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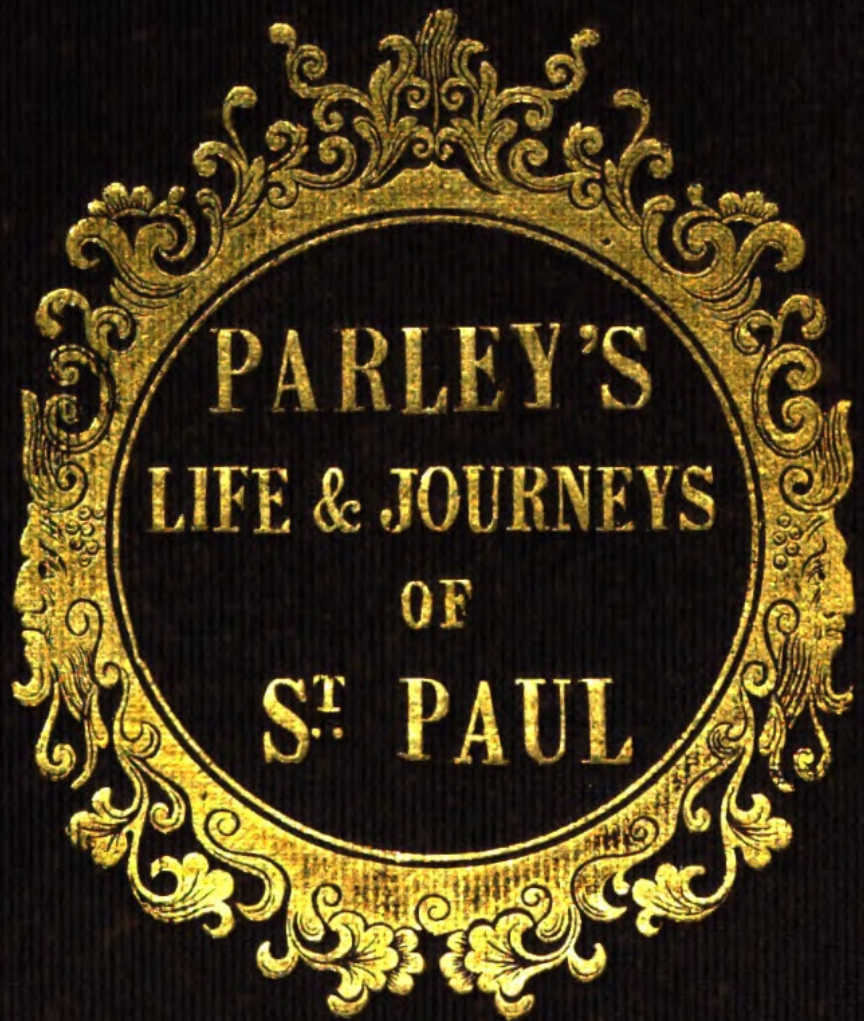
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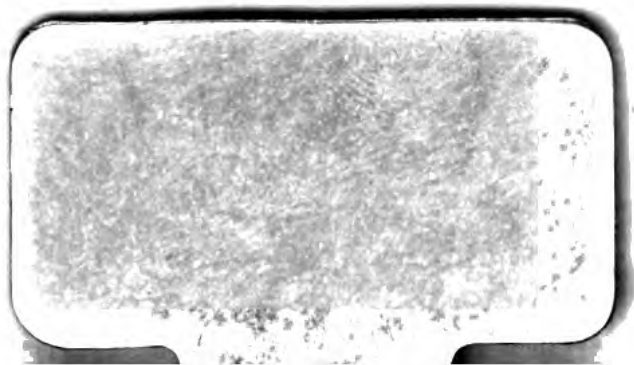


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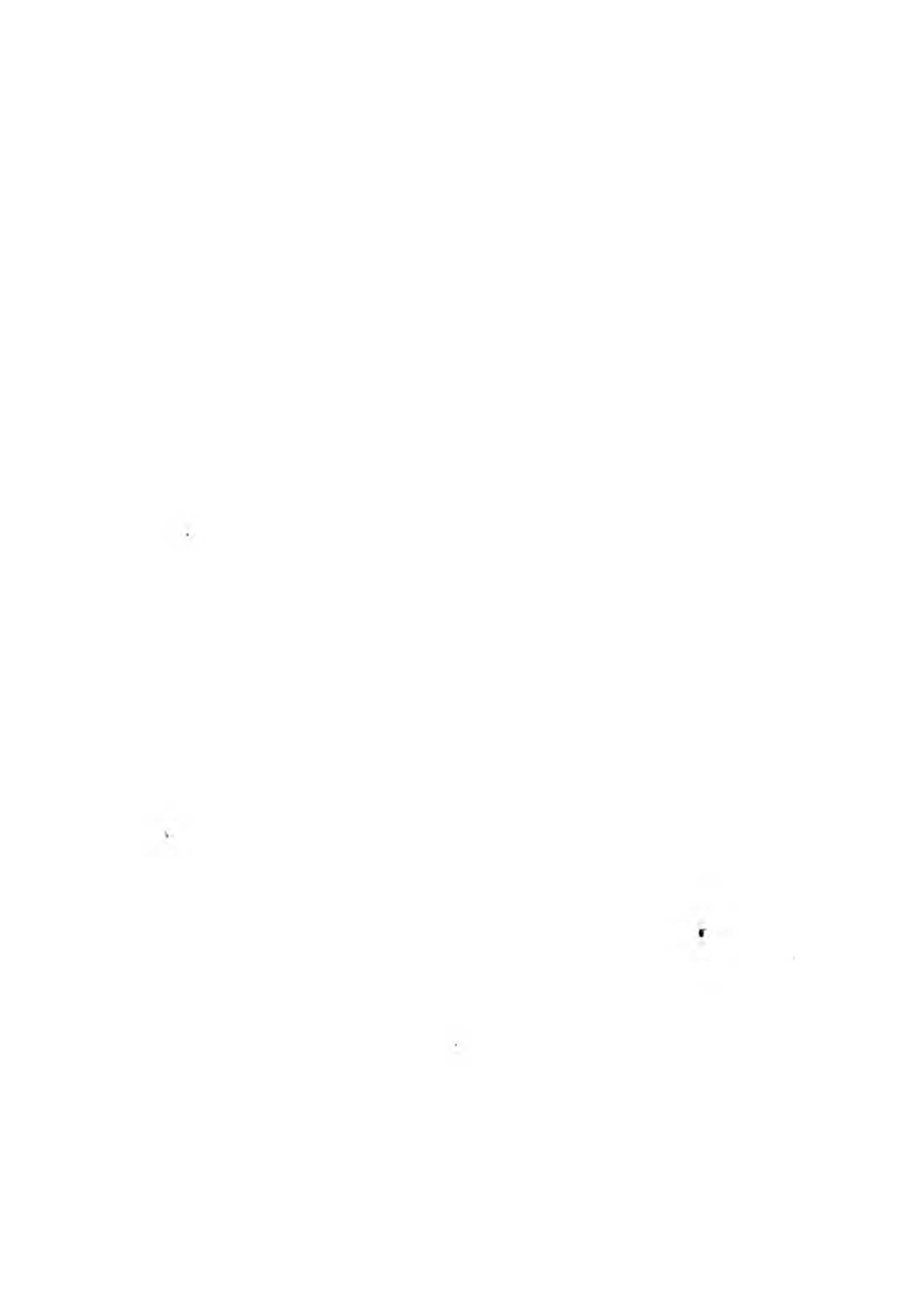
PARLEY'S
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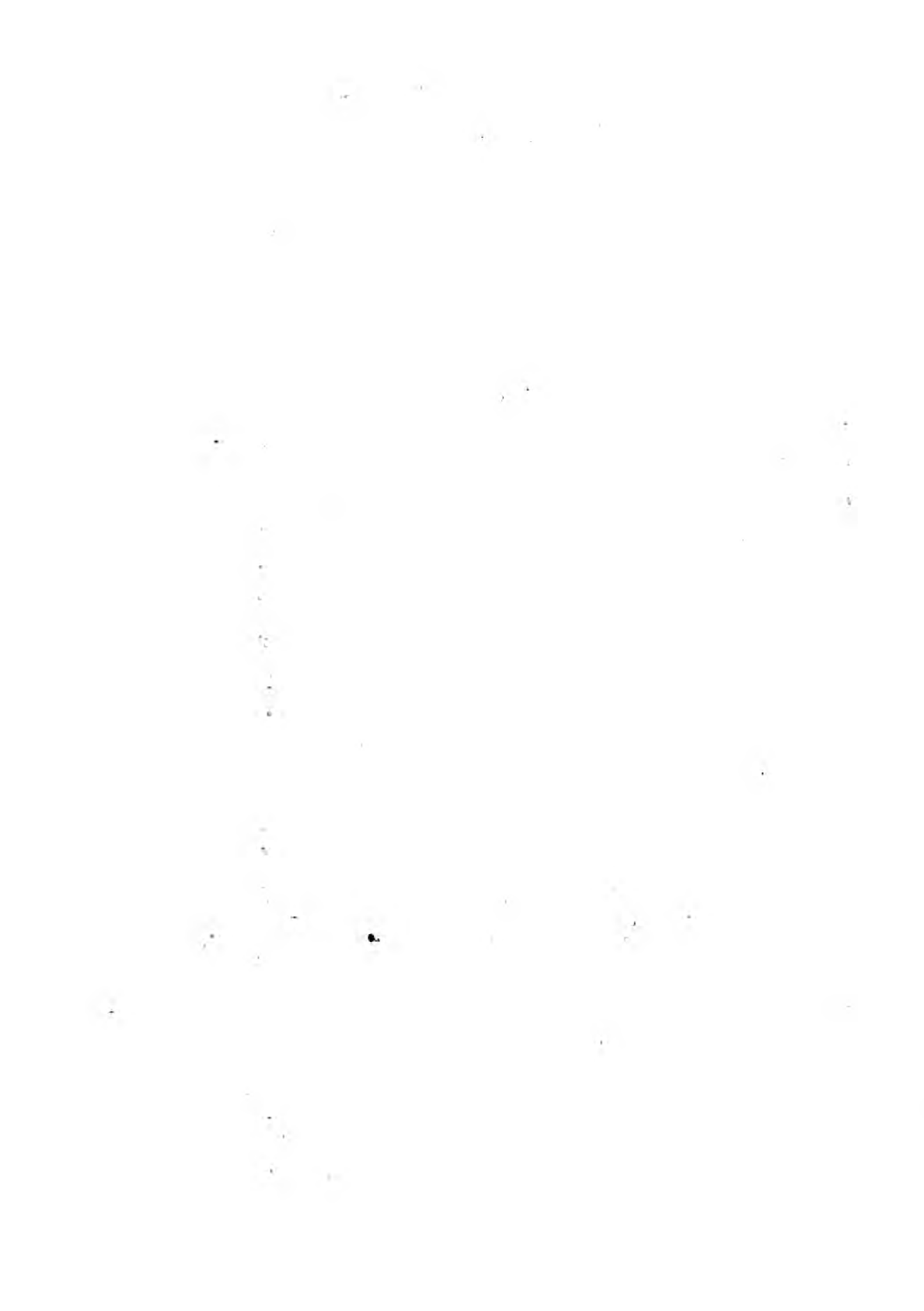
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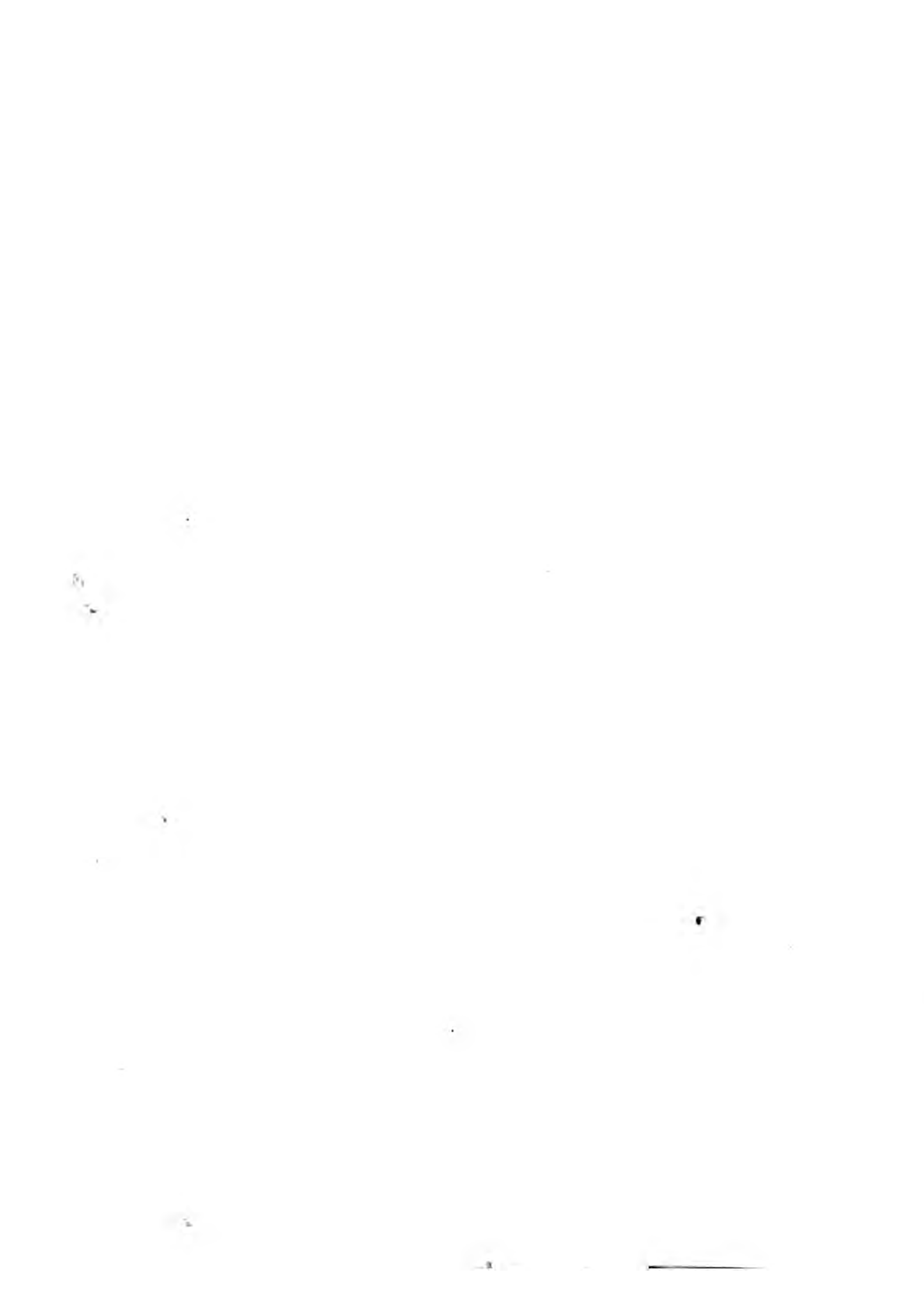


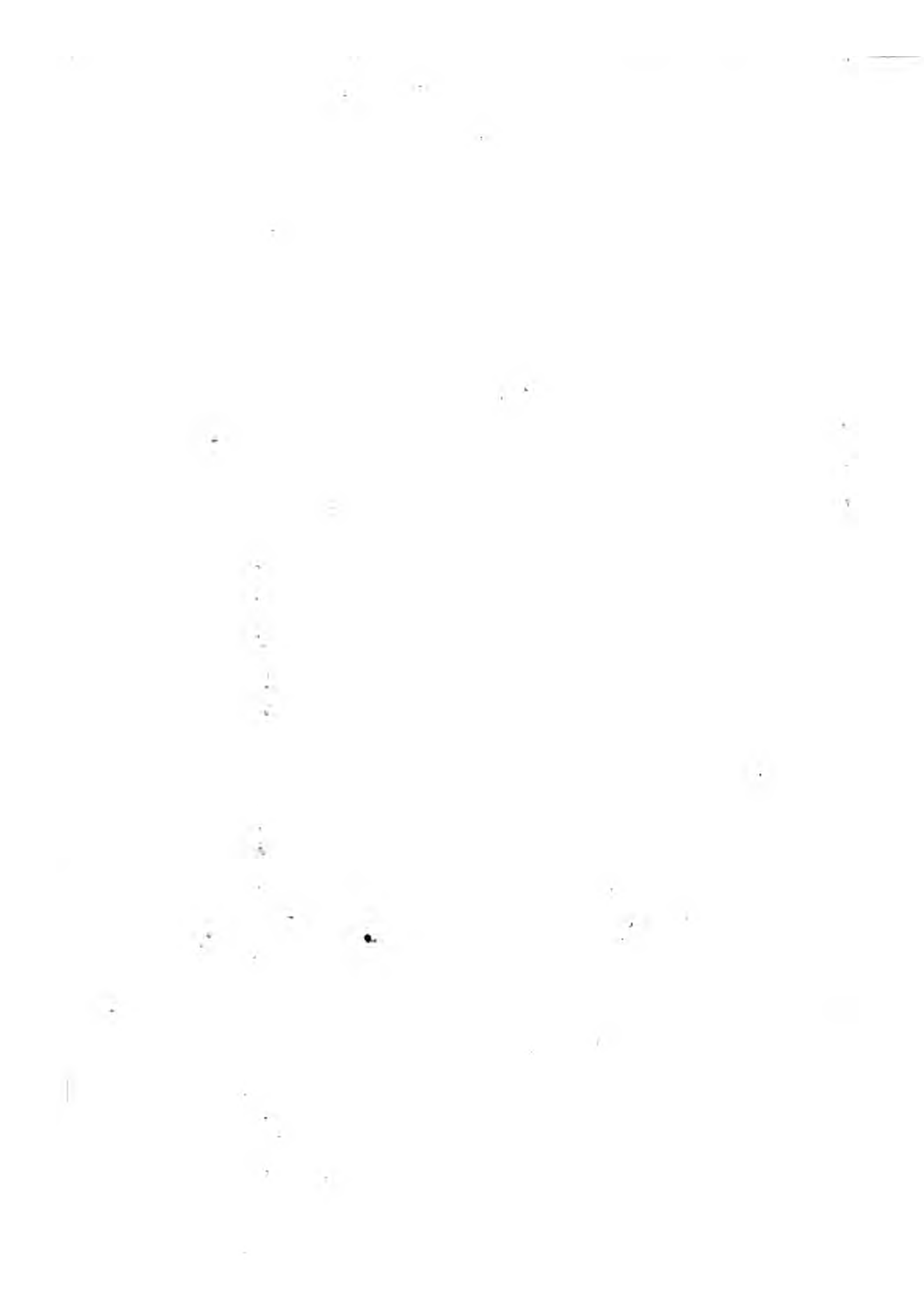
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DEATH OF ST. PAUL.

THE LIFE
AND
JOURNEYS
OF
PAUL THE APOSTLE.

BY
PETER PARLEY. *i. l.*

G. S. Goodrich.

EMBELLISHED WITH A MAP, AND SIX HIGHLY-FINISHED WOOD-
CUTS, FROM DESIGNS BY THE OLD MASTERS.

LONDON:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.,
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

M.DCCC.XLV.



1870



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BITHYNIA PAPHLAGONIA

GALATIA PONTUS

ASIA

PHRYGIA CAPPADOCIA

ANTIOCH
PISIDIA
Colosse Isaura Lystra
Derbe

PAMPHYLIA CILICIA

PERGA
MYSIA
LYDIA

SEA PAMPHYLIA

SALAMIS
CYPRUS

SEA CILICIA
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JUDEA

ANTIPATRIS

JOPPE

LYDDA

JERUSALEM

ASOTUS
GAZA

ANDRIA

EGYPT

ARABIA

Nile R.

Red Sea

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MILLIN

PARLEY'S
SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS.

THE LIFE AND TRAVELS OF
SAINT PAUL.

CHAPTER I.

PAUL, the apostle of the Gentiles, was not one of the twelve immediate followers of our Lord, whose lives and deaths I have already related; but born in a city far from Jerusalem, brought up an enemy to the Christian faith, and, from a sincere belief that their doctrines were untrue, the most cruel persecutor the first Christians had ever met with. That God, the Father, did not reject and condemn him to everlasting

punishment for his wickedness, but bore with him for a while, and at last employed him in his holy service, should teach parents to have patience with those children, whose disobedience arises rather from some errors of the head than of the heart ; and it should induce masters, also, not to condemn those scholars, or servants, too hastily, who, from either pride or prejudice, may be difficult to bend to their mode of instruction. Our heavenly Father, and merciful Master, had patience with Paul, and, knowing that he possessed talents, learning, courage, and perseverance, all which he had employed to persecute his people, poured his Holy Spirit into his heart, and made him a steward in his household.

Many persons place St. Peter at the head of the apostles, because they think that Christ committed the care of his church on earth to him ; but many also give St. Paul the honour of being the chief apostle, from the extent of his

labours, and the profound character of his writings : such disputes, however, become neither the old nor the young, for, all such distinctions were rejected by our Saviour, and humility uniformly pointed out as suitable to his disciples and his doctrines. As St. Peter was one of the companions of our blessed Lord, we cannot do wrong, therefore, in giving him the precedence when we write their histories, but we must not create any distinction of rank between two holy men, “who in their lives were pleasant and lovely, and in their deaths were not divided.”

Tarsus, a sea-port town, the capital of Cilicia, was the birth-place of Paul, or Saul, which was his family name : it was a rich commercial place, on the shores of the Mediterranean sea, and about three hundred miles distant from Jerusalem. For many years before the nativity of our Lord, this was a populous city, and the inhabitants having espoused the party of Julius

and Augustus Cæsar, against that of Crassus, these great men made it a free, or municipal town, by which the citizens were admitted to the same privileges as persons born at Rome. Paul's birth took place about the second year of the Christian era, and, when his age permitted, was placed at school. No city in the Roman empire was then more celebrated for its academies, and halls of philosophy, than Tarsus. It was before Alexandria and Athens in this respect, and many of the most eminent lecturers of Rome received their education in the Sicilian metropolis. Taking advantage of these opportunities, Saul acquired a very accurate knowledge of all the Greek and Latin writers, and made himself acquainted with the laws and customs of many nations. His reading had not been confined to the Bible, or Old Testament, solely; he must have known the works of Plato the philosopher, for he very often quoted phrases from his beautiful writings.

On several occasions, however, of his after life he gave such proofs of his scholarship, and of the education he received in his native city, that I should anticipate some of the chief events in his history, if I spoke more fully of them here.

There are many incidents in scripture that appear strange to the inhabitants of colder, and more northern, countries in the world, than Syria and Asia ; but it is foolish and presumptuous to doubt facts for no other reason than because they seem strange ; it is more wise and modest to suspect that our ignorance is the cause of the seeming difficulty. Now, although in these our days, men of fortune and rank, and education, despise business, and are allowed by our customs to enjoy their leisure, amongst the Jews of old there was a maxim, “that he who taught not his son a trade, taught him to be a thief,”—and the wisest of the ancient philosophers, also, held it prudent “to blame no employment, but to blame idle-

ness.” This practice prevailed for hundreds of years amongst the Israelites, whose descendants are, at the present day, all engaged in business; and the most learned of their rabbins were taught a manual occupation, in conjunction with learning, that they might be able to maintain themselves when it should be necessary. In their writings, and in their monuments, they are often described by their particular trades; as, Rabbi Jose, the tanner; Rabbi Jochanon, the carpenter. Indeed the custom was so old, and so well established, that when Christian monks formed themselves into fraternities, or brotherhoods, and lived in monasteries, while they exercised the strictest and most serious devotion, and cultivated literature much farther than any other class of society, they followed particular trades, and worked daily at their respective callings for their daily support. Before the invention of printing, the monks employed themselves in

writing, on vellum, different histories and works of philosophy, and missals ; many of which, as works of art—at all events of industry—are very extraordinary. Saul, according to the custom of his country, was put to a trade, and his parents chose for him that of “ a tent-maker.” In that particular city, situated so near the fields of so many battles, and amidst people so devoted to warlike pursuits, this trade must have been both respectable and profitable ; and it appears that even after his conversion and call, Saul continued to derive advantage from following it.

Trade most probably induced many Jews to settle at Tarsus, amongst whom were the ancestors of Saul. Both his father and mother were of that persuasion ; and, from his calling himself “ a Hebrew of the Hebrews,” we may conclude that he knew his parents also to have been descended from that people. His family belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, the youngest

son of Jacob ; and that celebrated patriarch himself prophesied of his son's tribe, saying, "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf ; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." This prophecy is said to have an evident application to St. Paul, who, in the morning of his life, persecuted the flock of Christ, and spoke against his church ; but, at the close of his life, the night of his existence, becoming a physician of the nations, he fed and distributed comfort and blessings to Christ's sheep.

Having made great proficiency in all the learning taught by the professors of Tarsus, and laid the best foundations for human wisdom and worldly distinction, his parents sent him to Jerusalem, to study the law. The free intercourse with the holy city induced many Jews to do likewise ; and so many young Hebrews went thither annually, that at length a temple, or college, was built for their reception, and called the Synagogue of the Cicilians.

At this time a famous rabbi, named Gamaliel, well skilled in the Jewish law, and supposed also to have been secretly satisfied that the Messiah had come, and that the infant Jesus was the true and promised Redeemer, taught in Jerusalem. He was the son of Rabbi Simeon, who came into the temple, and taking Christ in his arms, said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen my salvation."

Gamaliel was president of the Sanhedrim when our Saviour was brought before that assembly, and no one in Jerusalem at that time was better known, or more respected for wisdom, prudence, and impartial treatment to all that were brought before him. It was he who made that sensible speech to the Sanhedrim, in favour of the apostles and their religion, which caused the assembly to hesitate before they punished them and, so kind had he always been to the persecuted Christians, that some people have

thought that the apostles knew he believed, and allowed him to pass unnoticed in the Jewish council, because by so doing, he might afford more protection to proselytes. But I doubt very much whether duplicity, or secrecy, even for the advantage of our holy religion, was ever practised by the apostles : so that if Gamaliel were a Christian, and kept the secret, to save his own life, and to promote the true religion, he trusted in the mercy of God, who knew the secrets of his heart, for pardon and forgiveness.

Under this great master, or expounder of the law, Saul was placed by his parents, and as he himself says, “ at his feet ” was I brought up. This expression probably alluded to the attitude of standing, which Gamaliel’s pupils always observed, but which was not followed by students of the law after his death. “ Whilst he lived,” writes an old Jewish author, “ men were sound, and studied the law standing ; but when he died weakness crept into the world, and

students were forced to sit.” However, it is of little consequence whether this explanation be exactly right, because the meaning of the passage is plain, which is, that he was brought up along with the scholars that daily assembled around this learned teacher, and attentively heard his lectures: “at his feet,” is the same as “under his eye,”—a phrase which we are frequently accustomed to hear.

Saul’s natural abilities, great industry, and excellent early education, soon recommended him to the notice of his new master, and his proficiency was so great, that he very soon outstripped all his competitors in the race of knowledge. His father and mother being of the sect of Pharisees, he was trained particularly in the rules and doctrines of that sect, and this was the reason of his being so much opposed, from his boyhood, to the Christian creed. He had not been left to follow the guidance of his own clear understanding; but

his tender mind was bent and formed to the doctrines of the Pharisees, by illiberal teachers, and a bigoted system of instruction.

Pharisees styled themselves “the strictest sect,” by which they wished others to understand that they were the most correct people imaginable in moral conduct, and in commercial dealings. But they were base hypocrites : they repeated their prayers aloud, and standing in public places ; they gave charity openly, and from ostentation ; they felt the greatest hatred for every human being that did not belong to their own sect ; and whenever, by their apparent propriety of conduct, they deceived the people and gained their approbation, they turned all their influence against those who did not acknowledge their virtues, even against the princes of the land. Alexander Jannæus, when he was laid on his death bed, called his queen to him, and advised her not to oppose the Pharisees openly, but pretend to take their

advice, and to govern by their counsel.—“ Had I only conciliated those hypocrites,” said the dying king, “ I should have been more happy, and not have had the hatred of my subjects, for whom I was ready at any time to have given my life.”

If their doctrines were confined merely to making themselves looked at and admired, that would certainly have been foolish enough, but as it would not have done injury to innocent people, it might have been disregarded ; but they were not contented with outward pomp and pride ; they insisted also upon bringing over all other men to their party ; and whoever dared to espouse the religion or doctrines of Christianity in their presence, was immediately marked out by them for persecution. To accomplish these wicked purposes, they distinguished themselves in society by peculiar dresses as well as manners : they wore long robes, phylacteries, or small slips of

paper inscribed with moral sentences, deep fringes or borders to their garments, unlike those in general use, and in every possible way made themselves remarkable. Their principles were ill-natured, unjust and uncharitable; their behaviour haughty, overbearing, and unkind; they fasted as well as prayed in public, assumed demure looks, and even spoke in a whining tone of voice. They have been compared in scripture to whitened sepulchres, that appear fair outside, while all within is decayed; and their hypocritical smiles are often compared to the light that falls on the silent grave. Such a wicked and revengeful sect it was as dangerous to reject as to depart from: so that whenever a mind clear enough to see the baseness of their doctrines, and a heart kind enough to feel for the injuries they inflicted upon the innocent and honest, existed among them, they took care to watch over the actions of the owner, and prevent him

either behaving charitably, or passing over to those whose sentiments resembled his own.

Reared up in this odious sect, Saul could not have easily released himself from it : besides children very naturally follow the religion of their parents, especially when they have been carefully taught its doctrines by their teachers. And Saul's talents and education only gave him more power to do mischief so long as he continued in the religion of his pastors and his parents. Accordingly, when he deemed his education finished, he resolved to devote all his abilities to the advancement of his peculiar opinions. His temper was naturally violent, and having become a champion of the Law of Moses, and of the Traditions of the Elders, his zeal in maintaining his views soon became conspicuous. About many of the erroneous, and very wicked principles of the Pharisees, Saul judged for himself : but, the prejudices of education, under which he insensibly laboured,

the warmth also of his zeal for the service he had undertaken, so completely deceived him, that he thought he was acting for the glory of God, when he was pursuing to death all who departed from the law as laid down in the Old Testament.

The Christians who were so ignorantly supposed to be enemies, even destroyers of the Law, were of course odious to Saul, and while he denied that he was influenced by the pride and prejudice of the sect to which he belonged, he protested that he felt himself bound by his conscience, to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth. Although Saul, most probably, had committed several acts of hostility towards the Christian brethren before the death of Stephen, none of them are especially described. It appears that this disciple having performed many miracles in the presence of the Jews, earnestly entreated them to embrace the religion of Christ Jesus, not as one that

was opposed to the law of Moses, but, on the contrary, as fulfilling that very law, and accomplishing the chief prophecies in the Old Testament. Provoked at his earnestness and boldness, some of the rabbis belonging to the synagogue of the freed-men of Alexandria and Cyrene, challenged him to dispute with them, and to refute what they had to say. For a short while only could these boasters be induced to contend with the holy man ; and seeing their total inability to answer him, they meanly had recourse to stratagem. False witnesses were obtained, (a common practice amongst the Pharisees) who should swear that they heard Stephen blaspheme against Moses and against God ; and upon this infamous evidence he was dragged before the Sanhedrim. Change of place, or increase of power, produced no alteration in the calm dignity of Stephen, who not only repeated the words of life, which he had either heard from the lips of our Lord,

or been taught by his disciples, but added a sharp remonstrance upon the unholiness and obstinacy of the Pharisees in particular : “ Ye stiff-necked ! ye uncircumcised in heart and ears ! ye will for ever resist the Holy Ghost : ye tread in the paths of your fathers : as they did, so do you continue to do. Did not your fathers persecute every one of the prophets ? Did not they slay them who shewed the coming of the Holy One, whom ye yourselves have destroyed and murdered ? You have received the law by the disposition of angels, but never kept it.” This language was too plain, too true, too painful, for the Jews, who, instead of honouring the honest, holy man, who had the courage and candour to advise them truly, fell upon him with one accord, and dragged him out of the city. There, without the walls, Stephen was made the first martyr for the religion of Christ, being cruelly stoned to death. It was the custom that the witnesses

should throw the first stone ; and who can describe the real feelings of those monsters' hearts, who falsely accused the saint, when they were directed to perform the first act by which he was to be deprived of life ?

Saul, who was present during the infamous and fatal attack upon St. Stephen, attended his murderers to the place of death, and so far participated in the crime as to hold the garments of one of the witnesses, while he threw the first stone, the signal for the sacrifice of the martyr.

If we were ourselves free from sin, we might here stop to consider how far Saul was guilty of the death of St. Stephen, by holding the vestments of one who actually wounded him ; and, by his being present, aiding and abetting, as our laws say, in the crime. But, without at all involving ourselves in the charge of judging others, we may condemn Saul, for he himself acknowledges that he *consented* to his

death. God, who knows all our thoughts, judges by the heart, whether we be innocent or guilty, not by the words of the lips : one may murder another as perfectly by a violent wish, or a passionate desire, as by a blow ; for the Almighty takes the will for the deed, and condemns the companion of sin, as entirely as the actual perpetrator of the guilty deed. Saul was learned in moral law, and knew therefore that his presence encouraged the murderers of St. Stephen, and his holding their garments countenanced the awful crime :—he did not therefore plead ignorance ; but, long afterwards, declared that his crime arose solely from the prejudices of his education in Phari-saical principles, and a conviction that those opinions were correct. However melancholy the recollection, he acted properly in acknowledging his fault, for, on this condition only could he ever hope that God would grant forgiveness. He was too wise and too learned

to suppose that God could not or would not discover the error, which he himself, a weak and sinful mortal, had perceived ; and none of the primitive Christians have left a nobler confession of their sins, than this great apostle.

The martyrdom of St. Stephen was followed by a series of violent acts towards Christians : the very consciousness of guilt and cruelty made the Jews more sensitive ; and, to pretend that they believed themselves right in the dispute, they actually committed outrages upon innocent people that otherwise would, most probably, not have been perpetrated. The rage of persecution had now risen to such a height that all other business seemed to be forgotten at Jerusalem. In the crusade against religion, Saul acted a most conspicuous part ; he first drove numbers into exile, and compelled as many to seek safety by flight ; extending and spreading Christianity by the very means he adopted to crush it ; for, wherever the exiles

went, they taught to the people the religion for which they suffered. So mad and uncontrollable did Saul's zeal become, that he went into every place, like a raging lion, searching out Christians; he beat some publicly in the synagogue, because they refused to blaspheme; he dragged others to prison; and those who adhered to their opinions he caused to be put to death. The high-priests, perceiving his ability, intelligence, and extravagant zeal, took advantage of his failings, and commissioned him to hunt down heretics in every direction, and to seize, and bring before the council, all those teaching against the law of Moses, or against those traditions which Aristobulus had introduced into the Jewish church about a century before, and on which the Pharisees relied more confidently than any other sects.

Recommended to the Sanhedrim, by his talents for injury, and by the cruelties he inflicted upon the worshippers of the only true

God, Saul now had the presumption to address himself to that solemn council, and demand a warrant from them to proceed to Damascus, and there enter the synagogue and repeat his enormities. It may appear strange that the Sanhedrim possessed authority to grant this warrant; but the Roman governor did not take the trouble to meddle in the question of Jewish doctrines, and leaving all those matters to the Sanhedrim, that body retained, or was allowed, the privilege, of controlling their brethren, not only at Jerusalem, but all through Syria. They might send for them, and having arrested, bring them to Jerusalem, to be tried and executed. Saul knew the extent of the Sanhedrim's authority, and, with all the inhumanity of one whose hands were already steeped in crime—one who felt that his own safety was perilled, while Christians were permitted the enjoyment of liberty and freedom of speech—and driven headlong by the fury of

misguided zeal, he resolved upon following the poor emigrants who had escaped to Damascus, and either drive them from their new shelter, or drag them to Jerusalem for execution.

Vain of his commission, and accompanied by a sufficient number of officers to enforce his instructions, he set out from Jerusalem, in the confident hope of frightening the followers of the new religion from their attachment, by the severity of the conduct which would be shewn towards them. But his race of wrong and cruelty was now nearly closed ; a new light—not that of human learning, but of heavenly revelation—was about to shine upon him, and discover to himself those dark parts of his character, which had hitherto been concealed from him by the clouds of prejudice and ignorance. As he travelled along the road that led from Jerusalem to Damascus, intent upon that insatiable wickedness, to which Pharisaical pride had originally prompted him,





CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

suddenly a refulgent light, far exceeding the brightness of the mid-day sun, darted upon him. Confounded by its effects, Saul and his companions became much alarmed, and in all the terror of amazement fell prostrate to the earth. While they lay under the influence of this terrific spectacle, a voice was heard in the Hebrew tongue, crying out, "Saul! Saul! why persecutest thou me?"—to which he replied, "Who art thou, Lord?" and was immediately answered, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." It is evident, from his saying *Lord*, that he knew who it was that addressed him in this supernatural way, and this he only could have known from inspiration. He at once understood that all attempts to extirpate the faith in Christ must prove unavailing; and even that, like kicking against pointed spikes, he would only wound himself in the effort. Saul was therefore called of the Lord, or else

he could not know so instantaneously that it was Jesus whom he persecuted ; and that in pursuing the Christians, he was insulting the omnipotent Ruler of the universe.

The miraculous light, the sacred voice, the change that he felt passing over him, and through him, the new sentiments which the Holy Spirit had poured into his bosom, satisfied him so fully of his regeneration, and of his being called to the special service of that Jesus whom he had persecuted, that he only now desired to be made acquainted with the duties he was henceforth to discharge ; and, in the bitterness of repentance, he exclaimed, “ Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? ”—to which the same blessed voice replied, “ Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.” Of Saul’s conversion his attendants were witnesses ; some of them heard the voice from heaven, but did not see the person who spoke ; others of them saw the

light, and felt the greatest alarm, but only heard a confused sound, the meaning of which was subsequently interpreted to them ; but, the cause of their not knowing what the voice distinctly uttered was, that they were ignorant of the Hebrew tongue.

When Saul had risen up, he was capable of walking, and indeed found no interruption to the free motion of his limbs, but he was stricken blind by the brightness of the light from heaven, and therefore prayed his attendants to conduct him carefully to Damascus. There he remained in the house of Judas for three days, devoting himself to incessant prayer, and abstaining altogether from food or drink. While he was in this state of penitence and contrition, he had a vision, in which he was taken up into the third heaven, and there saw and heard things great and unutterable, and was also fully instructed in the mysteries of the gospel. At a future period, Saul expressly

affirms that he was not “taught the gospel which he preached by man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Although he certainly might have alluded in this passage to the ecstasy, or vision, which he had at the house of Judas, and although a divine appearance took place at, and for some time after, the opening of the Christian era, so that such a preternatural event need not surprise us, yet I think that Saul alluded simply to his miraculous conversion while on the road to Damascus, by which he was regenerated and born anew, when he says that the gospel was revealed to him through Christ Jesus.

There dwelt at Damascus, at the time of the conversion of Saul, a devout and charitable man named Ananias, who, although he confessed the faith of Christ crucified, was very much beloved and respected by all, even the Jewish portion of the inhabitants. To that religious and excellent man, our blessed Saviour

appeared in a vision, and commanded him to go into a certain street in the city, where Judas lived, and inquire for Saul, who was then offering up fervent prayers to the throne of grace and mercy, “ And the Lord said unto him, arise, 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.” The virtuous Christian started at the name of Saul, which he knew to be connected with so many deeds of blood, and from his violent temper and infamous treatment of the Christians, suspected that his visit to Damascus was only another artful snare, which he had laid to entrap poor victims, whose faith could not be shaken by his learned arguments or wicked threats of punishment and death. Our Saviour, however, calmed his fears by telling

him that this conversion was no artifice of the Pharisee himself, but the result of a heavenly inspiration, that he had taken Saul as a chosen vessel, to preach the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. That he should yet go before the greatest princes upon earth, and should do and suffer much for his sake : that hunger, thirst, chains, imprisonments, rocks, scourges, and shipwrecks, were to be endured by him in the name of Jesus Christ. “ Go thy way, Ananias,” said the Lord, “ for he is a chosen vessel, to bear my name among the Gentiles, and kings, and children of Israel. I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my sake.”

Laying aside his fears, Ananias immediately obeyed the divine command, and proceeding to the house of Judas, entered the room where Saul was in the attitude of prayer ; he then laid his hands gently upon him, and said, “ That Jesus who appeared to thee in the way,

hath sent me to restore thy sight, and by the infusion of his Spirit to give thee the knowledge of those truths which thou hast blindly and ignorantly persecuted ; but who now is willing to receive thee, by baptism, into his church, and make thee a member of his body.” Scarcely had Ananias concluded, before thick films, like scales, fell from his eyes, and his sight was immediately restored. He now submitted to the ceremony, and sacrament of baptism, after which he conversed familiarly with the Christians at Damascus.

Saul’s conversion was a subject of rejoicing, as well as of astonishment, to the whole church at Damascus ; but how must their surprise have been increased, when they heard him preaching the glad tidings of eternal life through Christ Jesus, to those very Christians whom he came with the intention to destroy. How were they amazed, and how must they have glorified the wisdom and the ways of

God, when they saw a storm of destruction converted into a soothing calm—a wolf lay aside his fierceness and put on the meekness of a lamb! Not only did Saul mix, preach, and converse with those he would, just four days before, have gloried in destroying, but, he taught with so much learning and ability “that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God,” that the Jews were utterly confounded by his arguments, and did not attempt to reply.

Before his conversion, the great Apostle is generally called Saul; but after that event, Paul. I have mentioned somewhere, in my Tales about St. Peter and the Twelve Apostles, how the names of persons called of God to the holy ministry of his church, were constantly altered at the time of their being called; and I think it very likely that the same took place in this case, *Saul*, which signifies “a destroyer,” being exchanged for

Paul, the meaning of which is “a labourer.” Saul, however, was a name very common in the tribe of Benjamin, ever since the first king of Israel, who was of that name, was chosen out of that tribe ; in memory of which event they frequently named their children at the ceremony of circumcision ; and when St. Luke speaks of him as teaching the Jews in Syria, he calls him by his Hebrew name, Saul. Paul is a Latin epithet, supposed by some persons to refer to the Roman corporation in which he was born, and by others to have been assumed to commemorate his conversion of Sergius Paulus, the Roman governor. But I have told you my opinion on this curious point, which is, that he assumed the name of Paul—a labourer—from the time of his conversion, either through humility, or in conformity with a practice which prevailed amongst the Hebrews, whenever they entered upon a more strict and religious mode of life.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL TO THE END OF
HIS FIRST APOSTOLIC JOURNEY.

If you only reflect upon the new and strange circumstances of St. Paul's situation at Damascus, after his conversion, you will not be surprised when I tell you, that he quitted that place as soon as he had recovered his sight, and, in his eloquent discourses, proclaimed his conversion through the influence of God's Holy Spirit. It was very natural for him to desire to avoid the inquisitive gaze of his brother Pharisees, and the searching questions of the angry Jews of Damascus, who were sadly mortified at his desertion of their false notions; besides, there is every reason to imagine that he had been warned, in the vision which he had, to retire from that neighbourhood, and avoid all quarrel with those who, perhaps, would gladly

have taken away his life. For these reasons he withdrew into Arabia Petræa, a country adjoining the region of Damascus, and to which that city had at one time been subject, and there devoted three whole years to the service of the Lord. While engaged in this ministry, he is believed to have received still further revelations of the mysteries of Christianity, and more full instructions as to his future labours.

The time of his retirement being completed, he returned again to Damascus, a place of much consequence at that period; and, having acquired confidence from experience, he addressed the citizens with so much boldness and vehemence, that his very manner brought over many Jews to the belief that Christ was the Messiah. Whoever would desire to convince and correct others, must have every appearance of being in earnest himself; and, although true believers may be deficient in

this respect, and false preachers may assume earnestness in order to deceive, yet it is reasonable to conclude, that he who is eloquent and urgent in his discourses, feels sincerely the truth of what he says. Now none of the apostles were more ardent or energetic in their manner than Paul, and it was on this very account that the Jews became so enraged against him, because he appeared to the people to be the more firmly convinced that the Messiah had come, and had been crucified by the Jews.

Damascus was a very ancient city;—Abraham's steward was called "Eliezer of Damascus," either from its having been built by him, or from its having belonged to him, —and in strength, grandeur, and situation, was the noblest city of Syria. It stands on a spacious, fertile plain, intersected by many streams, and the healthfulness of the climate brought many foreigners to settle there. Lebanon bounds the plain of Damascus on one side,

and Mount Hermon on the other, and from the great beauty of its situation, it was called in old times, “the holy and great Damascus,” and “the eye of the whole East.” At this time the city was governed by a deputy of Aretas, King of Arabia Petraea, a tributary prince to the Romans. Herod Antipas had espoused a daughter of this king, but afterwards divorcing her without any just cause, a war arose between these two potentates. Taking advantage of the excuse, which might easily be invented in time of war, and readily believed by a timid magistrate, the Jews protested that Paul was a spy in the interest of the Romans, and on this false accusation caused the Arabian governor to arrest him. Unwilling to abandon so rich and populous a city, where his labours must have proved so fruitful, he endeavoured to avert the malice of his enemies by argument and proof, but neither would be received ; his blood alone would be accepted.

To accomplish their revenge, and to silence so able an advocate of the gospel, the Jews now had recourse to every means of stratagem. The city gates being closed, and the regular guards doubled, orders were issued to search every house, and if their victim could be found, that he should be dragged immediately before the nearest tribunal of justice. But the reputation of Paul had made so many friends for him, that none would either betray him or refuse him shelter, so long as it was safe for him to remain in the city: when this was no longer prudent, and when it was evident that the Jews were resolved upon his death, his friends decided upon aiding his escape. The gates being closed and vigilantly guarded, escape that way was impossible, so that it only remained for him to cross the walls in some obscure part. It happened that the house in which he was concealed rested on the walls of the city, and its windows looked out towards the great plain

that surrounds it. This was a fortunate chance, and Paul's protectors taking advantage of it, succeeded in letting him down safely to the foot of the wall by means of a basket and strong ropes. The precise place, at which the apostle was lowered to the ground, was long noticed by travellers, and the city entrance which is the nearest to it, has been called from the event St. Paul's gate.

Moderation and gentleness of conduct are valuable in all persons, and the want of them a very great hindrance to advancement in life ; St. Paul experienced the truth of this maxim upon his arrival at Jerusalem after his extraordinary escape from Damascus. Forgetting his former practices, he began to address the multitude everywhere, calling upon them to acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah, and expounding to them different passages of the scriptures ; but they paid him little attention at first, believing that he was not sincere, and

recollecting that when he last preached to them he did not give honour to the Son of the Most Highest. In this difficulty he applied to Barnabas, telling him that his efforts were totally useless, as he was shunned by the people, and begging that he would assist in recommending him to their confidence. Barnabas, a kind and generous man, immediately went with him to St. Peter, who had not yet been cast into prison, and afterwards to James, our Lord's half-brother, and at that time Bishop of Jerusalem. By these holy men Paul was hospitably entertained for fifteen days. They heard the account of his miraculous conversion, and of his bold and clever preaching in Damascus, and of his escape from that city, by the help of those Christians whom his discourses had edified, with the greatest delight. And this was the first introduction of Paul to that holy brotherhood, of which he afterwards became one of

the chiefest and most remarkable members.

It was all in vain that Paul preached the gospel to the Jews, and exhibited his learning and talents in confuting the ablest of them ; his arguments were but coldly received by those who had before heard him argue the contrary way. It certainly was a hard thing for them to be persuaded that he was in earnest ; turncoats, or apostates, are always looked upon with suspicion, and people would rather believe those who had never changed sides, or forsaken the religion of their parents. But this is no reason why we should not take a right road, when we see clearly that we have been going wrong. It would be absurd to suppose, that because we have been brought up in the idol-worship of the Chinese, we should not embrace the religion of Christ, so soon as we are taught it, and perceive its light. Paul, therefore, was not culpable for having ceased to persecute the Christians, and for

having commenced to preach the gospel ; on the contrary, it was the best and surest way to obtain forgiveness of his great sins : nor were the people who doubted his sincerity guilty of any very extraordinary obstinacy ; their distrust was very natural.

But, Paul was too wise not to perceive that he had better remove to distant cities and countries, where, being less known, he could render greater service to his Master, and he now reflected upon the fittest course to take. Scarcely had he formed this prudent resolution, about which it is likely that he spoke with Peter and with Barnabas, when he was informed that he was not more safe in Jerusalem than he was at Damascus. That the malice of the Pharisees, whom he had forsaken, and now exposed, could not rest, and that plots were laid against his life. He was also warned of God, in a dream, of his real situation, and of the folly of his preaching to the Jews, who did

not believe him ; so he decided upon quitting Jerusalem, and henceforth preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

His brethren having approved of his intentions, they accompanied him in his way as far as Cæsarea Philippi ; after which he went on board ship, and, sailing for the coast of Cilicia, arrived once more at his native city, Tarsus. It is probable that the great change in his religious opinions was not very pleasing to his relations, or old companions, at home in that city, for he did not remain there long, but, in company with Barnabas, he set out for Antioch, to assist in propagating the doctrines of the gospel in that place. His great success fully proved the wisdom of his preaching in those places only, where his early life and former opinions were not known ; for, he made so many proselytes here, and had the gratification to collect so many attentive hearers around him, whenever he preached,

that he was induced to remain at Antioch a whole year.

And it was at this time, and at this place, Antioch, that the disciples of the religion of the gospel were first called Christians, after Christ, the founder and author of their faith. Although other institutions, and sects, had generally been designated from the name of their first inventor,—and indeed, even at this day, it is customary with all nations to do so, as we see the Wesleyans are named from John Wesley,—yet the disciples of Christ had hitherto been called Nazarenes, or followers of Jesus of Nazareth, and never Christians, until Paul and Barnabas taught at Antioch. But the name, Nazarene, is not yet entirely laid aside: the Jews, whenever they wish to speak scornfully, and with contempt, of our holy religion, still use it, just as the Gentiles used formerly to call its followers Galileans. However, the proper signification of the term,

Nazarenes, is “that class of Jews who mixed the law and the gospel, and formed a religion for themselves, out of Judaism and Christianity.”

The name of Christian, which ever after prevailed, and is now so widely spread over the world, did not arise accidentally; it was publicly and solemnly given to all those who had before been styled Nazarenes and Galileans, by Euodius, bishop of Antioch: and that so memorable an event may be more accurately laid up in our minds, I wish to add, that it took place in the reign of the Roman emperor Claudius, just ten years after the ascension of our Lord and Saviour.

About this time, a miserable famine occurred, the effects of which were felt over the whole Roman empire. Judea was more heavily visited by this calamity than other places, and the Christians of Antioch, having compassion for the suffering people, raised a

large subscription for their relief. Barnabas and Paul being selected as fit persons to distribute this very humane bounty, they proceeded accordingly to Jerusalem; and, having executed their commission to the satisfaction of the necessitous Christians, or “poor saints,” at that place, returned, after a short delay only, to Antioch. Few cities in Lesser Asia, or in Syria, had a more numerous population, or possessed riches in greater abundance than Antioch, so that the citizens had ample means to relieve their famishing brethren in Jerusalem. This, however, by no means diminishes the merit of their charity; because it is not the richest who are always the most compassionate, and because charity is estimated, not by the amount given, but the ability of the giver. The gift of the rich merchants of Antioch was, therefore, in all human probability, acceptable to God: for the intention of those who contributed was pure and full of pity.

And now, duties of a more severe and trying kind awaited Paul, who was so strong in faith, that no duty exceeded his ability. The brethren at Antioch observed his zeal with delight, and were meditating upon the best mode of employing it for the honour of God, and in the holy service of his blessed Son, when the Holy Spirit revealed to them, in a vision, the future destiny of the apostle. This divine communication was made to Simeon, surnamed Niger, (black), Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, and other preachers, directing them to set apart Barnabas and Paul, for the work to which they were appointed, that is, to preaching the gospel to the Gentiles elsewhere. Having spent some time in fasting, prayer, and meditation, the apostles received their authority from the elders, by the laying on of hands. This latter ceremony is observed in the ordaining of the clergy in the church of Christ, and was introduced by our Saviour himself, who laid his

hands on the heads of the little children, and blessed them. After the ordination of Paul and Barnabas, by the imposition of hands, and after they had heard the solemn prayers of the brethren for the success of their mission, they bade farewell to Antioch.

Leaving Antioch, Paul and Barnabas proceeded to Seleucia, a town on the river Orontes, about five miles from the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, founded originally by Seleucus, after whom it was called. Remaining but a short time here, they crossed once more to the Island of Cyprus, and visiting Salamis, the principal of its four great cities, entered the Synagogue, and preached, without fear, to the astonished Jews. This fine island, which takes its name from a species of cypress tree that grows on it very luxuriantly, was dedicated by its heathen inhabitants to the goddess Venus, and the morals and conduct of the people were held in abhorrence by other countries. Paul's

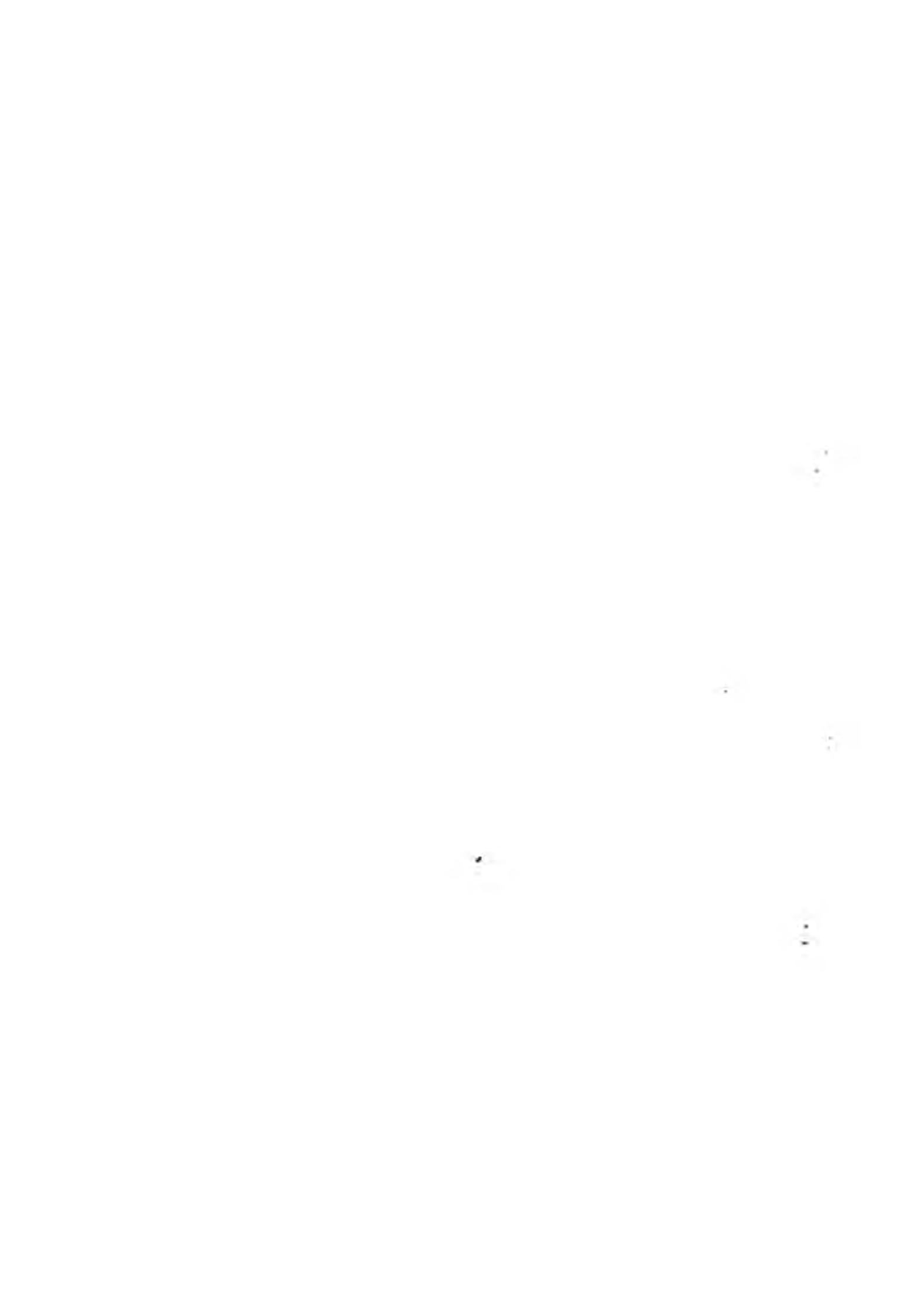
success therefore, was the more signal : and so well was he remembered in after ages, that when a primate, or chief-bishop, was appointed for Cyprus, his residence was fixed at Salamis, because there the gospel was first preached amongst them by the apostle Paul.

From Salamis the apostle crossed the island to Paphos, a city on its western shore, where there was a splendid temple to the Paphian Venus, and where Sergius Paulus, a Roman, was governor over a corrupt and debased people. This pro-consul was a man of much wisdom and prudence, but completely imposed on by the artifices of a Jewish impostor named Bar-Jesus, or Elymas. This sorcerer, or magician, opposed the preaching of Paul with extraordinary violence, and endeavoured to dissuade Sergius from paying any attention to the precepts of Christianity, or even permitting its teachers to explain them to the people.

But the pro-consul resolved, like an honest and sensible man, to judge for himself, and sending for the apostles, desired them to explain their peculiar tenets. Elymas being also present, Paul explained to him the sin of his opposition to the word of God, told him that he would, in a few minutes, be seized on by the avenging power of that God whom he had opposed, and become a terrible example to others. He had hardly uttered this dreadful sentence, when Elymas the sorcerer was struck blind, in the presence of an assembly before which he had promised to expose the errors of the Messengers of God. Having heard the reasoning of Paul, and witnessed the punishment of the sorcerer, the pro-consul Sergius Paulus, became satisfied of the reality of Paul's mission, of the truth of the doctrines which he taught, and, becoming a convert to the faith, blotted out his name from the consular annals, and wrote it down in the book of life.



ELYMAS STRUCK WITH BLINDNESS.



The vengeance of God, as displayed in closing the bodily eyes of him who had so maliciously shut the eyes of his mind against the light of the gospel, and endeavoured to keep all others, over whom he had any control, in ignorance and darkness, is very remarkable. Satan, no doubt, had raised up this magician in a place so public as the court of a prince, that the disgrace of the servants of God might be the more open; but the King of kings converted this artifice of the evil spirit into his disgrace. For, not only did the heathen governor, who had previously been under the influence of Elymas, insist upon hearing and judging for himself, but he had the most convincing proof given to him, by the treatment of the sorcerer, that he had acted a discreet as well as an impartial part. This conversion of Sergius Paulus is a most valuable lesson, pointing out to every inquirer after truth, the importance of patience, decision, and candour.

Encouraged by his triumph at Paphos, and in the whole isle of Cyprus, he sailed for the coast of Asia Minor, and landing in Pamphylia, proceeded to the city of Perga, famous for its temple to Diana: there he took Titus as a companion, in place of Mark, who had returned to Jerusalem, and accompanied by him, he set out for Antioch, the capital of Pisidia, another of those cities built by Seleucus, in honour of his father Antiochus. Here they were at first very kindly received, and, entering the synagogue on the sabbath-day, they heard some sections of the law read, after which, at the request of the rulers, Paul rose and addressed the people to the following effect:—

“Hearken, all ye descendants of Jacob, and ye that fear the Almighty, to the words of my mouth. The God of Israel made choice of our fathers, and loved them when they had no city of their own to dwell in, but were strangers and slaves in Egypt, bringing

them from thence with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm; he fed them in the wilderness forty years; and would not suffer his anger to arise against them, though they often provoked him in the desert. On their arrival in the land he promised their fathers, he destroyed the nations that inhabited it, and placed them in that fruitful country, dividing it to them by lot.

“ When they were settled in the land, he gave them judges during four hundred and fifty years, till Samuel the prophet. But on their desiring a king, he placed over them Saul, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, who reigned about forty years. After his death, he placed David on the throne of Israel, giving him this testimony, *I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.* And according to this promise, the Almighty hath raised up to the sons of David, a Saviour, *which is Christ the Lord;*

the baptism of repentance having been preached before his coming by John ; and, as his forerunner executed his office he asked his followers, *Whom think ye that I am ?* You must not mistake me for the Messiah : he will soon follow me ; but I am not worthy to perform the meanest office for him.

“To you, therefore, the descendants of Abraham, and all others who fear the Almighty, *is the word of this salvation sent.* For the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and rulers of Israel, being ignorant of him, and the voices of the prophets, though read every sabbath in the synagogues, fulfilled their predictions by condemning the immaculate Son of the Most High. They found, indeed, no fault in him, though they earnestly desired Pilate that he might be slain.

“ When everything that had been written by the prophets concerning him had been fulfilled, they took him from the tree, and deposited his

body in the chambers of the grave. But death had no power to detain him : his Almighty Father raised him from the habitations of the dead. After which he was seen for many days by his disciples, who attended him from Galilee, and were the witnesses chosen by Omnipotence, of those great and miraculous works. And we now declare unto you glad tidings : namely, that the promise made by the Almighty to our forefathers, he hath performed to us, their children, by raising Jesus from the dead. The prophet David also said, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* He also foretold that he should return from the chambers of the dead, and no more be subject to corruption. *I will give him,* said he, *the sure mercies of David.* And again, *Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.* Now this prophecy must relate to the Messiah, for David himself, after he had swayed the sceptre of Israel a certain time, fell asleep, was

deposited in the chambers of the grave, and his flesh saw corruption: but the great Son of David, whom the Almighty raised from the dead, never saw corruption.

“ Be it, therefore, known unto you, men and brethren, that through this Saviour is preached unto you forgiveness of sins. It is by his merits we are justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. Be careful, therefore, lest what was foretold by the prophets come upon you. *Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish, for I work a work in your days, a work which you will in no wise believe though a man deliver it unto you.*”

Never was a discourse heard with greater attention, and wherever attention is paid, the best effects generally follow. The converted, or proselyte, Jews were so pleased with the language and reasoning of the apostle, that they requested he would deliver the same sermon again on the next sabbath, that their

friends might also have the benefit of hearing him. To this he cheerfully consented, and so great a multitude assembled on this occasion, that his popularity vexed the unconverted Jews. Unable to endure the sight of so many attentive listeners, for the whole city flocked to hear St. Paul, they began to contradict the apostle's doctrines, and to speak blasphemously of the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Paul was too bold, and too able a scholar and preacher, to be the least alarmed at the violence and improper conduct of these Jews, and he told them plainly, that his blessed Lord had commanded him to preach the gospel first to the Jews, but since they obstinately refused to receive it, and were so wicked as to blaspheme against the Redeemer, he would now preach to the Gentiles. This declaration was very welcome to the latter, who received, with grateful hearts, the truths which the Jews had rejected: and, rejoicing exceedingly, they glorified God, and

large numbers of them became converts to the truth which the apostle spoke.

Instead of suspecting that where so many were brought over to a religion, it was probable there was some truth in it, the Jews became still more angry against the apostles, and put all their wicked arts into practice, to injure and to obstruct them in their blessed labours. By falsehoods, and artful insinuations, they prevailed upon some ladies of rank, remarkable for their devout lives, but bigoted in favour of the Jewish law, to influence their husbands against the apostles. This stratagem was but too successful; the magistrates, allowing themselves to be persuaded that the apostles were tale-bearers, impostors, and not to be believed, ordered them to be immediately driven out of the city. Remembering what their Lord had commanded them, they shook off the dust from their feet, while they passed out of the city, a sa testimony and threatening against the unjust amongst the citizens.

Iconium, the capital of Lycaonia, was next the scene of the apostle's labours ; and notwithstanding the ill treatment he had experienced from the jealous Jews, in so many places, and the violence which they seemed disposed to use towards him every where, so great was his zeal, and so noble his courage, that, on entering the city, he proceeded directly to the synagogue. This determination checked the Jews : and his sermons, in the very temple of the Israelitish faith, were listened to with such respect, that many were converted, and believed in the gospel. Had Paul, like a coward, forsaken his Master, he would have been despised, and scoffed at, by both Jews and Gentiles ; and, in endeavouring to escape, would have been less able to defend himself, and have quickly fallen a victim to timidity. But his firmness, in entering the synagogue, where he was sure to meet with his bitterest enemies, excited even their admira-

tion, and, while it procured for him their attention, gave him the opportunity of making converts, and defending himself and his doctrines against the attacks of the most violent and bigoted amongst the Jews. True courage had its deserved reward ; for he was allowed to preach daily in the synagogues ; and the Lord helped his efforts so far, that very many of all classes were brought to a belief in the religion of Christ, before the envy of his enemies could collect a sufficient number of perverse Israelites to join in driving him from the city.

During his stay at Iconium, Paul not only preached publicly, but instructed converts, and confirmed them in the faith, by miracles. He had gained over one half of the inhabitants, but the rest were as obstinate as ever, and remained in their infidelity. When people do wrong, they often endeavour to divert attention from themselves, by commencing

some charge against others, who were totally innocent. This was a constant trick amongst the Jews, and so soon as they began to suspect that they were wrong, at first, in denying Christ, and wrong, afterwards, in rejecting the evidence of his apostles, they tried to throw all the blame of the religious differences that arose amongst the people, upon the holy messengers of the only true and sacred faith. Knowing Paul's resolute manner, and that fine bold demeanour which his upright heart gave him, they dared not attack him fairly; they therefore had recourse to plot; and having induced a number of the lower sort of people, whose disregard for character was the cause of their forlorn condition, to aid them, the Jewish enemies of Paul laid a plan for intercepting him outside the walls of the city, and there stoning him and Barnabas. The Almighty, however, did not forget the zeal of his faithful servants, who, having received private information of

the wicked design against their lives, withdrew secretly, and reached Lystra in safety.

This little place is not far from Iconium, and being less populous, and inhabited by less idle and luxurious people, the apostle found no difficulty in collecting them around him, and persuading them to consider the danger of despising the word of God, which he declared to them. It was here that Paul found, amongst the converts to Christianity, a poor man who had been so great a cripple from his birth, that he never had been able to walk. Paul, perceiving that he had faith to be healed, through the grace of God, wished to add the perfect cure of his bodily infirmities, to that of his soul, which he taught him how to save,—namely, by having faith in the Lord. He also thought that the desire to be instructed, which these people had shewn, was deserving of anything he could do to confirm them in the faith; and, on this account he decided

upon performing a miracle in Lystra. Accordingly, taking advantage of the moment when the cripple was in the midst of the congregation, and within view of every one, the apostle, standing in a conspicuous place, called out to him, in a loud tone of voice, "Stand upright on thy feet!" The effect was immediate, and the man who had been a cripple, and had never walked a single step, upon Paul's pronouncing those few words, became filled with strength, his limbs were straightened, and power of motion given to them, so that he not only walked, but leaped up, in presence of the people.

The spectators very sensibly concluded, that as so great a work of mercy and benevolence could never have been performed by an evil power, and so miraculous a work could not have been done by a mere human one, the author of it must be a God, and descended from heaven. These innocent people argued very rightly,

but their first principle, the nature of the God, was false, for they thought that Paul, from his command of language, and the ease and wisdom of his words, must have been Mercury, the god of eloquence ; and that Barnabas, from the gravity of his appearance, was no other than Jupiter ; both having assumed the human form, and come upon this earth, for the relief of the poor and infirm. Nothing could have shewn more clearly the deep impression which Paul's preaching produced upon the feelings of these ignorant people, than their ascribing to one of the holy men the sovereignty of the only heaven they were acquainted with, and to the other, the honour of being his ambassador and chief speaker. Nor was the fame of the apostles confined to the public belief: the very priests of the heathen temples were convinced that the gods had, at length, come to visit them ; and, soon after, a procession arrived before the dwelling of Paul and Barnabas, led by the

priests of Jupiter, and accompanied by oxen, decked with garlands, according to the rites of their idolatry, to be slain and offered in sacrifice to the supposed gods.

Scarcely had the procession halted, and its object been explained to the apostles, when, shocked at the idea of such folly and impiety, they rent their clothes, and, in an agony of grief, besought the people to remove from their sight those symbols of superstition. To shew their abhorrence of such a proceeding, they rushed into the highway, and raising their hands in token of disapproval cried out, “Ye men of Lystra, ye are mistaken in the object of your worship; for though we have done many miracles, in the name and by the power of Christ, yet we are no more than men, and subject to the same bodily infirmities with yourselves, and preach unto you the glad tidings of salvation, that ye may forsake the vanities of this world, and turn to the living

God, who created the heavens, and the earth, the sea, and all the creatures they contain. This Omnipotent Being suffered all nations formerly to walk in their own ways, though he never left himself without witness, doing the greatest good to the children of men: it is he that sendeth rain from heaven, and crowneth the year with fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with joy and gladness.”

I don't know any sermon, or lecture, consisting of so few words, yet so full of argument for the existence, goodness, and power of an Almighty Creator and Governor of the universe: I cannot, therefore, go on with the narrative of the apostle's travels, without giving my own commentary upon this blessed discourse, in hopes of inducing my congregation of little readers to reflect upon the serious facts which it contains. The people of Lystra, struck with the force of Paul's language, yet puzzled between their respect for Mercury, and

their confused idea of Paul's being an immoral god in the human form, although he expressed his disgust for all gods of stone and wood, thought it both proper and prudent to obey him, and accordingly, they desisted from the intended sacrifice. Now, with respect to Paul's beautiful discourse, what can be more convincing of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, than the prospect of the several parts of the creation that surrounds us everywhere? Who can cast his eyes over all created universal nature, and not adore that Almighty Author, who has placed every object, every living thing, in the most perfect order, and preserves each with the most precise regularity; whose wisdom is seen in the structure of the minutest particle of matter, as well as in the formation of the world itself?

Behold the sun! the source of light and heat: it is so placed in the centre of our

planetary system, that each of those worlds, like our own, that move around it, may enjoy a just share of advantages similar to those which we derive from its golden beams. Each planet, if I may judge from our own case, is neither scorched by a too near approach, nor chilled by rolling away too far from its warmth ; they have, most probably, like us, seasons of fruits and flowers, of heat to cherish them, of cold to brace them, of plenty to make them grateful, of scarcity to make them frugal. And all these changes are as regular over the immense sphere, which our system of sun and planets occupies, as if they were within the grasp of one powerful but inspired hand. And so they are within such a grasp, and the hand is that of an Omnipotent Being, who we say, has hands and eyes, because we have no other words to describe his all-seeing and all-powerful nature. He it is who “poises the balancings of the clouds, that divides a water-course for the over-

flowing of waters, and a way for the lightning of the thunder.” These great changes do not happen by chance, for those who are old, like me, see the same kinds of storms, and hail, and thunder, return at the same seasons, year after year ; they must, therefore, be governed by a Being infinitely wise. When we think upon the air we breathe, its extraordinary properties, its contributing to maintain our very life within us, and how impossible it is to live many minutes without it, we are again obliged to confess, that it was so made by Wisdom, and is still under the control of its Author.

From the storms and the air, let us turn to contemplate the earth, and see whether there be not sufficient proof there also of God’s wisdom, power, and benevolence. It is covered with a variety of animals ; some we think beautiful, others we very sinfully call ugly : they all appear to have some dependence on each other, all are inferior to men in form and

mind: and it is in consequence of this that man exercises a control over them all, and turns so many of them to his profit and support. But what could man do if God withheld from him the light and the heat of the sun, or the presence of air? This thought at once proves to him that, at every instant, he is at the mercy of his Maker. "It is he that clothes the grass with a delightful verdure, that crowns the year with his loving kindness, and causes the valleys to stand thick with corn. It is he that maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains, and herbs for the service of men. He it is who adorns the lilies of the field, that toil not, neither do they spin, with a glory that exceeds the pomp and grandeur of Solomon's court. He shut up the seas with doors," and said, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

It is the benevolent Almighty that lulls

the raging winds, and smoothes the troubled waves, that allows the trembling mariners to escape from the dangers of the deep, and that brings the ship at last safely into harbour. Was it not right and wise of Paul to direct the attention of those ignorant heathens to the different objects in heaven, on earth, in the water, all which proclaim, from the wonderful way in which they are made and governed, that they can only be the work of a God who is wise, powerful, and good. This was the most direct way in which he could show that there was a God in heaven, and, when once they were persuaded of this great truth, he felt convinced that they would no longer pay divine homage either to weak mortals, whose greatness arose from enslaving their fellow-creatures, or to dumb idols, formed by human hands. Paul's appeal, therefore, "to the works of the Almighty finger," by which all his creatures are surrounded, was the best argument against

idolatry that could have been applied to these miserable people.

Paul had now succeeded better than he could have expected when he was setting out on his travels ; for, as people cling to their first religion, to the worship they learn in childhood, his task of converting them to another, was one of great difficulty. His very success at Lystra added to his difficulties, because it enraged the priests of the temples, and also the obstinate portion of the Jews, who saw plainly that Paul's religion was the true faith, and that the apostle himself had his authority from the Lord. The more, therefore, he called upon all to repent and be forgiven, the more he caused them to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only name by which they could be saved, the deeper the hatred of his enemies took root in their hearts against him. But he did not expect to escape persecution ; he was always ready to risk his life in the service of

Him who gave it, and that merciful master had rescued him on previous occasions from the plots of the disappointed Jews.

News of Paul's reception at Lystra reaching Iconium and Antioch, the malicious leaders of the Jews in those places, who had attempted to stone the apostles, hastened to Lystra, and there renewing their false accounts of those holy men, endeavoured to exasperate the multitude against them as impostors and disturbers. It is a melancholy reflection that mankind sometimes, too often indeed, exhibit the most contemptible want of steadiness, the most lamentable degree of ingratitude: in fact, that they are led away in many cases by him whom they have last heard. Malice is always artful, and the Jews from Antioch and Iconium, knowing the fickleness of the multitude, took advantage of it, and turned them against their benefactors, Paul and Barnabas. In a moment of time these worthless people forgot the

miracles performed in their presence and for benevolent purposes, shut their eyes against the proofs of God's power in heaven and on earth, to which Paul bid them look ; and the very people who had a little before desired to offer sacrifices to the apostles, were now base enough to seek their lives.

Seizing Paul, they dragged him through the city to the suburbs without the walls, the usual scene of those cruel murders which the heathens so remorselessly committed, and being stoned to death, as is supposed, left his mangled body in the highway. The Christian converts very probably endeavoured to save him, but were too late ; and when they came to the place where he lay, for the purpose of carrying him to the grave, he was miraculously restored to life, and rising up, joined them, and returned with them into the city, whole, and as if he had not sustained any injury, or received any violent blows.

Having shown himself in Lystra to his friends and his enemies, the next day he went to Derbe, accompanied by Barnabas, where he again declared the name of the Lord, and made many more converts to the truths of the gospel. Barnabas never deserted his friend in any of his troubles, but faithfully shared in them all, and in this way they proceeded, without the least fear of rudeness, or even of death, to teach all people the glad tidings of salvation. They did not stay long at Derbe, but returned again through Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, to Pisidia, confirming the Christians in those places, and exhorting them to remain true to the faith they had embraced : telling them to take example by them of zeal for the honour of God, and not to be deterred from seeking him by the unholiness of those who could certainly destroy the body, but could not reach the soul. With how much more justice can we ask people to undertake a difficult journey, when we

ourselves show them the way ! What stronger excitement can we desire than the example of some great and good man ; and, are we not ashamed to refuse doing what we see the noblest of mankind performing before us ! Paul's advice, therefore, was received as coming from the Lord—he did not insist upon their obeying orders which he himself did not obey.

Besides those beautiful lessons which he delivered at each place, he now also ordained elders and ministers, to instruct, and to watch over the churches, that is, the congregations he had formed in his journey ; he gave rules and regulations for the government of both pastors and people ; after which Paul and Barnabas left them to the protection of Almighty God, and with prayer and fasting commended them to his holy and merciful care.

From Antioch they travelled through Pisidia as far as Pamphylia, and stopping for a while at Perga, they preached the gospel to

the people of that place with good results, after which both set out for Attalia. This little place, called after King Attalia, its founder, but now named Sattalia, has a very excellent harbour, and many ships visit it; Paul, therefore, knew he could hence get an early passage to Antioch, in Syria, with which place Attalia carried on an active trade.

Thus ended Paul's *first apostolic journey*, and, having returned to Antioch, the place from which he at first set out, he called the Christian population together, and told them of his success, of his workings and labours in the ministry, and besought of them to observe what a door he had opened, that is, what a good beginning he had made, for the entrance of the Gentiles into the church of Christ. It was while Paul was staying at Antioch, that the famous controversy arose about the necessity of observing all the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law, now that the Christian dispen-

sation had been taught and established. This question was raised by a number of Jewish converts; and while the Gentiles thought themselves not bound to follow any dispensation but that of Christ, the Jews, who were converted, insisted upon the propriety of retaining all their old customs. This dispute caused a very serious disturbance at Antioch, and it was thought prudent to send Paul and Barnabas down to Jerusalem, to consult with the apostles who then lived there, as to the settlement of the dispute, because both parties had confidence in their knowledge, authority, and experience.

Arriving at the holy city, they waited on Peter, James and John, who were called the "pillars of the church," by whom they were very kindly received, and treated with hospitality. An explanation now took place between these holy men, in which Paul showed, very plainly, that he had been appointed by the Almighty to preach the gospel to the Gentiles,

or to those who never had been subject to the old law, while Peter had been especially called to teach the Jewish people ; it was agreed that this arrangement should ever after be followed. Having settled these points between themselves, previously, they called a general council, before which Peter delivered his opinion ; and, when he had ended, Paul and Barnabas arose, and told them what wonderful things they had done, during their ministry in Asia Minor, amongst the Gentiles. From Paul's account of his travels, it was evident, that God was pleased to have his gospel preached to those who were ignorant of the law, as well as to those who had been brought up under all its legal rites and privileges. No one, therefore, could any longer doubt the justice of the Almighty, nor the firmness of his laws for all his creatures who obey his holy word. The Gentiles were accordingly excused from obedience to the obligation of the law of Moses,

and the council of Jerusalem also desired that certain persons of their church should accompany Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, and confirm the statement, or clause, which they had heard, releasing Gentiles from Jewish laws. This was a very wise and liberal clause, for how can we believe any religion to be true or benevolent, which tells us, that the observance of forms, invented by men, is absolutely necessary to salvation. The religion of Christ is free from all such narrow views, and bigotry and uncharitableness do not belong to it.

CHAPTER III.

ST. PAUL'S SECOND JOURNEY.

HAVING obtained a decree in their favour, Paul and Barnabas returned cheerfully to Antioch, and delivered it, in the very words in which they had received it, to the assembly; and they were not long returned when Peter also arrived. After the decree had been publicly read and agreed to, the converts no longer refused to speak freely, and in a friendly manner, with the Gentiles, until some Jews coming from Jerusalem, entered the place, and brought their bigotry in along with them. Peter, perceiving these people to look very severely on him, immediately broke off conversation with the Gentiles, as if suddenly struck with the conviction, that he had acted improperly and contrary to the law. This timidity and changeableness in so great a man, very naturally surprised many people, and made them

uneasy in their minds, because, if the holy apostle, the companion of our Lord, was uncertain whether he should hold connection with the Gentiles or not, how could poor weak mortals, who never saw the light of the Saviour's countenance, or heard the words of life from his lips, know what was right to do. This was not the first time that Peter had denied what he had promised to remember, and Paul became so angry with him, for agreeing to the decree at Jerusalem, and being afraid to observe it at Antioch, that he rebuked him with much severity of language.

This is a very instructive picture—two of the most holy men that ever lived, one hesitating about keeping his word, the other so far forgetting himself as to use bitter, and reproachful language, to his brother. The example ought never to be forgotten, for, by remarking that such men could err, whenever they allowed their evil passions to govern

them for an instant only, we shall be more likely to keep a constant guard upon our own words and thoughts. Peter from his youth was forward to undertake anything, but wavering in performing it ; Paul, both before and after his conversion, showed all the marks of a bold, firm, and resolute character ;—when those fine qualities were properly directed, he became a zealous preacher, and an useful minister ; and of all men that we read of in the scriptures, he was the last that would have denied what he said, or would have sanctioned denial in others.

The dispute, however, between Paul and Peter, was soon reconciled, the love of God reigned in their hearts ; one repented that he had been doubtful, the other that he had been presumptuous. After these arrangements, Paul and Barnabas thought of going to visit the churches, or rather the converts, they had placed amongst the Gentiles, to confirm them

in the faith, explain any questions they might have to propose, and add to their numbers by preaching as they went. Barnabas wished to take Mark, his nephew, with them, but Paul positively refused to permit it : he reminded him of Mark's having left them on their former journey, and, as he had no reason to suppose that he might not desert them a second time, he would not allow him to form one of the party. The honest determination of Paul was not to be shaken by anything his friend could say, so that Barnabas, taking Mark along with him, set sail for Cyprus, his native country ; while Paul, selecting Silas for a fellow traveller, set out on his *second apostolic* journey, having prayed earnestly that God might favour his new undertaking.

Passing through Syria and Cilicia, the apostle confirmed all the churches as he went along, and, to satisfy their minds on the points lately disputed, about the necessity for still

observing the law of Moses, he gave to each church a copy of the decree, that had been passed by the council at Jerusalem. From some port in Cilicia he now sailed to the island of Crete, where he preached the gospel openly, and persuaded many of the people to embrace the religion of Christ Jesus ; and he had converted so many here, that it was necessary to place a minister over them. For this purpose he chose Titus, and ordained him the first bishop and pastor of the island ; and, to him also he left the duty of regulating the offices of the new church, the shortness of his stay there not enabling him to see all things settled himself. Taking an affectionate farewell of the converts in Crete, Paul and Silas re-embarked, and returned to Cilicia.

Landing in the scene of his former labours, Paul proceeded without delay to Lystra, where he first met that excellent man Timothy. His father was a Greek, but his mother a

Jewish convert, and by her he was brought up in a knowledge of the holy scriptures, which she had induced him to study with the greatest diligence. This account is not intended to cast reflections upon his father, for not having attended to his son's education, but leaving it solely to his mother, for, I have always found, in the history of the modern world, that children owe all their true scriptural information, and all that learning on which they build, when grown up to man's or woman's years, to the care which their mothers bestow upon them. My mother, when she tried to make me attentive to my scripture history, used to place Dr. Doddridge's Family Expositor on the table, and, pointing to the frontispiece, say, "There, there, Peter, see how little Doddridge is learning the history of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, from the pictures on the chimney tiles to which his mother is pointing." It was to the affectionate care of

a tender mother that the pious St. Ambrose of Milan owed the first rudiments of that education, which afterwards ripened into the most extensive knowledge of the scriptures.

Being well acquainted with human life, as well as the doctrines which belonged to a life to come, Paul knew that one so piously reared would be a suitable companion on his travels, and admirably adapted to be a special instrument for spreading the truths of the gospel, for sowing the word of God, like seed in spring, in the country they were about to pass over. Being a Gentile, however, he thought that he might be less acceptable even to those of his own class, because some little bigotry lurks in people's hearts, which they deny through shame; he desired him therefore to go and submit himself to the rites of the Mosaic law, and then, being prepared in every way, to come and join him on his journey. Timothy readily obeyed the apostle, and every-

thing being ready, they went out on their mission to Jews and Gentiles.

Setting out from Lystra, the little company of saints passed through Bythinia and Galatia; in both these countries they were received with the greatest respect, their sermons were heard with attention, and Paul's eloquent language, and holy precepts, so astonished and convinced the people, that they thought he must certainly have been an angel sent from heaven, for their instruction in the way of life. As he was proceeding towards proconsular Asia, the Holy Spirit descended, and forbid him to advance, turning his steps, also, towards Mysia, and thence to Troas. Here it was that a vision, representing a man of Macedonia in dress and form, appeared to him, and besought him to come and relieve his countrymen from their darkness, by preaching the gospel amongst them. At this remarkable moment, and while Paul was reflecting upon

the two separate appearances of the Holy Ghost to him, St. Luke arrived, and, joining the party, never afterwards forsook the great apostle.

Telling his companions, Timothy, Silas, and Luke, to be ready for the voyage, Paul made the necessary preparations, and, embarking at Troas, sailed first to Samothracia, an island in the Ægean sea, off the coast of Thrace, where they only touched, and the next day landed at Neapolis, a sea-port town of Macedonia. But this place was too small for their great objects, and soon quitting it, they went to Philippi, so called from Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, the best town in that part of Macedonia, and also a Roman colony, where they remained some days, labouring to plant there the Christian faith.

Not far from the city, and on the river side, stood a proseucha, or oratory, frequented by devout Jewesses, to hear the law read, and to join the more fervently in prayer. To this

place Paul directed his steps, and, having delivered to them the glad tidings of salvation, through repentance, by the power of the Spirit of God, he succeeded in converting many whose hearts were believed to have been hardened. Amongst these was a Jewish proselyte, named Lydia, a seller of purple in that city, but a native of Thyatira. This woman submitted to the sacrament of baptism, and caused all her family to imitate her example ; and so fully was she impressed with the truth of Paul's preaching and doctrines, that she insisted upon his bringing his companions along with him, and lodging in her house, whilst they thought proper to remain at Philippi. Being a person much respected, and having abundance of riches, the apostle thought the cause of his blessed Master would be promoted, by the people seeing a woman of so much consequence as Lydia publicly embrace Christianity.

Encouraged by his success, Paul continued to visit the oratory on the river-side every day, and to call on the people, who surrounded him, to hear the words of eternal life. Why he did not enter the synagogue here, I cannot say ; but it is not improbable that the richer and more bigoted Jews would not permit him. However, the proseucha was just as much a place of worship amongst the Israelites as any other. They had three different kinds of places of worship :—first, the temple, like our cathedral, where sacrifices were offered, and oblations presented, and where all males were bound to offer three times in every year ; secondly, their synagogues, like our parish churches, where the scriptures were read and expounded, and the people were taught their moral duty ; thirdly, the proseucha or oratory, like our chapel of ease, where worshippers came solemnly, and humbly, to offer up their prayers to heaven. Paul therefore was content with

the oratory on this occasion, its sanctity being equal to that of the temple or synagogue.

One day, as the apostle and his companions were proceeding to the river-side, they were met by a young woman who possessed the power of foretelling future events, and, by which extraordinary gift, her employers gained a handsome sum of money. Following Paul, she called out aloud, "*These men are the servants of the Most High God, which shew unto us the way of salvation!*" shewing how easily Heaven can extort evidence of its truth, even from the lips of Satan. At first Paul took no notice of the maid, not wishing perhaps to multiply miracles without necessity ; but when he found that she continued to follow him, day after day, he felt very uneasy, and thought that he should at last interfere, to put an end to her appeals. In humble imitation, therefore, of his blessed Master, he was unwilling to permit the evil one to acknowledge him, lest

his false tongue should injure the truth in the minds of men, and therefore, rejecting the testimony of the maid to his heavenly mission, he commanded the evil spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her. Subdued by the inspired words of Paul, the demon quitted her, and she was restored to presence of mind from that moment.

But Satan is never tired in his attempts to mislead the mind, and to corrupt the hearts of God's creatures : and he is more particularly busy at all times in seeking vengeance for disappointment. It is through his wicked influence over those that he can persuade to obey him, that so many revengeful dispositions arise, for, revenge belongs peculiarly to Satan, forgiveness to the Father which is in heaven. Enraged at the loss sustained by the cure of the damsel, Satan resolved to be revenged of the holy men who had shown the effects of God's power in the hands of his saints.

Urging the employers of the maid, who had lost a large income by the miracle, to accuse Paul and his companions of introducing religious changes that would be injurious to the state, and unlawful for them, being Romans, to comply with, they seized the apostle and dragged him, with his brethren, before the magistrates and governor of the colony. Desirous to procure tranquillity on any terms, the magistrates admitted the evidence against the apostles, and passed the sentence upon them to which all disturbers of the public peace were liable by the Roman law. This was, that they should be stripped, beaten with rods, and, in that condition, thrown into prison. Strict orders also being given to the jailor to look well to his prisoners, he pushed them into an inner dungeon, and to render escape impossible, placed their feet in stocks. This precaution was useless, and imprisonment in this case, as well as in others that may happen

even to-day, may be in vain : for a good man can turn a prison cell into a holy chapel, and “ a den of thieves,” into “ a house of prayer.” Nor can the dimness of a dungeon, or the mantle of night, interrupt the rays of divine joy and precious comfort from the souls of pious men. The tyrant, the jailor, may bind my feet to earth, but still my heart may mount up to heaven.

So calm and resigned were these holy men, that in the still hour of midnight, they raised their voices, prayed aloud, and sang praises to God in strains so lofty, that they were heard in every part of the prison. Scarcely had they stopped, when an earthquake shook the whole building to its foundation, the prisoners' chains fell off, and the prison doors flew open. It was evident, therefore, that their prayers and hymns had reached the throne of heaven, and that the arm of the Almighty had been stretched forth to free them from imprisonment and death.

The dreadful crash and breaking of bars awoke the jailor, who at once supposing that the prisoners must have escaped, and therefore that the magistrates would punish him severely, proposed to kill himself. But St. Paul perceiving his rash intention, and his great despair, called out to him not to destroy himself, for that all his prisoners were still secure within the walls. Before amazed at the violent shock which burst the prison doors and left the captives at liberty, he was now more surprised at the calmness and humanity of the apostle, who had actually prevented him from laying violent hands on himself. As soon as he had recovered from the effects of terror, he called for a light, and entering the cell where the apostles lay, threw himself at their feet, and implored their forgiveness. Not content with this confession, he took them away to his own house, gave them food, washed their stripes, applied balm to their wounds, and

begged that they would condescend to instruct him in the knowledge of that God who was so mighty to save.

To all his entreaties for pardon and instruction, Paul replied by assuring him, that there was no other way of salvation for him or his family, about which he expressed great anxiety, than by embracing with all his heart the faith of Christ. This the jailer, without any hesitation, believed ; and the happy change which Christianity produces in the minds of men, its effect in smoothing the roughest tempers, and instilling the sweetest principles of kindness and good nature into the most stern hearts, were visible in the converted jailer. He, who a little before had shown to these injured men the most merciless usage, having drank of the cup of holiness, felt the influence of its mild quality, and everything that charity or humanity could suggest, he endeavoured to do for the captives. Seeing that he was sincerely

convinced that, Jesus was the Son of God, and that Paul was his minister, the apostle administered the sacrament of baptism to him and his family ; and caused his companion to instruct them in the doctrines of the gospel, that they might become worthy of the blessing conferred upon them.

Early in the morning, the magistrates, either having heard of what had happened in the prison, or reflecting upon the very harsh and unjust treatment given to the Christian Apostles, sent their serjeant privately to the jailer, desiring him to release them. The jailer joyfully brought them the intelligence, and told them to depart in peace. Paul, however, refused to accept his liberty, resolved to make the magistrates sensible of the injuries they had done him and his friends, and to shew how unjustly he and they had been punished, not having had any trial or examination. He sent back word, that, as they thought proper to

scourge and to bind Roman citizens, contrary to the laws of the empire, and had sent them to prison, they must come themselves and take them out again.

The Roman government were very particular, and jealous, about the lives and liberties of their subjects, but especially of those who were free citizens : any insult offered to them being looked upon as an affront to the majesty of the whole Roman people. A Roman citizen should not be beaten at all : but to scourge and imprison him without any trial, was not only contrary to Roman law, but to the law of all nations. If this injury were done in public, that only made the error of the magistrate more flagrant, and called for a more humble apology, or greater repentance ; St. Paul was a Roman citizen, being born in a free city of the Roman empire, and understood, with exactness, the laws and privileges of Rome. Instead, therefore, of escaping out of prison, upon

intelligence that he and his friends might go away, he replied by reminding the magistrates of the danger of provoking the Roman power,—the error of beating citizens, uncondemned, and, the necessity of making amends. If, therefore, the magistrates desired that they should come out, let those who put them there, come and take them from the cell. This excellent advice was at once taken by the terrified magistrates, who came immediately to the prison, apologised humbly for their inhumanity and injustice, and submissively entreated the apostles to depart from that city.

The situation of Paul was now completely altered—from his being their prisoner, the magistrates were completely at his mercy ; but he disdained to take advantage of their fault, or even as the Israelite, “ return evil for evil ;” no, he gave good for evil, and forgave his persecutors. The humiliation of the magistrates he received as ample recompense ; he knew

that their own consciences would punish them sufficiently, and, when they had concluded their apology, the meek followers of the Lord Jesus again resumed their liberty. The first friend they visited after their liberation was Lydia, their kind hostess ; at her house they were met by a number of the brethren, anxious to welcome them back to freedom ; and there they related all the circumstances of their confinement and deliverance. The labours of the apostles at this place, laid the foundation of a new church, which fact may be gathered from a perusal of Paul's epistle to the Philippians.

Departing from Philippi, the holy company went first to Amphipolis, thence through Apollonia to Thessalonica, the capital of Macedonia, a journey of about one hundred and twenty miles. This city, now called Salonica, was very populous, and carried on a considerable commercial traffic with the cities of Asia Minor. Immediately after their arrival, Paul,

according to his usual custom, proceeded to the Jewish synagogue, and there, during three successive sabbaths, continued to reason with the teachers. Not the least discouraged by the cruelty and ingratitude he had experienced on his journey, he disputed with all his earnestness, and eloquence, upon the fulfilment of the prophecies in the Old Testament that relate to our Saviour ; proving, from the clearest evidence, that the Messiah had come, had suffered, and was risen again, and that the blessed Jesus was the promised Redeemer.

As the sun melts away wax, but hardens clay, so the sublime reasoning of Paul, while it confirmed many religious proselytes, only hardened the hearts of the obstinate and unbelieving Jews. They denied that the Messiah had come on earth, and said that if he had, he could not have been the same with Jesus, merely because of our Lord's ignominious death. As long as they refused to be con-

verted, they could not well do otherwise than reject the charge of having crucified the Redeemer: but, the ignominy of his death was all their fault, for, "his judge could find no fault in him," so that whether he was the Messiah, or not, he was unmercifully put to death.

During their visit to Thessalonica, the apostles lodged in the house of a Christian, named Jason, a kind-hearted person, who entertained them with remarkable cheerfulness. There they would have rested happily from their daily labours, and, by means of that rest, been able to have taught still longer in this large city, if the jealousy of the Jews had not interrupted them. The perverse portion of this obstinate people not only refused to receive the words of the gospel themselves, but resolved to prevent their fellow-citizens from hearing them; and, for this purpose, surrounding the house of Jason, they called out for Paul, and demanded that he should be

given up to the enraged multitude. This multitude, however, were not the respectable citizens of Thessalonica, but the very lowest and most debased wretches to be found about the city; creatures who were hired by the Jews for the purpose of insulting the apostles, and driving them entirely out of the city. In this wicked scheme, however, they were completely disappointed, for Paul and Silas having heard of the plot, laid for their expulsion, and even for something more cruel, withdrew from Jason's house before the Jews arrived, and concealed themselves in that of some unsuspected friend. Nothing could exceed their rage on finding that their victims had escaped. Since the prey they were hunting for could not be taken, and that the apostles of the blessed Jesus were extricated by a careful providence from their vengeance, they resolved on punishing him who was the supposed means of their preservation. Accord-

ingly, they seized on the innocent Jason, and on several of his Christian friends, whom they suspected of having helped Paul and Silas to conceal themselves, and dragged them before the magistrates. There they declared, that Jason was an enemy to Cæsar, that he had contributed to disturb the peace of society, and to impede the prosperity of the Roman empire. The charge of setting up Jesus as a king, to the prejudice of Cæsar, puzzled the magistrates, and terrified them also, because if true, it was what we call treason. Nor indeed could many of the people, who respected Jason for his virtuous and charitable conduct, clearly understand the point, so blinded were they also by fear of the Romans. They forgot, in their terror, Paul's instructions, that the kingdom of Christ was not temporal, or of this world, but heavenly, and therefore perfectly consistent with Cæsar's authority, and with all other kings' authority over their sub-

jects. Not being allowed to explain to his bigoted judges, the true nature of the kingdom of Christ, Jason was convicted of sheltering in his house, public disturbers of the peace, and before he could obtain his dismissal, was required to give bail for his appearance again, whenever the perverse Jews should think proper to renew the suit against him.

During the examination of Jason, and of the Christians who befriended the apostles, the holy persons themselves remained concealed so secretly, that the vigilance of the Jews failed to discover them: and, when night came on, a number of converts, whose faith was growing stronger every hour, contrived to convey them safely out of the city, and put them in the road to Berea, a city about fifty miles distant. Here again Paul entered the synagogue of the Jews, without the smallest fear of any thing that malice could occasion, and had the happiness to find the Bereans a

much more liberal, candid, and charitable people, than those he had met with in Thessalonica. Although Paul appears to have been a very determined, upright, honourable man, and fully aware that his mission was to the Gentiles, while Peter's was more particularly to the Jews, yet he had too good a heart, too generous a disposition, either to forget that he had been himself a Jew in the strictest sense, or to neglect any opportunity of calling out to his old companions, that they were on a wrong path to life and immortality. On the contrary, although they treated him in the most spiteful and cruel manner, his love for his countrymen overcame his anger, and whatever town he entered he first went to the synagogue, and expounded the gospel to the Jews of the place, proving, from passages in the Old Testament, the truth of every precept which he delivered, as belonging to the religion of his Lord and Master. At Berea, his sermons were heard

with the greatest respect, and the people acted towards him with perfect fairness, for, returning to their homes at evening, they opened the scriptures, and examined very carefully how far Paul's proofs agreed with the sense in which they had always understood the prophetic passages. Nothing could be more fair, and this was the right way to deal with so solemn a subject; having satisfied themselves that the apostle spoke the true meaning, they now began to believe; and not only Jews but many Gentiles also, including several ladies of quality, became converts to the religion of the holy gospel.

Paul's inveterate enemies at Thessalonica, having heard of his great success at Berea, could not endure it; and, giving way to the malice of their dispositions, came all the way from their native city, to raise up adversaries to him here also. They succeeded so far in creating disturbance, that Paul thought it not

prudent to remain longer, and encounter their violence, lest his faithful followers might be ill-treated in protecting him ; so, to prevent such a misfortune, he secretly withdrew from the city. The whole weight of the Jewish malice being directed against Paul, because he was the most uncompromising assertor of the faith of Jesus Christ, his companions were not apprehensive of insult ; Silas and Timothy therefore remained at Berea, while Paul set out for Athens.

When Paul quitted Berea, it was supposed that he intended to proceed to the sea-coast, and there, embarking for Asia, release himself from these continued persecutions by the Jews, and relieve his faithful friends from the hardships they endured by their attachment to him. But he had put his hand to the plough, and would not look back ; he had encountered the enemy, and would not yield ; he had embarked on a voyage of peril and

labour, for which he had been prepared, and would not now shrink from the terrors that appeared around him. He desired his guides to conduct him to Athens, after which they might return to Berea, and tell his fellow-labourers, Silas and Timothy, that he would anxiously expect their arrival there also, and hoped they would set out so soon as they should receive his letter.

Athens was, at that time, the most celebrated city in the world, surpassing all others in antiquities, refinement, and learning. Cicero, the great Roman orator, called it the fountain where civilisation, arts, learning, laws, and religion, were drawn by all the nations. All men of family, or fortune, visited Athens to complete their education; and, not to admire that famous city, was looked upon as a proof of bad taste, or want of judgment. Here it was that all those schools of philosophy were established, in which the learning of our

universities had its commencement. One sect of philosophers, calling themselves Epicureans, from Epicurus, their first master, were fond of an idle, jovial way of life ; to these men, therefore, the doctrine of the gospel, that says all shall be rewarded and punished, in another world, according to their conduct in this, was very disagreeable. To the Stoics, another sect, resembling, in some respect, the Pharisees, the Christian religion was not welcome, because it taught meekness, humility, modesty, and self-denial ; while those philosophers were puffed up with self-importance, and made wise men equal to God himself.

Such was the state of Athens when St. Paul arrived there, and these were the enemies he had now to engage. However, he gloried in the service of his blessed Master ; and, while the philosophers knew that their doctrines were all inventions, put forward either for profit, or to obtain the admiration of men on account of

their invention, the apostle knew that his doctrines were the will of the great Creator of the universe. Waiting patiently for the arrival of Timothy and Silas, he visited the beautiful buildings of this fine city, and examined into the extent, and nature, of the idolatry, which prevailed amongst its inhabitants. The people had a number of gods, whom they seemed to reverence, and in general there appeared to be much correctness of demeanour amongst them. They were devout and religious ; but their altars were erected to false gods, and their apparent moral conduct, being derived from that pride which the philosophers had taught them, any man of talents or learning might adopt. Wandering amongst the temples, St. Paul's attention was attracted by one altar particularly, inscribed with the words, " TO THE UNKNOWN GOD," which he thought was a most exact description of the religious darkness of the Athenians. Nor could the persons who caused

the sentence to be inscribed, explain its meaning? Some thought it was a name given by the pagans, to the God of the Israelites ; but others, that it was a general epithet, including all the heathen deities of Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Seeing that Athens, the nursery of philosophy and learning, was miserably overrun with idolatry, as a neglected garden is with the most noxious weeds, he resolved on attempting to bring it into cultivation; and, commencing with the Jewish part of the citizens, he disputed with them in the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, with all his strength and energy. On other days he preached the doctrine of repentance to the Gentiles, and explained to them the meaning of the atonement for the sins of men, which was to be made by the Messiah. These doctrines were quite new at Athens; but the people, being civilised by education, heard them calmly and patiently.

They did not persecute the preacher as the perverse Jews did elsewhere; they merely thought, that what Paul said was very strange; or, as the Stoics and Epicureans told them, that it was all fabulous. There were some of a reflecting turn of mind, who did not doubt Paul's preaching, but imagined that he only told them of some new god, of whom they had not heard before, and whose statue, probably, ought to be erected in their temples; but this could not be done without the authority of their rulers.

To ascertain this point, and to have the doctrines of Paul fully explained, he was invited to come before the Areopagus, the supreme court of Athens, which always decided what gods were to be worshipped in the temples, and there give an account of those doctrines, which he taught with so much confidence in their truth. Assenting readily to the request, the apostle appeared in presence of this assem-

bly of wise and learned men, and, in a grave and sublime speech, laid before them the principal truths of the Christian religion, and, at the same time, proved his own fitness for the sacred ministry, to which he had been called by the Son of God. Having been treated honourably and generously by the Athenians, it would not have been becoming on his part, to have called them, as he did the obstinate bigots in other places, "gross and stupid idolators:" such language would not have suited so learned an assembly, and would have prevented him from being heard to the end of his discourse. On the contrary, he praised the people of Athens, for the feeling of religion which he perceived amongst them, and, after the example of his divine Lord, taking advantage of every passing occurrence, he alluded to the altar inscribed, "To the unknown God," in defending the truth of his own religion. "I endeavour," said the

apostle, “only to explain that altar to you, and manifest the nature of that God whom ye ignorantly worship. The true God is he that made the world, and all things therein, and who, being Lord over all, dwells not in temples made with hands, nor is to be worshipped in lifeless idols. As he is the author of all things, he cannot be confined to the workmanship of men, whether temples or statues, nor stand in need of sacrifices, since he is the fountain of life to all things. He made, from one common original, the whole race of mankind, and hath wisely determined their dependence on him, that they might be obliged to seek after him and find him,—a truth perceivable in the darkest state of ignorance, and acknowledged by one of your own poets. If this be the nature of God, it is surely the highest absurdity to represent him by an image or similitude. The divine patience hath been too much exercised already with such

gross abuses in religion ; but now God expects a thorough reformation, having sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to make himself known to the world, and, at the same time, to inform them that he hath appointed a day of general judgment, when the religion of man will be tried by the gospel, before his only-begotten Son, who is appointed sole Judge of the quick and dead, and whose commission to that high office hath been ratified by the Almighty, in raising him from the dead.”

Before the delivery of this very able discourse, the philosophers had spoken with scorn and derision of St. Paul, asking what business that idle prating fellow had at Athens, or with learned men : and, even after its delivery, the Epicureans continued to mock him. They could not, however, do otherwise, without acknowledging their own folly, because they always laughed at the idea of a future state, so that, if the doctrine of the re-

surrection was believed by the Athenians, their system of philosophy was overturned completely. The Stoics, and other grave persons, however, thought very differently of what Paul had said about repentance, the fulfilment of the prophecies in the Old Testament, by the coming of the Messiah, and the resurrection of the dead at the last day ; and they very candidly told Paul, that they should like to hear him discourse of these subjects again. Some persons of the highest rank, and greatest learning, in this venerable assembly, were much affected at what they had heard, and informed the apostle of their conversion to Christianity, and their belief that he had spoken the truth.

Amongst the senators of the Areopagus, who sat in judgment upon Paul's doctrines, was Dionysius, a man of much learning, and very well acquainted with all those principles of art that have made Athens so famous, down

to the present time. Having travelled into Egypt at the age of five-and-twenty, to perfect himself in the study of astrology, for which that nation was then very celebrated, he there witnessed the miraculous eclipse that happened at the period of our Saviour's passion, from which he concluded that some great event was about to occur in the world. On his return to his native city, he was admitted to be a senator of the Areopagus, and, having disputed with St. Paul, upon the precepts of the gospel, he was convinced by him of the folly of idolatry, and of the wisdom and truth of the religion of Christ. His good education enabling him to learn and understand quickly what the apostle taught him, he was soon qualified to become himself a teacher, and was chosen the first bishop of Athens, by his holy preceptor. It is said—but I don't think it is satisfactorily proved—that the French now venerate him, under the name of St.

Denis, believing that this Dionysius was the first bishop of Paris.

Another convert, made by St. Paul's discourse before the senate of Athens, was Damaris, a lady of high rank, and who is supposed, by very careful writers on the scriptures, men who seek after truth only, to have been the wife of Dionysius. Paul, therefore, succeeded, where some of the other apostles might have failed, for, the Athenians would not have been disposed to grant so solemn an audience to any one, who had not shewn himself acquainted with their systems of philosophy, and, therefore, capable of shewing the folly on which some of them were built.

CHAPTER IV.

PAUL PREACHES AT CORINTH.

HAVING laboured to explain to the learned and polite people of Athens, the true religion of that God to whom they had erected an altar, but of whose nature they were in total ignorance, Paul now thought of visiting Corinth. But just as he was purposing to set out, Timothy arrived from Macedonia, whither he had been sent, to inquire into the state of the Christian church in that country. The news he brought was very melancholy; he said that, from the day of Paul's departure to that of his own, the Christians in Thessalonica had been persecuted by the unbelieving Jews, with the same malice and cruelty which Paul himself had found when he was amongst them. At first, Paul, overcome with sorrow at such an account, was inclined to go at once, to relieve

and comfort them ; but the enemies of the gospel persecuted him so bitterly, that he could only send Timothy to them. He desired him to remind them of what they had first been told, that persecution and enmity would certainly attend their conversion to Christianity, but that, “blessed are they who are reviled for Jesus Christ’s sake.”

Having prayed for the success of Timothy’s mission to his poor oppressed brethren at Thessalonica, Paul left Athens, and took the road to the city of Corinth. This flourishing sea-port stood upon a narrow isthmus, between the gulphs of Corinth and Ægina, which joined the Peloponesus, or Morea, to the Grecian continent. It had two harbours, Lecheum, and Cenchrea, at one of which it carried on a profitable trade with the chief cities of Europe, by means of the other, with those of Asia. In consequence of these national advantages, it soon became one of the most populous and

wealthy cities of all Greece. Part of these riches were usefully employed in raising splendid buildings, of which some ruins still remain, and one of the most beautiful of the five orders of architecture that we use in public buildings,—seldom, indeed, in our churches,—was invented here, and is called Corinthian. Another, and the greater part, of their treasures, however, was spent in much worse ways, such as in games held on the isthmus, to which all the idle and dissolute people of Greece crowded, as similar characters do to our race-courses and fairs ; and, in amusements and luxuries which were not creditable to any people, but particularly to a people whom God, in his mercy, had so highly favoured with worldly prosperity.

Besides the numbers drawn to Corinth, by its amusements and its great trade, the emperor Claudius issued an edict while Paul was there, expelling all Jews from Rome, and this

decree added to the already dense population of this city. Amongst the exiles who came hither, were Aquila and Priscilla his wife; being brought up to Paul's own trade, that of tent making, he formed a Christian friendship with them, and employed some of his leisure time along with them, at his old trade. Often on his travels, the apostle was in want of food, his friends being themselves deprived of their property and means of subsistence, by the enraged Jews; but, since ministers of God are not mercenary, so he was content with little, and now he endeavoured to save the new converts, from the burden of supporting himself and his companions, by working sometimes at the employment he had learned in his youth.

The boldness of Paul, in seeking to teach the doctrines of Christianity to the philosophers of Athens, should always be remembered as one of his very noblest performances, and his planting a church amongst the rich, proud,

and luxurious Corinthians, as one of his most useful. His success in these fine cities, in Corinth especially, is a remarkable proof of the mighty power of divine grace, by which he was made strong enough to endure so much suffering, and at last to triumph.

He pursued here the same system, and divided his time in the same accurate manner, as at Athens and other places, teaching and disputing in the synagogue on the sabbath days, and trying to convince the Jews that Jesus was the true Messiah, and that they need not look for another. Truth is disagreeable to those who have erred, and have not candour enough to acknowledge their fault, so that, the more clearly Paul showed the Jews that if Jesus were not the Messiah, the Old Testament would not be true, the more enraged they became. Paul's argument could not be disproved by reason; the Jews, therefore, were obliged to oppose him some other way, and the

first they hit upon was loud speaking, noise, insolent language, and blasphemy. Nothing can show more plainly that a cause is bad and weak, than its requiring to be supported by such sinful assistance as swearing. Whenever we are reduced so low in disputing that only an oath will induce people to believe what we say, we may be assured that we are wrong; and that we will please God by refraining from swearing, and be respected by our hearers by confessing that we were mistaken. Unfortunately, my opinion is not followed by as many as I sincerely wish would adopt it;—and the obstinate Jews, at Corinth, had recourse to the scandalous refuge of oaths and revilings, to prevent the voice of the apostle from being heard by the congregation. Unable to obtain a fair hearing, he solemnly warned them of the consequence of their malice, and told them that the sin of preventing the word of God from being heard, by their ignorant brethren,

would be upon the heads blasphemed and reviled. ¶
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 teaching the Gentiles.

He now chose the house of Justin, a religious proselyte, to teach and discourse in, resolving to abandon the Jewish synagogues, and, by his preaching and miracles, he made numerous converts to the faith. But no conversion was more painful to the Jews, or more gratifying to Paul, than that of Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, who received the gospel in faith and love, along with Gaius and Stephanus. These persons, with their families, submitting to public baptism, were admitted members of the church of Christ.

The strongest body must grow weak from

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first ~~then~~ labour: the soundest understanding, insol~~ve~~ be deranged by too much application, and the most patient temper may be exhausted by being too much tried. From all these causes, Paul, the holy servant of the most holy master, might have sank down with fatigue, distress of mind, and disappointment, which no human nature could endure, had not our Lord "looked upon him." Knowing his agony, our blessed Redeemer communicated to Paul, in a vision, that, although he had not hitherto been very fortunate in making converts, he should yet gather a great harvest therein;—that he need not despair, but, on the contrary, might preach confidently before his enemies, for that He himself would stand beside him and protect him.

Silas and Timothy returned to Corinth from Thessalonica, just after our Lord had appeared to Paul, and strengthened him, by the inspiration of divine grace, for continuing to convert

these effeminate and luxurious citizens. Having heard this account of the church of Christ which he had planted, Paul immediately afterwards wrote what is called "The First Epistle to the Thessalonians." The design of this affectionate address was to confirm them in the Christian faith, to advise perseverance as pleasing to the Almighty, to remind that he had told them how afflictions and persecution would ensue, at the same time that he taught them how Christ had been reviled and put to death ; and, lastly, to point out to them the chief duties of a Christian and religious life.

While Paul was occupied in writing to his faithful proselytes at Thessalonica, and calling on them never to forsake the name of Jesus, the malice of the Jews was spreading more widely through the city. Conspiring against the holy man, they brought him before Gallio the pro-consul of Achaia, of which Corinth was the capital, and there accused him of in-

roducing a new and strange mode of worship, contrary to that which either the Jewish law, or the Roman government, permitted. The apostle stood forward ready to plead his own cause, but the magistrate informed him, it would not be necessary. "Had these men," said he, "been guilty of any violation of the laws by which peace is secured in society, by which what is right and wrong amongst mankind is determined, then I should have been willing to examine into the charge against them ; but since the controversy is purely of a religious nature, it is not a fit subject to be brought before a court of human laws, and I must therefore dismiss it." The Jews were greatly annoyed at this decision, and remaining in the court, expressed their feelings so clamorously, that Gallio directed the proper officers to drive them out of the hall. This defeat was the signal for a riot that was not expected ; several of the citizens, who had all along been

disgusted with the Jews who persecuted Paul, now went so far as to seize upon Sosthenes, a ruler of the Jewish consistory, whom they perceived in the crowd, and knew to have been a very busy person in promoting the disturbances, and beat him very severely in front of the hall of justice. Such an act would have either been checked, or punished, by Gallio under other circumstances, but he also seemed to despise the conduct of the Jews so heartily, that he did not interfere or concern himself the least in the business.

The success which had been promised to Paul, in the vision which he had seen at Corinth, now seemed to attend his labours ; the magistrates discountenanced the envious conspiracies of the Jews against his life, many converts were made almost daily, and amongst them were several whose names were afterwards much respected over Europe and Asia by all Christians. This triumph induced him

to prolong his stay ; and when he composed his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, which he did during his sojourn at Corinth, he had been upwards of a year and a half resident there. This second letter he felt he ought to write, because he had promised in his first that he would visit them in person, but now found that he could not do so, the business of his divine Master requiring his presence elsewhere. He, therefore, besides repeating his entreaties that they would remain constant to the faith, beseeching that they would not allow themselves to be shaken in their resolutions by the troubles which the perverse Jews would excite around them ;—a lost race of men whom the anger of the Almighty would yet overtake. In his first letter he had also spoken of this destruction of the Jewish power and people, but his meaning had not been correctly understood, some persons supposing that the terrible day of the Lord was even then near ;

these mistakes he now took the opportunity of correcting, by showing what particular events must certainly precede our blessed Lord's coming to judge the world.

Feeling that he ought to be about his Master's business, the apostle, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, went to Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, in order to take his passage on board a ship, then about to sail for Syria. When the three friends reached Cenchrea, one of them, either Paul or Aquila, shaved his head; if it was Aquila, he must have done so in compliance with a Nazarite vow he had made some time previously, which time was now run out; but if the circumstance refers to St. Paul, he did so according to a Jewish custom: and, as the same custom required that the hair should be cut off at the door of the tabernacle, or that the person should repair thither as soon as convenient, this may be the reason of Paul's hastening to Jerusalem from Cen-

chrea. However, I don't insist upon your believing, that the vow was made by one of these holy men rather than by the other, because the most learned and pious writers declare that they cannot decide the point; besides, it is not of much consequence to us, although it would certainly be gratifying to know everything, exactly, that the inspired apostle did. The vessel in which he took his passage, having touched at Ephesus, a famous city of Asia Minor, the apostle landed there, and going into the Jewish synagogue, he preached with very great success to the citizens. They were so delighted with his piety and eloquent language, that they requested of him to remain longer with them, but having taken his passage for Syria, he told them that he could not stop at that time, but that he would visit them on his return. Besides having engaged a passage, which he would have forfeited by staying at Ephesus, Paul had resolved upon

being present at the approaching feast of the Passover in Jerusalem : he thought this would be a proper opportunity for preaching the gospel, from the great number of people that would flock thither on the occasion. Again, if he were the person whom the scriptures represent to have shaved his head at Cenchrea, then there is a still better and clearer explanation of his refusing to delay at Ephesus or any other place, while hastening to complete his vow at the door of the tabernacle at Jerusalem. The loss of his passage was a mere temporal, or worldly, consideration, the neglect of his vow a spiritual one,—and surely so faithful a minister as St. Paul could not doubt for a moment, which duty should be preferred. Sailing from Ephesus, Paul landed safely at Cæsarea in Judea, a very handsome and flourishing city, but now a heap of ruins ; he quitted this place immediately and hastened to Jerusalem, to be in time for the celebration

of the Passover. Here he met many of his Christian brethren, with whom, however, he did not tarry long after the conclusion of the festival, but, departing, revisited Antioch. He here dwelt for some time, actively employed in teaching the truths of our holy religion ; and, when he thought his services were called for elsewhere, he obeyed the call, and set out on his mission. As he passed through the countries of Galatia and Phrygia, he laboured to convert the Gentiles, and he confirmed many converts to the doctrines of our Saviour ; and in this manner, that is, working incessantly, he at length arrived at Ephesus.

Paul had not forgotten the churches he founded at Corinth and Ephesus, whilst he was sowing the seed of Christ in other countries. There was a very clever Jew of Alexandria, named Apollos, who had received a good deal of instruction from Aquila and Priscilla, who had taken care of the churches

in Paul's absence. In Achaia, particularly, he shewed great zeal ; and his knowledge of the law and the prophets, as well as of the doctrine of repentance, preached by John the Baptist, surprised and convinced many hearers. This excellent man was in Greece when Paul returned to Ephesus, to make it his home for three years to come.

The apostle resolved upon keeping his promise to the people of Ephesus, by teaching them for a long time, and, with hopes of bringing them over to the side of Christ, brought with him, as assistants, Gaius of Derbe, Aristarchus, a native of Thessalonica, Timothy and Erastus, from Corinth, and Titus. The first thing he did, on commencing his ministry, was to send for twelve disciples who had been preaching in the city, and ask them whether they had received the miraculous gift and power of the Holy Ghost, since their conversion : to which they replied, that they

never had received any such gift, nor had they heard that such a miraculous spirit had, of late years, been bestowed upon the church. Surprised at their reply, he then inquired unto what they had been baptised, since it was not unto the name of the Holy Ghost. But they said they received nothing more than John's baptism. Perceiving their error, Paul explained to them, that, although John's baptism only spoke openly of repentance, it tacitly meant and included the faith of Christ and of the Holy Ghost. Grateful for the apostle's care of them, they all consented to accept of baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which he administered to them. After the ceremony the apostle, laying his hands on them, prayed fervently to heaven, upon which they all received the Holy Spirit, and were filled with the gift of tongues, and of prophecy, and of working miracles. The Jewish synagogue was

the first place Paul chose to preach in, and for upwards of three months he attended there continually, and disputed with those that were best acquainted with the law. Nothing could exceed his courage, and earnestness, in endeavouring to convince them, that the Christian religion was the fulfilment of the prophecies contained in their own Bible. For all this labour, he received only ingratitude; he met only with obstinacy: he saw, still, much want of holiness; and, becoming disgusted with the perverse Jews, who frequently disturbed his preaching, he took all his converts with him, and withdrew to the school-room of Tyrannus, a respectable teacher of general literature. There he continued to preach "Christ crucified" for two whole years; and, during so long a period, the Jews, of what is called pro-consular Asia, because it was governed by a Roman officer of that authority, had an opportunity of hearing the truths of

the gospel explained, by one who spoke under the effect of the Spirit of God.

Simple, or what we often call vulgar, minds, are always more forcibly convinced by anything presented to the sight, than to the inner faculties, such as discernment, or reflection. It saves them from the trouble of thinking, or reasoning. It is entirely beyond anything they could do themselves, so they conclude it must have been done by the great Author of the universe. God, who knows all things, acted towards such of his creatures as were incapable of judging otherwise, by miracles, or works which are not according to the usual course of nature, and which, therefore, the multitude, or common people, could not expect to see performed by any one who was not divinely authorised. To support Paul under his trying difficulties, the Almighty had given him the power of performing extraordinary miracles, some of which were of a very

singular nature; and indeed, there is no doubt, that many impostors, who have appeared in late years, and pretended to be possessed of power to work miracles, had these particular miracles, and this part of St. Paul's life in their thoughts, while they were sinning so wickedly.

I must not speak of Paul as a man of business, and say that his time and his talents were both devoted to the service of his Master, because he was not a common man, but a chosen minister of God; yet while he was at Ephesus, he seems to have laboured more than human power in general can, in administering to the diseased in mind and body, in relieving sorrow of every kind, and in promoting happiness amongst God's creatures by every means in his power; he must, undoubtedly, have sunk under the fatigues of his ministry, had not the Lord been with him, for it was under his protection only, that such strength could have

been exercised. Many now brought handkerchiefs, aprons, and any other part of the clothing of diseased persons, to the apostle, and besought him that he would only put his finger upon them. His doing so at once imparted to the object a miraculous power, and, when the halt, or blind, or maimed, received back their garment, they found themselves made whole ; and evil spirits vanished from those that were possessed by them. As the performance of miracles proved to the multitude the divine commission of Paul, numerous vagrant Jews, who either envied his fame, or disbelieved his power, pretended that they also possessed authority from unseen sources, and invited their followers to witness some of their miracles. But their attempts were so clumsy, that they were instantly detected, by which they lessened their own authority, and added, just in the same degree, to the credit of the apostle. There were some

amongst these rude magicians, these silly jugglers, whose consciences were sorely stricken by their own sinfulness, and, unable to endure the pain of guilt, they went to St. Paul, confessed their crime, and asked to be received into that church where the hopes of salvation are constantly shining. They proved their sincerity, by breaking their magic wands, and burning their books of mysteries.

A very wrong, and very mischievous, mode of reasoning, has attributed to Solomon a belief in the efficacy of magic arts, and some commentators assert that Solomon really had rules for practising it. People who come in for a heavy shower of rain, feel a secret pleasure in the idea, that others have had an equal share of it; so, those who have fallen into a great mistake, are consoled, in a measure, by having fellow-sufferers. Magicians and sorcerers, and other impostors, who saw plainly that they were detected, endeavoured

to shew that others, and wiser men than themselves, had also been deceived by false reliance on human powers only, and they try to bring in Solomon amongst the number. But he who prayed for wisdom to understand God's will, would be little likely to abuse the gift ; so that I shall not allow Solomon to be put in the same class with fools, and hypocrites, and sinners of the lowest kind.

I must not omit to tell you here, however, of the seven sons of Sceva, at Ephesus. These young men, descended from one of the chief families set apart for the priesthood, observing the effects produced by pronouncing the name of Christ, on persons possessed of devils, determined to try the experiment themselves, and actually conjured the evil spirits, in the name of that Jesus whom Paul preached, to depart from the afflicted. It was quite in vain for them to call, because the demon was too stubborn, and not only kept possession of the diseased, but

called out that he knew who Jesus and Paul were, but knew not what authority the sons of Sceva had to use that holy name. Nor did the evil one rest contented with rebuking them, but actually instigated the demoniac to fall upon them, tear their clothes, wound their bodies, and seize them so violently, that they with difficulty made their escape. When this story was publicly known, many became converts to the faith of Christ ; many also turned their backs upon magicians, and other common impostors ; and, it was the fame of this very circumstance, that terrified the sorcerers themselves, and induced them to throw their books, and their wands, into the flames.

It may appear to have been of little consequence whether those books were burnt, or thrown away ; but, this is not the case ; there are very strong reasons in favour of the one rather than the other mode of destroying them. So valuable were all such books of

fate considered, that those in Ephesus alone would have sold for fifteen hundred pounds; the laws of the Roman empire forbid the possession of all such magic writings on penalty of banishment, or death, so that the owners cherished them on account of the secret value they possessed. But, so perfect was the conversion of the impostors, that they would not sell their books privately, or throw them away for any one to find and put by; but, being convinced of their sinful character, would only rest satisfied with their complete destruction. Practical duties were not the only ones in which the apostle was engaged during the latter portion of his residence in Ephesus. He had heard there, that after his departure from Galatia, his church had formed very corrupt opinions as to the necessity for observing legal rites, and that many false teachers had made their way amongst the converts. These men, through

either ignorance or malice, began to undermine the doctrine Paul had taught the Galatians ; they abused the apostle personally, saying, that he was only a minister at second hand, and not worthy of being compared with Peter, James, and John, who had familiarly conversed with Christ, in the days of his flesh, that is in his life-time, and who had been deputed, immediately, by our blessed Lord to teach his gospel. To correct these false views it was that he now wrote his celebrated Epistle to the Galatians, which is contained in the New Testament. In this defence he reproveth the Galatian church, with proper and due severity, for being so easily led astray from the holy path, in which he had placed them to pursue the way of salvation ; and for suffering themselves to be so readily imposed upon by a set of knaves, who were evidently working for worldly fame and fortune. As to his own appointment to the

apostolate, he shows clearly that it is as honourable as that of any of our Lord's holy attendants; that he received his commission from Christ himself, that the Lord honoured him subsequently by further communications; that his power of working miracles through the influence of the Holy Spirit, was the gift of his divine Master, and, finally, that he ought not to be considered inferior to the very best of the immediate apostles of our Lord. Having vindicated his character, he next proceeded, in the same epistle, to refute several Judaical opinions, that had crept in amongst the doctrines which he had left in Galatia, and disfigured the purity of that church; and he concludes his beautiful letter by repeating to them what are the true rules, and necessary duties, of a holy life.

The last remarkable occurrence in which the apostle was concerned during his ministry at Ephesus, is so much connected with the

famous temple of Diana which once stood there, that I think it necessary to tell you something about that great and celebrated building. For costliness, extent, and beauty, this noble edifice has been styled one of the seven wonders of the world. It was four hundred and twenty feet in length, two hundred in breadth, and the roof was supported by one hundred and twenty-seven columns of Parian marble, seventy feet in height. Of these, which were the gifts of so many kings, twenty-seven were richly carved, all the rest most highly polished. We are told that Ctesiphon was the architect who furnished the plan of the temple, but he could not have lived to see it finished, for it occupied two hundred and twenty years in building. These things can only be true of the greatest of all the temples to Diana that stood there, because the buildings raised on the same spot were destroyed by fire several times ; and, on the night that

Alexander the Great was born, an idle fellow, named Erostratus, again set fire to it, for the sole purpose, as he affirmed when dying, of handing down his name in history. The only remains of this once famous temple are a few large pillars, and the ruins of the stone conduits for draining the land around the building. The little village that occupies the site of Ephesus is called Aiasoluk by the Turks, its present owners.

Now there may be some excuse for persons paying respect to a great and stately building, such as this fine temple, in the Ionic order of architecture, must have been; but, there can be none for their folly in adoring a little ill-shaped ebony image, such as that of Diana was, that the Ephesians preserved here with so much care and jealousy. In order to carry on the cheat, they pretended that this image fell from heaven, where it had been formed by the hands of Jupiter, the king of their Gods; and, to

prevent detection, they actually killed the artist who made it. Within the temple a sort of trade was carried on by the crafty priests of Diana, consisting in the sale of little shrines, or models of the building itself, made of solid silver; these were purchased, probably, at very handsome prices, owing to the veneration in which the goddess and her temple were held; and, not only the priests, but the artists engaged in the manufacture of these toys, must have derived a considerable annual income from them. Amongst the silversmiths who gained the largest profits from this trade was one Demetrius, who plainly perceived that the growth of Christ's religion was certain to be accompanied with the total ruin of his business of shrine-making. Accordingly, calling all the other silversmiths of the city around him, he spoke in mournful language of the result of Paul's preaching; he spoke of the loss to themselves, the injury to their profits,

the reduced emoluments of their business, the danger of their no longer being able to maintain their wives and children in affluence, if the apostle was permitted to teach his doctrine to the Ephesians. Having stated their pecuniary loss first, he next alluded to the disgrace that would come on pro-consular Asia, if that temple, built at the public cost, that goddess made by the hands of Jupiter, those ancient altars of gold, and silver, and marble, so long worshipped, were now to be forsaken. Proceeding to still greater lengths in his attempt to excite a disturbance, and involve the apostles as the objects of it, he said, "that this St. Paul had perverted city and country ; that he had persuaded the people that these images which silversmiths made were no real gods at all, nor was anything fashioned by human hands ever fit to be worshipped, language likely to bring the goddess Diana, whom all Asia adored, into contempt and

dishonour.” So much were his hearers excited by this discourse, that they cried out, as if with one voice, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*.

If we only reflect a little upon the conduct of Demetrius, we shall soon perceive that his story is only what is called plausible, but is entirely deficient in sound argument; nor do I think he was honest in his intentions. He knew very well that his images and shrines of silver were not better, nor more sacred than any other piece of work which he manufactured: besides, if Diana was really a goddess, she did not require his assistance in defending herself against the preaching of Paul; but, on the other hand, if Paul, who was unattended by any military force to carry his objects into execution, like a Roman general, could by his preaching alone destroy the gods of the Ephesians, it was quite useless for Demetrius to oppose him. His selfishness, and the bigotry of his followers, prompted him to

continue his opposition to the apostle, until, at length, the rabble, filled with zeal for their goddess, sought Paul everywhere throughout the city, resolved, should they catch him, upon throwing him to the wild beasts in the theatre, for the amusement of the spectators.

Not being able to find Paul, who, when he heard of the tumult in the streets, took shelter in a place of security, the people seized two of his companions from Macedonia, Gaius and Aristarchus, and dragged them away to the theatre, with the cruel design, it is believed, of casting them before the wild beasts, whose rage was inflamed by hunger. Paul being informed of the danger to which his poor friends were exposed, determined instantly upon quitting his hiding place, entering the tumult, and sharing in their fate ; from this honourable, but rash conduct, he was at length dissuaded, both by the Gentile Christians, and by the manager of the theatre, who was his friend.

These persons knew that when a mob begin to riot, their intentions may not be very mischievous, but that seldom having a leader, and not understanding each other's meaning, they advance from one act of imprudence to another, until the most violent deeds are perpetrated. Paul's friends, therefore, less generous and noble than himself, assured him that he would only endanger his own life without saving those of his companions, by which the guilt of the ignorant, unthinking, crowd would be greatly increased.

While Paul was engaged with his kind friend the manager of the theatre, the confusion and uproar increased; part of the multitude having come only to ascertain the cause of the concourse, added to the scene of violence by shouting aloud, desiring to be told what all this meant, and refusing to credit the tale when informed of the real origin of the tumult. In the midst of this distraction, Alexander, a Jewish

convert, was pushed forward by one party, to answer questions, and afford an explanation, to the people, of the whole business. Had he been listened to, he would most certainly have cleared himself, and laid all the blame upon Paul and his companions: but, no sooner was it discovered by the crowd, that he was a Jew, than they suspected him to be a fellow-labourer with the apostle, and instead of hearing his apology, continued to vociferate for nearly two whole hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The enemies of Paul made a mistake in refusing to hear Alexander, for he was that coppersmith of whom the apostle complains in his Epistle to Timothy, "that he did him much evil, and greatly withstood his words," adding, that for blaspheming Christ, he delivered him over unto Satan.

When the noise and confusion had abated a little, the town-clerk, a discreet and excellent man, part of whose duty consisted in keeping

a register of the games, entered the theatre for the purpose of checking the riots altogether. Having at length persuaded the people to remain silent, he rose from his place and said, that “the world was sufficiently acquainted with the devotion paid by the Ephesians to the great goddess Diana, and the image which fell from heaven, so that it was altogether needless to create so much noise on the subject, or to publish it again: that they had seized persons who were not guilty of blasphemy, or sacrilege, against their goddess, which was in itself an unlawful act. As for Demetrius and his companions, if they had anything particularly to bring against Paul and his friends, the court was then sitting, and they might lay the complaint before it; if the controversy, however, was about some other matters, such as a violation of the laws of that province, there was also a proper tribunal before which all such charges should be heard.”

He concluded his sensible admonition by telling the most noisy, that their conduct in arresting innocent men without any authority from the magistrates, and in creating such an alarming tumult, left them at his mercy to punish or acquit, and that since he preferred the milder course, they had better be quiet also, and return to their homes in an orderly and becoming manner.

Popular commotions are raised and calmed as rapidly, and at the same time as imperceptibly, as the waves of the sea. The wind that excites the wave is not observed advancing, nor is its retreat noticed, until the waves are still again. The cause of a sedition amongst the people is often but imperfectly understood by themselves, and the magistrates who subdue it, seldom think of anything except its suppression. So completely were the rioters at Ephesus—the men who, only an hour before, thirsted for the blood of the apostle—

convinced of their error, and reduced from rage to resignation, that they quickly left the theatre, and returned peaceably to their homes, permitting Gaius, Aristarchus, and Alexander, to be released, without any further ill-treatment.

Although I have endeavoured to shew that Paul's friends obtained their liberty, in a way that is natural enough in cases of riots and seditions, yet the escape of the apostle himself from a most cruel death, at these rioters' hands, I consider little less than miraculous. I can easily believe that they were indifferent about Gaius and Aristarchus, but I have no doubt they wished to catch Paul, and to cast him to the wild beasts, in their theatre. But, from this dreadful end his merciful Master protected him, and he himself always spoke of this escape as miraculous. "We had," says the apostle, "the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God; who raised the dead, *who delivered us*

from so great a death." And in another part of his writings, he says, "he fought with beasts at Ephesus," alluding to the savage ferocity of the Ephesians, whom he compares to the wild beasts kept in their theatre, to devour human beings, as sport for the spectators, and to which they had, most probably, intended to give him as a prey.

Having seen peace restored amongst the people of Ephesus, and had new reason for acknowledging God's mercy towards himself and companions, in the late riots, the apostle began to think of visiting other places. While he was considering in which direction he should go, intelligence came to him, that the church of Corinth was much disturbed; that false teachers had managed to gain admission, and, by their wrong notions, were dividing the Christians there into different parties, at variance with each other. To make a show of their zeal, since they could make none of

their talents, they pretended that there was a distinction between Peter, Paul, and Apollos, and persuaded their followers to respect one only of them as the chief apostle. This was a scandal to the church of Christ, which has no reference to parties, or sects, or factions, nor does it consist in violent opposition to Christians who do not belong to the same sect. Our Lord was a Prince of Peace; he recommends mercy, and charity to each other; so that quarrelling and envy have nothing to do with his religion.

When people pretend to admire any preacher, or leader, ardently, and declare, that they had little pleasure in being taught by any one else, we may be sure that the mind has taken a wrong inclination. Why not give ear to every faithful minister—why dislike to hear any, unless we know that they are unworthy? Our Lord's blessed religion consists not in envy, or hatred, or

dissensions, or in trusting to men only for guidance, but in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Whenever a person tells me he cannot bear to hear any other than his favourite preacher, I conclude that he is envious of all others, that he, perhaps, is not so much led by his favourite as he pretends, and that he has a very weak, jealous, and narrow mind.

Now each of these false preachers at Corinth, chose out a certain apostle as the head of his party,—not that these holy men approved of such conduct, they did not know anything about it, nor would they have allowed a distinction to be made between them,—and by this improper conduct, the church of Corinth was split into parties. Some sects took up very wild and extravagant opinions, which they must have said they learned from that apostle, whom they had the assurance to call their chief-priest. Indeed, it was an ob-

ject with these men to keep disputes alive, for they were illiberal, and, “an envious man,” as the proverb says, “never fishes more successfully than in troubled waters.” We need not have recourse to old proverbs, history is a better authority, and there we read that the idle and ill-disposed are always trying to create sedition in their own countries, expecting that they will gain something, even if it were only by theft, in the confusion; while in peace and quietness all their actions would be exposed to view. Men of troubled spirits are said to ride best in a whirlwind.

Alarmed lest these dissensions might increase or continue, Paul now wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he chides them very sharply for their breaking into parties, blames their schisms, and entreats them to embrace heaven again. He corrected many great errors into which they had been led, and explained several controversies, and

difficult points, on which they had very properly asked his advice and assistance. Having finished his Epistle to the Corinthians, he next wrote one to Titus, whom he had appointed bishop of Crete, and placed in that beautiful island to preach the gospel of Jesus to its inhabitants. In this affectionate letter he gave very full instructions to Titus, for the performance of his duties as a bishop ; pointing out most clearly, the conduct both pastor and people should observe towards each other. As Apollos and Zenos were then leaving Ephesus for the Isle of Crete, Paul took advantage of the opportunity to send his letter to the bishop by their hands.

CHAPTER V.

FROM PAUL'S QUITTING EPHEBUS TO HIS APPEARANCE
BEFORE FELIX.

PAUL had now spent nearly three whole years at Ephesus, and by his diligence, courage, and pious zeal, succeeded in founding there a community or church, including a great number of persons. Having seen them all happy, and united in the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, he then ordained Timothy to be their bishop, and placed him over them. This was his last apostolic act in this place, and now, while many Christians were assembled around him to take their leave, he spoke to them in language, that was not only well chosen and learned, but what is far more valuable, full of love and affection.

Setting out from Ephesus, Paul now travelled in a northerly direction for about two hundred miles, to Troas, where he embarked

on board a vessel just setting sail for Macedonia. His reason for visiting Troas, was the expectation of seeing Titus, who was to have met him there, but in this he was disappointed. Arriving in Macedonia, he proceeded in his good work, preaching and bringing over converts to the faith of Christ ; and in this way he continued even as far as Illyricum, which is now called Slavonia. This was not only a fatiguing journey, but beset with danger to the apostle, who spoke of his troubles afterwards in these remarkable words, “without were fightings, within were fears.” Returning from Slavonia, through Macedonia into Greece, that just and benevolent God, who never forsakes the wanderer, led him to where his friend Titus was ; and, from this pious man he learned, that the epistle which he had written to the Corinthians from Ephesus, produced excellent fruits, that is, it had calmed the troubles, and cured the dissensions, which

then separated the members of that church from each other. What a comfort the presence and counsel of a sincere friend proves to us in our afflictions ! and surely Paul, worn down by the fatigues of a lengthened journey, and harassed by rude treatment from people only half civilised, must have felt refreshed by the meeting with the virtuous Titus, his old companion and steadfast friend.

But Titus did not come from Crete to Corinth, and thence all the way up through northern Greece, for the sole purpose of once more seeing his beloved friend—he had more serious occasion for this journey. Knowing the miserable condition of the Christians at Jerusalem, this good bishop left his diocese, and, travelling through Greece, solicited contributions at every place for the relief of the suffering church in the holy city. From the Corinthians he received very large subscriptions, and St. Paul, taking advantage

of their generous example, told the Macedonians they would do well to imitate such noble conduct. As Titus was shortly about to return to his duties, and as Corinth lay in his way back, Paul thought it would be desirable to entrust him, and St. Luke, who accompanied him, with a letter to the Corinthian church, that which we now call, "*The Second Epistle.*" In this letter, which is a supplement or completing of the first, he endeavours to effect what he had before failed in: he introduces advice that he had omitted in his previous letter, and he vindicates his apostleship from the contempt which the false teachers tried to fix upon it. Before Paul sent any letter to the church of Corinth, some of the teachers declared themselves to be his followers solely, and protested against Peter and Apollos; but, after the apostle's first epistle, in which he censured envy, malice, and all other unkindnesses, particularly amongst men

who professed to teach the religion of the meek and merciful Messiah, the false preachers could not restrain their anger, nor conceal their real character longer, but openly slandered Paul, and disavowed his doctrines. It was partly to refute all these calumnies, and to prove the true heavenly nature of his own appointment to preach the words of eternal life, that he wrote this latter epistle ; in which, however, many other points are explained besides those that concerned his own character.

When Paul closed this famous letter, he commenced writing another, not to the Corinthians, but to his friend Timothy, whom he had left in charge of the church at Ephesus. Forgiving all the cruel treatment he had experienced at that place, the apostle now wrote what is named in Scripture, "The First Epistle to Timothy," containing full directions how to conduct himself towards his church ; reminding him of the high office which he filled,

the great expectations that were formed of his character and zeal, and the solem duty which the care of so large a church, or number of Christians, imposed on him. He gives him very particular caution, as to the qualifications of those whom he may hereafter choose for bishops and ministers ; because, although the sin of an improper choice would fall partly on the individual who undertook to perform that which he could not do, yet the bishop would also be culpable, for not having examined him fully, and found how far he was fitted for the ministry. These instructions, which St. Paul gave about eighteen hundred years ago, are now carefully followed, in ordaining ministers, and in choosing bishops for the church of Christ. The apostle added other directions : but these referred to the ordaining of deaconesses, and instructing of servants ; and he concluded his useful letter with a caution against false teachers, whom he calls a

“ pestilent generation,” and against other artful persons, who were to arise afterwards, and try to seduce converts from the faith of the cross.

During the apostle’s sojourn in Greece, he paid a visit to Corinth, where he had before established a Christian church, on very solid foundations, for they were laid in the hearts of the people. There he wrote his Epistle to the Romans, which forms part of the sacred scriptures, and when it was finished, he gave it to Phœbe, a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea, near the port of Corinth, who was then proceeding to Rome. In this very celebrated letter, Paul states clearly, and decides with perfect certainty, the question then in dispute between Jews and Gentiles, as to the observance of rites and ceremonies, under the Jewish law, and how far they were binding upon both, after the atonement for sin, by the death of the Redeemer. He also wrote fully, to the church at Rome, upon another point of

doctrine, namely, "Christian liberty," and the use of indifferent things, besides other matters that depended upon the explanation of the redemption. But he was not content with explaining what we call hard passages, in the law or the prophets, which he was so capable of doing, from his learning and talents ; he rather urged upon his readers the necessity of leading a holy and pious life, and of acting charitably towards all mankind, in humble imitation of him whose charity had no end, who so loved all that he laid down his life for all, without distinction.

And now, the apostle thought the time had come, when he should return to Syria, and bring those subscriptions from the church at Corinth, and other places, to the poor brethren at Jerusalem, for whose relief they were intended. He was diverted from his purpose, however, for a little while, by private intelligence which he received, of a design to kill and rob him on his journey, which was formed against him by

the Jews. Upon this providential discovery, he returned into Macedonia, and, making his way to Philippi, a large town in that country, near to which Brutus, the Roman patriot, was defeated by Augustus Cæsar,—he rested awhile, and then, proceeding to the sea-shore, took shipping, and crossed the Archipelago, to Troas, in Asia Minor. When he last visited this place, his stay was very short, and the people were, therefore, much disappointed. He now remained an entire week ; and, on the Lord's day, the whole church, or Christian community here, assembled to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Although I have used the word, church, very often, both as being a proper term, and because it is the name given in the holy scriptures, you are not to suppose that it means a public building, or place of worship, such as our cathedrals, or parish churches. In the beginning of Christianity, there were no

churches ready-built for the disciples ; so they taught at one time from a boat, the people standing on shore ; at another from a house on the top—for they are low, flat, and pleasant to stand upon. At Troas, Paul, most probably, preached in a caravanserai, or in a private house, the plan of which is a square court-yard, surrounded by galleries, from which there are doors into chambers behind them, and windows, also looking across the gallery down on the court. Our old-fashioned inns were all built in this eastern manner, and the remains of the Talbot Inn, in the Borough of Southwark, where the pilgrims to Canterbury used formerly to meet, will give a sufficiently correct notion of the kind of house that Paul preached in at Troas. Being intent on hastening to Jerusalem, and never weary in his Master's service, Paul continued his last discourse here till midnight, making it so much longer than was his custom, because he wished to set out thence

on the following day. It is probable that several felt faint from long listening, for it is more difficult to many persons to hearken to others than to speak themselves, but one young man only is named as being quite overcome. This youth, whose name was Eutychus, dropping into a sound sleep, fell down from the third story into the court yard, and was taken up dead. The congregation was of course greatly alarmed by so sad an accident, and expressed their sorrow loudly ; but Paul, telling them to be tranquil, offered up the most fervent prayers to the throne of grace, for renewed powers, and immediately after restored the young man to life and health.

I should wish you always to notice the particular places in which God was pleased to allow a miracle to be performed, and the circumstances that accompanied it; and you cannot avoid discovering, that both are wisely adapted to establish the truth of the apostles'

missions on earth : there Paul was little known, for he passed through, on his first visit, without delaying ; some proof, therefore of his divine authority was required. Since he was to leave the next morning after delivering this sermon, no way appeared by which he could give an example of his power. Yet God showed one, by means of a thoughtless, though, perhaps, not worthless youth who was seated in the very highest story of the building, as if to make his fall the more fatal, that the power of the apostle in raising him to life might be the more manifest to the spectators. How dark do the ways of God appear at first, how bright and beautiful afterwards !

This part of St. Paul's life resembles, in some degree, that of his divine Master, since he was indefatigable in his labours, and went about everywhere doing good. He crossed sea and land, taught the scriptures, and

performed many miracles. Like a great and perfect architect, he either laid the foundation of the building, and gave the plan into the hands of others to finish, or he raised the whole edifice himself, from the first stone to the last. He was diligent in season and out of season, spared no pains night or day, in doing good to the souls of men. Having spent the night in holy exercises, early in the morning the apostle bade farewell to his affectionate little congregation ; and, having sent on his companions by sea, set out on foot himself to Assos, a sea-port town in the province of Troas. Here he embarked for Mitylene, the capital of the island of Lesbos, which he left again on the following day for the isle of Chios ; but in this place he does not appear to have taken any interest, for, on the day after he touched there, we find that he landed securely at Trogyllium, a town seated on a promontory of the same name, in the province of Ionia.

He passed by Ephesus, not from any ill feeling ; he was too wise, too charitable to do so ; the real cause of his going on as far as he could, and as fast as he could, was to reach Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

To save time, during his detention at Miletus, the chief town of Caria, where he now landed, he sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus ; and, calling them all around him, spoke to them in very affecting language. He reminded them how faithfully and feelingly he had performed his duties amongst them ; what troubles and dangers he had undergone for the benefit of their souls ; and how continually he preached the gospel of the Lord Jesus to them from the time of his first coming into that part of Asia Minor. They should not forget, he said, how constantly he warned them not to neglect whatever might be useful or profitable to them, not only in his sermons, but in private con-

versation ; above all things, he entreated them to believe that repentance, and a change of life, and a firm reliance upon the death of Christ, as the only way whereby man can live, were the means of eternal salvation. He told them that he was then going to Jerusalem, ignorant what was to happen to him there, beyond what had been told by those who had the gift of prophecy ; and, in every place he visited, he met persons who foretold that sorrow, and affliction, and even imprisonment awaited him. “ This,” said Paul, “ gives me no concern ; I am willing to lay down my life whenever the cause of God and his gospel require it, and I am determined on serving my great Lord and Master faithfully.”

“ As for myself,” added the apostle, “ I well know that you will see my face no more ; but, for my encouragement and satisfaction, ye yourselves can bear me witness, that I have not, by concealing any part of the

Christian doctrine, betrayed your souls. And, as for yourselves, whom God has made bishops and pastors of his church, you should be careful to feed, guide, and direct, those Christians under your inspection, and be infinitely tender of the welfare of souls, for whose redemption the blessed Jesus laid down his own life. All the care, therefore, possible for you to use, is no more than necessary ; for, after my departure, false teachers will appear in the church, to the great danger of the souls of men, seeking, by every crafty method, and pernicious doctrine, to gain proselytes to their party ; and, by that means, fill the church of Christ with schisms (divisions) and factions. Watch ye, therefore, and remember with what tears and sorrow I have, during three years, warned you of these things. And now I recommend you to the divine favour and protection, and to the rules and instructions of the gospel, which, if ad-

hered to, will undoubtedly dispose and perfect you for that state of happiness, which the Almighty hath prepared for good men in the mansions of eternity. You well know that I have, from the beginning, dealt faithfully and uprightly with you ; that I have no covetous designs, or ever desired the riches of other men ; nay, I have laboured with mine own hands, to support myself and my companions ; you ought therefore to support the weak, and relieve the poor, rather than be yourselves chargeable to others, according to that incomparable saying of the Redeemer, “ It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Of all Paul’s discourses, I think I like this the best, because, it not only shows his great piety, his education, and his ability to speak in the most affecting manner, but it tells us plainly the blessing of being charitable towards each other in this life, a firm stepping-stone, I am convinced, in our way to that

which is to come. Indeed, St. Paul's writings are remarkable for this very thing that I have noticed, that is, for speaking of "practical duties," as well as "points of doctrine," and I have always thought that our faith must be vain if we do not attend to these.

As soon as he ended his discourse, he knelt down, and called on his companions to join him in solemn prayer to the throne of grace. As they rose up and walked with him to the ship, they were melted into tears, and took leave of him with many expressions of sorrow. They heard every word of his "visitation charge," with attention, with profit, and even with joy, except the words, "you shall see my face no more," and it was regret at parting with their inspired teacher, that caused so much grief amongst them.

Once again on sea, Paul and his attendants were soon far from Miletus, and reaching the Isle of Coos, so famed among the ancients for

excellent wines, there passed a day, and then sailed away for the Isle of Rhodes. This is a large island at the south-west point of Asia Minor, and more celebrated in history than the others in the Archipelago. There was a large statue, called a Colossus, erected at the mouth of the harbour here, under the legs of which large ships entered ; and, in later ages, a brave company of religious knights who dwelt here, defended themselves against the Turks, with a courage that astonished all Europe. However, they at last thought it prudent to remove to Malta, an island in the Mediterranean, not far from Sicily.

From Rhodes he sailed to Patara, the capital of Lycia, where they found a vessel bound for Tyre, in which they immediately embarked, and soon arrived in safety at that celebrated city of Phœnicia. Here many Christians dwelt, some of whom possessed the gift of prophecy, and these advised Paul not to

go to Jerusalem. The apostle, however, never abandoned his Master's business from fear of punishment, or of death, and, believing that it was his duty to go to Jerusalem, and carry with him the contributions he had for the suffering Christians, he declined to take this advice. Having stayed a while with them, they all went down together to the sea-shore, and looking out upon the mighty waters of the sea, which were stopped from overflowing the land by Almighty strength, they all knelt down and joined in prayer.

Taking an affectionate leave of his friends, Paul again embarked for Ptolemais, formerly called Accho, where there was a Christian community or church, and having only staid long enough to salute the brethren there, he returned on board ship, and on the next day reached Cæsarea. This place was the residence of Philip the Evangelist, one of the seven deacons who were at first set apart

by the apostles ; and with him lived his four maiden daughters, all gifted with the power to prophecy. With this pious family Paul lodged during his stay in Ptolemais, and from these prophetesses he, no doubt, heard that great danger attended his going to Jerusalem. While he lodged in Philip's house, Agabus, a Christian prophet, from Judea, came there to see him, and taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own hands and feet with it, signifying by this emblem, or symbol, that the Jews intended to serve Paul in the same manner, and then to deliver him to the Gentiles. The Christians of Cæsarea, knowing Agabus to be a prophet, entreated Paul to stay with them, or to take any other road, rather than that towards Jerusalem. But their kind persuasions were of no avail ; instead of attending to them, or even doubting about what he should do, he asked them what they meant. Was it to add more affliction to his sorrow ?—for that he

was ready, not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem for the sake of Christ and his holy religion.

Finding that their requests produced no change in Paul's fixed resolution, his disciples did not trouble him any further, rightly thinking that all should then be left to the will of God. Accordingly, when preparations for the journey were completed, Paul and his fellow-travellers set out for Jerusalem, where they were welcomed affectionately by all the Christians that lived there.

On the day after he entered Jerusalem, Paul and his companions went to the house of James, the apostle, to meet the bishops and elders of the church. When they had saluted each other, and all were seated, Paul gave them an account of his travels, and of his success in making converts among the Gentiles, upon which they offered up thanksgiving to God. "But now," said they, "you must

be more cautious ; for you are in a city containing many thousand Jewish converts, all zealous for the law of Moses, who have heard that you taught converts from their religion in Asia, to forsake circumcision, and other forms and ceremonies of the law : so soon as the multitude know that you are arrived, they will, no doubt, try to find out how far this is true, and how far you do observe those ceremonies." They added, also, that it would be advisable for him to accompany four persons then going to fulfil a vow, and perform the usual rites and sacrifices with them, either as a Nazarite vow, or in gratitude for recovery from illness, or escape from danger. This would show to the Jews that he had no objection to observe the Mosaic law, and the Gentiles did not care whether he observed it or not.

As this advice was given by faithful ministers of Jesus, by men who were Paul's

sincere friends, and for the benefit of Christ's church, he consented "to become all things to all men, that he might gain the more." Taking the four persons along with him, the apostle entered the temple, and informed the priests that the time of a vow they had made being expired, and, having purified themselves as their case required, they were come to make such offerings as the Mosaic law demanded. Before the seven days, during which they were to continue offering sacrifices, had expired, some Jews, seeing Paul in the temple, recognised him as the champion of Christ in lesser Asia; and, calling out to their friends for assistance, they seized the apostle, dragged him out of the temple, and caused the doors to be shut. All this violent conduct they justified by asserting, that this was the fellow who everywhere spoke contemptuously of the law, as well as of that holy temple, which he thus profaned by

bringing uncircumcised Greeks into it. The latter charge was altogether untrue, and arose from the blindness of their malice, which made them mistake one of Paul's four companions for Trophimus, a Gentile convert of Ephesus, whom they had seen walking in Jerusalem with the apostle.

Upon these charges Paul was violently seized ; and, so great was the uproar occasioned by it, that his life had fallen a sacrifice, had not Claudius Lysias, the captain of the Roman garrison in the tower of Antonia, come to his relief. From the great numbers, and great noise of the people, the officer very naturally thought that the prisoner must have committed some dreadful offence ; and, without asking what it was, put a double chain upon him, as Agabus had foretold. The clamorous Jews still demanded his instant death, and would themselves have killed him, but that the soldiers took him up in their arms, and

carried him to the castle. As they were moving on towards the gate, Paul spoke to the governor in the Greek language, which made the other ask him whether he was not that Egyptian who had headed a riot in Judea a few years before? Paul replied by informing him that he was a Jew, a native of Tarsus, a rich and honourable city of the Roman empire; and hoped, therefore, that he would be permitted to speak to the people. Upon this explanation, the captain stepped forward, and, from the door of the castle, made a sign for the people to be silent; and, as soon as they obeyed, Paul addressed them in the Hebrew language, to the following effect:

“That he had been brought up in Jerusalem, and educated there by Gamaliel, whose learning they respected; that in his youth he was as zealous for the observance of all the customs of the Jewish law as themselves, and had persecuted to death every Christian he

could find, which facts were known to the high priest, and to the Sanhedrim. He next related to them the account of his miraculous conversion, and how he had received an immediate command from God to depart for Jerusalem, and preach the glad tidings of salvation through the name of Jesus, to the Gentiles." No sooner had they heard him mention that God also regarded the Gentiles, than they called out "*Away with such a fellow from the earth!*" and, as if preparing to stone him to death, they threw off their outer garments, and cast dust into the air. To prevent such a wickedness, the captain ordered him to be brought into the castle, and there scourged, until he told what was the true cause of so much rage against him. But, while the lictor was binding his hands, Paul asked the centurion who stood by, whether it was lawful to scourge a Roman citizen before he had been tried or convicted? Alarmed by

this question, the centurion immediately went to the governor, and told him to be cautious what he did, for that the prisoner, he believed, was a Roman citizen. The governor himself now came, and, telling Paul that he had given a large sum of money for the privilege, desired that he would say how he had become a freeman? "I was free-born," said Paul; upon which, first ordering the lictor to loose his hands, he went away to think of clearing himself; and next day he ordered the prison-chains to be struck off.

When Paul was brought before the Sanhedrim, he boldly said he had done nothing wrong; but that, in all the transactions of his life, he had observed carefully the rules which his duty required: "Men and brethren," he exclaimed, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." An honest man finds security always in his own breast; and the mind of a religious and honourable man is

always as calm and serene as the heavens on a summer's day, over which a cloud sometimes passes, but seldom remains.

Envyng the fearless manner of the apostle, Ananias, desired those who stood next him to strike him on the face; upon which, Paul, turning toward the priest, said, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." Being asked how he dared to affront God's high-priest, he said he did not know that Ananias was a high-priest; nor was it right to revile a magistrate; for God had commanded, "that no man should speak evil of the ruler of the people."

Perceiving that the council consisted of Sadducees, who deny the resurrection, and of Pharisees, who believe it, Paul cried out "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, and am now brought before your tribunal for asserting the resurrection of the dead:" a declaration that brought over

one part of the judges to his side, but made the other more opposed to him. A tumult now took place, in which Paul's life was endangered, so that Lysias, the governor, thought it best to take him back to his dungeon. There, during the silence of night, he was made acquainted, by a vision, with the intentions of his enemies, and how he should escape the snares of the malignant Jews ; and, even in Rome itself, bear testimony to the truth of the holy scriptures.

At this time, about forty Jews formed a conspiracy against him ; and swore " that they would neither eat nor drink until they should put the holy apostle to death." Notwithstanding the secrecy with which they managed the design, a nephew of Paul's, heard of it, and told Lysias, who sent him off in the night time to Felix, the Roman governor of the province, who resided at Cæsarea, by whom he was imprisoned in Herod's hall.





PAUL BEFORE FELIX.

CHAPTER VI.

PAUL BEFORE FELIX AT CÆSAREA.

ANANIAS arrived at Cæsarea, accompanied by Tertullus, the orator, who addressed Felix, in a speech full of flattery, accusing Paul of sedition, heresy, and profanation. Felix, having heard him patiently, told Paul that he was at liberty to make his defence. Upon which, he expressed his happiness at being tried before a competent Judge, and denied resolutely all the charges brought against him, but not proved. He confessed, *that, after the way which they called heresy, so worshipped he the God of our Fathers*; and that, according to this faith, he was careful to maintain a clear and quiet conscience, both towards God and man. Felix not seeing any proof of Paul's having caused a sedition, postponed his decision, until he had spoken with Lysias.

Drusilla, the wife of Felix, and daughter of Herod, being desirous of hearing Paul, her husband gave him leave to explain his doctrines. Whereupon he spoke of righteousness, sobriety, and judgment to come ; and he reasoned so admirably on the terrors of the last day, that Felix trembled on his throne, and, not being able to listen any longer, told Paul to go away then, but that he would send for him again, at a more convenient season.

Porcius Festus having succeeded Felix, the Jews renewed their charges against Paul. They requested that he might be sent back to Jerusalem to be tried ; but Festus answered, that, as he was himself going to Cæsarea, any complaints against Paul, should be made there. Festus tried to persuade him to submit to another trial, saying that he would go to Jerusalem himself, in order to preside at it. But Paul saw, that, as Felix left him in prison, to please the Jews, on his going out of

office, Festus would try him at Jerusalem to please the same party, on his coming in ; besides, the Jews would probably waylay him, and murder him ; he answered, therefore, at once, *I appeal unto Cæsar* ; which he was privileged to do by the Valerian law.

When King Agrippa came to Cæsarea with his sister Bernice, to visit the governor, Paul's story excited his curiosity so much, that he requested to hear him, and judge for himself. Next day, the king, Bernice, and Festus, entering the court, the apostle was placed before them ; when Festus, repeating what he had told Agrippa, added, that he wished the charges to be explained in his presence.

When Festus concluded, Paul replied as follows, " I consider it as a peculiar happiness, King Agrippa, that I am to make my defence against the accusations of the Jews, before thee : however, thou art well acquainted with all their customs, and the

questions commonly debated amongst them. I, therefore, beseech thee to hear me patiently. All the Jews are well acquainted with my manner of life, from my youth, the greatest part of it having been spent with my own countrymen at Jerusalem. They also know that I was educated under the institutions of the Pharisees, the strictest sect of our religion, and am now arraigned for a tenet, or principle, believed by all their fathers; a tenet sufficiently credible in itself, and plainly revealed in the scriptures: I mean the resurrection of the dead. Why should any mortal think it either incredible or impossible that God should raise the dead?" The apostle went on to describe the different acts of his life, and his call to serve the Lord; how the Jews had treated him, and how he had always preached the fulfilment of the law and the prophets, by the coming of the Messiah.

Festus, unable to hear so much plain truth

now called out, "Paul, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." To which he replied, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." He said he knew very well that the whole story of the ill-usage he had received, and of the life he had led, was known to Agrippa, because all the events occurred in public, and then looking at the tribunal he asked, "King Agrippa, believest *thou* the prophets? I know that thou believest." By this question he meant, did Agrippa believe that those prophecies in which a Saviour is promised to mankind, had been fulfilled by the advent or coming of Christ into the world. To which Agrippa answered, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." "Oh," said Paul, "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." This was a

great victory ; Paul had the happiness of shaking the mind of a man who possessed kingly authority—a man whose mind being above corruption, was therefore able to form a just opinion.

Agrippa, who rose up somewhat hastily from the judgment seat, informed Festus, that the prisoner had been guilty of no capital crime ; that he should neither have been chained nor imprisoned, and, were it not that he had appealed unto Cæsar, he might then have been set at liberty. However, he must now be sent to Rome. Being allowed to take with him St. Luke, Aristarchus, and Trophimus, he was put on board ship at Adramyttium, in the month of September, A. D. 56, under the care of Julius, a centurion. Sidon was the first port they touched at after their departure from Adramyttium ; there the centurion permitted them to go on shore, and visit the brethren of the church. Their stay, how-

ever, was short, and, again putting to sea, they steered towards the Isle of Cyprus, and thence to Fair Havens, near Myra, a city of Lycia.

As the season was far advanced, Paul advised the centurion to winter there, but he preferred the opinion of the master of the ship, and proceeded. At first the wind was favourable, but suddenly, increasing into a storm, they were so driven before it, that it was found necessary to throw most of the lading overboard. During fourteen days, they endured all the terrors of the tempest, but on the fourteenth night, land being observed, they dropped anchor, intending to wait for daylight. Paul now advised the passengers and crew to refresh themselves, for they had been fasting a long time, assuring them also that they should all escape from shipwreck. The land they approached proved to be the same that Paul had foretold, the Island of Malta, in the Lybian sea. There they disembarked, in a place

now called St. Paul's Bay, and going up along the little rocky valley of Moustà, kindled a fire and sat down to enjoy themselves. While they were engaged in this way, a viper, attracted by the heat, crept out of the woods, and reaching where Paul was, fastened on his hand. The Maltese, astonished at the sight, at once supposed that he must have been some murderer, who had escaped the dangers of the sea, only to receive punishment from God in a more public manner. But, when they saw him shake the venomous creature off his hand into the fire, without having sustained any harm himself, they called out that *he was a God*.

After a three month's sojourn in Malta, the prisoners were put on board "The Castor and Pollux," an Alexandrian vessel, bound for Italy, and first putting in at Syracuse, next sailing to Rhegium, and lastly reaching Puteoli, they landed and set out for Rome.



ST. PAUL AT MALTA.



As soon as he arrived there, sending for the heads of the Jewish consistory, he related to them the cause of his coming, and the treatment he had received; but they were also divided in their opinions, so that he found his preaching would be more useful to the Gentiles. Paul, however, resided here, in his own private house, during two whole years, and employed himself in preaching and writing.

Amongst his new converts here, was one Onesimus, who had been the servant of Philemon, a nobleman of Colosse, but had ran away from his master, and carried off part of his property. Knowing that his change of mind was sincere, Paul desired him to return and gave him a letter, “earnestly desiring Philemon to pardon him, and notwithstanding his former faults, to treat him kindly, and use him as a brother; promising that if Onesimus had wronged, or owed him anything, he himself would repay it.”

The Christians at Philippi hearing of Paul's residence at Rome, made a subscription for him, and sent it by Epaphroditus their bishop. Paul sent them in return, by the same venerable messenger, an epistle, exhorting them to be courageous under their afflictions, and to beware of the bigoted Jews: soon after this period it was that he wrote an Epistle to the Ephesians, which he intrusted to the care of Tychicus. At Colosse false teachers induced the people to address angels in their prayers, as God, and his Holy Son, were too exalted to attend to them. This wrong doctrine, Paul, who heard all about it from Epaphras, refuted in his Epistle to the Colossians. Being released from the accusations of the Jews, which were altogether the result of malice, the apostle now wrote his most famous work, the Epistle to the Hebrews, which magnifies the glory of Christ, and sets the religion of his gospel above the law of





PAUL AND PETER IN PRISON.

Moses, and above the ceremonies of the Jews.

About this period of his life, Paul was absent from Rome, and it is supposed that during that absence he visited Spain, England, Sicily, Greece, and Crete, returning again to Rome. Whilst he was engaged in his last journey, a general persecution of the Christians took place, so that scarcely had he reached his house, and met with the chief apostle of the Jews, St. Peter, than both these holy men were seized and thrown into prison, on pretence of having set fire to the city. As Paul had converted some of Nero's family to the faith of the gospel, so that they abhorred the sinful life of the emperor, no hope of escape from the tyrant's vengeance remained. Paul and Peter, the two chief apostles of our holy religion, were kept in prison together, and only brought forth to be put to death. I have already told you how Peter suffered

martyrdom ; Paul, being a Roman citizen, was not subjected to death on the cross, a death reserved for the lowest description of criminals—his sacred head was severed from the body that bore it by the sword of a public executioner.

At the Salvian waters, three miles from Rome, this martyrdom took place, and the apostle's remains were buried in the Ostian way, about a mile from the place of execution. In the year 317, Constantine the Great raised a beautiful temple over his grave, adorned with a hundred columns, and the Emperor Theodosius rebuilt the whole edifice with still greater splendour. But what can tombs, or temples, or transitory honours avail, to the recollection of him who fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept his faith.

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