THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY BY JOHN S. C. ABBOTT

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BY

JOHN S. C. ABBOTT

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THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY:

CONSISTING OF THE

LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS OF NAZARETH;

THE

ADVENTURES OF PAUL AND THE APOSTLES;

AND

The Most Interesting Events in the Progress of Christianity,

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE PRESENT TIME.

BY

JOHN S. C. ABBOTT,

AUTHOR OF "THE MOTHER AT HOME," "LIFE OF NAPOLEON," "LIFE OF FREDERIC THE GREAT," ETC.

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TO THE MEMBERS OF

The Second Congregational Church and Society

IN FAIR HAVEN, CONNECTICUT,

This Volume

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY THEIR FRIEND AND PASTOR,

JOHN S. C. ABBOTT.

PREFACE.

THE author of this volume has for many years, at intervals, been engaged in its preparation. It has long seemed to him very desirable that a brief, comprehensive, and readable narrative of the origin of Christianity, and of its struggles and triumphs, should be prepared, adapted to the masses of the people. There are many ecclesiastical histories written by men of genius and erudition. They are, however, read by few, excepting professional theologians. The writer is not aware that there is any popular history of the extraordinary events involved in the progress of Christianity which can lure the attention of men, even of Christians, whose minds are engrossed by the agitations of busy life.

And yet there is no theme more full of sublime, exciting, and instructive interest. All the heroism which the annals of chivalry record pale into insignificance in presence of the heroism with which the battles of the cross have been fought, and with which Christians, in devotion to the interests of humanity, have met, undaunted, the most terrible doom.

The task is so difficult wisely to select and to compress within a few hundred pages the momentous events connected with Christianity during nearly nineteen centuries, that more than once the writer has been tempted to lay aside his pen in despair. Should this book fail to accomplish the purpose which he prayerfully seeks to attain, he hopes that some one else may be incited to make the attempt who will be more successful.

In writing the life of Jesus, the author has accepted the narratives of the evangelists as authentic and reliable, and has endeavored to give a faithful, and, so far as possible, a chronological

account of what Jesus said and did, as he would write of any other distinguished personage. The same principle has guided him in tracing out the career of Paul and the apostles.

It has not been the object of the writer to urge any new views, or to discuss controverted questions of church polity or theology. This is a history of facts, not a philosophical or theological discussion of the principles which these facts may involve. No one, however, can read this narrative without the conviction that the religion of Jesus, notwithstanding the occasional perversions of human depravity or credulity, has remained essentially one and the same during all the centuries. We need no additional revelation. The gospel of Christ is "the power of God and the wisdom of God." In its propagation lies the only hope of the world. Its universal acceptance will usher in such a day of glory as this world has never witnessed since the flowers of Eden wilted.

JOHN S. C. ABBOTT.

FAIR HAVEN, CONN.

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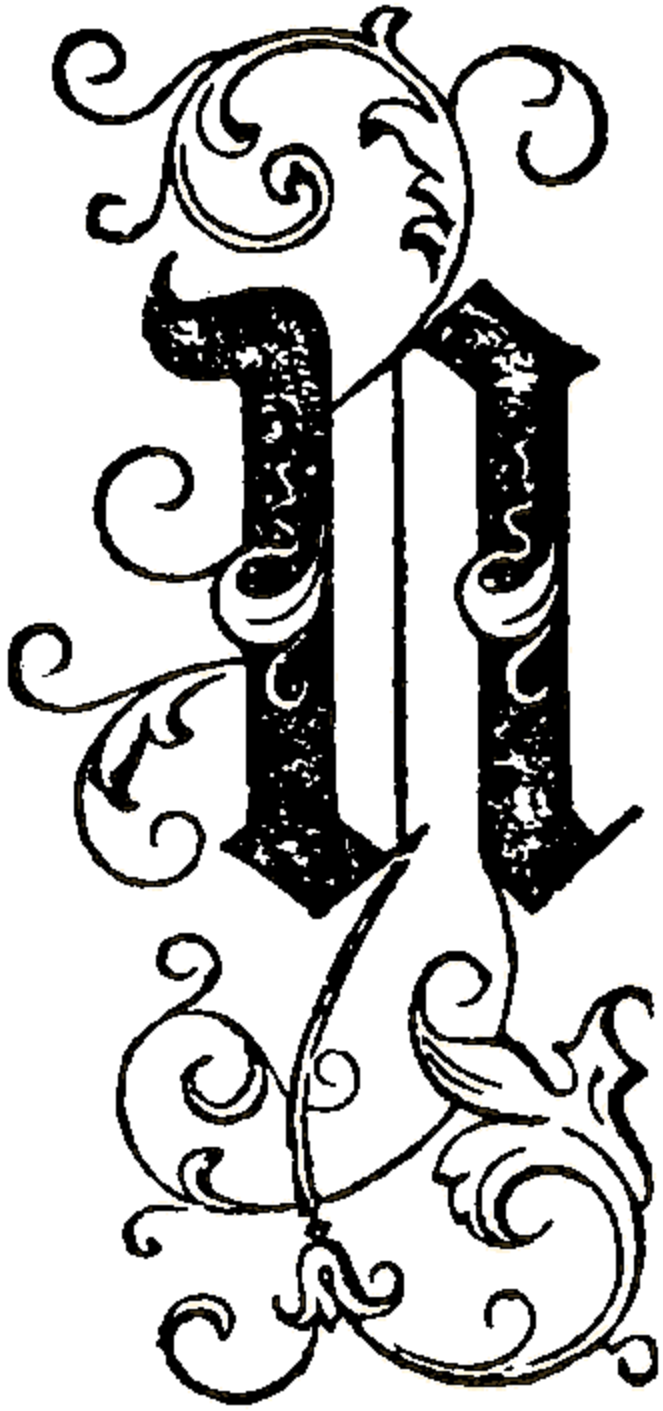
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O one now takes much interest in the history of the world before the coming of Christ. The old dynasties of Babylon, Media, Assyria, are but dim spectres lost in the remoteness of the long-forgotten past. Though the Christian lingers with solemn pleasure over the faintly-revealed scenes of patriarchal life, still he feels but little personal interest in the gorgeous empires which rise and disappear before him in those remote times, in spectral vision, like the genii of an Arabian tale.

Thebes, Palmyra, Nineveh,—palatial mansions once lined their streets, and pride and opulence thronged their dwellings: but their ruins have faded away, their rocky sepulchres are swept clean by the winds of centuries; and none but a few antiquarians now care to know of their prosperity or adversity, of their pristine grandeur or their present decay.

All this is changed since the coming of Christ. Eighteen centuries ago a babe was born in the stable of an inn, in the Roman province of Judæa. The life of that babe has stamped a new impress upon the history of the world. When the child Jesus was born, all the then known nations of the earth were in subjection to one government,—that of Rome.

The Atlantic Ocean was an unexplored sea, whose depths no mariner ever ventured to penetrate. The Indies had but a shadowy and almost fabulous existence. Rumor said, that over the wild, unexplored wastes of interior Asia, fierce tribes wandered, sweeping to and fro, like demons of darkness; and marvellous stories were told of their monstrous aspect and fiendlike ferocity.

The Mediterranean Sea, then the largest body of water really known upon the globe, was but a Roman lake. It was the central portion of the Roman Empire. Around its shores were clustered the thronged provinces and the majestic cities which gave Rome celebrity above all previous dynasties, and which invested the empire of the Cæsars with fame that no modern kingdom, empire, or republic, has been able to eclipse.

A few years before the birth of Christ, Julius Cæsar perished in the senate-chamber at Rome, pierced by the daggers of Brutus and other assassins. At the great victory of Pharsalia, Cæsar had struck down his only rival Pompey, and had concentrated the power of the world in his single hand. His nephew Octavius, the second Cæsar, surnamed Augustus, or the August, was, at the time Jesus was born, the monarch of the world. Notwithstanding a few nominal restraints, he was an absolute sovereign, without any constitutional checks. It is not too much to say, that his power was unlimited. He could do what he pleased with the property, the liberty, and the lives of every man, woman, and child of more than three hundred millions composing the Roman Empire. Such power no mortal had ever swayed before. Such power no mortal will ever sway again.

Fortunately for humanity, Octavius Cæsar was, in the main, a good man. He merited the epithet of *August*. Though many of the vices of paganism soiled his character, still, in accordance with the dim light of those dark days, he endeavored to wield his immense power in promotion of the welfare of his people.

Little did this Roman emperor imagine, as he sat enthroned in his gorgeous palace upon the Capitoline Hill, that a babe slumbering in a manger at Bethlehem, an obscure hamlet in the remote province of Syria, and whose infant wailings perhaps blended with the bleating of the goat or the lowing of the kine, was to establish an empire, before which all the power of the Cæsars was to dwindle into insignificance.

But so it was. Jesus, the babe of Bethlehem, has become, beyond all others, whether philosophers, warriors, or kings, the most conspicuous being who ever trod this globe. Before the name of Jesus of Nazareth all others fade away. Uneducated, he has introduced principles which have overthrown the proudest systems of ancient philosophy. By the utterance of a few words,

all of which can be written on half a dozen pages, he has demolished all the pagan systems which pride and passion and power had then enthroned. The Roman gods and goddesses—Jupiter, Juno, Venus, Bacchus, Diana—have fled before the approach of the religion of Jesus, as fabled spectres vanish before the dawn.

Jesus, the "Son of man" and the "Son of God," has introduced a system of religion so comprehensive, that it is adapted to every conceivable situation in life; so simple, that the most unlearned, and even children, can comprehend it.

This babe of Bethlehem, whose words were so few, whose brief life was so soon ended, and whose sacrificial death upon the cross was so wonderful, though dead, still lives and reigns in this world,—a monarch more influential than any other, or all other sovereigns upon the globe. His empire has advanced majestically, with ever-increasing power, down the path of eighteen centuries; and few will doubt that it is destined to take possession of the whole world.

The Cæsars have perished, and their palaces are in ruins. The empire of Charlemagne has risen, like one of those gorgeous clouds we often admire, brilliant with the radiance of the setting sun; and, like that cloud, it has vanished forever. Charles V. has marshalled the armies of Europe around his throne, and has almost rivalled the Cæsars in the majesty of his sway; and, like a dream, the vision of his universal empire has fled.

But the kingdom of Jesus has survived all these wrecks of empires. Without a palace or a court, without a bayonet or a sabre, without any emoluments of rank or wealth or power offered by Jesus to his subjects, his kingdom has advanced steadily, resistlessly, increasing in strength every hour, crushing all opposition, triumphing over all time's changes; so that, at the present moment, the kingdom of Jesus is a stronger kingdom, more potent in all the *elements of influence* over the human heart, than all the other governments of the earth.

There is not a man upon this globe who would now lay down his life from love for any one of the numerous monarchs of Rome; but there are millions who would go joyfully to the dungeon or the stake from love for that Jesus who commenced his earthly career in the manger of a country inn, whose whole life was but a scene of poverty and suffering, and who finally perished upon the cross in the endurance of a cruel death with malefactors.

As this child, from the period of whose birth time itself is now dated, was passing through the season of infancy and childhood, naval fleets swept the Mediterranean Sea, and Roman legions trampled bloodily over subjugated provinces. There were conflagrations of cities, ravages of fields, fierce battles, slaughter, misery, death. Nearly all these events are now forgotten; but the name of Jesus of Nazareth grows more lustrous as the ages roll on.

The events which preceded the birth of Jesus cannot be better described than in the language of the inspired writers:—

"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia; and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the

Lord blameless. And they had no child, because Elisabeth was barren; and they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord; and the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

"And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And, when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

"And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

"And the angel, answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God, and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

"And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. And, when he came out, he could not speak unto them. And they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And, after those days, his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me to take away my reproach among men.

"And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored; the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And, when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her,

"Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

"Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also, that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.

"And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her."[1]

Elisabeth was at that time residing in what was called the "hill-country" of Judæa, several miles south of Jerusalem. Mary was in Galilee, the extreme northern part of Palestine. "And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Juda; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost; and she spake out with a loud voice, and said,

"Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? for, lo! as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath showed strength with his arms; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever."

"Now, the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But, while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins.

"Now, all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which, being interpreted, is *God with us*.[2]

"Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son."

Mary, upon her visit to Elisabeth, remained with her about three months, and then returned to Nazareth. Upon the birth of John, he was taken on the eighth day to be circumcised. His father, who still remained dumb, wrote that he should be called John. To the surprise of his friends, speech was then restored to him. These remarkable events were extensively noised abroad. “And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be?”

In the year of Rome 450, the Emperor Cæsar Augustus ordered a general census of the population of Palestine to be taken, that he might, with exactitude, know the resources of the province. The Jewish custom had long been, that a man should be registered in his birthplace instead of that of his residence. During the months of January and February of that year, all the narrow pathways of Judæa were crowded by cavalcades of those who were seeking their native places to be registered according to this decree.

Among these lowly pilgrims there were two, Joseph and Mary, from the obscure village of Nazareth. Toiling along through the ravines of Galilee, over the plains of Samaria, and across the hill-country of Judæa, they continued their journey, until, at the end of the fourth day, they entered the little village of Bethlehem, about five miles south of Jerusalem.

So many travellers had entered the village before them, that there was no room left in the inn. Perhaps even the stable might have been refused, had not the woman’s condition appealed to the heart of the inn-keeper. But there she and her husband found a place to rest.

Outside of the village stretched the plains, where, hundreds of years before, David watched his father’s flocks. On the same hill-slopes shepherds tended their sheep still. It was apparently a serene and cloudless night. Suddenly there appeared in the heavens, descending from amidst the stars, the form of an angel. The simple-minded shepherds gazed upon the wonderful spectacle with alarm. The angel, radiant with heaven’s light, addressed them, saying,—

“Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger.”

As these words were uttered, the babe was born; and immediately there appeared a vast multitude of the heavenly host,—the retinue which had accompanied the celestial visitant from heaven to earth. Such a band never before met mortal eyes. With simultaneous voice they sang, while the melody floated over the silent hills, “Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, good-will toward men.”

The voice of prophecy had announced, ages before, that the long-expected Messiah should be born in Bethlehem. Seven hundred years had passed since the prophet Micah wrote,—

“And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.”[3]

The angels disappeared, and the heavenly depths resumed their accustomed calm. But the scene and the words sank deep into the hearts of the shepherds, who believed without questioning this

wonderful announcement. The time foretold by the prophets—had it truly come? Was the long watching of the true-hearted Jew really at an end?

Making haste in the eagerness of their hope, the shepherds went to Bethlehem, and found Mary, Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. Having this corroboration of the angels' words, they told to all whom they met the marvellous scene which they had witnessed. All wondered; for it was not thus that they had expected the Messiah to come. But Mary, the mother, kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Although the birth of Jesus was thus heralded by a choir of angels, it seems not to have been universally recognized that the Messiah had come. The evidence is abundant, from passages taken from both Roman and Jewish writers, that there was a general expectation at the time, throughout the East, that some one was soon to be born in Judæa who would rule the world. The ideas prevailing respecting the nature of his reign were extremely vague. Tacitus, Suetonius, Zoroaster, all allude to this coming man, whose advent had been so minutely foretold in the sacred writings of the Jews.

The Persian priests, or Magi, were among the most learned men of those times. Whatever of science then was known was inseparably blended with religion. Astrology and astronomy were kindred studies. The Persian Magi were surprised by the appearance of a star, or meteor, of wonderful brilliancy. They interpreted it as a sign that the long-expected Messiah was born. As they approached the meteor, it moved before them. A deputation of their number was appointed to follow it. It led them to Judæa. They then began eagerly to inquire where the child was born. Herod the king heard these strange tidings. He trembled from fear that this prophetically-announced Messiah would assume kingly power, and eject him from his throne. In great anxiety he sent for the most approved interpreters of the Bible, and inquired of them if the prophets had announced the *place* in which the Messiah should be born. They replied that the place was Bethlehem, citing in proof the prediction of the prophet Micah. Herod, having determined to take the life of the child, called the Magi before him, and directed them to go immediately to Bethlehem, and, as soon as they had found the young child, to report to him, saying that he wished to worship him also.

The meteor, which had led them from the plains of Persia, and which had perhaps, for a time, vanished, re-appeared, and went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was. After paying the divine babe the tribute of their homage and adoration, instead of returning to Herod with the information, admonished by God, they departed by an unfrequented route to their own country.

The infamous king, thus baffled, in his rage sent officers to put to death all the children in the city of Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years of age and under. He supposed that in that number the infant Jesus would surely be included. But Joseph, warned by God in a dream, escaped by night with Mary and the babe into Egypt, about forty miles south of Bethlehem. There the holy family remained for several months, until the wretched Herod died, devoured by a terrible disease. But, as his son Archelaus ascended the throne vacated by Herod, Joseph did not deem it safe to return to Judæa, but, by a circuitous route, found his way back to the obscure

hamlet of Nazareth, buried among the mountains of Galilee. Here, we are informed, “the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.”

Before the flight into Egypt, all the ceremonies enjoined by the Mosaic law upon the birth of a child of Jewish parents were strictly observed. At the presentation of the babe in the temple, the aged Simeon, then the officiating priest, recognized him as the long-looked-for Messiah. Anna too, the prophetess, gave thanks to the Lord for him.

After these scenes, a veil is dropped over the child-life of Jesus. It is lifted but once, when, at the age of twelve, the child attended his parents to Jerusalem. Being separated from Joseph and Mary in the crowd, they sought anxiously for him, and found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions. All who heard the questions and the answers of the child were amazed at his wisdom. To the tender reproof of his mother, he answered as though the meaning of his life were just beginning to dawn upon him: “How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”

His parents did not understand him; but he returned with them to Nazareth. Here among the hills of Galilee, in a village so obscure that its name is not mentioned in the Old Testament, the youthful years of Jesus passed unnoticed away until he had attained the age of thirty. According to the Jewish law, a man could not take upon himself priestly duties until he was thirty years old. Not until then was he considered to have obtained that maturity of character which would warrant him in assuming the office of a teacher, or which would enable him to realize the sacredness of the priestly calling. No record of these years is given us, save that contained in the declaration, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

John the Baptist, forerunner of Jesus, seems to have passed through very different youthful discipline from that of Him whom he was to herald. Jesus spent his childhood and early manhood, so far as we are informed, in the seclusion of that domestic life which is common to man. Nurtured in its sweet simplicity, he learned from experience the trials and cares of humanity in its lowliest condition.

John, forsaking these tranquil scenes of domestic life, fled into the desert, and, in the most dreary solitudes, prepared for his momentous ministry. The last of the prophets, “greater was not born of women than he.” The place he chose for his preparation was one of desolate grandeur. The borders of the desert reached the barren, verdureless banks of the Dead Sea. All signs of life were lost in a region apparently cursed by the frown of God. The heavy waters of the lake lay motionless, and the mountains of Moab rose beyond in their severe and rugged sublimity.

Yet here John dwelt, that he might ponder the meaning of the Scripture prophecies, so as to be able to expound them with power when the time should come for him to address the people. Here he was impressed with the enormity of sin against God, and the hopelessness of the sinner, unless a higher power came to his rescue. Here God revealed to his soul the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins through faith in an atoning Saviour,—“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,”—the Lamb so often slain in symbolic sacrifice, but now to appear and suffer in his own sacred person.

When the time of preparation was completed, the word of God came to John, summoning him to his work. Emerging from his life of solitude, he traversed all the country round about Jordan, crying out in trumpet-tones, which collected thousands to listen to him, “Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” The new prophet, humble in his own soul, as the truly great always are, disclaimed all title to the Messiahship, declaring that One was coming mightier than he, the latchet of whose shoes he was unworthy to unloose. When the multitude, impressed by his figure, his character, and his words, inquired of him, “Art thou the Christ?” he replied emphatically, “I am not.”—“Art thou Elias, then?” was the continued query. The reply was equally emphatic, “No.”—“Who art thou, then?” they further inquired. He replied, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.”

A leathern girdle encircled the loins of this wonderful man. His frugal fare consisted of locusts and wild honey. John stood by the River Jordan, baptizing those who presented themselves for the rite. Jesus, then about thirty years of age, appeared among them. Since his twelfth year, no act of his had been recorded. But now, according to the Jewish idea of maturity, he was prepared to enter upon his ministry. John doubtless had not seen him for many years. Probably he had never known that he was the Christ. But, when that pure and holy One came to be baptized, the eyes of the prophet were opened, and he hesitated, saying, “I have need to be baptized of thee; and comest thou to me?” But Jesus commands, and John performs the rite. Then the faithful prophet is rewarded by seeing the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon the brow of Jesus. A voice at the same time was heard from the serene skies, exclaiming in clear utterance, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

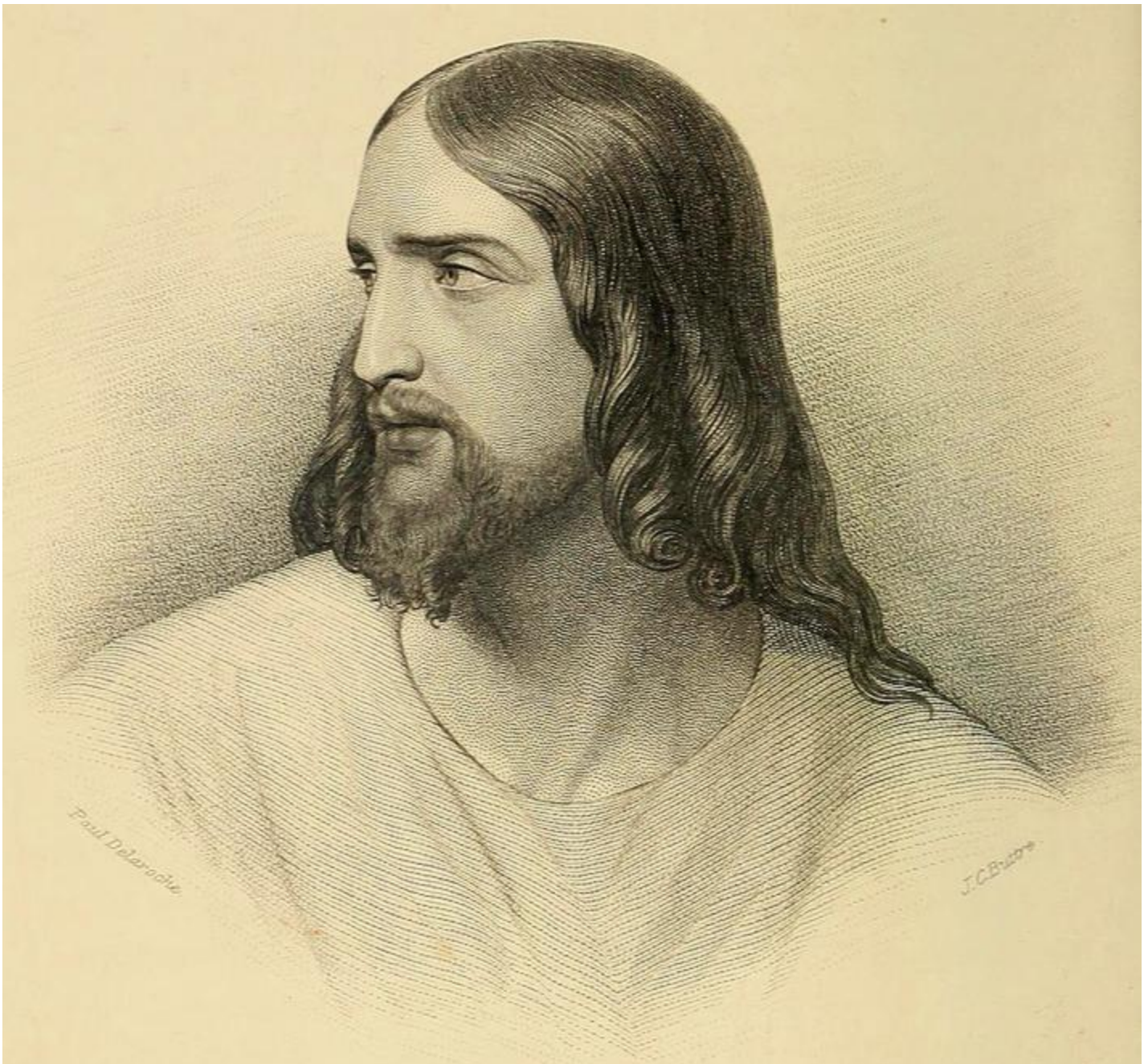
Then John was filled with fulness of assured joy, as he says, “I knew him not;” meaning, of course, that, before the performance of the rite, he had not known Jesus as the Messiah. The following day, John pointed out Jesus to two of his disciples as the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

Soon after this came the period of our Lord’s temptation, over which our hearts are moved with wonder and tender compassion. Son of God as he was in his spiritual nature, in the humiliation of his earthly mission he had also become Son of man. Sinless from his birth, the taint of evil had never touched his pure soul. Yet a higher nature than even this was necessary before he could redeem the people from their sins. There was needed in his human nature a knowledge of the power of evil, which could only be obtained through suffering its temptations.

How else could he truly sympathize with and succor those who are tempted? Oh holy mystery of the temptation of the Son of God!—a mystery so sacred and unfathomable, that we can only bow our hearts in adoration, knowing that we have now a high priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities,—one who “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

It is impossible to ascertain with certainty the chronology of our Saviour’s movements. But, following that which is generally most approved, we infer that Jesus returned from the temptation in the wilderness to Nazareth, where he sojourned for a short time. John had publicly announced Jesus to be the Messiah, in the words, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!” Jesus was thus declared to be the atoning Lamb, which for so many centuries had been represented by the sacrifices offered under the law.

Among the crowd who had flocked to the wilderness to hear the impassioned preaching of John there were two fishermen, who became convinced that Jesus was the long-promised Christ. The first of these, Andrew, hastened to inform his brother Simon Peter that he had found the Messiah. These two were apparently our Saviour's first disciples. Probably their views of the nature of his mission were exceedingly vague. They, however, attached themselves to his person, and followed him. Jesus received them kindly, but without any parade. At the first glance he seems to have comprehended the marked character of Simon Peter; for he addressed him in language in some degree prophetic of his future career: "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas; which is, by interpretation, a stone." Cephas was the Syriac for Peter.



Jesus.

Jesus.

BOSTON: B. B. RUSSELL.

The next day two others attached themselves to Jesus,—Philip and Nathanael. Then, as now, the moment one became a disciple of Jesus, he was anxious to lead others to him. Philip, who had accepted the invitation of Christ to follow him, sought out one of his friends, Nathanael, and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nathanael was a little doubtful whether the son of the carpenter Joseph, from the obscure hamlet of Nazareth, could be the heaven-commissioned Messiah for whose advent the pious Jews had been praying during weary centuries. Incredulously he inquired, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” The laconic reply of Philip was, “Come and see.”

It appears that Nathanael was a man remarkable for his upright and noble character. As Jesus saw him approaching, he said to those around him, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” Nathanael, overhearing the remark, inquired of him, “Whence knowest thou me?” The reply of Jesus, “Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee,”—thus alluding to some secret event which Nathanael was sure no mortal could know,—convinced him of the supernatural powers of Jesus; and he exclaimed in fulness of faith, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel!”

The reply of Jesus was a distinct avowal of his Messiahship: “Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

Jesus, strengthened, not exhausted, by his temptation in the wilderness, returned to Nazareth. In the mystery of his double nature as Son of God and Son of man, the mission of his life seems now to have been fully revealed to him. He then commenced preaching his gospel of penitence for sin, faith in him as a Saviour, and a holy life.

Not with words of denunciation did he open his ministry. Tenderly he bore with the doubts and questionings, which led many to hesitate to acknowledge him as the long-looked-for Messiah. Sympathy and healing for body and soul were the first messages of our Lord. The hard, stern outlines of the Jewish law were softened, yes, glorified, by the spiritual meaning infused into them by Jesus. Sent to preach the gospel to the poor, and to bind up the broken-hearted, he addressed the desponding in words of encouragement and cheer, while he did not abate one iota of the integrity and authority of the law.

A few miles north of Nazareth, slumbering among the hills of Galilee, was the little village of Cana. A marriage was celebrated there on the third day after the return of Jesus from the wilderness. He was invited to the wedding, with his mother and the disciples who had accompanied him to Nazareth. The fame of Jesus was rapidly extending, and the knowledge of his expected presence probably drew an unexpected number to the wedding. Consequently, the wine, simple juice of the grape, usually provided on such occasions, was found to be insufficient. The mother of Jesus informed him with some solicitude that the wine was falling short. It would

appear that he had anticipated this; for his reply, “What have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come,” may be interpreted, “It is not necessary for you, mother, to be anxious about this: the time for me to interpose is not yet come.” That time soon came,—probably when the wine was entirely exhausted. The anxious, care-taking mother understood this to mean that he would, at the proper time, provide for the emergency; for she went to the servants, and requested them to do whatever Jesus should ask of them.

In the court-yard there were six stone firkins, or jars, about two-thirds the size of an ordinary barrel, containing about thirty gallons each. Jesus ordered the servants to fill them with water. Surprised, but unhesitatingly they obeyed. He then directed them to draw from those firkins, and present first to the governor of the feast. To their amazement, pure wine filled their goblets,—wine which the governor of the feast declared to be of remarkable excellence. This was the first miracle which is recorded of our Saviour. There is no evidence that there was the slightest intoxicating quality in this pure beverage thus prepared for the wedding-guests.

Soon after this, Jesus went to Capernaum, a thriving seaport town upon the western shores of the Lake of Galilee, about twelve miles north-east of Nazareth. His mother, his brothers,—who did not accept his Messiahship,—and his disciples,—we know not how many in number,—accompanied him. We have no record of his doings during the few days that he remained there. As the feast of the Passover was at hand, Jesus went up to Jerusalem, there to inaugurate his ministry in the midst of the thousands whom the sacred festival would summon to the metropolis. A few of his disciples accompanied him. Their journey was undoubtedly made on foot, a distance of about a hundred miles.

Upon their arrival, Jesus directed his steps immediately to the temple, probably then the most imposing structure in the world. The sight which met his view as he entered the outer court-yard of the temple with his humble Galilean followers excited his indignation. The sacred edifice had been perverted to the most shameful purposes of traffic. The booths of the traders lined its walls. The bleating of sheep and the lowing of oxen resounded through its enclosures. The litter of the stable covered its tessellated floors, and the tables of money-changers stood by the side of the magnificent marble pillars. The din of traffic filled that edifice which was erected for the worship of God.

Jesus, in the simple garb of a Galilean peasant, and without any badge of authority, enters this tumultuous throng. Picking up from the floor a few of the twigs, or rushes, he bound them together; and, with voice and gesture of authority whose supernatural power no man could resist, “he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence: make not my Father’s house a house of merchandise.”

No one ventured any resistance. The temple was cleared of its abominations. There must have been a more than human presence in the eye and voice of this Galilean peasant, to enable him thus, in the proud metropolis of Judæa, to drive the traffickers from all nations in a panic before him, while invested with no governmental power, and his only weapon consisting of a handful of rushes; for this seems to be the proper meaning of the words translated “a whip of small cords.”

The temple being thus cleared, some of the people ventured to ask of him by what authority he performed such an act. His extraordinary reply was, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” There is no evidence that there was any thing in the voice or gesture of Jesus upon this occasion which implied that he did not refer to the material temple whose massive grandeur rose around them. It is certain that his interrogators so understood him: for they replied, “Forty and six years was this temple in building; and wilt thou rear it up in three days?”

The evangelist John adds, “But he spake of the temple of his body.” We have no intimation that Jesus attempted to rectify the error into which they had fallen. And it is difficult to assign any satisfactory reason why he should have left them to ponder his dark saying. Human frailty is often bewildered in the attempt to explicate infinite wisdom.

Probably the fame of Jesus had already reached Jerusalem. His wonderful achievement, in thus cleansing the temple, must have excited universal astonishment. Many were inclined to attach themselves to him as a great prophet. There was at that time residing in Jerusalem a man of much moral worth, by the name of Nicodemus. He was rich, was in the highest circles of society, a teacher of the Jewish law, and a member of the Sanhedrim, the supreme council of the nation.

He sought an interview with Jesus at night, that he might enjoy uninterrupted conversation, or, as is more probable, because he had not sufficient moral courage to go to him openly. In the following words he announced to Jesus his full conviction of his prophetic character: “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him.”

Jesus did not wait for any questions to be asked. With apparent abruptness, and without any exchange of salutations, he said solemnly, as if rebuking the assumption that he, the Lamb of God, had come to the world merely as a teacher, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus ought to have understood this language. The “new birth” was no new term, framed now for the first time. The proselytes from heathenism, having been received into the Jewish fold by circumcision and baptism, in token of the renewal of their hearts, were said to be “born again.” Jesus, adopting this perfectly intelligible language, informed Nicodemus that it was not by intellectual conviction merely that one became a member of the Messiah’s kingdom, but by such a renovation of soul, that one might be said to be born again,—old things having passed away, and all things having become new. Nicodemus, who perhaps, in pharisaic pride, imagined that he had attained the highest stage of the religious life, was probably a little irritated in being told that he needed this change of heart to gain admission to the kingdom of God; and, in his irritation, allowed himself in a very stupid cavil. “How can a man,” said he, “be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?”

Jesus, ever calm, did not heed the cavil, but simply reiterated his declaration, that no man could become a member of the kingdom of God, unless, renewed in the spirit of his mind, he thus became a partaker of the divine nature. Nicodemus probably assumed that he, as a Jew, would be entitled by right of birth to membership in the kingdom of the Messiah. When a Gentile became a proselyte to the Jewish religion, by the rite of baptism he promised to renounce idolatry, to

worship the true God, and to live in conformity with the divine law. The external rite gradually began to assume undue importance. Our Saviour, in announcing to Nicodemus the doctrine that a spiritual regeneration was needful, of which the application of water in baptism was merely the emblem, said, "Except a man be born of water *and of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh,"—is corrupt: "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,"—is pure. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

And then, in reply to queries which he foresaw were rising in the mind of Nicodemus, he continued: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." This sublime truth is thus enunciated without any attempt at explanation. Why is one man led by the Holy Spirit to the Saviour, while another, certainly no less deserving, is not? This question has been asked through all the ages, but never answered. Where is the Christian who has not often said,—

"Why was I made to hear thy voice,

And enter while there's room,

When thousands make a wretched choice,

And rather starve than come?"

Infinitely momentous as are these truths, they are the most simple truths in nature. Nothing can be more obvious to an observing and reflective man than that a thorough renovation of spirit is essential to prepare mankind for the society of spotless angels and for the worship of heaven. This is one of the most simple and rudimental of moral truths. And when Nicodemus, with the spirit of cavil still lingering in his mind, allowed himself to say, "How can these things be?" Jesus gently rebuked him, saying, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? If I have told you earthly things,"—the simplest truths of religion, obvious to every thoughtful man,—"and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"—the sublime truths which can only be known by direct revelation.

Jesus then proceeds from the simple doctrine of regeneration to the sublimer theme of an atoning Saviour,—a theme the most wonderful which the mind of man or angel can contemplate. There cannot be found in all the volumes of earth a passage so full of meaning, in import so stupendous, as the few words which then came from the Saviour's lips. It was the distinct and emphatic announcement of the plan of salvation devised by a loving Father in giving his Son to die upon the cross, in making atonement for the sins of the world.

"No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven; even the Son of man, which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not

condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved; but he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."

It does not appear that even this enunciation from the lips of Jesus, of the sublime doctrines of regeneration and atonement, produced any immediate result upon the heart of Nicodemus. That they produced a deep impression upon his mind cannot be doubted. Not long after, when there was intense commotion in Jerusalem in consequence of the teachings of Jesus, Nicodemus summoned sufficient moral courage to speak one word in his defence. "Doth our law," said he, "judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?" But he seems to have been effectually silenced by the stem rebuff, "Art thou also of Galilee?" We hear no more of this timid man, until after the lapse of three years, when Jesus had perished upon the cross, Nicodemus brought to Joseph of Arimathea some spices to embalm the body. This, also, he probably did secretly and by night. How contemptible does such a character appear—one too cowardly to live according to its own convictions of duty—when contrasted with such men as Abraham, Noah, Daniel, and Paul! And yet there is many a Nicodemus in almost every village in our land.

Soon after this, Jesus left Jerusalem, and went into the rural districts of Judæa, where he preached his gospel, and his disciples baptized, and by this rite received to the general Church such as became converts. John the Baptist was then preaching to large assemblies in Samaria, in a place called Ænon, about twenty miles west of the River Jordan, and about sixty miles north from Jerusalem. This place, though among the hills, was well watered with springs and streams, and thus well adapted for the vast numbers who gathered to hear this renowned preacher.

Jesus and his disciples were in Judæa, in the vicinity of Jerusalem, probably about forty miles south of John. Some of the zealous disciples of John became annoyed in hearing that larger crowds were flocking to Jesus than to him; that Jesus was making many converts, and that his disciples were actually baptizing more than were the disciples of John. But the illustrious prophet did not share in their feelings of envy. In words worthy of his noble character he replied,—

"Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He must increase; but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all; for he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."


MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Botrys
Gebal
Beirut
Sidon
Zarephath
Tyre
Achzib
Acre
Hepha
Athlit
Dora
Caesarea
Japho
Jabneh
Ashdod
Askelon
Gaza
Zaleh
Heldua
Mukharah
Zezin
Zifthek
Beltaniy
Rehob
Laish
Baneas
Hasbeiya
Chalcis
Abila
Helbon
Heliopolis
Jambruda
Conna
Lybo
Compchara
Morraah
Gerada
Telseae
Duma
DAMASCUS
Calana
Kesweh
Merjany
Sasa
Bahret el Hijaneh
Bahret Bala
Aen Salamen
WATERS of MERON
Gishala
Safed
Jotapata
Hukkok
Bethsaida
Capernaum
Cana
Rimmon
Magdala
Bethárbel
Tiberias
Tarichea
Nazareth
Endor
Nain
Meridio
Jezrel
Beth Sheah
Enganim
Capercotia
Dothan
Asher
Thebez
Thirza
Samaria
Shechem
Jacob's Well
Pirathon
Gilgal
Lebonah
Shiloh
Bethel
Gilgal
Jericho
Gibeah
Bethany
JERUSALEM
Bethlehem
Hebron
Adora
Carmel
Esthemoa
Kerioth
Hazar Shual
Ephraim
Zoroa
Corealhe
Doroa
Kenath
Hergasa
Hippos
Gadara
Arbela
Pella
Jabesh Gilead
Succoth
Gerasa
Dibbin
Archelais
Ramoth Gilead
Gaulda
Philadelphia
Beth Nimrah
Beth Haran
Beth Jesimoth
Mt Pisgah
Rabbath
Remtheh
Meneh
Bozrah
Salkah
Batanis
BASHAN
PLAIN OF ACCO
PLAIN OF SHARON
PLAIN OF PHILISTIA
COUNTRY OF THE PHILISTINES
DEAD SEA
PALESTINE

PALESTINE

Jesus, being informed of the spirit of rivalry which existed on the part of John's disciples, decided to withdraw from that region, and return to Galilee. His direct route led through the central district of Samaria. There was a bitter feud between the inhabitants of Judæa and Samaria, so that there was but little social intercourse or traffic between them. The road led first over barren plains as far as Bethel; then traversed a region of undulating hills smiling with verdure, till it became lost in a winding mountain-pass quite densely wooded. On the third day of the journey, Jesus, toiling on foot beneath the scorching sun of Syria, reached Sychar, in the heart of Samaria. About a mile and a half from the village, at the foot of Mount Gerizim, there was a celebrated well, which the patriarch Jacob had dug several centuries before. Jesus sat down by the well to rest, while his disciples, who accompanied him, went into the village to purchase some food. While seated there alone, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me to drink." His dress and language indicated that he was a Jew.

The woman replied, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?"

"If thou knewest," said Jesus, "the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

To this enigmatical reply, which evidently aroused the attention of the woman, she rejoined, "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. From whence, then, hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children and his cattle?"

Again Jesus replied in enigmatical language, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The woman, bewildered, and with excited curiosity, said, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

"Go, call thy husband," said Jesus, "and come hither."

The woman, conscience-smitten, and somewhat alarmed by the mysterious nature of the conversation, answered, "I have no husband."

The startling response of Jesus was, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. In that saidst thou truly."

The woman, alarmed, and anxious to withdraw the conversation from her own sins and personal duty, sought, as half-awakened sinners have ever endeavored to do from that day to this, to change the theme into a theological discussion.

“Sir,” she said, “I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”

This question was a standing controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans. “Believe me,” Jesus replied, “the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

The Samaritans rejected the prophets, and received only the five books of Moses. Jesus therefore announced that the Jewish, not the Samaritan faith, was the true religion; while at the same time he declared that external forms were important only as they promoted and indicated holiness of heart.

The woman replied, “I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ. When he is come, he will tell us all things.”

Her astonishment must have been great when Jesus rejoined, “I that speak unto thee am he.”

The conversation was here interrupted by the return of the disciples who had gone into the village. Though surprised in seeing Jesus engaged in earnest conversation with the Samaritan woman, they asked him no questions upon the subject; but the woman, so agitated that she forgot to take her water-pot with her, hurried back to the village, saying to her friends, in language somewhat exaggerated, “Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?”

Quite a crowd of Samaritans were soon gathered around the well. In the mean time, the disciples besought Jesus to partake of the refreshments which they had brought from the village. His remarkable reply was,—

“I have meat to eat that ye know not of. My meat” (the great object of my life) “is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye have entered into their labors.”

It is probable that Jesus went from the well into the village or city of Sychar; for he continued in that region for two days, preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. The result was, that many more believed, and said unto the woman, “Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

Continuing his journey, Jesus proceeded still northward to Galilee. The fame of his words and of his works was spreading far and wide. As he travelled, he entered the synagogues of the villages,

and preached his gospel probably to large crowds. Popularity accompanied his steps; for, we are informed by the sacred historian, “he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.”

Upon reaching the province of Galilee, he repaired to Cana, where his first miracle was performed. His name was now upon all lips; and, wherever he appeared, crowds were attracted. About twelve miles north-east from Cana, upon the shores of the Lake of Galilee, was the city of Capernaum. A nobleman there, of high official rank, had a son dangerously sick. Hearing of the arrival of Jesus in Cana, and fully convinced of his miraculous powers, he hastened to him, and entreated him to come down and heal his son. Immediately upon the application of the nobleman, appreciating the faith he thus exhibited, he said, “Go thy way: thy son liveth.” Apparently untroubled with any incredulity, the nobleman set out on his return. Meeting servants by the way, they informed him that his son was recovering. Upon inquiry, he learned that his convalescence commenced apparently at the very moment in which Jesus assured him of his safety. In consequence of this second miracle in Galilee, the nobleman and all his family became disciples of Jesus.

From Cana, Jesus went to the home of his childhood and youth, in Nazareth, which was but a few miles south of Cana. It is probable that his reputed father, Joseph, was dead, as we have no subsequent allusion to him; and that there was no home in Nazareth to welcome the wanderer. Upon the sabbath day, according to his custom, he repaired to the synagogue. Taking the Bible, he opened to the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, and read those prophetic words of the promised Messiah which had been written nearly seven hundred years before:—

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

He closed the book, returned it to the officiating minister, and sat down upon the raised seat from which it was customary for the Jewish speakers to address the audience. The eyes of all were fastened upon him.

“This day,” said Jesus, “is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” It was universally understood that this passage from the prophet referred to the Messiah. Thus he solemnly announced to his astonished fellow-citizens of Nazareth that he was the Son of God, whose coming the pious Jews had, through so many centuries, been expecting. It is evident that the tidings of his career were already creating great excitement in Nazareth.

“All bare witness,” writes the inspired historian, “and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph’s son?

“And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, *Physician, heal thyself*: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto

Sarepta, a city of Sidon" (a Gentile city), "unto a woman that was a widow" (a Gentile woman). "And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian."

This declaration, that God regarded Gentiles as well as Jews with his parental favor, roused their indignation. The inspired historian records, "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong; but he, passing through the midst of them, went his way."

It is not known whether a miracle was performed at this time to disarm the mob, or whether the infuriated populace were overawed by the natural dignity of his demeanor, and by the sacredness which began to be attached to his person as the reputed Messiah. It was a case similar to that which occurred when he cleansed the temple.

Jesus, upon this occasion, took his text from the Bible, and commented upon it. The text and a few of his remarks have been alone transmitted to us. There is a rocky cliff which extends for some distance along the hill on which Nazareth is built, which is still thirty or forty feet high, notwithstanding the accumulated *débris* of eighteen centuries, which was undoubtedly the scene of this transaction.

John the Baptist was now cast into prison. His work as the forerunner of Christ was accomplished. Eight months of our Lord's ministry had passed away. On the eastern shore of the Dead Sea there was an immense fortress called Machærus. Built on a crag, surrounded by gloomy ravines, and strengthened by the most formidable works of military enginery then known, it was deemed impregnable. Here the despot Herod had shut up John the Baptist as a prisoner. Weary months rolled away as the impetuous spirit of the prophet beat unavailingly against the bars of his prison. Though a prophet, the *whole* mystery of the Messiah's kingdom had not been revealed to him. With great solicitude, apparently with many doubts and fears, he watched the career of Jesus, so inexplicable to human wisdom.

Jesus, rejected with insult and outrage by the people of Nazareth, repaired to Capernaum, on the shores of the lake. This body of water, so renowned in the life of Jesus, is the only sea referred to in the gospel history. It is alike called the "Sea of Galilee," the "Sea of Tiberias," and "Lake Gennesaret." In Capernaum he took up his residence for a time, "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God;" that is, preaching the glad tidings of full and free remission of sins through faith in him as the Messiah, and his coming kingdom. "The time," said he, predicted by the prophets, "is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye, and believe the gospel."[4]

Walking one day on the shores of the lake, he met Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, engaged in their occupation as fishermen. It will be remembered that they had met Jesus before, at the time of his baptism by John, and had become convinced that he was the Messiah. On some of his journeyings they had accompanied him. But they had not, as yet, permanently attached themselves to his person. He said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Their unwavering faith in him is manifest from the fact, that leaving their boat and their net, and their earthly all, in their humble garb of fishermen they followed him.

Continuing the walk along the water's edge, they met two other young fishermen, also brothers, James and John. They were sitting upon the shore with their father Zebedee, mending their net. Jesus called them also to follow him; which they promptly did, leaving their father behind them. Jesus had selected them to be preachers of his gospel; and they were to be with him, that, listening to his addresses, they might learn the doctrines which they were to preach.

Accompanied by these four disciples, Jesus returned into the city of Capernaum; and probably the next day, it being the sabbath, he entered the synagogue, and addressed the people. We have no record of his address. Mark simply informs us that he "taught; and they were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes."5 Luke says, "His word was with power."6

Among the crowd assembled there was a man possessed of a devil. He startled the whole assembly by shouting out, "Let us alone! What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee whom thou art, the Holy One of God."

"Accepting, with whatever mystery the whole subject of demoniac possession is clothed, the simple account of the evangelists, it does appear most wonderful,—the quick intelligence, the wild alarm, the terror-stricken faith, that then pervaded the demon world, as if all the spirits of hell who had been suffered to make human bodies their habitation grew pale at the very presence of Jesus, and could not but cry out in the extremity of their despair."7

Jesus turned his mild, commanding eye upon the demoniac, and calmly said, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him." The foul spirit threw the man to the ground, tore him with convulsions, and, uttering a loud, inarticulate, fiendlike cry, departed. The man rose to his feet, serene and happy, conversing with his friends in his right mind. All were seized with amazement. The strange tidings ran through the streets of the city. The fame of such marvels spread rapidly far and wide. "What new thing is this?" was the general exclamation; "for with authority he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they do obey him."

The mother of Simon Peter's wife was taken sick with a violent fever. Jesus, being informed of it, visited her bedside, took her gently by the hand, and rebuked the fever. The disease, as obedient to his command as was the foul spirit, immediately left the sufferer. The cure was instantaneous and complete. She arose from her couch, and returned at once to her household duties.

It is difficult to imagine the excitement which these events must have produced. Upon the evening of that memorable day, the region around the house was thronged with the multitude, bringing unto him all that were sick with divers diseases. "And he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God. And he, rebuking them, suffered them not to speak; for they knew that he was Christ."8

It is impossible for us to comprehend the nature of the union of God and man in the person of Jesus. The sacred historian, in announcing that God "was made flesh and dwelt among us," makes no attempt to solve this mystery. But it seems that Jesus, though possessed of these

miraculous powers, was so exhausted by the labors and excitements of the day, that, long before the dawn of the morning, he rose from his bed, and, leaving the slumbering city behind him, retired to a solitary place, where, fanned by the cool breeze of the mountain and of the lake, he spent long hours in prayer.

Peter and his companions, when they rose in the morning, missed Jesus. It was not until after a considerable search that he was found in his retreat. They informed him of the great excitement which pervaded the city, and that the people were looking for him in all directions. But Jesus, instead of returning to Capernaum to receive the adulation which awaited him there, said, “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also. I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities; for therefore came I forth.”

In the mean time, some of the people had found him; and they began to gather around him in large numbers. They entreated him to return to the city, and take up his residence with them; but he declined, and at once entered upon a laborious tour through the cities and villages of Galilee, “teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sicknesses and all manner of diseases among the people.”

Though these deeds were done in Galilee, the extreme northern province of Syria, still the fame of them spread rapidly through the whole country. “And they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from beyond Jordan.”

Galilee was at that time very densely inhabited by an energetic and bustling population of about three millions. It was about sixty miles in length, and forty in breadth; containing, according to Josephus, two hundred and four towns and villages, whose average population was fifteen thousand. Through this region, Jesus, accompanied by a few of his disciples, entered upon a pedestrian tour. The lake was thirteen miles long, and six broad. Its shores were dotted with villages luxuriant in culture, and the waters of the lake were covered with the boats of fishermen.

Now all is silent there, lonely and most desolate. Till last year, but a single boat floated upon its waters. On its shores, Tiberias in ruins, and Magdala, composed of a few wretched hovels, are all that remain. You may ride round and round the empty beach, and, these excepted, never meet a human being, nor pass a human habitation. Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, are gone. Here and there you stumble over ruins; but none can tell you exactly what they were. They knew not, those cities of the lake, the day of their visitation. Their names and their memory have perished.

The number of sick people whom Jesus healed on this circuit must have been immense; for he traversed a wide and populous region, and patients were brought to him from great distances; and he healed them all. One cannot but regret that we have no minute record of the events which transpired and of the addresses which Jesus made on this missionary excursion, which commenced, it is supposed, in June, and was closed early in October.

CHAPTER II.
TOUR THROUGH GALILEE.

The Horns of Hattin.—The Sermon on the Mount.—Jesus goes to Capernaum.—The Miraculous Draught of Fishes.—Healing the Leper, the Paralytic.—Associates with Publicans and Sinners.—The Feast of the Passover.—The Cripple at the Pool.—The Equality of the Son with the Father.—Healing the Withered Hand.—Anger of the Pharisees.—The Twelve Apostles chosen.—Inquiry of John the Baptist.—Jesus dines with a Pharisee.—The Anointment.—Journey through Galilee.—Stilling the Tempest.—The Demoniacs and the Swine.—The Daughter of Jairus.—Restores Sight to the Blind.—Address to his Disciples.



BOUT seven miles south of Capernaum there was a double-peaked eminence, fifty or sixty feet high, which commanded a charming view of the Valley of Gennesaret. These peaks were called the Horns of Hattin, from the village of Hattin, situated at the base of the hill. As Jesus, upon his return from his first circuit through Galilee, approached Capernaum, when the throng which accompanied him, or flocked out of the city to meet him, had become immense, he probably ascended this hill, from which he could easily address them. For ages it has been called, on that supposition, the “Hill of the Beatitudes.”

It must have presented a charming scene. The smooth and grassy hill rose from a landscape luxuriant with verdure, draped with vineyards, and rich in the autumnal hues of harvest. The waters of the lake sparkled in the sunlight, and the distant horizon was fringed with towering mountains. Jesus sat upon the summit of the hill: his avowed disciples gathered affectionately around: the multitude, presenting a sea of upturned faces, thronged the grassy slopes.

It was then and there that Jesus delivered that Sermon on the Mount, which, by universal admission, is the most memorable discourse ever uttered by human lips. Probably in a voice which penetrated the remotest ear, he enunciated those sublime truths, which, for eighteen centuries, have echoed through human hearts, and which will continue thus to echo, with ever-increasing power, until the flames of the last conflagration shall envelop our globe.

He first announced the conditions of entrance into the new kingdom of God. Its gates were to be open to the lowly in heart; to those weeping over their own unworthiness, and hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Those qualities which were most despised by Jewish pride and pharisaic self-righteousness were the ones upon which God looked with love and a blessing.

He then declared the law of the kingdom of God, showing that, instead of abrogating the old covenant, it did but re-establish its principles, and supplement its imperfections, by carrying moral obligations beyond all external observances, into the inner regions of the heart.

With amazement this motley assemblage must have listened to announcements so contrary to the whole spirit of the age; as,—

"Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, for my sake. Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and sendeth his rain upon the just and upon the unjust."

The parade of alms-giving, ostentatious devotion, and the display of fastings and prayers, are severely denounced. And, in this connection, Jesus gave that sublime formula of prayer which has compelled the admiration even of his foes, and which for beauty and comprehensiveness can find no parallel in the literature of the world:—

"Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us, this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

In this wonderful discourse each statement is but an annunciation of truth, bearing with it its own evidence. There is no labored argument, no attempt to prove his doctrine. The assumption seemed to be, that no honest mind could refuse its assent to these truths. With such divine majesty he gave utterance to these sublime principles, that it is recorded, "The people were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

From the mount, Jesus directed his steps towards Capernaum, followed by a great multitude still eager to hear the word of God. When he reached the shore of the lake, the crowd became so dense as to impede his steps. There were two boats by the shore, their owners being at a little distance washing their nets. One of these belonged to Simon Peter. To avoid the pressure, Jesus entered the boat, and requested Peter to push out a little from the land. From the boat, surveying the vast throng upon the shore, he again addressed them; but we have no record of the words he spoke. It is uncertain whether Peter accompanied Jesus on this his first tour through Galilee. At the close of the discourse, Jesus requested Peter to launch out a little farther into the deep, and let down his net. Peter slightly remonstrated, saying, "Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net." He did so, and a miraculous draught of fishes was enclosed, so that the net broke, and it was necessary to call for assistance from another boat. Two boats were so filled with the fishes, that they began to sink. Simon Peter was so impressed by this miracle, that he fell upon his knees at the feet of Jesus, exclaiming, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

"If Peter," writes R. Mimpriss, "had returned to his worldly occupation through the fear of being in want, as following One who had not where to lay his head, he must have felt confounded at this reproof of his own unfaithfulness in being so plentifully supplied by his Lord when unable to provide any thing for himself in his own way. Peter seems to have been powerfully impressed, not only with the miracle, but also with his own unworthiness as a disciple."

Jesus compassionates the weakness of his impulsive disciple, and replies, "Fear not: henceforth thou shalt catch men." James and John were with Peter, and witnessed this transaction. They all were convinced that it was folly to doubt that Jesus had divine power to make suitable provision for all who were in his service. This faith brought forth immediate fruit in corresponding works. "They forsook all, and followed him."

Approaching the city, Jesus encountered a leper. The scene which ensued cannot be more forcibly described than in the graphic language of Mr. Lyman Abbott:—

"In its worst forms, leprosy is alike awful in its character, and hideous in its appearance. For years it lurks concealed in the interior organs. Gradually it develops itself: spots of red appear upon the skin, chiefly the face; the hair of the brows and lids and beard begins to fall off; the eyes become fierce and staring; the voice grows hoarse and husky, and is finally quite lost; the joints grow stiff, refuse to fulfil their office, and drop off one by one; the eyes are eaten from their sockets. The patient, strangely insensible to his awful condition, suffers an apathy of mind that is scarcely less dreadful than the condition of his body.

"Universally regarded as suffering a disease as virulent in its contagion as in its immediate effects, the leper was shunned as one whose fetid breath bore pestilential poison in it. Universally regarded as bearing in his body the special marks of divine displeasure for intolerable sin, his sufferings awoke no sympathy, but only horror. From the moment of the first clearly-defined symptoms, the wretched man was deliberately given over to death: he was an outcast from society. No home could receive him. Wife and children might not minister to him. Wherever he went, he heralded his loathsome presence by the cry, 'Unclean, unclean!'

“Men drew one side to let him pass. Mothers snatched their children from before his path. To touch him—the horror-stricken Jew would sooner suffer the kiss of an envenomed serpent. No one ever thought to proffer succor to a leper; no physician ever offered him hope of health; no amulets could exorcise this dread visitation. A special token of the wrath of God, only God could cure it: only repentance of sin and the propitiation of divine wrath could afford a remedy. No hand ever bathed the leper’s burning brow, or brought the cooling draught for his parched lips. None ever spoke a word of sympathy to his oppressed heart. Society had built no hospitals for the sick, no lazarettos even for its own protection; and the leper, driven from the towns, dwelt in dismantled dwellings, or in caves and clefts of the rock, solitary, or in the wretched companionship of victims as wretched as himself.

“One of these unhappy sufferers had heard of the fame of Jesus. He believed, with the hope sometimes born of desperation, in the divine power of this new prophet; and nought but divine power could give him relief. He disregarded alike the law which excluded him from the city and the horror he must face to enter it, and broke through all restraints to implore the word of healing from this inheritor of the power of Elijah. The crowd heard his cry, ‘Unclean, unclean!’ and opened in superstitious dread to give him passage through. He cast himself at the feet of Jesus with the outcry of despairing imploration, ‘Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.’ The people had looked on him only with horror. Jesus was moved with compassion. They had drawn back that they might not receive the contagion of his garments. Jesus put forth his hand to touch him. They had echoed his cry, ‘Unclean!’ Jesus said, ‘I will: be thou clean.’ And, in the instant of that speaking, the leper felt the burning fever depart, and a new fresh blood, healed at its fount, course through his veins.”9

Jesus directed the man to go directly to the priest, in accordance with the provisions of the Mosaic law, and to obtain from him the official testimony that he was cured, and relief from the ban which was laid upon him as a leper. This he was to do immediately, before the priest could learn that it was Jesus who had healed him; otherwise the priest might refuse through prejudice to testify to the reality of the cure.

A miracle so wonderful increased the excitement which had already attained almost the highest pitch. Such crowds flocked after Jesus, that he found it necessary to withdraw from the city, and seek a retreat in “desert places.” Still the multitude flocked to him from every quarter. Luke, speaking of this his retirement, says, “He withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.” It is worthy of special observation how much time Jesus spent in prayer.

After devoting several days in this retreat to solitude and devotion, Jesus, in whose character the serious, thoughtful, pensive temperament so wonderfully predominated, returned to Capernaum. The tidings spread rapidly throughout the city. An immense concourse soon thronged the street on which the house was situated which he had entered. Jesus addressed the vast concourse,—the door-sill, perhaps, his pulpit, the overarching skies his temple, and his audience a motley assemblage crowding the pavements. Proud Pharisees and self-conceited doctors of the law had come, drawn from the surrounding cities to the spot by the fame of Jesus.

While Jesus was speaking, some men brought a paralytic patient on a couch to be healed. But the concourse was so dense, that they could not force their way through to his feet. The roof of the

house was flat, surrounded by a battlement, to prevent any one from falling off. By a back way they entered the house, ascended to the roof, broke away a portion of the battlement, and with cords lowered the man on his couch down before Jesus. Palsy is often the result of an intemperate life, of sinful habits: it is not improbable that it was so in this case. In healing the leper, Jesus had merely said, in the exercise of his own divine power, "I will: be thou clean." Now, in the exercise of that same divine power, he assumed the prerogative of forgiving sin.

"When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

The Pharisees and the doctors of the law, offended at this assumption, said one to another, "Who is this who speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?

"Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee? or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all."

The amazed people exclaimed, "We have seen strange things to-day!"

Leaving the thronged city, Jesus, who seems ever to have cherished a great fondness for the country, went out to some favorite spot upon the shore of the lake; but the excited multitude followed him. As they were leaving the city, Jesus saw a man named Matthew, also called Levi, the son of Alpheus, sitting at the door of a custom-house, where he was collecting the taxes which were levied by the Roman government. The tax-gatherer was exceedingly unpopular with the Jews. No intimation is given us respecting the character of Matthew, or whether he had previously manifested any interest in Jesus. But, for some reason, Jesus deemed him worthy of being called as one of his apostles. The fact is announced in the brief words, "And he saith unto him, Follow me; and he left all, rose up, and followed him."

Matthew took Jesus to his house, and invited some of his old friends, several of whom were tax-gatherers, and others not of religious repute, to meet him at a feast. It would seem that there was a pretty large party; for it is recorded,—

"Many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many."

The scribes and Pharisees were very indignant that Jesus should associate with persons of such character. Jesus, hearing of their fault-finding, replied,—

"They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

He then, by the forcible illustrations of the "new cloth on an old garment" and "new wine in old bottles," showed that the rigorous observances of the old dispensation were not adapted to the freedom and privileges of the new.

The time for the feast of the Passover had come; and Jesus, with his disciples, took a second journey to Jerusalem. There was a pool at Jerusalem called Bethesda, which, in the popular estimation, had at a certain season of the year great medicinal virtues. At such times, large numbers, suffering from every variety of disease, were brought to the pool. Jesus saw a man there who had been utterly helpless, from paralysis probably, for thirty-eight years. He was poor and friendless. Sympathetically Jesus addressed him, inquiring, "Do you wish to be made whole?" The despairing cripple replied, "Sir, I have no one, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but, while I am coming, another steppeth down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." Immediately the man was made whole.

It was the sabbath. The sanctimonious Pharisees, watching for some accusation of Jesus, when they saw the rejoicing man in perfect health, carrying the light mattress upon which he had reclined, in an absurd spirit of cavilling accused him of violating the holy day by carrying a burden. He replied, that the one who had cured him had directed him to do so. Upon their inquiring who it was who had given him such directions, he could only reply that he did not know. It appears that Jesus, immediately after performing the miracle, had withdrawn.

Soon after this, Jesus met the man in the temple. It is probable that his disorder had been brought on by intemperance and vice; for Jesus, addressing him, said, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." The news of this miracle rapidly spread. The Pharisees denounced Jesus severely, assuming that he was breaking the sabbath. Jesus had performed this miracle in his own name, as by his own power. His remarkable reply to their accusation was, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." This astounding assertion implied his equality with God the Father. "As my Father," he says, "carries on the works of providence on the sabbath, so I, his Son, have an equal right to prosecute my labors." The Jews were so indignant at this assumption, that they formed a plot to slay him, "because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

Jesus did not deny the accuracy of their inference, but re-enforced it by declaring in still stronger terms his unity with the Father: "Verily I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth. And he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them [gives them life], even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. I can of

mine own self do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

The remainder of this remarkable discourse we must here omit for want of space. We are not informed what impression it produced upon his auditors. Soon after this, Jesus, accompanied by some of his disciples, in the vicinity of Jerusalem, was passing, on the sabbath, through a field of grain. By an express statute, any one could pluck a handful of the standing wheat as he passed. His disciples, being hungry, plucked the ears, rubbed out the kernels in their hands, and ate them. The cavilling Pharisees, ever watching for some offence, again complained that Jesus was encouraging the violation of the sabbath. Jesus improved the opportunity to show that the laws of God were intended for the benefit of man; that David and his followers, when hungry, ate of the show-bread, and were blameless; that the priests in the temple did not violate the sabbath in performing a large amount of labor required by their services. They might reply, "You are no priest, and your work is not for the benefit of the temple." This objection was met by the very remarkable statement, that Jesus was Lord of the temple:—

"But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. But, if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day."

These were astounding declarations for even the most exalted prophet to make,—that he was the Son of God; that he came forth from the Father; that whatever the Father could do, he could do; that all men were bound to honor him even as they honored the Father.

Returning to the city, Jesus entered the synagogue. It was the sabbath day, and the building was doubtless thronged, as, wherever Jesus now appeared, the multitude followed. It is manifest that the masses of the people were in sympathy with him, though the self-righteous Pharisees and the doctors of the law sought for an opportunity of bringing forward such accusations as should turn the tide against him. In the synagogue there was a man with a withered hand, who had doubtless come hoping to find Jesus and to be cured. The Pharisees watched him, to see if he would, as they deemed it, or pretended to deem it, violate the sabbath by doing a work of healing upon that day. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, called upon the man to rise up and stand forth in a conspicuous place in the presence of the whole congregation. Then, turning to the Pharisees, he said,—

"I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?" Apparently, without waiting for an answer, he added,—

"What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and, if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out? How much, then, is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days."

This unanswerable argument, of course, carried with it the convictions of the masses of the people. The Pharisees were exasperated. Jesus, instead of assuming an air of triumph, or even feeling it, in his inmost soul was saddened by the malignant spirit displayed by his adversaries.

“Being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand; and he stretched it out, and his hand was restored whole as the other.”

The Pharisees were so enraged in being thus baffled, that they went out and entered into a conspiracy with the partisans of the infamous Herod to put him to death. Jesus, who “knew their thoughts,” quietly withdrew, and, leaving Judæa, returned to Galilee. As he travelled invariably on foot, it was a journey, through the whole breadth of Samaria, of several days. It is remarkable that no record of this journey is given us, though Jesus was unquestionably healing the sick and preaching the gospel all the way. We are simply informed by Mark,—

“A great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judæa, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.”

When they reached the shores of the Sea of Galilee, the throng became so great, that Jesus, to avoid the pressure of the crowd, entered “a small ship,” or boat, and pushed out a little from the shore; “for he had healed many, insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God!”

From the tumult of these exciting and exhausting scenes, Jesus escaped to the solitude of a mountain near by, where, alone, he “continued all night in prayer to God.”[10] In the morning he called his disciples to him, and, after these long hours of prayer, “of them he chose twelve, whom he named apostles. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils. Now, the names of these twelve apostles are these: Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphæus, and Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.”[11]

Accompanied by these twelve as a select and sacred band of missionaries, and followed by the remaining band of the disciples, Jesus descended from the mountain into one of the plains which fringed the shores of the Galilean lake. Immediately he was surrounded with “a great multitude of people which came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases, and they that were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch him; for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.”

In the presence of this vast assemblage, and in a voice which probably every one could hear, Jesus again gave full utterance to the moral principles upon which his kingdom was to be reared. In this extraordinary address, the same principles are enunciated which he proclaimed in his Sermon on the Mount, which Matthew has recorded. Luke has probably given us but an epitome of this second address. It was as follows:—

“And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed are ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now; for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate

you from their company, and reproach you, and shall cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

"But woe unto you that are rich! for you have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

"But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

"But love ye your enemies, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful and the evil. Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

"Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master; but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite! cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

"For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

"And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like. He is like a man which built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock. And, when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man, that, without a foundation, built a house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

At the close of this address, Jesus entered into Capernaum. There was residing in the city a centurion, or captain of a band of a hundred Roman soldiers. He had a servant who was sick, "grievously tormented, and ready to die" of a palsy. It is probable that this centurion, though a pagan by birth, had become a worshipper of the God of the Jews, and was highly esteemed by the Jewish people. Immediately upon the return of Jesus to Capernaum, the centurion repaired to the elders of the Jews, and besought them that they would intercede with Jesus in his behalf that he would heal his servant. They went in a body, the centurion accompanying them.

"And, when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this; for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue."

Jesus, addressing the centurion, said unto him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."

When Jesus saw that this Roman soldier, this Gentile, had such implicit confidence in him as to believe that diseases were as obedient to the command of Jesus as his own men were to his authority, he turned to his disciples, and said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth."

Then, addressing the centurion, he said, "Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." The centurion and his friends, returning to the house, found the servant restored to perfect health.

The next day, Jesus, accompanied by his disciples and a large concourse of the people, went to Nain, a small city among the mountains of Galilee, about twelve miles south-west of Capernaum. "Now, when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and much people of the city was with her. And, when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier; and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak; and he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear [awe and amazement] on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people."[12]

John the Baptist was now a prisoner in the castle of Machærus. He had testified to the Messiahship of Jesus. The months were gliding away, and yet Jesus was not accomplishing any thing of that which the Jews had expected of their Messiah. He had filled Palestine with his fame as a great prophet, performing the most astounding miracles, and preaching with wisdom and power, which excited the admiration of his friends, and baffled his foes. But there were no indications whatever of any movement in the direction of driving out the Romans, and restoring the Jews to independence in a re-established kingdom which should be the wonder of the world.

As John, from the glooms of his prison, watched the footsteps of Jesus, he was probably disappointed and bewildered. He began, perhaps, to doubt whether Jesus were the Messiah. He therefore sent two of his disciples to ask of Jesus distinctly the question, “Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?”

Instead of replying to this question, Jesus performed, in the presence of the two disciples, a large number of very extraordinary miracles. “He cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.”

Then, addressing the messengers from John, he said, “Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard,—how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.”

Then, apparently apprehensive that his disciples might form an unfavorable opinion respecting John, as though he were fickle-minded, having once declared him to be the Messiah, and then in doubt sending to inquire if he were the Messiah, he assured them that John was not “a reed shaken by the wind;” that he was not a luxurious man “clothed in soft raiment,” who could be conquered by imprisonment; but that he was one of the most heroic and inflexible of prophets: “among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater.”

Continuing his remarks, he said that the scribes and lawyers were like capricious children invited by their playmates to join them in their amusements, but who would play neither at weddings nor funerals. Thus they rejected John because he was too austere, and Jesus because he was not austere enough. “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”—“I had read this passage a hundred times,” said John Randolph, “before I perceived its real meaning,—that no lukewarm seeker can become a true Christian.”

There were two cities, Chorazin and Bethsaida, in which Jesus had preached his gospel and performed many miracles, and they had not accepted his doctrine. Having enjoyed and rejected such privileges, Jesus declared that it would be more tolerable in the day of judgment for the heathen inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon than for them. Capernaum also received the severest denunciation. These cities have utterly perished: not even their ruins remain. And yet Jesus closed this impressive discourse with the soothing words, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek, and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”13

Notwithstanding the severity with which Jesus denounced the Pharisees, one of them, by the name of Simon, probably somewhat convicted of sin, invited him to dine. Jesus promptly accepted the invitation. While reclining upon a couch at the table, in the Oriental custom, one of the unhappy women of the city, of notoriously bad character, overwhelmed with remorse, came in with a box of precious ointment, and wept so bitterly, that her tears fell upon the feet of Jesus where she knelt. She wiped the tears off with her flowing hair, and anointed his feet with the fragrant ointment. Jesus did not rebuke her.

The proud, self-righteous Pharisee was offended. Though he did not venture to utter any words of reproof, he said to himself, “This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him.” Jesus knew his thoughts, and said, in those calm tones of authority which marked all his utterances,—

“Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And, when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?”

Simon replied, “I suppose that he to whom he forgave most.”

Jesus said unto him, “Thou hast rightly judged.” Then, turning to the weeping penitent at his feet, he said, “Simon, seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house: thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”

Then, turning to the woman, he said, “Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace.”

From the city of Nain, Jesus set out upon a new tour through the cities and villages of Galilee, accompanied by his twelve apostles. Several devoted women also accompanied them, to minister to their wants. Mary, called Magdalene (from Magdala, the place of her residence), and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, are specially mentioned. It was truly a missionary tour, as Jesus “went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.” It must have occupied several months; and yet we have scarcely the slightest record of its events.

Upon reaching Capernaum, the throng was so great, that Jesus had no time even to partake of food. A man, both blind and dumb, and possessed with a devil, was brought to him; and he healed him. This led many to inquire, “Is not this the Messiah?” It is interesting to observe how the feelings of the people vacillated. The astounding miracles which Jesus performed led them to believe that he must be the Messiah; and yet he was making no movement whatever toward the establishment of that temporal kingdom which they supposed to be the principal object of the Messiah’s coming. The Pharisees, as a body, were growing more and more malignant in their hostility. It was impossible for them to deny that evil spirits were compelled to obey the bidding of Jesus. They therefore absurdly affirmed that the devils obeyed him because he was “Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.” It was in this connection, when the Pharisees, wilfully withstanding the evidence of truth, maliciously, and against the conviction of their own consciences, accused Jesus of being the prince of devils, that he uttered the remarkable declaration,—

“Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

The serenity with which Jesus ever alluded to the grandeur of his own character and mission is worthy of special notice. There is no apparent want of modesty in his speaking of himself in terms which, from the lips of any other man, would be deemed intolerable boasting. In the very impressive discourse uttered upon this occasion, he said, referring to himself,—

“The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.”

While he was thus speaking, he was informed that his mother, and his brothers, James, Joses, Simon, and Judas, were standing without, and wished to speak to him. He replied, “Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?” Then, waving his hand towards his disciples, he added, “Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.”

The same day on which the above transactions took place, Jesus left the city of Capernaum, and repaired to a secluded spot upon the shores of the lake. As usual, an immense concourse followed him. Here, addressing listening thousands, he resumed his preaching, standing upon a boat, while the multitude thronged the shore. It was on this occasion that he introduced the beautiful parable of the sower. At the close, his disciples inquired why he addressed the people in parables. His reply was, that he did so, because that, by so speaking, honest inquirers for the truth could easily receive it, and be benefited by it; while cavillers, who hated the truth, and were seeking only for opportunities to revile, had also an opportunity presented to them to develop their own wicked natures.

He then introduced the parables of the wheat and the tares, of the grain of mustard-seed, of the leaven. Returning to the city, he entered a house with his twelve apostles, and there privately explained more fully to them the significance of the parables, and added three more,—the parable of the hidden treasure, of the one pearl, of the net.

As the evening of this busy day approached, Jesus again sought solitude, and requested his disciples to take him in a boat across the lake to the eastern shore. The lake here was about six miles broad. Slowly moving over the calm waters, it was midnight ere they reached the middle of the lake. Suddenly a terrible tempest came sweeping down upon them from the snowy cliffs of Mount Hermon on the north. Jesus slept serenely amidst the surging waves, though the apparent danger was very great. His terrified companions awoke him, saying, rather petulantly, “Lord, save us! Carest thou not that we perish?”

Jesus, as he looked around upon the darkness and the raging waves, rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was immediately a perfect calm. Then, turning to his disciples, he gently chided

them for their unbelief. “Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?” Notwithstanding all they had witnessed before, the disciples were greatly impressed by this signal display of power, and said one to another, “What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

The eastern shore of the lake was a wild, rocky, cavernous district, which, in olden time, had been much used as catacombs for the dead. They had scarcely landed amidst the solitude of this inhospitable region when two demoniacs came rushing out of the tombs to meet him. Of one it is said, he was exceeding fierce, so that “no man could bind him; no, not with chains; because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.”

From his lair this madman rushed upon Jesus to avenge this invasion of his domains. But suddenly he stopped, seemed bewildered, terrified, and, falling upon his knees, gazed upon the approaching stranger with speechless astonishment. Calmly Jesus addressed him, saying, “Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit!” Then ensued the following very singular colloquy:—

The demoniac, with a loud voice, cried out, “What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.”

Jesus replied, “What is thy name?”

“My name is Legion,” answered the demoniac; “for we are many.” The devils then besought Jesus that they might not be sent out of the country, so congenial to them, of desolation, rocks, and deserted tombs. Upon one of the cliffs which bordered the lake there was a herd of swine, nearly two thousand in number: “So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.”

Jesus said unto them, “Go. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the whole herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and were choked in the sea.”

It is, perhaps, not strange that these demons should, under the circumstances, have conducted in a manner to us utterly inexplicable. Certainly no attempts, thus far, to show the reasonableness of their course, have proved successful.

The keepers of the swine fled, reporting throughout the region the disaster which had befallen them, doubtless much more impressed by the loss of the swine than by the restoration of their brother-man from the possession of demons. The desolate country on this side of the lake was inhabited by a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. As the Jews were forbidden by their own laws to keep swine, the keepers were either engaged in illegal business, or were Gentiles.

Not far from the scene of this miracle was the small city of Gergasa. The report soon reached its streets. An immense multitude, “the whole city,” flocked out “to see what was done.” They found the man, whose maniacal fury had been the terror of the whole community, sitting calm and peaceful, “in his right mind,” conversing with Jesus. But they mourned the loss of the swine.

Still they stood in such fear of the power of Jesus, that they did not dare to molest him, but, with one accord, entreated him to depart out of their coasts. Jesus responded to their wishes by re-entering the ship, and returning to the other side of the lake. The grateful man, who had been thus miraculously delivered from the most awful doom, begged for permission to accompany him; but Jesus withheld his consent, saying,—

"Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."[14]

Upon the return of Jesus to Capernaum, he was received very cordially by the people; for they had missed him, and mourned even his short absence. The busy life of Jesus, in preaching his gospel, and in enforcing his authority by miraculous deeds of beneficence, seems to have engrossed every moment of his time.

Immediately upon his return to Capernaum, we find him surrounded by an immense concourse of people, drawn together by the novelty and the charm of his teachings. While he was addressing them, Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, came, and, falling upon his knees at the feet of Jesus, earnestly entreated him to save his little daughter, who was lying at the point of death. "Come, I pray thee," said he, "and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live."

Jesus accompanied him to his house: his disciples and the crowd followed. While on his way through the streets, a woman, afflicted by a distressing disease, which, according to the law, was pronounced unclean, and was deemed incurable, stealthily pressed her way through the crowd, and, striving to avoid observation, touched the hem of his garment; for she said within herself, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole."

The result cannot be more impressively told than in the words of the evangelist: "And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And, when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour."

While this scene was transpiring, a messenger came from the house of Jairus to inform him that his daughter was dead, and that, consequently, all hope was at an end. But Jesus spoke words of encouragement to the grief-stricken father, saying, "Be not afraid: only believe." They repaired to the house. The members of the bereaved family were giving utterance to their grief by loud weeping and wailing. Jesus gently reproved them, intimating that he would awake her from the sleep of death, by saying, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." This assertion only excited the derision of the unbelieving group who had gathered around the corpse.

He ordered all to leave the death-chamber. Then, entering with the father and mother of the child, he took the lifeless hand in his own, and said, “Damsel, arise!” Immediately the glowing blood of health rushed through her veins; and the daughter of twelve years rose from her couch, to be encircled in the arms of her amazed and grateful parents.

Thus wonder after wonder greeted the ears of the astonished citizens of Capernaum. Returning from the house of Jairus to the dwelling, probably the house of Peter, which he made his temporary home while in Capernaum, he was followed by two blind men, who incessantly exclaimed, “Thou son of David, have mercy on us!” For some unexplained reason, Jesus paid no apparent heed to their cry. But, when he entered the house, the blind were permitted by the multitude to crowd their way in also. Jesus then, turning to them, said, “Believe ye that I am able to do this?” They replied, “Yea, Lord.” Then he touched their eyes, and said, “According to your faith be it unto you.” We know not why Jesus should have enjoined it upon these blind men, as he did upon the parents of the maiden restored to life, not to proclaim the miracle abroad. It seems impossible that such astounding events, occurring in a crowded city, in broad day, could be concealed, or that any advantage could be derived from their concealment.

Jesus returned to Nazareth; but his reception by his fellow-townsmen was not cordial. Though he performed some miracles, and taught in their synagogue with such wisdom and authority as astonished them, still they rather sneeringly remarked,—

“Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James and Joses and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence, then, hath this man all these things?”

Jesus seems to have been discouraged by this unbelieving spirit on their part; for he soon left them, after healing a few of their sick, saying in a proverbial phrase, “A prophet is not without honor save in his own country and in his own house.”

Leaving Nazareth, he again set out upon a tour through the cities and villages of Galilee, “teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”15 The material and the spiritual wants of the people deeply oppressed his spirit. “He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd.” In view of this moral desolation, he called his twelve chosen apostles around him, and said to them,—

“The harvest truly is plenteous; but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.”

He then, having endowed them with miraculous powers that they might cast out devils and cure diseases, sent them forth two and two “to preach the kingdom of God.” In preparation for the privations and toils before them, he addressed them in the following memorable words:—

“Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And, as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils. Freely have ye

received; freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat.

“And, into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And, when ye enter into a house, salute it. And, if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but, if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But, when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

“And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But, when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come.[16]

“The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household! Fear them not, therefore; for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

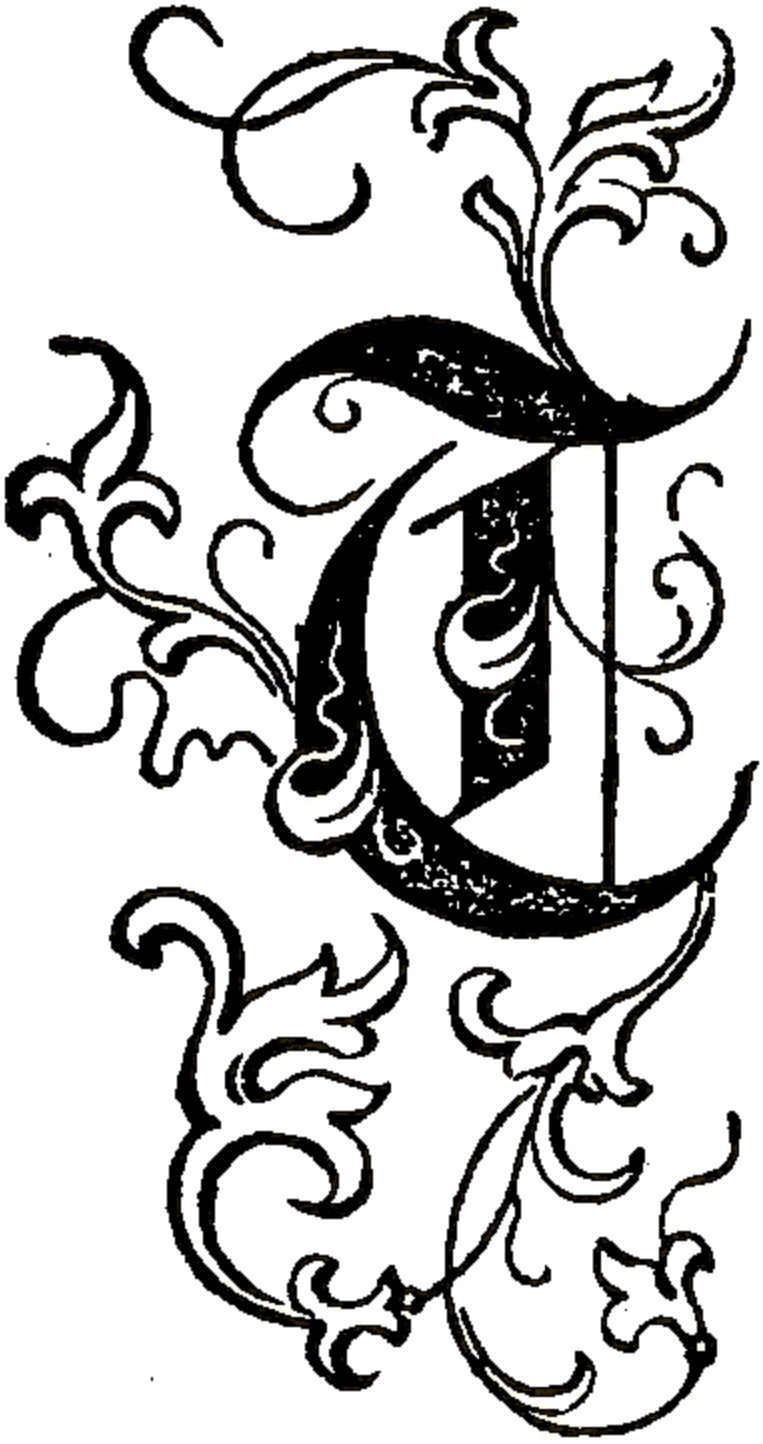
“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

“He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones17 a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, He shall in no wise lose his reward.”

Thus commissioned to an enterprise of toil, poverty, deprivation, and suffering, these apostles of Jesus went forth to preach the gospel of Christ throughout the land. Jesus also “departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.”

CHAPTER III.
THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS, AND MIRACLES OF HEALING.

Infamy of Herod.—Jesus in the Desert.—Feeds the Five Thousand.—Walks on the Sea.—Preaches to the People.—Visits Tyre and Sidon.—The Syro-Phœnician Woman.—Cures all Manner of Diseases.—Feeds the Four Thousand.—Restores Sight to a Blind Man.—Conversation with Peter.—The Transfiguration.—Cure of the Lunatic.—Dispute of the Apostles.—Law of Forgiveness.—Visits Jerusalem.—Plot to seize Jesus.—The Adulteress.—Jesus the Son of God.—The Blind Man.—Parable of the Good Shepherd.—Raising of Lazarus.



HE fame of Jesus had reached the ears of King Herod, the son of Herod called the Great. This wretched man had already ordered the death of his prisoner, John the Baptist, to gratify a woman who had deserted her own husband, and had induced him to abandon his own wife, that they might be united in guilty bonds. Agitated by remorse, he feared that his beheaded victim had risen from the grave.

It would seem to be a matter deeply to be regretted that we have no record of the adventures of the apostles upon their first missionary excursion. At its close they returned to Jesus, who was at Capernaum, “and told him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.

“And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while; for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.” Upon the northern shore of the lake, there was the city of Bethsaida, just east of the entrance of the Jordan into the Sea of Galilee. Near that place there was a desert region of silence and solitude. Embarking in one of the fishermen’s boats, called a ship, Jesus and his apostles sought this retreat; but the excited multitude followed upon the shore on foot. There was no seclusion for Jesus. An immense crowd soon again surrounded him. They were in the desert, and, without food, were in danger of perishing. Jesus, “moved with compassion towards them, received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.”

Ascending a small eminence, Jesus looked with tender sympathy over the vast and hungry throng, amounting to five thousand men, besides women and children. His disciples ventured to suggest, that as night was coming on, and they had nothing to eat, he should send them all away, that in the villages around they might obtain food. Jesus requested them to ascertain how much food there was at their disposal. Having made inquiries, they reported to him that there were but five barley-loaves and two small fishes.

He then requested the multitude to sit down upon the ground in companies of fifty. Taking the loaves and the fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and brake. The disciples then distributed to the multitude; “and they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up of the fragments which remained twelve baskets full.”

Having thus fed them, Jesus requested them all to retire to their homes. At the same time, he directed his disciples to get into the ship, and return to the western side of the lake. He himself, entirely alone, went up into a mountain apart to pray. The gloom of night soon enveloped the whole region. A violent head wind arose, tossing the little ship which contained the disciples upon a boisterous sea. It was the darkest hour of the night, just before the dawn of the morning, when the disciples, toiling at the oars against the contrary wind, were affrighted by seeing some one approach them, walking over the waves. All saw the apparition, and were so greatly alarmed, that they cried out for fear.

But soon they were re-assured by hearing the well-known voice of Jesus saying unto them, “Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.” The impulsive Peter immediately exclaimed, “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And, when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But, when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and, beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me! And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith! wherefore didst thou doubt?”

As Jesus entered the ship, the wind ceased, and they found themselves entering their destined port near Capernaum. The crowd still thronged Jesus in ever-increasing numbers wherever he appeared. They came swarming over the lake in boats, and by all paths on the land, “and ran

through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. And whithersoever he entered, into villages or cities or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment; and as many as touched him were made whole."

The miracles Jesus performed seemed to be but the incidental part of his mission, intended to draw attention to his preaching, and to enforce its authority. Surrounded by the turmoil, of which we can form but a feeble conception, we have the record of the following remarkable sayings. Alluding to the miracle by which he fed the five thousand, he said,—

"Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed;" that is, accredited as an ambassador.

When some one alluded to the miracle which Moses performed in the gift of manna in the desert, Jesus replied, "Verily I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me,—that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent me,—that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

It is not strange that reflective men should have been profoundly moved by such extraordinary utterances, sustained as they were by the most astounding miracles. Here was a man born in their own neighborhood, in the most humble ranks of life, saying, "I am the bread of life;" "He that cometh to me shall never hunger;" "I came down from heaven;" "I will raise him up at the last day."

"The Jews then murmured at him" because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."

But Jesus said unto them, "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Well might those who listened to such extraordinary teachings as these say, "Never man spake like this man." "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Jesus replied in still more extraordinary and apparently inexplicable declarations: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.”

It was in the synagogue at Capernaum that Jesus made these remarks. Even his disciples were perplexed, and said “This is a hard saying: who can hear it?” Jesus, knowing their thoughts, instead of explaining his meaning, added,—

“Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not.”[18]

John, who records these words, adds, “For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon; for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.”

The Jewish doctors at Jerusalem, hearing of the fame of Jesus, and of the vast influence which he was acquiring, sent several of their most influential men to Galilee as spies upon his conduct, and, if possible, to entrap him. After a time, they accused the disciples of Jesus of not conforming to the ceremonial observances which their rules enjoined,—particularly in the matter of not performing sufficiently minute and numerous ablutions before eating, or after returning from market. Jesus silenced them by showing that they, by their unwarranted traditions, had established burdensome ceremonies which the law did not enjoin, and that they had wickedly substituted these external rites for obedience, and holiness of heart.

“Ye reject,” said he, “the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. Ye hypocrites! well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”

Soon after this, Jesus took another excursion through the whole length of Galilee, in a north-west direction, to Tyre and Sidon, in the province of Syro-Phœnicia, on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, then cities of great commercial importance. Sidon was at the distance of about sixty miles from Capernaum. Both of these cities were inhabited mainly by idolaters. Entering a house in that distant region, a woman of the country, who had doubtless heard of his miraculous powers, came to him, and, in very imploring terms, cried out,—

“Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David! my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.”

Jesus, for some unexplained reason, for a time paid no heed to her cry. At length, with great seeming severity, he said to her, “It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.”

She replied, “Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

Jesus answered, “O woman! great is thy faith. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that hour.”

This is all the record we have of this long journey. It is the general assumption that Jesus retreated to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, not to extend his ministry there, but to obtain transient rest from its exhausting toils. Returning, he crossed the Jordan several miles above its entrance into the lake, and approached Gennesaret on its eastern shore. But his footsteps could not be concealed.

“Great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and he healed them, insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel.”

One man was brought to him here who was deaf, blind, and nearly dumb. His friends implored Jesus to interpose in his behalf. Jesus moistened his own finger with spittle, and then touched his ears and his tongue. Looking up to heaven, he sighed, and said, “Be opened! and straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.”19

It is worthy of notice, that Jesus, in performing these wonderful miracles, manifested no spirit of exultation. In this case, looking up to heaven, “he sighed.” This same pensive mood of mind seemed to accompany all his teachings and all his actions.

Jesus was here again in the comparatively desolate region on the east side of the lake. Four thousand men, besides women and children, had gathered around him. “I have compassion on the multitude,” said Jesus, “because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat; and, if I send them away to their own houses fasting, they will faint by the way.”

There were but seven loaves and a few little fishes at hand. Jesus, as before, directed all the multitude to sit down upon the ground. He then took the seven loaves and the fishes, gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples to distribute to the multitude. When all had been abundantly satisfied, seven baskets of the fragments were gathered up.

Dismissing the well-fed multitude, all whose sick he had also healed, Jesus took ship and crossed the lake to Dalmanutha, a small town on the western shore of the lake, about twenty miles south of Capernaum. Some scribes and Pharisees came to him in a cavilling spirit, demanding that he should perform some miracle for their special entertainment or satisfaction. Saddened by the unbelieving, captious disposition they manifested, “he sighed deeply in spirit;” and, refusing to minister to their entertainment, he left them, and returned to the other side of the lake, warning his disciples to beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The ship landed them

again at Bethsaida, on the north-eastern shore of the lake, near the spot where he had performed the miracle of feeding the multitude with the loaves and the fishes. A blind man was brought to him, whom he healed by applying spittle to his sightless eyes. He then, we cannot tell why, sent him away to his house, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town."[20]

About fifteen miles north of Bethsaida, near the source of the Jordan, was the somewhat important town of Cæsarea Philippi. There were a few scattered villages in the sparsely-settled region between. Sauntering along on foot in one of the lonely roads of this secluded and romantic region, ascending the eastern banks of the Jordan, he withdrew for a little time from his disciples to a solitary place for prayer. Then, returning to them, he inquired,—

"Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

"And they said, Some say, John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

"But whom say ye that I am?" he added.

Simon Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

It seems from this conversation that the people generally did not recognize Jesus as the long-expected Messiah. They supposed that he was to appear in great pomp and power, drive the Roman invaders out of Palestine, and restore the kingdom again to Israel. But, when Peter announced so emphatically his conviction that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, Jesus replied,—

"Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Upon this remarkable declaration has been reared the stupendous fabric of the Papal Church, with the assumption that Peter was here appointed the vicegerent of Christ, with power to forgive sin, and condemn to eternal death; and this supremacy was to be extended to his successors. For the following reasons, Protestants reject this interpretation:—

1. "Upon this rock" means, *Upon this declaration that Jesus is the Christ*; in accordance with the reiterated assertion, that "other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ."
2. Whatever may be meant by the expression, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," cannot be intended to confer any special supremacy upon Peter, since the same authority was immediately (Matt. xviii. 18) extended to all the apostles.

It is very evident that Jesus did not regard Peter as infallible; since he soon administered to him the terrible rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" It is equally plain that the other apostles did not so regard him; since it is recorded (Gal. ii. 11) that Paul withstood him to his face, because he

was to be blamed. To *bind* and to *loose*, in Jewish phrase, was to *prohibit* and to *permit*. By this phrase, Jesus announced that his apostles were to be divinely guided in the organization of the Church. Such rites and ceremonies as they should establish were to have the force of divine authority.

It was but gradually that Jesus revealed the great mystery of his kingdom to his disciples. He now, for the first time, began to unfold to them the truth,—that he was to go to Jerusalem, there to suffer and to be killed, and to rise again from the dead on the third day. The impetuous Peter, perhaps unduly elated by the commendation he had just received, with the grossest impropriety took it upon himself to rebuke his Lord and Master, whom he had just confessed to be the Messiah. Jesus turned upon him, and, with terrible severity, said,—

"Get thee behind me, Satan! thou art an offence unto me; for thou savorest not [dost not understand] the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Peter needed this rebuke; and it certainly must have satisfied him that he could set up no claim to infallibility. Jesus, continuing his address to his apostles, said, in words which will ever vibrate throughout the whole Christian world,—

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall find it. For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."[21]

This conversation took place far away amidst the wild and mountainous solitudes of the north, in the vicinity of Cæsarea Philippi. Just north of them swept the magnificent mountain-range of Great Hermon. Rugged peaks were rising from the plain all around. Jesus, who ever loved the stillness of the night and the solitude of the mountain, took with him three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John, and ascended one of these eminences "to pray."

"And, as he prayed, he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him; and they spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

"But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep; and, when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles,—one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias,—not knowing what he said. While he yet spake, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And there came a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him.

“And, when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid; and, when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only.”

Thus there were three witnesses to the divine attestation that Jesus was the Messiah. Still, when they were descending the mountain, Jesus requested them to “tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.”

It was difficult for the disciples to accept the doctrine of a Messiah who should be put to death: it caused an utter bewilderment of all their preconceived conceptions of a Messiah triumphant over all his foes. As they walked along, “they questioned one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.” It seems that they were thrown into a state of great perplexity, and began again to doubt whether Jesus were really the Messiah; for the next day they cautiously inquired of him how it was that “the scribes say that Elias must first come.” Jesus informed them that Elias had already come, in the person of John the Baptist; and that, as the scribes had done to him whatever they chose, “so likewise shall the Son of man suffer of them.”

As soon as Jesus appeared, descending from the mountain, a multitude rapidly gathered around him. A father, who had heard of the fame of Jesus, had brought his son to be healed who was suffering terribly from a foul spirit. He had arrived while Jesus was upon the mountain, and had applied to his disciples for aid. As soon as Jesus appeared, the father hastened to him, and, falling upon his knees before him, said,—

“Lord, have mercy on my son; for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

“Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation! how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me.”

The child was brought to Jesus, and was immediately seized with terrible convulsions. To the inquiry of Jesus, “How long is it ago since this came unto him?” the father replied, “Of a child; and ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him. But, if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

“Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

“And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief.

“When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

“And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him. And he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and delivered him again to his father.”

The disciples soon after came to Jesus, and inquired of him, privately, why they could not cast out that evil spirit. To this Jesus made the remarkable reply, not easily to be fully comprehended by our weak faith,—

"Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain [probably pointing to the Mount of Transfiguration], Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit, this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."22

Jesus now commenced another tour through the cities and villages of Galilee, preaching the gospel and healing the sick, everywhere creating amazement "at the mighty power of God." While on this tour, he again informed his disciples, in most emphatic terms, of his approaching death at Jerusalem.

"The Son of man," said he, "is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and, after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day."23

But the apostles could not understand how the Messiah could be put to death. "They were exceeding sorry," and "understood not that saying," and "were afraid to ask him." As the apostles journeyed along, following the footsteps of Jesus, a discussion rose among them as to who would be pre-eminent in the kingdom of the Messiah.

"Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace; for by the way they had disputed among themselves who should be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them; and, when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me; and whoso shall receive me, receiveth, not me, but Him that sent me."

When they had returned to Capernaum, the question rose respecting paying tribute-money, which Jesus paid by sending Peter to the lake to catch a fish, in whose mouth a piece of money was found. Jesus also made some very striking remarks, recorded by both Matthew and Mark, respecting the fearful consequence of tempting others to sin.24

He also introduced the parable of the lost sheep, gave them instructions respecting their dealings with a Christian brother who should fall into sin, and conferred upon them all the same authority to establish rules for the government of the Church which before he had apparently conferred upon Peter. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever shall be loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven." He then assured them, that, in the organization of the Church, if any two should agree about the arrangement of affairs, it should be ratified by God. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven; for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

When Peter asked Jesus if he should forgive a brother who had sinned against him seven times, he replied, “I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.” He then introduced the parable of the king and his debtors.

The Jews’ feast of tabernacles was at hand. Jesus had thus far performed his miracles and proclaimed his teachings almost entirely in the remote province of Galilee. His brethren urged him to go up to Jerusalem, the thronged metropolis, that he might “show himself to the world.” They said this sarcastically; for, notwithstanding all his mighty works, it is recorded that “his brethren” did not believe in him. Jesus, however, said that the time had not yet come for him to go to Jerusalem; adding, “The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil.” Jesus remained in Galilee until after his brethren had gone up to Jerusalem. At the feast, there was a very general inquiry where Jesus was. It was supposed, that, being a Jew, he certainly would not abstain from being present. There was also great diversity of opinion expressed respecting his character; some saying that he was a good man, while others said that he was deceiving the people.

About the middle of the feast, Jesus made his appearance, and, entering the temple, taught the people. His words and manner excited the surprise of all who heard him, leading them to say, “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” Jesus replied,—

“My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. Did not Moses give you the law? and yet none of you keepeth the law. Why go ye about to kill me?”

The people replied in words which showed their rising hatred, “Thou hast a devil. Who goeth about to kill thee?”

Jesus, referring to the healing of the man at the Pool of Bethesda, said, “I have done one work, and ye all marvel.” Then, to show them the unreasonableness of their hostility to him because he thus healed a man on the sabbath day, he said, “Moses gave unto you circumcision; and ye, on the sabbath day, circumcise a man. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry at me because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?”

The appearance of Jesus and his teaching excited great commotion in Jerusalem; and there was much discussion among the people, whether he were the Messiah. The rulers were bewildered. They wished to arrest him and silence him; but there was nothing in what he said or did which could warrant them in any acts of violence. Many of the people in Jerusalem expressed the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, saying, “When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than this man hath done?” The Pharisees and chief priests, alarmed by these indications of increasing popular favor, secretly sent officers to take him; but, though Jesus continued teaching the people without adopting any measures of concealment or defence, for some unexplained reason the officers did not arrest him. He, however, made an announcement to the people, which, at the time, they did not fully comprehend,—that, when his appointed time came, he should return to

his Father in heaven, and that then they would seek him in vain. “Yet a little while,” said he, “am I with you; and then I go unto Him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come.”25

Thus he continued boldly teaching until the last great day of the feast, when, in an emphatic voice, he uttered in the temple the memorable words, so assuming if he were but a man, so suitable if he were divine, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;” adding, in phrase still figurative, that those who thus partook of the fountain of living waters should bestow liberal and constant blessings on their fellow-men.

When the officers who had been sent to arrest Jesus returned without him, they replied to the inquiry why they had done so, “Never man spake like this man.” The Pharisees scornfully retorted, alluding to the undoubted fact that it was the common people who generally accepted Jesus, “Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.”

Here Nicodemus, who was a member of the council, and who, several months before, had visited Jesus by night, ventured timidly to interpose. “Doth our law,” he inquired, “judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?” He was silenced by the contemptuous and somewhat menacing reply, “Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.”

While the rulers were thus seeking to entrap Jesus, he left the city, and ascended the greensward of the Mount of Olives, about a mile east of the walls. Here it seems that he spent the night beneath the stars of that serene and genial clime. Early the next morning, he returned to the temple. A multitude, as usual, gathered around him. The following remarkable scene which then ensued cannot be better described than in the language of the inspired writers:—

“And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and, when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now, Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou? This they said tempting him, that they might accuse him.

“But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground. So, when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”26

Then, turning to the people assembled in the temple, he said, in phrases which will cause every thoughtful mind to pause and ponder, “I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

These were, indeed, very extraordinary assertions upon any other assumption than that he was truly the "brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." The Pharisees accused him of boasting, saying, "Thou bearest record of thyself: thy record is not true."

Jesus re-affirmed his declaration, saying, "Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh: I judge no man. And yet, if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself; and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."[27]

To this they replied with the question, "Where is thy Father?" They had before sought to kill him because he said that God was his Father.

Jesus answered, "Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. I go my way; and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go ye cannot come. Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said, therefore, unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for, if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

They responded, "Who art thou?"

Jesus, evading an explicit answer, replied, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but, as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."

We are informed that many were convinced by these words that Jesus was the Messiah. Addressing them, he said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

But his opponents rejoined, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man. How sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"

Jesus replied, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house forever; but the Son abideth ever. If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father; and ye do that which ye have seen with your father."

"Abraham," said they, "is our father."

Jesus replied, “If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father.”

Then said they unto him, “We be not born of fornication. We have one Father, even God.”

“If God were your Father,” Jesus rejoined, “ye would love me; for I proceeded forth and came from God. Neither came I of myself; but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it. And, because I tell you the truth, ye believe not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And, if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God’s word. Ye, therefore, hear them not, because ye are not of God.”

The rulers, growing more and more exasperated by this plainness of speech, replied, “Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?”

Jesus answered, “I have not a devil; but I honor my Father, and ye do dishonor me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.”

His opponents replied, “Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead. Whom makest thou thyself?”

Jesus answered, “If I honor myself, my honor is nothing. It is my Father that honoreth me, of whom ye say that he is your God. Yet ye have not known him. But I know him; and, if I should say I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.”

Then said the Jews, “Thou art not yet fifty years old; and hast thou seen Abraham?”

Jesus replied, “Before Abraham was, I am.”

The exasperation of his foes now exceeded all bounds, and they began to pick up stones to stone him; but Jesus, exercising that marvellous power by which he had before extricated himself from the violence of his enemies, quietly retired from the temple, passing through the midst of them.

Entering the streets of the city, he met a man blind from his birth. His disciples asked the question which has been re-echoed by all thoughtful minds from that day to this: “Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?”

Jesus replied, that his calamity was not to be attributed to any particular sin of himself or his parents. “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be

made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

He then anointed the eyes of the blind man with clay moistened with spittle, and directed him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. He did so, and his sight was restored. It was the sabbath day. The Pharisees, enraged, said, "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day." Others, however, replied, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" And thus all Jerusalem was agitated by diversity of opinion. The rulers, in their madness, had passed a decree, that, if any one should confess that he believed that Christ was the Messiah, he should be put out of the synagogue; that is, he should be exposed to the terrible doom of excommunication, which was attended with awful maledictions, exclusion from all intercourse with society, and which prohibited every one from ministering in any way whatever to his wants.

Still the excitement in the city was every hour rising higher and higher. The blind man was universally known. His miraculous cure no one could deny. Neither the blind man nor his parents dared to avow their belief that Jesus was the Messiah. When the parents were questioned, they referred the questioner to their son, saying, "He is of age: ask him." When the son was questioned, he was equally cautious in his responses. The Pharisees who approached him said, "Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner."

He replied, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not. One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

To their reiterated inquiry, "How opened he thine eyes?" he replied, somewhat provoked, "I have told you already, and ye did not hear. Wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye, also, be his disciples?"

This taunt increased their exasperation: and they retorted, "Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is."

With unexpected boldness, the man rejoined, "Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is; and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now, we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."

For this speech, cautious as it was, the rulers excommunicated the man. Jesus heard of it, and went in search of him. Having found him, he inquired, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man replied, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" Jesus said, "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee."

To this emphatic declaration, that Jesus was the Messiah, the man replied, "Lord, I believe." The inspired historian adds, "And he worshipped him;" that is, paid homage to him as the Messiah.

Jesus then delivered to those who had gathered around him the parable of the good shepherd, and explained it, saying,—

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me; but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

Such remarks as these increased the excitement and the diversity of opinion which prevailed respecting Jesus. Many of them said, "He hath a devil, and is mad: why hear ye him?" Others said, "These are not the words of him that hath a devil: can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

It is probable, that, after this, Jesus returned to Capernaum in Galilee. Two months passed, during which he was undoubtedly active in his mission; but we have no record whatever of any thing which he said or did. The feast of the dedication commenced on the fifteenth day of December, and continued eight days. We find Jesus again at Jerusalem. The record of John is as follows:—

"And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus replied, "I told you, and ye believed not. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. I and my Father are one."[28]

This assertion of the oneness of Jesus with the Father so exasperated the unbelieving Jews, that they took up stones to stone him. Jesus said to them, "Many good works have I showed you from my Father: for which of those works do ye stone me?"

They replied, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

Jesus replied in words which the Jews understood to be reaffirming his statement, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him."

This renewed assertion of his equality with God induced the Jews again to take up stones to stone him; “but he escaped out of their hands.” Leaving Jerusalem, he crossed the River Jordan, and entered that wilderness region which had been rendered memorable by the preaching and the baptism of John. There, at a distance of about a hundred miles from his implacable foes, beneath the shadows of Mount Gilead, he resumed preaching the gospel to the multitudes of the common people who resorted to hear him. It is written that “many believed on him there.”

A few miles east from Jerusalem there was the little village of Bethany, where a man by the name of Lazarus resided with his two sisters, Martha and Mary. They were the warm friends of Jesus, and their dwelling had been one of his favorite resorts. Lazarus was taken sick. His sisters immediately sent word to Jesus, who, in the wilderness, was one or two days’ journey from Bethany. Jesus, instead of hurrying to his afflicted friends, said calmly to the messenger, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” Two days passed by; and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go into Judæa again.” They endeavored to dissuade him, saying, “Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?” He, however, informed his disciples that Lazarus was dead, and intimated to them that he must go to raise him from the grave.

Accompanied by his disciples, he reached Bethany. Martha hastened to meet him before he entered the town, and gently reproached him, yet in terms expressive of her unbounded confidence. “Lord, if thou hadst been here,” she said, “my brother had not died; but I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.”

“Thy brother,” said Jesus, “shall rise again.”

“I know,” Martha rejoined, “that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

Jesus replied, “I am the resurrection and the life.[29] He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

“Yea, Lord,” Martha replied: “I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.”

Mary soon joined her sister, and, falling at the feet of Jesus, exclaimed, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus, therefore, saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him?”

Together they went to the tomb, where the body was already mouldering to corruption. When they reached the tomb, Jesus wept. He directed the stone which was the door of the tomb to be moved. Then, lifting his eyes to heaven, he said,—

“Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.”

Then in a loud voice, addressing the dead, he exclaimed, “Lazarus, come forth!” Immediately Lazarus, embarrassed by the wrappings of the grave-clothes, rose, and came out from the tomb, and returned to his home with his friends.

This miracle led many of the Jews to accept Jesus as the Messiah. But it only exasperated the Pharisees, and they met together to devise some plan by which they could secure his destruction. We are informed, that, consequently, “Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews, but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim.”

This was probably a small town several miles north-east from Jerusalem. We know not how long Jesus remained here with his disciples, and we have no record either of his sayings or doings while in this place. The inspired penman informs us, “When the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.”[30]

CHAPTER IV.
LAST LABORS, AND FAREWELL TO HIS DISCIPLES.

Journey to Jerusalem.—Mission of the Seventy.—Jesus teaches his Disciples to pray.—Lament over Jerusalem.—Return to Galilee.—The Second Coming of Christ.—Dangers of the Rich.—Promise to his Disciples.—Foretells his Death.—Zacchæus.—Mary anoints Jesus.—Enters Jerusalem.—Drives the Traffickers from the Temple.—The Pharisees try to entrap him.—The Destruction of Jerusalem, and the Second Coming.—Judas agrees to betray Jesus.—The Last Supper.—The Prayer of Jesus.



S Jesus was journeying back from Ephraim to Jerusalem with his disciples, he entered a town of the Samaritans, where the inhabitants, learning that he was on his way to Jerusalem, did not give him a hospitable reception. Two of his disciples, James and John, were so indignant at their conduct, that they asked for authority to command fire from heaven to consume them. Jesus mildly rebuked them, saying, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” And he passed on to another village.

As they were toiling along over the shadowless plains, an enthusiastic convert came to him, saying, “Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.” Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.”[31]

Though he thus gently repelled this man,—who, perhaps, expected to derive some considerable worldly advantage from following him,—to another whom he met he said, “Follow me.” But this man made an excuse,—apparently a very sufficient one,—saying, “Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.” Jesus replied, “Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.”

There were doubtless circumstances in this case, with which we are not familiar, which justified this seemingly harsh reply. The meaning was quite obvious,—“Let those who are dead in sin take care of the dead;” and Jesus doubtless meant to teach by this that nothing whatever is to be allowed to divert the mind from religion. When another said, “Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house,” he replied, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

“After these things,” it is written, “the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come.” He gave them the same directions, and almost in the same words, which he had previously given to the twelve apostles. As these disciples returned from their short but important mission to preach the gospel, they said joyfully, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.” Jesus made the memorable reply,—

“I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

A lawyer, one whose profession was to study the Jewish law, feigning a desire to be instructed, and yet probably seeking to entrap him, asked, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

Jesus replied, “What is written in the law? How readest thou?”

The lawyer replied, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbor as thyself.”

Jesus responded, “Thou hast answered right. This do, and thou shalt live.”

But the lawyer was by no means satisfied by this simple announcement of duty, and in a cavilling spirit inquired, “And who is my neighbor?”

Jesus replied in the beautiful parable of the Good Samaritan.[32]

On his way to Jerusalem, he visited Bethany, the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. As he drew near to Jerusalem, which was to be the scene of his fearful sufferings, he was much

engaged in prayer. It is recorded, “And it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say,—

“Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.”33

This prayer is precisely the same in spirit, and almost the same in words, with that which Jesus gave in the Sermon on the Mount, and was followed with very similar instructions, urging importunity in prayer. In this discourse he introduced the parables of the rich man, the wise steward, the unfaithful servant, and the barren fig-tree.

While engaged in these various works of instruction and healing, he, on his tour of mercy, again visited Galilee. Some of the Jews came to him, and urged him to leave the dominions of Herod, as Herod was seeking to kill him. Jesus replied,—

“Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.” It is supposed that Herod had cunningly sent these men, hoping thus to frighten Jesus out of his realms. The reply, which was somewhat proverbial, was simply, “Tell Herod not to be troubled. I am not violating the laws: I am engaged in works of mercy. For two or three days more I shall remain in his domains, and shall then go to Jerusalem: there my course will be ended.” Jesus added,—

“Nevertheless, I must walk to-day and to-morrow and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee! how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

Unremittingly Jesus continued in his walks of usefulness, preaching the gospel, healing the sick, comforting the afflicted, and silencing the cavils of his foes. The record we have of these tireless labors is very brief, and apparently without regard to chronology. It was probably at this time that he uttered the parables of the wedding and of the great supper.34

Multitudes continually thronged around him. To them he said, “If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” In Scripture phrase, “to hate” often signifies to *love less*. This was a declaration that Christ was to be loved supremely. No one could be his disciple who was not willing to forsake all earthly possessions and friends, if need be, for his cause.35

The self-righteous Pharisees complained that “this man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” Jesus replied in the beautiful parables of the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, and that most impressive, perhaps, of all his parables, the prodigal son; assuring poor sinners that not only

God, with parental love, welcomed their return to him, but that there was joy in the presence of the angels of God over one repentant sinner.

Each parable seems to have been a reply to some inquiry, remark, or opposition, on the part of those who listened to him. Thus he introduced the parable of the unjust steward, and of the rich man and Lazarus.36

In this latter parable, it is clearly taught that the soul, immediately upon death, proceeds to a state of reward or of punishment; and as flame causes the most direful material anguish, so sin causes the acutest suffering of which the immaterial nature is susceptible.

Jesus was now on his route to Jerusalem through the villages and cities of Galilee and Samaria. He crossed the Jordan, and preached in the rural districts beyond. Large multitudes followed him. It is impossible now to ascertain the route he took in these journeyings. The Pharisees asked when the kingdom of God—that is, the reign of the Messiah—should commence. He made the memorable reply, which is still read with awe, as indicative of scenes of unspeakable sublimity and terror yet to come:—

"As the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man: they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

"Likewise, also, as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."37

In these revelations of awful scenes to come, there is an apparent blending of the terrible suffering which was soon to befall Jerusalem in its utter overthrow and of the final coming of Christ at the day of judgment.

Again he urged persevering prayer by the parable of the importunate widow,38 and enjoined humility by the parable of the Pharisee and the publican.39 The question of divorce was presented to him, with the statement that Moses had allowed it for very trivial causes. Jesus replied, that, in the eyes of God, divorce and subsequent marriage could only be justified upon the ground of a violation of the marriage oath.40

Some children were brought to him to be blessed. He laid his hands upon their heads, and prayed; and then said, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein."

A young man of wealth, and, as a ruler, occupying posts of honor, came to Jesus, and, rather boastfully asserting that he had kept all the commandments from his youth up, inquired what more he must do that he might enter the kingdom of God. It is said that Jesus, looking upon the

ingenuous young man of unblemished morals, “loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way; sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me.”

This was merely reiterating the declaration, that every one who would be a disciple of Jesus must be willing, at his command, to make any sacrifice whatever. The test proved that the young man loved wealth more than Christ. “He went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.”

It is recorded, when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, “How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!” Then, using an expression proverbial for denoting any thing remarkably difficult, he added, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

Peter, who, since the severe rebuke administered to him by Jesus, seems to have been very retiring, said, “Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. What shall we have, therefore?” Jesus replied,—

“Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”41

It is supposed that Jesus was at this time on the eastern side of Jordan, nearly opposite Jericho. The reply to Peter was followed by the parable of the householder and his laborers. Jesus crossed the ford, and, entering Judæa, directed his steps towards Jerusalem. His disciples, conscious of the peril to which he would expose himself in the metropolis, were amazed and afraid. Jesus called the twelve around him, and said to them,—

“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles; and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him; and the third day he shall rise again.”42

The idea that the Messiah could be put to death—He who had power to bring the dead to life—was so incomprehensible to the apostles, that they could not receive the meaning of his words. They, however, walked along, conversing as they went; and both Matthew and Mark record several of the memorable sayings of Jesus by the way.43

As they drew near to Jericho, a blind man, waiting for him by the wayside, earnestly implored relief. Jesus restored his lost vision, simply saying, “Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.”

From Jericho, which was about twenty miles north-east from Jerusalem, they continued their journey, followed by an immense multitude. Two blind men, as Jesus approached, loudly implored his aid. He touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes received sight.

A rich man, named Zacchæus, a chief publican, being of short stature, climbed a tree that he might see Jesus as he passed. Jesus called him down, saying, “To-day I must abide at thy house.” Zacchæus hastened down, and received Jesus with great cordiality. Again there was murmuring because Jesus was “guest with a man that is a sinner.” It seems that Zacchæus was in heart a better man than he was in repute: for Jesus said, “This day is salvation come to this house; forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.” Then, in allusion to the charge that he associated with sinners, he said, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Notwithstanding what Jesus had said respecting his approaching sufferings and death at Jerusalem, his disciples still expected that there would be some signal displays of his power there in the establishment of a glorious reign. Jesus, therefore, addressed them in the parable of the nobleman and his servants.

Six days before the passover, Jesus reached Bethany. A very careful computation has led to the opinion that this was on the 30th of March, the year of our Lord 30. A supper was provided for him at the house of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. Lazarus sat at the table. The grateful Mary, taking an “alabaster box of ointment very precious,” anointed the head and the feet of Jesus. The house was filled with the fragrant odor. The estimated value of this was about fifty dollars,—a much larger sum in those days than now.

Several who were present considered it an act of great extravagance. That sum, distributed among the poor, would have relieved much distress. Judas Iscariot, who was the treasurer of the little band, murmured loudly, saying, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?” “This he said,” John adds, “not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.”

But Jesus commended the deed in the remarkable words, “She hath wrought a good work on me: for ye have the poor always with you, and, whenever ye will, ye may do them good; but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could. She has come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.”44

Curiosity to see Lazarus, as well as to see Jesus, assembled an immense crowd around the house. The raising of Lazarus from the dead, and his daily appearance, were evidence of the miraculous powers of Jesus which no argument could refute. The chief priests were so malignant that they consulted to put Lazarus to death, “because that by reason of him many of the Jews believed on Jesus.”

Leaving Bethany,—which, it will be remembered, was but about two miles east of Jerusalem, on the eastern declivity of the Mount of Olives,—Jesus advanced toward Jerusalem. As the rumor of his approach was circulated through the streets, a vast throng poured out at the gates to meet him. They bore branches of palm-trees in their hands, and shouted, as they escorted him in triumph, “Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord!”45 Near a hamlet at the Mount of Olives, Jesus procured a young ass which had never been mounted. His disciples spread some of their garments on the ass, and Jesus took his seat thereon. A conqueror would have wished to enter the city on a spirited war-horse gayly caparisoned. Jesus studiously avoided

all such parade. The overjoyed multitude, however, “spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before and that followed cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”46

As Jesus, thus accompanied, commenced the western descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole city lay spread out as a panorama before him. “And, when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”47

The whole city of Jerusalem was agitated by the coming of Jesus, the now widely-renowned prophet of Galilee. Jesus proceeded at once to the temple. The blind and the lame were brought in throngs to him. He healed them all. The city resounded with his acclaim. Even the children in the streets shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” The chief priests and the scribes were sorely annoyed, saying, “The world has gone after him.”

Some Greeks who were in Jerusalem came to the disciples, and expressed a wish to see Jesus. They were brought to him. Jesus, probably addressing them, said,—

“The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honor. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.” It is added, “Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

All who stood by heard the supernatural noise, and some the distinctly-articulated voice, and said, “An angel spake to him.” Jesus answered,—

“This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” “This,” adds the inspired writer, “he said, signifying what death he should die.”

The people, bewildered by such assertions, replied, “We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever; and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?”

Jesus answered, “Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.”

Jesus, after these words, withdrew secretly with his disciples from the city (for it was night), and returned to Bethany. In the morning, he came back to Jerusalem. Being hungry, and seeing a fig-tree by the way, he went to it, and found leaves only. We know not now what lesson Jesus intended to teach us: he said, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever.” The tree withered away. Again, finding the temple sacrilegiously perverted to purposes of traffic, he, by his authoritative person and voice, drove the traffickers out, saying, “It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.”

The scribes and chief priests were becoming more and more exasperated by these reproofs. But they feared to lay violent hands upon Jesus, he was so popular with the masses of the people. He continued through the day teaching the crowds ever thronging the temple to listen to his calm, impressive words. At the approach of evening, he returned to the quietude of Bethany, and in the morning re-entered the city. As he was teaching in the temple, the chief priests and scribes came and inquired of him by what authority he did these things. Jesus baffled their malignity by asking them what they thought of the prophet John. They were greatly annoyed. If they should say he was a prophet, Jesus would inquire why they did not believe in him. If, on the other hand, they should say that he was but a common man, the indignation of the people would be aroused; for they all regarded John as a prophet. They therefore said, “We cannot tell.” Jesus replied, “Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.” Having thus silenced them, and put them to shame, Jesus addressed them in the parable of the father and his two sons, and then in the parable of the vineyard let out to husbandmen.48

He made such personal application of these parables as to leave no doubt in the minds of the scribes and Pharisees that he referred to them. “But, when they sought to lay hands upon him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.” Another parable he added, that of the marriage-feast, illustrative of the same truth, that the Gentiles would enter the kingdom of God, which the Jews refused to enter.

The Pharisees endeavored to entrap him by inducing him to say something which would render him unpopular with the people. After much deliberation, they sent some spies to him to inquire whether it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, who had conquered and enslaved them. If he should say “No,” it would be treason: if he should say “Yes,” it would exasperate the people.

Jesus, “knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Bring me a penny. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They said unto him, Cæsar’s. Jesus, answering, said, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” It is added, “They marvelled, and left him, and went their way.”

Again: the Sadducees, who denied the doctrine of the resurrection, inquired of him whose wife a woman in the resurrection would be, who had married, one after another, seven husbands. Their cavilling spirit was silenced by the reply, that, in the future world, those who should “rise from the dead” would not marry, but would be as the angels of God in heaven.49 He then re-affirmed the doctrine of a future life, saying,—

“Now, that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”50

The Pharisees were quite pleased in finding the Sadducees thus confounded. Still they sought the destruction of Jesus. After taking counsel together, they commissioned one of their lawyers to ask which was the chief commandment of the law. Among these ritualists, there was quite a diversity of opinion upon this subject. Some said, “Sacrifices;” others, “Circumcision;” others, “The law of the sabbath,” &c. Jesus replied,—

“The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”51 It is recorded, “No man, after this, durst ask him any question.”

Jesus now, in his turn, asked the Pharisees a question, to show them the divine character of the Messiah, and how far their views of his dignity fell short of the truth.

“What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?” They replied, “The son of David.” Jesus rejoined, “How, then, doth David, by the Holy Ghost, call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David, then, call him Lord, how is he his son?”

They again being thus baffled, it is recorded, “And no man was able to answer him a word.”

Jesus then warned his disciples to beware of the pride, ambition, and ostentation of the scribes; of their ceremonial display, and of their moral corruption. In the temple were placed several money-boxes to receive the voluntary contributions of the people for the service of the temple. Jesus noticed the people as they came with their contributions,—many of the rich casting in large sums, not at all unwilling that the amount should be known by the lookers-on. “And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God; but she, of her penury, hath cast in all the living that she hath.”52

Notwithstanding the abounding evidence of the divine mission of Jesus, there were many who hardened their hearts, and who refused to believe in him. Others there were, then as now, who, though they were convinced of his Messiahship, had not sufficient moral courage to confess him before men. It is recorded, “Nevertheless, among the chief rulers, also, many believed on him: but, because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”53

In reference to all who thus rejected him, Jesus exclaimed, “He that believeth on me, believeth, not on me, but on Him that sent me; and he that seeth me seeth Him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any

man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."[54]

He then, addressing the multitude, warned them in the most solemn manner to avoid the hypocrisy and haughty display of these proud and pompous ceremonialists. His denunciations of them were terrible, and must have roused them to the highest pitch of rage.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" he said, "for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and, for a pretence, make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and, when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves," &c.[55]

A more terrible, and at the same time calm and truthful, denunciation cannot be found in any language. As Jesus left the temple, his disciples called his attention to the massive stones of which it was reared. Jesus assured them that the temple was to be so utterly destroyed, that not one stone should be left upon another. Departing from the city, he went with his disciples to the Mount of Olives. As he sat upon that eminence, which overlooked the city, he gave them an appalling account of the scenes which were to ensue at the time of its destruction. In reference to the persecutions which they were to encounter, he said, "For they shall deliver you up to councils, and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten; and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. Now, the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."[56]

In continuation of this wonderful discourse, and in reply to an inquiry what should be the sign of his coming and of the end of the world, Jesus added,—

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled."[57] He then adds, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

There is no portion of Scripture which has occasioned more perplexity than these predictions of Jesus, contained in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew; and it may also be

said that there is no portion of the New Testament which is read with more interest, or which inspires more profound and religious emotion. Jesus was speaking to his disciples of the overthrow of Jerusalem, and of the utter destruction of the temple. They said, “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?”

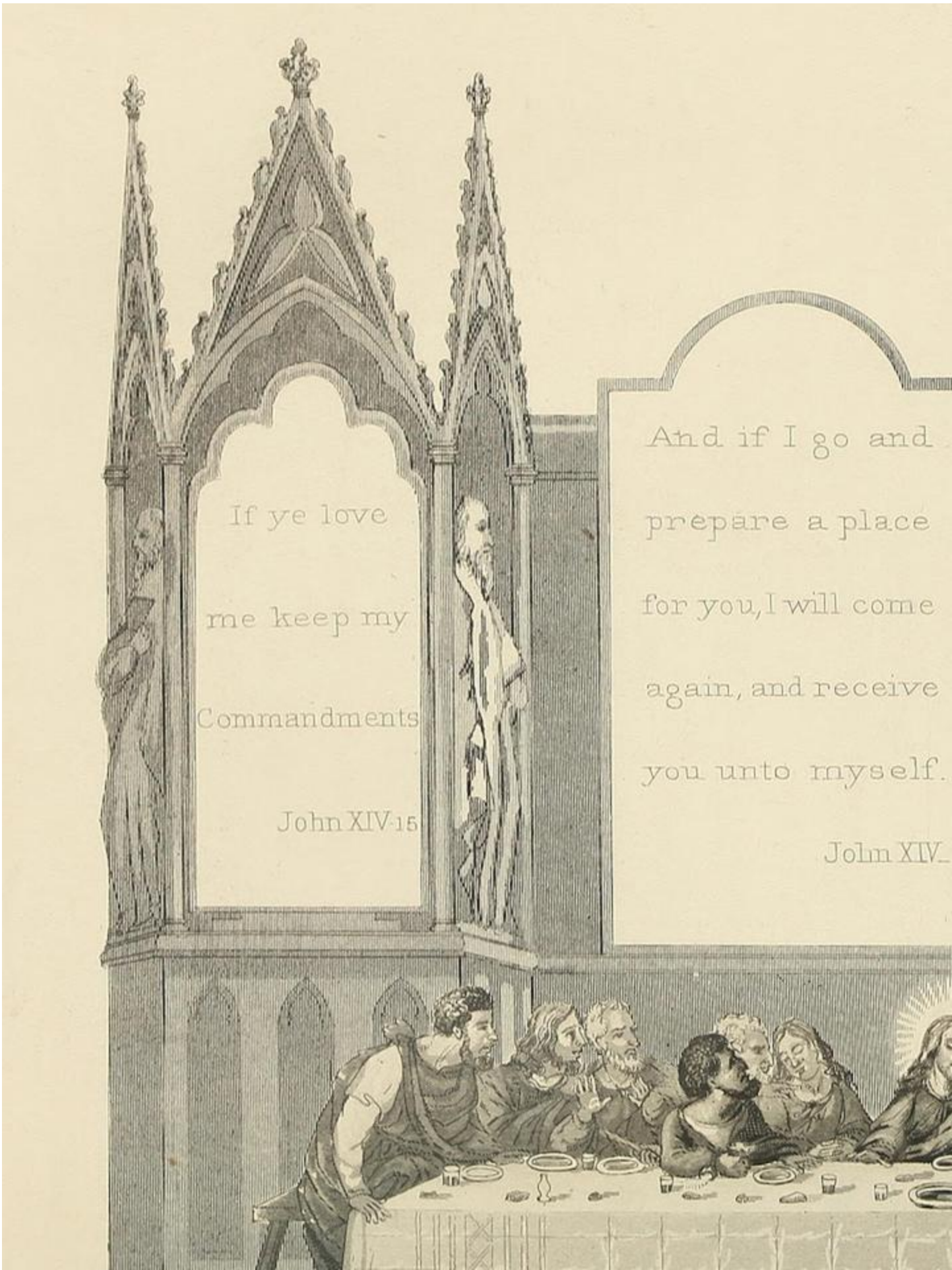
Here were two distinct questions, but which were probably erroneously associated in the minds of the disciples as one. They probably supposed that Christ’s second coming, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world, were to be the same event. In the reply of Jesus, these events are so blended, that occurrences are apparently brought together which are actually separated by many centuries. Many suppose that the destruction of Jerusalem is foretold from the beginning of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew to the twenty-ninth verse; that, from the twenty-ninth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter to the thirtieth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter, the second advent of Christ is foretold; and that, from the thirty-first verse to the end of the chapter, Christ speaks of the final judgment.

There are not a few careful students of the Bible who suppose that there are here indicated three distinct comings of Christ,—first, for the destruction of Jerusalem; second, to establish a millennial reign upon earth; and, thirdly, his coming in the day of judgment at the end of the world. Upon this general subject, the following judicious remarks by Rev. William Hanna will recommend themselves to the reader:—

“It so happens, that, among those who have made the province of unfulfilled prophecy their peculiar study, the most various and the most discordant opinions prevail. They differ, not only in their interpretation of individual prophecies, but in the systems or methods of interpretation which they employ. For some this region of biblical study has had a strange fascination; and, once drawn into it, there appears to be a great difficulty in getting out again. Perhaps the very dimness and doubtfulness that belong to it constitute one of its attractions. The lights are but few, and struggling and obscure; yet each new entrant fancies he has found the clew that leads through the labyrinth, and, with a confidence proportioned to the difficulties he imagines he has overcome, would persuade us to accompany him. Instead of inclining us the more to enter, the very number and force of these conflicting invitations serve rather to repel.”[58]

At the conclusion of these announcements respecting the future, Jesus gives a very sublime description of the day of final judgment, in which he represents himself as seated upon the throne to pronounce the irreversible verdicts.

“When the Son of man,” he said, “shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.”[59]


If ye love
me keep my
Commandments
John XIV-15
And if I go and
prepare a place
for you, I will come
again, and receive
you unto myself.
John XIV.

Having thus described himself as seated upon the throne of final judgment, he added the declaration so bewildering to his disciples, “Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.”

The chief priests and the scribes held a council in the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest, to devise some means by which they might put Jesus to death. It was not easy to rouse the mob against him; for he was popular with the people. Judas Iscariot, probably hearing of this council, went to the chief priests, and agreed to betray Jesus to them by night for thirty pieces of silver,—about fifteen dollars. “They feared the people;” and it was consequently necessary that he should “betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.”

Jesus, as usual, entered Jerusalem early in the morning, and, all the day long, was preaching his gospel; “and all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple for to hear him.” At night, he retired to his silent retreat on the Mount of Olives.

In the evening of the first day of the feast, Jesus and his twelve apostles met in an upper chamber at Jerusalem to partake of the paschal lamb. “Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father.” Tenderly he loved his apostles. In this hour, when their final separation was so near, “he riseth from supper, laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. After that, he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.”

Simon Peter, with characteristic impulsiveness, exclaimed remonstratingly, “Lord, dost thou wash my feet?”

Jesus replied, “What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.”

But Peter still remonstrated, saying, “Thou shalt never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.”

Then this childlike man, fickle yet heroic, exclaimed, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!”

Jesus rejoined, “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” He then added, in allusion to Judas Iscariot, “And ye are clean, but not all.”

Having thus washed the feet of his apostles, he sat down, and said to them, “Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet; for I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

Jesus then “took bread; and, when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me.”

While they were eating of the bread, and before they partook of the cup, Jesus said to them,—

"Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. And truly the Son of man goeth as it was determined; but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed! I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now, I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me."60

John adds, "When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."

This announcement created mingled feelings of surprise and grief. "The disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake; and they were exceeding sorrowful, and began, every one of them, to say unto him, Lord, is it I?"

He replied, "It is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish."

John, who is represented as the favorite disciple of Jesus, was sitting next to him, and reclining upon his bosom. Peter beckoned to him to ask whom he meant.

"Lord, who is it?" said John.

Jesus replied, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it." And, when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot; and, after the sop, Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, "That thou doest, do quickly."61

Judas immediately rose, and went out; "and it was night." As soon as he had left, Jesus said to the remaining eleven, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come, so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Peter said unto him, "Lord, whither goest thou?"

Jesus replied, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards."

Peter rejoined, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake."

Jesus answered, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice. Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."62

Peter rejoined, “Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death.” But Jesus reiterated his assertion, “I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.”

After this and some other conversation, Jesus “took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord’s death till he come. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

Then, to comfort them in view of the terrible disappointment they would encounter in his death, he said, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.”

Thomas, one of the twelve, inquired, “Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?”

Jesus replied, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.”

Philip, another of the twelve, said, “Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.”

Jesus replied, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works’ sake. Verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father.[63]

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me.[64] Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”

Judas, the brother of James, and who subsequently wrote the Epistle of Jude, inquired, “Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?”

Jesus replied, “If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings; and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you; but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you; for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.”

It was now probably about midnight. Jesus and his apostles sang a hymn, rose from the paschal supper, and went to the Mount of Olives. Jesus was going to be betrayed, and to die, with the whole scene of suffering open to his mind. His apostles, bewildered, and overwhelmed with grief, knew that something awful was about to take place; but they scarcely comprehended what. As they walked sadly along, Jesus continued his discourse, saying, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. I am the vine: ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.

“If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me; but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

“These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. If

they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not Him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."

Jesus then again warned the apostles of the sufferings to which they would be exposed; entreated them to persevere; assured them that he would send the Comforter to sustain them in every trial, who should guide them to all truth; and reiterated the assertion, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father."[65]

Having thus finished his farewell discourse to his apostles, standing with them at midnight upon the greensward outside of the walls of the city, with darkness and silence around, and the stars above, he raised his eyes to heaven, and breathed the most solemn, comprehensive, and impressive prayer that was ever uttered by mortal lips.

"Father," said he, "the hour is come: glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father! glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now, they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world; and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name. Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.

“Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”66

CHAPTER V.
ARREST, TRIAL, AND CRUCIFIXION.

Anguish of Jesus.—His Prayers in the Garden.—The Arrest.—Peter’s Recklessness.—Flight of the Apostles.—Jesus led to Annas; to Caiaphas.—Jesus affirms that he is the Messiah.—Frivolous Accusations.—Peter denies his Lord.—Jesus is conducted to Pilate.—The Examination.—Scourging the Innocent.—Insults and Mockery.—Rage of the Chief Priests and Scribes.—Embarrassment of Pilate.—He surrenders Jesus to his Enemies.—The Crucifixion.—The Resurrection.—Repeated Appearance to his Disciples.



ESUS having finished this prayer, the little band descended into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, a deep and dark ravine, and, crossing the Brook Kedron, entered the Garden of Gethsemane, a secluded spot, which Christ often visited for retirement and prayer. Here Jesus seems to have been overwhelmed in contemplating the mysterious sufferings he was about to experience. The language used by the inspired writers indicates the highest possible degree of mental agony. He "began to be sore amazed and very heavy." These words, in the original, express the most

excruciating anguish,—a torture which threatens to separate soul from body, and which utterly overwhelms the sufferer. As though he could not bear to be alone in that dreadful hour, he took with him Peter, James, and John, and withdrew from the rest of the apostles, for a little distance, into the silence and midnight gloom of the garden. He then said to his three companions,—

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Tarry ye here, and watch with me."

He then withdrew a little farther—"about a stone's cast"—from them, and fell upon his face, on the ground, and prayed, saying,—

"O my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

In answer to his prayer, an angel appeared unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And yet, notwithstanding the support thus furnished, the anguish of this dreadful hour in which he was about to bear the mysterious burden of the world's atonement was so terrible, that, "being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."[67]

After this scene of anguish and prayer, which probably occupied an hour, he returned to his three disciples, and found them asleep. He gently reproached them, saying to Peter, "Could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing; but the flesh is weak."

Again he retired the second time, and the same scene of inexpressible and unimaginable mental suffering was re-enacted. Jesus recoiled not from the physical pain of the cross; never were buffeting, scourging, crucifixion, borne more meekly, more uncomplainingly: but this agony seems to have surpassed all mortal comprehension. It is recorded,—

"He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father! if this cup may not pass away except I drink it, thy will be done."

Returning, he found his friends once more asleep. It was late in the night; and, worn out with anxiety and exhaustion, we are told that "their eyes were heavy." It is evident that Jesus, engaged in his agonizing prayer, had been for some time absent from them. He did not reproach them, and they had no excuse to offer.

"And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words." Then, returning, and finding them still asleep, he said, perhaps a little reproachfully,—

"Sleep on now, and take your rest. Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. Behold, he is at hand that doth betray me."

While he was speaking these words, the light of torches was seen approaching. Judas knew well where to find Jesus; for he had often accompanied him to this retreat. He took with him a band of Roman soldiers, and officers of the Sanhedrim, "with lanterns, torches, and weapons." As it was

night, and Jesus, in the shades of the garden, was accompanied by his twelve disciples, there was danger that he might escape, and in the morning rally the people to his rescue. Also, in the darkness, it would be difficult for the soldiers to discriminate persons so as to know which of them to arrest. Judas, therefore, gave them a sign, saying,—

"Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he. Take him, and hold him fast."

The kiss was then the ordinary mode of salutation, like shaking of hands now. Judas, followed by the band, approached his well-known Lord, and said, "Hail, Master; and kissed him." Jesus calmly replied,—

"Friend, wherefore art thou come? Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

Advancing towards the soldiers, he said to them, "Whom seek ye?" They said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." There was something in his address and bearing which so overawed them, that for a moment they were powerless; and "they went backward, and fell to the ground."

"Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way."

Judas slunk away into the darkness, and the soldiers seized Jesus. The impetuous Peter "drew a sword," probably snatching it from one of the soldiers, and "smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear." Jesus reproved him, saying,—

"Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how, then, shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

Turning to the wounded servant, he said to him, "Suffer ye thus far;" and, touching his ear, he healed him. Then, addressing the soldiers, he said,—

"Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves, to take me? I was daily with you in the temple, and ye took me not; but the scriptures must be fulfilled. This is your hour and the power of darkness."

It seems incomprehensible, that, under these circumstances, the apostles could have been so terror-stricken, as, with one accord, to have abandoned Jesus, and fled; but they all did it,—the valiant Peter with the rest. Jesus, thus utterly forsaken, was left alone with his enemies.

The soldiers bound Jesus, and conducted him back into the city, and led him to the house of Annas. He had formerly been high priest. His son-in-law Caiaphas now occupied that office. Annas was a man of great influence, and it was important to obtain his sanction in the lawless enterprise in which the Jewish rulers were now engaged. It seems that Annas was not disposed to incur the responsibility of these deeds of violence; and Jesus was led to the house of Caiaphas.

Of the dispersed apostles, two of them (Peter, and probably John) followed the guard at a distance, furtively creeping beneath the shadows of the trees and the houses. Though it was still night, a meeting of the Sanhedrim, but an illegal one, had been convened in the palace of Caiaphas. Twenty-three members constituted a court. Caiaphas presided. Jesus was led into the hall before them for a preliminary examination.

By this time there was probably some considerable tumult, and the gradual gathering of a crowd. Peter and the other apostle cautiously approached the palace, and obtained admission to watch the proceedings, without making themselves known as the followers of Jesus. Peter sat with the servants, who had gathered around the fire which had been kindled in the great hall.

The high priest inquired of Jesus respecting the number of his followers, and the sentiments he had inculcated. Jesus replied,—

"I spake openly to the world. I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort. In secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me: behold, they know what I said."

This reply, though perfectly respectful, so exasperated one of the attending officers, that he struck Jesus in the face with the palm of his hand. To this Jesus meekly replied, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?"

False witnesses had been bribed to testify against Jesus; but they contradicted each other, and could bring forward no charge against him worthy of serious consideration. At last they brought forth the silly accusation, "We heard him say, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days."

Jesus did not condescend any reply to such frivolous charges, but maintained perfect silence. Caiaphas said to him, "Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?" Still Jesus was silent. The charges brought against him were sufficiently preposterous, without any defence on his part. Caiaphas was not a little perplexed, and in his perplexity said,—

"I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God."

Jesus replied, "I am; and hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Caiaphas affected to be shocked. He rent his clothes, saying, "What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy. What think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death."

While this cruel farce was being enacted, Peter sat warming himself by the fire, not far from Jesus, conversing occasionally with the servants. One of the maid-servants looked upon him, and said, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth." Peter replied, "Woman, I know him not." Soon after, a man-servant reiterated the charge, saying, "Thou art also of them." Peter again replied, "Man, I am not." About an hour after, several who stood by said, "Surely thou art one of them;

for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech bewrayeth thee. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak."

Just at that moment, the clear crowing of a cock was heard once and again. Jesus, who had overheard all this conversation, turned round, and simply looked at Peter. That sad and sorrowing glance pierced like a two-edged sword. The prophetic words of Jesus rang in his ears: "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." The wretched man "went out and wept bitterly."

A scene of awful insult and suffering now ensued, such as perhaps never before or since has been witnessed in a nominal court of justice. They spat in his face; they beat him with their clinched fists and with the palms of their hands; they mocked him, saying, "Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?" Even the servants joined in the general outrage of derision and violence.

The morning had now dawned. The chief priests and elders took counsel how they might put Jesus to death. This could not be done without the consent of the Roman governor. They therefore bound him again, and led him to Pontius Pilate, a cruel despot, who was then Roman governor of Judæa. Early as it was, quite a crowd followed as Jesus was led from the hall of Caiaphas to the judgment-seat of Pilate.

In the mean time, the miserable Judas Iscariot, overwhelmed with remorse, threw away his thirty pieces of silver, and went and hanged himself. Pilate met the Jews with their victim as they approached the judgment-hall, and inquired, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" They replied, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee." Pilate replied, "Take him and judge him according to your law." They, thirsting for his blood, answered, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." Pilate then addressed himself to Jesus, and inquired, "Art thou King of the Jews?" Jesus replied by asking the question,—

"Sayest thou this of thyself? or did others tell it thee of me?"

Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done?"

Jesus replied, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence."

Pilate rejoined, "Art thou a king, then?"

Jesus said, "Thou sayest" (i.e., it is so) "I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Pilate, having carelessly inquired “What is truth?” without waiting for any answer, turned to the Jews, and said, “I find in him no fault at all. But ye have a custom that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye, therefore, that I release unto you the King of the Jews?”

There was then in prison a noted robber and murderer by the name of Barabbas. With one accord these Jewish rulers cried out, “Not this man, but Barabbas!”

Then Pilate, though he had already declared Jesus to be innocent, infamously ordered him to be scourged, that he might conciliate the favor of the Jews. It pales one’s cheek to think what it was to be scourged by the sinewy arms of the Roman soldiery.68 After Jesus had undergone this terrible infliction without the utterance of a word, while fainting with anguish and the loss of blood, the ribald soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and forced it upon his brow, piercing the flesh with its sharp points, and crimsoning his cheeks with blood. A purple robe they threw over his shoulders, and placed a reed, in mockery of a sceptre, in his hand: derisively they shouted, “Hail, King of the Jews!” while they smote him with their hands.

The infamous Pilate led Jesus forth thus, exhausted, bleeding, and held up to derision, to the Jews, saying at the same time, “Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.”

But the rulers, clamorous for his blood, not satisfied with even this aspect of misery, cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate, wicked as he was, recoiled from the thought of putting one so entirely innocent to death. He therefore said impatiently and sarcastically, “Take ye him, and crucify him; for I find no fault in him.” This he said, knowing that the Jews had no legal power to do this. But they replied, “We have a law; and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.”

Pilate was greatly troubled. The bearing of Jesus had deeply impressed him. He was fearful that there might be something divine in his character and mission. Turning to Jesus, he said, “Whence art thou?” (i.e., “What is thy origin and parentage?”) Jesus made no reply. Pilate then added,—

“Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and power to release thee?”

Jesus replied, “Thou couldst have no power at all except it were given thee from above. Therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.”69

Pilate was now really desirous of liberating Jesus; but being a weak and wavering man, totally deficient in moral courage, he knew not how to resist the clamors of the Jews. They endeavored to goad him to gratify them by the menace, “If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar’s friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.”

Pilate was not on very good terms with the imperial government. He knew that any report that he was unfaithful to Cæsar might cost him his office.

Pilate still persisted, “I find no fault in this man. And they were more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.” Pilate caught at this allusion to Galilee, and hoped that there was a new chance to extricate himself from his difficulties. As a Galilean, Jesus belonged to Herod’s jurisdiction; and it so chanced that Herod was at that time in Jerusalem. He therefore sent him under a guard to Herod. A band of chief priests and scribes accompanied the prisoner to this new tribunal, and vehemently accused him. Herod, with his men at war, set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. It was now about twelve o’clock at noon. Pilate presented Jesus to the Jews, saying scornfully, “Behold your King!”

A scene of tumult and clamor ensued, the rulers crying out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Then Pilate said, “Ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverteth the people; and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: no, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him and release him.”[70]

Still the clamor rose, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate was seriously troubled. While these scenes had been transpiring, his wife had sent a messenger to him, saying,—

“Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.”

But Pilate had force of character only in wickedness. In violation of every dictate of his judgment, he surrendered Jesus to his foes. “When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person. See ye to it.”

The Jews replied, “His blood be on us and on our children.” Pilate then, having released Barabbas, again ordered Jesus to be scourged, and delivered him to the Jews to be crucified. The soldiers led Jesus into the common hall of the palace, and summoned all their comrades to take part in the awful tragedy in which they were engaged.

First they stripped Jesus, then put on him a scarlet robe, placed a crown of thorns upon his head, put a reed in his hand, and bowed the knee before him, and derisively exclaimed, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

At length, weary of the mockery, they took off his imperial robes, clothed him again in his own garments, spat upon him, smote him on the head with the reed, and led him away to crucify him. A heavy wooden cross was placed upon the shoulders of Jesus, which he was to bear outside of the walls of the city, where it was to be planted, and he was to be nailed to it. Exhausted by the sufferings which he had already endured, he soon sank fainting beneath the load. The soldiers met a stranger from Cyrene, and compelled him to bear the cross. Thus they proceeded, followed by an immense crowd of people, men and women, many of the women weeping bitterly. Jesus turned to them, and said,—

"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For, if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry."71

They came to a small eminence, a short distance from the city, and beyond its walls, which was called Mount Calvary, sometimes Golgotha. The place of the execution of Jesus is not now known. He was nailed by his hands and his feet to the cross, and the cross was planted in the ground. By his side two thieves suffered the same punishment. Jesus, as in this hour of terrible agony he looked down from the cross upon his foes, was heard to breathe the prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Pilate wrote the inscription, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." This, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, was nailed over the cross. The Jews wished to have it changed to "*He said* I am the King of the Jews;" but Pilate refused to make the alteration. Of the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus, one was obdurate. Even in that hour of suffering and death he could revile Jesus, saying, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." The other, in the spirit of true penitence, rebuked the companion of his crimes, saying,—

"Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." Then, turning his eyes to Jesus, he said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

Jesus replied, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

As Jesus hung upon the cross, his sufferings excited no pity on the part of his foes. They reviled him, saying, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. He saved others: himself he cannot save. He trusted in God: let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God."

The mother of Jesus, and two other women who had been his devoted friends, and the apostle John, stood by the side of the cross. Jesus, addressing his mother, and then turning his eyes to John, said, "Woman, behold thy son!" To John he said, "Behold thy mother!" From that hour John took Mary to his home.

There now came supernatural darkness over the whole land, which continued until about three o'clock. Jesus, being then in his dying agonies, exclaimed with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and then he added, "I thirst." Some one, probably kindly disposed, ran, and, filling a sponge with vinegar, raised it upon a reed to the lips of the sufferer. Jesus, simply tasting of it, said, "It is finished!" and with a loud voice exclaimed, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!" and died.

At that moment, the massive veil of the temple in Jerusalem, which concealed the holy of holies, was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. There was an earthquake rending the solid rocks.

Many graves were burst open, and the bodies of the saints which slumbered in them came forth to life, “and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.”

These startling phenomena greatly alarmed the crowd which was gathered around the cross. “Truly,” many of them exclaimed, “this was the Son of God.” It was Friday afternoon. At the going-down of the sun, the Jewish sabbath would commence. Being the sabbath of the commencement of the paschal feast, it was a day of unusual solemnity. The Jews, unwilling that the bodies should remain upon the cross over the sabbath, applied to Pilate to hasten the lingering death of the crucified by breaking their legs. The brutal Roman soldiers did this brutally to the two men who were crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers, to make it certain that life was extinct, thrust his spear deeply into his side. The outflow of blood and water indicated that the spear had pierced both the pericardium and the heart.

It is recorded that these things were done that the scripture might be fulfilled, “A bone of him shall not be broken;” and, “They shall look on him whom they pierced.” Thus, also, the executioners of Jesus divided his garments among themselves, and drew lots for his seamless coat; “that the scripture might be fulfilled which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots.”

The evening drew nigh. One of the disciples of Jesus, a wealthy man by the name of Joseph, from Arimathea, being a man of high position, went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Pilate, marvelling that he was so soon dead, granted his request. Nicodemus also, the timid man who visited Jesus by night, and once during his career ventured to speak a cautious word in his favor, now came by night, with a hundred-pound weight of myrrh and aloes, to embalm the dead body of one whom he had not the moral courage to confess when that living one was struggling against his foes.

Joseph took the body of Jesus from the cross, wrapped it in a linen robe, and deposited it in a newly-constructed tomb of his own which he had hewn out of a solid rock. The door of the tomb was closed by a heavy stone. Several women, the friends of Jesus, followed his remains to the sepulchre. This was Friday, called the “preparation-day,” because, on that day, the Jews prepared for the solemn rest of the sabbath.

The next morning, the morning of the sabbath, the chief priests and Pharisees, remembering that Jesus had declared that he would rise again on the third day, held a council, and called upon Pilate, requesting him to appoint a sure guard at the tomb until after the third day, “lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead.”[72]

Pilate authorized them to make the watch as sure as they could, employing a guard of Roman soldiers which had been placed at the command of the Jewish rulers. A detachment of these soldiers was marched to the tomb to guard it, and in some way sealing the stone at the door with the public signet of the Sanhedrim. Thus every thing was done which caution could suggest to prevent any deceit; and these precautions established beyond all possibility of doubt the reality of the resurrection.

The night of Friday, the sabbath, and the night succeeding the sabbath, passed in quiet. Early in the morning of the third day (which was the first day of the week), "at the rising of the sun," Mary Magdalene, and another Mary, the mother of James, came to the sepulchre. As they approached the closed door, there was a violent earthquake, which rolled back the stone which had closed the entrance. An angel, radiant with exceeding beauty and clothed in celestial robes, sat upon the stone. The guard fainted in excessive terror. The angel addressed the women, saying,—

"Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come see the place where the Lord lay."[73]

Entering the sepulchre, they saw an angel, in the form of a young man, sitting on the right side, also clothed in the white robe which is the emblematic garment of heaven. The angel repeated the declaration which had just been made by his companion, and added,—

"Go your way; tell his disciples and Peter[74] that he is risen from the dead. And, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him. Lo, I have told you."

Greatly agitated and overjoyed, they ran to communicate the glad tidings to the disciples. On their way, Jesus met them, and greeted them with the words, "All hail!" "And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

Some of the guard also, as they recovered from their swoon, hastened into the city to report to the chief priests what had transpired. Alarmed by these tidings, they held a council, and bribed the soldiers to say that they all fell asleep in the night; and, while they slept, the disciples of Jesus came and stole the body. This was the best story they could fabricate; though it was obvious, that, if they were asleep, they could not know that the disciples had stolen the body. Moreover, it was death for a Roman soldier to be found sleeping at his post. The rulers, however, promised that they would intercede with Pilate, and secure them from harm.

The women hastened to the residence of John, who had taken home with him the mother of Jesus. There they met him and Peter, and informed them of what had happened. The two disciples immediately started upon the run for the sepulchre. John reached the sepulchre first, and, looking in, saw the tomb to be empty, and the grave-clothes of Jesus lying in a corner. He, however, did not venture in. The impetuous Peter soon arrived, and immediately entered the tomb. John followed after him. The body of Jesus was gone: the grave-clothes alone remained. Thoughtfully they returned to their home.

Mary Magdalene had probably accompanied John and Peter to the tomb; and, after they had left, she remained near the door, weeping. As she wept, she looked into the sepulchre, and saw "two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." One of the angels said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She replied, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." It seems that she still thought that the enemies of Jesus had taken away his remains.

As she said this, she turned around, and saw a man standing at her side. It was Jesus; but she knew him not. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?” She, supposing him to be the gardener, replied, “Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her (probably then assuming his well-known voice), “Mary!” Instantly she recognized him, and, astonished and overjoyed, could only exclaim, “Master!” Jesus added,—

“Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.”

Then probably he disappeared. Mary went into the city, and informed the bewildered and weeping disciples of what she had seen; “and they, when they had heard that he was alive and had been seen of her, believed not.”

At a later hour of that same day, two of the disciples went to the village of Emmaus, about six or seven miles west from Jerusalem. As they walked along, they were conversing about the wonderful events which were transpiring. While thus engaged in conversation, Jesus joined them, but in a form which they did not recognize.

“What manner of communications are these,” said he, “that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?”

One of the disciples, whose name was Cleopas, replied, “Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?”

“What things?” inquired Jesus.

“Concerning Jesus of Nazareth,” was the answer, “which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel. And, besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and, when they found not his body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not.”

Jesus replied, “O fools,[75] and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

“And, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went; and he made as though he would have gone farther: but they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.”[76]

Greatly excited by this event, the two disciples hastened back that same evening to Jerusalem, where they found the eleven apostles assembled together. In the mean time, Jesus had appeared to Peter; but when, and under what circumstances, this happened, is not recorded.77

The brethren from Emmaus told the eleven apostles how Jesus had revealed himself to them in the breaking of bread. The apostles were in a room, with the door closed, from fear of the Jews. As the disciples were giving their narrative, suddenly "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts78 arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

"And, when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb; and he took it, and did eat before them. Then Jesus said to them again,—

"Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And, when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."79

After Jesus had retired, Thomas, who had been absent for the few moments when Jesus was present, came in, and upon being told by the apostles, "We have seen the Lord," replied in despondency and grief,—

"Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."

The week passed away, and the first day of another week came. The eleven apostles were again assembled together. Thomas was with them. As they sat at meat, the doors being shut, Jesus came, and said, "Peace be unto you." Then, turning to Thomas, he said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing."

Thomas replied, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus rejoined, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Again Jesus disappeared. John writes, "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book."80

The apostles now, in a body, "went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them." This was probably the Mount of Transfiguration. Very brief is the record of what ensued, which is given by Matthew alone: "And, when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying,—

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”[81]

Soon after this, Jesus revealed himself to several of his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, under the following circumstances:—

“There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a-fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

“But, when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he saith unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast, therefore; and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.

“Now, when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher’s coat unto him, and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship (for they were not far from land, but, as it were, two hundred cubits[82]). As soon, then, as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes,—a hundred and fifty and three; and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith to them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time[83] that Jesus showed himself to his disciples after he was risen from the dead.

“So, when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?[84] He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me; and he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.”

Jesus then added, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walked whither thou wouldest; but, when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.”

“This,” says John, “spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And, when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved [John] following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is

he that betrayeth thee? Peter, seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

John adds, "Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"[85]

At the conclusion of this interview, of which we have so brief a recital, Jesus said, "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then," writes Luke, "opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."[86]

Paul testifies, that, after this, Jesus "was seen of above five hundred brethren at once." But we have no record of that interview, or of one which he mentions with James alone.

We have but a brief account of the last and most sublime of all these interviews. Jesus met the eleven in Jerusalem. Their prejudices so tenaciously clung to them, that they again asked, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power; but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in Judæa and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Going out from Jerusalem, they walked together over the Mount of Olives on the road to Bethany. When near the summit of that sublime swell of land which had ever been one of his favorite places of resort, Jesus stopped on the greensward, at a point where one could obtain an almost unbroken view of the horizon and of the overarching skies, and, raising his hands, pronounced a final earthly blessing upon his apostles.

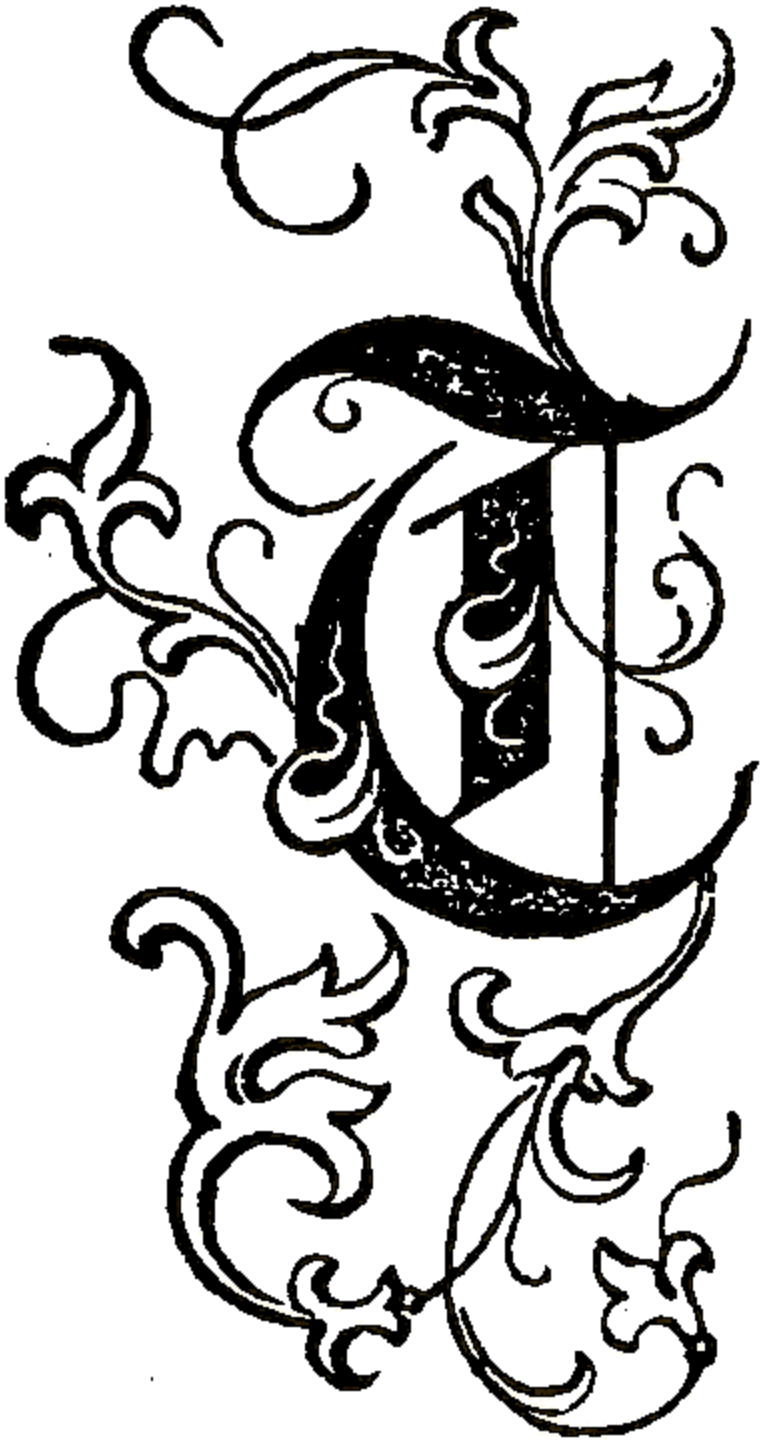
Then he began slowly to ascend into the air. As he rose higher and higher, they all gazed upward upon him in silent amazement. At length, far away in the distance, a dim cloud appeared, perhaps a cloud of clustering angels, which received him out of their sight. As the apostles stood lost in wonder, still gazing into the skies, two angels, clothed in heaven's "white apparel," stood by them. One of them said,—

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

The apostles returned to Jerusalem, there to await "the baptism of the Holy Ghost."

CHAPTER VI.
THE CONVERSION AND MINISTRY OF SAUL OF TARSUS.

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost.—Boldness of the Apostles.—Anger of the Rulers.—Martyrdom of Stephen.—Baptism of the Eunuch.—Saul's Journey to Damascus.—His Conversion.—The Disciples fear him.—His Escape from the City.—Saul in Jerusalem.—His Commission to the Gentiles.—The Conversion of Cornelius.—The Vision of Peter.—Persecution and Scattering of the Disciples.—Imprisonment and Escape of Peter.—Saul and Barnabas in Antioch.—Punishment of Elymas.—Missionary Tour to Cyprus and Asia Minor.—Incidents and Results.



HE apostles, after the ascension of Jesus, obedient to the command of their Lord, remained in Jerusalem, waiting for the fulfilment of the mysterious promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost. To make their number complete, they chose Matthias to take the place of Judas. He was a disciple who had been a witness of the resurrection of Jesus. Two were selected; and then the choice between them was decided by lot, the apostles praying to their Lord, saying,—

“Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen.”

Upon the day appointed for the feast of Pentecost, about fifty days after the crucifixion, all the disciples in Jerusalem were assembled for prayer. They numbered then but about a hundred and twenty. “Suddenly,” writes the sacred historian, “there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

This was the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The disciples, though unlearned men, were now able to preach fluently in the languages of all the many nations represented at Jerusalem. Peter, endowed with new power, so showed the Jews the terrible guilt they had incurred in crucifying the Messiah, that thousands cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” The response which has echoed through all the ages, from that day to this, was, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”87

About three thousand converts were that day added to the church. The days passed rapidly on, while the disciples were earnestly engaged in prayer, and in preaching in the temple and in the streets, occasionally performing miracles of healing in the name of Jesus. Wonderful and hitherto unexperienced success attended their labors. Every day, converts were added to the church. In a few days after the commencement of their ministry, the number of avowed disciples in Jerusalem was increased from a hundred and twenty to five thousand.

The timidity of Peter seemed to vanish. He became truly heroic in his boldness. His eloquence, fearlessness, and zeal gave him prominence above the other disciples. Having healed a lame man at the gate of the temple in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the excitement in the city became so great, that the priests and the Sadducees, with the captain of the temple, came upon Peter and John, arrested them, and thrust them into prison, “being grieved,” it is written, “that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead.”

The next day a meeting of the Sanhedrim was convened, and the prisoners were assembled before that imposing court. To the question, “By what name, or by what power, have ye done this?” Peter replied to Annas and Caiaphas, and the other rulers who were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus, “Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.”

He then earnestly preached to his judges the gospel of Christ, saying, “There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”88

The rulers were astonished at this boldness, perceiving “that they were unlearned and ignorant men;” and, being alarmed by the supernatural events which they could not deny, they threatened them, commanding them “not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus,” and let them go. But both Peter and John answered, “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you

more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."[89]

Even in those early days, there was imperfection in the church. There were five thousand members in Jerusalem. Two of these members were found to be unworthy; and the imperfections of those two have made more noise in the world than all the silent virtues of the other five thousand. So it ever is. The calm, quiet devotion of myriads of Christians is not recorded. The report of the treachery of Judas, the fall of Peter, the perfidy of Ananias and Sapphira, resound through all the centuries.

Jerusalem was shaken by the "wonders wrought among the people" by the hands of the apostles, and by the effect of their teaching. "Believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." The miraculous powers conferred upon the apostles seemed to be fully equal to those exercised by Jesus. "They brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed every one."[90]

Caiaphas and the rulers "were filled with indignation." Again they seized the apostles, and imprisoned them; but the "angel of the Lord" opened their prison-doors, and the next morning they were found again teaching excited crowds in the temple. A general council of the Sanhedrim was convened. They ordered the officers again to arrest the apostles. They did so, "but without violence; for they feared lest they should be stoned." The high priest, much exasperated, said to them, "Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

Peter replied in the bold and stinging words, "We ought to obey God rather than man. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."[91]

After much debate, the court ordered the apostles to be scourged, and then discharged. They endured the terrible punishment, "rejoicing that they were permitted to suffer shame for his name." But there was no power in the blood-stained lash to silence them. "Daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

The wants of the rapidly-increasing Christian community soon became so extended, that seven deacons were chosen to attend to the secular affairs of the church, that the apostles might give themselves "continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

One of these seven, Stephen, "full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." He was arrested, and false witnesses were bribed to accuse him. "We have heard him say," they testified, "that this Jesus of Nazareth shall change the customs which Moses delivered us."

Stephen was permitted to speak in his defence. He began with the call of Abraham, and gave a rapid sketch of the great events in their national existence, selecting those points which were most available in their bearing upon his cause. He showed how the *faith* of Abraham and the *piety* of Joseph secured God's blessing. He probably somewhat exasperated them when he showed that the law of Moses did not restrain their fathers from, at times, lapsing into the grossest idolatry: and when, in continuation of his argument, that external observances alone did not constitute piety, he said, "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands," he probably was assailed by some rude interruption; for, emboldened by inspiration, he suddenly exclaimed,—

"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."92

This plain speech so exasperated the rulers, that "they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed upon him with their teeth." Stephen knew that death was his doom from those unjust and inexorable judges. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God; and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

There was no crime in all this, no violation of the law. To have pronounced any legal condemnation would have been absurd. The only resource left was mob violence. These proud and infamous men, the dignitaries of the Sanhedrim, "cried with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet whose name was Saul.

"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And Saul was consenting unto his death."93

This is the first mention which is made of Saul, the most remarkable man whose name is recorded in sacred or profane annals.

Saul was born in the city of Tarsus, in Asia Minor. It was "no mean city," the capital of the Roman province of Cilicia, and situated upon the River Cadmus, a few miles from its entrance into the Mediterranean Sea. The parents of Saul were wealthy. It was a custom of the times, that every child, no matter how opulent his parents, should be taught some trade. Saul learned that of a tent-maker. We know almost nothing of his childhood and early youth. His parents belonged to the sect of Pharisees, the most punctilious observers of the rites of the Jewish religion. His vernacular language was probably Greek, though he undoubtedly was thoroughly instructed in Hebrew. As it is said that he was "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel," and as it was the custom of the Jews to send their children, between the ages of ten and fourteen, to be instructed in the law, it is supposed, that, at that early age, Saul was sent to Gamaliel, the distinguished teacher in Jerusalem.

Saul, at the time of the martyrdom of Stephen, though a young man, had manifestly attained both maturity and influence. He was probably a member of the Sanhedrim, as he states, that, when the Christians were put to death, he gave his vote against them.94 His commanding influence is also manifest from the declaration, "Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and, being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."95

After the martyrdom of Stephen, the persecution raged in Jerusalem with ever-increasing violence. It is recorded, "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and, haling men and women, committed them to prison."96 This cruel persecution in Jerusalem scattered the Christians far and wide. Philip went to Samaria, and in one of the principal cities "preached Christ unto them." His preaching was attended with wonderful success. Many converts were made, "and there was great joy in that city."

The tidings of the success attending the preaching of the gospel in Samaria reaching Jerusalem, Peter and John were commissioned by those of the apostles who remained in the city to repair immediately to that province. The same miraculous testimony accompanied their preaching as at the day of Pentecost. After a very successful tour, having "preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans," they returned to Jerusalem.

A very interesting incident is here recorded respecting Philip. By divine direction he was journeying to Gaza, the extreme southern city of Palestine. Gaza was on the direct route to Egypt. An officer of high rank, connected with the household of Candace, queen of Egypt, had been up to Jerusalem, and was returning to his native country in his chariot. He was a devout man, and, as he rode along, was reading the scriptures. It so chanced that he had opened to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and was at that moment reading the seventh and eighth verses:—

"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth."

Just then, the eunuch, overtaking Philip, invited him to a seat in the chariot by his side. Then, reverting to the scripture which he was reading, he inquired of Philip, "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?"

"Then Philip began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." The eunuch, convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, accepted him as his Saviour, became his disciple, and received the ordinance of Christian baptism, not as a member of any local church, but of the one universal Church of Jesus Christ. The scriptural account of this event is beautiful in its simplicity:—

"And, as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water. And the eunuch said, See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest; and he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the

eunuch; and he baptized him. And, when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing."

Philip continued his tour, preaching the gospel in all the principal cities of Judæa and Samaria, until he reached Cæsarea, on the coast of the Mediterranean. We are not informed what success attended his preaching.

Luke, to whom we are indebted for the account of the Acts of the Apostles, writes,—

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."97

Damascus is supposed to be the oldest city in the world. Josephus says that it flourished before the days of Abraham. Surviving the ruins of Babylon and of Tyre, it was, in the days of Isaiah, called "the head of Syria." In the time of the apostles it was one of the most populous, opulent, and beautiful cities on the globe. It was situated amidst a paradise of luxuriance, and was abundantly watered by crystal streams flowing from the sides of Mount Lebanon.

The distance between Jerusalem and Damascus was one hundred and thirty-six miles. In the slow mode of travelling in those times by caravans, it occupied six days. Jesus never visited the city, it being farther north than he journeyed in any of his tours; but his disciples, in their dispersion, had preached the gospel in the city, and many converts had been gathered there. It was mid-day as Saul and his fellow-travellers drew near the gates of Damascus. At noon, beneath the burning sun of the East, all nature seemed in repose. The voices of the birds were hushed, the hum of industry ceased, and silence reigned. The event which ensued, certainly one of the most momentous in the history of the world, and fraught with consequences of greater magnitude than any human imagination can conceive, cannot be better narrated than in the language of Saul himself:—

"And it came to pass, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? and he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? and the Lord said unto me, Arise, go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus."98

In the centre of Damascus there was a street, still existing, three miles long, called Straight. Saul, whose eyes were utterly blinded by the brilliancy of the vision, was led by the hand into this street, to the house of a man by the name of Judas. He remained for three days in darkness, surrendered to reflection. The emotions which agitated him in view of his past persecution of the

Christians, and of the conclusive evidence he now had of the Messiahship of Jesus, were so painful and intense, that, during all this time, he could neither eat nor drink.

There was in Damascus a disciple of Jesus by the name of Ananias, a devout man, of such irreproachable integrity of character, that all men were constrained to acknowledge his virtues.

To him the Lord Jesus appeared in a vision, and said, "Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight."

Ananias replied, "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name."

Jesus replied, "Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

Ananias repaired immediately to the house of Judas, and, placing his hands in divine benediction upon the head of Saul, said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."[99]

The scales fell from the eyes of Saul. His sight was restored. He arose refreshed and strengthened, and immediately received the rite of baptism. Saul, having thus become a disciple of Jesus, and, by baptism, a member of his visible Church, immediately made his faith conspicuous by his self-sacrificing and energetic works. In the modest account which he subsequently gave of his conversion to King Agrippa, he said,—

"Whereupon, O King Agrippa! I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."[100]

As Saul was seen day after day, in the Jewish synagogues of Damascus, proclaiming with all his fervid powers of eloquence that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah, all that heard him were amazed. They said one to another,—

"Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?"

But the zeal of Saul daily increased in fervor; and he "confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ."[101] The Jews, not being able to reply to his arguments, resorted, as usual, to mob violence to silence him. Jesus, in his parting counsels to his disciples, had directed them, when persecuted in one city, to escape to another. The Jews entered

into a conspiracy to kill Saul. They guarded the gates that he might not escape from the city, and engaged assassins to put him to death.

The thick and massive walls of Damascus, rising about thirty feet high, afforded a site for quite a number of small dwellings. From the windows of one of these houses, in a dark night, the disciples lowered Saul down, outside the walls, in a basket, by a rope. There this heroic young man stood alone at midnight, with a career of fearful suffering clearly unveiled before him; and yet his love for Jesus, his Lord and Master, was such, that he counted it all joy that he was permitted to suffer shame in his name.

From Damascus, Saul directed his steps eastward into Arabia. How far he went, and what success he enjoyed in preaching to the Jews scattered throughout those regions, are not recorded. It is not known how many weeks or months were occupied upon this missionary tour. Several years after, alluding to this event in a letter which he wrote to the Galatians, he says, "I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem."[102]

During all these three years, the sacred writers are silent respecting the adventures of Saul. At the end of this time, he went up to Jerusalem. It is an interesting indication of the slight intercourse there was between distant cities at that time, when but few could write, and there were no postal facilities, that the disciples at Jerusalem had not even heard of the conversion of Saul. When he arrived in Jerusalem, and wished to throw himself into the arms of the friends of Jesus, it is written, "They were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple."[103]

But Barnabas, one of the disciples in Jerusalem, a man of wealth, and one who had already acquired reputation for his benevolence,[104] had in some way become acquainted with the conversion of Saul, and his zeal in the service of Jesus. He took Saul by the hand; led him to the apostles Peter and James, who still remained in Jerusalem,[105] and declared unto them how the Lord Jesus had appeared to Saul in the way, had spoken to him, and how Saul had preached boldly in Damascus in the name of Jesus.

They then received Saul cordially, and he commenced preaching "in the name of the Lord Jesus" with all his wonted energy in the synagogues of Jerusalem. Those who had crucified Jesus, and who remembered that Saul had co-operated with them in their persecution of his disciples, were roused to intensity of rage. A conspiracy was formed, as in Damascus, to kill him.

Saul had been in Jerusalem but fifteen days, taking lodgings in the house of Peter, when the brethren informed him that he must immediately escape from Jerusalem, or he would lose his life. A stranger to fear, at first he was unwilling to go. But the Lord Jesus appeared to Saul as he was praying in the temple, and said to him,—

"Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me."

Saul replied, "Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee; and, when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him."

Jesus replied, “Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”106 Thus instructed, Saul, aided by the disciples, escaped from Jerusalem, and proceeding to Cæsarea, on the sea-coast, a distance of about sixty miles, took ship for Tarsus, his native place.

For a short time now, persecution ceased. The churches established in all the leading cities of Palestine had rest. The disciples preached the gospel far and wide with great success. In the language of the sacred annalist, the churches “were edified, and, walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.”

At this time, Peter set out on a missionary tour towards the sea-coast, preaching in all the towns and villages through which he passed. Arriving at Lydda, a small town about five miles from Joppa, which was on the Mediterranean shore, he found a man, by the name of Æneas, who had been confined to his bed for eight years. Peter healed him, saying, “Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.” This miracle gave such force to the ardent preaching of Peter, that, in the language of the inspired penman, “all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron turned to the Lord.”107

At Joppa there was a disciple, whose name was Dorcas, greatly beloved for her charities. She was taken sick, and was laid out to be buried. It seems that the disciples there, hearing of the miraculous cure of Æneas, had faith that Peter could raise their sister from death’s slumber. They sent two messengers to him to urge his hastening to Joppa. Upon his arrival, he was conducted immediately to the residence of Dorcas. The chamber in which the dead body lay was filled with mourners, many of them weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas had bestowed upon them. Peter kneeled down by the bedside and prayed, and then called upon the dead to arise. Dorcas opened her eyes, and sat up. Peter gave her his hand, led her out of the chamber, and presented her alive and well to her friends.

This miracle, so astounding, was reported throughout the city. Peter remained there several days, preaching the gospel, and residing with one Simon, a tanner. His success is indicated in the declaration, that “many believed in the Lord.”

About thirty miles north of Joppa, upon the seashore, was the important seaport of Cæsarea. A Roman force of soldiers was established there; and a man by the name of Cornelius was the captain of an Italian band of a hundred men, which gave him the title of a centurion. He was a devout man, who had abandoned Roman paganism, and had become a worshipper of the true God. His noble character is depicted in the words, “He gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.”

One day, which, it seems, he had devoted to fasting and prayer, as he was upon his knees, at three o’clock in the afternoon, an angel of God appeared to him, and said,—

“Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside. He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.”

Immediately Cornelius despatched two men to Joppa upon this mission. As, about noon the next day, they were approaching the city, Peter was upon the flat roof of the house, the usual place of

retirement, engaged in prayer. In a vision he saw a sheet let down from heaven by its four corners, containing animals of all kinds,—those reputed clean, and those which the ceremonial law pronounced unclean. A voice came to him, saying,—

"Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

But Peter replied, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean."

The voice rejoined, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

This vision was repeated three times in immediate succession. While Peter was seated upon the house-top, pondering its significance, the messengers commissioned by Cornelius arrived, and stood before the gate of the house, inquiring if Peter lodged there.

The spirit then said to Peter, "Behold, three men seek thee. Arise, therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."[108]

Peter immediately descended, met the messengers, and received from them the following communication: "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee."

Peter invited the men in, entertained them for the night, and the next day accompanied them to Joppa. The vision had taught him, that, in the eye of God, there was no distinction between the clean and the unclean in the human family; that the barrier between the Jew and the Gentile was now broken down; and that the gospel of Jesus was now to be preached to all nations, tribes, and families alike. The centurion received Peter with profound reverence, regarding him as a divinely-appointed ambassador to him. Several of the friends of Cornelius, probably all Greeks or Romans who had abandoned idolatry, were assembled in his house to meet Peter. The zealous and bold apostle, addressing them, said,—

"Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I, without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for. I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me."

Cornelius informed Peter of his vision, and of the direction given him by the angel to send for Peter, and receive instruction from his lips. "Now, therefore," said he in conclusion, "we are all here present before God to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."

We have but a brief abstract of what Peter said in reply, but enough to show us, without any doubt, what was the gospel which he preached to them.

"Of a truth," said he, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but, in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

After brief reference to Jesus Christ, “Lord of all,” to his teachings, his miracles, his crucifixion, and his resurrection, he concluded by saying, “And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.109 To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”110

Following these words of Peter, the miraculous influences of the Holy Spirit fell upon all alike,—upon Gentile as well as Jew. Several Jews had accompanied Peter to the house of Cornelius; and “they were astonished, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost; for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.”111

Peter then said, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” He accordingly baptized these believing Gentiles in the name of the Lord Jesus, and thus received them directly into the church without insisting upon their first becoming Jews.

When the tidings reached Jerusalem and other parts of Judæa that Peter had received Gentiles to the Church of Jesus Christ, which the Jews had supposed was intended for them alone, it created great excitement. Peter, after remaining a few days in Joppa, returned to Jerusalem. Here he was met by the disaffected brethren, who charged him with what they considered the great ceremonial crime of associating with “men uncircumcised,” and eating with them.

But Peter narrated all the circumstances, and so convincingly, that “they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”

The other disciples, who, by the persecution at Jerusalem, had been scattered abroad, travelled as far as Phœnice and the Island of Cyprus, and to Antioch, in the extreme north, which was then the capital of Syria, and one of the largest cities in the world. They, however, preached the gospel only to the Jews, not considering the Gentiles as entitled to its privileges. In Antioch, the disciples were eminently successful in preaching the religion of Jesus; so much so, that it is recorded that “great numbers believed, and turned unto the Lord.”112

The apostles in Jerusalem, hearing of the great religious interest which was excited in the metropolitan city of Antioch, sent Barnabas to assist the brethren there. He was “a good man, full of faith and the Holy Ghost.” His heart was rejoiced by the scenes which he witnessed in Antioch, and eloquently he urged the converts that with “purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord.” His labors gave a new impulse to the conversions, and “much people was added to the Lord.”113

Saul was at this time preaching in Tarsus, his native city, about thirty miles north-west from Antioch. Barnabas went to Tarsus in search of Saul, and brought him back with him to the metropolitan city. For a year Saul and Barnabas continued in Antioch, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ; and there first the disciples of Jesus received the title of Christians. This was about the year of our Lord 44. As so many Gentile converts were now flocking into the churches, the Christians ceased to be regarded as merely a sect of the Jews, and the rapidly-increasing disciples in their varied organizations assumed gradually a new and independent character.

It so happened about this time that there was a severe drought and famine in Judæa; and Saul and Barnabas were sent by the Christians in Antioch with contributions for the suffering brethren there. Herod Agrippa I., an unprincipled ruler, grandson of Herod the Great, was then king of all Palestine. He, without any apparent cause, drew the sword of persecution. James, the brother of John, was put to death. Peter was arrested and thrown into prison, and so carefully guarded by sixteen soldiers—four for each watch in the night, two chained to the prisoner in his cell, and two stationed at the outside door—as to render his escape apparently impossible. The king had decided to gratify the malice of the Jews, immediately after the passover, by putting Peter to death.

The night had arrived which was supposed to be the last that Peter was to spend upon earth. In the morning he was to be led to his execution. He was quietly sleeping between the two soldiers, bound to them by chains. The angel of the Lord, whom neither granite walls nor iron doors could exclude, entered the prison in dazzling effulgence. As he awoke Peter, the chains dropped from the prisoner's hands.

"Arise," said the angel, "gird thyself, bind on thy sandals, cast thy garment about thee, and follow me."

The angel led him through the intricacies of the prison, and by the guards who were paralyzed with fear, until he came to the outer iron portal which opened into the city. The massive gate, of its own accord, swung open upon its hinges. The angel led Peter into one of the streets, and took leave of him. It was midnight. Peter found himself near the house of Mary, the mother of John. Several of the disciples, knowing that Peter was to be executed the next day, had met there to pass the night in prayer. Peter knocked at the gate. A young girl by the name of Rhoda went to the door; and when she heard the voice of Peter, instead of opening to him, she was so overjoyed and bewildered, that she ran back with the tidings.

The disciples, knowing how apparently impossible it was for Peter to escape from the guard set over him, did not credit her assertion, but declared that she was insane. Upon going to the gate, however, they found, to their astonishment and delight, that Peter stood before them. He informed them of his miraculous deliverance, and the same night withdrew from the city.[114]

The dawn of the morning, revealing the events of the night, created intense commotion in the city. Herod commanded the guard to be put to death, and instituted a rigorous but unavailing search throughout the city for Peter. Soon after, Herod left Jerusalem for Cæsarea, and took up his abode there. On the 1st of August,[115] there was a magnificent festival in Cæsarea in honor of the king. From all the region around, the population flocked into the spacious theatre, whose stone seats rose tier above tier in a vast semicircle, which was thronged with those eager to do homage to the infamous yet powerful monarch. As Herod entered, the edifice rang with applause. Seated upon a gorgeous throne, he addressed the multitude. With one voice the sycophantic throng shouted, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man!" In the midst of this scene of pride and blasphemy, the angel of death smote Herod with an invisible dart; and the wretched man was taken from the theatre in convulsions, which soon consigned him to the tomb.

Saul and Barnabas had returned to Antioch, and, with other brethren, were earnestly engaged in preaching the gospel there. A divine intimation influenced the brethren to set apart these two distinguished disciples for a missionary excursion to the benighted regions beyond them. After a season of fasting and prayer, they laid their hands upon them, ordaining them for this special work. Antioch was situated upon the River Orontes, about twenty miles from its entrance into the Mediterranean. The two missionaries repaired to Seleucia, an important seaport on the coast. Far off in the west, the mountains of the majestic Island of Cyprus could be seen on a clear day, emerging from the horizon in shadowy glory. Cyprus was the native place of Barnabas. Taking ship, a sail of perhaps a hundred and fifty miles brought them to Salamis, a populous city upon the island, where there was a large colony of Jews.

Here they preached the gospel of Jesus in the Jewish synagogue, but with what success we are not informed; neither is it recorded how long they tarried in that city. They crossed the island, a distance of about a hundred miles, from Salamis, on the eastern coast, to Paphos, the capital, on the west. Here the governor of the island, Sergius Paulus, resided. He was a serious-minded, worthy man; and he sent for Saul and Barnabas, wishing to hear from them the principles of the new religion.

But a virulent opposer arose, a pretended sorcerer, by the name of Elymas, who did every thing in his power to prevent the governor from listening to the words of the disciples. Saul, "filled with the Holy Ghost," fixed his eyes upon the impostor, and addressed him in the following terrible rebuke:—

"O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness! wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season."

The guilty opposer of the religion of Jesus was instantly struck with blindness, and groped his way along, "seeking some one to lead him by the hand." The governor, already deeply impressed by the teachings of the disciples, and astonished by the miracle, became himself a follower of Jesus. Of his subsequent life we know nothing, but trust that he endured to the end, and that he is now rejoicing in the paradise of God.

In connection with this miracle, we find the name of Saul changed to Paul. Until this time, he is invariably spoken of as Saul. The sacred writer, recording these scenes at Paphos, simply says, "Saul, who also is called Paul." Ever after this he is spoken of as Paul.

Paul and Barnabas, with Mark, who had accompanied them as their attendant and assistant, sailing from Paphos, crossed the arm of the sea, and landed on the coast of Asia Minor, at the little seaport town of Perga in Pamphylia. Here, for some unexplained reason, Mark became dissatisfied, and excited the displeasure of his companions by abandoning them, and returning to Jerusalem, which had been the home of his earlier years.

The two intrepid disciples made but a short tarry at Perga. Entering the wild passes of the Pisidian mountains, they traversed a desert region, encountering every step of the way perils of robbers, until they reached the important city of Antioch in Pisidia, about a hundred miles from

the sea-coast. This populous city was inhabited by Greeks, Jews, and a strong Roman colony. The sabbath came. Paul and Barnabas, according to their custom, repaired to the Jewish synagogue. As strangers of distinction, they were invited to address the people. Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, has given us quite a full abstract of the address of Paul upon this occasion.116 Here, as everywhere, "Christ and him crucified" was the theme of the apostle's discourse. First he proved from the prophets that Jesus was the Messiah; that, in accordance with the voice of prophecy, he had been put to death by wicked men, and on the third day had risen from the grave. He closed with the following words:—

"And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again. Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days,—a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

There were many Gentiles present. The Jews, as a body, did not favorably receive this address of Paul. The Gentiles, on the contrary, entreated him to preach to them again on the next sabbath. There were also many of the Jews who united with them in this request. During the week, Paul and Barnabas were doubtless busy preaching the gospel as they could find opportunity. The next sabbath, the synagogue was thronged. "Almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God; but, when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming."117

It is of no avail to present the truth to those who are determined not to receive it. To these cavilling Jews Paul and Barnabas replied, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles: for so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."118

Luke adds the expressive words, "And, when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

The successful preaching of the gospel has almost invariably excited corresponding antagonism. Converts were multiplied; and penetrating the region around, proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation through a suffering Messiah, they established flourishing churches in many places. Here, for the first time, we find female influence arrayed against the cause of Christ. The hostile Jews won to their side some ladies of high respectability, and, through them, influenced the political leaders. Thus so formidable an opposition was roused, that Paul and Barnabas were expelled from the city, and from its immediately surrounding region.

They therefore pressed on their way to Iconium, nearly a hundred miles east from Antioch. Here, also, they found a mixed population of Greeks, Jews, and Romans. They repaired to the synagogue, and preached the gospel of Jesus with such success, that it is recorded, "A great

multitude, both of the Jews and also of the Greeks, believed." As usual, opposition was excited; but it was at first not sufficiently strong to drive them from the city. We are told that "long time abode they, speaking boldly in the Lord." At length, the opposition assumed very formidable proportions. A riotous mob was roused by the unbelieving Jews, who threatened to stone Paul and Barnabas.

They therefore withdrew from Iconium; and, continuing their journey eastward (forty or fifty miles), they reached the small town of Lystra. Here they found a man who had been a cripple from his birth, and who had never walked. Paul healed him. The rude, superstitious people, accustomed to the idolatrous worship of almost any number of gods, exclaimed, "The gods are come to us in the likeness of men!"

Assuming that Paul and Barnabas were two of their favorite gods,—Jupiter and Mercurius,—they summoned the priest from the temple of Jupiter, which was reared before the principal gate of the city, and, with garlands and sacrifices, were preparing to offer idolatrous worship to the strangers. When Paul and Barnabas perceived what the Lystrians were about to do, they were horror-stricken, and, rushing in among the idolaters, remonstrated so vehemently, as to dissuade them, though with difficulty, from their purpose.

Some malignant Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and roused the fickle-minded mob, so that they stoned Paul, and drew him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. The converts, who were not numerous enough to prevent this violence, gathered around the bruised and gory body; when Paul revived, and, with characteristic bravery, went back again into the city.

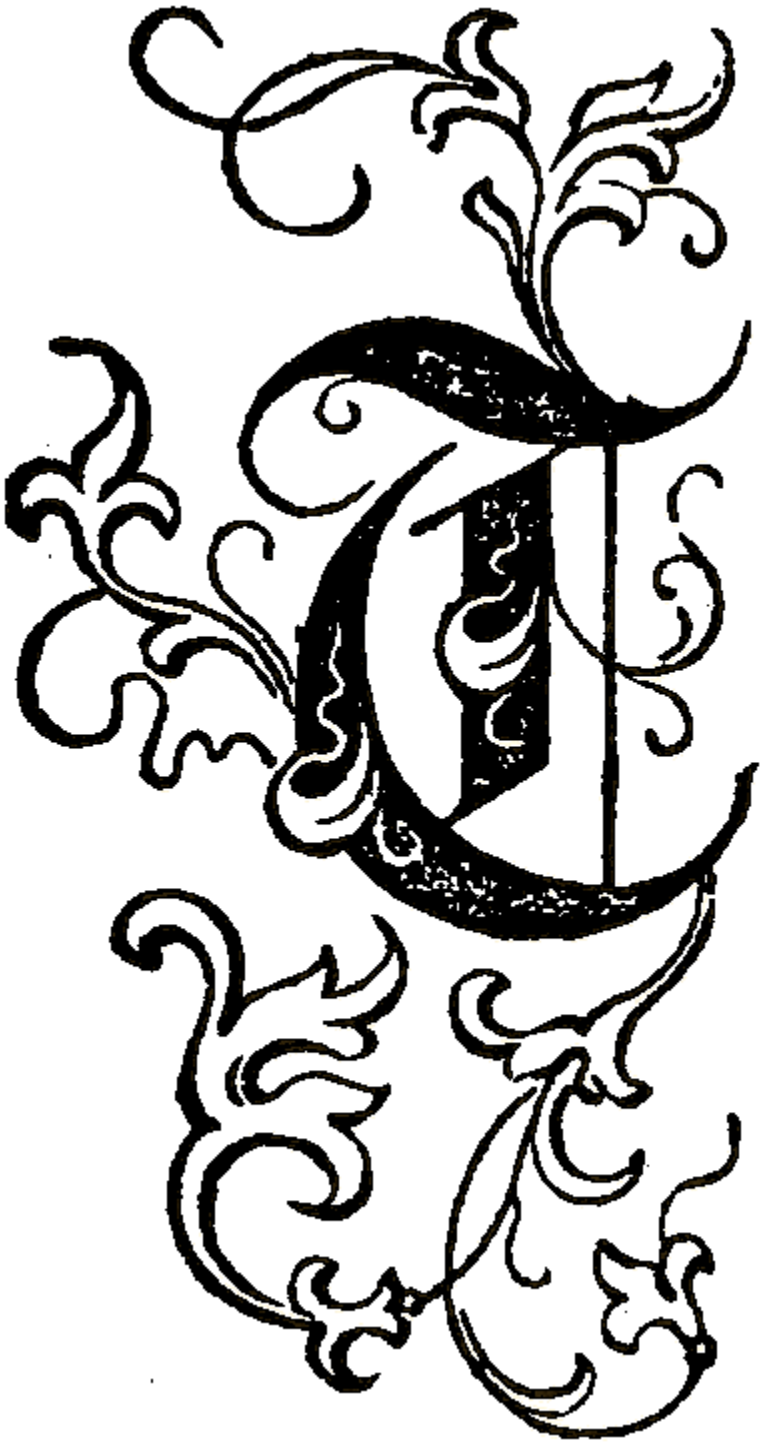
The next day, Paul, accompanied by Barnabas, proceeded to another city (Derbe), a few miles farther east. Here they preached the gospel for some time, gaining many disciples; when "they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."[119]

They then returned by the same route they had already traversed, preaching as they went, till they reached Perga, whence they took ship for Antioch. It is *conjectured* that this tour occupied about a year. Upon their arrival in Antioch, they gathered all the disciples, and recounted to them the events of their excursion, dwelling particularly upon the fact that God "had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." They both continued in Antioch for a "long time," preaching the gospel.

CHAPTER VII.
MISSIONARY ADVENTURES.

The First Controversy.—Views of the Two Parties.—Council at Jerusalem.—Results of Council.—The Letter.—Vacillation of Peter.—Rebuked by Paul.—The Missionary Excursion of Paul and Barnabas.—They traverse the Island of Cyprus.—Land on the Coast of Asia Minor.—

Mark returns to Syria.—Results of this Tour.—Paul and Silas set out on a Second Tour through Asia Minor.—Cross the Hellespont.—Introduction of Christianity to Europe.—Heroism of Paul at Philippi.—Tour through Macedonia and Greece.—Character of Paul's Preaching.—Peter's Description of the Final Conflagration.—False Charges.—Paul in Athens; in Corinth.—Return to Jerusalem.



HE Jews had supposed that the Messiah was to come to the Jews alone, and that no one could become a member of his kingdom unless he first became a Jew. But Paul and Barnabas were preaching to the Gentiles, and establishing churches among them. Thus quite a serious dissension sprang up among the Christians, who had previously been Jews, upon this question. While some of the brethren ardently advocated the doctrine, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved," Paul opposed this sentiment with all his energies. Several of these "Judaizing Christians," as they were termed, came down to Antioch from Judæa, and so troubled the Christians there with disputations which seemed to threaten the very foundations of Christianity, that it was determined to summon a council of the most eminent Christians at Jerusalem, the seat of the mother church, to settle the agitating question.

Paul and Barnabas, with several other members of the Church at Antioch, were commissioned as delegates to attend this council. On their journey, as they passed through the cities of Samaria, preaching by the way, they announced the glad tidings that God was receiving the Gentiles, and conferring upon them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the same as upon the Jews. It is estimated that fifteen years had now passed since Paul traversed that same road, from Jerusalem to Damascus, to persecute the Christians. Since that time, Paul had twice visited the Holy City, and Christianity had made extraordinary progress throughout Syria and Asia Minor. Upon arriving at Jerusalem, the council was convened, over which James, pastor of the church there, presided. As soon as the council was opened, several of the Judaizing Christians arose, and argued that all Gentile converts should be circumcised, and that they should punctiliously observe all the rites of the ceremonial law. Peter was the first one to reply on the other side. We have an abstract of his speech:—

"Men and brethren," said he, "ye know how that a good while ago[120] God made choice among us, that the Gentiles, by my mouth, should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."[121]

Then Barnabas and Paul gave an account of their missionary tour through Asia Minor, and of the wonderful success with which God had blessed the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles. James then rose, whose opinion as presiding officer, and pastor of the metropolitan church, would have great weight with the council, and very earnestly and convincingly sustained the views advocated by Peter, Paul, and Barnabas. The result recorded by Luke was as follows:—

"Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: and they wrote letters by them after this manner:—

"The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law (to whom we gave no such commandment), it seemed good unto us, being

assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,—men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent, therefore, Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth: for it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things,—that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."[122]

The brethren returned to Antioch, and communicated to the assembled church there the result of the council. It gave great satisfaction; and though, for a time, the all-important question continued here and there to trouble the churches, eventually there was universal acquiescence in the decision of the brethren at Jerusalem. After this, Paul and Barnabas continued some time in Antioch, "teaching and preaching the word of the Lord."

In the mean time, Peter came to Antioch to assist the brethren in their labors there. Impetuous and versatile, and far from infallible, he at first lived in free intercourse with the Gentile converts, eating with them, and meeting them in social friendship on terms of entire equality; but suddenly, "through fear of those who were of the circumcision," we find him withdrawing from those whom he had just been treating as equals, and giving his example in favor of those who demanded that the Gentiles should become Jews.

This vacillation and inconsistency on the part of Peter excited the indignation of Paul. The account which Paul gives of this transaction is as follows:—

"But, when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For, before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but, when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But, when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all,—

"If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ,—even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."[123]

There is no evidence that this event caused any permanent alienation between the two apostles. It is more probable that Peter, whose mind was susceptible of such rapid changes, immediately relented, and, with all the gushings of his generous and loving nature, returned to duty. It is pleasant to read in one of the subsequent epistles of Peter the words, "Even as our beloved brother Paul hath written unto you."[124]

Soon after this, the enterprising spirit of Paul induced him to leave the comparative tranquillity of his home and labors in Antioch, and to revisit all the cities and villages in Asia Minor, where he, with Barnabas, had established churches. He said to Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do."[125]


ADRIATIC SEA
ITALY
ROME
Three Taverns
Appii Forum
Puteoli
Neapolis
MT. VESUVIUS
CALABRIA
Tarentum
Sybaris
CORCYRA
LEUCUS
EPHALLENIA
IONIAN SEA
Regium
SICILY
Agrigentum
Syracuse
MELITA
MEDITERRANEAN
Scodra
MACEDONIA
Amphipolis
Apollonia
Berœa
GREECE
THESSALY
MAGNESIA
EPIRUS
Athens
Corinth
ACHAIA
PELOPONNESUS
Sparta
JACINTHUS
Leptis Magna
Ptolemais
Apollonia
Cyrene
TRAVELS
OF THE
APOSTLE PAUL
SCALE OF MILES
0 45 90 135 180.

Barnabas wished to take Mark with them again as an attendant. This John Mark, the same one who wrote the Gospel under his name, was the nephew of Barnabas, being his sister's son. Paul was unwilling to take him, being displeased with his conduct on their previous tour, when he "departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to their work." Barnabas was probably not a man of very much force of character, as is indicated by his being carried away with the dissimulation of Peter to which we have alluded. He had certainly occupied a secondary position on the previous missionary tour, and Paul was perhaps not unwilling to exchange him for some other brother.

There is no evidence that there was any angry controversy here,—any thing inconsistent with the Christian integrity and brotherly kindness of the two men. Barnabas took Mark with him, and, embarking at Seleucia, sailed for the Island of Cyprus. Paul chose Silas as his companion, one of the delegates who had been sent from the council at Jerusalem to Antioch. Journeying by land, and probably on foot through Syria and Cilicia, they visited the churches in Asia Minor, in a route from east to west, instead of, as before, from west to east.

Proceeding through Derbe, he came to Lystra, where, on the previous tour, he had been cruelly stoned. Here he found a young convert by the name of Timothy, for whom he formed the strongest of earthly attachments. Timothy's mother was a Jewess; but his father was a Gentile, a Greek. His lineage was good, as Paul speaks of "the unfeigned faith which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice."126 Timothy attached himself to Paul, and ever after they were associated as father and son. Paul repeatedly calls him "my son," "my own son in the faith," and writes, "Ye know, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel."127

Timothy was the son of a Jewess; and his father, though a Greek, was unquestionably not an idolater, but a proselyte. While Paul was carrying "to all the churches" the decision of the council in Jerusalem,—that Gentiles were not to be forced into Judaism upon becoming Christians,—still, out of regard to the strong prejudices of the Jews among whom he was going, he caused Timothy to be circumcised. Some have regarded this as inconsistent conduct on the part of Paul; others have considered it but an indication of his far-sighted wisdom and caution. But for this, the hostile Jews would have had a new and formidable weapon of opposition to wield against him. As Timothy could not be regarded as a Gentile, the action of Paul could not be deemed inconsistent with the decision of the council at Jerusalem.

Paul, Silas, and Timothy passed through the whole central region of Asia Minor, preaching the gospel in all its cities and villages; but we have no record of the incidents which attended their labors, or of the adventures which they encountered. It was undoubtedly a successful excursion; for the sacred historian writes, "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in numbers daily."128

Passing through the provinces of Phrygia and Mysia, they came to Troas, on the eastern coast of the Ægean Sea, not far from the mouth of the Hellespont. Here the vision of a man appeared to Paul in the night, saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." They therefore took a vessel

at Troas, and sailed in a north-westerly direction, among the islands of the Ægean Sea, till they came to the important Island of Samothracia. Passing around this island on the north, they directed their course to Philippi, on the Macedonian coast. This was the chief city of that part of Macedonia. There was an important Roman colony established here, and a synagogue of the Jews outside of the walls. Here they remained several days, probably, as was ever their custom, on the week-days preaching the gospel in the streets of the city, and from house to house. On the sabbath, they went to the Jewish synagogue by a river-side. The following incident is recorded as occurring at this time and place:—

"A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."[129]

Thus peacefully the gospel was first transplanted into Europe. But in this life, "after the calm, the storm" seems to be the rule. Some persons of influence owned a slave-girl, who was believed to be possessed "with a spirit of divination." How much of this was imposture cannot now be known. But the owners of this damsel derived much profit from the many credulous people who flocked to her to have their fortunes told. Impelled by some unexplained influence, as she met Paul and Silas day after day, she exclaimed, in the hearing of all the people,—

"These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation."

At length, Paul, "being grieved, turned and said, I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her."

Her powers of divination, whatever they were, immediately left her. Her masters were enraged. All hope of future gain was at an end. They seized Paul and Silas, and dragged them before the city authorities. It was not easy to bring any accusation against them; for the law allowed no remedy for property depreciated by exorcism. They therefore framed a charge in which truth and falsehood were singularly blended.

"These men," said they, "being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans."

The Jews had recently, in consequence of some disturbance, been all driven out of Rome.[130] They were generally hated and despised. It was also a principle in Roman law, that any religious innovations which threatened to unsettle the minds of the people, or to create tumult, were to be rigorously suppressed. Under these circumstances, it was not difficult to rouse the violence of the mob.

The magistrates, apparently without listening to any defence, ordered them to be led to the whipping-post and scourged. The scourging upon the bare back by the brawny arms of a Roman lictor was indeed a terrible ordeal for any one to pass through. Bruised with the lash, and fainting from pain and the loss of blood, they were thrust into a dark, pestilential dungeon in the inner

prison; and their feet were made fast in the stocks. The jailer had special charge to keep them safely. The scene which ensued cannot be better narrated than in the language of Luke:—

"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God; and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison-doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway."

The morning dawned. The magistrates, probably somewhat alarmed in view of the violent measures which they had pursued, sent officers to the jailer with the order, that he should "let those men go." Paul and Silas were both Roman citizens, and Paul was a lawyer. The Roman law did not allow any one entitled to the dignity of Roman citizenship to be exposed to the ignominy of scourging.131

These Roman citizens, without any form of trial, without any legal condemnation, had been openly scourged in the market-place. Paul therefore replied to the message from the magistrates ordering them to be liberated,—

"They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out."

The magistrates were greatly alarmed when they learned that their victims were Roman citizens. The report of the outrage at Rome would cost them their offices, if not their lives. They therefore hastened to the prisoners, and became suppliants before those whom they had so inhumanly persecuted, entreating them to depart out of their city. Paul made no appeal to the authorities at Rome; he was too busy preaching the gospel to devote any time to personal redress: but the course he pursued throughout that scene of suffering placed Christianity on high vantage-ground in Philippi, and secured for its advocates the protection of law.

These heroic men made no haste to leave the city. Returning to the house of Lydia, they met all the brethren who by their instrumentality had been led to embrace the religion of Jesus, and addressed them in farewell words of solace and counsel. Thus far it appears, from the form of the narrative, that Luke, the historian of the Acts of the Apostles, had accompanied the brethren on this missionary excursion. It is inferred that Luke and Timothy remained a little longer in Philippi, and that Luke did not rejoin Paul for some time.

Paul and Silas set out to cross the mountains to Amphipolis, a city about thirty miles south-west from Philippi: thence they pressed on twenty-five miles, to Apollonia; and thence thirty-two miles farther, to Thessalonica. We have no record how long they stopped at the two first places,

or what success attended their preaching there. In this important seaport, the most populous city in Macedonia, Paul and Silas remained for some time. The following is the inspired record of the commencement of Paul's labors there:—

"They came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."

The preaching of Paul and Silas in Thessalonica resulted in the conversion of many, both of the Jews and the Gentiles. It is recorded that among the converts there were numbered "of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." In Paul's two Epistles to the Thessalonians, we find quite a minute account of the sentiments which he advanced in this city. The spiritual reign of Christ, his second coming in clouds of glory with his holy angels, and the endless happiness which his disciples would then inherit, were the themes of infinite moment which inspired his fervid eloquence. The following extract from one of his letters, which he subsequently wrote to the Thessalonians from Corinth, will show the manner in which he treated such themes. Speaking of the second coming of Jesus in the day of his exaltation, he wrote,—

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."[132]

This graphic account of the sublime scenes to be witnessed at the second coming of our Lord Jesus agitated the church in Thessalonica, as the Christians there supposed that the coming of Jesus was to be hourly expected. This led Paul to write another letter, in which he corrected that error. In this he wrote,—

"Now, we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering-together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come except there come a falling-away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."[133]

Who the "man of sin" is remains an undecided question. The Protestants have generally applied the words to the Pope of Rome. It will be remembered, that when Jesus took his final departure from his disciples, ascending into the skies in bodily presence before them from Mount Olivet, two angels appeared to them, and said,—

“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”[134]

The second coming of Christ, to reap the fruits of his humiliation and his atoning sacrifice in the establishment of his spiritual kingdom, was a prominent theme in the teaching both of Christ and his apostles. The language of Peter upon this subject unfolds, indeed, a scene of wonderful sublimity:—

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance; that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

“For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.

“Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”[135]

These emphatic announcements, that the Lord Jesus, who had risen from the grave and ascended to heaven, would come again in glory with an angelic retinue to establish an everlasting kingdom, were interpreted by hostile or careless hearers to intimate that the Christians had designs against the Roman government, which they intended by revolution to overthrow; that they intended to establish the throne of Jesus upon the ruins of the throne of Cæsar. This charge was brought against Jesus, notwithstanding his reiterated declaration, “My kingdom is not of this world.”

The enemies of Paul and Silas took advantage of this misrepresentation to accuse them of treason against the Roman government. The record is as follows:—

“But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And, when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.”136

The commotion in the city was so great, and the peril of mob violence so imminent, that the brethren sent Paul and Silas by night to Berea, an interior town, about sixty miles south-west of Thessalonica. In this small rural city, situated on the eastern slope of the Olympian mountains, Paul found an intelligent, unprejudiced people, who listened gladly to the tidings of salvation which he brought them.

“They were more noble,” writes Luke, “than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.”137

The malignant Jews in Thessalonica, hearing of Paul’s success in Berea, sent some of their number to rouse the mob there against him. Paul, aware that he could hope to accomplish but little amidst scenes of popular clamor and violence, quietly withdrew. He, however, left Silas and Timothy behind: they, being less prominent, would not so much attract the attention of the populace.

Aided by the brethren of Berea, Paul repaired to the sea-coast, where he embarked for the city of Athens. Coasting along the western shore of the Island of Eubœa, a distance of ninety miles, they came to Cape Colonna, the southern extremity of Attica. Here, on Sunium’s high promontory, stood the temple of Minerva, a landmark to the Greek sailors. The eminence is still crowned with the ruins of its white columns.

Rounding this cape, the navigator soon came in sight of the splendid city of Athens, “built nobly on the Ægean shore, the eye of Greece, the mother of arts and eloquence.”138 Idolatrous shrines crowned every height, and gorgeous temples for the worship of false gods were found in all the streets. Athens was probably by far the most renowned city Paul had yet entered; and it embraced a large class of poets, philosophers, and men of literary leisure. “All the Athenians, and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.”

The statues to the gods were so numerous, that Petronius, a Roman satirist, declared that it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens. The spirit of Paul was roused as never before in seeing this great city so entirely surrendered to idolatry. In the synagogue of the Jews, and daily in the market-place, and from house to house, as he could find persons to listen to him, he proclaimed the religion of Jesus. His earnestness, and the power of his eloquent words, soon arrested general attention. Some of the proud philosophers turned contemptuously from him, calling him a “babbler:” others had their curiosity excited, and wished to hear more, saying, “He seemeth to be

a setter-forth of strange gods, because," adds Luke, "he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection."[139]

There was at Athens a renowned eminence, called Mars' Hill, upon whose summit was reared one of the most majestic buildings of ancient or modern days, called the Acropolis. Here the court of the Areopagus, the most solemn of the Grecian courts, held its sessions. Here Paul was taken by the Athenians to expound to them his doctrine. Never had he addressed such an audience before. Apparently never before, since he became a disciple of Jesus, had he encountered an hour to be fraught with more momentous consequences. The sacred historian has given us his address, or an abstract of it, upon this occasion. In its appropriateness to the circumstances of the case, it is universally regarded as unsurpassed in the records of human eloquence:—

"Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious;[140] for as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.

"For in him we live and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."[141]

The results of this address upon the minds of those who listened were various. Some of the philosophers, when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, "mocked." Many of the Jews were probably irritated at the suggestion that Jews and Gentiles were to be placed on an equality. Others, more respectful, withdrew, simply saying, "We will hear thee again of this matter." This was probably merely a polite expression of indifference. Paul did not feel sufficiently encouraged to prolong his labors among auditors so unpromising. In the synagogue, and in the streets, Paul had been preaching to the Athenians "Jesus and the resurrection." It was to this same theme, the burden of all his teachings, that upon Mars' Hill he so skilfully drew the attention of his hearers.

Paul did not encounter any tumult or violence in Athens. How long he remained there cannot now be known. As to the results of his labors, we are informed that Dionysius, a member of the court of Areopagus, and a woman by the name of Damaris, with some others, became converts to Christianity.

From Athens Paul proceeded to Corinth, the commercial metropolis of Greece, and a city renowned for its wealth, its luxury, and its wickedness. Corinth was about sixty miles from Athens, in a direction very nearly west. Two of the exiled Jews, Aquila and his wife Priscilla, whom a decree of the Emperor Claudius had expelled from Rome, had taken refuge in Corinth. They cordially received Paul, and he abode with them. They were tent-makers by occupation; making tents, then in great demand, of cloth woven from goat's-hair. Paul, who was unwilling to be burdensome to any one, met his expenses by his daily or rather nightly toil at this trade, which he had learned in his early youth. After preaching the gospel all day, we can see him in the evening diligently aiding Aquila and Priscilla in their manual labor.

Soon Silas and Timothy, coming from Thessalonica, joined Paul in Corinth. As he witnessed the great wickedness of the city, his spirit was stirred within him to an unusual degree. Earnestly he testified to the degenerate Jews that Jesus is the Christ. But the Jews would not receive Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah. They reviled the preacher and his gospel. Luke writes,—

"And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."

He thus abandoned the synagogue; and it seems that it was necessary for him to leave the residence of his Jewish hosts, and to take up his abode with a Gentile by the name of Justus. This man lived near the synagogue, and, though a Greek, had renounced idolatry, and was a worshipper of the true God. Paul's labors among the Jews had not been entirely in vain: for "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house;" and Paul in person baptized him.142

Among the Gentiles Paul's success was very great, and converts were rapidly multiplied. The rage of the Jews was such, that it was feared that Paul would encounter personal violence; but the Lord appeared to Paul in the night in a vision, and said to him,—

"Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city."

For a year and six months Paul continued in Corinth, preaching the gospel. It was from that city that he wrote his two impressive and affectionate letters to the converts in Thessalonica. An easy, good-natured man, by the name of Gallio, was at that time governor of the province of Achaia, which included the whole of Southern Greece. Probably the conversion and baptism of Crispus exasperated the Jews to the highest degree. They stirred up an insurrection in the streets; seized Paul, and with clamor and tumult dragged him before the judgment-seat of Gallio. But the charges which they brought against Paul were so frivolous, that Gallio drove them from his presence, declaring that he would be no judge of such matters.

The Greeks hated the Jews. And here, for the first time, we have the remarkable exhibition of the populace proceeding to acts of violence against the enemies of Paul. According to the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles, the Greek populace rushed upon Sosthenes, the ruler of the Jewish synagogue, and severely beat him. It was far more important to Gallio that he should be popular

among the Greeks than among the Jews: he therefore, with characteristic indifference, left Sosthenes to his fate. After this, the Jews no longer attempted to molest Paul.

He remained in Corinth "yet a good while;" but we have no record of the amount or success of his labors. He then bade farewell to the numerous converts whom he had gathered in Corinth, and, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, embarked at Cenchrea, and, leaving the shores of Greece behind him, crossed the Ægean Sea, a distance of about two hundred miles, and landed at the renowned city of Ephesus, in Asia Minor. In the record of this event it is written,—

"He then took leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow."[143]

The structure of the sentence does not determine whether it was Paul or Aquila who had a vow; neither are we informed why the vow was taken. Paul apparently entered the synagogue at Ephesus but once, when he reasoned with the Jews, endeavoring to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah; and, though entreated to tarry longer with them, he declined, saying, "I must by all means keep this feast[144] that cometh in Jerusalem; but I will return again unto you."

Sailing from Ephesus, leaving Aquila and Priscilla behind him, he landed at Cæsarea in Syria, and immediately hastened up to Jerusalem to report to the church there his adventures in the long and momentous excursion he had made,—an excursion which occupied a little over two years. He then returned to Antioch.

CHAPTER VIII.
THE CAPTIVE IN CHAINS.

The Third Missionary Tour.—Paul at Ephesus.—The Great Tumult.—The Voyage to Greece.—Return to Asia Minor and to Jerusalem.—His Reception at Jerusalem.—His Arrest, and the Riot.—Speech to the Mob.—Paul imprisoned.—Danger of Assassination.—Transferred to Cæsarea.—His Defence before Festus and Agrippa.—The Appeal to Cæsar.—The Voyage to Rome.—The Shipwreck.—Continued Captivity.



E now enter upon Paul's third missionary journey through the interior of Asia Minor. How long he remained in Antioch before entering upon this tour, or what exact route he took through Phrygia and Galatia, we do not know. Timothy probably accompanied him, as mention is made of his name in connection with Paul's stay at Ephesus. All the record we have of this journey through the heart of Asia Minor, in which Paul visited the various churches which he had

established, is contained in the words, “He departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.”145

Just before Paul’s arrival at Ephesus,—which city he had promised to visit again,—a Jew came there, by the name of Apollos, a devout man, very eloquent, who was a disciple of John the Baptist; he not having yet received the fuller revelation of life and immortality made by Jesus Christ. Aquila and Priscilla, listening to his bold and fervid addresses in the synagogue, took him, and explained to him more fully the gospel of Jesus as it had been expounded to them by Paul. Thus instructed in the “glad tidings,” Apollos went to Corinth with letters of recommendation to the brethren there, where “he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.”146

While Apollos was preaching at Corinth, Paul, having traversed the mountainous districts of Asia Minor, came to Ephesus. There were but few in that great and wicked city who had any true conception of the religion of Jesus. There were several, who, under the preaching of Apollos, had become disciples of John, walking in the comparatively dim light which that prophet had revealed. Eagerly they received the fuller illumination which Paul brought to their minds. Twelve of these were baptized by Paul in the name of the Lord Jesus: then, upon his laying his hands upon them, they received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, “and spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

For three months, Paul continued earnestly preaching in the synagogue “the things concerning the kingdom of God.” Success did not attend his labors: on the contrary, many were hardened by them, “and believed not, but spake evil of that way.” Paul, disheartened, withdrew entirely from the synagogue, and, taking the few disciples with him, established an independent church.

A man named Tyrannus, a school-teacher, who was either a convert, or was favorably affected towards the new doctrine, opened his schoolroom for the preaching of Paul. In that room, and from house to house, the zealous and persevering apostle preached, for the space of two years, “repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.” A large church was organized. Paul himself, and other disciples, made many excursions into the surrounding region, “so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.”147 Paul still continued to exercise miraculous powers, healing the sick, and casting out evil spirits. Some “vagabond Jews,” witnessing the power which the name of Jesus exerted, undertook to exorcise in that sacred name; but the demoniac, exclaiming, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.” This so alarmed the professional exorcists, that many of them relinquished their calling, and burned their books of sorcery, though they were valued at about eight thousand dollars. “So mightily,” adds Luke, “grew the word of the Lord, and prevailed.”

Paul now decided to visit the churches in Macedonia and Achaia, and then to return to Jerusalem, saying, “After that, I must see Rome also.” Timothy, and another disciple by the name of Erastus, were sent before him to announce his coming to the churches in Macedonia and Achaia.

Just before Paul left Ephesus, a very violent and not unnatural tumult arose in the city. Ephesus was renowned throughout the world for the worship of the goddess Diana. The temple, erected at the head of the harbor for the idolatrous worship of this goddess, was deemed, in its magnificence and dazzling beauty, one of the wonders of the world. It was a common saying, "The sun in its course sees nothing more magnificent than Diana's temple." This gorgeous marble shrine of idolatry was 425 feet long, 220 broad, and was embellished by 127 columns, each 60 feet high. The Greek ladies throughout all Achaia and Asia lavished their treasures in almost incrusting the temple with precious stones. It was one of the principal sources of revenue to the city, and of employment for its workmen, to construct silver statues of the goddess, which were sold in immense numbers throughout all the pagan world. But the preaching of Paul was bringing idolatry into disrepute, and destroying the trade in idols.

There was a large manufacturer of these silver shrines in the city, by the name of Demetrius. He called his numerous workmen together, and thus addressed them:—

"Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods which are made with hands: so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."148

These inflammatory words roused the workmen: they were repeated through all the shops in the city. A gathering mob began to surge through the streets with clamor and threatenings. The one continuous cry of the mob was, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The infuriated populace coming across two of Paul's companions and friends, Gaius and Aristarchus, seized them, and dragged them into the theatre, an immense enclosure, without a roof, where tiers of stone seats rose one above another, affording room for an immense assembly.

As soon as the news reached Paul, the intrepid man wished immediately to rush into the theatre, in the endeavor to rescue his friends; but even the officers of the city entreated him not thus to peril his life. With difficulty they dissuaded him from the rash and hopeless movement.

The tumult in the theatre was fearful. "Some cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together." At length the mayor of the city, an officer next in dignity and authority to the governor, entered the city, and endeavored to allay the tumult. Having succeeded in obtaining silence, he addressed the mob as follows:—

"Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?149 Seeing, then, that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. For ye have brought hither these men, who are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. But, if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters,150 it shall be determined in a

lawful assembly. For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse."[151]

Soon after this Paul assembled the disciples, and took leave of them, in preparation for his journey into Greece. From Ephesus he had written his First Epistle to the Corinthians; and he was greatly distressed by some disorders which had crept into the church there. We have no record of the events which occurred during this journey. Sailing across the Ægean Sea, he landed first in Macedonia. "And when he had gone over those parts, and given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, and there abode three months." He tarried some time in Philippi, waiting the arrival of Titus: upon his arrival, he wrote his Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

Accompanied by Titus, Paul went to Corinth, where he spent some time endeavoring to correct the abuses to which we have referred. While at Corinth, he wrote his Epistle to the Romans,—unquestionably the most important document which ever proceeded from a human mind.

But the malignant Jews in those regions still thirsted for his blood. As they lay in wait for him to kill him as he should embark for Syria, he changed his route, and returned through Macedonia to Philippi, where he took ship for Troas, on the Asiatic coast; which port he reached after a sail of five days. There he remained a week. The first day of the week, as commemorating the resurrection of Jesus, had become, instead of the seventh, the customary day for the assembling of Christians.[152]

Paul, as he was the next day to leave the brethren at Troas, probably never in this world to meet them again, continued the parting service until midnight. A young man named Eutychus, overcome by sleep, fell from a third-story window to the ground, and was taken up dead. Paul restored him to life. He then continued the social and religious services until the dawning of the day. The ship in which he was to embark sailed first for Assos, a small seaport about nine miles from Troas by land, and more than twice that distance by water.

Paul went on foot to Assos. There he took ship, and, sailing by Chios, Mitylene, and Samos, passed by Ephesus, and landed at Miletus, an important commercial city, about thirty miles beyond Ephesus. He sent for the elders of the church at Ephesus, and there took leave of them in the following affecting address:—

"Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations which befell me by the lying-in-wait of the Jews; and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

"And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that, by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. I have coveted no man’s silver or gold or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Luke adds, “And, when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck, and kissed him; sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.”153

Sailing by the Islands of Coos and Rhodes, without stopping, they landed at Patara, a small seaport in the province of Lycia, on the southern coast of Asia Minor. Here Paul took another vessel, and leaving the island on the left, after a voyage of about three hundred and forty miles, landed at Tyre, in Syria. There was a church in Tyre; and Paul remained with the Christians there a week while the ship was discharging its cargo. The brethren, conscious of the danger he would encounter in Jerusalem, urged him not to go there; but Paul was fixed in his purpose. When the time came for the ship to sail again, the brethren, with their wives and children, accompanied him to the shore. There, upon the sandy beach, they knelt down, and commended the heroic and beloved apostle to the protection of God. From Tyre the ship sailed along the coast of Syria to Ptolemais, the celebrated Jean d’Acre of modern history. The distance between the two places was about thirty miles. Here Paul was again refreshed by the society of the disciples whom he found there, and with whom he remained but one day.

Paul left the ship at Ptolemais, and continuing the journey by land, a distance of thirty or forty miles, reached Cæsarea. Philip the evangelist—one of the seven deacons chosen by the church in Jerusalem, to whom we have been before introduced as teaching and baptizing the eunuch on the road by Gaza, towards Egypt—resided in Cæsarea. His family consisted of four daughters, who were very earnest Christians, and who were endowed with the prophetic spirit. Paul remained for several days the guest of that Christian family.

While residing there, a certain prophet, by the name of Agabus,—the same who had previously predicted “that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world,”154—came to Cæsarea. Agabus, using the imagery of action so common with the prophets, took Paul’s girdle, bound it around his own hands and feet, and said,—

“Thus saith the Holy Ghost: So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man to whom this girdle belongs, and they shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.”155

The Christian friends of Paul at Cæsarea, when they heard this prophetic announcement, entreated him with the most earnest supplication, and even with tears, not to go up to Jerusalem, and thus place himself at the mercy of these cruel and inveterate foes. But Paul replied,—

“What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Luke, who still accompanied Paul, adds, “And, when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.”

Paul, with the companions who had attended him from Macedonia, and accompanied by several Christians from Cæsarea, went up to Jerusalem, and took up his residence at the house of Mnason, one of the early converts to Christianity.

Thus we have accompanied Paul on his last recorded journey to Jerusalem. It was a journey full of incident; and it is related more minutely than any other portion of his travels. We know all the places by which he passed, or at which he staid; and we are able to connect them all with familiar recollections of history. We know, too, all the aspects of the scenery. He sailed along those coasts of Western Asia, and among those famous islands, the beauty of which is proverbial. The very time of the year is known to us: it was when the advancing season was clothing every low shore and the edge of every broken cliff with a beautiful and refreshing verdure; when the winter storms had ceased to be dangerous, and the small vessels could ply safely in shade and sunshine between the neighboring ports. Even the state of the weather and the direction of the wind are known.

We can point to the places on the map where the vessel anchored for the night, and trace across the chart the track that was followed when the moon was full. Yet more than this: we are made fully aware of the state of the apostle’s mind, and of the burdened feeling under which this journey was accomplished. The expression of this feeling strikes us the more from its contrast with all the outward circumstances of the voyage. He sailed in the finest season, by the brightest coasts, and in the fairest weather; and yet his mind was occupied with forebodings of evil from first to last, so that a peculiar shade of sadness is thrown over the whole narration.156

Paul, like his divine Master, was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” The sins and sufferings of humanity oppressed his soul. Throughout all his epistles, we see indications of the pensive spirit with which he regarded the sublime and awful tragedy of time and sin.

Upon the arrival of the apostle in Jerusalem, he was very cordially received by the brethren. Knowing that he had many enemies even among the Christians there, who demanded that the Gentile converts should be brought into subjection to all the rites of Judaism, his dejected spirit must have been much cheered by this affectionate greeting. The disciples in Jerusalem, consisting of converted Jews and converted Gentiles, now counted their numbers by thousands. They were necessarily divided into many local churches. There was an immediate gathering of

the pastors of these churches to hear Paul's report of the success of his extended missionary tour. James, who had presided at the general council held in Jerusalem several years before, seems also to have presided at this meeting. Paul "declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry." The majority were very favorably impressed by his address, and "glorified the Lord." They, however, said to him,—

"Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: and they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs."

They therefore urged, that as it was impossible but that his arrival should be known, and that it would call the Christians together to hear from him, he should do something to refute these calumnies, and disarm hostility. They therefore suggested that he should take charge of four *Jewish Christians* who were under a vow, accompany them to the temple, and pay for them the necessary charges. This would prove that Paul, so far as the Jews were concerned, still respected the law of Moses. As to the Gentile converts, they reiterated the advice given by the council. Paul, who had laid it down as his principle, that to the Jew he would become a Jew, and to the Gentile a Gentile, that he might win all to Christ, accepted this suggestion. He was ready to accept or reject mere outward observances as expediency might dictate. In his view, circumcision was nothing, and uncircumcision nothing, but faith that worketh by love.

The next day was the great feast of Pentecost. Jerusalem was crowded with Jews from all parts of Syria, and even from remoter lands. Those who had already persecuted Paul on his missionary tour were there, ready to renew their violence. When Paul entered the temple with the men who had taken the vow, they sprang upon him, seized him, and cried out,—

"Men of Israel, help! This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and, further, brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place."[157]

A terrible mob was at once excited among the fanatic Jews. They seized Paul, dragged him out of the temple, and were about to kill him in the streets, when the chief captain in command of the Roman garrison heard of the uproar. Placing himself at the head of a band of soldiers, he assailed the mob, rescued Paul, chained him by each wrist to a soldier, and then inquired what he had done that they were thus beating him. The tumult and uproar were such, "some crying one thing, and some another," that no definite charge could be heard.

The captain, Claudius Lysias, supposing Paul to be a renowned Egyptian rebel and a guilty disturber of the peace, ordered his prisoner to be led to the barracks within the fortress. The crowd followed, shouting, "Away with him!" The pressure of the throng was so great, that, when they reached the great staircase leading up into the castled fortress, Paul was borne by the soldiers up the steps. When the prisoner reached the top of the stairs, whence he had a clear view of the angry, surging mob below, he turned to Lysias, and, addressing him in Greek, inquired, "May I speak unto thee?" Lysias was astonished to hear him speak in Greek, and said,—

"Art thou not that Egyptian which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?"

Paul replied, "I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people."

Obtaining permission, he waved his hand to obtain silence, and then, addressing the Jewish multitude in the Hebrew language, gave them quite a minute account of his past history, his persecution of the Christians, and his miraculous conversion to that faith which he once endeavored to destroy. But, when he announced that the Lord Jesus had said to him, "Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto *the Gentiles*," the rage of the fanatic Jews was roused to the highest pitch. With united voice they cried out,—

"Away with such a fellow from the earth! it is not fit that he should live."

As they were shouting and gesticulating with the most violent expressions of ferocity, Lysias ordered him to be led into the fortress, and, in accordance with the infamous practice of the times, to be examined by scourging, to see what confession bodily agony would thus extort from him. As they were binding him to the whipping-post, Paul said to the centurion who was superintending the operation,—

"Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

The remark was immediately reported to Lysias. He, upon questioning Paul, ordered him to be unbound; and the heroic prisoner passed the night in one of the cells of the fortress. The next day, Lysias summoned a council of the chief priests, and brought Paul before them, that he might learn of him of what crimes he was accused. He was put upon his defence without any charge being brought against him. Ananias, the high priest, a brutal wretch, presided. As Paul, commencing his defence, modestly said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day," the infamous judge was so enraged, that he ordered those standing near to smite him on the mouth.

Saint as Paul was, this brutal outrage roused his indignation; and he exclaimed, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?"

Some one who stood by said, "Revilest thou the high priest?"

Paul, at once restored to self-possession, replied, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."

The Jews were at that time divided into two highly antagonistic parties,—the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Sadducees did not believe in any future state, or in any spiritual existence. They said, "There is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit." The Pharisees, on the contrary, believed fully in the resurrection of the dead, and in a future life. Paul took advantage of this division of sentiment among his judges, and, knowing that one of the sources of the bitter hostility excited

against him was that he taught that Jesus of Nazareth had risen from the grave, continued his defence by saying,—

"Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question."

This caused an immediate division between the two parties, and arrayed the Pharisees on the side of Paul. They said, "We find no evil in this man; but, if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God." The dissension between these two rival sects became so intense, that they almost proceeded to blows. "The chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the castle."

In the night, the Lord Jesus appeared to his devoted apostle, and said to him, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

Certain of the Jews, finding it difficult to crush Paul by processes of law, entered into a conspiracy, binding themselves by an oath not to eat nor drink till they had killed him. There were forty of these conspirators; and they were so assured of the sympathy of the Jewish rulers in this endeavor, that they went to them, informed them of their resolve, and sought their co-operation. The plan which they proposed to the chief priests and elders was, that they should officially apply to Claudius Lysias that Paul might be once more brought before the Jewish court for further examination. As the prisoner was being conducted from the fortress to the court, the assassins, lying in wait, would fall upon him, and kill him.

A nephew of Paul, the son of his sister, learned of this conspiracy, and, obtaining access to the fortress, informed Paul of his peril. Paul sent the young man by one of the centurions to communicate the intelligence to Lysias. Thus informed, Lysias secretly at night assembled a band of four hundred Roman soldiers and spearmen and seventy cavalry to escort Paul to Cæsarea, and place him under the control of Felix, the governor of Judæa, who resided in that city. It was a journey of seventy-five miles, and would have to be taken rapidly; and therefore more than one horse was provided for Paul.

The escort started with its prisoner at nine o'clock at night, and took with them the following letter to the governor:—

"Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them; then came I with an army and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. And, when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council; whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. And, when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell."

Marching rapidly with their prisoner, the escort proceeded that night thirty-eight miles, as far as Antipatris. From this point the foot-soldiers returned to Jerusalem, as their presence was no

longer needed for the protection of Paul. The horsemen accompanied Paul the remainder of the way to Cæsarea, and, proceeding directly to the governor, surrendered to him their prisoner. Felix ordered Paul to be held in custody in Herod's palace, which was the official residence of the governor, until his accusers should come from Jerusalem.

After an interval of five days, Ananias the high priest, with the elders, and a distinguished orator named Tertullus, came to Cæsarea to prefer their charges against Paul in the presence of the governor. Tertullus brought forward their accusations in the following address to Felix:—

"Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, we accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words: for we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes;158 who also hath gone about to profane the temple; whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. But the chief captain, Lysias, came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come unto thee; by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse him."159

Paul was then called upon for his defence against these frivolous charges. It was as follows: "Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself; because that thou mayest understand that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city; neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

"But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets; and have hope toward God (which they themselves also allow) that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men. Now, after many years, I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude nor with tumult. Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had aught against me; or else let these same here say if they have found any evil-doing in me while I stood before the council, except it be for this one voice, that I cried, standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day."

Felix had been governor of Judæa for six years. It was now nearly thirty years since the death of Christ. There were numerous bodies of Christians in churches scattered all over Palestine. He had enjoyed ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the sentiments of the Christians, was a thoughtful man, and was by no means predisposed to treat Paul with severity. He therefore placed Paul under the custody of a centurion, who was to accompany him wherever he went, but to allow him perfect liberty and free access to his friends.

It would seem that Drusilla, the wife of Felix, had some curiosity to see Paul; for, after a few days, Felix and Drusilla (who was a Jewess) sent for Paul to come to the palace, and in private heard him "concerning the faith in Christ." Luke records,—

"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time: when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

"He had hoped also," Luke adds, "that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him."160

For two years, Paul was held a prisoner in Cæsarea. How wonderful that God should, at such a time, have allowed such a man so long to be kept in comparative silence! He was doubtless active in the service of his Saviour in Cæsarea every hour of every day; but we have no record of the results of those labors. At length Felix was summoned to Rome, and was supplanted in the office of governor by Festus. The malice of the Jewish rulers towards Paul continued unabated; "and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound." This was in the year of our Lord 60.

Immediately upon the arrival of the new governor at Cæsarea, the sleepless hatred of the Jews made a fresh attempt upon the life of Paul. Three days after Festus landed at Cæsarea, he went up to Jerusalem, the political metropolis of his province. Immediately the high priest, accompanied by several of the most prominent of the Jews, appeared before Festus, and begged that Paul might be sent back from Cæsarea to Jerusalem for trial. They had in the mean time prepared a band of assassins to fall upon Paul by the way, and put him to death.

Festus wisely declined placing an uncondemned person thus in the hands of his enemies, but stated, that, as he was about to return to Cæsarea, they could send his accusers there with whatever charges they had to prefer against him. After remaining in Jerusalem about ten days, Festus returned to Cæsarea, summoned a court of assistant judges, took his seat upon the judicial tribunal, and ordered Paul to be brought before him. The Jews who came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove. It would seem, from the summary which is given of Paul's reply, that he was charged with heresy, sacrilege, and treason,—the same charges which had before been brought against him by Tertullus. "Neither against the Jews," Paul answered, "neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended any thing at all."

Festus was anxious to conciliate the favor of the Jews, and suggested that Paul should go up to Jerusalem, there to be tried before a tribunal over which he himself would preside. Paul knew that he could expect no justice there, and that he was in danger of being assassinated by the way. He was a Roman citizen, and, as such, had the privilege of appealing to Cæsar at Rome. This was his last resort. He therefore said,—

"I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but, if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar."161

Even Festus had no power to ignore this appeal. By those potent words, “I appeal unto Cæsar,” Paul had transferred his cause from the provincial governor to the emperor at Rome. Nothing remained for Festus but to send Paul to Rome, with all the documents bearing upon the trial, and with his own official report. Festus, however, was still in perplexity. The charges brought against Paul were so extremely frivolous, that he knew not what statement to make. He was ashamed to send a prisoner to Rome with such trivial accusations; and it seemed to him “unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.”

Festus was governor of the small province of Judæa. Agrippa was king of the whole of Syria, of which Judæa was but one of the provinces; and he also included within his realms other dominions, whose limits cannot now be very accurately defined. It so happened, that, at this time, Agrippa, with his sister Bernice, paid a complimentary visit to the new governor of Judæa at Cæsarea, and remained with Festus several days. He was a Jew, and was thoroughly acquainted with Jewish law. Festus, who was much embarrassed by the position in which he found himself placed in reference to Paul, consulted Agrippa concerning the affair. The account which he gave of the case to Agrippa is quite curious.

“There is a certain man,” said he, “left in bonds by Felix; about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him. To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth; against whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed, but had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And, because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters; but, when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cæsar.”[162]

The curiosity of Agrippa was excited, and he requested that Paul might be brought before him. Accordingly, the next day, the king and his sister, with great pomp, entered the audience-chamber. The king took his seat in the judicial chair, and was attended by a brilliant suite of military officers, and of the most distinguished men of Cæsarea. Before this august assemblage Paul was led. In the following ceremonious speech, Festus described the circumstances under which the prisoner had been left in his charge:—

“King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him. Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O King Agrippa! that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write; for it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.”[163]

Agrippa then condescendingly said to the prisoner that he was permitted to speak for himself. Paul opened his defence with the following words:—

"I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews; especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently."

He then briefly recounted his early history, narrating in full the circumstances which attended his conversion to the religion of Jesus. After speaking of the vision which appeared to him on the road to Damascus, before whose brilliancy all had fallen to the earth, he said,—

"I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose,—to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

"Whereupon, O King Agrippa!" continued Paul, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but showed first unto them of Damascus and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

"For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Having, therefore, obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come,—that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles."

As Paul thus alluded to the resurrection of the dead, he was interrupted in his discourse by Festus, the unbelieving Roman, exclaiming with a loud voice,—

"Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad."

Paul turned to the governor, and said courteously, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him."

Then, addressing the king himself, who, as we have said, was a Jew, he added, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

The arguments of Paul had been so rational and irresistible, that Agrippa seems to have been intellectually convinced by them; for he thoughtfully replied, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”

Paul, whose heart ever glowed with Christian love for all his fellow-men, answered, “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 terminated the interview. Agrippa, in conferring with his council, found them unanimously of the opinion that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or of bonds. He therefore said to Festus, “This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.” But it was now too late. Paul had made his appeal; and nothing remained but to send him, by the first opportunity, to Rome. There was a ship in port from Adramyttium which was engaged in the coasting-trade, and which was to touch at various ports in Asia Minor.

Paul, with two companions,—Luke, and Aristarchus from Thessalonica,—was embarked on board this ship. There were other prisoners in the ship, and they were under charge of a guard of soldiers, with Julius, their commanding-officer. The day after sailing, they touched at Sidon, sixty-seven miles north from Cæsarea. Julius treated his prisoner very courteously; and, as there was a church in this place, he was allowed to go ashore “unto his friends to refresh himself.” Leaving Sidon, they sailed across what is called the Sea of Cilicia, leaving the Island of Cyprus on their left, being driven to this circuitous route by contrary winds, till they reached the city of Myra, a large seaport in the province of Lycia.

At Myra they found a ship from Alexandria in Egypt bound for Italy. The prisoners were placed on board this ship, which must have been one of considerable size, as it conveyed, with crew and passengers, two hundred and seventy-six souls. Calms and head-winds delayed their passage, so that it was “many days” before they reached the Island of Cnidus, which was but a hundred and thirty miles from Myra. The wind and the current still opposing them, they, finding themselves unable to sail directly across the Ægean Sea, ran down to the southward; and having doubled Cape Salmone, the most easterly cape of the Island of Crete, they sailed along the southern coast of that island, sheltered from the north winds, a distance of about a hundred and fifty miles, until they came to a celebrated harbor, or roadstead, called the Fair Havens. There was no settlement here upon the shore; but the city of Lasea was situated a few miles inland. Winter had now come; and fierce storms swept the Mediterranean, rendering navigation quite perilous. Upon leaving Myra, they had hoped to reach Italy before the dangerous season should arrive; but the untoward weather had detained them, and there were still many weary leagues of a tempestuous sea to be passed over before they could cast anchor in the Tiber.

The question was anxiously deliberated, whether they should still brave the peril of the seas. Paul, probably speaking, not by inspiration, but from his own natural intelligence and caution, warned them, that, if they continued their voyage, not only would the safety of the ship be imperilled, but also the lives of all on board; but as the present anchorage was incommodious to winter in, and there was no other good harbor near, it was decided, notwithstanding the warning of Paul, to continue the voyage.

About fifty miles west of the Fair Havens, on the southern coast of the Island of Crete, was the seaport of Phenice. Some who had been there spoke of that harbor as a safe one, and urged, that, at all hazards, they should try to reach Phenice, where they could winter if it were deemed expedient. Taking advantage of a gentle south wind, they were sailing close by the southern shore of Crete, when suddenly a very fierce tempest arose from the north-east,—a hurricane, probably such as is now called a Levanter, but then called Euroclydon,—and they were driven helplessly before it, in hourly peril of being ingulfed.

About forty miles off the southern coast of Crete was situated the small Island of Clauda. Under the lee of this island, they succeeded with great difficulty in saving the small boat which was attached to the ship, and which had been in great peril of being staved to pieces. The fury of the wind and waves was such, that there was danger that the over-strained planks would open seams, so that the ship would founder. To obviate this danger, heavy cables were passed around the ship, slipping them over the bows, and tightening them upon deck, so as to bind the loosening planks together. Still the gale was driving them at its mercy towards the coast of Africa.

Near that coast there were two dangerous quicksands, ever shifting their places under the wash of the surging sea, so that their position could never be laid down with certainty in any chart. The storm raged with increasing fury until the third day, when they endeavored to lighten the ship by throwing over a portion of her cargo. Still the days and nights of peril came and went. Thick clouds darkened the sky. Neither sun nor stars were visible. All reckoning was lost, as the shifting gale drove them they knew not whither. During this terrible tempest, the suffering of body and mind was such, and the labors of the crew so incessant, that there had been no opportunity for receiving food. All now seemed to have surrendered themselves to despair. The opening seams indicated that the ship must soon founder. In this hour of extremity, Paul said to the officers,—

“Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island.”[164]

Fourteen days had now passed, during which the ship had been driven hither and thither over the foaming billows of the Adriatic Sea. About midnight of the fourteenth, the sailors saw some indications that they were approaching land,—probably by the roar of breakers, which a practised ear will discern even amidst the wildest tumult of a storm. Upon sounding, they found twenty fathoms of water. Soon sounding again, they found but fifteen fathoms. Thus warned of their danger of being hurled in midnight darkness upon the rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and waited impatiently for the dawn.

Some of the sailors, as usual, were disposed to get out the only boat and escape to the shore, leaving the others to their fate. They pretended that it was their object to cast some more anchors out of the foreship. Paul, perceiving this, said to the centurion who was in command of the guard of soldiers, “Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.”

The soldiers, in prompt obedience to military command, cut the ropes, and the boat drifted off into the darkness of the stormy sea. As the day was beginning to dawn, Paul entreated them all to refresh themselves with food, saying that this was needful to strengthen them for the fatigues still before them, and assuring them that they should all be saved without the slightest bodily harm. It is very evident that the exalted Christian character of Paul had given him great influence with all on board. “He took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all; and, when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer.”

Further to lighten the ship, that they might draw nearer to the shore, they threw out the remainder of the cargo of wheat into the sea. With the early dawn, they saw the outline of an unknown island at a little distance before them. As the light increased, they saw a small bay, or indentation of the shore, where there was some slight protection from the violence of the sea. Raising their anchors, and spreading their mainsail, they ran the ship as far as possible upon the land. The bows struck the sand; while the stern, still floating, was tossed up and down by the surging billows; and thus the ship was rapidly being broken to pieces. The soldiers, with their characteristic recklessness of human life, proposed that the prisoners should be put to death, lest they should escape by swimming; but the more humane centurion, cherishing kindly feelings for Paul, gave liberty to each one to save himself as best he could. Passengers and crew all now made for the shore. The strong swimmers sprang boldly into the sea; others, on boards or fragments of the ship, reached the land. Thus they stood upon the beach, drenched, and shivering in the cold wintry wind, having lost every thing, their lives only being preserved. The storm still continued, and the rain was falling.

Some of the natives of the island soon collected around them, and informed them that they were upon the Island of Malta, in the Adriatic Sea, about four hundred and eighty miles from Crete. By the aid of the inhabitants, a fire was soon kindled, and they all assembled around it. As Paul gathered some sticks to throw upon the fire, a viper, one of the most venomous of reptiles, whose bite was deemed certain death, fastened itself upon his hand. Paul shook the reptile into the flames. They all looked to see him drop dead, supposing him to be a murderer who could not escape divine vengeance; but soon, seeing no harm befall him, they went to the other extreme, declaring him to be a god.

The shipwrecked company remained for three months upon the island before any opportunity was presented to leave it. That Paul devoted these three months to energetic efforts in the service of his Master, no one can doubt; but we have no record of the incidents he encountered, or of the results of his labors, with one exception. In the narrative of Luke we find the following brief statement:—

“In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody-flux; to whom Paul entered in and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So, when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed; who also honored us with many honors; and, when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.”[165]

A ship from Alexandria by the name of "Castor and Pollux," which had wintered in the isle, was to sail with the returning spring for Rome. The shipwrecked prisoners, with their guard, were taken on board, and the sails were spread. They touched at Syracuse, the capital of the Island of Sicily, which was on their direct route. Here they remained three days; and then, weighing anchor, they directed their course towards the Straits of Messina, and landed at Rhegium, on the southern extremity of Italy. Thence, running along the western coast of the Italian peninsula, they came to Puteoli, about seven miles south-west of the present city of Naples. Puteoli was then the principal seaport in Southern Italy.

Here they found Christian brethren; but it is not known by whom the gospel was brought to their region. Paul was permitted to tarry with them seven days. Thus there was opportunity for the tidings to reach Rome (which was but fifty-six miles distant) of the approach of the renowned apostle. The Christians in Rome were doubtless pretty well acquainted with Paul's career. His Epistle to the Romans had been written about five years before this.

Leaving the ship at Puteoli, they commenced their journey by land to Rome. When they had advanced about ten miles on their way, they came to a place called Appii Forum. Here, and at another place a few miles farther on called the Three Taverns, they found brethren from Rome who had come to meet them. The cordiality with which the Christians greeted the venerable prisoner so cheered him, that "he thanked God, and took courage."

Upon Paul's arrival in Rome, he was surrendered to the custody of the captain of the pretorian cohort. His name, according to Tacitus, was Burrhus Afranius. This officer kindly allowed Paul his liberty, save only that he was always chained to a soldier, who accompanied him wherever he went. After Paul had been in Rome three days, he invited his brethren (the Jews) to meet him, and thus addressed them:—

"Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans; who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. But, when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught to accuse my nation of. For this cause, therefore, have I called for you; because that for the hope of Israel[166] I am bound with this chain."

The Jews replied, "We neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came showed or spake any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

A day was accordingly appointed, when they met Paul at his lodging; and he expounded to them the principles of the Christian religion, and of the kingdom of Christ, "persuading them out of the law of Moses and the prophets from morning till evening."

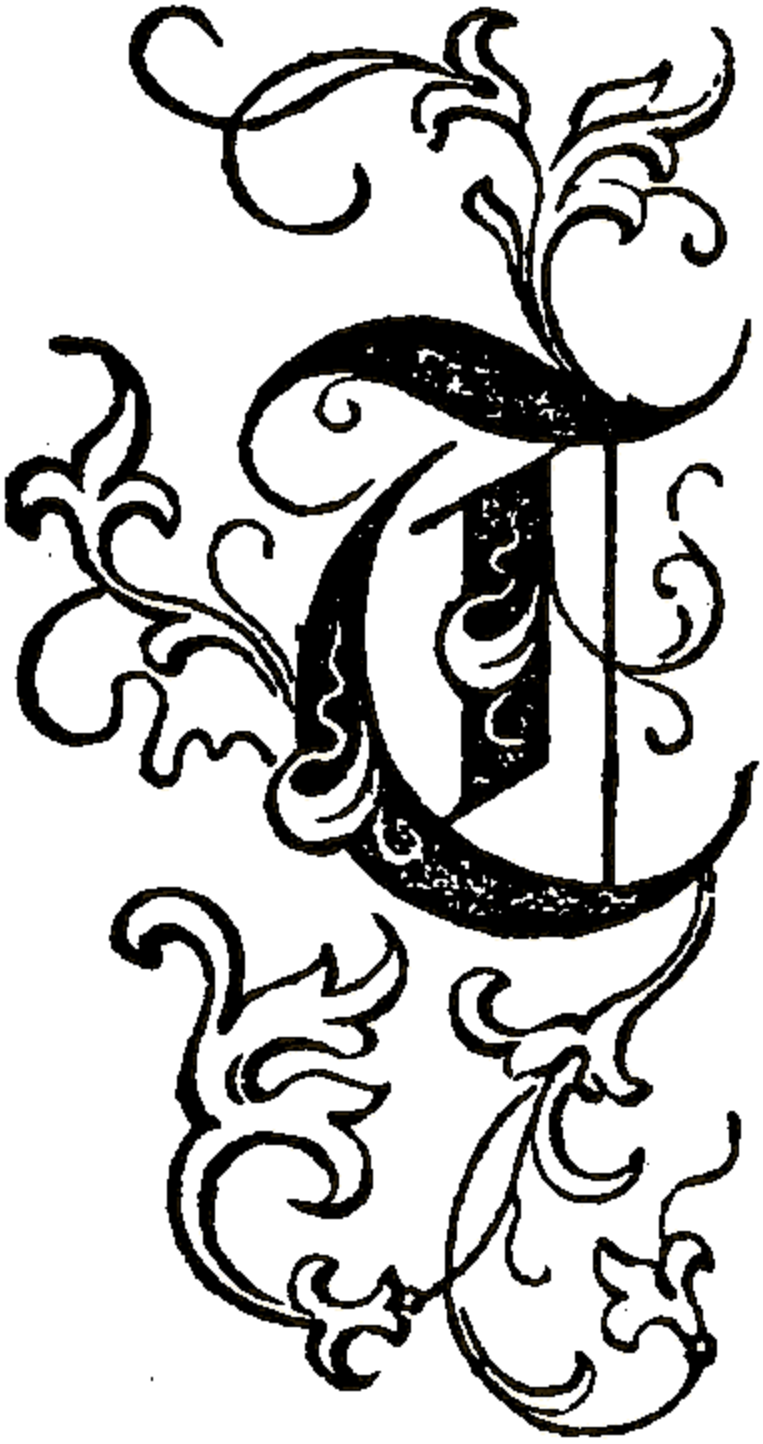
Some believed, and some believed not. A very animated debate arose between the two parties, and they retired disputing vehemently. Paul regarded the result as a rejection of Christ; for, quoting against the unbelieving Jews one of the denunciations of the prophet Isaiah, he added, "Be it known, therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that

they will hear it." Luke concludes his interesting narrative, which the Holy Spirit superintended, with the words,—

"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

CHAPTER IX.
THE FIRST PERSECUTION.

The Population of Rome.—The Reign of Tiberius Cæsar.—His Character and Death.—The Proposal to deify Jesus.—Caligula.—His Crimes, and the Earthly Retribution.—Nero and his Career.—His Crimes and Death.—The Spirit of the Gospel.—Sufferings of the Christians.—Testimony of Tacitus.—Testimony of Chrysostom.—Panic in Rome.—The Sins and Sorrows of weary Centuries.—Noble Sentiments of the Bishop of Rome.



HE inspired narrative of Luke, contained in the Acts of the Apostles, brings down the history of Christianity through a period of thirty years after the ascension of our Saviour,—to A.D. 62. The subsequent career of the apostle Paul is involved in much obscurity. It is generally supposed, from allusions in his letters, that he was soon brought to trial, and acquitted, in the year of our Lord 63. From Rome he probably returned to Jerusalem, and thence visited Ephesus, Laodicea,

and Colosse. Afterwards he returned to Rome by the way of Troas, Philippi, and Corinth. Rome presented to him the widest and most important field of labor, and on that account he probably decided to spend the remainder of his life there; and there he suffered martyrdom (it is supposed, in the year of our Lord 65), as will be related in subsequent pages.

But it is necessary for us now to retrace our steps a little, and to turn back a few leaves of the pages of history. Luke, in his narrative, has conducted Paul to Rome, then proud mistress of the world, containing a population variously estimated from two to four millions. Rome was the central and apparently impregnable fortress of pagan superstition; and it was in Rome, in deadly struggle with her wicked emperors and her degraded populace, that some of the greatest victories of Christianity were won. The strife between paganism and the religion of Jesus continued for centuries, and developed heroism on the part of the Christians to which no parallel can be found in secular annals.

It will be remembered, that, when Jesus was crucified as a malefactor upon Mount Calvary,—the sacrificial Lamb of God, bearing in his own wonderful person, as both God and man, the mysterious burden of the world's atonement,—Tiberius Cæsar, the adopted son and heir of Octavius Cæsar, or Cæsar the August, sat upon the imperial throne. It was in the eighteenth year of the reign of Tiberius that Jesus was crucified. This event, the crucifixion of the Son of God,—probably the most wonderful which has occurred during the annals of eternity,—produced no impression whatever; was unknown in the distant palaces of Rome.

The death of Tiberius strikingly illustrates the depravity of the times. He had retired to the Island of Capreæ, where, in a palace of the most luxurious surroundings, he surrendered himself to almost every conceivable indulgence of sin. For six years he remained there, while conspiracies and revolts agitated the empire. There was a young man in his suite by the name of Caligula, son of the renowned general Germanicus, whom Tiberius, through jealousy, had put to death.

Caligula was one of the vilest of the vile. He ingratiated himself in the favor of the tyrant by pandering to all his wickedness, and by the most sycophantic adulation. At length, the death-hour of Tiberius tolled. Remorse, with scorpion-lashes, hovered over his dying-bed. He resorted to every expedient to repel reflection, and to close his eyes against the approach of the king of terrors. In pursuit of health, he had left Capreæ, and was at Misenum, near Naples. Caligula had, with many other courtiers, accompanied him.

The wretched emperor, reclining upon his couch, was taken with a fainting-fit. His physician, feeling his pulse, said, "His life is ebbing fast." All thought him dying. The courtiers abandoned the powerless monarch, who had no longer any favors to grant, and gathered tumultuously with their congratulations around Caligula, declaring him to be emperor. In the midst of their hilarity, Tiberius, to the consternation of all, revived; but he was weak and helpless, and could be easily put out of the way. A few of the courtiers entered his chamber, and pressed a pillow upon his face; and, after a brief and feeble struggle, the smothered king lay still in death. Caligula, who was, if possible, still more infamous than Tiberius, was now decorated with the imperial purple.

It is stated by Justin and other early writers, that Pontius Pilate, after the crucifixion of Christ, wrote to the Emperor Tiberius, giving an account of his death, his resurrection, and of the

miracles which he had performed; and that Tiberius proposed to the Roman senate that Jesus should be recognized as one of the gods, and that his statue should be placed in a niche in one of the temples of paganism. The senate, for some unexplained reason, did not accede to this request.

Caligula, elated by his accession to sovereign power, surrendered himself to the uncontrolled dominion of lusts and passions, which had already been rendered furious and untamable by long years of indulgence. It is difficult to account for the cruel and senseless atrocities perpetrated by this monster upon any other supposition than that he was a madman, or that fiends had taken possession of his person.

He erected a temple of gold; placed in it a statue of himself, which he ordered to be dressed every day in clothes similar to those which he should that day wear; and, declaring himself to be a god, constrained his subjects to worship his statue with divine honors. The degraded populace, without religion, without any moral principle, hesitated not to bow in adoration before this image of the most contemptible of men. The most rare delicacies which money could purchase were offered in sacrifice at his shrine. His wife, and even his horse, were ordained as priests to officiate in his temple. The insane luxury which he displayed surpassed all that had hitherto been known. His baths were composed of the most costly liquids. His table service was of solid gold. Even in his sauces he had jewels dissolved, that they might be more costly. He built a stable of marble for his favorite horse, and fed him with gilded oats from a manger of ivory.

The cruelty of this idiotic monster was equal to his folly. Senators, untried, uncondemned, were wantonly murdered at his bidding. His victims were thrown into the dens of half-famished lions and tigers to be devoured alive. It was one of the entertainments of his meals to place persons upon the rack, that he might be amused by their shrieks, and entertained by their convulsions.

The guilty, cowardly wretch was ever trembling in every nerve in apprehension of assassination. Suspecting one of the most beautiful women of his court of being engaged in a conspiracy against him, he placed her upon the rack to enforce confession, and dislocated every joint in her body. Her shrieks and mutilation roused the courtiers to the energies of despair. Cherea, a Roman senator, approached the emperor, and, plunging a dagger into his heart, exclaimed, “Tyrant, think of this!”

Caligula fell dead. He was but twenty-nine years of age, and had reigned but four years. To such men, how awful the declaration of Christianity!—“All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth,—they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

Anarchy succeeded. As some drunken Roman soldiers were rioting through the palace, they found a half-crazed old man named Claudius, an uncle of Caligula, hidden behind a pile of lumber in the garret. They seized him, and partly in jest, and partly in earnest, proclaimed him emperor. The army took up the joke, and ratified the choice. In solid phalanx, with banners, shoutings, and bugle-peals, they presented him to the trembling senate, and compelled his enthronement.

In Claudius, the worst of conceivable bad elements were combined: he united the stupidity of the idiot with the ferocity of the demon. He commenced his reign about the forty-sixth year of the Christian era. Britain, then inhabited by barbaric tribes, invited invasion. Claudius sent an army to march through Gaul, and, crossing the channel, to plant the banners of the empire on those distant shores. Many and bloody were the battles; but the Roman legions were triumphant.

Claudius was so elated with the conquest, that he in person repaired to Britain to receive the homage of the savage inhabitants of the conquered isle. Still the conquest was very imperfect. But a few of the tribes had been vanquished. Large portions of the island still remained under the sway of their bold and indomitable chieftains. Thirty battles were subsequently fought, and several years of incessant conflict passed, before Britain was fairly reduced to the condition of a Roman province.

Messalina, the wife of Claudius, has attained the unenviable notoriety of having been the worst, the most shameless woman earth has ever known. The renown of her profligacy has survived the lapse of eighteen centuries. The story of her life can now never be told: modern civilization would not endure the recital. The ladies of her court were compelled, under penalty of torture and death, publicly to practise the same enormities in which she rioted. Her brutal husband was utterly regardless of the infamy of her life. At length, becoming weary of her, he connived with another for her assassination.

Claudius, having murdered Messalina, married Agrippina. She had already given birth to the monster Nero. For a short time, she ruled her imbecile husband with a rod of iron. Three wives had preceded her. One day, Claudius, in his cups, imprudently declared that it was his fate to be tormented with bad wives, and to be their executioner. Agrippina weighed the words. Claudius loved mushrooms. Agrippina prepared for him a delicious dish, sprinkled poison upon it, and with her own loving hands presented it to her spouse. She had the pleasure of seeing him fall and die in convulsions at her feet.

Such was life in the palaces of Rome at the time of the apostles. Such was the world that Jesus came to redeem. The question is sometimes asked, whether humanity is advancing or retrograding in moral character. No one familiar with the history of past ages will ask that question. Manifold as are the evils in many of the courts of Europe at the present time, most of them are as far in advance of ancient Rome, in all that constitutes integrity and virtue, as is the most refined Christian family in advance of the most godless and degraded.

Nero, a lad of seventeen, whom Claudius had adopted as his heir, succeeded to the throne. It is said, that, at the commencement of his reign, he gave indications of a humane spirit; but this period was so short as scarcely to deserve notice. The character and career of Nero were such, that, from that day to this, the ears of mankind have tingled with the recital of the outrages he inflicted upon humanity. The sceptre of the world was placed in the hands of this boy in the year of our Lord 54. The knowledge of the doctrines of Jesus had already reached Rome. Paul was there, though in chains, boldly preaching the religion of Jesus of Nazareth.

“There is one God, and one only,” said Jesus; “and all idols are vanity and a lie.”

“All mankind are brethren,” said Jesus; “and God commands that every man should love his brother as himself.”

“The divine benediction,” said Jesus, “rests upon the lowly in spirit, the pure in heart; upon the peacemakers; upon those who visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and who practise every thing that is true and lovely and of good report. Repent of sin, seek pardon through faith in a Saviour who has died to atone for your sins, commence a life of devotion to the glory of God and to the welfare of your brother-man, and death shall introduce you to realms of honor, glory, and immortality.”

“God is no respecter of persons,” said Jesus. “The monarch and the slave stand alike at his tribunal. The wicked, and those who fear not God, shall be cast into hell. The smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever.”

These offers of salvation to all who would repent and commence the Christlike life, these good news and glad tidings, were joyfully accepted by hundreds and by thousands of the poor and the oppressed and the world-weary; but the denunciations of divine wrath upon those who, by their enormities, were converting this world into a realm of woe, fell appallingly upon the ears of proud and unrelenting oppressors.

The teachings of Jesus were thus hateful to Nero. He hated that religion which condemned him. He hated those who preached it. He deliberately determined to blot out that religion from the world; to silence in death every tongue that proclaimed it. It was apparently an easy task to do this. Nero was monarch of the world. A resistless army moved unquestioning at his bidding. All power was apparently in his hands. He was a man, for the times, highly educated. He was endowed with intellectual shrewdness as well as physical energy, and could bring public opinion to bear against the Christians, while he assailed them with the axe of the headsman and the flames of martyrdom.

The Christians were few and feeble. To turn against them popular indignation, atrocious libels were fabricated. The Christians were in the habit of taking their infants to church to be baptized. Pagan slanderers affirmed that they were taken there to be offered in bloody sacrifice. The Christians often met to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper: they ate of that bread which represented the body of Jesus broken for us; they drank of that wine emblematic of the blood of Jesus, shed for our sins. The pagans declared that the Christians were cannibals; that they secretly met in midnight feasts, and, having murdered a man, ate his flesh, and drank his blood.

Thus a terrible prejudice was created against the Christians. Many were deceived by these cruel slanders who would possibly have joined the disciples had they known the truth. Thus shrewdly Nero prepared the public mind for the outrages he was about to inflict upon those whom he had doomed to destruction. Even Tacitus, the renowned Roman historian, a man of much candor, was manifestly under the influence of these gross libels. In the following terms, he describes the first persecution of the Christians at Rome by Nero:—

“Christ, the founder of that name, was put to death as a criminal by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judæa, in the reign of Tiberius. But the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out

again, not only through Judæa, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also, whither all things horrible and disgraceful flow from all quarters as to a common receptacle, and where they are encouraged. Accordingly, first those were seized who confessed that they were Christians; next, on their information, a vast multitude were convicted, not so much on the charge of burning the city, as of hating the human race.

"And in their deaths they were made the subject of sport; for they were covered with skins of wild beasts, and worried to death by dogs, or nailed to crosses, or set fire to, and, when day declined, burned to serve for nocturnal lights. Nero offered his own gardens for that spectacle, and exhibited a circensian game, indiscriminately mingling with the common people in the habit of a charioteer, or else standing in his chariot. Whence a feeling of compassion rose towards the sufferers, though guilty, and deserving to be made examples of by capital punishment, because they seem not to be cut off for the public good, but victims to the ferocity of one man."[167]

It will be noticed in the above paragraph that Tacitus alludes to a charge which Nero brought against the Christians, of having set fire to the city of Rome. One day, some one repeated in conversation, in presence of the tyrant, the line, "When I am dead, let fire devour the world." Nero replied, "It shall be said, 'When I am living, let fire devour the world.'"

Rome then contained, according to the general estimate, about four million inhabitants. They were crowded together in narrow, winding streets. Nero ordered his emissaries to apply the torch in various sections of the city. The wind was fresh; the buildings, which were mostly of wood, were dry; the flames fierce. Nero ascended a neighboring tower to view the cruel, sublime, awful spectacle. Earth never witnessed such a scene before, has never since. For nine days and nights the flames raged in quenchless fury. Uncounted multitudes, caught in the narrow streets, perished miserably. The most magnificent specimens of architecture and priceless works of art were consumed.

The motives which led to this diabolical deed were probably complex. It is said that Nero, satiated with every conceivable indulgence, longed for some new excitement. The spectacle of the dwellings of four millions of people in flames; the frenzy, the dismay, the runnings to and fro, of the perishing millions,—men, women, and children; the rush and roar of the conflagration, flashing in billowy flames by night to the clouds,—all combined to present a spectacle such as mortal eye had never gazed upon before.

The estimated population of the Roman empire at this time was about a hundred and fifty millions. By the assessment of enormous taxes upon these millions, funds could easily be raised to rebuild Rome in hitherto unimagined splendor. It is said that this ambition was one of the motives which inspired Nero to his infamous deed.

Nero commenced with great energy, levying taxes, and rebuilding the city; but the cry of the starving, houseless millions could not be stifled. The tyrant was alarmed. To shield himself from obloquy, he accused the Christians of the crime, and visited them with the most terrible retribution.

“Not all the relief,” writes Tacitus, “that could come from man, not all the bounties that the prince could bestow, nor all the atonements which could be presented to the gods, availed to relieve Nero from the infamy of being believed to have ordered the conflagration. Hence, to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons called Christians.”

To enter into the detail of the outrages to which the Christians were exposed would but harrow the feelings of the reader. Demoniac ingenuity was employed in inflicting the most revolting and terrible suffering; while at the same time the victims were so disguised, sewed up in skins of wild beasts, or wrapped in tarred sheets, as to deprive them of all sympathy, and expose them to the derision of the brutal mob. Tender Christian maidens passed through ordeals of exposure, suffering, and death, too dreadful for us, in these modern days, even to contemplate. That divine support which Christ promised to his followers in these predicted hours of persecution sustained them. The imagination cannot conceive of greater cruelty than Nero inflicted upon these disciples of Jesus: and yet in death they came off more than conquerors; and it proved then emphatically true, that “the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church.”

It was during this persecution by Nero that Paul suffered martyrdom at Rome. He had been there a prisoner in chains for some years. With his accustomed power and success, he had preached the gospel of Jesus; and those pure doctrines had gained access even to the palace of the Cæsars. A large and flourishing church had been gathered in that city, which in corruption equalled, even if it did not outvie, Sodom and Gomorrah. On no page of Holy Writ does the light of inspiration beam more brightly than in Paul’s Epistle to the Church at Rome.

Chrysostom says, that a cup-bearer of Nero, and one of the most distinguished females of his court, became, through the preaching of Paul, disciples of Jesus, and recoiled from the sin and the shame everywhere around them. This so enraged the tyrant, that he ordered Paul immediately to be beheaded.

It is one of the legends of the Romish Church, founded upon evidence which has not generally been entirely satisfactory to Protestants, that the apostle Peter visited Rome, where he was arrested, and imprisoned with Paul. It is said that the two apostles were incarcerated together in the prison of Mamertin, which was at the foot of the Capitoline Hill, and which was constructed of damp and gloomy underground vaults, extensive in their range, and crowded with the victims of tyranny. Two of the prison-guards and forty-seven of the prisoners, impressed by the character and by the teachings of these holy men, became converts. Peter baptized them. Nero ordered both of the apostles to be executed. Their death took place, according to the declaration of the Catholic fathers, on the same day,—the 29th of June, A.D. 67. St. Paul, being a Roman citizen, could not be subjected to the ignominy of crucifixion: he was beheaded. St. Peter, being a Jew, was regarded as a vile person, and doomed to the cross. Paul was led a distance of three miles from the city to a place called the Fountain of Salvienne, where the block of the executioner awaited him. On the way, forgetful of self, he preached the gospel of Jesus to the soldiers who guarded him. Three of them became converts, and soon after suffered martyrdom.

St. Peter was led across the Tiber to the quarter inhabited by the Jews, and was crucified on the top of Mount Janiculum. As they were preparing to nail him to the cross in the ordinary manner,

he said that “he did not merit to be treated as was his Master,” and implored them to crucify him with his head downwards. His wish was granted.168

Nero had a half-brother, Britannicus, the son of Claudius and his own mother Agrippina. Legitimately, he was entitled to the throne rather than Nero. The tyrant became jealous of Britannicus. He was invited, with his mother and his sister Octavia, to a supper in the palace of Nero. A goblet of poisoned wine was placed before him: he drank, fell into convulsions, and died in the arms of his mother. Nero reclined listlessly upon a sofa, and, as he witnessed his agonizing convulsions, said “he did not think much was the matter with Britannicus; that it was probably merely a fainting-fit.” When it appeared that the prince was really dead, he ordered the body to be immediately removed and burned; while the entertainment went on undisturbed. It was a tempestuous night. Floods of rain were falling, and a tornado swept the city, as the funeral-pyre of the young prince blazed in the Campus Martius.

“The appointments for his burial,” writes Tacitus, “had been prepared beforehand. His ashes were entombed in the Campus Martius during such tempestuous rains, that the populace believed them to be denunciations of the wrath of the gods against the deed. Nero, by an edict, justified the hurrying of the obsequies, alleging that it was an institution of their ancestors to withdraw from the sight such as died prematurely, and not to lengthen the solemnity by encomiums and processions.”

The vast estates of Britannicus, consisting of palaces, villas, and other property, were seized by Nero, and divided among his partisans to purchase their support.

Agrippina understood full well that Britannicus had been poisoned by his brother Nero; but she feigned to be deceived, and to believe that he died accidentally in a fit. Agrippina was another Messalina. She hated Nero, and determined to secure his death. Nero hated her, and was plotting day and night how he might kill her, and yet not expose himself to the charge of being the murderer of his mother. They both affected the most cordial relations in their social intercourse, and addressed each other in the most endearing epithets.

Agrippina was immensely rich, had numerous and powerful partisans, and had formed the plan of effecting the assassination of Nero, and of placing upon the throne one of her favorites, Rubellius Plautus. Nero, whose suspicions were ever active, received some intimations of this plan. The following ingenious device he adopted to rid himself of his mother: He caused a vessel to be constructed with more than regal splendor, but so arranged, that, by the withdrawal of a few bolts, the heavy canopy which overhung the royal couch would fall with a fatal crash; and at the same time planks would give way, which would cause the vessel immediately to founder.

Agrippina was residing at her magnificent country-seat at Antium, near Rome. Nero invited his mother to an entertainment, such as only a Roman emperor could provide, at Baiæ, near Naples. It is probable that the mother was somewhat deceived by the marvellous affection manifested for her by her son. She accepted his invitation. She was conveyed to Baiæ in a sedan. Nero met her upon her approach, embraced her affectionately, and led her to the villa of Bauli, washed by the sea, where her reception was as magnificent as imperial wealth and power could give. Agrippina was assigned a seat by the side of her son. He loaded her with caresses, amused her with

anecdotes, and honored her by pretending to seek her counsel upon the most serious affairs of state.

It was a late hour when the banquet came to a close. Nero conducted his mother to the beach, and assisted her into the imperial barge, which, driven by three banks of oars, was appointed to convey her to Antium. It was a brilliant night. The unclouded sky was resplendent with stars, while not a breath of wind rippled the polished surface of the sea. With lusty sinews the well-trained seamen pushed the barge from the shore. The hired assassins of Nero on board had made all the arrangements for the destruction of the empress, her attendants, and the seamen; while precautions had been adopted for their own escape. They had proceeded but a short distance on their voyage, when suddenly the heavy-laden imperial canopy fell, with such force as to crush to death one of the female attendants who reclined at Agrippina's feet; but it so happened that some of the timbers fell in such a way as to protect Agrippina from serious harm, though she was slightly wounded. Instantly apprehending the treachery of her son, she had sufficient presence of mind to remain perfectly quiet. One of her maids, who was thrown into the sea, in her drowning terror cried out that she was Agrippina, and implored of them to save the mother of the prince. The assassins smote her upon the head with their oars and boat-poles, and she sank senseless in the waves. The barge soon foundered; but Agrippina floated off on a portion of the wreck. The agents of Nero, supposing they had effected their object, swam to the shore.

Agrippina, in the early dawn, was picked up by a small boat, and conveyed to her villa at Antium. Shrewdly she pretended to regard the adventure as an accident. She despatched a courier to inform her affectionate son, that, through the mercy of the gods, she had escaped fearful peril. She entreated him not to be needlessly alarmed, as she had received but a slight wound, and would probably soon be quite restored.

Nero was thunderstruck. He knew his mother too well to imagine that she was blind to the stratagem from which she had so wonderfully escaped. He felt assured that she would at once resort to some desperate measures of retaliation and of self-defence. Not a moment was to be lost. He despatched a band of assassins to Antium to break into the apartment of his mother, and with their daggers immediately to secure her death beyond all question.

The armed band reached the villa late at night, burst open the gates, and advanced rapidly to the chamber where the empress had retired to her bed. All the slaves encountered on the way were seized. In the chamber of Agrippina a dim light was burning, and one maid was in attendance. The assassins surrounded the bed. The leader struck her a heavy blow on the head with a club: the rest plunged their daggers into her heart. She slept in death, the guilty mother of a demoniac son.

"In these particulars," writes Tacitus, "authors are unanimous; but as to whether Nero surveyed the breathless body of his mother, and applauded its beauty, there are those who have affirmed it, and those who deny it."

After the murder of Agrippina, which was so openly perpetrated as to render it vain to attempt any disguise, Nero, either consumed by remorse or distracted by terror, retired to Naples. It is said that his appearance and movements indicated that he was the victim of utter misery; while at

the same time his demoniac malice blazed forth more luridly than ever. He sent a communication to the senate, stating that he had caused the death of his mother because she was plotting his assassination. His sister Octavia and his wife Poppæa soon fell victims to his insane vengeance: the one was placed in a vapor-bath, had her veins opened in every joint, and then had her head cut off; the other perished from a brutal kick.

Immediately there ensued a series of executions and assassinations of the most illustrious men of Rome, who were accused of conspiring against the tyrant. Tacitus gives the details of many of these atrocities. The recital would be but wearisome and revolting to the reader.

Rome was stricken with terror. No one was safe from either the poisoned cup, the dagger, or the headsman's axe. At length, human nature, even unspeakably corrupt as it had become in Rome, could endure the monster no longer. Servius Galba, seventy-two years of age, was governor of Spain. He was a man of unusual virtues for those times, was of pensive, thoughtful temperament, and endued with courage which no peril could intimidate. Placing himself at the head of his devoted legions, he openly proclaimed war against the tyrant, and commenced a march upon Rome for his dethronement. The tidings outstripped the rapid movements of his troops, and garrison after garrison unfurled the banners of revolt.

One night, Nero, dressed in woman's clothes, was in one of the palaces of Rome, surrounded by his boon companions, male and female, indulging in the most loathsome orgies, when a great uproar was heard in the streets. A messenger was sent to ascertain the cause. He returned with the appalling tidings, that Galba, at the head of an avenging army, was marching rapidly upon Rome; that insurrection had broken out in the streets; and that a countless mob, breathing threatenings and slaughter, were surging toward the palace.

The wretched tyrant, as cowardly as he was infamous, was struck with dismay. He sprang from the table so suddenly as to overturn it, dashing the most costly vases in fragments upon the floor. Beating his forehead like a madman, he cried out, "I am ruined, I am ruined!" and called for a cup of poison. Suicide was the common resort of the cowardly, in those days, in their hours of wretchedness. Nero took the poisoned cup, but dared not drink it. He called for a dagger, and examined its polished point, but had not sufficient nerve to press it to his heart. He then rushed from the palace in his woman's robes, with his long hair fluttering in the wind. Thus disguised, he almost flew through the dark and narrow streets, intending to plunge into the Tiber. As he reached the bank, and gazed upon its gloomy waves, again his courage failed.

Several of his companions had accompanied him. One of them suggested that he should flee to a country-seat about three miles from Rome, and there conceal himself. Insane with terror, bareheaded, in his shameful garb, he covered his face with a handkerchief, leaped upon a horse, and succeeded, through a thousand perils, in gaining his retreat. Just before he reached the villa, some alarm so frightened him, that he leaped from his horse, and plunged into a thicket by the roadside. Through briers and thorns, with torn clothes and lacerated flesh, he reached the insecure asylum he sought.

In the mean time, the Roman senate had hurriedly assembled. Emboldened by the insurrection, and by the approach of Galba, they passed a decree, declaring Nero to be the enemy of his

country, and dooming him to death *more majorum*; i.e., according to ancient custom. Some one of Nero's companions brought him the tidings in his hiding-place. Pallid and trembling, he inquired, "And what is death *more majorum*?" The appalling reply was, "It is to be stripped naked, to have the head fastened in the pillory, and thus to be scourged to death."

The monster who had amused himself in witnessing the tortures of others recoiled with horror from this dreadful infliction. Seizing a dagger, he again endeavored to nerve himself to plunge it into his heart. A prick from its sharp point was all that he could summon resolution to inflict. He threw the dagger aside, and groaned in terror. Again he strove to talk himself into courage.

"Ought Nero," said he, "to be afraid? Shall the emperor be a coward? No! Let me die courageously."

Again he grasped the dagger, and anxiously examined its keen edge; and again he threw it aside with a groan of despair.

Just then the clatter of horsemen was heard, and a party of dragoons was seen approaching. His retreat was discovered, and in a few moments Nero would be helpless in the hands of his enemies: then there would be no possible escape from the ignominious and agonizing death. In the delirium of despair, he ordered a freedman to hold a sharp sword, so that he might throw himself violently against it. He thus succeeded in severing the jugular vein, and his life-blood spouted forth. As he sank upon the ground, the soldiers came up. He looked at them with a malignant scowl; and, saying "You're too late!" he died.

Thus perished this monster of depravity. It is said that this event took place on the 19th of June, A.D. 68. Many Christians at the time supposed Nero to be the antichrist. This wretch had reigned thirteen years, and died in the thirty-second year of his age. In view of his career, the only solution upon which the mind can repose is found in the declaration of Scripture, "After death cometh the judgment."

These events occurred eighteen hundred years ago. During the long and weary centuries which have since elapsed, what a spectacle has this world almost constantly presented to the eye of God! The billows of war have, with scarcely any intermission, surged over the nations, consigning countless millions to bloody graves. Pestilence and famine have ever followed in the train of armies, creating an amount of misery which no human arithmetic can ever gauge. Slavery, intemperance, domestic discord, ungovernable passions, the tyranny of kings, the oppression of the rich and powerful, and the countless forms in which man has trampled upon his feebler brother-man, have made this world indeed a vale of tears. The student of history is appalled in view of the woes which, century after century, man has visited upon his fellow-man. For all this there is and can be no remedy but in the religion of Jesus. Here is the panacea for nearly every earthly woe. Here, and here only, is there hope for the world.

Against this almost universal corruption the Christians were struggling. The conflict seemed hopeless. In this moral warfare, the only weapon they had to wield was the simple preaching of the gospel of Christ. But that gospel, by its wonderful triumphs, has proved itself to be "the wisdom of God and the power of God to salvation." It is refreshing to read a letter which

Clement, the bishop of Rome, wrote to the church at Corinth about this time. We can quote but one paragraph:—

"Let us endeavor to be of the number of those who hope to share in the promises of God. And how shall we accomplish this, my dear brethren? If our minds are established in the faith; if we seek in all things to please God; if we bring ourselves in entire accord with his holy will; if we follow the paths of truth, renouncing all injustice, avarice, contention, anger, deceptions, complainings, impiety, pride, vanity, ambition,—then, my dear brothers, we shall be in the path which conducts us to Jesus Christ our Saviour. Let the strong help the feeble, and let the feeble respect the strong. Let the rich give to the poor, and let the poor thank God that he has given to the rich the means of supplying their wants. He who has created us has introduced us into this world, which he has so richly prepared for our abode. Having received from him so many favors, we ought to thank him for all things. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Such was the spirit of the religion of Jesus. To banish this gospel from the world, imperial Rome often combined all its energies.

CHAPTER X.
ROMAN EMPERORS, GOOD AND BAD.

Character of the Roman Army.—Conspiracy of Otho.—Death of Galba.—Vitellius Emperor.—Revolt of the Jews, and Destruction of Jerusalem.—Reign of Vespasian.—Character of Titus; of Domitian.—Religion of Pagan Rome.—Nerva.—Anecdotes of St. John.—Exploits of Trajan.—Letter of Pliny.—Letter of Trajan.



S we contemplate the awful scenes of depravity and misery witnessed under the reign of many of the Roman emperors, the sympathies of the reader are naturally excited in behalf of the oppressed millions. But it is a melancholy truth, that the people were as bad as the rulers. The assassin and his victim, the oppressors and the oppressed, the emperor in his palace, the nobles in their castles, the beggared poor in their hovels, were alike merciless, morally degraded, and depraved. Probably earth has never witnessed a more diabolical band than was congregated in a Roman army.

The Roman senate which had deposed Nero, and consigned him to death, immediately proclaimed Galba emperor. He was comparatively a worthy man, seventy-two years of age, and childless. Conscious of the awful corruption which reigned at Rome, and of his inability to stem the torrent; oppressed with the infirmities of years, and drawing near to the grave,—he adopted as his successor a young officer in the army, Piso Lucianus, a man of noble character and of rare virtue. But the last thing that the army desired was a virtuous sovereign. The soldiers, accustomed to plunder and license, desired a ruler who would gratify all their fierce and luxurious desires. They were exceedingly dissatisfied with the restraints which Galba imposed upon them. They wished for a tyrant who would trample down the nations, and who would allow the army to share in the plunder. Consequently, the soldiers were ripe for insurrection both against Galba and Piso.

There was a man in the army named Otho. He was one of the vilest of the vile; and had been so intimately the friend and accomplice of Nero, that he had ardently hoped for adoption. Tacitus says of him,—

"Otho was a stranger from his earliest days to every fair pursuit, and in the pride of manhood was distinguished for nothing but riot and debauchery. His emulation in luxury recommended him to the notice of Nero." Most of the soldiers favored his views, and the creatures of Nero's court zealously supported him as a congenial character. Numbers lamented the loss of Nero, and longed for the former laxity of discipline.

Otho formed a conspiracy in the army against Galba. He ridiculed his severe discipline, the restraints he imposed upon his troops, and his neglect to enrich them with plunder, and pamper them with luxuries. He assured them that Piso would be like Galba; that he would in the same way restrain their passions, and enforce rigid discipline. With talent for sarcasm, he scouted the idea of justice and mercy, declaring "that the affectation of practising such virtues, as they were called, was ridiculous in such a world as this."

The conspiracy ripened. At the appointed time, the soldiers, with clashing of weapons and loud huzzas, raised Otho upon their shoulders, and declared him to be their emperor. The virtuous Galba was pursued with malignity even more intense than that which had driven Nero to suicide. The scene of his death is minutely described by Tacitus. Tumultuous thousands of the Roman soldiers, with oaths and imprecations, rushed from their encampment into the city to the palace of the emperor. A resistless mob of armed demoniac men surged through the streets. The populace fled before them. Galba had left the palace, and was on his way to the Forum. The infuriate mob of infantry and cavalry scattered in all directions. Some burst into the Forum, and trampled the senators beneath their feet. Galba was seized. As the assassins gathered around him, he looked up, and calmly said,—

"If you wish for my head, here it is. I am willing at any time to surrender it for the good of the Roman people."

Scarcely had he uttered these words ere a sinewy soldier, with one blow of his heavy broadsword, struck off his head, and it rolled upon the pavement. Another soldier seized it by the hair, and thrust a pike into the palpitating flesh; and, with the shoutings of tumultuous thousands,

the gory trophy was paraded through the streets. Such were the scenes which were witnessed in pagan Rome while the disciples of Jesus were preaching in obscurity, but with invincible zeal, from house to house, the gospel of love to God, and love to man.

The senate, overawed by the army, was compelled to ratify this foul assassination, and to declare Otho emperor. We have now reached the year of our Lord 67.

There was at this time an ambitious but able general, named Vitellius, in command of a powerful Roman army upon the Danube. He had secured the good-will of his fiendlike troops by the plunder which he allowed them, and the license in which they were permitted to indulge. He refused to recognize Otho as emperor; and, raising the standard of revolt, by a vote of the army caused the imperial dignity to be conferred upon himself. Vitellius, at the head of his army, marched upon Rome to wrest the sceptre from the hands of his rival. Otho advanced to meet him. The armies were each seventy thousand strong. They encountered each other on the plains of Lombardy, near Mantua. The battle was long and bloody. At length, the legions of Otho were utterly routed and dispersed. Dismissing most of his attendants, the ruined adventurer fell upon his own sword, and died. He had previously requested his slaves to bury him immediately. "This had been his earnest request," writes Tacitus, "lest his head should be cut off, and be made a public spectacle."

Vitellius, who at once compelled the senate to proclaim him emperor, was not by nature a tyrannical man; but he was luxurious and dissolute in the extreme, surrendering himself to every possible form of self-indulgence. He even equalled Nero in his unbridled, shameless profligacy. It is said that the expenses of his table alone, for a period of four months, amounted to a sum equal to about thirty million dollars.

There was little in the character of such a man to excite either respect or fear. A conspiracy was soon formed for his overthrow. There was quite a distinguished general, named Vespasian, in command of the Roman army in Judæa. He had acquired celebrity in the wars of Germany and Britain, and, having been consul at Rome, had many acquaintances of influence there. Vespasian entered into a correspondence with the conspirators. It was not difficult to induce his soldiers to proclaim him emperor.

Vespasian, remaining himself in the East, sent his army, under his ablest generals, to Rome. A terrible battle was fought beneath its walls and through its streets, during which the beautiful capitol, the pride of the city, was laid in ashes. The troops of Vespasian were triumphant, and the opposing ranks were utterly crushed. Vitellius, as cowardly as he was infamous, hid in the cabin of a slave. He was dragged forth, and paraded through the streets, with his hands bound behind him, and with a rope round his neck. After enduring hours of ignominy, derision, and torture, he was beaten to death by the clubs of the soldiers. His body was then dragged over the pavements; and the mangled mass, having lost all semblance of humanity, was thrown into the Tiber.

The obsequious senate immediately united with the victorious army in declaring Vespasian emperor. While these scenes of tumult and carnage were transpiring, and the whole Roman empire was desolated with poverty, oppression, and woe, Christianity was making rapid and noiseless progress among the masses of the people in many remote provinces of the empire too

obscure or distant to attract the attention of the emperors. The teachings of Jesus were alike adapted to one and to all, to every condition, and to every conceivable circumstance in life. The doctrines of the cross came with moral guidance and with unspeakable consolation to all who would accept them,—to the millions of bondmen; to the despised freedmen; to the soldier; to centurions, governors, and generals; to the members of the imperial palace. It said to all, "Earth is not your home: lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven. Accept life's discipline, bear it patiently, that you may be prepared by it for honor, glory, and immortality in heaven."

The Jews in Judæa took advantage of these civil discords to rise in rebellion against their Roman masters. Vespasian organized an army, which he placed under his son Titus, to quell the revolt. When Jesus was crucified at Jerusalem, the Jews said, "His blood be upon us and on our children." It was a fearful imprecation, and terribly was it realized. Christ had minutely foretold the utter destruction of Jerusalem, so "that not even one stone should be left upon another."

"When ye shall see Jerusalem," said Jesus, "compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles."169

It was in the year of our Lord 70. Vials of woe, which even the mystic symbols of apocalyptic vision cannot exaggerate, were poured out upon the doomed city. Human nature has perhaps never before nor since endured such woes. It is impossible for the imagination to conceive more appalling horrors, or sufferings more terrible, than were then experienced. The reader will find those scenes of rage, despair, and misery, minutely detailed by the pen of Josephus. It requires strong nerves to enable any one to peruse the revolting narrative with composure.

Probably the disciples of the Saviour, warned by their divine Master, had all fled from Jerusalem and Judæa, conveying the tidings of the gospel wherever they went in their wide dispersion. Our Saviour had urged them to a precipitate flight. "When ye therefore shall see," said he, "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (referring to the Roman armies), "stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains; let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house; neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be. And, except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but, for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened."170

The siege lasted six months. The city was entirely demolished. A million of Jews perished by the sword, pestilence, and famine. A hundred thousand who were taken captive were sold into slavery. All Judæa was thus brought again into submission to Rome. Titus, laden with the spoils of the city, and accompanied by his long train of captives, returned in triumph to Rome. He was received with universal acclaim. The signal victory he had achieved strengthened the throne of

his father. In commemoration of the event, a triumphal arch was erected,—*the Arch of Titus*. This massive structure, reared eighteen hundred years ago, remains almost perfect to the present day. It still attracts the thoughtful gaze of every tourist in Rome.

Vespasian proved one of the best of the Roman emperors. With great energy and wisdom, he devoted himself to the welfare of his wide-spread realms. It was during his reign that the world-renowned Coliseum, was reared,—the most gigantic amphitheatre in the world. It furnished seats for eighty thousand spectators, and standing-room for twenty thousand more. It was in the arena of this vast edifice that subsequently so many Christians, with a hundred thousand spectators gazing mockingly upon them, endured the pangs and won the crown of martyrdom.

But under Vespasian there was no persecution. Indeed, it is probable, that he, residing so long in Judæa, had, like Felix, become somewhat acquainted with Christian doctrines; and, like Agrippa, he may have been almost persuaded to become a Christian. The teachings of Jesus exert an ennobling influence far beyond the bounds of the organized church; and it is certain that Vespasian exhibited a character of humanity, of purity, of interest in the public welfare, very different from that which was developed by most of the Roman emperors. Still there is no evidence that he became an acknowledged disciple of Jesus. It is said that he died on the 24th of June, A.D. 79, after a prosperous reign of ten years.

Feeling himself to be dangerously ill, he remarked to those around him, derisively, in view of what he knew would be the action of the senate in voting his deification, “I perceive that I am about to become a god.” As his end drew near, he said, with pride which he could not have learned from the religion of Jesus, “An emperor should die standing.” Aided by his friends, he rose from his couch, and, while sustained by their arms, expired.

We are confirmed in our view, that the Emperor Vespasian must have been brought in some degree under the influence of Christian doctrine, from the marvellous change, resembling true conversion, which suddenly took place in the character of his son Titus, who succeeded his father on the throne.

In early years, this young man was exceedingly dissipated; but to the surprise of every one, and without any known cause which history has transmitted to us, he abandoned all the vicious practices of his youth, separated himself from all his dissolute companions, and commenced a life of integrity, of purity and benevolence, which was certainly such as the religion of Jesus enjoined. With devotion hitherto unexampled, he consecrated himself to the welfare of his realm, and to promoting the happiness of those around him. One of his remarks, illustrative of his character, has survived the lapse of eighteen centuries. It will continue to live in the hearts of men so long as earth shall endure. At the close of a day in which no opportunity had occurred of doing good, he exclaimed sadly, “Perdidi diem,”—“*I have lost a day.*” This truly Christian sentiment is beautifully versified in the words,—

“Count that day lost whose low-descending sun

Views at thy hand no worthy action done.”

It was during the reign of Titus, in A.D. 79, that the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii—as corrupt in all conceivable abominations as Sodom and Gomorrah could possibly have been—were buried beneath the lava and ashes of Vesuvius. They were discovered early in the last century. The remains of these cities, so wonderfully preserved, and now being brought to light, reveal much of the habits and social customs of those days.

We know not that Titus was a Christian. The light is very dim which comes down to us through these long centuries. But it is certain, that, in very many things, he manifested the spirit of Christ. The reign of this good man was short. Titus had a brother Domitian, an utterly depraved young man. He was to Titus as Cain to Abel. Anxious to grasp the sceptre, it is said that he poisoned his brother Titus when he had attained the forty-first year of his age and the second of his reign. The wretched Domitian ascended the throne. It is certain that he had heard of Jesus, of Christianity. The guilty are always suspicious. Knowing that the Christians regarded Jesus as their King, that they were looking for his second coming to reign as their Lord and Master, he regarded Jesus as a formidable rival. Apprehensive that there might be some heirs of Jesus around whom the Christians might rally, he arrested a large number of the disciples, and had them brought before him for examination. Anxiously he inquired of them what money they had in their treasury, what territory they possessed, and when and where the reign of Jesus would commence. The disciples assured him that they had neither lands nor money. In proof, they showed him their hands, indurated by toil. They assured him that the kingdom of Jesus was to be, not an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly and angelic; and that his reign would not commence until the end of the world, when Jesus would appear in clouds of glory.

Domitian was by no means satisfied with these replies. It was the general belief of the Christians, that Christ, in his second coming, might appear at any time. This was appalling tidings to Domitian. Such a dethronement was more terrible than any other which could be thought of. He hated the Christians, and wreaked undiscriminating and pitiless vengeance upon them. Many were driven from their homes into exile. They carried with them into the remotest provinces of the empire the glad tidings of the gospel. Many suffered death, accompanied by all conceivable tortures.

It is one of the legends of the Catholic Church, that the aged apostle John, being then at Rome, was, by the order of Domitian, thrown into a caldron of boiling oil. Miraculously he escaped without injury. He was then banished to the Isle of Patmos. It was there that he was favored with that wonderful series of visions recorded in the book of Revelation. In these mystic pages, so much of which is still enigmatical, the apostle represents what was to happen in succeeding ages,—particularly that the Church should suffer persecution; the punishment of its persecutors; the ruin of Rome, where idolatry reigned; the destruction of idolatry itself, and the final glory of the triumphant Church.[171]

There was a very renowned Roman general, by the name of Agricola, who, under Titus, had been very efficiently employed in Britain in endeavoring to civilize the barbarous natives. He taught them many of the manners and customs of the more enlightened Romans. It is said that Domitian, fearing that Agricola was acquiring reputation, caused him to be poisoned.

Sin and insanity are closely allied. Domitian wished to enjoy the splendors of a Roman triumph; but he had never won a victory. He was no soldier. Still he got up a magnificent civil and military display, and with streaming banners, and pealing music, and the tramp of armed legions, entered Rome, charioted like a conqueror returning from the most triumphant campaign. A large number of slaves, disguised as captives of war, were led in the train to grace a triumph which exposed Domitian to universal ridicule and contempt. He assumed divine honors; reared statues of himself in gold and silver in conspicuous positions, and required his subjects to address him as a god. Any who were suspected of being unfriendly to him were mercilessly punished with torture and death. The extravagance of his expenditure was so enormous, that Martial says, in one of his epigrams,—

"If the emperor would call in all his debts, Jupiter himself, even though he had made a general auction of Olympus, would have been unable to pay two shillings in the pound."

The tyrant kept a tablet, upon which he wrote the names of those whom he had doomed to die. His infamous wife Domitia, for some cause suspecting him, got a peep at the tablet while her husband was asleep. To her consternation, she found her own name, with those of several others, on the fatal list. She immediately entered into a conspiracy with them for the assassination of her husband. One of the conspirators approached the emperor under the pretence of presenting him a memoir disclosing a conspiracy. Assuming that his right arm was crippled, it was hung in a sling. As he presented the memorial with his left hand, he suddenly drew a concealed dagger, and plunged it into the heart of the tyrant.

Thus died Domitian, as is reported, on the 17th of September, A.D. 96. He was but forty-five years of age, and had reigned fifteen years. This wicked world of ours has produced many monsters. Among them all, it would be difficult to find any one more execrable than Domitian. In his character, not a redeeming trait could be found to mitigate the hatred and contempt with which he was universally regarded. The tidings of his death were hailed with joy throughout the empire. His statues were demolished, and his name consigned to infamy.

While these scenes were transpiring within the bounds of the Roman empire, almost nothing is known of the condition of the world outside of those not very clearly-defined limits. There are dim and shadowy glimpses of vast tribes or nations wandering over the hills and plains, as savage, as ferocious, as the wild beasts in whose skins they were clad. They seemed to be ever struggling in battle, as they surged to and fro over the vast plains of India, around the shores of the Caspian, and through the defiles of the Caucasus, amidst the gloomy forests extending far away from the remote banks of the Danube to the regions of eternal ice and snow. Storms of passion and cruelty were here silently accumulating, which were soon to burst with overwhelming destruction upon the Roman empire. With many thinking men there was a growing apprehension of these barbarians, who were gathering in such appalling swarms upon the frontiers of the Roman world. Occasionally an adventurous traveller would penetrate these wilds, and bring back astounding stories of the numbers, barbarism, and warlike ferocity, of these innumerable tribes.

If we look within the Roman empire, we see little but crime and misery. A haughty slaveholding aristocracy, few in number, but strong in the resistless power of the Roman legions, trampled the

degraded and depraved millions beneath their feet. The Roman aristocracy had scarcely a redeeming virtue. The pillage of the known world had fallen into their hands. There were those of them who possessed estates larger than many modern kingdoms. Their vice and luxury were boundless. They seldom moved unless guarded by a troop of insolent retainers, whose devotion they easily purchased by spoils of the plundered.

The religion of pagan Rome consisted of a gorgeous display of magnificent temples, shrines, and imposing ceremonies. It was a religion which never ennobled the character, exerting no influence whatever in the promotion of public or individual virtue. Gibbon, whose authority on this point will not be questioned, states "that the private character and conduct of these foul idolaters were never in the slightest degree restrained by the religion which they professed."

Upon the very day of the death of Domitian, the senate, apprehensive that the army might anticipate them in the choice of a successor, conferred the imperial purple upon Nerva, a venerable and virtuous man of sixty-five. We say that he was venerable and virtuous; while there is no evidence that he was a disciple of Jesus. It is impossible now to ascertain how far the influence of the Jewish religion, with its ten commandments and its revelation of one only God, had extended beyond the Israelitish organization, or how far the teachings of Jesus had penetrated the community and was influencing the lives of those who did not openly profess his name; but it is certain that here and there individuals were found, though few in number, who were devout men, like the Roman centurion Cornelius, "who feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."

Such a man was Nerva. He immediately recalled all the Christians who had been banished from Rome by the Emperor Domitian. He issued a decree forbidding that any one should be molested for cherishing the faith either of the Jews or of the Christians. The dungeons, which were filled with the victims of tyranny, he opened, and liberated the captives. The venerable apostle John was released from his exile at Patmos, and returned to Ephesus, where it is said that he remained for the rest of his life.

It is often difficult to discriminate between what should be regarded as true and what as fable in the annals of those early days. But the following incident, given by the Abbé Fleury, is alike interesting and instructive, as showing the reputation which the venerable apostle enjoyed. It is said that St. John one day attended a meeting of the disciples in a small village a few miles from Ephesus. A young man of remarkable personal beauty was also present, who was so frank and genial in his manners as at once to win the tender regard of the affectionate disciple whom Jesus loved. Addressing himself to the pastor of the church after the young man had left, the apostle said, "In the presence of this church, and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I commend to your especial care this young man." As he left to return to Ephesus, he very emphatically repeated the solemn charge.

The bishop or pastor of the church sought the young man, won his confidence, taught him the religion of Jesus, and finally by baptism received him to the church. The young man having partaken of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, the bishop deemed him safe, and relaxed his vigilance. But he, being exposed anew to temptation, fell into bad company, was lured to midnight festivals, gradually abandoned all religious restraints, and plunged into the most

reckless course of dissipation. His last state became so much worse than the first, that he at length became captain of a gang of robbers, whose rendezvous was among the mountains, and who were the terror of the community.

Some time after this, the apostle again visited this rural church. With deep interest he inquired for the young man. The bishop, with tears filling his eyes, replied,—

"He is dead,—dead to God. He has become a bad man and a robber. Instead of frequenting the church, he has established himself in the fastnesses of the mountains."

The venerable apostle was overwhelmed with grief. After a moment's reflection, he said, "Bring me immediately a horse and a guide." Without any preparation, in the clothes he then wore, he advanced towards the region infested by the robbers. Scarcely had he entered their rocky haunts ere some of the gang who were on the lookout arrested the defenceless, penniless, humbly-clad old man. "Conduct me to your chief," said the apostle: "I have come expressly to see him."

The captain soon made his appearance, armed from head to foot. The moment he recognized the apostle, overwhelmed with shame, he turned, and endeavored to escape by flight. John, notwithstanding the infirmity of years, pursued him with almost supernatural speed, and cried,—

"My son, why will you fly from your father, an old man without arms? Have pity upon me, my son: do not fear. There is still hope that you may be saved. I will plead for you with Jesus Christ. If it be necessary, I will willingly give my life for yours, as he has given his for us. Believe me that Jesus Christ has sent me to you."

At these words the young man arrested his steps, but could not raise his eyes from the ground. He threw aside his arms, and then, trembling, burst into tears, weeping bitterly. When the apostle had reached him, the young man threw his arms around the neck of the aged Christian, and with sobbings, either of remorse or penitence, embraced him tenderly. The apostle endeavored to console the guilty wanderer from the fold of Christ. He assured him that Jesus was ready to forgive all. He led him back to the church, engaged all the disciples to pray for him, and kept him constantly by his side as a companion and a friend. Under these influences, it is said that the prodigal became a true penitent, re-entered the church, and ever after continued one of its brightest ornaments.

It was at Ephesus that John wrote the Gospel that bears his name, and also his three Epistles. It is said, that in his extreme old age, when his faculties of body and mind were so enfeebled that he could not make a continuous discourse, he would frequently rise in the prayer-meetings of the church, simply repeating the words, "My dear children, love one another." When some of the brethren, wearied by the continued utterance of the same sentiment, inquired of him why he always repeated the same words, he replied, "Because this is the commandment of our Lord. If you keep this commandment, you will keep all the rest." The venerable apostle died at Ephesus in the year of our Lord 99.

The Emperor Nerva, because he was a good man, was extremely unpopular with the army, and with the aristocracy, whose wealth was derived from plundering the helpless. Feeling the

infirmities of years, and having no children, Nerva looked about him for some available candidate to whom he could transmit the crown. There was a distinguished Roman general, named Trajan, at the head of an army upon the Danube. He was stationed there to resist the barbarians from the north, who were now making frequent inroads into the Roman empire, burning and plundering without mercy. Trajan constructed a bridge across the Danube. The ruins of this stupendous structure of twenty-two arches still remain, testifying to the amazing skill of the Roman engineers. Across this bridge the impetuous general marched his legions, and, constructing a military road for their advance, pursued the barbarians through the wilds of Dacia to the River Dneister, chastising them with terrible severity. The importance of this conquest was deemed so great, that, in commemoration of the event, a magnificent monument was reared in Rome. This world-renowned shaft—the Column of Trajan, a hundred and eighteen feet in height—still stands, one of the most admired works of art in the world. Upon a spiral belt intwined around it were sculptured the principal events of the expedition. Napoleon I. adopted the Column of Trajan as the model of the still more lofty and imposing column raised in the Place Vendôme in honor of the French army.

Nerva pronounced Trajan his heir. Hardly had he taken this important step ere he suddenly died, after a reign of but little more than a year. Trajan, who, unopposed, assumed the sceptre, though exceedingly ambitious of military renown, and imposing upon himself no restraints in sensual indulgence, was a very intelligent, and naturally a kind-hearted man. But he could not look with a friendly eye upon the advances which Christianity was making. The teachings of Jesus condemned both his military career and his personal habits.

Pliny, called the Younger, was then governor of Pontus, in Asia Minor. There were very many Christians within his realms. Very severe edicts had been issued from Rome against them. It was Pliny's duty to see these decrees executed. But his philosophic mind and humane spirit recoiled from consigning to torture and to death men, women, and children in whom he could see no crime worthy of punishment. He accordingly wrote to the Emperor Trajan the following letter, which has been transmitted to us by Eusebius:—

"I deem it my duty, sire, to consult your majesty upon all those questions respecting which I am in doubt; for who can better guide me in my perplexities, or instruct me in my ignorance? I have never been present at the trial of the Christians; therefore I do not know for what they are punished, or with what crimes they are charged: but I have many doubts whether regard should not be paid to the difference of age; whether the most tender children should not he distinguished from those of maturer years; whether those who repent should be entitled to a pardon; or whether it should be of any avail that one who has once been a Christian is no longer such. It is also a question with me whether the name alone should be punished, without any other crime, or the crimes usually attached to that name.

"Still the following is the course which I have adopted towards those who have been brought before me as Christians: I have interrogated them if they were such. When they have confessed it, I have asked them a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment. If they have persevered in the declaration, I have pronounced judgment against them; for I can have no doubt, that, whatever may be the character of the Christian faith, inflexible obstinacy merits punishment.

“There are others of these fanatical persons whom I have ordered to be sent to Rome, since they were Roman citizens. Accusations, as is usual in such cases, are greatly multiplied, and very many are denounced to me. An anonymous proscription-list has been made out, containing the names of many who deny that they are, or ever have been, Christians.

“When I have seen those accused worshipping the gods with me, and offering incense to your image which I have erected among the statues of the gods, and, most of all, when they have abjured Christ, I have thought it my duty to set them at liberty; for I am told that it is impossible to compel those who are truly Christians to do either of these things.

“So far as I can learn, the only fault or error of which the Christians are guilty consists in this: They are accustomed to assemble on a certain day before the rising of the sun, and to sing together a hymn in honor of Christ as a god. Instead of binding themselves to the commission of any crime, they take a solemn oath not to be guilty of fraud or robbery or impurity, or any other wrong. They promise never to violate their word, never to be false to a trust. After this they retire, soon to meet again to partake of a simple and innocent repast; but from this they abstained after the ordinance I issued, in accordance with your orders, prohibiting the people from assembling together.

“The repasts of the Christians were innocent, although the calumny has been widely diffused that they stifled an infant and ate it. I thought it necessary, in order to ascertain the truth, to subject to the torture two females who had served at these feasts; but I could detect nothing but an unreasonable superstition.

“This subject has seemed to me the more worthy of investigation in consequence of the great numbers of the accused. Many persons, of all ages, of both sexes, and of every condition in life, are placed in peril. The superstition has infested not only the cities, but the villages and the remote rural districts. But it seems to me that it can be arrested and exterminated. Certain it is that the temples of the gods, which had been almost abandoned, have begun to be frequented. Solemn sacrifices, after long interruption, are again celebrated. Even in the most sparsely-settled districts, the victims for sacrifice are to be seen. Hence one may judge of the large number of those who would return to the gods if an opportunity were given for repentance.”

This letter was written about the year of our Lord 106. Trajan, in his reply, says,—

“You have done perfectly right, my dear Pliny, in the inquiry you have made concerning Christians; for truly no one general rule can be laid down which can be applied to all cases. They must not be sought after. If they are brought before you, and convicted, let them be capitally punished; yet with this restriction,—that if any renounce Christianity, and evidence their sincerity by supplicating our gods, however suspected they may be for the past, they shall obtain pardon for the future on their repentance. But anonymous libels in no case ought to be noticed; for the precedent would be of the worst sort, and perfectly incongruous with the maxims of my government.”

This response of the emperor checked in some degree the persecutions with which the Christians were menaced; but it did not prevent their enemies from inflicting upon them, under various

pretexts, all the injury in their power. In many places the populace, and in others the magistrates, pursued them with obloquy and oppression; so that, while there was no general and declared persecution, they were everywhere exposed to insult and outrage.

CHAPTER XI.
MARTYRDOM.

The Martyrdom of Ignatius.—Death of Trajan.—Succession of Adrian.—Infidel Assaults.—Celsus.—The Apology of Quadrat.—The Martyrdom of Symphorose and her Sons.—Character and Death of Adrian.—Antoninus.—Conversion of Justin Martyr.—His Apology.—Marcus Aurelius.—Hostility of the Populace.—The Martyrdom of Polycarp.



T the commencement of the second century, Ignatius was bishop or pastor of the church in Antioch, in Syria. He had occupied the post for forty years, and had obtained a very high reputation for devout character and Christian zeal. The Emperor Trajan, who had issued orders throughout the empire, that those refusing to worship the pagan gods, and persisting in Christianity, should be put to death, passing with his victorious army from the banks of the Danube to combat the barbarians of the East, stopped for a time at Antioch. Ignatius was brought

before him, charged with the crime of being a Christian. The emperor sternly inquired of him, "Why do you disobey our orders, and influence others to ruin themselves by doing the same?"

Ignatius replied, "I must be obedient to God, whom I bear in my heart."

"Who is the God," asked Trajan, "whom you bear in your heart?"

"Jesus Christ," was the reply.

"And do you not believe that we bear in our hearts those gods who combat with us against our enemies?" was the question of Trajan.

The Christian bishop boldly replied, "You deceive yourself in calling the demons of the Gentiles gods. There is but one God, who has made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all which they contain; and there is but one Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, to whose kingdom I aspire."

Trajan replied, "Do you speak of him who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?"

"Yes," responded Ignatius: "he has made atonement for my sins, and has put all the malice of Satan under their feet who carry him in their hearts."

"Do you, then, carry in your heart him who was crucified?"

"I do," was the response; "for it is written, 'I will dwell in them, and walk with them.'"

Trajan was irritated, and angrily replied, "Since Ignatius confesses that he carries in his heart him that was crucified, we command that he be conveyed in chains, under a guard of soldiers, to Rome, there to be thrown to the beasts, for the entertainment of the people."

The venerable bishop was hurried by his guard to Seleucia. There he took ship for Smyrna. In this city he had an interview with the illustrious Christian pastor Polycarp, who was soon to follow him in the path to martyrdom. From Smyrna he was conveyed to Troas, and thence to Neapolis. Having found a ship in one of the seaports of the Adriatic, he sailed to Ostia, near Rome. Here he was met by a large number of Christians, who were overwhelmed with grief in view of his cruel and inevitable doom. Ignatius, however, who was cheerful, and even happy, as he looked forward to his approaching martyrdom, consoled them with touching words of love and affection. The hour for the sacrifice came. The Coliseum was crowded with the jeering multitude, filling all its vast expanse, to enjoy the spectacle. The venerable bishop was placed in the centre of the arena.

As the iron doors of the dens were opened, a large number of ferocious wild beasts, gaunt with famine, with loud roarings, and lashing their sides with rage, rushed into the enclosure. Sharp and short was the agony which this benevolent disciple of Jesus was called to endure. The famished beasts, lions and tigers, leaped upon him; and scarcely a moment elapsed ere he was torn limb from limb, and devoured. Nothing remained but one or two of the larger bones.
A hundred thousand pagans raised a shout of applause; but louder was the acclaim as clustering

angels gathered around the Christian who had been faithful unto death, welcoming him to his heavenly home.

While these tragic scenes were transpiring in Rome, Trajan was pushing his conquests on the distant shores of the Persian Gulf. He was seized with sickness and pain; and it was soon evident that the hour of his death was near at hand. In a state of extreme dejection and languor, he bade adieu to the army, and by short stages endeavored to reach Rome. But inexorable Death could not be appeased. He had advanced only as far as Cilicia when he sank into the grave. His guilty spirit ascended to that tribunal to which he had so cruelly sent Ignatius before him.

Trajan, on leaving the Persian Gulf, had intrusted the command of his army to his nephew Adrian, a man of much military renown. The army proclaimed him emperor. The senate at Rome ratified the appointment. Adrian was kind to his friends, demoniacal to his enemies. He had many virtues, and many terrible vices.

Christianity was by this time very widely extended throughout the Roman world. Many new sects sprang up, and fanatical and immoral heresies arose. Hence the reputation of Christianity suffered severely. All these religious adventurers, endeavoring to establish new sects, many of them influenced by the worst of motives, assumed the name of Christians. The extravagances which they taught, and the abominations in which they indulged, in many places, caused the very name of Christian to be regarded with contempt and odium. The pagans were by no means disposed to discriminate between the true disciples of Jesus and those miserable fanatics who were called by the Christian name.

As the new religion gained in strength, the antagonism of its opponents grew more virulent. Several men of letters arose, who wrote against Christianity with great force of argument, and power of sarcasm. Probably no infidel writer in any age has surpassed the Epicurean philosopher Celsus in the shrewd adaptation of his writings to influence the popular mind: indeed, from that day to this, infidel writers have done little more than repeat his arguments. He overwhelmed the Christians with calumnies and contempt.

These attacks influenced intelligent Christians to write in defence of their faith. The Emperor Adrian, in the year 140, visited Athens. Quadrat, the bishop of the church there, a man of much ability, wrote an apology in defence of the Christian faith. He presented a copy to the Emperor Adrian. It seems probable that the argument exerted a great influence upon the mind of the emperor; for, while in Athens, he declared himself so favorably impressed with what he could learn of the faith and conduct of Christians, that he was unwilling that they should any longer be exposed to persecution. He even expressed the wish that Christianity should be recognized as one of the religions of Rome.

To a governor of one of the provinces who wrote a letter on that subject he replied, “If the people of the province will appear publicly, and make open charges against the Christians, so as to give them an opportunity of answering for themselves, let them proceed in that manner only, and not by rude demands and mere clamors. If any thus accuse them, and show that they have committed any offence against the laws, do you decide according to the nature of the crime committed. But,

by Hercules!" exclaims the impetuous emperor, "if the charge be a mere calumny, do you estimate the enormity of the offence, and punish the calumniator as he deserves."

Adrian had erected upon the banks of the Tiber, near Rome, a very magnificent palace. With characteristic fickleness, he decided to dedicate it to the pagan gods. The oracles were consulted. They returned the response, probably through the cunning of the idolatrous priests, that the Christian widow Symphorose, with her seven sons, was exciting the displeasure of the gods by their worship of the Christians' God; and the emperor was promised, if he would sacrifice them, he should be blessed in all his undertakings. Adrian ordered Symphorose and her sons to be brought before him. At first he employed very mild measures, and in kind tones entreated them to offer sacrifices to the pagan gods.

Symphorose replied, "My husband and my brother were both your tribunes. They suffered many torments for the name of Jesus, rather than sacrifice to idols. By their death they have vanquished your demons. They chose rather to be beheaded than to consent to sin. The death which they have suffered has covered them with ignominy in the sight of men, but has crowned them with glory before the angels."

The emperor was irritated, and began to threaten.

"Unless you sacrifice," said he, "with your sons, to the all-powerful gods, I will offer you all up in sacrifice to them."

The Christian matron replied, "Your gods cannot receive me in sacrifice; but if I am burned for the name of Jesus Christ, my God, I shall render the flames to which your demons are consigned more tormenting."

The emperor curtly rejoined, "Take your choice: either sacrifice to my gods, or die miserably."

"Do you think," said Symphorose meekly, "that fear will cause me to yield? It is my desire to rejoin my husband, whom you have slain for the name of Jesus Christ."

The emperor ordered her to be taken to the Temple of Hercules. There she was scourged, and then hung by the hair of her head. As she still remained firm, he ordered her to be thrown into the river, with a large stone tied around her neck. The savage deed was immediately performed; and the body of the heroic Christian martyr disappeared beneath the waves. The next day, the emperor caused her seven sons to be brought before him. In vain he exhorted them to sacrifice to the idols. Seeing all his menaces to be unavailing, he erected seven stakes, and bound the brothers to them with cords. He ordered a different death for each one. The first, named Crescent, had his throat cut. The second, Julian, was pierced through the breast with a pike. The third, Nemesius, was struck to the heart with a dagger. Thus they all perished. Their mutilated bodies remained during the day exposed to the jeers of brutal pagans. The next morning the emperor ordered the corpses to be collected and thrown into a ditch. The Christians subsequently gathered up the remains, and buried them about eight miles from Rome. The ruins of a church are still to be seen, which in after-years was erected upon that spot, called the Church of the Seven Brothers.

Such is the narrative which has come down to us from those distant ages. We have no reason to doubt its essential accuracy. Such scenes were continually occurring; and the evidence is incontrovertible, that, in those days of terrible persecution, God did sustain the disciples of Jesus with supernatural support. Tender children and timid maidens encountered death in its most frightful forms with firmness which excited the wonder and admiration of the sturdiest pagans.

The Eastern sage, as he accompanied a monarch through the gorgeous saloons of his palace, said that it had one great defect,—it had no chamber which was death-proof. Adrian found this true in the magnificent pile which he had reared upon the banks of the Tiber. He was taken ill. The disease developed itself in a tormenting dropsy. He had no rest by day, no rest by night. The weary hours were filled with suffering. Remorse was undoubtedly gnawing at his heart. He had known the better way, but had refused to walk in it. Paganism offered him no consolations. Christianity he had rejected. In his anguish he longed to die,—to take that leap in the dark which must be so terrible to any thoughtful man who has not accepted the truth, that life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel. His sufferings were so great, that he begged his friends to kill him,—to present him the poisoned cup, or to plunge the dagger to his heart. But no one was willing to perform that service. He was often heard to exclaim, "How miserable a thing it is to seek death, and not to find it! How strange it is that I, who have put so many others to death, cannot die myself!"

Upon this couch of suffering, from which death removed him in the sixty-second year of his age, he wrote the following lines to his departing spirit, so affecting, so melancholy, that they have survived the lapse of eighteen centuries:—

"Animula, vagula, blandula,

Hospes comesque corporis

Quæ nunc abibis in loca,

Pallidula, rigida, nudula?

Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos."

Prior has endeavored to translate or imitate this stanza in the following lines, which but feebly express the spirit of the original:—

"Poor little, pretty, fluttering thing!

Must we no longer live together?

And dost thou plume thy trembling wing

To take thy flight thou know'st not whither?

Thy humorous vein, thy pleasing folly,

Lie all neglected, all forgot;

And pensive, wavering, melancholy,

Thou dread'st and hop'st thou know'st not what."

Adrian appointed Antoninus, a man of singular purity and integrity of character, who was about fifty years of age, to succeed him on the throne. He enjoined it upon him to adopt as his heir Marcus Aurelius, a very beautiful boy of seventeen, whose fascination of character and manners had won the love of the Emperor Adrian.

Antoninus was a humane man. Christianity had obtained prominence, and had become an important element in the Roman world. But still the Christians were hated by the idolaters, and suffered innumerable wrongs and outrages from the hands of the populace, even when there was no governmental persecution. Their sufferings enlisted the sympathy of Antoninus. The mere fact that one was a Christian, no matter how pure his character, how exemplary his life, exposed him to every conceivable indignity from the idol-worshipping populace. The local magistrates, yielding to the clamors of the mob, would afford no protection to those who were accused of being the disciples of Jesus. Antoninus issued the following decree:—

"If any one shall for the future molest the Christians, and accuse them merely on account of their religion, let the person who is arraigned be discharged, and the accuser be punished according to the rigor of the law."

During the reign of Antoninus, there arose a very distinguished man, now known as Justin Martyr, the productions of whose pen are still read with admiration, and whose name will never die. He was born in Samaria, of Greek parentage. In youth he enriched his mind by intense study and extensive travel. All truly great men are thoughtful and pensive. The mystery of life oppresses them, and the thought of what there is beyond this life absorbs the soul.

Justin has given an exceedingly interesting account of his endeavors to find some system of philosophy or some doctrines of religion which could guide and solace him. We give the narrative in his own words:—

"At first I placed myself under the instruction of a Stoic. After some time, I perceived that he could teach me nothing respecting God: indeed, he confessed that he knew nothing of God himself, and that he did not consider a knowledge of him to be at all necessary. I immediately left the Stoic, and addressed myself to a Peripatetic, a disciple of Aristotle. He was, at least in his own opinion, an extremely subtle man. After spending some days with him, I found that he was more interested in the money I should pay him than in any thing else. Being satisfied that such was not the philosophy I needed, I bade him adieu.

"Hearing of a Pythagorean of very great reputation, I applied to him. He also had a very exalted opinion of his own wisdom. When I informed him that I wished to become one of his disciples, 'Very well,' said he to me: 'have you studied music, astronomy, and geometry? or do you think it possible that you can understand any thing of that which leads to bliss without having mastered

those sciences which disengage the soul from sensible objects, rendering it a fit habitation for the intelligences, and placing it in a condition to contemplate goodness and beauty?'

"As I confessed that I had not studied those sciences, he dismissed me; for he deemed them necessary.

"One can judge how great were my sufferings in seeing my hopes thus frustrated. My grief was the more keen, since I really did suppose he knew something; but, as it would require a long time for me to perfect myself in those branches, I could not submit to the delay. I then determined to seek the instruction of the Platonists. There was a philosopher of that sect in our city, highly distinguished. I had many conversations with him, and profited much by them. It afforded me great pleasure to become acquainted with incorporeal things. The consideration of ideas elevated my spirit as upon the wings of an eagle. Thus I thought that in a very short time I should become wise. I even conceived the foolish hope that I should soon see God. This frame of mind led me to seek solitude."

Justin then goes on to narrate, that one day he was walking by the shore of the sea, absorbed in thought, when he saw a venerable man approaching him. The dignified bearing of the stranger, and the remarkable serenity and sweetness of his countenance, arrested his attention. They entered into conversation. The stranger proved to be a Christian, a man of remarkable intelligence, who understood the vain systems of the philosophers as well as the gross absurdities of the popular idolatry. He unfolded to Justin the religion of Jesus. The young man was deeply impressed with the revelation thus made to him. As he contemplated the idea of one God, the Creator of all things; of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, coming to the world to make atonement for sin; of immortality; of the elevation of the soul to eternal happiness in heaven through penitence, the abandonment of sin, and the prayerful and persevering endeavor in thought and word and deed to live a holy life,—the earnest spirit of Justin bowed to the majesty of truth. He became a devoted Christian. The simple preaching of the cross of Christ, which many of the Greek philosophers regarded as foolishness, became to Justin, as it has to many others, "the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation."

Justin, by his self-denying devotion, soon became conspicuous in all the churches. He wrote an apology in behalf of the Christians. This treatise, which would do honor to any pen in the nineteenth century, was addressed "To the Emperor Antoninus, his two sons, the Roman senate, and all the Roman people." Very lucidly he stated the essential doctrines of Christianity, and the nature of the evidence upon which the religion was founded. With resistless force of argument he refuted the calumnies with which the Christians were assailed, showing that their hopes of eternal happiness were all forfeited if they allowed themselves in any known sin. He dwelt upon the injustice of condemning Christians for their name alone. He made it perfectly clear to the humblest intelligence, that, when the Christians spoke of the kingdom of Christ, they had reference, not to an earthly, but to a spiritual kingdom. He stated the nature and design of the sacraments,—of baptism and the Lord's supper.

Justin closed his apology with the following forcible words:—

“If you find Christianity to be reasonable, respect it: but do not condemn to death, simply because they are Christians, those who have committed no crime; for we declare to you, that you cannot escape the judgment of God if you persist in such wickedness. As for us, we only say, ‘The will of God be done.’ We might demand justice of you in virtue of the decree of your illustrious father Adrian; but we have preferred to rest our cause upon the justice of our demands.”

This admirable treatise, calmly written with great force of language and cogency of argument, must have exerted a very powerful influence. Still popular prejudice is seldom removed by argument. Though here and there many leading minds were led to regard Christianity with more favor, still the malice of the ignorant and brutal masses, who were ever crying, “To the lions with the Christians!” remained unchanged.

Justin was at Rome when he wrote this apology. Soon after, he left Rome, and retired to Ephesus.

Upon the death of Antoninus, whose reign of twenty-two years was an uneventful one, Marcus Aurelius ascended the throne. For some unexplained reason, the new emperor commenced his reign with very unfriendly feelings towards the Christians. Though he issued no decree of persecution, yet he afforded the disciples no protection: they were left to be maltreated by the brutal populace, and often to be condemned to torture and death by the angry and unprincipled governors of distant provinces. In the seventh year of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, a very terrible persecution of the Christians sprang up in Smyrna and its environs. The emperor remained silent in his palace while the Christians were scourged to death, burnt at the stake, or thrown to wild beasts. It is said that these martyrs were so wonderfully sustained by supernatural power, that, in their hours of most dreadful anguish, not a groan escaped their lips.

It will be remembered that the venerable Polycarp was bishop of the church in Smyrna. Through the urgency of his friends he was induced to leave the city, to seek a retreat in the country. The mob clamored for his blood: they pursued him. Two boys were found, who, as they supposed, knew of the place of his concealment. These merciless men placed the boys upon the rack. In their unendurable agony, they told where Polycarp was to be found. A band of soldiers, thoroughly armed, hastened to seize him. It was late on Friday night, and the bishop was calmly sleeping in his chamber. Aroused by the noise of their entrance, he descended to meet them, greeted them kindly, and ordered refreshments to be set before them. He then asked of them the favor to grant him one hour for prayer. The soldiers, impressed by his venerable appearance and kindly spirit, could not refuse his request. At the close of this season of devotion they placed him upon an ass, and conducted him to the city.

The sun of Saturday morning had risen as they entered the streets of Smyrna. Many of the pagans who had long known Polycarp, and who appreciated the nobleness of his character, entreated him simply to say, “Lord Cæsar,” to offer sacrifice to the idols, and thus to be saved. He meekly replied, “I cannot follow your advice.” They were so exasperated by what they considered his irrational stubbornness, that they not only overwhelmed him with reproaches, but treated him with personal abuse.

He was brought before the tribunal of the pro-consul Philip, who seemed to wish to save the venerable old man. He said to Polycarp, “If you will only swear by Cæsar, and reproach Christ, I will immediately release you.”

Polycarp replied, “Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and he hath never wronged me. How can I now blaspheme my King, who hath saved me? I am a Christian. If you desire to learn the Christian doctrine, assign me a day, and I will declare it to you.”

The pro-consul said, “I have the beasts, and will expose you to them if you do not yield.”

Polycarp replied, “Let them come. I cannot change from good to bad; but it is well to pass from these sufferings to the realms of justice.”

“If you have no fear of the beasts,” the pro-consul replied, “I will bind you to the stake, and consume you with fire, unless you yield.”

“You threaten me,” said Polycarp, “with fire, which burns but for a time, and is soon extinguished; but you are ignorant of the future judgment, and of the fire eternal which is reserved for the impious.”

The pro-consul was astonished at his firmness. Still he sent his herald into the amphitheatre to proclaim to the eager throng awaiting the cruel spectacle of the martyrdom that Polycarp had confessed himself a Christian. With loud and angry shouts, the populace declared that he was the father of the Christians; that it was he who had induced so many to abandon the temples of the gods. With one voice they demanded that he should be thrown to the lions.

Philip refused, saying that the spectacles of the wild beasts were finished. They then raised the deafening cry, that he should be burned at the stake. Immediately they ran to the workshops around to gather fuel. It was observed that the Jews were as eager as the pagans at this work. While they were rearing the funeral-pile, Polycarp turned to the few friends who had ventured to gather around him, and said to them with a smile (for he rather courted than dreaded martyrdom), “I am to be burned alive.”

The executioners deprived him of all his clothing, dragged him to the stake, and, while the populace were piling the fagots around him, prepared to fasten him to it; but he said to them calmly,—

“Leave me as I am. He who gives me fortitude to endure the fire will enable me to remain in the midst of the flames without being bound.”

These savage men, perhaps interested in witnessing the result of such an experiment, consented.

Polycarp then, raising his eyes to heaven, breathed aloud the following prayer:—

“Lord God all-powerful, Father of Jesus Christ, thy blessed and well-beloved Son, through whom we have received grace to know thee, I thank thee that thou hast led me to this day and to

this hour, in which I am to take part in the number of thy martyrs. May I this day be admitted into thy presence with them as an acceptable sacrifice, in accordance with that thou hast prepared, predicted, and fulfilled!

"Therefore I praise thee for all these things. I bless thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal and celestial High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy dear Son; to whom be rendered glory, with thee and the Holy Spirit, now and through all future ages. Amen."

The church in Smyrna wrote an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, which is still extant, and which they sent to their brethren throughout the world. The day of miracles had not yet passed. The church testifies to the following miraculous event which was witnessed at his death:—

"When Polycarp had finished his prayer, and pronounced 'Amen' aloud, the officers lighted the fire: and, a great flame bursting out, we, to whom it was given to see, saw a wonder; who also were reserved to relate to others that which had happened. For the flame, forming the appearance of an arch as the sail of a vessel filled with wind, was a wall round about the body of the martyr; and it was in the midst, not as burning flesh, but as gold and silver refined in a furnace. We received also in our nostrils such a fragrance, as of frankincense or some other precious perfume! At length, the impious judges, observing that his body could not be consumed by fire, ordered the executioner to approach, and plunge his sword into his body. Upon this a quantity of blood gushed out, so that the fire was extinguished, and all the multitude were astonished."

The dead body was then placed upon the funeral-pile, and burned. The friends of the martyr were then permitted to collect the charred bones, and give them Christian burial.

The Roman empire was beginning to be assailed with such ferocity by the surrounding barbarians, that Marcus Aurelius found it necessary to enlist Christians in the army. He formed a brigade of six thousand of these persecuted disciples of Jesus, and incorporated them with one of the Roman legions. God endowed these soldiers with such bravery, and enabled them to win such victories, as called forth the admiration both of the emperor and the army.

After a decisive battle, in which God seemed miraculously to have interposed in behalf of the Christian legion, Aurelius issued a decree, declaring that the Christians should no longer be persecuted, but should be entitled to all the rights and privileges belonging to other subjects of Rome.

CHAPTER XII.
PAGAN ROME.

Infamy of Commodus.—His Death.—The Reign of Pertinax.—The Mob of Soldiers.—Death of Pertinax.—Julian purchases the Crown.—Rival Claimants.—Severus.—Persecutions.—Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas.—The Reign of Caracalla.—Fiendlike Atrocities.—

Elagabalus, Priest of the Sun.—Death by the Mob.—Alexander and his Christian Mother.—Contrast between Paganism and Christianity.—The Sin of Unbelief.



FTER a stormy reign of twenty-three years, the Emperor Aurelius died, and his son Commodus, nineteen years of age, succeeded to the throne. He was a demon. His atrocities I must not describe: nothing can be imagined, in the way of loathsome, brutal, fiendlike vice, of which he was not guilty. A foul pagan, he filled the palaces of Rome with all the atrocities of iniquity.

He murdered one of his own sisters, and worse than murdered the rest. He amused himself in cutting off the lips and noses of those who incurred his displeasure. The rich he slew, to get their money; the virtuous, because their example reproved his vices; the influential, fearing lest they should attain too much power.

Under Commodus, the Christians were not exposed to governmental persecution, though there were occasional acts of the grossest outrage. One of his female favorites, who had great influence over him, became their protector. Conversions were rapidly multiplied. Many of the most noble and opulent in Rome embraced the Christian faith, which they could see presented the only hope for this lost world. One of these very distinguished men, Apollonius, an accomplished scholar, presented to the Roman senate a very eloquent appeal in favor of Christianity. The senate demanded that he should retract his opinions. As he refused, he was sent to the block, and beheaded.

The outrages Commodus was perpetrating, and the executions he was daily ordering, at length became intolerable. His nominal wife, the same Marcia who had protected the Christians, finding, from a memorandum which she picked from his pocket, that he had doomed her with several others to die, gave him a cup of poison. As he was reeling under the influence of the draught, an accomplice plunged a dagger into his heart, and "he went to his own place." "To his own place!" Where was that place? No one can be familiar with the history of the awful crimes which have been perpetrated upon this globe, and not feel that there is necessity for justice and retribution beyond the grave.

The joy in Rome was indescribable when the rumor spread through the thronged streets, on the morning of the 1st of January, 193, that the tyrant was dead. The senate and army placed Pertinax, mayor of Rome, upon the vacant throne. He was, for a pagan, a good man. He found the nation with an empty treasury, and enormously in debt, and attempted to economize; but the army demanded the wealth and luxury which could be obtained only by rapine.

Commodus had accumulated a vast amount of gold and silver plate; chariots of most costly construction; robes of imperial purple, heavily embroidered with gems and gold; and last, but not least, he had seized, and crowded into his harem, six hundred of the most beautiful boys and girls. The plate, the chariots, the robes, and the handsome boys and beautiful girls, were all sold to the highest bidder. It is Christianity alone which recognizes the brotherhood of man. Pertinax, a pagan, could perhaps see no wrong in selling these young men and maidens into slavery. All the money thus infamously obtained was honestly paid into the exhausted treasury.

The army had loved Commodus. He allowed the soldiers unlimited license; he filled their purses with gold; he crowded their camp with male and female slaves. Pertinax wished to introduce reforms. The army hated Pertinax because he was good, as devils hate angels. "Away with him!" was the cry which resounded through the whole encampment.

Three hundred burly wretches, from the encampment outside the walls of Rome, marched to the palace. Deliberately they cut off the head of Pertinax. Parading it upon a lance, they, with shouts of triumph, marched back through the streets of Rome to their barracks. The citizens looked on

in dismay: they dared not utter a word. The army was their master. A standing army and an unarmed people place any nation at the mercy of an ambitious general.

Sixteen thousand soldiers, thoroughly trained, and heavily armed in steel coats of mail, were always quartered just outside the gates of Rome. From their commanding encampment on the broad summits of the Quirinal and Viminal Hills they held the millions of the Roman capital in subjection. The gory head of Pertinax was elevated upon a pike. The brutal soldiery gathered around it with yells and hootings, and offered the crown to the highest bidder.

Julian, a vile demagogue, the richest man in Rome, offered a thousand dollars to each soldier, making sixteen millions of dollars. He could easily win back treble the sum by extortion and the plunder of war. The soldiers accepted the offer. Surrounding Julian, they marched in dense column into the city to the capitol, and compelled the senate to recognize him as emperor. There were sixteen thousand swords as so many indisputable arguments to enforce their demands. The senate, with the sword at its throat, obsequiously obeyed. The trembling populace was equally submissive. With apparently universal acclaim, Julian was proclaimed emperor.

But there were other imperial armies besides the sixteen thousand which held Rome in awe. There was one in Greece of twenty thousand, one of twenty thousand in Britain, and one of thirty thousand in Syria. Each of these armies followed the example of the Pretorian Guard, as the army at Rome was called. Each chose an emperor from among its generals. There were thus four rival emperors, each at the head of a powerful army. The arbitrament of bloody battle alone could decide who should hold the prize.

The three distant armies commenced an impetuous march upon Julian at Rome. Severus from Greece was nearest. With giant strides he pressed forward, sweeping all opposition before him. As he drew near the camp of the Pretorian Guard, the soldiers, who had already received their thousand dollars each from Julian, coolly cut off Julian's head, and sent it to Severus. The two armies then fraternized under Severus, and took possession of Rome.

Albinus was advancing with his twenty thousand men from Britain. Enormous bribes were sent to him by Severus; and he gave in his adhesion to the successful general who was so formidably intrenched at Rome. Niger then, marching from Syria, was easily routed by the three combined armies opposed to him. He was taken captive, and beheaded. Severus thus became emperor without a rival. In commemoration of his victory, he reared in Rome a colossal triumphal arch, which remains to the present day.

Severus was a thoroughly bad man; and yet he protected the Christians. A physician who had embraced the new religion had saved the life of his child. Severus gratefully took him into the palace, and treated him with the utmost kindness. Though unwilling to regulate his own conduct by the religion of Jesus, he so far appreciated the excellence of Christianity as to appoint one of its advocates as teacher of his child. When the fury of the populace at Rome rose against the Christians, Severus interposed to shield them.

But in remote parts of the empire, where the power of the crown was but feebly felt, persecution raged terribly. The father of the renowned Eusebius was beheaded: his property was confiscated,

and his widow and children left utterly destitute. Eusebius, who was then but seventeen years of age, and a very earnest Christian, was so anxious to follow his father to martyrdom, that his mother could with great difficulty restrain him. He lived to establish a reputation which has filled the world with his name.

In Africa, also, the persecution was violent. In Carthage, twelve Christians at one time were brought before the pro-consul, three of whom were females. They refused to abjure their faith, and were condemned to be beheaded. We have a minute account of the trial,—the questions and their answers. Upon being condemned to death simply for being Christians, they knelt together, and thanked God that they were honored with the crown of martyrdom. Joyfully each one received the death-blow. It was at this time, and at Carthage, that Tertullian wrote his world-renowned apology for Christianity. It was so eloquent in its rhetoric, and so convincing in its logic, that it exerted a very powerful influence over all thoughtful minds.

The martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas at Carthage was one of the memorable events of this persecution. Perpetua was a Roman lady of exalted birth, and highly educated, who had become a Christian. Felicitas was a young Christian bride, about to become a mother. The parents of Perpetua were pagans, and also her two brothers. She was but twenty-two years of age, recently married, and had an infant child.

She was arrested, and thrown into prison. Her aged father, who loved Perpetua tenderly, prostrated himself upon his knees before his daughter, and, with tears gushing from his eyes, entreated her to save her life by sacrificing to the gods. She remained firm. The high social position of the captive caused a large crowd to be assembled at the trial. Her father came, bringing to the court her babe, and entreating Perpetua, for the sake of her child, to save her life. He hoped that the sight of her child would cause her to relent, and renounce Jesus. The public prosecutor, Hilarien, then said to her,—

“In mercy to your aged father, in mercy to your babe, throw not away your life, but sacrifice to the gods.”

“I am a Christian,” she replied, “and cannot deny Christ.” The anguish of her father was so great, that he was unable to restrain loud expressions of grief; and the brutal soldiers drove him off with cruel blows. “I felt the blows,” says Perpetua in a brief memorial which she left of her trials, “as if they had fallen on myself.” Perpetua was then condemned to be torn to pieces by wild beasts.

“When the day for the spectacle arrived,” says Perpetua, “my father threw himself on the ground, tore his beard, cursed the day in which he was born, and uttered piercing cries which were sufficient to move the hardest heart.”

Both Perpetua and Felicitas were doomed to the same death. The two victims were led into the arena of the vast amphitheatre, where, with the utmost ingenuity of cruelty, they were to be gored to death by bulls. The rising seats which surrounded the amphitheatre were crowded with spectators to enjoy the spectacle.

Let us, in imagination, descend into the dark, damp dungeons opening into the arena. Here in this den are growling lions, gaunt and fierce; and here is a den of panthers with glaring eyeballs. They have been kept starved for many days to make them furious. Here in this cell of stone and iron, which the glare of the torch but feebly illumines, is a band of Christians,—fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters. They are to be thrown to-morrow into the arena naked, that they may be torn to pieces by the panthers and the lions, and that the hundred thousand pagan spectators may enjoy the sport of seeing them torn limb from limb, and devoured by the fierce and starved beasts.

In one of these cells Perpetua and Felicitas were confined. In another were several wild bulls. It was a glorious summer's day, and the cloudless sun shone down upon the amphitheatre, over which a silken awning was spread, and which was crowded with many thousands of spectators. Here were congregated all the wealth and beauty and fashion of the city,—vestal virgins, pontiffs, ambassadors, senators, and, in the loftiest tier, a countless throng of slaves. Carthaginian ladies, affecting the utmost delicacy and refinement, vied with men in the eagerness with which they watched the bloody scenes.

In the centre of the arena there was suspended a large network bag of strong fine twine, with interstices so large as to afford no covering or veil whatever to the person. Perpetua was first brought into the arena, young and beautiful, a pure and modest Christian lady. She was led forth entirely divested of her clothing, that to the bitterness of martyrdom might be added the pangs of wounded modesty. A hundred thousand voices assailed her with insult and derision. Brutal soldiers placed her in the transparent network. There she hung in mid-air, but two feet from the ground, as if floating in space. Then the burly executioners gave her a swing with their brawny arms, whirling her in a wide circle around the arena, and retired.

An iron door creaks upon its hinges, and flies open. Out from the dungeon leaps the bull, with flaming eyes, tail in air, bellowing, and pawing the sand in rage. He glares around for an instant upon the shouting thousands, and then catches a view of the maiden swinging before him. With a bound he plunges upon her, and buries his horns in her side. The blood gushes forth, and she is tossed ten feet in the air; while the shrieks of the tortured victim are lost in the hundred thousand shouts of joy.

This scene cannot be described: it can hardly be imagined. Lunge after lunge the bull plunges upon his victim, piercing, tossing, tearing, mangling, till the sand of the arena is drenched with the blood of the victim; until her body swings around, a lifeless, mangled mass, having lost all semblance of humanity. Felicitas in the mean time is compelled to gaze upon the scene, that she may taste twice the bitterness of death. In her turn she is placed in the suspended network, and in the same fiery chariot of martyrdom ascends to heaven.

Several other Christians perished at the same time, being torn by wild beasts, and devoured by half-famished bears, leopards, and wild boars. Pages might be filled with similar accounts; but this record must be brief.

The Emperor Severus died on an expedition to Britain, in the year of our Lord 211, leaving the crown to his two sons, Caracalla and Geta. They were both thoroughly depraved boys. Caracalla,

the elder, invited his brother Geta to meet him in the presence of his mother to confer upon the division of the empire. During the conference, Caracalla drew near his brother, and, taking a dagger from beneath his dress, buried it to the hilt in Geta's heart. The murdered boy sprang into his mother's arms, and died, she being deluged with the blood of her son. This was early in the third century, when pagan Rome was at the summit of its wealth, refinement, luxury, and power. The murderer of Geta thus became sole emperor of Rome.

Christianity was beginning to create a public conscience. It was throwing the light of future judgment and final retribution upon such hideous crimes. Both of these young men, depraved though they were, had received some religious instruction. The stings of remorse imbittered every remaining hour of Caracalla's life. The image of his brother Geta, gasping, shrieking, dying, bathed in blood, in the arms of his terrified mother, pursued the murderer to his grave: but it did not soften his heart; it only hardened him in sin, and inflamed his soul with almost insane jealousy and fear. Every individual who was supposed to be in the interest of Geta was put to death, without regard to age or sex. In the course of a few months, twenty thousand perished by this wholesale proscription.

A wag in one of the schools in Alexandria wrote a burlesque verse upon Caracalla. The tyrant, in consequence, ordered the whole city to be destroyed. Every man, woman, and child was ordered to be put to death. A few only of the young and beautiful were reserved as slaves.

The only way in this world to be happy is to strive to promote the happiness of others. He who makes others wretched is always wretched himself. Caracalla lived the life of a demon, filling the world with woe; but, in all the empire, there was scarcely to be found a greater wretch than he.

One of his generals, Macrinus, who had displeased the emperor, learning that he was doomed to death, engaged a centurion, a man of herculean strength, to assassinate him. A dagger through the back pierced the heart of the tyrant. Thus terminated the diabolical sway of Caracalla, with which God had allowed the world to be cursed for six years.

The army had adored Caracalla; for he had given free rein to the license of the soldiers, and had enriched them by plunder. Macrinus, the assassin, was not illustrious either by birth, wealth, or military exploits. The soldiers reluctantly, and with many murmurs, submitted to the decision of the senate recognizing him as emperor. The army was encamped in winter quarters in Syria. Macrinus, exulting in new-born dignity, was luxuriating in his palace at Antioch. Under these circumstances, a Syrian soldier, by the name of Elagabalus, a reckless, unprincipled man, formed a conspiracy in the camp outside the walls of Antioch. He assumed that he was a son of one of the concubines of Caracalla. The soldiers, eager for the renewal of their former privileges of plunder and outrage, enthusiastically rallied around the banner of the insurgent general. There was one short battle. Macrinus was slain, and the troops with one accord welcomed Elagabalus as emperor. The senate, not daring to present opposition to the army, obsequiously confirmed its vote.

This rude, untamed pagan was a worshipper of the sun. He had been a high priest in one of the idol temples. With his army enlarged by brutal hordes from the East, he marched upon Rome in

the double capacity of pagan pontiff and emperor. He was arrayed in sacerdotal robes of damask embroidered with gold. A gorgeous tiara was upon his brow; and he wore bracelets and a necklace incrusted with priceless gems. The city pavements over which he passed were sprinkled with gold-dust. Six milk-white horses, sumptuously caparisoned, drew a chariot containing a black stone, the symbol of the god he worshipped. Elagabalus, as pontiff, held the reins with his back to the horses, that his eyes might not be for a moment turned from the object of his idolatry.

A new temple was reared for this new idol on the Palatine Hill. Its worship was introduced with splendor such as Rome had never yet witnessed. Syrian girls of great beauty danced around the altar. Elagabalus, with his crowd of adorers of the new divinity, rioted in those dissolute rites, which even the pen of a Roman historian shrinks from recording.

The palaces of the Cæsars had been as corrupt as Europe knew how to make them; but Elagabalus transported to them all the additional vices of Asia. Modern civilization will not allow the story of his infamy to be told: the enlightenment of the nineteenth century could not bear the recital. The change which Christianity has introduced into the world is so great, that there is not a court in Europe now, no matter how corrupt, which would endure for a day a Nero or an Elagabalus.

Even pagan Rome could not long submit to so unmitigated a wretch. There was mutiny in the camp. Elagabalus was cut down in the fray. A mob of soldiers, with infuriate yells, dragged the corpse by the heels through the streets, and cast the mangled, gory mass into the Tiber. The senate passed a decree consigning his name to eternal infamy. Posterity has ratified that decree.

There are those, it is said, who believe that there is no punishment after death; that all the dead go at once to heaven. Strange must be the philosophy, and stranger still the theology, which can contemplate Elagabalus welcomed at the golden gates, angels crowding to meet him, while God, with beaming countenance, exclaims, “Well done, good and faithful servant! enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

The Pretorian Guard of sixteen thousand mailed and veteran soldiers, whose encampment was just outside the walls of Rome, took a nephew of Elagabalus,—Alexander Severus, a boy of but seventeen years of age,—and made him emperor. Two reasons influenced them: first, he was available; second, he was young, and they thought they could mould him at their will.

And now again we get a gleam of Christian light upon this dark scene,—a gleam of that Christian influence which ennobles statesmanship, purifies morals, and promotes every virtue; that sublime Christian principle, which requires, that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we do all to the glory of God.

The mother of young Alexander was a Christian. Never was the maxim more beautifully illustrated, that blessed is the boy who has a pious mother. This noble woman, notwithstanding all the unspeakable corruptions which surrounded her, had trained her child in the faith and morals of Jesus. Like a guardian angel, she had watched over her son amidst all the temptations of the palace.

Alexander, upon ascending the throne, in the very palace where Elagabalus had so recently practised his pagan orgies, habitually rose at an early hour, and upon his bended knees implored God's guidance. He then held a cabinet council, aided by sixteen of the most virtuous senators. The affairs of state were carefully discussed, efforts being made to redress every wrong.

A few hours were then set apart for study, that he might, by intellectual culture, be better prepared for his responsible situation. He then practised for a time at the gymnasium for the promotion of his bodily vigor. After lunch, he received petitions and dictated replies till supper, at six, which was the principal meal of the day. Guests of distinction were always invited to sup with him. His table was frugal, his dress simple, his morals were pure, his manners polished and courtly. He adopted for his motto the golden maxim of Jesus our Lord: "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."172 It was then fresh and new. Few even of those who admired the sentiment knew that it was Jesus who had given it its emphatic announcement.

When Severus appointed a governor of a province, he first publicly propounded his name, that, if there were any disqualification, it might be mentioned. "It is thus," he said, "the Christians appoint their pastors: I will do the same with my representatives."

And yet, strange as it may seem, Alexander Severus does not seem to have been a true Christian. He was simply like many upright, high-minded, honorable young men now, who assent to Christianity, are measurably governed by its morals, but are not in *heart* disciples of Jesus.

Alexander was deficient in moral courage: he wished to compromise. While he professed belief in Jesus, he professed also belief in the Roman gods. He wished to build a temple in Rome, to be dedicated to Jesus Christ, for Christian worship; but the oracles told him, that, if he did this, everybody would become Christian, and the temples of the gods would be abandoned. He therefore desisted. Still, throughout his reign, Christians were protected so far as he could protect them; but, in remote sections of the empire, Christians often suffered terribly from the malice of pagan magistrates, and from the brutality of the mob.

The reforms of justice and mercy which Alexander Severus was introducing into the empire were hateful to the soldiers. They wished to give free range to their appetites and passions, and to riot in plunder. A mutiny was excited in the camp against him. In a paroxysm of rage, the Pretorian Guard, sixteen thousand strong, marched into the city, breathing threatenings and slaughter. For three days and three nights, a terrible battle raged in the streets of Rome. There was a wasting conflagration, and multitudes were slain. The city was menaced with total destruction. And all this because a virtuous emperor wished to protect the innocent, and to restrain the wicked from crime!

A kind Providence gave Alexander the victory. The insurgents were driven back to their camp. Still they were too powerful to be punished. The whole reign of Severus was harassed and imbittered by the outrages of this licentious soldiery.

We have now come down in our narrative to the middle of the third century. The Romans were a very powerful, and in many respects a highly-cultivated people. Their literature has excited the admiration of the world. It is still studied in the highest seats of learning. Their paganism was the

best which the world has ever known. We have presented in impartial contrast the practical workings of the religion of Rome and the religion of Jesus Christ. Every thoughtful reader must be impressed with the wonderful, the divine superiority of Christianity. It must be manifest to every reflective mind, that, in the religion of Jesus Christ, we find the only hope for our lost world. That religion is not a religion of dead doctrines and pompous ceremonies, but one of a living faith and a holy life.

"Do right," says Christianity,—"right to God by loving him and worshipping him as your heavenly Father; right to yourself by cultivating in your own heart every thing that is pure, lovely, and of good report; right to your fellow-man, regarding him as your brother, and doing every thing in your power to elevate him, purify him, and prepare him for heaven. Your past sins may all be forgiven. Christ has died upon the cross, and made atonement for them. Penitence for sin, trust in an atoning Saviour, and the earnest, prayerful return to a holy life, will open to you the gates of heaven." This is Christianity. It needs not the enforcement of labored argument: it is its own best witness. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."[173]

It not unfrequently happens that a young man gets the impression that there is something a little distinguished in being an unbeliever. He assumes the air of a sceptic, and takes the ground that Christianity is the religion of weak minds; that the reason why he does not believe is, that he has more intelligence and knowledge than those people who believe.

Should there chance to be such a one who reads these pages, I would ask him, How do you account for the fact that the most intelligent men in the world have been Christians? Were Bacon and Boyle, Sir Matthew Hale and Herschel, men whose intellectual renown has filled centuries, weak-minded men?—and yet they were Christians. Was Napoleon Bonaparte a man of feeble intellect?—yet he said at St. Helena,—

"The loftiest intellects since the advent of Christianity have had faith, a practical faith, in the mysteries and the doctrines of the gospel; not only Bossuet and Fénelon, who were preachers, but Descartes and Newton, Leibnitz and Pascal, Corneille and Racine, Charlemagne and Louis XIV." Were Washington and Jackson, Clay and Lincoln, ignorant and weak men?—they were Christians. Are the presidents in nearly all the colleges and universities of Christendom incapable of comprehending the force of argument?—they are Christians.

Was Daniel Webster a man of feeble powers of comprehension, incapable of appreciating the force of an argument?—he bears the following testimony to his faith in Christianity:—

"Philosophical argument, especially that drawn from the vastness of the universe, compared with the apparent insignificance of this globe, has sometimes shaken my reason for the faith that is in me; but my heart has always assured and re-assured me that the gospel of Jesus Christ must be a divine reality. This belief enters into the very depths of my conscience. The whole history of man proves it."

No: it is too late for any one to take the ground that Christianity is the religion of ignorant men and weak women. God has given evidence sufficient to convince every candid mind. This evidence is so abundant, that God declares it a great sin not to believe. There is no crime more

severely denounced in the Bible than that of unbelief. Perhaps you say, “I cannot believe without evidence;” but God has given evidence sufficient to convert every heart which is not so wicked that it will not believe.

Not to believe will surely bring condemnation at God’s bar. To believe in Christianity, and yet not in heart to accept it, and not publicly to avow one’s faith, is perhaps a greater sin. The declaration of our Saviour is positive, that he will not recognize at the judgment-day those who have not confessed him before men.

There are undoubtedly those who have wickedly cherished a spirit of unbelief, until God, as a punishment, “has sent them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.”174

The following incident affectingly illustrates this truth. The writer, a few years ago, at the close of the afternoon’s service in the church on a summer’s day, was called upon in his study by a man of dignified person and manners, whose countenance and whole demeanor indicated superior intellectual culture. I had noticed him for one or two sabbaths in the church. His marked features, and his profound attention to the preaching, had awakened my interest. With much courtesy he apologized for intruding upon my time, but expressed an earnest desire to have a little conversation with me.

“I have,” said he, “for several sabbaths, attended public worship in your church, and need not say that I have been interested in the preaching; and you will probably be surprised to have me add, that I cannot believe the sentiments you advocate. I cannot believe that the Bible is a divine revelation, or that there is any personal God. I am what you would probably call both an infidel and an atheist; and I should be glad to give you a brief account of my history.

“When a young man, I became interested in the writings of the French philosophers,—Voltaire, Helvetius, Diderot, and D’Alembert. I filled my library with their works, and perused them with eagerness. Their teachings I accepted. They were in harmony with my desires; and I lived accordingly. Renouncing all faith in Christianity, in any other God than the powers of Nature, and in any future life, I surrendered myself unrestrained to the indulgence which those principles naturally inculcated. Thus I have lived. Christianity and its professors have ever been the subjects of my ridicule and contempt.

“I still retain those principles. The arguments with which I have stored my mind, and upon which I have so long relied, appear to me invincible. I cannot believe that the Bible is any thing more than a human production. When I look upon the world, its confusion and misery, I can see no evidence that there is any God who takes an interest in the affairs of men. I see that the wrong is just as likely to triumph as the right. In the animal creation, there is, from the lowest to the highest, a regular gradation; and as they all, at birth, came from nothing, so, at death, into nothing they will vanish.

“I have now passed my threescore years and ten. I have lost most of my property. My eyesight is rapidly failing. The companions of my youthful days are all gone. Most of my children are in the grave; and I have no more expectation of meeting them in another world than of meeting my faithful dog or my sagacious horse. I am aged, infirm, bereaved, and joyless. There is nothing in

the retrospect of the past to give me pleasure: the present brings but weariness, gloom, and sadness: before me is the abyss of annihilation.

"Now, could I only believe as you believe,—that there is a loving heavenly Father, who watches over his children; that the trials of this life are intended to form our characters for endless happiness; that beyond the grave there is immortality, happy realms where the sorrows of earth are never known; that provision is made for the forgiveness of all my sins; and that, after a few more days here, I could enter golden gates, and be forever in heaven with the loved ones who have gone before me,—I should indeed be the happiest man in the world. But I cannot believe it. There is no evidence sufficiently strong to remove my unbelief."

Such was the confession of an unbeliever; and we know that such must be the moral condition of every man who is approaching the grave without the Christian's hope. How different from this was the testimony of Paul the Christian as he drew near the close of his noble life, even with the pains of martyrdom opening before him! He writes to Timothy,—

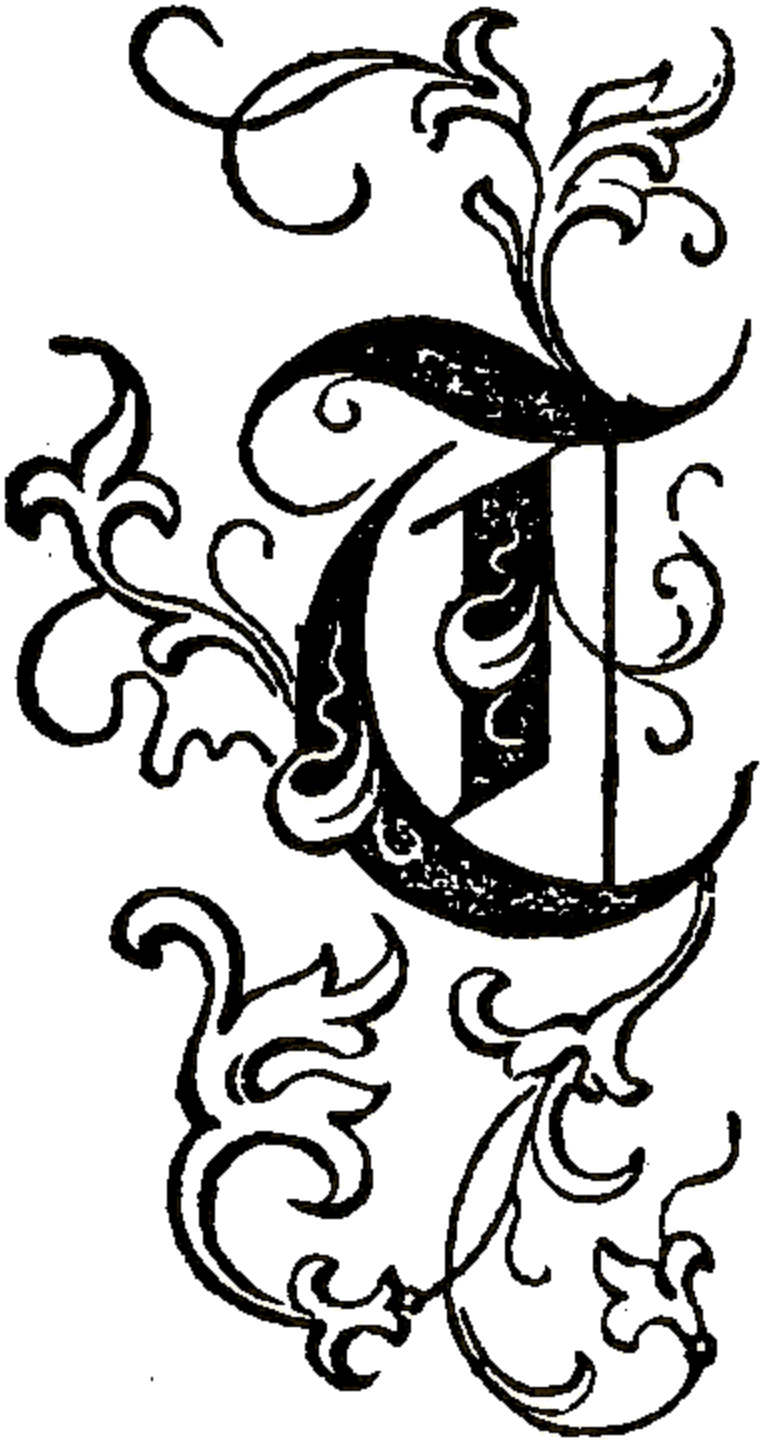
"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

I will simply say in conclusion, in reference to my unhappy friend, whom I could not but love, that though he would admit that there was a *Power*, which he called *Nature*, which had introduced him to this world, and would ere long remove him from it, no persuasions of mine could induce him to pray to that Power for light and guidance; though he would, apparently with profoundest reverence, fall upon his knees at my side, and listen to my prayers to the Creator.

Circumstances soon removed me several hundred miles from his dwelling. Whether he be living as I now write these lines with a tearful eye, I know not. A few years ago, after two years of absence, I met him. Sorrow had left unmistakable traces upon his marked features. As I took his hand, he admitted that there were still no rays of light to gild the gloom of his pathway to the grave.

CHAPTER XIII.
SIN AND MISERY.

Maximin the Goth.—Brutal Assassination of Alexander.—Merciless Proscription.—Revolt of the Army on the Danube.—Rage of Maximin.—His March upon Rome.—Consternation in the Capital.—Assassination of Maximin.—Successors to the Throne.—Popular Suffrage unavailing.—Persecution under Decius.—Individual Cases.—Extent of the Roman Empire.—Extent of the Persecution.—Heroism of the Christians.



HE last chapter closed with the reign of Alexander Severus, in the year of our Lord 235. His mother being a Christian, her son, though still, for popularity's sake, supporting idolatry, was induced, out of respect to his mother, to ingraft upon the errors of paganism many of the noble teachings of Christianity. His death is associated with one of the most wild and wondrous of the tales of ancient times.

Alexander Severus, or the Severe, as he was called, from his puritanic severity of morals, was returning with his army from a war expedition to the East. On the plains of Thrace he stopped to celebrate the birth of a son. In commemoration of the joyful event, there was a display of all the military pageants and gymnastic games then in vogue.

The whole army, in gorgeous display, was drawn up on a spacious plain. Thousands of the neighboring people were assembled to witness the splendors of the *fête*. It was a clear and beautiful morning. All eyes were riveted upon the emperor, as, followed by a magnificent retinue, he came galloping upon the field.

Suddenly there sprang from the crowd of spectators a gigantic barbarian, a Goth. With the speed of an antelope, he bounded to the side of the emperor's horse. Apparently without the slightest exertion, or the least loss of breath, he kept pace with the fleet Arabian charger, as, with almost the swiftness of the wind, the magnificent steed careered over the plain. This brawny young savage was eight feet tall, and was as admirably proportioned as the colossal statue of the Apollo Belvedere.

Giants have not generally much intellect; but this young Goth had great activity and energy of mind. His courage resembled that of a ferocious wild beast. He could tire out a horse in a race. He could break the leg of a horse with a blow of his hand. He could throw successively, with apparently the greatest ease, thirty of the ablest wrestlers who could be brought against him. He demanded for his daily food forty pounds of meat and twelve quarts of wine. Extraordinary as these statements appear, they seem to be well authenticated. Such was the young barbarian, who, rollicking, leaping, and gambolling around the emperor, attracted the attention of the vast crowd of soldiers and spectators who were spread over the plain.

Soon the games were introduced on the model of the world-renowned Olympic games of Greece. They consisted of all athletic sports of leaping, wrestling, boxing. This young Goth, Maximin by name, distanced all competitors. Sixteen of the stoutest wrestlers were brought forward to contend against him. Almost without exertion, he laid them, one after another, upon their backs.

Gunpowder has equalized strength. A small man can pull a trigger as well as a large one. The bullet shot from a rifle will accomplish equal execution, let the rifle be held by a dwarf or a giant. But in those days, before the invention of gunpowder, when men fought with clubs and battle-axes, with massive swords and heavy cross-bows, agility and strength were essential to the successful warrior.

The emperor gazed upon the feats of Maximin with astonishment and admiration. The giant was an unmitigated barbarian, whose father was a Goth, and whose mother was from a still more savage tribe, called the Alani. The emperor took Maximin into his service, loaded him with honors, and rapidly promoted him from post to post in the army, until he became one of the highest generals. The Roman soldiers, accustomed to do homage to the military prowess of muscles and sinews, regarded Maximin with great veneration.

Alexander had taken with him his Christian mother. She had great influence over her son. A very sumptuous tent was provided for her, which was always pitched in the middle of the camp. This

ungrateful Goth, Maximin, conspired against his benefactor. “Why,” said he, “should a Roman army be subject to an effeminate Syrian, the slave of his mother? Soldiers should be governed by soldiers; by one reared in the camp; by one who knows how to distribute among his comrades the treasures of the empire.”

By these means a mutiny was excited. The mutineers rushed upon Alexander, beat him down with their clubs, and hewed him to pieces with their battle-axes. With hideous clamor, the army proclaimed Maximin their emperor. This assassination of Alexander, and enthronement of the barbarian Goth, took place on the 19th of March, A.D. 235.

Maximin, invested with the imperial purple, was ashamed of his low origin, of his ignoble birth. He endeavored to put every one to death who knew him when he was an untamed savage. Four thousand were thus handed over to the assassin and the executioner. Conscious of his low breeding, his ignorance, and his ungainly address, he would not allow any person of cultivated mind or polished manners to appear in his presence, lest others should notice the contrast. He did not live in the gorgeous saloons of the palace, surrounded by a splendid court, where he would not be at home, and where he knew not how to behave, but remained in the camp, surrounded by soldiers who were ever ready to obey his most ferocious bidding. He avoided every thing which could bring him too broadly in contrast with metropolitan refinement.

This cruel despot was very ingenious in devising modes of torture for those whom he even suspected of being unfriendly to him. There was no form of cruel death to which he did not resort to avenge himself upon his enemies. Maximin was insatiate in his grasping for wealth. He even robbed idolatrous temples, and melted down into coin the exquisite statues of gold and silver. He hated Christianity, and ordered the churches to be burned, and the pastors and officers of the churches to be put to death. This persecution was short in its duration, but terrible while it lasted. Maximin reigned thirteen years. It seems short, as we look back upon that period through the lapse of fifteen centuries; but it must have been awful for Christians to have endured thirteen years of bloody persecution under such a monster.

There occurred several disastrous earthquakes during his reign. He attributed them to the displeasure of the gods, in consequence of the Christians forsaking the idols. Thus the fanatic fury of the mob, as well as the cruel energies of the governmental arm, were turned against the disciples of Jesus. The mob pursued all Christians with the most cruel and revolting outrages, and their vilest atrocities were sustained and encouraged by the government. Such was the persecution which raged nearly sixteen hundred years ago, and is now nearly forgotten; indeed, many are not aware that it ever existed.

Maximin was with his army on the banks of the Danube. He rewarded his soldiers abundantly with license and plunder. There was another Roman army in Africa. The soldiers there rose in revolt against Maximin. They chose Gordian, governor of the province, emperor. He was a wealthy Roman gentleman, eighty years of age. A son of his was to share with his father the cares of empire.

But Maximin was not to be trifled with. Raging like a wild beast, and gnashing his teeth with fury, he put his army on a rapid march for Africa. In one bloody battle the troops of Gordian were almost annihilated. The son was slain in battle: the father in despair committed suicide.

The senate in Rome, detesting Maximin, the brutal barbarian monster, had ventured to espouse the cause of Gordian. The maddened Maximin turned his march towards Rome. The powerless senate was in utter dismay. Not only confiscation and death awaited them and their families, but death in its most cruel form. The whole city was agitated with terror.

There was every reason to fear that the barbarian, with his demoniac soldiery, marching beneath the blood-red banner of plunder and slaughter, would put the inhabitants to the sword, and commit the city to the flames. It was the customary vengeance for conquerors in those days to burn every dwelling of their foes, and to put every man, woman, and child to death, excepting a few of the young and beautiful, who were reserved to groom their horses, and to fill their harems.

The senate, in terror, made desperate efforts to meet the emergency. The populace of Rome were aware of their danger. A new army was very quickly raised. Two emperors were chosen: one, a wealthy Roman noble, by the name of Balbinus, was to remain at Rome, and attend to the civil administration there; the other, Maximus, a brave and veteran soldier, was placed in command of the army, which consisted of the Pretorian Guard of sixteen thousand men, encamped just outside the walls of Rome, and such recruits as could be added to them.

Maximin, almost literally roaring with rage, was pressing forward by forced marches. Plunder, slaughter, and smouldering ruins, marked his path. He had crossed the Julian Alps. The wretched inhabitants fled before him. But at length his atrocities created a mutiny among his own soldiers. A fiendlike band rushed into his tent, pierced him through and through with their javelins, cut off his head, and, with derision and insult, paraded it on a pike through the camp.

All Rome rang with shouts of joy, and blazed with illuminations, when it was reported that the tyrant was dead. But anarchy ensued. The soldiery, composed principally of the most desperate vagabonds of the city, were not disposed to accept an emperor elected by the senate. Conscious of their power, they resolved to place one of their own favorites upon the imperial throne.

In a resistless, organized mob, they strode into the city in solid battalions, battered down the doors of the palace where the two emperors were in council, pierced them with a thousand spears, dragged their mangled bodies, by ropes tied to their heels, with hideous yells through the streets, and threw the gory remains into a ditch, to be devoured by dogs. In six months, five Roman emperors had thus perished by violence. Think how vast the change which the teachings of Jesus have introduced, refining manners, giving laws, purifying morals!

When we reflect upon such scenes, it is impossible to deny that the teachings of Jesus have wrought the most astonishing and salutary changes in the world. It is not too much to say, that pagan Rome in its palmiest days was far below Christian Rome in its greatest degeneracy. Christianity has introduced refinement of manners, more equitable laws, and morals immeasurably superior to any thing which existed around the shrines of idolatry. And yet these are only the incidental blessings, over and above the salvation of the souls of those who became

spiritually the disciples of Jesus, accepted him as their Saviour, and who brought their hearts and lives into sympathy with his teachings. There were millions of such, who are now in the realms of glory, of whom history made no record.

The soldiers took a boy thirteen years of age, and, bearing him triumphantly to the camp, jocosely made him emperor. The senate, with sixteen thousand swords at its throat, was compelled to ratify their choice. Soon, however, an ambitious general, named Philip, poisoned the boy, and induced the soldiers to proclaim himself emperor.

It is said that this Philip had once professed Christianity, but, having yielded to the temptations which surrounded him, had been excluded from the Church for his crimes. He had an enlightened conscience; but his Christian character, as in many other cases, fell a sacrifice to his ambition. He was a weak man. Though he did not directly persecute the Christians, he did not venture to protect them. His reign was short,—only five years.

The army on the Danube chose one of their generals—Decius—emperor. The two rival armies, under their several sovereigns, soon met near Verona, and engaged in terrible mutual slaughter. Both sides were equally bad. God left them to scourge and torture and devour one another. It is thus that he often punishes wicked nations, by leaving them to destroy themselves. Philip's soldiers were routed. They turned upon him, cut off his head, and joined the conqueror. Decius marched triumphantly to Rome, where the senate and people welcomed an emperor who could enforce his title with so many glittering swords.

To the eye of reason, nothing can seem more absurd than the doctrine of hereditary descent of power. That a babe, a feeble girl, a semi-idiot, or a monster of depravity, should be invested with sovereign power over millions, merely from the accident of birth, appears preposterous. But, if there be neither intelligence nor virtue in a nation, the chance of birth may give as good a ruler as the chance of popular suffrage.

Rome had become so dissolute, that had every name in the empire been cast into the wheel of a lottery, and the first one thrown out been accepted as emperor, the result could not have been more disastrous than that which ensued from the vote of the army and the senate.

In wolfish bands, savage hordes from the forests of the north came pouring across the Danube, plundering, burning, and putting to the sword all before them. Rome, weakened by division, was poorly prepared to resist such a foe. Decius marched timidly to meet the inrolling flood of barbarians. With hyena yells they rushed upon him, scattering his forces as wolves scatter sheep. Scaling the walls of Philippopoli, they slaughtered in cold blood the whole population, amounting to a hundred thousand souls. This was the first successful irruption of the barbarians into the Roman empire. This momentous event took place in the year of our Lord 250. No tongue can tell the dismay which thrilled all hearts in Rome as the appalling tidings reached them that the barbarians had conquered and annihilated a Roman army, and were on the triumphant march to the capital.

Decius was slain: his body, trampled into the mire of a morass, was never found.

Under the reign of Decius there was a dreadful persecution of the Christians, which was commenced in Alexandria. We can infer its character from the following incidents. A young Christian, named Matran, was first scourged with terrible severity; his eyes were then burned out with red-hot irons; he was then stoned to death. A Christian young lady, by the name of Quinta, had a long rope tied about her feet; then the brutal mob, seizing the rope, dragged her upon the run, with yells of derision and rage, over the rough pavement, till life was extinct, and the poor mangled body had lost all semblance of humanity. But we cannot proceed with this recital. It would be inflicting too much pain upon the sensibilities of our readers to have faithfully pictured to them the sufferings of the maiden Apollonia, of Sempion, and of many others, whose martyrdom history has minutely recorded.

Decius published a bloody edict against the Christians, and sent it to the governors of all the provinces. They were ordered vigilantly to search out Christians, and to punish them with the utmost severity,—by scourging, by burning at the stake, by beheading, by tossing them to wild beasts, by the dungeon, by seating them in iron chairs heated red-hot, by tearing out the eyes with burning irons, by tearing the flesh from the bones with steel pincers. Demoniac ingenuity was devised to lure them to sin, or to force them to renounce their Saviour.

In Smyrna, two eminent Christians, Pionius and Metrodore, underwent a rigorous examination. We have a record of the questions and the answers. Every effort was made by promises and by threats to induce them to recant; but they remained firm in their Christian integrity. They were then nailed to crosses, cruel spikes being driven through their hands and their feet. The crosses were planted in the ground, and heaps of combustibles were piled around for the funeral pyre. Before the torch was applied, they were again entreated to deny Christ.

“If you will do so,” said the proconsul, “the spikes shall immediately be drawn out, and your lives shall be preserved.”

Their only reply was a prayer to the Lord Jesus to receive their spirits. The flames crackled and roared around them, enveloping them as in a fiery furnace. In the chariot of fire, their united spirits ascended to the martyr’s crown. Page after page might be filled with similar recitals; but enough has already been said to give an idea of the frantic yet unavailing efforts which wicked men have made to obliterate Christianity from the world. These scenes remind one of the revelation written by the “beloved apostle” to the “angel,” or pastor, of the church in Smyrna:—

“These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead, and is alive: I know thy works and tribulation and poverty (but thou art rich); and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.... He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”[175]

Upon the death of Decius, the senate, terrified by the destruction of the army and by the approach of the barbarians, again chose two emperors. Hostilianus was invested with the civil, and Gallus with the military command. Rome, Christianity-persecuting Rome, had already sunk so low, that Gallus was compelled to the ignominy of purchasing peace with the barbarians on

the most degrading and revolting terms. They were permitted to retire unmolested with all their plunder and with all their captives, consisting of thousands of Romans, young men and beautiful women, to till the soil, and serve in the harems of the barbarian Goths. By the law of retribution, this was right. Rome had made slaves of all nations: it was just that Rome should drink of the cup of slavery herself.

Gallus, the military emperor, wished to reign alone: he therefore poisoned Hostilianus. There was a Roman army on the Danube. The soldiers there proclaimed their general, Æmilianus, emperor. Gallus marched to meet him; but his soldiers despised his weakness, and slew him and his son, and then joined the army of Æmilianus.

The Roman empire at this time, about the middle of the third century, consisted of a belt of territory about a thousand miles in breadth, encircling the Mediterranean Sea as a central lake. All beyond were unknown savage wilds. Throughout all this vast region, Paganism was assailing Christianity with the most malignant and deadly energies.

And yet the zeal of the Christians was such, that while some, yielding to the terrors which threatened them, denied Christ, many went gladly to martyrdom. No one could tell how soon his hour would come. The life of the Christian was in daily peril from the executioner or from the mob; and yet many of those Christians, inspired with supernatural zeal and courage, devoted themselves entirely to the open and earnest preaching of the gospel.

"I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," said Christ. They accepted the mission. In the thronged streets of the city, like Paul at Athens, while some gnashed their teeth with rage, and others heard them gladly, they proclaimed salvation through faith in an atoning Saviour. Two and two they penetrated the villages, and wandered through the sparsely-settled country, with the sublime and astounding doctrine, that God, in the person of Jesus Christ, had suffered upon the cross to make an atonement for sin; and that now all who wished to reach heaven were to acknowledge this Saviour, and live according to his teachings, at whatever hazard.

Thus, notwithstanding the persecutions, converts were multiplied. For every one who was slain, perhaps two rose to take his place. The persecutors themselves, like Saul of Tarsus, often became converts, and preached that faith which they had once endeavored to destroy. Even the unbelieving Gibbon, who seldom loses an opportunity to show his hostility to the religion of Jesus, admits that the zeal of the early Christians in preaching the gospel, their fortitude under the most dreadful sufferings, the purity of their morals, and their love for one another, were among the potent influences which enabled Christianity to triumph over the imperial power of the Cæsars and the malignity of the mob, to overthrow all the gorgeous altars of paganism, and to establish itself firmly upon the ruins of the most imposing system of idolatry the world has ever known.

CHAPTER XIV.
INVASION CIVIL WAR, AND UNRELENTING PERSECUTION.

Æmilianus and Valerian.—Barbaric Hordes.—Slavery and its Retribution.—Awful Fate of Valerian.—Ruin of the Roman Empire.—Zenobia and her Captivity.—The Slave Diocletian becomes Emperor.—His Reign, Abdication, Death.—Division of the Empire.—Terrible Persecution.—The Glory of Christianity.—Characteristics of the First Three Centuries.—Abasement of Rome.



BOUT this time, near the close of the third century of the Christian era, the barbarians who surrounded the Roman empire commenced with great vigor their resistless ravages. Along the whole line of the Danube, they swarmed in locust legions across the frontiers. Still the infatuated Romans, instead of combining against the common foe, were wasting their energies in persecuting the Christians and in desolating civil wars.

A Roman general, by the name of Æmilianus, was in command of the army upon the Danube. His soldiers had chosen him emperor. There was another Roman army in France, then called Gaul. This Gallic army chose their general, Valerian, emperor. These two hostile forces marched to settle the question on the field of battle. As the antagonistic hosts drew near each other, the soldiers of Æmilianus, deeming the opposite army the stronger, murdered their general, whom they had chosen emperor, and, with loud huzzas, rallied around the banner of Valerian.

From the remote East, from Persia, and from the Indies, tribes of uncouth names, language, and dress, were ravaging all those wild frontiers of the empire. Valerian, an old man of seventy years, sent his son Gallienus with an army to drive back these hordes into Persia. He himself, in the mean time, repaired in person to the Danube to assail the barbarians there. But the irruption of these ferocious bands was like the resistless flood of the tide: it could not be arrested. In wave after wave of invasion, they swept over France and Spain. They even crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, and entered Africa. An immense tribe came howling through the defiles of the Rhætian Alps, and swept over the plains of Lombardy.

Another vast army descended those then unexplored rivers flowing from the north into the Black Sea, ravaging all the coasts of Asia Minor, glutting themselves with plunder, massacring the old, and carrying off the young. With how little emotion we read such a narrative! and yet how awful must have been the desolation and misery which were inflicted by these wolfish barbarians upon the wretched inhabitants!

These wild beings, in boats made of the skins of beasts, floated down the Bosphorus and the Hellespont; and the illustrious men and beautiful women of Greece were captured by these demons in human form. The descendants of Demosthenes and of Aristides, of Plato and of Aspasia, were dragged into hopeless and endless slavery.

Five hundred years before this, a distinguished Grecian philosopher, Aristotle, had written a book to prove that slavery was right; that it was right for the more powerful nations to enslave the weaker ones. The wheel had now turned, though it had been five hundred years in turning. The barbarian Goths were the more powerful, and the intellectual and polished Greeks the less powerful. These shaggy monsters, as wild as the beasts whose skins they wore, were but carrying out the philosophy of Aristotle as they dragged the boys and girls of Greece into bondage.

Gloriously the religion of Jesus beams forth amidst all these horrors. “God hath made of one blood all nations.”176 “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”177 “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”178

The Emperor Valerian pressed on with his Roman legions to attack the barbarians in the Far East. He crossed the Euphrates, and encountered the Persian host, drawn up in defiant battle-array on the plains of Mesopotamia. A terrible battle was fought, and the Roman army cut to pieces. The conquerors took Valerian prisoner; and God, in awful retribution, compelled the captive emperor to drink to the dregs that bitter cup of slavery which the Roman emperors, for so many centuries, had forced to the lips of all the other nations.

Derisively the Persians robed the captive emperor in imperial purple. He was compelled to kneel upon his hands and his feet in the mud, that Sapor, his conqueror, might use him as a block, putting his foot upon his back as he mounted his horse. For seven years, Valerian was kept as a slave in Persia. He was exposed to every indignity which pride and revenge could heap upon him. At last, with demoniac barbarity, they put out his eyes, and skinned him alive. His skin, dyed red, was stuffed, and preserved for ages in commemoration of Persia's triumph over imperial Rome.

Gallienus, upon the captivity of his father, was invested with the imperial sceptre. Appalled by the fate of Valerian, he dared not march to attack the barbarians. Sheltering himself in Rome, he endeavored to bribe the Goths and Vandals to cease their ravages. The barbarians accepted his bribes, despised his weakness, and continued their forrays.

The Roman empire was in hopeless ruin. There was no longer recognized government or recognized law. In all directions, ambitious generals were rising in struggles for the crown. In the course of twelve years, more than thirty of these claimants appeared. The whole empire was swept by the blood-red surges of civil war. In those twelve years, it is estimated that the Roman empire, by civil war and barbaric invasion, lost one-half of its population. The sword, famine, and pestilence swept off a hundred and fifty millions of the inhabitants.

These barbarians ravaged the empire in all directions, perpetrating horrors indescribable. Several times they flaunted their defiant flag within sight of the dome of the capitol at Rome. Aureolus, an insurgent general, marched upon Rome with an army from the Upper Danube. Gallienus advanced to meet him. In the tumult of a midnight battle, he was slain by one of his own soldiers. With his dying breath he named one of his most distinguished generals, Claudius, emperor. The senate accepted him.

Claudius captured Aureolus, and put him to death. The barbarians now, in armaments more formidable than ever before, were crossing the frontiers in a line fifteen hundred miles in length, extending from the German Ocean to the waves of the Euxine.

An immense army of Goths, numbering three hundred and twenty thousand men, in six thousand barges, descended the Dneister to the Black Sea. Hence, passing through the Bosphorus, they entered the Sea of Marmora, and swept resistlessly over all the provinces of ancient Greece. Claudius attacked them. In a momentary revival of the ancient Roman vigor, he drove them back to their forests. In the pursuit, Claudius died; and the sceptre passed to Aurelian, the son of a peasant, but one of Rome's ablest generals. He pursued the Goths with astonishing energy, smiting them with a rod of iron. He drove them from France, Spain, and Britain, and then prepared to attack them in the Far East.

Among the many rivals for the imperial throne who at this time sprang up, there was one named Odenathus, at Palmyra, near the Euphrates. He maintained his sovereignty over many wide provinces there for twelve years. Dying, he transmitted his sceptre to his widow Zenobia. Her history was so wonderful as to merit particular notice.

Queen Zenobia was an extraordinary woman. She was as graceful in form as a sylph, marvellously beautiful in features, and endowed with the highest intelligence. She spoke fluently four languages,—Latin, Greek, Egyptian, and Syriac. What was still more wonderful for a woman in those days, she was an author, and had written an epitome of Oriental history. Her domain extended from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean. The celebrated Longinus, whose fame is known to every student, was her secretary.

Without assuming any hostility with the powers at Rome, Zenobia, for five years, maintained uncontrolled command over this eastern division of the empire. Aurelian marched against her. The witty satirists of Rome lampooned him for making war against a woman. Aurelian replied in a communication to the senate,—

"Some speak with contempt of war against a woman. They know not the character or the power of Zenobia. It is impossible to enumerate her warlike preparations, of stones, arrows, and every species of missile weapon. She has numerous and powerful military engines from which artificial fire is thrown. The dread of punishment has armed her with desperation. Yet I trust in the protecting deities of Rome."

After several sanguinary battles, in which Zenobia was worsted, she retired to her citadel within the walls of Palmyra. As the Romans vigorously pressed the siege, she, conscious of the doom that awaited her should she be captured, attempted to escape on one of her fleetest dromedaries. She had reached the distance of sixty miles, when she was overtaken, and brought back, a captive, to Aurelian.

The Roman victor showed no mercy. Longinus, the illustrious scholar, was sent to the block. Palmyra was sacked, and nearly destroyed. All the aged men and women and the young children were put to the sword. Zenobia and a multitude of boys and girls were carried captive to Rome. Such a triumph the decaying city had not witnessed for years. It was the dying flickering of the lamp. Twenty elephants, four tigers, and two hundred of the most imposing animals of the East, led the pompous procession. The vast plunder of the Oriental cities was ostentatiously paraded.

An immense train of captives followed to give *éclat* to the triumph. Conspicuous among these slaves was Zenobia, radiant with pensive beauty. She was robed in the most gorgeous attire of the Orient. Fetters of gold bound her beautiful arms; and she tottered beneath the burden of jewelry and precious stones with which she was decorated. Her magnificent chariot was drawn by Arabian chargers richly caparisoned. The captive queen followed it on foot. All eyes were riveted upon her.

Aurelian rode in a triumphal car drawn by four stags. The Roman senate in flowing robes, the bannered army, and the countless populace, closed the procession. This was the last of Rome's triumphs. The reign of anarchy commenced. Aurelian was cut down by assassins.

For two or three hundred years, but three or four Roman emperors had died a natural death. For eight months after the assassination of Aurelian, there was no emperor. No man seemed willing to accept the crown,—it was so sure to bring upon him the assassin's dagger. The glory of Rome had departed forever.

Such was the condition of the world about the middle of the third century. Pagan Rome had fallen through her own corruption. Her polluted shrines were abandoned, and her idolatrous temples were mouldering to decay. Christianity was steadily undermining the proudest temples of pagan worship. The disciples of Jesus, purified by persecution, were preaching that pure faith which was dethroning idols, breaking fetters, educating the ignorant, and regenerating the wicked.

There was at this time in Rome a venerable old man, of vast wealth and singular purity of character, named Tacitus. He had been a kind friend to the poor. Weary of anarchy, the people gathered in tumultuous thousands around his mansion, demanding that he should be emperor. Earnestly he begged to be excused.

But, just at this time, tidings came that the barbarians from the East were crowding across the Euphrates and the Tigris. They were plundering, burning, and massacring in all directions. The soldiers were clamorous for an emperor to lead them to repel this invasion. This noble old man of seventy-five years was compelled to yield. He put himself at the head of the army, and had advanced to within a hundred and fifty miles of the Euphrates, when the soldiers rose in mutiny, and killed him.

Diocletian, who had been a slave, grasped the crown by the energies of his strong mind and his brawny arm. A few bloody conflicts ensued; but he was a resolute man, and opposition soon melted before him. As it was no longer possible to hold the empire together, assailed as it was in every quarter by the barbarians, Diocletian sagaciously divided it into four parts:—

1. France, Spain, and England were made one kingdom, and assigned to Constantius.

2. The German provinces on the Danube made another kingdom, which was allotted to Galerius.

3. A third realm was composed of Italy and Africa, where Maximian was invested with the sovereignty.

4. Diocletian took for himself the whole of Greece, Egypt, and Asia.

The Roman empire was thus divided into four kingdoms, which were in some respects independent; yet, as Diocletian had created them, and appointed their sovereigns, they were all in a degree under his energetic sway, and bound to support each other against the common foe. But Rome seemed to have filled up the measure of its iniquity. No human sagacity could avert its doom. For ages she had been gathering “wrath against the day of wrath.”

Soon the savage Britons rose in arms. German tribes, clad in skins and swinging gory clubs, blackened the banks of the Danube and the Rhine. The wild hordes of Africa, from the Nile to Mount Atlas, were in arms. Moorish nations, issuing from unknown fastnesses, crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, and swept like the sirocco of the desert over the Spanish peninsula; then, gathering upon the cliffs of the Pyrenees, they descended in an avalanche of destruction upon the plains of France. The Persian hordes, emerging from the steppes of Tartary in countless bands,

were roused to new efforts to chastise Rome, their old hereditary enemy. Thus the shouts of war reverberated over the whole of the then known world. All its fields were crimsoned with blood.

There were four royal capitals. Rome was abandoned as the metropolitan centre. Diocletian was still the ruling spirit over all those kingdoms which his sagacity had formed. He chose for his own capital Nicomedia, on the Asiatic coast of the Sea of Marmora. Though he spent his life in the camp, he endeavored to invest his capital with splendor which should outvie all the ancient glories of Rome.

Diocletian was a shrewd man. Being aware how much the masses were influenced by outward show, he robed himself in garments of satin and gold. He wore a diadem of most exquisite pearls. Even his shoes were studded with glittering gems. All who approached him were compelled to prostrate themselves, and address him with the titles of deity. Gradually this extraordinary man became supreme emperor. The other three kings were crowded into the position of merely governors of subordinate provinces.

Diocletian resolved to uphold paganism, and consecrated all the energies of his vigorous mind to the extirpation of Christianity. We need not enter into the details of this persecution, its scourgings and its bloody enormities: such details are harrowing to the soul. We have already given examples sufficient to show what persecution was under the Roman emperors. The heroism with which many young persons of both sexes braved death, from love to Christ, is ennobling to humanity.

A decree was passed ordering every soldier in the army to join in idolatrous worship. The penalty for refusal was a terrible scourging, and to be driven from the ranks. There were many Christian soldiers in the army. With wonderful fortitude they met their fate.

Diocletian issued a decree that every church should be burned, that every copy of the Scriptures should be consigned to the flames, and that every Christian, of whatever rank, sex, or age, should be tortured, and thus compelled to renounce Christianity. No pen can describe the horrors of this persecution, the dismay with which it crushed all Christian hearts, or the fortitude with which the disciples of Jesus bore the scourgings, fire, and death.

We might fill pages with narratives of individual cases of suffering and of heroism. How little do we in this nineteenth century appreciate the blessing of being permitted to worship God according to the dictates of our consciences, with none to molest or make afraid!

While Diocletian was thus persecuting the Christians, he was also struggling with almost superhuman energy to hold together the crumbling elements of the Roman empire, assailed at every point by the barbarians. Nations die slowly: their groans are deep, their convulsions awful. For several centuries, Rome was writhing in death’s agonies.

In the twenty-first year of his reign, and the fifty-ninth of his age, Diocletian, enfeebled by sickness, and exhausted by the cares of empire, resolved to abdicate his throne. At the same time, he compelled Maximian to abdicate at Milan. It was his design to re-organize the Roman empire into two kingdoms, instead of four. This was the origin of the division of the Roman world into

the Eastern and Western empires. The morning sun rose upon the Oriental realms of Galerius: its evening rays fell upon the Occidental kingdom of Constantius.

The ceremony of abdicating the empire of the world by Diocletian was very imposing. About three miles from the city of Nicomedia there is a spacious plain, which was selected for the pageant. Upon a lofty throne, Diocletian, pale and emaciate, announced to the immense multitude assembled his resignation of the diadem. Then, laying aside his imperial robes, he entered a closed chariot, and repaired to a rural retreat which he had selected at Salona, on the Grecian shore of the Adriatic Sea. It was the 1st of May, A.D. 305.

Accustomed for many years to luxury, he surrounded himself in a magnificent castle with the highest appliances of wealth and grandeur. With the eye of an artist he had selected the spot. From the portico there was a view of wondrous beauty. The wide panorama spread out before him an enchanting landscape of the cloud-capped mountains of Greece, with towering Olympus, the blue waters of the Mediterranean, and the green, luxuriant, and Eden-like islands of the Adriatic.

Ten acres were covered by the splendid palace he had here constructed. It was built of freestone, and flanked by sixteen towers. The principal entrance was appropriately named “the Golden Gate.” Gorgeous temples were reared in honor of the pagan gods, whom Diocletian ostentatiously adored. The surrounding grounds were embellished in the highest style of landscape-gardening. The saloons and banqueting-halls were filled with exquisite paintings and statuary.

But even here, in the most lovely retreat which nature and art could create, man’s doom of sorrow pursued the emperor. The keenest of domestic griefs pierced his heart, darkening the splendors of his saloons, and blighting the flowers of his arbors and parterres.

Bitterly had Diocletian persecuted the Christians. He had made every effort to infuse new vigor into pagan worship. Was this his earthly punishment? We know not: we simply know that for long years he wandered woe-stricken, consumed by remorse, through those magnificent saloons, into which one ray of joy never penetrated. The dread future was before him. Pagan as he assumed to be, he had no faith in paganism: he upheld the institution simply as a means of overawing the populace.

There is a marked difference between Christianity and all forms of idolatry. The intellectual men of olden time—Cicero, Plato, Aristotle—despised the popular religion: they regarded it merely as an instrument to intimidate the ignorant masses.

But, with Christianity, the ablest men, the profoundest thinkers, are its most earnest advocates. The presidents of our colleges, the most prominent men at the bar, the most distinguished of our statesmen, our ablest scientific men, our most heroic generals, are men who revere Christianity; who seek its guidance through life, and its support in death.

The death of Diocletian is shrouded in mystery. Some say he was poisoned. Some affirm, that, tortured by remorse, he committed suicide. We simply know that he died with no beam of hope

illuminating the gloom of his dying-bed. He passed away to the judgment-seat of Christ, there to answer for persecuting Christ's disciples with cruelty never surpassed.

Such was the condition of the world at the commencement of the fourth century.

In the first century of the Christian era, we have mainly a series of execrable emperors, who, by their extravagance and their crimes, were sowing the seeds for the dissolution of the empire.

In the second century, Christianity begins slowly to make itself felt. We have some very good emperors, but with no power to stem the torrent of corruption at full flood. One after another they are swept away by poison and the dagger. Corruption rolls on in resistless surges. Christianity, earnest, active, and heroic, then in its infancy, could do very little to stay such billows in their impetuous career. It could only work upon individual hearts. But thus it gradually spread its life, giving leaven through the mass.

The third century dawns upon us, black with clouds and storms. Apocalyptic vials of woe are emptied upon the world. There is dread among the nations. Death on the pale horse stalks through Europe. The fetlocks of the horse are red with blood. Rome, the Babylon of that day, drunk with sensuality and oppression, falls in convulsions,—shrieks and struggles and dies. It was needful that such a Rome, the tyrant and oppressor of humanity, should die. In prophetic vision we can see this Babylon descending to the realms of woe:—

"Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming:

It stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth;

It hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

All they shall speak, and say unto thee,

'Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us

Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols:

The worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!

How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!'"[179]

During this century, Christianity made rapid progress. It is alike the testimony of pagan and Christian writers that this progress is mainly to be attributed to the zeal of the Christians, their kindness to the poor, their sympathy with the afflicted, their purity of morals, and their fortitude under the severest pangs of martyrdom.

Notwithstanding the fiery persecutions with which paganism with all its energies had assailed Christianity, it continued steadily to multiply its converts and to extend its peaceful conquests.

CHAPTER XV.
CONSTANTINE.—THE BANNER OF THE CROSS UNFURLED.

Helena, the Christian Empress.—Constantine, her Son, favors the Christians.—Crumbling of the Empire.—Constantine the Christian, and Maxentius the Pagan.—Vision of Constantine.—The Unfurled Cross.—Christianity favored by the Court.—Licinius in the East defends the Christians.—Writings of Eusebius.—Apostasy of Licinius.—Cruel Persecution.



T the commencement of the fourth century, Christianity had made such rapid progress, that there were flourishing churches in all parts of the Roman world, and spacious temples of worship in all the principal cities. Indeed, in about one century after the death of Jesus Christ, Justin Martyr wrote,—

“There exists not a people, whether Greek or Barbarian, or any other race of men, by whatever appellation or manners they may be distinguished, however ignorant of arts or agriculture,

whether they dwell under tents or wander about in covered wagons, among which prayers are not offered up in the name of a crucified Jesus to the Father and Creator of all things."

Persecution had not been continuous, but spasmodical; at times raging like a tempest, and again dying away into a transient calm. If any thing went wrong, pagan superstition attributed it to the displeasure of the idol gods. All calamities were considered as the punishment which the gods were inflicting upon the people because the Christians were causing the shrines of the idols to be deserted. Tertullian, an earnest Christian pastor in Carthage, wrote,—

"If the Tiber overflowed its banks, if there were famine or plague, if the season were hot or dry or scorching, whatever public calamity happened, the universal cry of the populace was, 'To the lions with the Christians!'"

When Diocletian abdicated, he compelled Maximian also to abdicate, and then divided the empire into halves, placing Galerius as emperor in the East, and Constantius in the West. Galerius was a cruel, proud, fanatical pagan, who hated the Christians. He assailed them with one of the most bloody persecutions they had ever experienced.

Constantius had married a Christian lady, Helena. Though not himself a Christian, he was so far influenced by his pious wife as to greatly befriend them. In fifteen months after the enthronement of Constantius over the Western empire, he died. The crown descended to his son Constantine, then thirty-two years of age. This was in the year 306. Constantine was not a Christian; but he was a humane, intelligent man, who revered the memory of his pious mother. His father Constantius, like Agrippa, had been almost a Christian. Like many such men now, he had great respect for religion. There were many Christians who were inmates of the palace. He even appointed Christians as chaplains, and listened to their daily prayers in his behalf. All through history, we see traces of the wonderful power of a truly Christian wife and mother.

Helena, the mother of Constantine, was so consistent in her Christian character, that her family were constrained to recognize her superiority, and to admire her spirit. It was doubtless her example which mainly influenced her illustrious son to embrace the gospel. Through her long life she was the munificent friend of the Christians,—travelling from place to place to aid them with her money and her personal influence. She died at the age of eighty years, a true mother in Israel. In the palace, as in the cottage, maternal piety has been one of the greatest blessings of earth.

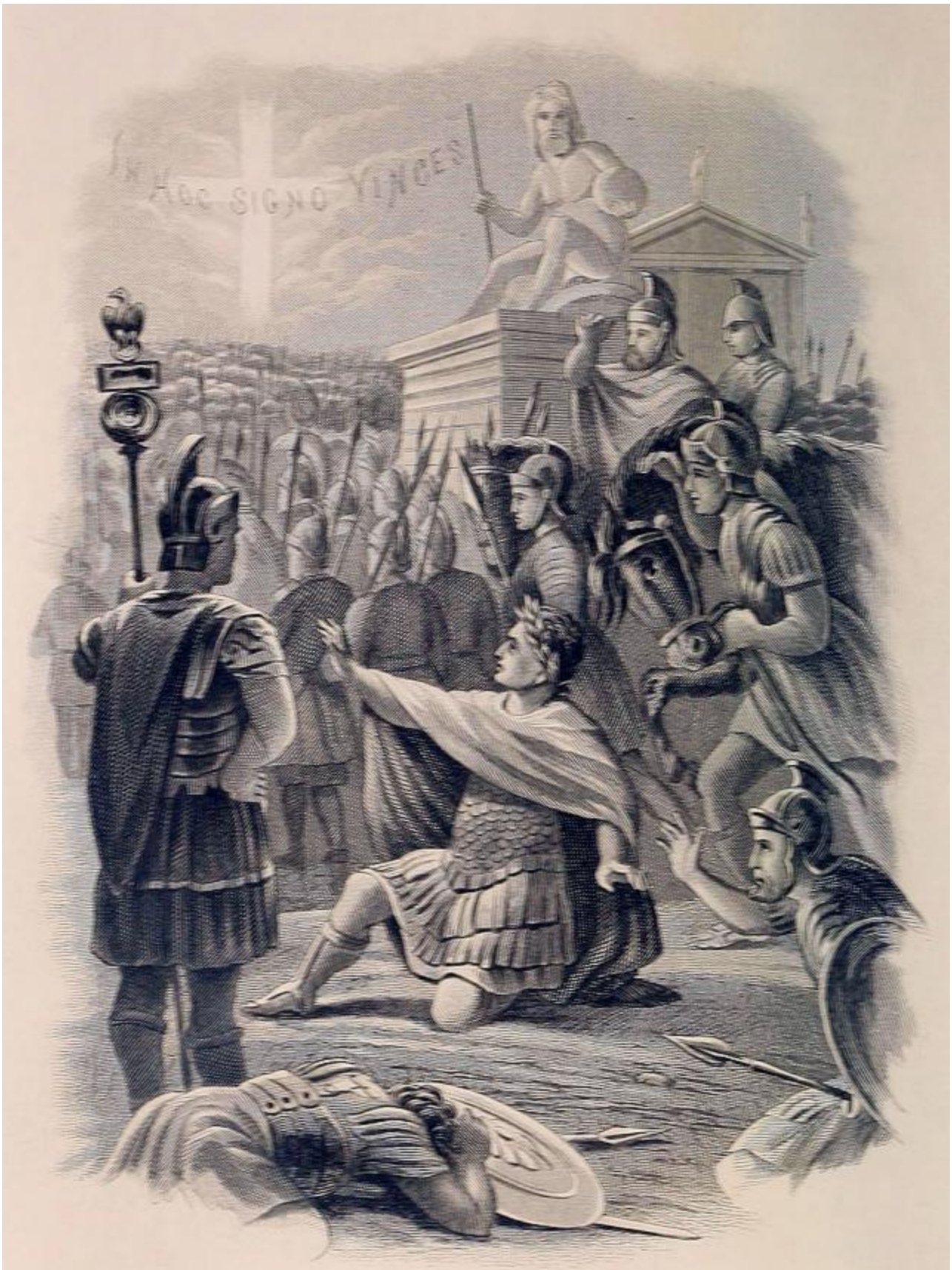
Nothing now could arrest the dissolution of the old Roman world, crumbling beneath the weight of its own corruptions. The dogs of war were soon unleashed. Rival emperors again appeared. While Constantine was in Britain, a general by the name of Maxentius raised the standard of revolt against him in Italy. At the head of an army of a hundred and eighty thousand foot, and eighteen thousand horse, he bade defiance to Constantine.

The emperor, roused to the highest pitch of indignation, impetuously crossed the British Channel, traversed Gaul, surmounted the Alps by the pass of Mont Cenis, and descended into the plains of Piedmont. He was within four hundred miles of Rome before Maxentius was aware that he had crossed the British Channel. In accordance with the barbaric customs of the times,

Constantine, as he approached Rome, ravaged the States which had sympathized in the revolt of Maxentius, and made slaves of all the people. The number of captives so increased, that hundreds of smiths were constantly employed in hammering the swords of the vanquished into fetters.

Maxentius was an inveterate pagan. In preparing for the conflict with Constantine, he had supplicated the aid of the Roman gods by the most gorgeous ceremonies and the most costly sacrifices. This led Constantine to feel that he must appeal to the God of the Christians for support. The following remarkable narrative is recorded by contemporary writers as given by Constantine himself.

Just before the final battle, Constantine was earnestly praying in his tent to that God whom his mother had revealed to him. While engaged in this act of devotion, he observed a remarkable appearance in the heavens; when there emerged, in wonderful distinctness and effulgence, a cross with this inscription,—"*In hoc vinces*" ("By this thou shalt conquer"). The miraculous apparition was seen by the whole army.


IN HOC SIGNO VINCES

Vision of the Cross

While Constantine was pondering the significance of this sign, night came on. In a dream, Christ appeared to the emperor with the same cross which he had seen in the heavens, and directed him to cause a banner to be made after that pattern, and, beneath that banner, to lead his armies to victory over their pagan foes.

However we may explain this event, whether we regard it as a miracle, or as the effect of the excited imagination of the emperor, this seems to be certain,—that Constantine himself made repeated and solemn declarations that he had seen this vision. He certainly did raise the banner of the cross,—the first time that banner was ever raised over his army. He taught his troops, pagans as most of them were, to seek the aid of the God of the Christians.

Eusebius, pastor of the church at Nicomedia, one of the most eloquent preachers and able writers of the age, records that he had this story of the miraculous appearance of the cross from the emperor himself; and that the emperor, conscious of the great importance of the statement, substantiated the narrative by the solemnity of an oath. Constantine could have had no motive to perjure himself; neither was such a crime in accordance with his character.

Constantine, much excited by the dream of the night, which enforced the remarkable vision of the day, rose with the earliest dawn, summoned his principal officers into his presence, and informed them of the standard which he wished to have immediately constructed.

A slender cross was then made,—a long pike-staff being traversed by a cross-bar. This was gilded, and incrusted with the most precious gems. A crown of gold and diamonds surmounted the staff. To this there was attached a small silken banner, richly embroidered with gold and jewels, and containing the monogram of Christ. Above and beneath this silken standard were images in gold of the emperor and his children. In addition to this imperial banner which rose over the tent of the emperor, there were other similar banners on a smaller scale constructed, one for each division of the army. The emperor had also imprinted upon his helmet an image of the cross, and one also upon the shield of every soldier. He summoned several bishops, or pastors, to his presence, that they might instruct him respecting the character of Jesus, his mission and his career. He obtained copies of the Sacred Scriptures, and read them with great care.[180]

The 28th of October of the year 312 had arrived. Constantine had with him but forty thousand troops; but they were veterans, and were inspired with the utmost confidence in their leader, who was one of the ablest of generals. When within nine miles of Rome, the emperor encountered the army of Maxentius strongly intrenched. A terrible battle ensued, and Maxentius was utterly routed with awful slaughter. In endeavoring to escape across the Tiber by the Milvian Bridge, he was crowded by the fugitives into the river. From the weight of his armor, he sank like lead. The next day his body was dragged from the mud; and the soldiers, having cut off his head, paraded it on a pole while Constantine entered Rome in triumph.

Maxentius had been terribly cruel. Even while the battle had been raging outside the walls, a mutiny had been excited against him in Rome. The senate, and all the people, and even the routed soldiers of Maxentius, received the conqueror with great enthusiasm. An arch of triumph

was reared to his honor, which remains with its costly ornaments and flattering inscription to the present day. A statue of Constantine is placed in one of the public squares of Rome, with a cross instead of a lance in his hand.

Licinius was emperor in the East. Constantine negotiated a matrimonial alliance between his sister Constantia and Licinius. The nuptials were celebrated in Rome. The emperor easily influenced Licinius to co-operate with him in issuing the following decree from the city of Milan:—

"I, Constantine the august, and I, Licinius the august, desirous of promoting in every way the public peace and prosperity, have deemed it one of our first duties to regulate the worship of Deity. We do therefore grant to Christians and all others the liberty to embrace such religion as each one may choose, that we may draw down the favor of Heaven upon us and upon our subjects. We have resolved not to deny to any one the liberty to embrace the Christian faith, or any religion which to him may seem best."

All over the empire the officers of government were ordered no longer to molest the Christians, but to protect them. The property which had been wrested from them was restored; their places of worship, which had been closed, were re-opened; and they were rendered eligible to all the offices of honor and emolument in the empire.

Licinius had established his capital at Constantinople, then called Byzantium. While he was absent at Rome to obtain his bride, Maximian in Asia crossed the Bosphorus with a powerful army in the depth of winter, and, after a siege of eleven days, captured Byzantium. Licinius, at the head of seventy thousand troops, marched to regain his capital. The two armies met about fifty miles west of the city. Maximian made a solemn vow to Jupiter, that, if he would give him the victory, he would put every Christian man, woman, and child within his domains to death, and thus extirpate the Christian name.

The night before the decisive battle, Licinius dreamed that an angel appeared to him, and called upon him immediately to arise, and to pray with his whole army to the supreme God, promising him the victory if he should do so. The angel also dictated to him the form of the prayer which he was to offer.

Licinius, awaking, immediately called for a secretary, and directed him to write down the words of the prayer which had been uttered by the angel. They were as follows:—

"Great God, we pray to thee. Holy God, we pray to thee. To thee we commend all justice. To thee we commend our safety. To thee we commend our subjects. To thee we commend our empire. It is through thee we live. It is through thee alone that we can be victorious or happy. Great and holy God, listen to our prayers. We reach forth our arms to thee. Great and holy God, grant our prayer."

Many copies of this prayer were taken, and distributed to the officers, so that every soldier might learn and repeat it. The zeal of the army, and its confidence in victory, were thus greatly augmented.

The battle took place on the first day of May, in the year 313. The two hosts met upon a wild and barren plain called Champserain. The soldiers of Licinius, upon a given signal, threw down their shields, uncovered their heads, and, raising their arms to the skies, repeated simultaneously the prayer which all had learned. Three times the prayer was repeated, the emperor and all the officers joining in the supplication.

The hostile army, drawn up at a little distance, heard with astonishment the confused noise of their voices, like the rush of many waters.

The soldiers of Licinius replaced their helmets and shields. The war-trumpet sounded; and with waving banners, and shouts of onset, the two armies rushed at each other. The slaughter of the army of Maximian was such as had scarcely ever been seen before. The soldiers of Licinius seemed endued with supernatural strength. They struck down the opposing ranks as the mower sweeps the grass with the scythe. Maximian, terror-stricken, threw aside his purple robes, and, dressing himself in the clothes of a slave, escaped across the strait. He fled with such precipitation, that in twenty-four hours he entered Nicomedia, a hundred and sixty miles from the battle-field. There he soon died, tortured by misery, pain, and remorse, after having in vain endeavored to kill himself.

Constantine now joined Licinius; and they re-issued in the East the same decree in favor of the Christians which they had already published in the West. Constantine even entreated the Christians to rebuild their churches. Thus wonderfully was persecution brought to an end. The Christians were astonished at these marvels of divine power. They were inspired with new energies. Large and beautiful churches rose upon the ruins of those which had been destroyed. The people, influenced by the imperial decree, crowded the churches.

The emperor wrote letters in favor of the Christians; invited the pastors to his table, and treated them with great distinction. He contributed liberally to the building and the ornamentation of the churches. The widows and orphans of the martyrs were regarded with especial favor. He gave dowries to the young girls, and married them to wealthy and distinguished men.

It was at this time that Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, the most learned man of his age, wrote his celebrated defence of Christianity, entitled “Demonstratio Evangelica.” In it he showed that the law of Moses was intended for a single people, occupying a limited territory; and that it was by no means applicable to the whole world; but that this law of Moses invited the world to a new alliance, which was to be formed of all peoples, under the gospel of Jesus Christ. He argued the vast superiority of Christ to Moses; declaring that the purity of his life proved that he was not an impostor, and that his miracles proved that he was not a mere man. He showed that no man could doubt the reality of these miracles, when one considered the simplicity of the disciples, their good faith, their disinterestedness, their perseverance even unto death, and the impossibility of imagining any motive they could have had to deceive the world.

He showed clearly that the Christians had not received the religion of Jesus through a blind faith and a rash credulity; but that, after serious examination, they were fully persuaded by substantial reasons, and were influenced by a well-founded judgment, to abandon the paganism in which they had been educated, and to embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ. Eusebius also wrote a history

of the Church, from the birth of Christ to that time. These works of this distinguished man have been invaluable to succeeding generations.

A nominal Christian emperor was now upon the throne at Rome. Paganism had received its death-blow. But a system the growth of centuries, interwoven into poetry, eloquence, statuary, and all the manners and customs of life, could not die easily. It lingered still for ages in its dying struggles, and made several convulsive efforts to obtain a new lease of life.

But the conversion of Constantine, a Roman emperor, to Christianity, was one of the most important events in the history of the Christian Church. It invested the new religion, in the eyes of the community, with dignity. It emboldened the timid, and inspired the resolute with new zeal. The pagans complained that nearly all were forsaking the worship of the gods, and joining themselves to the Christian party.

Constantine manifested a noble spirit of toleration. He made no attempt to suppress the rites of paganism by force. “Those,” he said in one of his edicts, “who are desirous of continuing slaves to the ancient superstition, have perfect liberty for the public exercise of their worship.”

Very resolutely he protected the Christians from outrage. Several Jews became converts to Christianity. The Jews persecuted them with vituperation and abuse. The emperor issued a decree, that any persons who should in future be guilty of a similar crime should be burned at the stake.

The Roman world was now, as we have mentioned, divided into two portions; and there were two emperors,—Constantine in the west, and Licinius in the east. Gradually rivalry sprang up between them. As Constantine had embraced Christianity, Licinius decided to rally to his support all the energies of paganism. He first caused gross slanders to be circulated against the Christian pastors.

He then forbade them to enter any house of the pagans, lest they should convert them. Next he forbade their holding any councils, or visiting each other’s churches. Growing more and more zealous in his persecution, he banished all Christians from his palace, sending several into exile, confiscating their property, and threatening them with death.

He forbade all women from meeting in the same assemblies or churches with the men, or from listening to any prayers or religious teachings from men. Finally he forbade the Christians from holding any religious meetings whatever in the cities: they were allowed to meet only in the open air in the country, the emperor saying mockingly, “that the open air of the fields was more healthy than the confined air of a room.”

When one enters upon a career of wickedness, he invariably presses on with ever-increasing impetuosity. Licinius now issued a decree, that every man in governmental employ should offer sacrifices to the pagan gods. The wrath of Licinius was directed mainly against the bishops, or pastors, in consequence of the affection which they manifested for Constantine. Many churches were torn down; others were shut up. Several bishops were put to death: their bodies, cut into

small fragments, were thrown into the water as food for fishes. The Christians in dismay began to fly from the cities and villages, and to seek refuge among the mountains.

In the city of Sébaste, in Armenia, there were in one of the regiments forty young men who were Christians. The governor, Agricola, ordered them to sacrifice to the idols. Unitedly and firmly they refused. The governor, having exhausted the power of promises and menaces, devised a new form of torture and death.

It was a cold climate, and mid-winter. In a night of freezing wind and bitter cold, these forty young men were exposed, with no clothing, upon a high scaffold swept by the wintry blast. By the side of the scaffold was a room, in which were glowing fires, ample clothing, and a warm bath. Any one who would renounce Christ might descend from the scaffold, and immediately enjoy all the comforts which warmth and clothing could give.

The young men encouraged each other, saying, that, after a few hours of suffering, they would all meet in a happy, heavenly home. One only of the number failed: in the intensity of his anguish he denied Christ, descended from the scaffold, and plunged into a warm bath, where he instantly died. One of the attendants in charge of the baths was so moved by this, that he immediately declared himself a Christian, and, divesting himself of his clothing, took his place upon the scaffold, by the side of the freezing disciples. The morning came. They were all nearly dead, with their extremities badly frozen. A huge funeral-pyre was erected: the still-breathing bodies were placed upon it; the torch was applied, and their bodies were burned to ashes.

One of the young men, of vigorous constitution, had not suffered so much as the rest from the cold. The executioners tried to persuade him to recant, and to save himself from the fire. His Christian mother stood by. Nerved by that sublime faith which seemed to inspire the early Christians in those days of martyrdom, she said,—

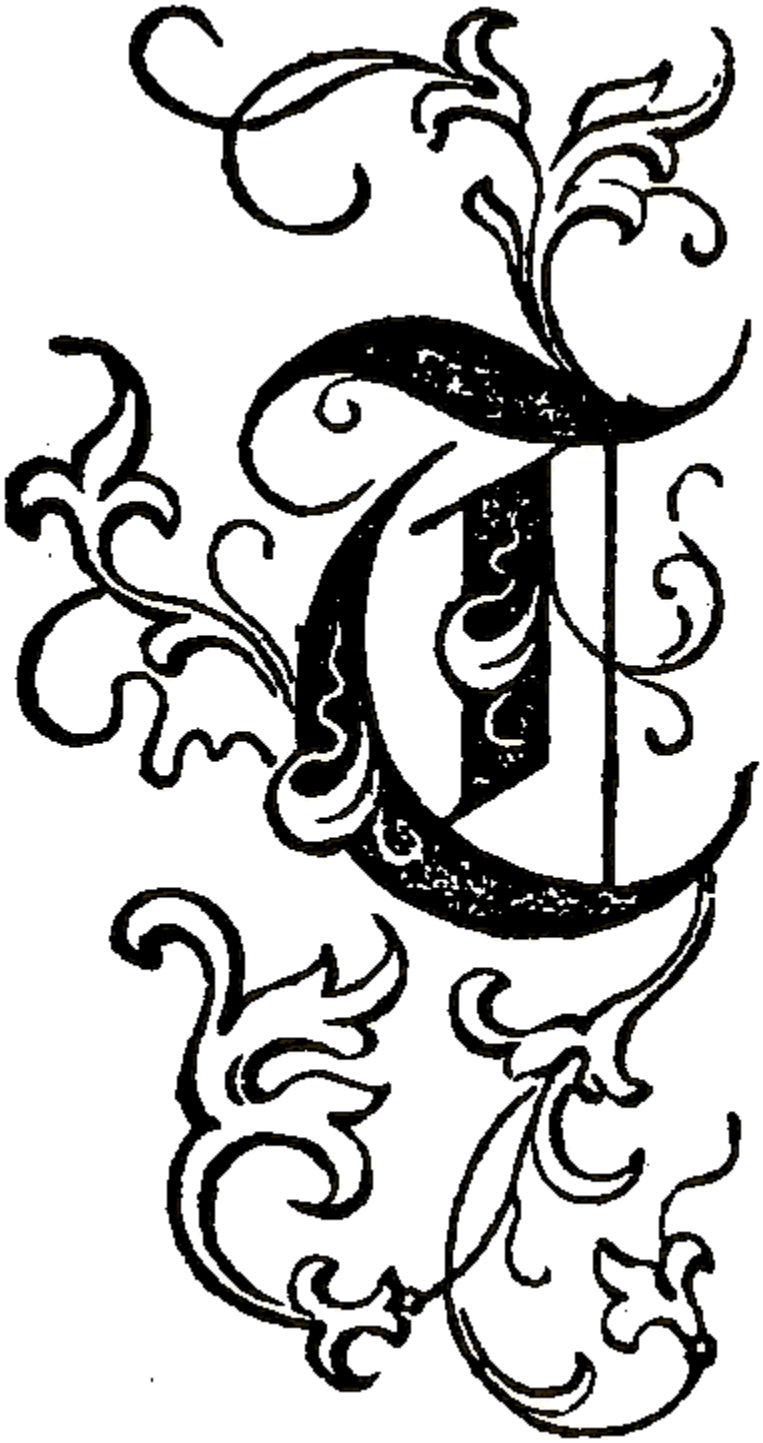
“Go, my son, and finish with your comrades this short journey, that you may not be one of the last to appear in the presence of your God.”

In the mean time, Constantine was more and more favoring the Christians. He issued edicts recommending the universal observance of the Lord’s day; he abolished all those laws which forbade Christians when dying to bequeath their property to the Church; and he forbade the *cross* from ever again being used as an instrument of punishment.

CHAPTER XVI.
THE CONVERSION OF CONSTANTINE.

The Arian Controversy.—Sanguinary Conflict between Paganism and Christianity.—Founding of Constantinople.—The Council of Nice.—Its Decision.—Duplicity of some of the Arians.—The Nicene Creed.—Tragic Scene in the life of Constantine.—His Penitence and true

Conversion.—His Baptism, and Reception into the Church.—Charles V.—The Emperor Napoleon I.



HE Arian controversy, which subsequently so distracted the Church, commenced about this time,—A. D. 318. Arias, a pastor of Alexandria, introduced the doctrine, that the Son was not

equal to the Father; that he was created by him, and that there consequently was a time when the Son did not exist.

This denial of the divinity of Christ, and consequently of the doctrine of the Trinity, involved, as it was deemed, the necessary denial of the stone which was regarded as the fundamental doctrine of Christianity,—the corner-stone upon which the whole edifice of the salvation of sinners was reared. The controversy greatly agitated the Church for ages, and has not fully subsided even to the present day.

As Constantine had embraced the cause of the Christians, and Licinius that of the pagan party, it is not strange that the two emperors should soon find themselves arrayed in arms against each other. On the 13th of July, 324, the two armies of the rival emperors met near Adrianople.[181] Licinius had a hundred and fifty thousand infantry and fifteen thousand cavalry: Constantine had a hundred and twenty thousand infantry and ten thousand cavalry. It was clearly understood on both sides that it was a battle between the two religions, as in olden time between God and Baal.

Constantine took with him as chaplains several Christian bishops. The banner of the cross, like the ancient ark of the covenant, was very conspicuously borne before the troops. Constantine set apart the day before the battle for a season of fasting and prayer with his whole army.

Licinius gathered around him the magicians of Egypt and the idolatrous priests. The most imposing sacrifices were offered to the pagan gods. He assembled all his officers in a grove filled with idols, and thus addressed them:—

“Behold, my friends, the gods of our fathers, whom we honor as we have been taught to do by them! Our adversary has abandoned them for I know not what strange God, whose infamous standard profanes his army. This battle will decide which of us is in error.

“Should the strange God of Constantine, whom we deride, give him the victory, notwithstanding our superiority in numbers, we shall be compelled to recognize him. If, on the contrary, our gods should give us the victory,—of which there can be no doubt,—we will utterly exterminate those wretches who have rejected them.”

Eusebius records this speech, saying that he received it from the lips of those who heard it.[182]

The battle raged fiercely from dawn till dark. In the night Licinius fled, leaving twenty thousand of his soldiers dead upon the field, and abandoning his camp and all his magazines. Gathering recruits as he retreated, he made another stand on the plains of Thrace. Constantine, who had vigorously pursued, again attacked him, and nearly annihilated his army. From a force of a hundred and thirty thousand men, scarcely three thousand escaped. Licinius fled to the mountains of Macedonia, and sued for peace. Constantine, out of regard to his sister Constantia, treated his brother-in-law generously. He, however, wrested from him nearly all his domains in Europe, leaving him sovereign only in Asia and Egypt.

Eight years of comparative tranquillity passed away, when the two emperors again found themselves in arms against each other. Licinius, though an infirm old man, displayed on the

occasion amazing energy. He assembled on the fields of Thrace a hundred and fifty thousand infantry and fifteen thousand horse. The Bosphorus and the Hellespont were crowded with his fleet of three hundred and fifty galleys, with three banks of oars. Constantine met them with a hundred and twenty thousand horse and foot and two hundred transports. There was another of those awful scenes of blood and woe called a battle. How faintly can imagination picture the scene!—two hundred and eighty-five thousand men hurling themselves against each other in the most desperate hand-to-hand fight; the cry of onset, the clangor of weapons, the shrieks of death. In a few hours, thirty thousand of the troops of Licinius were dead in their blood. The monarch himself, with the disordered remainder of his troops, fled wildly to Byzantium.

There was a long and cruel siege. Constantine was victorious: the world was again under one monarch, and he a nominal Christian. This extraordinary man issued a decree to his subjects, especially to those of his newly-conquered Eastern empire, assuring them of his conviction that the God of the Christians, the true and Almighty God, had given him the victory over the powers of paganism, in order that the worship of the true God might he universally diffused. He also issued the following prayer:—

"I invoke thy blessing, O Supreme God! Be gracious to all thy citizens of the Eastern provinces; bestow on them salvation through me, thy servant. And well may I ask this of the Lord of the universe, Holy God; for by the guidance of thy hand have I undertaken and accomplished salutary things. Thy banner, the cross, everywhere precedes my armies: whenever I advance against the enemy, I follow the cross, the symbol of thy power. Hence I consecrate to thee my soul imbued with love and fear. Sincerely I love thy name; and I venerate thy power, which thou hast revealed to me by so many proofs, and by which thou hast confirmed my faith."

This would be deemed extraordinary language to appear in the proclamation of any, even of the most Christian monarch of the present day. How much more remarkable must it have seemed coming from a Roman emperor just emerging from paganism, and addressed to the whole Roman world!

It was the wish of Constantine that Christianity might be the recognized religion of the empire, and that all his subjects might be united in the worship of the one true God. Still he favored perfect toleration. Yet Christianity was every way encouraged. Distinguished Christians were placed in the highest offices of state. Chaplains were appointed in the army. Though no compulsion was exercised, all the soldiers were invited and encouraged to attend public worship.

The city of Rome for a long time had ceased to be the only capital; and Constantine chose, with great sagacity, Byzantium, at the mouth of the Bosphorus, as the new capital, giving it the name of Constantinople, after himself. This imperial city enjoyed a very salubrious clime, and occupied a position, for the accumulation of wealth and the exercise of power, unsurpassed by that of any other spot upon the globe. It was situated upon an eminence which commanded an extensive view of the shores of Europe and Asia, with the beautiful Straits of the Bosphorus flowing down from the Black Sea on the north, emptying into the Sea of Marmora, and thence descending through the Dardanelles, or Hellespont, to the Mediterranean on the south. These were avenues of approach through which no foe could penetrate. The city was favored with a

harbor, called the Golden Horn, spacious and secure. The site of Constantinople seems to have been designed by Nature for the metropolis of universal European dominion.

The wealth, energy, and artistic genius of the whole Roman empire were immediately called into requisition to enlarge and beautify the new metropolis. The boundaries of the city were marked out fourteen miles in circumference. Almost incredible sums of money were expended in rearing the city walls, and in works of public utility and beauty. The forests which then frowned unbroken along the shores of the Euxine Sea afforded an inexhaustible supply of timber. A quarry of white marble, easily accessible, upon a neighboring island, furnished any desired amount of that important building-material.

The imperial palace soon rose in splendor which Rome had never surpassed. With its courts, gardens, porticoes, and baths, it covered several acres. The ancient cities of the empire, including Rome itself, were despoiled of their noble families, who were persuaded to remove to the new metropolis to add lustre to its society. Magnificent mansions were reared for them. The revenues of wide domains were assigned for the support of their dignity. Thus the splendors of decaying Rome upon the Tiber were eclipsed by the rising towers of Constantinople upon the Bosphorus.

Few men have been more warmly applauded, or more bitterly condemned, than Constantine. Fifteen centuries have passed away since his death, and still he is the subject of the most venomous denunciation and the most impassioned praise. He was in person tall, graceful, majestic, with features of the finest mould. Intellectually he was also highly endowed. None of the ordinary vices of the times stained his character. Conscious of his superior abilities, and sustained by the popular voice, he pursued a career to which we find no parallels in history.

The Arian controversy was now greatly agitating the Church. The emperor, having in vain endeavored to quiet it by a letter, decided to call an ecumenical council; that is, a general council of bishops from all parts of the world. It was a measure then without an example.

The city of Nice, one of the principal cities of Bithynia, was selected for the assembly. Three hundred and eighteen bishops met, besides a large number of subordinate ecclesiastics. The emperor defrayed the necessary expenses of the members of the council. The session was opened on the 19th of June, in the year of our Lord 325. The meeting was held in the large saloon of the palace, with benches arranged on either side for the bishops. The members of the council first entered, and silently took their seats: they were followed by a small group of the distinguished friends of the emperor. Then, upon a given signal, all rose, and the emperor himself came in. He was robed in imperial purple, and his gorgeous attire glistened with embroidery of gems and gold. A golden throne was prepared for him at the end of the hall, where he took his seat to preside over the deliberations.

One of the most prominent of the bishops, Eustache of Antioch, then rose, and, in the name of the council, thanked the emperor for all the favors he had conferred upon Christianity. The emperor briefly replied, expressing the joy he felt in presiding over such an assembly, and his hope that they might come to a perfectly harmonious result. He spoke in Latin, his native language. An interpreter repeated his words in Greek for the benefit of those who were most familiar with that language.

The council continued in session until the 25th of August,—sixty-seven days. The principal, the almost exclusive attention of the council was directed to the new doctrine of Arius,—that Christ, the Son, was not equal to the Father, but was created by him, and was subordinate to him. The decision of the council, called the Nicene Creed, rebuked, in the most emphatic terms, the Arian doctrine as heresy. Its language upon this point was as follows:—

"We believe in one only God, Father all-powerful, Creator of all things visible and invisible; and in one only Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son, engendered of the Father (that is to say, of the substance of the Father), God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten and not made, consubstantial with the Father, through whom every thing has been made in heaven and on earth; who for us men, and for our salvation, has descended from the skies, has become incarnate and made man, has suffered, rose on the third day, ascended to the skies, and will come to judge the living and the dead."

Thus words were heaped upon words, to express, beyond all possibility of doubt, the sense of the council of the entire equality of the Son with the Father. The Arians seemed disposed to accept the same language used by the Trinitarians, while they affixed a different signification to the words.

"The bishops," writes the Abbé Fleury, "seeing the dissimulation of the Arians, and their bad faith, were constrained, that they might express their meaning more unequivocally, to include in a single word the sense of the Scriptures, and to say that the Son is *consubstantial* with the Father, making use of the Greek word *homoousios*, which this dispute has since rendered so celebrated. They thus declared that the Son was not only *like* the Father, but the *same*,—*identical with him*."

All the bishops but two signed this creed. After some conference, those two signed also.

"It is said," writes Eusebius,—"and it is Philistorge, an Arian author, who says it,—that these two, Eusebius of Nicomedia, and Theognis of Nice, used fraud in their subscriptions, which they made together. They inserted the letter *i* in the word *homoousios*, so that it read *homoiousios*; which signifies *similar to*, not *identically the same*."

The doctrine of Arius was thus condemned, as contrary to the teachings of the Scriptures, by this numerous council of pastors from all parts of the then known world. Several other subjects of minor importance were discussed, and decided upon. The Holy Spirit was declared to be also, like the Son, equal with the Father, and identically the same. The emperor wrote a letter, which was published with the decrees of council, urging that they should be accepted in all the churches. "The results," said he, "of these sacred deliberations of the bishops, must be in accordance with the will of God." In the most severe terms he condemned the doctrine of Arius, commanding that his writings, wherever found, should be burned. It was a dark age. Toleration was but little known. The emperor even went to the unwarrantable length of saying,—

"Whoever shall conceal any thing which Arius has written, instead of delivering it up to be burned, shall be put to death immediately upon being taken."

Conversions from paganism were becoming frequent and numerous. Under the fostering care of the emperor, churches rose all over the land.

A tragic event in the life of this extraordinary man deserves record. His second wife was a beautiful woman named Fausta, much younger than himself. She was about the age of the emperor's very handsome son Crispus. Fausta fell in love with the young man. Virtuously he repelled her advances. It is written,—

"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned."

Fausta rushed to Constantine, and accused Crispus of atrocious crime. The imperial father, in the frenzy of his rage, ordered his innocent son to be led instantly to execution. His headless body was hardly in the tomb ere the truth of his wife's guilt and his son's innocence was made known to the unhappy emperor beyond all possibility of doubt. In the delirium of his anguish, he ordered Fausta to be drowned in her bath.

Henceforward, for Constantine, life was but a dismal day. He never recovered from the gloom of these events; and it is said that he was never known to smile again. For forty days he fasted, weeping and groaning, and denying himself all comforts. He erected a golden statue to Crispus, with this simple, pathetic inscription:—

"TO MY SON, WHOM I UNJUSTLY CONDEMNED."

The conversion of Constantine to Christianity was at first intellectual only, not the regeneration of the heart. He was a nominal Christian, believing in Christ. Still there is no evidence that he had been born again of the Holy Spirit, or that he had accepted Christ as his personal, atoning Saviour. The cares and sorrows of life tend to lead every thoughtful mind to Jesus. Constantine had become a world-weary, heart-broken old man, sixty-four years of age. Rapidly-increasing infirmities admonished him that he must soon appear before the judgment-seat of Christ,—before that Saviour whose authority his intellect had been constrained to recognize, but to whom, as yet, he had not fully surrendered his heart.

Deeply depressed in spirits, and sinking beneath his maladies, he retired to some warm springs in Asia. Death was slowly but steadily approaching. Constantine repaired to the church, and with tears and prayers, and deep searchings of soul, sought preparation to meet God. Having obtained, as he thought, assurance that his sins were forgiven, he assembled all the bishops of the neighboring churches in his palace, near the city of Nicomedia, and, with as much publicity as could be exercised without ostentation, confessed his Saviour before men, received the rite of baptism, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Eusebius, the renowned Bishop of Nicomedia, performed the rite of baptism, and administered the sacred elements. It is to the pen of this illustrious bishop that we are indebted for most of the incidents in relation to the religious history of Constantine. From this time until his death, which occurred soon after, he seemed to live as a sincere and devout follower of the Redeemer. Eusebius says, "Constantine, on receiving baptism, determined to govern himself henceforth, in the minutest particulars, by God's worthy laws of life."

The emperor died at Nicomedia on the 21st of May, in the year 337. He was sixty-four years of age, and had reigned thirty-one years. This was the longest reign of any Roman emperor since the days of Augustus Cæsar. His funeral was attended with all the marks of homage which love and gratitude and imperial power could confer.

How singular and how touching are these triumphs of Christianity! The poor benighted slave in his cheerless hut, bleeding and dying beneath the lash, finds in the religion of Jesus that peace and joy to which the monarch in his palace is often a stranger. The martyr in the dungeon, wan and wasted with material misery, with pallid lips sings hallelujahs to Him who hath redeemed him to God by his blood.

The imperial Constantine, robed in the purple of nearly universal empire, in the gorgeous palace of Nicomedia, surrounded with all the pomp and splendor of an Oriental monarch, finds his heart yearn for those consolations which the religion of Jesus alone can give. He bows his head to the water of baptism; he partakes of the sacred bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, solemnly, devoutly, tearfully; and finally, when sinking away in death, he breathes the prayer, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

A few centuries rolled away, and there was another monarch, the Emperor Charles V., whose sceptre ruled almost the whole known world. Weary of life, and oppressed with the sense of sin, he sought a religious retreat in the solitary Vale of Estremadura. In the cloisters of the Convent of St. Justus the abdicated emperor wept over his sins, and sought forgiveness through the atoning Saviour. He announced to the whole world his penitence, and his trust in Jesus. The regal mind, which had proudly stood untottering beneath the cares of universal empire, bowed in humble submission to the religion of Jesus, which alone can meet the yearnings of the humble and contrite soul.

A few centuries pass, and another emperor arises who attracts the gaze of the world. Neither Constantine nor Charles V. wielded a sceptre, which, in the elements of grandeur and power, surpassed that of Napoleon I. Look at the dethroned monarch, as, through the long agony of St. Helena, he sinks into the grave. He, before whose imperial will all Europe had bowed, was dying upon his miserable pallet at Longwood. That eagle eye was dimmed with tears, as, bolstered up in his bed, with penitence for sin, and avowed trust in the atoning Saviour, he received the emblems of that body which was broken, and that blood which was shed, for our sins: then, a peaceful penitent, surrendering himself to the arms of that Saviour who has said, "Whoso cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out," he fell asleep; we trust,

"Asleep in Jesus!—blessed sleep!

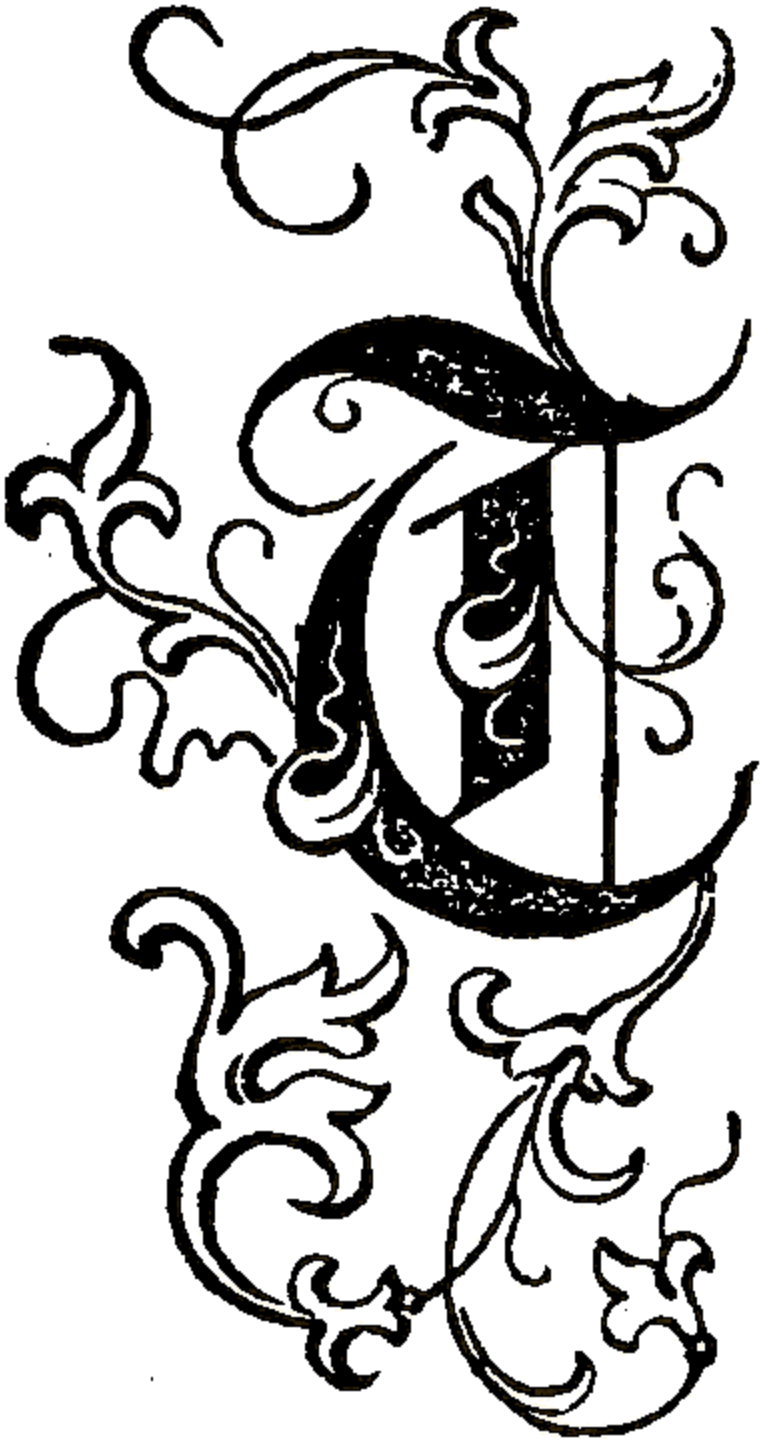
From which none ever wake to weep."

How signal are these triumphs of Christianity!—triumphs which fill so many pages of history and biography. How beautiful is this religion of Jesus in its adaptation to every conceivable condition and want of life! The Emperor Constantine, master of the world, with almost limitless power in his hand and boundless wealth in his lap, needs this religion just as much as the humblest slave or the feeblest child in his realms.

There is no royal road to heaven. Constantine, like all others, could only find peace by penitence for sin, the public acknowledgment of his faith in an atoning Saviour, and the prayerful consecration of himself to God. You and I, my readers, can find salvation only where Constantine found it. There is but one door through which we can enter the heavenly kingdom: that door is Christ.

CHAPTER XVII.
JULIAN THE APOSTATE.

The Devotion of Constantine to Christianity.—Constantius and the Barbarians.—Conspiracy of Magnentius.—The Decisive Battle.—Decay of Rome.—Fearful Retribution.—Noble Sentiments of the Bishop of Alexandria.—Death of Constantius.—Gallus and Julian.—Julian enthroned.—His Apostasy.—His Warfare against Christianity.—Unavailing Attempt to rebuild Jerusalem.—Persecution.—His Expedition to the East, and Painful Death.



HE Christian Emperor Constantine, during his reign, issued many earnest appeals to his subjects, entreating them to abandon paganism, and embrace Christianity. Heliopolis, in Phœnicia, was a heathen city, which had surrendered itself to the most degrading and abominable rites of idolatry. There was not a single known Christian in the city.

The emperor sent workmen to the place, and, at his own expense, erected a very beautiful church edifice. He then selected several clergymen of marked ability, and commissioned them to preach the gospel there. At the same time he placed in the hands of the pastors a large sum of money for the relief of the poor, saying,—

"I hope that the conversion of the souls of the pagans may be promoted by doing good to their bodies."

The most convincing evidence which the community in general can have of the reality of the Christian religion is to be found in the lives of its professors. When we compare the Christian Constantine with most of the pagan emperors who had gone before him, all must be impressed with the greatness of the change.

The palace is a dangerous place for the education and the training of children. Constantine had three sons, who bore severally the names of Constantine, Constantius, and Constans: they were all dissipated. Upon the death of their father, the empire was divided between them. The eldest son, Constantine, who was twenty-one years of age, had assigned to him Spain, Gaul (now France), and all the territory west of the Alps. Constantius, who was but twenty years old, took Asia and Egypt. Constans, who had attained but seventeen years, received, as his share, Italy and Africa.183

Constantine the father, with his vigorous arm, had held the barbarians in check. God had apparently heard his prayers, and had given him the victory over his enemies. His death was the signal for a general war. Constantius, in the East, was soon struggling against an inundation of Tartar tribes. The usual scenes of blood and misery ensued, as the hostile armies, now in surging waves of victory, now in the refluent billows of defeat, swept the doomed land.

While Constantius was thus engaged struggling against the barbarians on the plains of Asia, Constantine was plotting an expedition against his brother Constans, who was a mere boy, proud, conceited, and incompetent. But the race is not always to the swift. Constantine, with a large army, crossed the Julian Alps, and invaded Italy to wrest that kingdom from his brother. But Constans, whom Constantine had despised, had able generals. They lured Constantine into an ambush, routed his army, killed him, and annexed all his realms to the Western empire.

Soon after this, a sturdy general, Magnentius, formed a conspiracy in the army, killed young Constans, and was proclaimed emperor by the soldiers. All the Western and Central realms acknowledged him.

Constantius, from the East, put his veteran army in motion, and advanced from the plains of Mesopotamia to make war upon Magnentius and to avenge his brother's death. The whole then known world was thrown into commotion by this strife, which was to decide who should be master of this world. War and woe held high carnival. There were famine, pestilence, and death, smouldering towns, blood-stained fields covered with the slain, and despairing shrieks of widows and orphans.

The hostile armies met in vast numbers on the River Drave, not far from its entrance into the Danube. It was one of those battles which was to decide the fate of the world. Constantius, aware of the military ability of his antagonist, wisely, but not heroically, retired to the tower of a church where he could overlook the field. He left the conduct of the day to one of his veteran generals.

A fiercer battle than that which ensued was perhaps never fought. Roman and barbarian legions were intermingled, blending in the fight. The air was darkened with stones, arrows, and javelins. Clouds of horsemen, glittering in their polished armor, swept the field like moving statues of steel, trampling the dead and wounded beneath iron hoofs. Night terminated the conflict.

The army of Magnentius, overpowered by numbers, was almost annihilated. Fifty-four thousand were left dead upon the field. They sold their lives dearly. A still greater number of the troops of Constantius lay drenched in blood by their side. Over a hundred and twenty thousand perished in this one battle. Thus did Rome, in civil strife, devour her own children. Thus was the way opened for the irruption and triumph of the barbarians.

In the darkness of night, Magnentius, throwing aside his imperial mantle, mounted a fleet horse, and, accompanied by a few friends, attempted to escape through the Julian Alps. He reached the city of Aquileia, at the head of the Adriatic Sea, not far from the present city of Trieste. Here, amidst the pathless defiles of the mountains, he rallied his surviving troops around him, and made another stand.

But city after city abandoned his cause, and raised the banner of the victorious Constantius. He then fled to Gaul. Constantius vigorously pursued him. At length, hedged in on every side, the wretched Magnentius, in despair, terminated his life by falling upon his own sword. He thus obtained an easier death than he could have hoped for from his foe.

Thus was the whole Roman world again brought under the sway of a single sovereign. Constantius, the son of Constantine the Great, reigned without a rival, from the western shores of Britain to the River Tigris, and from the unexplored realms of Central Germany to the interior of Africa. But over these wide realms there was nowhere happiness or peace. The benevolence of God seemed to be thwarted by the wickedness of mankind.

The Goths, in merciless bands, were sweeping over Gaul, leaving the path behind them crimsoned with blood, and blackened with smouldering ruins. Germanic tribes, pitiless as wolves, were flocking across the Danube, darkening the air with the smoke of burning villages, and rending the skies with the shrieks of their victims. From the vast plains of Tartary, bands of shaggy monsters, fierce as the beasts which roamed their wilds, came rushing across the eastern frontier into the war-scathed empire. There was peace nowhere. Every day brought its battles and its woes.

The ancient city of Rome, no longer the capital of the empire, was now crumbling to decay. Constantius, from curiosity, visited it. He found the population still immense, and was received by the inhabitants with great enthusiasm. The imperial palace which he occupied had entertained no royal guest for thirty-two years. After spending a month in the city, admiring the monuments of genius and art which were spread over the seven hills, he was suddenly recalled to meet an

appalling irruption of the barbarians from the Danube. They were ravaging that wide and beautiful valley with every conceivable atrocity, and had already captured many thousand Romans,—men, women, and children,—whom they were carrying as slaves into their inaccessible wilds. Among these prisoners were men of the highest rank, and ladies of refinement and beauty.

Constantius placed himself at the head of a veteran army, and pursued the barbarians with such vigor as to compel them to drop many of their captives and much of their plunder, and to retreat in confusion to their forest-glades. He then turned his legions towards the east, and hurried along by forced marches towards the River Euphrates. Here a barbarian chieftain, called Sapor, was ravaging Mesopotamia with an army of a hundred thousand savage men from the wilds of Tartary.

The Roman emperor was prosecuting with great vigor this arduous campaign, when he heard the tidings of a revolt in Gaul, and that the army there had proclaimed its general as emperor. Burning with rage, he commenced a rapid march with his legions towards the west, when he was seized with violent sickness which arrested his steps. While languishing on a bed of pain, with the sceptre of imperial power crumbling in his hands, and death staring him in the face, the sins of his life rose appallingly before him. It soon became manifest that his earthly career was drawing to a close.

Constantius had been politically in favor of Christianity as the religion of the State. He regarded the pagan party as his political enemy. Destitute himself of the spirit of Christianity, he commenced the unrelenting persecution of his pagan adversaries, confiscating their property, and sending them to the rack, the dungeon, and the stake.

It is remarkable all through history, how, under the government of God, there seems to be developed a system of retribution. We ever meet that principle in the biography of individuals, and in the vicissitudes of nations. The pagans had persecuted the Christians with cruelty which demons could not have surpassed; and now God allowed a bad man, a Christian in name only, to torture the pagans with the same weapons which they had so pitilessly wielded. It is a fact, which every Christian will read with pleasure, that the true disciples of Jesus remonstrated against this retaliation. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, earnestly expostulating, wrote,—

“When men resort to persecution, it is evident that they want confidence in their own faith. Satan, because there is no truth in him, pays away with hatchet and sword. The Saviour is so gentle, that he only says, ‘Whosoever will, let him be my disciple.’ He forces none. He knocks at the door of the soul, and says, ‘Open to me, my sister.’ If the door is opened, he goes in. It is the character of true piety not to force, but to convince.”

The emperor was influenced by political considerations only. He regarded the pagan party simply as his antagonists, who sought his overthrow that they might grasp the reins of power. In co-operation with his court, he ordered the demolition of their temples, and directed all the energies of fire and sword to the demolition of the idolaters. Thus the flames of persecution, which once consumed the Christians, now blazed almost as fiercely in wrapping the pagans in their fiery folds.

Such was the condition of the world towards the close of the fourth century. Christianity had undermined all the temples of idolatry, and was enthroned as the established religion of the Roman empire. Ambitious men rallied about it as a great political power. Wicked men nominally embraced it as an essential step to worldly advancement. Christianity had thus, perhaps, more to fear from favoritism than from persecution. Unprincipled men, grasping at wealth and power, embraced Christianity merely as an instrument for the promotion of their own temporal aggrandizement. They hated its spiritual teachings, and endeavored to make it a religion of dead doctrines and of pompous ceremonies, rather than a rule to govern heart and life. They crucified Christianity while crowning it.

Lured by hopes of court favor and preferment, many who were still in heart pagans had hypocritically professed Christianity. Corruption thus crept into the Church. To conciliate the ignorant idolatrous populace, and to lure them into the Christian churches, the pomp and pageantry of pagan rites were introduced to supplant the unostentatious and simple ordinances of the gospel. Hence the origin of those theatric shows which are still the prominent features in the worship of the Church at Rome.

The death-bed of Constantius was that of an awakened and despairing sinner. He had been a wicked man. He had known his duty; for he had enjoyed the teachings of a Christian father. He had also heard the faithful preaching of the gospel.

Death brings all to the same level: the emperor and his humblest slave are upon an equality in that dread hour. As one reads the record of the remorse of the dying Constantius, he may say,—

“By many a death-bed I have been,

By many a sinner’s parting scene,

But never aught like this.”

As the moment drew near when his spirit, leaving the body, was to be transported to God’s bar, he trembled, and cried aloud for mercy. He gathered the most devout of the clergy around his bedside, and entreated them to pray for him.

Professing heart-felt repentance, the dying monarch implored that the rite of baptism and that of the Lord’s Supper might be administered to him. He received both of these ordinances, and still found but little peace. There are doubtless death-bed repentances; but they are very rare. It is only by living the life of the righteous that one can expect to know by blessed experience what it is “sweetly to fall asleep in Jesus.” Trembling, hoping, despairing, the imperial sinner passed away into the vast unknown.

How deep is the shade of melancholy which lingers around these sad recitals! Where now are those monarchs who once ruled the world? Where now are the soldiers of those thronging armies, which, fourteen centuries ago, swept the nations with billows of flame and blood?

And where shall we all be when a few more of these fleeting years shall have passed away? Is it wise to live for this world alone, when life is such a vapor, and when we are so soon to be ushered into the dread scenes of eternity? There is a voice, solemn as the grave, coming up to us from all these past ages, saying, "Prepare to meet thy God."

"The sun is but a spark of fire,

A transient meteor in the sky:

The soul, immortal as its Sire,

Shall never die."

The three sons of Constantine the Great were now dead. Neither of them left a male heir. Constantius had two cousins, of whom, during his whole life, he had always stood in great dread, lest they should aspire to the crown. He had caused them both to be arrested and imprisoned. Though thus held as captives, they were bound, as it were, with golden chains. A magnificent palace was assigned them, where they were provided with every luxury. They were, however, closely guarded, not being allowed to leave the spacious grounds of the palace. They were permitted to see such company only as the emperor would admit to their presence.

At length, Constantius had appointed Gallus, the elder of these brothers, viceroy of the Eastern empire. Gallus took up his residence at Antioch, and immediately released his brother Julian, and received him at his court. Constantius, in a fit of jealousy and rage, caused Gallus to be assassinated. He also re-arrested Julian, and confined him for seven months in a castle at Milan, where the imprisoned prince daily expected to meet the doom of his brother. Through the intercession of Eusebia, the wife of Constantius, the life of Julian was spared. He was sent into honorable exile to the city of Athens.

Julian had from childhood developed unusual scholarly and philosophic tastes. In the groves of the Academy at Athens he had devoted himself assiduously to the cultivation of Greek literature. When Constantius set out on his military expedition to the Euphrates, he named Julian as his heir to the throne, and also directed him to take charge of an army to beat back the barbarians who were ravaging the Valley of the Danube and the Rhine. As Julian, the man of books, the bashful, retiring scholar, received this appointment, he exclaimed, "O Plato, Plato! what a task for a philosopher!"

Julian, enamoured of the classic literature of Greece and Rome, had become an actual worshipper at the idolatrous shrines of the pagans. He loved poetic dreamings, and revelled in the wild mythology of his ancestors. He was just one of those men whom we now politely call *conservative men*, or, more irreverently, *old fogies*. He clung to ancient superstitions and rotten abuses, and was quite opposed to the innovations and reforms which Christianity would introduce.

But suddenly he developed traits of character which surprised every one. He entered the camp, shared the coarse food and the hardships of the meanest soldiers, and developed military ability

of the highest order. At Strasburg on the Rhine, in command of but thirteen thousand men, he assailed, and after a terrific battle put to flight, thirty-five thousand of the fiercest barbarians of the North. In the heat of this hard-fought battle, six hundred Roman cuirassiers, overpowered by the enemy, in a panic fled. Julian punished them by dressing them in women's robes, and marching them along his lines amidst the derision of the whole army.

He crossed the Danube with his heroic troops, and advanced boldly into the almost unknown regions of the north, cutting down the German tribes mercilessly before him. He liberated, and restored to their homes, twenty thousand Roman captives who had been carried off as slaves into these wilds.

Julian, on his return from this successful expedition, repaired to Paris for his winter quarters. Three centuries before this time, Julius Cæsar had found this now-renowned city a mere collection of fishermen's huts on a small island in the Seine. It was called Lutetia, which signified *The Place of Mire*. Since then the wretched little village had gradually increased. The small, marshy island had become entirely covered with houses. Two wooden bridges connected it with the shore. Julian was much pleased with the place, and built him a palace there.

Constantius was at this time in the Valley of the Euphrates, contending, as we have mentioned, against Sapor. He became jealous of the renown which Julian was acquiring. To weaken him, and thus to prevent his gaining any more victories, he ordered a large portion of his army to be withdrawn from Gaul, and sent to the Euphrates. Julian easily induced his soldiers to refuse to go. Clashing their weapons, they rallied around their commander, and, with loud huzzas, declared him to be their emperor.

Constantius, foaming with rage, put his army in motion to march to Gaul for the destruction of his rival. He had but reached Tarsus in Cilicia, the birthplace of the apostle Paul, when he died.

Such was the history of Julian before his assumption of the imperial diadem. He was at the head of his army, just entering the defiles of the Alps, hurrying to meet Constantius in battle, when he heard the welcome tidings of his death. Julian was then thirty-two years of age. With great eagerness he pressed on to Constantinople, where he was crowned emperor on the 11th of December, 361.

This extraordinary man now resolved to restore paganism, and to abolish and utterly annihilate Christianity. Publicly, and with imposing ceremonies, he made a renunciation of the Christian religion, and committed himself to the care of the pagan gods. As the conversion of the Emperor Constantine was one of the most signal events in the history of the Church, so was the apostasy of the Emperor Julian one of the memorable events in the history of mankind. A bolder act of infidelity and atheism has perhaps never been recorded in the annals of our race.

Even the infidel Gibbon, in allusion to it, and to the inveterate zeal with which Julian persecuted the Christians, quotes the soul-stirring words of Milton in reference to the apostate angel Satan, as from hell's dark domains he winged his flight for the seduction and ruin of our race:—

"So eagerly the Fiend

O’er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,

With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,

And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.”

Thus Julian pressed on inexorably till death, endeavoring to crush the religion of Jesus, and to reinstate the gorgeous but senseless mummeries of paganism. Intellectually, Julian was a remarkable man both in native vigor of mind and in rich mental culture. Those portions of his works which have descended to us prove that he possessed talent, wit, and rhetorical ease and fluency. It seems as though God allowed such men to assail Christianity, that it might be seen that the religion of Jesus could triumph over the highest intelligence combined with unlimited despotic power.

It is recorded that Julian possessed among other mental marvels such flexibility of thought and abstract power of attention, that he could employ his hand to write, his ear to listen, and his voice to dictate, at one and the same time. During the long winter evenings, he devoted himself with tireless malignity to writing a book against Christianity. This treatise left but little which modern unbelief could add.

To prove that paganism could make as good men as Christianity could make, Julian adopted the most austere morals, rigidly abstaining from those vices which characterized the times. He despised the pomp of royalty, discarded all luxuries, slept on the ground, and partook only of the most frugal fare. Indeed, he went so far in the spirit of eccentricity, fanaticism, and superstition, as to renounce the decencies of dress and the laws of cleanliness. He deemed it an act of piety to be filthy in person, and to allow vermin to devour him. In one of his letters, boasting of his superior piety, he descants with pride upon the length of his finger-nails, the dirtiness of his unwashed hands, and the shagginess and *populousness* of his beard.

Julian repaired and garnished the idol temples, and reinstated pagan worship in the palace with all conceivable splendor. Every effort was made to render idolatry fashionable and popular by gorgeous parades and court patronage. The emperor himself often officiated as a priest at these polluted shrines. The churches were robbed of their property. Christians were ejected from all lucrative and honorable offices, and their places supplied by pagans. The Christian schools were broken up, and the children of Christians denied all education save in the schools of the idolaters.

Jesus had predicted that the temple at Jerusalem should be destroyed, and should never again be rebuilt. Julian resolved to rebuild the temple, and thus prove Christ to be a false prophet. He endeavored to arouse the enthusiasm of the Jews in the undertaking, and called upon the pagan and Christian world to witness the accomplishment of the enterprise. Under these circumstances, he put forth all the energies which imperial power placed in his hands, and utterly, utterly failed.

The fact stands forth as one of the most remarkable in history, avowed by Christians, and admitted by pagans, that the Roman emperor Julian could not rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. It is stated by authority which no one has been able to controvert, that the workmen were terrified and driven away by phenomena which they certainly regarded as supernatural. Even infidelity

cannot subvert the testimony which sustains this narrative. The fact is recorded by Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, by the eloquent Chrysostom of Antioch, by the renowned Gregory Nazianzen, and by the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus, who declares that no one disputed the fact. He writes,—

"While Alphius, assisted by the governor of the province, urged with vigor and diligence the execution of the work, horrible balls of fire breaking out near the foundations, with frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place from time to time inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen; and the victorious element continuing in this manner, absolutely and resolutely bent, as it were, to drive them to a distance, the work was abandoned."

The statement is confirmed by many witnesses without contradiction. The fiercest storms beat upon the workmen. Bolts of lightning descended, destroying the works. Earthquakes shook the foundations, and volcanic flames burst up through the yawning crevices. The enterprise thus commenced in an impious spirit Julian was compelled to abandon. A well-read scholar, he knew that open persecution, imprisonment, torture, and death had utterly failed in arresting the progress of Christianity. He resolved to try the influence of insult and contempt. He hoped, by dooming the disciples of Jesus to ignorance and poverty, to paralyze their energies.

The rich and powerful pagans, as well as the low and vulgar, thus encouraged by the example of the king and the court, began to assail the Christians with new malignity. The disciples were everywhere insulted, persecuted, mobbed. To call one a Christian became the severest term of reproach.

Then, as now, there were vast multitudes who had no independent faith of their own. These unthinking ones drifted along with the popular current. Julian condescended himself to write lampoons against Christianity. In one of these, ridiculing the Christian doctrine, that any man who repents of sin and trusts in the Saviour may be forgiven, he represents, in a satire entitled "The Cæsars," his Christian uncle, the Emperor Constantine, going on a mission to the shades of the infernals. There the emperor gathers around him all the foul fiends of the pit, and, addressing them, says,—

"Whoever is a profligate, a murderer, a guilty man of any kind, let him come boldly to me: I will wash him in the water of baptism, and make him instantly pure. And should you fall into the same crime again, and only beat your breast, and say, 'I am sorry,' you shall again be perfectly holy."

It would be difficult anywhere to find a more interesting illustration of the fact, that there is often but a hair's breadth between the most debasing error and the most ennobling truth. The Christian doctrine of forgiveness through repentance, and trust in the atonement, which our Saviour has made, very nearly resembles this burlesque of the doctrine as uttered by Julian; and yet one is true, and the other false. Salvation through faith in the sufferings and death of Jesus is described by the pen of inspiration as "the mighty power of God" for the redemption of a lost world. What is the Christian doctrine of forgiveness through faith in Jesus? It is this:—

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has made atonement for all sin upon the cross of Calvary. Whoever now will abandon sin, trust in this Saviour, and earnestly and prayerfully commence the Christlike life, persevering to the end, shall be forgiven.

Now, how small is the *verbal* difference between this Christian doctrine of salvation through faith in an atoning Saviour and Julian's gross perversion of that only truth by which a sinner may be saved!

Some may wonder how it was possible for such a man as Julian, highly educated, and endowed by nature with great intellectual abilities, to advocate idol worship. The following extracts from a treatise of instructions which he drew up for the use of the pagan priests will show with how much plausibility such a man could argue in support of a bad cause:—

"Let no one accuse us," he says, "of holding the gods to be wood, stone, brass. When we look at the images of the gods, we ought not to see in them stone and wood, neither ought we to see the gods themselves.

"Whoever loves the emperor is pleased with beholding his image; whoever loves his child delights in the picture of his child. So whoever loves the gods looks with pleasure on their images, penetrated with awe towards those invisible beings who look down upon him."

This was the subtle philosophy of paganism. It was a philosophy which the unlettered populace did not attempt to comprehend. The masses of the people saw in their gods but wood, stone, and brass. In the worship of these idols, they had a religion which exerted no beneficial influence upon the morals or the heart. And here reflect for a moment upon a fact which no intelligent man will call in question.

In the whole history of the world, not an individual can be found who ever renounced infidelity, and sincerely embraced Christianity, who has not been made a better man by the change; and, on the other hand, not a single instance can be found of one who has renounced Christianity, and embraced infidelity, who has not been made a worse man by the change.

The Bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius, was one of the most illustrious men of his age. He was profoundly learned, a zealous Christian, an eloquent preacher, and one whose unblemished virtues commanded the respect of all. His success as a preacher exasperated Julian to the highest degree. Moreover, he was so beloved in Alexandria by his flock, and by the whole community, that it was not easy to strike him with the weapons of persecution. Even the governor of Alexandria hesitated to obey the decree of the infuriated emperor, and to drive Athanasius from a people by whom he was so highly respected and ardently beloved. At length, the emperor, receiving the tidings of some new conversions to Christianity through the eloquence of Athanasius, in his wrath wrote to the governor as follows:—

"I swear by the great Serapis, that, unless Athanasius is driven from Alexandria before December, you shall be severely punished. You know my temper. The contempt which is shown for the gods in Alexandria fills me with indignation. There is nothing I desire more than the

banishment of Athanasius. The abominable wretch! Through his preaching several Grecian ladies of high rank have become Christians, and have been baptized."

Athanasius was banished. After the death of Julian, he returned. This good old man, having attained the age of eighty years, died in the year 393. His life was one of the most eventful in the history of the Church. Nobly he fought the battle, and passed from the stern conflict to the victor's crown.

"Athanasius is one of the greatest men of whom the Church can boast. His deep mind, his noble heart, his invincible courage, his living faith, his unbounded benevolence, sincere humility, lofty eloquence, and strictly virtuous life, gained the honor and love of all."184

Julian had been thoroughly instructed in Christianity. He had been nominally a Christian. He had deliberately apostatized from the faith, with the determination to reinstate paganism. He consecrated all the resources of his brilliant mind to invest paganism with some of the intellectual grace and dignity of Christianity. To rescue paganism from the contempt into which it had fallen, he endeavored to introduce into the idol worship some of the moral elements which he had purloined from the teachings of Jesus. In one of the attacks of this envenomed foe upon Christianity, he unwittingly uttered the noblest eulogy upon the early Christians.

"As children," he wrote, "are coaxed with cake, so have these Christians enticed the poor to join them by kindness. Strangers they have secured by hospitality. By affecting brotherly love, great moral purity, and honoring their dead, they have won the multitude."

This is a beautiful tribute to the character of the early disciples of our Saviour from the pen of a foe. Julian gave the idolatrous priests the excellent advice, to endeavor to win the people back to the pagan shrines by the same measures. He distributed large sums of money among the priests to aid them in their work. In his earnest appeal to them, he says that the pagan poor obtained no assistance from their own people; while the Christians support all of their own poor, and assist also many of those who worship the gods.

The idols were reinstated, with great ceremonial pomp, in temples from which they had disappeared. The unstable populace, ever swinging to and fro, and naturally inclined to a religion which demanded no holiness either of heart or life, drifted over in large numbers to the pagan party. In one of Julian's appeals in behalf of the gods, he wrote,—

"I am a worshipper of the God of Abraham, who is *a* great and mighty God. You Christians do not follow Abraham: you erect no altars to his God, neither do you worship him as Abraham did with sacrifices."

Julian was perfectly willing to place the statue of Jehovah, as one of the gods, by the side of Jupiter and Bacchus and Diana and Venus. In his zeal against Christianity, he endeavored to revive ancient Judaism. He had invited the Jews to co-operate with him in his unavailing attempt to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. He even stooped to ignoble trickery, that he might put a moral compulsion upon the Christians to do homage to the idols.

The emperor's statue stood in all public places. It was customary for every one, in passing, to bow to it as to the emperor. Julian placed by the side of his statue, in closest proximity, several statues of the gods. Thus no one could respectfully bow the head to the image of the emperor without apparently doing homage to the idols. Not to bow to the statue of the emperor was a penal offence. Thus, and in many other ways too numerous to mention, Julian the apostate endeavored to reinstate paganism.

But all the artifice and imperial power of Julian could not restore a religion which had no elevated doctrines of theology, no ennobling principles of morality, which presented no lofty motives of action, and which unfolded no realms of a glorious immortality beyond the grave.

It is a necessity of man's nature that Christianity should finally triumph; for the religion of Jesus alone meets and satisfies the deepest yearnings of the human soul: it inspires to purity of life and to noble deeds as nothing else conceivable can inspire; it irradiates the realms beyond the grave with light and love and eternal joy; it is indeed good news,—glad tidings to all people.

Many attempts have been made to build up Christian virtues without Christian principles. All such efforts have failed. Human passion is so strong in its bias to sin, that it can be restrained by no power less potent than the gospel of Jesus Christ. The doctrine of the cross, though to the Jew a stumbling-block and to the Greek foolishness, is, to them that are saved, the wisdom of God and the power of God.

Every year, Julian grew more inveterate and malignant in his hostility to Christianity. The city of Antioch, in Syria, was the capital of Asia Minor. Paul had long and successfully preached the gospel in that city; and, under the Emperor Constantine, every vestige of paganism had disappeared from its temples and its streets. Julian made strenuous efforts to re-establish pagan rites in Antioch. He reared an idol temple in the vicinity of a Christian burying-ground, and then ordered the bodies of the Christians to be removed from their graves, as polluting the soil which the idol temple rendered sacred to the pagan gods.

The Christians met to transfer, in solemn procession, the remains of their honored dead to another burial-place. With united voice they chanted the ninety-seventh Psalm, which calls upon the heathen deities to prostrate themselves before the majesty of Jehovah:—

"The Lord reigneth: let the earth rejoice;

Let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.

Confounded be all they that serve graven images,

That boast themselves of idols.

Worship him, all ye gods."

Julian, in his exasperation, caused the arrest of several of the most prominent of these Christians, and sentenced them to the severest punishments. One young man, Theodosius, was subjected to

the utmost extremity of torture. He bore the agony with such fortitude as to excite the admiration of the pagans.

While Julian was thus breathing threatenings and slaughter against the Church, he was summoned to the frontiers of Persia, where a terrible invasion was menacing the empire. Persia had gradually risen into a military power which threatened to assume independence.

The country between the Euphrates and the Tigris, called Mesopotamia, or *between the rivers*, consisted of a region about five hundred miles long and fifty wide. It was an exceedingly fertile plain. The inhabitants called themselves Assyrians. Being wealthy and numerous, and far distant from the central power of Rome, they had not only raised the banner of revolt against the empire, but had sent large armies across the Euphrates, which ravaged the adjacent provinces, and returned enriched with plunder and slaves.

To bring these Assyrians again into subjection to the Roman power, Julian commenced a campaign against them. He took with him sixty-five thousand veteran Roman soldiers and a vast body of Scythian auxiliaries and roving Arabs. Eleven hundred barges crowded the Euphrates, to float down the stream the emperor's ponderous engines of war and his military supplies.

These boats, flat-bottomed, were easily converted into pontoon-bridges. As this immense army crossed the Euphrates, and entered Assyria, Julian gathered the whole body around him, and, with the most imposing rites of pagan religion, offered sacrifices to the pagan gods, appealing to them for aid in his enterprise. The appeal, for a time, seemed not to be in vain. Signal success accompanied his arms. City after city fell before the terrible power of the Roman legions. The trail of the victorious army was marked by smouldering ruins and blood.

Maogamalcha was one of the most important cities of this Assyrian realm. The wolfish Roman legions burst through the gates. Every conceivable outrage was inflicted upon the wretched inhabitants, and then they were consigned to indiscriminate massacre. The governor of the city was burned alive. There were in the suburbs three palaces, enriched with every thing which could minister to the pride of an Eastern monarch. Palaces, gardens, parks, statuary, paintings,—all were reduced to utter ruin.

The devastation of a palace creates much emotion; but it is the burning of the cottage, of which history takes such little notice, which fills the world with weeping and woe. Julian became such a terror to this whole region, that the painters of the nation represented him as a lion vomiting fire. And yet this same man seemed to have his appetites and passions under perfect control: he was quite free from many of those vices which degrade humanity; he shared all the hardships of the soldiers, often traversing with them, on foot, the burning plains.

But ere long the heathen gods, whose aid he had implored, and upon whom he had relied, seemed to abandon him. He was led to adopt the most insane measures, which could only result in his ruin. Troubles gathered thickly around him. He became so harassed with anxiety, that he could not sleep. One night, in troubled dreams, or in a revery, an angel appeared before him weeping, and covered with a funereal veil.

The superstitious monarch, affrighted, rushed from his tent. It was midnight. The camp was silent. The stars of Mesopotamia shone down sadly upon the apostate. Suddenly a brilliant meteor shot athwart the sky. To the superstitious pagan it was a menace from the god of war, indicating defeat.

At break of day the trumpets suddenly sounded, summoning the soldiers to repel an attack from the foe springing by surprise upon them. It was a sultry summer's morning: not a breath of air mitigated the overpowering heat. Julian, as he rushed to the field, laid aside his cuirass. A cloud of arrows and javelins fell upon him. A barbed javelin, lined with sharp inlaid blades of steel, grazed his arm, pierced his ribs, and, with its keen point, penetrated deeply the liver of the monarch. Frantic with pain, Julian seized the weapon, and endeavored to wrench it out. In the attempt, his hands were severely lacerated by the blades. Bleeding, fainting, he fell senseless to the ground.

His guards bore his inanimate body from the tumult of the battle to a neighboring tent. It was some time before he awoke to consciousness. The blood was gushing from the wound. It was evident to Julian, and to all others, that he must soon die. Grasping a handful of the crimson gore, he flung it madly toward the heavens, as if conscious that Jesus was reigning there, and exclaimed, "O Galilean! thou hast conquered."

The current of life was now fast ebbing, and death was manifestly near at hand. The wretched Julian made a faint attempt to rally to his support his pagan philosophy.

"I have lived," he said, "without any sin. I am not afraid to die. My soul is now to be absorbed into the ethereal substance of the universe."

Thus he died. At midnight, the spirit of Julian the apostate ascended to the judgment-seat of Christ. This sad record suggests a few obvious thoughts, to which we cannot refrain from directing the attention of our readers:—

1. The experience of eighteen centuries seems to prove that the final triumph of Christianity is certain. Every weapon raised against Christianity has failed. Argument has exhausted its most profound efforts. Persecution has in vain expended all its energies of torture, dungeons, flames, and death. Though there are men now who hate the religion of Jesus, who oppose it in every possible way,—some by direct hostility, and some by neglect,—still Christianity was never before so potent as now. Never before has it exerted so controlling an influence over the hearts and lives of men. Its power has steadily increased with the lapsing centuries.

2. It is obvious that the triumph of Christianity will not be a triumph in which all the enemies of Christianity will become its friends: its persistent enemies will perish. Satan may never be converted; but he will be held in chains. Julian died hurling defiance at Jesus Christ: he may forever remain thus obdurate; but he will never again have it in his power to persecute the Christians. Julian is immortal: he is as free now to love or hate as he was fourteen centuries ago. God never robs his intelligent creatures of the freedom of the will. But those who remain unrelenting can never be permitted to mar, by their malice, the joys of heaven.

3. There are in this world, probably in the wide universe of God, but two parties,—those who are the friends of Christ, and those who are not his friends. To this solemn truth we must ever come. “He that is not with me is against me,”185 says Christ. One’s love for Christ may not be fully developed; one’s rejection of Christ may exist in a latent state: but the germs of love or rejection are in every soul; every one is in heart either with Constantine or Julian.

4. Death is to all alike the same sublime event. There is something awful in the death of Julian. The tumult and the uproar of the battle rage around him; the blood gushes from his lacerated veins. But death itself is an event so sublime, that all its surroundings are of but little moment. It is the one thing, the one only thing, of which every person is sure. No matter when, where, or how, death comes: to leave this world forever; to go to the judgment-seat of Christ; to hear the sentence, “Welcome, ye blessed!” or “Depart, ye cursed!” and then to enter upon eternity, a happy spirit in heaven, or a lost spirit in hell,—this is an event so transcendently sublime, that its accidental accompaniments are scarcely worthy of a thought.

CHAPTER XVIII.
THE IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS OF JULIAN.

Anecdote.—Accession of Jovian.—His Character.—Christianity reinstated.—Death of Jovian.—Recall of Athanasius.—Wide Condemnation of Arianism.—Heroism of Jovian.—Valentinian and Valens.—Valentinian enthroned.—Valens in the East.—Barbarian Irruptions.—Reign of Theodosius.—Aspect of the Barbarians.—Rome captured by Alaric.—Character of Alaric.—His Death and Burial.—Remarkable Statement of Adolphus.—Attila the Hun.—Valentinian III.—Acadius.—Eloquence of Chrysostom.—His Banishment and Death.—Rise of Monasticism.



N reference to the death of Julian, an anecdote is related which has been deemed sufficiently authentic to be quoted in most ecclesiastical histories. At the very hour when Julian was dying in Mesopotamia, a pagan scorner, a thousand miles distant, in Antioch, banteringly inquired of a Christian, alluding to Jesus Christ, “What do you think the carpenter’s son is doing now?”

The Christian, as if prophetically witnessing the dying scene upon the Tigris, solemnly replied, "Jesus the Son of God, whom you scoffingly call the carpenter's son, is just now making a coffin."

After a few days, the tidings of Julian's death reached Antioch. The coincidence produced a powerful impression, and was regarded as a supernatural revelation. The death of Julian filled the hearts of pagans with dismay, and elated the Christians with gratitude and hope. The remains of Julian were hastily embalmed, to be transported to the shores of the Mediterranean; and his army, having been utterly routed, commenced a precipitate retreat. Famine devoured them; pestilence consumed them; the arrows and javelins of their triumphant, pursuing assailants strewed with gory corpses the path along which they fled. In the midst of this din of arms and these scenes of dismay, a few voices nominated Jovian, an officer of the imperial guard, as emperor.

Jovian was not merely nominally a Christian, but probably in heart a true disciple of Jesus Christ. He was a man alike majestic in character and stature. When thus nominated to assume the supreme command, he said sadly,—

"I cannot command idolaters. I am a Christian. The displeasure of God is even now falling upon us as an army of his enemies."

When troubles come, nearly all men are disposed to look to God for aid. The whole army was at that time in imminent peril of annihilation from famine, pestilence, and the sword. The officers in a body gathered around Jovian, and earnestly entreated him to accept the crown.

"We will all," they said, "be Christians. The reign of idolatry has been too short to efface the teachings of the good Constantine. Lead us, and we will return to the worship of the true God."

This noble young man was but thirty-two years of age. He had already given proof of remarkable courage, not only upon the field of battle, but in braving the wrath of Julian by refusing to bow down to idols. Jovian, having accepted the perilous office of emperor, soon succeeded in entering into a treaty of peace with the Persians, and in thus extricating the army from otherwise inevitable ruin.

It is refreshing to a spirit weary of the corruptions of mankind to contemplate the sincerity and honesty with which this extraordinary man conducted the most important affairs. For seven months the army was on its march, of fifteen hundred miles; from the Euphrates to Antioch. Jovian maintained the principles of true toleration: all men were allowed to worship as they pleased. The disastrous career of Julian had led to a general distrust of the heathen gods; and the moral influence of a Christian emperor, operating in a thousand ways, increased the disposition of the soldiers to abandon the idols, and to return to Christianity. Paganism had met with but a transient revival. Now, like a hideous dream of the night, it was passing away, to be revived no more forever. The sign of the cross, which Julian had effaced, was replaced upon the Roman banners.

The Arian controversy continued to agitate the Church. Arius had declared the Son to be, not the equal of the Father, but the first-born and highest in rank of all created beings. The Council of Nice, with almost perfect unanimity, had declared the doctrine of Arius to be new, unscriptural, and a dangerous heresy. Jovian adhered to the ancient faith as pronounced by the Council of Nice. He recalled the bishops who had been banished by Julian, and restored the church property which had been confiscated.

It will be remembered that Athanasius, the renowned Bishop of Alexandria, had been driven into exile by Julian, because, through his preaching, some Grecian ladies of noble birth had been converted and baptized. Jovian recalled the faithful Christian pastor by the following letter, which he published to the world:—

"To the most religious friend of God, Athanasius. As we admire beyond expression the sanctity of your life, in which shine forth marks of resemblance to the God of the universe, and your zeal for Jesus Christ our Saviour, we take you, venerable bishop, under our protection. You deserve it by the courage you have shown in the most painful labors and cruel persecutions. Return to the churches; feed the people of God; offer prayers for us; for we are persuaded that God will bestow upon us, and upon our fellow-Christians, his signal favors, if you afford us the assistance of your prayers."

The city of Alexandria, in Egypt, had been one of the strongholds of paganism. The pagan priests had represented to Julian that the presence of Athanasius in Alexandria rendered all their magic arts unavailing; that his preaching was causing the temples of the gods to be abandoned in the city and throughout all Egypt; and that, unless he were silenced, there would soon be left no worshippers of the gods. Athanasius, upon his restoration to his church in Alexandria, wrote a letter of thanks to Jovian, in which he says,—

"Be it known to you, emperor, beloved of God, that the doctrine established by the Council of Nice is preached in all the churches,—in those of Spain, of Britain, of Gaul; in all those of Italy, of Campania, of Dalmatia, of Mysia, of Macedonia, and of all Greece; in all those of Africa, of Sardinia, of Cyprus, of Crete, of Pamphylia, of Lycia, of Isauria; in all those of Egypt, of Libya, of Pontus, of Cappadocia, and of the neighboring countries; and those of the East, excepting a few there who follow the opinions of Arius. We know the faith of the churches by the effects produced; and we have received letters from them. The small number of those who are hostile to this faith is scarcely worthy of consideration in opposition to the sentiment of the entire Christian world."[186]

This is very striking testimony to the almost universal assent of the Church in that day to the equality of the Son with the Father. "The Council of Nice," writes Athanasius, "has not said merely that the Son is like the Father, or like God, but that he *is God*, and the *true God*. It says that he is consubstantial with the Father. And the bishops have not separated the Holy Spirit as a stranger from the Father and the Son; but they have glorified him with the Father and the Son, because the Holy Trinity has but one and the same divinity."[187]

Gregory, Bishop of Nazianzen, wrote a very interesting circular letter to all Christians, giving them truly Christian counsel as to the course they should pursue in the new and almost miraculous change in their affairs.

"Let us show our gratitude to God," he writes, "by purity of soul, by inward peace, by holy thoughts, and a spiritual life. Let us not avenge ourselves upon the pagans, but win them by our gentleness and love. Let him who has suffered most from the pagans refer them to the judgment of God. Let us not think of confiscating their goods, of dragging them before the tribunals, or of inflicting upon them any of the woes which they have inflicted upon us. Let us render them more humane, if it be possible, by our example."188

The army had passed by Tarsus, the birthplace of Paul, where the remains of Julian were consigned to the tomb, and had reached the village of Dadastane, on the confines of Galatia and Bithynia, when Jovian died, in the night of the 17th of February, 364, within about three hundred miles of Constantinople. He was found one morning dead in his bed; having been accidentally stifled, it is supposed, by the fumes of charcoal in his apartment. His broken-hearted wife, who was hastening to greet her husband, met his remains on the road. With the anguish and tears of widowhood, bitter then as now, she accompanied them to the tomb in Constantinople. He was but thirty-three years of age, and had reigned but eight months. The main body of the army, being a little in advance, had then reached Nice, the capital of Bithynia. As soon as the soldiers heard of the death of Jovian, they unanimously elected Valentinian, who was captain of the imperial guard, his successor. Valentinian was also a Christian. The following anecdote illustrates the nobility of his character:—

It was the custom of Julian on special occasions to distribute gifts to those who had merited them. The apostate emperor, who would stoop to every kind of trickery to lure the soldiers, even unconsciously, to pay homage to the idol gods, on one of these occasions, when about to bestow rewards, had an altar erected before him, upon which were placed glowing coals. By the side of the altar stood a table covered with frankincense.

As a part of the ceremony, each one who was to receive an imperial gift was to sprinkle a little of the incense upon the coals, from which a fragrant cloud would gracefully arise. It was a stratagem to lead the Christians to offer incense to the gods, without being conscious that they were doing so. Julian thus endeavored to entrap three of his leading Christian generals,—Jovian (who became his successor), Valentinian, and Valens.

After burning the frankincense, and receiving the imperial gift, Valentinian returned to his tent. As he sat down to partake of some refreshments, he, according to his custom, asked a blessing in the name of Jesus Christ. A pagan companion, observing this, exclaimed, with real or affected astonishment,—

"How is this? Do you invoke the name of Christ after having publicly renounced him?"

"What do you mean?" inquired Valentinian, alarmed and surprised.

"I mean," was the reply, "that you have just offered incense to the gods upon one of their altars."

Valentinian immediately rose, and, hastening to the presence of the emperor, laid down at his feet the precious gifts he had received, saying,—

"Sire, I am a Christian. I wish all the world to know it. I have not intentionally renounced my Saviour, Jesus Christ. If my hand has erred, my heart has not followed it: the emperor has deceived me. I renounce the act of impiety, and am ready to make expiation with my blood."

Jovian, and Valentinian's brother Valens, did the same with their gifts. The emperor was exasperated. In the first impulse of his rage, he ordered them to be led immediately to execution. As the executioner stood ready with his heavy sword to sever their heads from their bodies, and the victims were upon their knees to receive the death-blow, a herald hastily approached, and arrested the execution. The emperor, upon reflection, deemed it not wise for such an offence to consign to death three of the best and most influential officers in his army.

Another characteristic anecdote is related of Valentinian, worthy of record. He was commander of the imperial guard. As such, it was necessary for him, upon all important occasions, to be at the side of the emperor. At one time, when Julian, in performance of some rites of the pagan religion, was entering the Temple of the Goddess of Fortune, dancing in religious homage, two priests stood, one on each side of the vestibule, to sprinkle the emperor with holy-water. This was a pagan rite which the Papal Church has transferred from the temples of idolatry to the sanctuaries of Christ.

A drop of this water fell upon the dress of Valentinian. Turning to one of the priests, he said, "You have sullied my garments." Immediately he tore from his robe the portion upon which the water consecrated to idols had fallen.

The emperor was so irritated, that for a time he banished him from his command. It is said that Julian would not put him to death, because, with strange inconsistency, he was unwilling that he should wear the crown of martyrdom. Such was the character of the Christian Valentinian, upon whose shoulders the robes of imperial purple were now placed.

Valentinian seems to have proved himself, in all respects, worthy of his high position. He was majestic in stature, commanding in intellect, and of irreproachable purity of morals. He was crowned by the army at Nice, in Bithynia; his brother Valens receiving from him the appointment of assistant emperor. The Eastern empire, from the Danube to the confines of Persia, was assigned to Valens, with Constantinople for his capital. Valentinian took charge of the Western empire, selecting the city of Milan for his metropolis.

Still the barbarian hordes from all directions were crowding upon the crumbling Roman empire. While Valentinian was struggling against their locust legions in the West, Valens was making an equally desperate and equally unavailing struggle against them in the East. The Huns came howling on from the wilds of Tartary, fierce as the wolves, and in numbers which no man could count. They could not be resisted. In an impetuous flood they surged along, till all the plains of Greece were swept by the inundation. Even the Goths fled in terror before these shaggy and merciless warriors.

Valens entered into an alliance with the Goths, hoping by their aid to resist the still more dreaded Huns. He allowed his barbarian allies to take possession of all the waste lands of Thrace. Availing themselves of this advantageous base of operations, the treacherous Goths ravaged the whole country to the shores of the Adriatic, menacing even Italy with their arms. They laid siege to both the cities of Adrianople and Constantinople. Terror reigned everywhere. Tears and blood, through man's demoniac ferocity, deluged this whole world. In an awful battle before the walls of Adrianople, the army of Valens was cut to pieces. Valens himself perished upon the bloody field. How little can we imagine, seated by our peaceful firesides, the dimensions of that wail of misery ascending from a whole army perishing beneath the sabres and the battle-axes of merciless barbarians! This is indeed a lost world. Surely history proves that man is a depraved animal. How happy might this world have been had man been the friend, instead of the foe, of his brother-man!

For twelve years Valentinian was engaged in almost an incessant battle. The Picts and Scots were rushing down upon Britain from the mountains of Caledonia. All along the Rhine and the Danube, tribes of uncouth names and habits were desolating, in plundering bands, every unprotected region. Worn down with care, toil, and sorrow, Valentinian fell a victim to a sudden attack of apoplexy in the year 375, in the fifty-fourth year of his age.

Valentinian had a son, Gratian, who, at the time of his father's death, was but seventeen years old. He succeeded his father on the throne of the Western empire, without inheriting either his virtues or his energy. Retiring to Paris, the boy-emperor surrendered himself to voluptuous indulgence. Discontent created an insurrection, which was led by Maximus, Governor of Britain. Gratian, abandoned by his troops, fled to Lyons, where he was overtaken and slain.

A Christian general by the name of Theodosius had succeeded Valens in the East. Difficulties had arisen between Theodosius and Maximus. War ensued. Maximus was slain. Valentinian, a mere boy, younger brother of Gratian, was placed upon the throne of the Western empire. The poor child was almost immediately assassinated. Theodosius marched to the West to avenge his death, and assumed the government of the whole united empire of the East and of the West. But he was a sick man, and the hand of death was already upon him: in less than four months he breathed his last at Milan.

Theodosius was a zealous Christian: in character he was one of the purest of men, and was earnestly devoted to the welfare of his realms; but his reign was sullied by intolerance,—doubtless conscientious, but none the less bigoted. He issued severe edicts against those Christians who swerved from the established faith as enunciated by the Council of Nice. He unrelentingly demolished or closed all the temples of paganism. He instituted that office of inquisitors of the faith, which, revived in subsequent centuries, became the fruitful source of so much crime and woe.

It was indeed a dark day, in the year of our Lord 379, when Theodosius ascended the throne. There was no stable government anywhere, no protection from violence. The Roman power, which, oppressive as it had been, was far better than anarchy, was now but a crumbling ruin, which no human energy or skill could rebuild.

As we look back through the gloomy centuries upon these dim, tumultuous scenes, a new vision of appalling grandeur rises before the eye. Alaric—the world-renowned Alaric the Goth—appears in the arena at the head of his fierce legions. Like gaunt and famished beasts of prey, his savage hordes swept over Greece, entered Italy, and besieged Milan. These barbarians were a short, chunky, broad-shouldered race of men, of herculean strength. A contemporary writer thus describes their general aspect:—

"Their high cheek-bones, and small, twinkling eyes, gave them a savage and cruel expression, which was increased by their want of nose; for the only visible appearance of that organ consisted of two holes sunk in the square expanse of their faces."

Onward, ever onward, rolled this flood of hideous and pitiless foes. While this inundation was sweeping along from the East, another similar flood came surging down from the North: the two torrents, blending, eddied around the walls of Rome. For six hundred years the city of Rome had not been insulted by the presence of a foreign foe.

Theodosius was the child of Christian parents. At the commencement of his reign, he was but nominally a Christian; that is, he was not a pagan, but had intellectually given his assent to the religion of Jesus. He had not, however, at that time, publicly united with the Church. The perils which were menacing the State, and a severe fit of sickness with which he was seized at Thessalonica, seem to have led him to feel the necessity of personal religion. The emperor sent for Ascole, the pastor of the church in Thessalonica, and, having ascertained that he cordially accepted the doctrines of the Council of Nice, received from him the rite of baptism, and thus enrolled himself among the disciples of Jesus. Notwithstanding the faults of the Christian Emperor Theodosius,—faults to be attributed to the times rather than to the individual,—history has pronounced him one of the purest and noblest monarchs who ever occupied a throne.

Upon the death of Theodosius at Milan, the empire was divided between his two sons: Arcadius was crowned in the East, Honorius in the West. The Eastern empire embraced Thrace, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt: the Western empire included Italy, Africa, Gaul, Spain, Britain, and the Danubian provinces. The Western empire was now much the weaker. Rome had ceased to be the metropolis, and enjoyed only the renown of its former greatness. Milan had become the new capital.

Alaric, with his fierce legions, after a short siege of Milan, was driven back. The timid Honorius was so alarmed by the invasion, that, with his court, he retired from Milan to Ravenna. Alaric, at the head of a hundred thousand men, contemptuously passing by Ravenna, commenced the siege of Rome. The walls surrounding the city still remained in their massive strength. Famine compelled the citizens to purchase a temporary peace at the price of the payment of a vast sum of money, and the surrender of many of the leading citizens as hostages.

When the delegation from the Roman senate, with the offer to surrender, was introduced to Alaric, the members of the delegation ventured to state rather menacingly, that, if Alaric refused them honorable terms, he would rouse against him an innumerable people animated by despair. Alaric replied with a scornful laugh,—

“The thicker the grass, the easier it is mown.”

He then assigned the only terms upon which he would retire. He demanded *all* the gold and silver in the city, whether it were the property of the State or of individuals; then all the rich and precious movables; then all the slaves who had been captured from the barbarians.

“If such, O king! are your demands,” the ministers replied, “what do you intend to leave to us?”

“Your lives,” the conqueror haughtily replied. Still Alaric somewhat abated the rigor of these demands.

There is but little reliance to be placed in barbarian faith. Alaric and his fierce hordes were soon again encamped before the walls of the imperial city. There were forty thousand slaves (white slaves), the victims of Roman rapacity, within the walls. They conspired with the invaders. At midnight there was a servile insurrection: the gates were thrown open, and the clangor of rushing barbarians resounded through the streets.

It is not in the power of human imagination to conceive the horrors of a city sacked at midnight,—a city of more than a million of inhabitants, men, women, and children, at the mercy of a savage foe.189 The slaves were glad of a chance to avenge the wrongs of ages. They were of the same race with their masters. The hour of vengeance had tolled. The Romans had thoroughly instructed them and their barbarian confederates in all the arts of cruelty and lust. God alone can comprehend the scenes which were enacted during that awful night. The most venerable and costly memorials of the past were surrendered to conflagration: large portions of the city were consumed.

For six days the Goths held the metropolis; then, reeling in intoxication, encumbered with spoil, and dragging after them their captives,—the young men to groom their horses; the maidens, daughters of Roman senators and nobles, to till their harems,—they rioted along the Appian Way, and surged over all Southern Italy, giving loose to every depraved desire.

It is thus that God punishes guilty nations. Though sentence against an evil work may not be speedily executed, the hour of recompense is sure to come. For four years the whole of the south of Italy was subject to the barbarians. Roman philosophers had long argued that it was right for the stronger nations to enslave the weaker. The Goths were now the stronger, and the Romans the weaker; and the Romans were compelled to drain to the dregs the cup which their own hands had mingled.

Men of senatorial dignity, and matrons of illustrious birth, became the menial servants of half-naked savages. These burly barbarians stretched their hairy limbs beneath the shade of palm-trees; and young men and maidens born in palaces washed their feet, and presented them Falernian wine in golden goblets.

While Alaric was thus ravaging Italy, the Emperor Honorius was ignominiously besieged behind the walls of Ravenna. The old Roman empire had so far crumbled away, that Italy alone remained even nominally subject to the emperor. Even large portions of Italy were in the hands

of the foe. Persia, Egypt, Turkey, Germany, France, Spain, England, all overrun by barbarians, became the cradles of those monarchies which are flourishing or decaying in those regions at the present day.

Alaric the Goth was one of the most remarkable of men. His native ferocity was strangely mitigated by profound respect for Christianity. Many of the Gothic soldiers had also, at least nominally, adopted the Christian faith. When Rome was taken by storm, Alaric exhorted his soldiers to respect the churches as inviolable sanctuaries. A Goth burst into the house of an aged woman who had devoted herself to the service of the Church. Upon his demanding her gold and silver, she conducted him to a closet of massive plate.

"These," said she, "are consecrated vessels belonging to the Church of St. Peter. If you touch them, the sacrilegious deed will remain upon your conscience."

The barbarian was overawed, and sent a messenger to inform the king of the treasure he had discovered. Alaric sent an order that the sacred vessels should be immediately transported, under guard, to the church of the apostle.

"From the extremity, perhaps, of the Quirinal Hill to the distant quarters of the Vatican, a numerous detachment of Goths, marching in order of battle through the principal streets, protected with glittering arms the long train of their devout companions, who bore aloft on their heads the sacred vessels of gold and silver; and the martial shouts of the barbarians were mingled with the sound of religious psalmody."[190]

Augustine, in his celebrated work entitled "The City of God," refers with much gratification to this memorable interposition of God in behalf of his Church. Alaric died just as he was entering upon an expedition for the conquest of Syria, having been in possession of Italy for four years.

"The ferocious character of the barbarians," writes Gibbon, "was displayed in the funeral of a hero whose valor and fortune they celebrated with mournful applause. By the labor of a captive multitude, they forcibly diverted the course of the Busentius, a small river that washes the walls of Consentia. The royal sepulchre, adorned with the splendid spoils and trophies of Rome, was constructed in the vacant bed. The waters were then returned to their natural channel; and the secret spot where the remains of Alaric had been deposited was forever concealed by the inhuman massacre of the prisoners who had been employed to execute the work."

Adolphus, brother-in-law of Alaric, succeeded, by the vote of the Gothic army, to the supreme command. He was also a remarkable man. His intelligence and moral worth may be inferred from the following remarks which he made to a citizen of Narbonne. The conversation was related by this citizen to St. Jerome, in the presence of the historian Orosius.

"In the full confidence of valor and victory," said Adolphus, "I once aspired to change the face of the universe; to obliterate the name of Rome; to erect on its ruins the dominion of the Goths; and to acquire, like Augustus, the immortal fame of the founder of a new empire. By repeated experiments, I was gradually convinced that laws are essentially necessary to maintain and regulate a well-constituted State, and that the fierce, intractable humor of the Goths was

incapable of bearing the salutary yoke of laws and civil government. From that moment I proposed to myself a different object of glory and ambition; and it is now my sincere wish that the gratitude of future ages should acknowledge the merit of a stranger who employed the sword of the Goth, not to subvert, but to restore and maintain, the prosperity of the Roman empire."

In accordance with these views, Adolphus opened negotiations with Honorius, the Roman emperor, who was besieged at Ravenna. He entered into an alliance with him to assist in driving out the barbarians who were on the other side of the Alps. He even sought and obtained in marriage Placidia, a Christian lady, the daughter of Theodosius, and sister of Honorius. This illustrious woman, whose adventurous life we cannot here record, had been highly educated at Constantinople. The bride was young and lovely: the bridegroom was also remarkable for dignity of bearing and manly beauty. Thus the daughter of the decaying house of Rome was wedded to the chieftain of a new dynasty just emerging into fame and power.

The nuptials were conducted with great splendor at Narbonne, in Gaul. Fifty beautiful boys in silken robes presented the bride each two vases,—one filled with golden coin, and the other with precious gems. Even these treasures formed but a very inconsiderable portion of the gifts which were lavished upon Placidia. Adolphus, assuming the character of a Roman general, marched from Italy into Gaul. Driving out the barbarians there, he took possession of the whole country, from the ocean to the Mediterranean. Here Adolphus ere long died, and Placidia returned to her brother Honorius at Ravenna. After an inglorious reign of twenty-eight years, the timid and imbecile Honorius died at Ravenna. His secretary, John, seized the falling sceptre. Another party advocated the claims of the son of the emperor's widowed sister Placidia, a child of but six years. John was beheaded. The boy, as Valentinian III., was declared emperor. Placidia was appointed regent.

Attila the Hun, whose devastations have procured for him the designation of "the Scourge of God," now appears prominent upon the scene. At the head of half a million of men, he swept over Gaul and Italy, creating misery which no tongue can adequately tell: it would seem that humanity could scarcely have survived such billows of unutterable woe. All Venetia was ravaged with unsparing slaughter. A portion of the wretched inhabitants, flying in terror before Attila, escaped to a number of marshy islands, but a few feet above the water, at the extremity of the Adriatic Sea. Here they laid the foundations of Venice, the "Queen of the Adriatic,"—that city of the sea, which subsequently almost outvied Rome in opulence, power, and splendor, and whose magnificence, even in decay, attracts tourists from all parts of the world. "The grass never grows," said this demoniac warrior, "where my horse has once placed his hoof."

Valentinian III., having attained early manhood, developed an exceedingly profligate character. The Eastern and Western empires were now permanently divided, never again to be united. Arcadius was emperor at Constantinople. Kings generally contrive to live in splendor, whatever may be the poverty of their subjects. St. Chrysostom, in one of his sermons, speaks reproachfully of the splendor in which Arcadius indulged.

"The emperor," says he, "wears on his head either a diadem or a crown of gold, decorated with precious stones of inestimable value. These ornaments and his purple garments are reserved for his sacred person alone. His robes of silk are embroidered with the figures of golden dragons.

His throne is of massive gold. Whenever he appears in public, he is surrounded by his courtiers, his guards, and his attendants. Their spears, their shields, their cuirasses, the bridles and trappings of their horses, have either the substance or the appearance of gold.

"The two mules that draw the chariot of the monarch are perfectly white, and shining all over with gold. The chariot, itself of pure and solid gold, attracts the admiration of the spectators, who contemplate the purple curtains, the snowy carpet, the size of the precious stones, and the resplendent plates of gold, which glitter as they are agitated by the motion of the carriage."

St. Chrysostom, from whose works the above extracts are taken, was one of the most distinguished ecclesiastics and preachers of that day. He had been pastor of the church in Antioch, where, in substitution of his true name of John, he had by his eloquence acquired the epithet of Chrysostom, or "the Golden Mouth." His renown secured for him the unanimous call of the court, the clergy, and the people, to the archbishopric of Constantinople.

Chrysostom was of noble birth, of ardent piety, highly educated, and was one of the most attractive and powerful of pulpit orators. He had been educated for the law. Becoming a Christian, he devoted himself to the gospel ministry. He lived humbly, devoting the revenues of the bishopric to objects of benevolence. His eloquent discourses, couched in copious and elegant language, and enlivened by an inexhaustible fund of illustrations, drew crowds even from the theatre and the circus. Nearly a thousand of his sermons are preserved. They witness to his "happy art of engaging the passions in the service of virtue, and of exposing the folly as well as the turpitude of vice almost with the truth and spirit of dramatic representation."[191]

From the pulpit of St. Sophia in Constantinople, Chrysostom, with the boldness of one of the ancient prophets, thundered forth his anathemas against the corruptions of the times. He spared neither the court nor the people. A conspiracy was formed against him, in which some of the unworthy clergy, irritated by his denunciations, united. Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria, led the clerical party. Eudoxia, the dissolute wife of the Emperor Arcadius, exasperated by the rumor that the audacious preacher had reviled her under the name of Jezebel, arrayed the court influence against him. He was finally banished to the extreme border of the Euxine or Black Sea. The infuriate queen doomed the Christian bishop to exile to Cucusus, a dreary and far-distant town among the defiles of the Caucasian Mountains.

"A secret hope was entertained," writes Gibbon, "that the archbishop might perish in a difficult and dangerous march of seventy days, in the heat of summer, through the provinces of Asia Minor, where he was continually threatened by the hostile attacks of the Isaurians. Yet Chrysostom arrived in safety at the place of his confinement; and the three years which he spent at Cucusus were the last and most glorious of his life.

"His character was consecrated by absence and persecution. The faults of his administration were no longer remembered: every tongue repeated the praises of his genius and virtue; and the respectful attention of the Christian world was fixed on a desert spot among the mountains of Taurus.

“From that solitude, the archbishop, whose active mind was invigorated by misfortunes, maintained a strict and frequent correspondence with the most distant provinces; exhorted the separate congregation of his faithful adherents to persevere in their allegiance; extended his pastoral care to the missions of Persia and Scythia; negotiated, by his ambassadors, with the Roman pontiff and the Emperor Honorius; and boldly appealed from a partial synod to the supreme tribunal of a free and general council. The mind of the illustrious exile was still independent; but his captive body was exposed to all the revenge of his oppressors, who continued to abuse the name and authority of Arcadius.

“An order was despatched for the instant removal of Chrysostom to the extreme Desert of Pityus. His guard so faithfully obeyed their cruel instructions, that, before he reached the sea-coast of the Euxine, he expired at Comana, in Pontus, in the sixty-third year of his age.”192

Exhausted by the long journey on foot, with his head uncovered in the burning heat of the sun, he joyfully welcomed the approach of death. Clothing himself in white robes, as in a bridal garment, he partook of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper; offered a fervent prayer, which he closed with the customary words, “Praise be to God for all things!” and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. His remains were first entombed in the chapel of the martyr St. Basil. After slumbering there thirty years, they were transported, with every demonstration of respect, to Constantinople. The Emperor Theodosius, then upon the throne, advanced as far as Chalcedon to meet them. Falling prostrate upon the coffin, he implored, in the name of his guilty parents Arcadius and Eudoxia, the forgiveness of the wrongs which the Christian bishop had received at their hands. At a later period, the remains of Chrysostom were removed to the Vatican, at Rome, where they now repose.

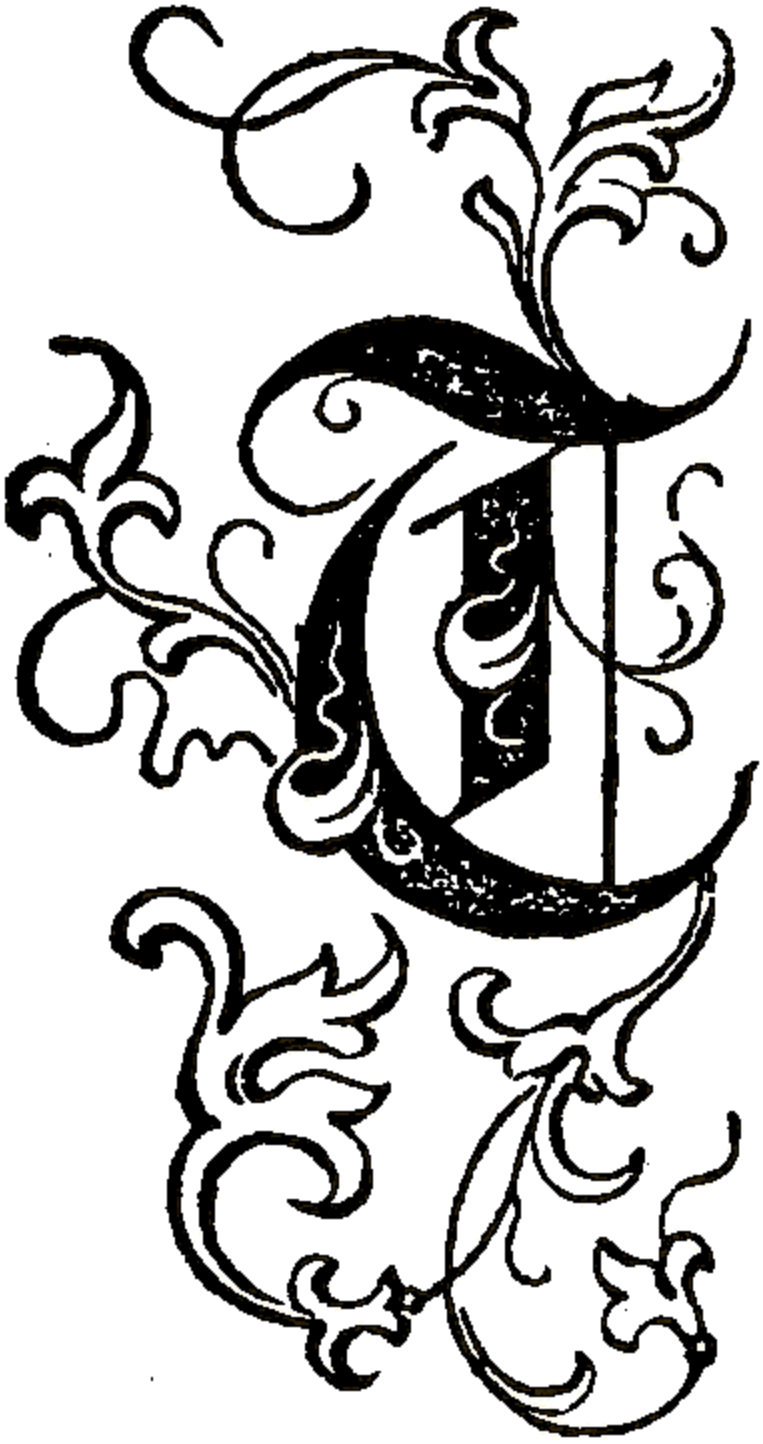
Over two hundred of the letters which Chrysostom wrote during his exile are still extant. They all breathe a remarkable spirit of cheerful trust in the promise that “all things work together for good to them that love God.”193

The terrible persecutions to which the Christians had been exposed had driven many into the wilderness, where they sought refuge amidst rocks and caves. The fearful social corruptions of the times also led some to flee from temptations too strong for flesh and blood to bear. The hut of the hermit and the cell of the monk gradually expanded into the massive and battlemented monastery, where considerable communities took refuge. Though these institutions gradually degenerated, as almost every thing human does, they were in their origin a necessity. Chrysostom, in the earlier periods of his Christian life, had resided for some time with the anchorites who had sought a retreat in the mountains near Antioch.

One can scarcely conceive of a more melancholy spectacle of national wretchedness than Italy now exhibited. Attila the Hun had trampled beneath the feet of his impetuous legions nearly all opposition. This extraordinary man is described by his contemporaries as possessing the coarse features of a modern Calmuck. His head was large and bushy, with an abundance of hair; his complexion was swarthy; with deep-seated eyes, a flat nose, and a few straggling hairs for a beard. Broad shoulders, and a short, stout body, gave indication of immense muscular strength. His bearing was excessively haughty; and he had the habit of wildly rolling his eyes, as if he wished to enjoy the terror which he could thus inspire.

CHAPTER XIX.
THE FIFTH CENTURY.

Christianity the only Possible Religion.—Adventures of Placidia.—Her Marriage with Adolphus the Goth.—Scenes of Violence and Crime.—Attila the Hun.—Nuptials of Idaho.—Eudoxia and her Fate.—Triumph of Odoacer the Goth.—Character of the Roman Nobles.—Conquests of Theodoric.—John Chrysostom.—The Origin of Monasticism.—Augustine.—His Dissipation, Conversion, and Christian Career.—His “Confessions.”



HE fifth century dawned luridly upon our sad world. There was no stable government anywhere. The Roman empire, which, oppressive as it had often been, was far better than anarchy, had now become but a crumbling ruin, which no human energy or skill could rebuild. The attempt by Julian the Apostate to reinstate paganism had proved so utter and humiliating a failure, that there was no possibility of the undertaking being ever again repeated.

There can be but one religion which an enlightened world will accept; and that is Christianity. If Christianity is renounced, the world will never adopt any substitute which has yet been proposed. The superstitions of barbarians are all too senseless to be thought of for a moment. Though there was a political party in the Roman empire who rallied around Julian, even many of his partisans regarded his efforts to reinstate paganism with ridicule and contempt. The wits of the day lampooned him mercilessly.

Honorius, Emperor of the West, after a disastrous reign of twenty-eight years, died in the year 423. Weary scenes of anarchy and bloodshed ensued, which we have no space to describe. Placidia, a Christian princess, daughter of the great Theodosius, had been carried away captive by the Goths. The splendor of her birth, her marvellous personal beauty, and the elegance of her manners, won universal admiration. The young Gothic king Adolphus, who was a man of unusual grace both of person and mind, won the hand and heart of his captive. The nuptials were attended with great splendor at Narbonne, as we have mentioned in the previous chapter.

"The bride," writes Gibbon, "attired and adorned like a Roman empress, was placed on a throne of state; and the king of the Goths, who assumed on this occasion the Roman habit, contented himself with a less honorable seat by her side. The nuptial gift, which, according to the custom of his nation, was offered to Placidia, consisted of the rare and magnificent spoils of her country. The barbarians enjoyed the insolence of their triumph; and the provincials rejoiced in this alliance, which tempered by the mild influence of love and reason the fierce spirit of their Gothic lord."[194]

The love of Adolphus for his beautiful bride was not abated by time or possession. A year passed, when they rejoiced in the birth of a son, whom they named Theodosius, after his illustrious grandfather. The death of this child in his infancy caused great grief to his parents. He was buried in a silver coffin in one of the churches near Barcelona. Soon after this, Adolphus was assassinated in his palace, at Barcelona, by one of his followers,—Sarus. Singeric, the brother of Sarus, seized the Gothic throne. He immediately murdered the six children of Adolphus, the issue of a former marriage. Placidia was treated with the most cruel and wanton insult. The daughter of the renowned Emperor Theodosius was driven on foot, amidst a crowd of vulgar captives, twelve miles, before the horse of a barbarian who had murdered her husband.

Singeric enjoyed his elevation but seven days, when assassination terminated his earthly being. Wallia, who by the suffrages of the Goths succeeded to the throne, restored Placidia to her brother Honorius. The reign of the barbarians in Gaul, with their wars and their plunderings, caused for a time the ruin of those once opulent provinces.

Attila the Hun, to whom we have alluded, with an innumerable horde of the ferocious warriors, invaded Italy, everywhere perpetrating atrocious acts of cruelty. The barbarians massacred their prisoners, inflicting upon them inhuman tortures, apparently from the mere love of cruelty. Two hundred beautiful young maidens were exposed to every cruelty which savage ingenuity could devise. Their bodies were torn asunder by wild horses, and their mutilated limbs left unburied. Attila overran the rich plains of Lombardy, and established himself in the palace of Milan. The senate of Rome, terror-stricken, sent an embassage to implore peace of the barbarian. Attila demanded the Princess Honoria, daughter of the Emperor Valentinian, for his bride, and one-half

of the kingdom of Italy as her dowry. While negotiations were pending, and Honoria was trembling in anticipation of her dreadful doom, the fierce Hun ravaged large portions of Gaul and Italy at the head of half a million of warriors as fierce and merciless as wolves.

The victorious Hun retired to the wilds of the North to replenish his diminished hordes, threatening to return and inflict still more signal vengeance, unless the bride he demanded, and the dowry claimed with her, were immediately granted him. In the mean time, he added to his harem of innumerable wives a beautiful maiden named Idaho.

"Their marriage," writes Gibbon, "was celebrated with barbarian pomp and festivity at his wooden palace beyond the Danube; and the monarch, oppressed with wine and sleep, retired at a late hour from the banquet to the nuptial-couch. His attendants continued to respect his pleasures or his repose the greater part of the ensuing day, till the unusual silence alarmed their fears and suspicions; and, after attempting to awaken Attila by loud and repeated cries, they at length broke into the royal apartment. They found the trembling bride sitting by the bedside, hiding her face with her veil, and lamenting her own danger, as well as the death of the king, who had expired during the night. An artery had suddenly burst; and, as Attila lay in a supine posture, he was suffocated by a torrent of blood, which, instead of finding a passage through the nostrils, regurgitated into the lungs and stomach. His body was solemnly exposed in the midst of the plain under a silken pavilion; and the chosen squadrons of the Huns, wheeling around in measured evolutions, chanted a funeral-song in memory of a hero glorious in his life, invincible in his death, the father of his people, and the terror of the world.

"According to their national custom, the barbarians cut off a part of their hair, gashed their faces with unseemly wounds, and bewailed their valiant leader as he deserved, not with the tears of women, but with the blood of warriors. The remains of Attila were enclosed within three coffins,—of gold, of silver, and of iron,—and were privately buried in the night. The spoils of nations were thrown into his grave. The captives who had opened the ground were inhumanly massacred; and the same Huns who had indulged such excessive grief, feasted, with dissolute and intemperate mirth, about the recent sepulchre of their king."

Valentinian inveigled a noble lady, alike illustrious for beauty and piety, to his palace, where he treated her with such indignities as to rouse to the highest pitch the wrath of her husband and friends. A conspiracy was formed by her husband Maximus, a Roman senator; and Valentinian died beneath the daggers which his crimes had unsheathed. The solders placed the diadem upon the brow of Maximus. His wife soon after died; and he endeavored to compel Eudoxia, the widow of Valentinian, to become his spouse. She recoiled from throwing herself into the arms of the murderer of her husband, and appealed for aid to Genseric, one of those powerful Vandal kings who had wrested Africa from the Roman empire.

Genseric joyfully espoused her cause. With a large fleet he entered the Tiber, advanced to Rome, and captured the city. In the struggle, Maximus was slain, and unhappy Rome was surrendered to the Moors and the Vandals to be pillaged for fourteen days. The barbarian Genseric carried back into the wilds of Africa, as slaves, Eudoxia, the widowed Empress of Rome, and her two daughters. Many other Roman matrons and maidens swelled the long train of captives who were dragged into life-long bondage.

“Eudoxia,” writes Gibbon, “was rudely stripped of her jewels; and the unfortunate empress, with her two daughters, the only surviving remains of the great Theodosius, was compelled as a captive to follow the haughty Vandal, who immediately hoisted sail, and returned, with a prosperous navigation, to the port of Carthage. Many thousand Romans of both sexes, chosen for some useful or agreeable qualifications, reluctantly embarked on board the fleet of Genseric; and their distress was aggravated by the unfeeling barbarians, who, in the division of the booty, separated the wives from their husbands, and the children from their parents.”

The whole world seemed to be now essentially in the condition of a city surrendered to the mob. There was no stable government anywhere. There was nowhere peace or prosperity or joy. Man’s corruption had filled the earth with misery. Still there were thousands of individual Christians, in obscurity and through much tribulation, struggling nobly to their throne and their crown in heaven.

It is difficult to conceive of a more melancholy spectacle than Italy presented. The barbarians were masters of the whole Peninsula. Odoacer, a stern Gothic warrior, after several years of the wildest anarchy, with wars and assassinations too numerous to mention, in the year 476 compelled the Roman senate by a formal decree to abolish the imperial succession, and to recognize him as the military chieftain of Italy. Thus, after the decay of ages, the Roman empire fell, to rise no more.

Sagaciously this ferocious barbarian respected time-honored institutions. He conferred upon his captains titles of dukes and counts, thus perpetuating and extending the feudal system. The Roman nobles, surrendering themselves to all sensual indulgence, had sunk into the lowest debasement. A contemporary historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, gives the following graphic account of the aristocracy of Rome at that time:—

“The ostentation of presenting the rent-roll of their estates provokes the resentment of every man who remembers that their poor ancestors were not distinguished from the meanest of the soldiers. The modern nobles measure their rank by the splendor of their carriages and the magnificence of their dress. Followed by a train of fifty slaves, they sweep the streets with impetuous speed. When they condescend to visit the public baths, they assume a tone of loud and insolent command, and appropriate to themselves conveniences designed for the Roman people. Sometimes they visit their plantations in the country, and, by the toil of servile hands, engage in the amusements of the chase. When they travel, they are followed by a multitude of cooks and inferior servants, accompanied by a promiscuous crowd of slaves and dependent plebeians. They express exquisite sensibility for any personal injury, and contemptuous indifference for all the rest of the human species. Should they call for some water, and a slave be tardy in bringing it, the slave would be punished with three hundred lashes.

“A sure method of introduction to the society of the great is skill in gambling. The confederates are united by an indissoluble bond of friendship, or rather of conspiracy. The acquisition of knowledge seldom engages their attention who abhor the fatigue and disdain the advantages of study. The distress which chastises extravagant luxury often reduces them to the most humiliating expedients. When they wish to borrow, they are as suppliant as a slave. When called upon to pay, they assume airs of indolence, as if they were the grandsons of Hercules.”

Italy had indeed fallen: the barbaric leader of a semi-civilized band was her enthroned monarch. During a reign of fourteen years, vast crowds of emigrants from the bleak realms north of the Rhine and the Danube flocked into sunny Italy.

They received a cordial welcome from Odoacer, and rapidly blended with the people among whom they took up their residence. But fertile and beautiful Italy was too rich a prize in the eyes of the powerful Northern nations to be long left in the undisputed possession of Odoacer.

Upon the northern banks of the Euxine Sea there was a populous nation called the Ostrogoths. Their king, Theodoric, had been educated at Constantinople, and was a civilized man, reigning over a comparatively barbaric people. He commenced his march upon Italy, accompanied by the whole nation.

"The march of Theodoric," says Gibbon, "must be considered as the emigration of an entire people. Each bold barbarian who had heard of the wealth and beauty of Italy was impatient to seek, through the most perilous adventures, the possession of such enchanting objects. The wives and children of the Goths, their aged parents and most precious effects, were carefully transported; and some idea may be formed of the heavy baggage that followed the camp, by the loss of two thousand wagons, which had been sustained in a single action in the war of Epirus. For their subsistence the Goths depended on the magazines of corn, which was ground in portable mills by the hands of their women; on the milk and flesh of their flocks and herds; on the casual produce of the chase; and upon the contributions which they might impose on all who should presume to dispute their passage or to refuse their friendly assistance. Notwithstanding these precautions, they were exposed to the danger and almost to the distress of famine in a march of seven hundred miles, which had been undertaken in the depth of a rigorous winter."[195]

Their march was through provinces devastated by war and famine. Still Theodoric had many fierce battles to wage ere he descended the southern declivities of the Julian Alps, and displayed his banners on the confines of Italy. Odoacer met him on the eastern frontiers of Venetia. Conquered in a bloody battle, he retreated to the walls of Verona; and all Venetia fell into the hands of the Ostrogoths. Odoacer made another stand upon the banks of the Adige: a still more sanguinary battle was fought, and the broken bands of Odoacer fled to Ravenna, on the Adriatic. Theodoric marched triumphantly to Milan, where the ever-fickle multitude received the conqueror with every demonstration of joy. Still, for three years, wretched Italy was desolated by war: misery reigned from the Alps to the extremity of the Peninsula, as man's inhumanity to man caused countless millions to mourn.

At length, Theodoric was victorious: having annihilated the armies of the Goths, and plunged his sword into the bosom of Odoacer, he entered upon the undisputed sovereignty of the whole of Italy. Theodoric governed this most beautiful of realms with energy, wisdom, and humanity. A third of the lands of Italy were divided among his own people. For thirty-three years he reigned with sagacity, which has given him the designation of "the Great." He was nominally a Christian, as were very many of his followers. The days of paganism had passed, never to return. Christianity had in a remarkable degree pervaded the barbaric nations outside the limits of the Roman empire.

Christianity, which had gained such signal victories over the learned and luxurious Romans, was equally triumphant over the warlike barbarians of Scythia and Germany. These fierce hordes, in their military incursions, carried back into their savage wilds thousands of captives. Many of these were Christians, and some were clergymen. They were dispersed as slaves throughout the wide realms of their conquerors. They, like the early disciples who were scattered from Jerusalem, proclaimed, in the huts of their barbaric masters, the gospel of Jesus, and won many triumphs to the cross of Christ.

John Chrysostom, whom we have mentioned as one of the most illustrious men of these days, upon becoming a Christian when but little over twenty years of age, abandoned all the ambition of life, and retired to the cells of the anchorites who were dwelling on the mountains in the vicinity of Antioch. Chrysostom gives us the following account of the mode of life then adopted by the anchorites:—

"They rise with the first crowing of the cock, or at midnight. After having read psalms and hymns in common, each, in his separate cell, is occupied in reading the Holy Scriptures, or in copying books. Then they proceed to church, and, after mass, return quietly to their habitations. They never speak to each other. Their nourishment is bread and salt: some add oil to it, and the invalids vegetables. After meals they rest a few moments, and then return to their usual occupations. They till the ground, fell wood, make baskets and clothes, and wash the feet of travellers. Their bed is a mat spread upon the ground; their dress consists of skins or cloths made of the hair of goats or camels. They go barefooted, have no property, and never pronounce the words *mine* and *thine*. Undisturbed peace dwells in their habitations, and a cheerfulness scarcely known in the world."

There can be no question as to the sincerity of these cloistered monks, misguided as they were. Chrysostom dwelt in a cavern for two years, without lying down. His penance was so severe, that he was thrown into a fit of sickness, which compelled his return to Antioch. After a life of tireless activity, many persecutions, and efficient devotion to the interests of the Church, he died, as we have mentioned, in exile, in the sixty-third year of his age.

"The name of Chrysostom, 'Golden-mouthed,' was assigned to him after his death to express the eloquence which he possessed in so much greater a degree than the other fathers of the Church. He never repeats himself, and is always original. The vivacity and power of his imagination, the force of his logic, his power of arousing the passions, the beauty and accuracy of his comparisons, the neatness and purity of his style, his clearness and sublimity, place him on a level with the most celebrated Greek authors. The Greek Church has not a more accomplished orator."[196]

The inclination for monastic seclusion very rapidly increased. Some sought the silence of the desert because they felt unable to resist the temptations of busy life; some, to escape from persecution; some, as a refuge from remorse; some, from the conviction that sin might be atoned for by self-inflicted suffering; some, from disgust at life, or a natural fondness for solitude and contemplation. In the middle of the fourth century, there was a colony of these anchorets upon the Island of Tabenna, in the Nile, numbering fifty thousand persons. They lived in the extreme of abstinence, occupying cheerless cells in very humble huts.

Men only at first entered upon this hermit life. About the middle of the fourth century, female monasteries, or convents of nuns, were instituted.

This retirement from the world to the cloister in those troublous times proved by no means an unmixed evil. Gradually very solemn monastic vows and extremely rigid rules of discipline were introduced.

"These houses now became the dwellings of piety, industry, and temperance, and the refuge of learning driven to them for shelter from the troubles of the times. Missionaries were sent out from them: deserts and solitudes were made habitable by industrious monks. And in promoting the progress of agriculture, and civilizing the German and Sclavonian nations, they certainly rendered great services to the world from the sixth century to the ninth. But it must be admitted that these institutions, so useful in the dark ages of barbarism, changed their character to a great degree as their wealth and influence increased. Idleness and luxury crept within their walls, together with all the vices of the world; and their decay became inevitable."197

In the early part of this century Augustine died, a man whose renown has been fresh in the Church for fourteen hundred years. He was born in Tagasta, a small city in Africa, on the 13th of November, 354. His father was a pagan, though he became a disciple of Jesus just before his death. His mother was an earnest Christian, by whose pious teachings Augustine in his early childhood was deeply impressed. While a mere boy, upon a sudden attack of dangerous sickness, he entreated that he might be baptized, and received into the fold of Christ. The sudden disappearance of alarming symptoms led his mother to hesitate, fearing that he might again fall into sin, and that then his baptism would only add to his condemnation. Augustine afterwards expressed the opinion that this was a great mistake. He thought, that, had he then made a profession of his faith in Christ, it would have operated as an incentive to a holy life, and would have saved him from much subsequent sin and suffering.

With returning health, temptation came, and the boy of ardent passions was swept away by the flood. "My weak age," he writes, "was hurried along through the whirlpool of flagitiousness. The displeasure of God was all the time imbittering my soul. Where was I, in that sixteenth year of my age, when the madness of lust seized me altogether? My God, thou spakest to me by my mother, and through her warned me strongly against the ways of vice. But my mother's voice I despised, and thought it to be only the voice of a woman. So blinded was I, that I was ashamed to be thought less guilty than my companions. I even invented false stories of my sinful exploits, that I might win their commendation.

"I committed theft from the wantonness of iniquity: it was not the effect of the theft, but the sin itself, which I wished to enjoy. There was a pear-tree in the neighborhood loaded with fruit. At dead of night, in company with some profligate youths, I plundered the tree. The spoil was thrown away; for I had abundance of better fruit at home. What did I mean that I should be gratuitously wicked?"

The father of Augustine, though not wealthy, had sufficient means and the disposition to afford his son all existing facilities for the acquisition of a thorough education. The young man devoted himself sedulously to the cultivation of eloquence. In the pursuit of his studies, he repaired to

Carthage, then the abode of intellect, wealth, and splendor. Here he plunged quite recklessly into fashionable dissipation. When seventeen years of age, his father died; but his fond mother maintained him at Carthage. It is manifest that he was still the subject of deep religious impressions. Upon reading the "Hortensius" of Cicero, he was charmed with its philosophy; but he writes,—

"The only thing which damped my zeal was, that the name of Christ was not there,—that precious name, which from my mother's milk I had learned to reverence; and whatever was without this name, however just and learned and polite, could not wholly carry away my heart."

He commenced studying the Scriptures, but with that proud, self-sufficient spirit which debarred him from all spiritual enlightenment. His haughty frame, he afterwards confessed, "justly exposed him to believe in the most ridiculous absurdities."

"For nine years," he writes, "while I was rolling in the slime of sin, often attempting to rise, and still sinking deeper, did my mother in vigorous hope persist in incessant prayer for me. She entreated a certain bishop to reason me out of my errors. He replied, 'Your son is too much elated at present with the pleasing novelty of his error to regard any arguments, as appears by the pleasure he takes in puzzling many ignorant persons with his captious questions. Let him alone: only continue to pray to the Lord for him. It is not possible that a child of such tears should perish.'"

"My mother," writes Augustine, "has often told me since, that this answer impressed her mind like a voice from heaven."

For nine years, from the nineteenth to the twenty-eighth of his age, this very brilliant young man lived in the indulgence of practices which he knew to be sinful. His pride of character and his high intellectual attainments precluded his entrance upon scenes of low and vulgar vice. He was genteelly and fashionably wicked. He had attained distinction as a teacher of rhetoric, and supported himself in that way. There was a young man in Carthage who had been a nominal Christian, the child of Christian parents, and a companion and friend of Augustine from childhood. A very strong friendship sprang up between them; and Augustine succeeded in drawing this young man away from the Christian faith, and in luring him into his own paths of error and of sin.

This young man was taken dangerously sick. When unconscious, and apparently near his end, he was, by the wish of his parents, baptized. Contrary to all expectation, he recovered. Augustine writes,—

"I regarded his baptism when in a state of unconsciousness with great indifference, not doubting that he would adhere to my instructions. As soon as I had an opportunity of conversing with him, I attempted to turn into ridicule his late baptism, in which I expected his concurrence. But he dreaded me as an enemy, and with wonderful freedom admonished me, that, if I would be his friend, I should drop the subject. Confounded at this unexpected behavior, I deferred the conversation till he should be thoroughly recovered."

There was a relapse, and the young man died. Augustine was overwhelmed with anguish: remorse was manifestly in some degree commingled with his grief. Time gradually lessened his sorrow; and in his restlessness he resolved to go to Rome, there to seek new excitements and a larger field of ambition. Knowing that his widowed mother's heart would be broken by his abandonment of her, he deceived her, and, upon pretence of taking a sail with a friend, left his home to seek his fortune in the renowned metropolis of the world.

"Thus," he writes, "did I deceive my mother; and *such* a mother! Yet was I preserved from the dangers of the sea, foul as I was in the mire of sin. But the time was coming when thou, O God! wouldst wipe away my mother's tears; and even this base undutifulness thou hast forgiven me. The wind favored us, and carried us out of sight of shore. In the morning, my mother was distracted with grief: she wept and wailed, and was inconsolable in her violent agonies. In her, affection was very strong. But, wearied of grief, she returned to her former employment of praying for me, and went home; while I continued my journey to Rome."

Soon after his arrival in the city, he was taken dangerously sick, and his life was despaired of. In the lethargy of his sickness, he thought but little of his sins and his danger. His mother, though uninformed of his sickness, repaired to the church every morning and evening, there to pray for the conversion of her son. Gradually Augustine regained his health, and was invited to give some lectures upon rhetoric in Milan. Bishop Ambrose was pastor of the church there,—a man of superior intellectual powers, and who had acquired renown both as a logician and an orator. Young Augustine called upon the bishop.

"The man of God," he writes, "received me as a father; and I conceived an affection for him, not as a teacher of truth, which I had no idea of discovering in the Church, but as a man kind to me. I studiously attended his preaching, only with a curious desire of discovering whether fame had done justice to his eloquence or not. Gradually I was brought to attend to the doctrine of the bishop. I found reason to rebuke myself for the hasty conclusions I had formed of the indefensible nature of the law and the prophets. The possibility of finding truth in the Church of Christ appeared."

His mother, drawn by love and anxiety, now left Carthage, and, crossing the Mediterranean, went to Milan, where she became united to her wayward and wandering son. Augustine informed his mother of the partial change which had taken place in his views, and that he was in the habit of attending the preaching of Bishop Ambrose. She replied, "I believe in Christ, that, before I leave this world, I shall see you a sound believer." She made the acquaintance of the bishop, interested him still more deeply in her son, and, with renewed fervor, pleaded with God for his conversion.

"Ambrose," Augustine writes, "was charmed with the fervor of my mother's piety, her amiableness, and her good works. He often congratulated me that I had such a mother, little knowing what sort of a son she had. The state of my mind was now somewhat altered. Ashamed of past delusions, I was the more anxious to be guided right for the time to come. I was completely convinced of the falsehood of the many things I had once uttered with so much confidence."

A season of great anxiety and sadness now ensued. He was firmly convinced of the divine authority of that Bible, which, in his infidelity, he had rejected. Still he had not as yet surrendered his heart to the Saviour, and had found no peace in believing. In comparison with eternal things, all the pursuits of this world seemed trivial. His heart was like the troubled sea: his conscience reproached him for neglecting the salvation of his soul. The following extract from his "Confessions" gives a vivid idea of the struggles in which his spirit was then engaged:—

"Your mornings," I said to myself, "are for your pupils: why, then, do you not attend to religious duties in the afternoon? But, then, what time should I have to attend to the levees of the great? What, then, if death should suddenly seize you, and judgment overtake you unprepared? But what if death be the end of our being? Yet far from my soul be such a thought! God would never have given such proof of the truth of Christianity if the soul died with the body. Why, then, do I not give myself wholly to God? But do not be in a hurry. You have influential friends, and may yet attain wealth and honor in the world. In such an agitation of mind," continues Augustine, "did I live, seeking happiness, yet flying from it."

Twelve years had now passed away, during which Augustine had been professedly seeking the truth, and yet had found no peace. "I had," he writes, "deferred from day to day devoting myself to God, under the pretence that I was uncertain where the truth lay."

And then the question occurred to him, "How is it that so many humble persons find peace so speedily in religion, while I, with all my philosophy and anxious reasonings, remain year after year in darkness and doubt?" Conscious that the difficulty was to be found in his own stubborn will, he retired in great agitation to a secluded spot in the garden, and, as he writes, "with vehement indignation I rebuked my sinful spirit because it would not give itself up to God." His anguish was great, and he wept bitterly. Falling upon his knees beneath a fig-tree, with tears and trembling utterance he exclaimed,—

"O Lord! how long shall I say to-morrow? Why should not this hour put an end to my slavery?"

Just then, he fancied that he heard a voice saying to him, "Take up, and read." He had with him Paul's epistles. Opening the book, the first passage which met his eye was this, found in the thirteenth chapter of Romans, thirteenth and fourteenth verses:—

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof."

The besetting sin of Augustine, and the great and crying shame of the times, was sensuality. The passage came to his mind as a direct message from Heaven. It said to him, "Abandon every sin, renounce your pursuits of earthly ambition, and commence a new life of faith in Jesus Christ." He at once was enabled to make the surrender: all his doubts vanished; and that "hope, which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast," dawned upon his mind.

He immediately hastened to his mother to inform her of the joyful event; and she rejoiced with him with heartfelt sympathy such as none but a Christian mother can understand. In commenting upon this change, Augustine writes, “The whole of my difficulty lay in a *will* stubbornly set in opposition to God. But from what deep secret was my free will called out in a moment, by which I bowed my shoulders to thy light burden, Christ Jesus, my Helper and my Redeemer?” Where is the thoughtful Christian who has not often asked this question?—

“Why was I made to hear Thy voice,

And enter while there’s room,

When thousands make a wretched choice,

And rather starve than come?”

The reply which our Saviour makes to this inquiry is not an explanation: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

Augustine relinquished his profession of a teacher of rhetoric, and, guided by Bishop Ambrose, entered upon the study of theology. He was baptized in the church of Milan with his son Adeodatus, whom he acknowledged as his child. Augustine decided to return to Carthage with his mother; but, just as they were about to embark at the mouth of the Tiber, she was taken sick, and died. The afflicted son pays a very beautiful tribute to her memory, as one of the most noble of Christian women. In this eulogy he makes the following statements illustrative of her character and of the times:—

“My mother, when young, had learned by degrees to drink wine, having been sent to draw it for the use of the family. How was she delivered from this snare? God provided for her a malignant reproach from a maid in the house, who in a passion called her a drunkard. Thus was she cured of her evil practice.

“After her marriage with my father, Patricius, she endeavored to win him to Christianity by her amiable manners; and patiently she bore his unfaithfulness. His temper was hasty, but his spirit kind. She knew how to bear with him when angry by a perfect silence and composure; and, when she saw him cool, would meekly expostulate with him. Many matrons would complain of the blows and harsh treatment they received from their husbands, whom she would exhort to govern their tongues. When they expressed astonishment that it was never heard that Patricius had beaten his wife, or that they ever were at variance a single day, she informed them of her plan. Those who followed it thanked her for its good success: those who did not experienced vexation.

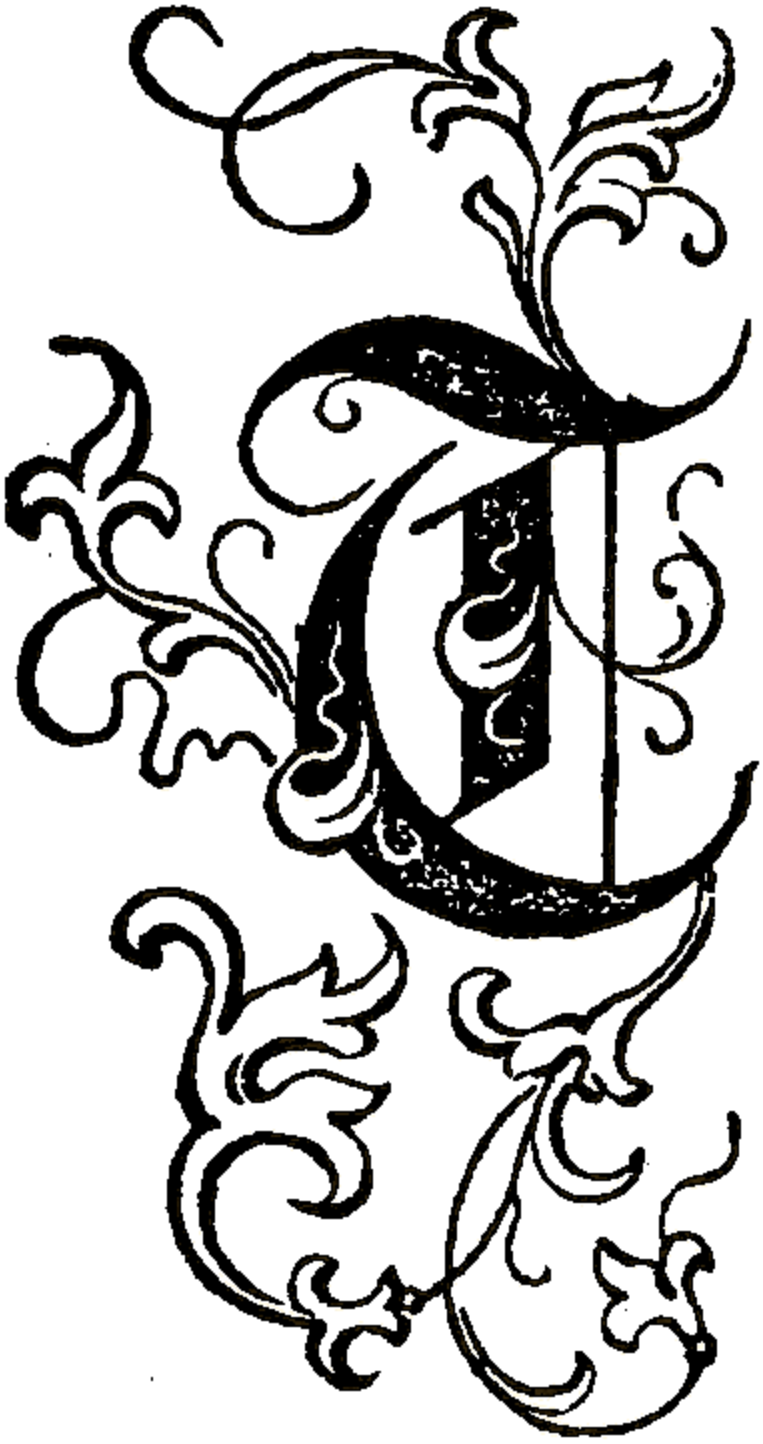
“It was a great gift which, O my God! thou gavest her, that she never repeated the unkind things which she had heard from persons who were at variance with one another; and she was conscientiously exact in saying nothing but what might tend to heal and to reconcile. At length, in the extremity of life, she gained her husband to thee, and he died in the faith of Christ.

“My mother and I stood alone at a window facing the east, near the mouth of the Tiber, where we were preparing for our voyage. Our discourse ascended above the noblest parts of the material creation to the consideration of our own minds; and, passing above them, we attempted to reach heaven itself,—to come to thee, by whom all things were made. At that moment the world appeared to us of no value. She said, ‘Son, I have now no clinging to life. It was your conversion alone for which I wished to live. God has given me this. What more is there for me to do here?’ Scarcely five days after, she fell into a fever. She departed this life on the ninth day of her illness, in the fifty-sixth year of her age, and the thirty-third of mine.”

Augustine returned to Africa, where, after three years of retirement and study, he was ordained a preacher of the gospel. The fame of his eloquence rapidly spread throughout the Western world, drawing crowds of the pagans, as well as of the Christians, to his church; and ere long he was elected Bishop of Hippo. After a life of unwearied devotion to the interests of Christianity, preaching the gospel of Christ with simplicity, purity, and fervor rarely equalled, and with his pen defending the doctrines of grace with logical acumen and philosophic breadth of view perhaps never surpassed, this illustrious man died in the year 430, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, and the fortieth of his ministry.

CHAPTER XX.
CENTURIES OF WAR AND WOE.

Convulsions of the Sixth Century.—Corruption of the Church.—The Rise of Monasteries.—Rivalry between Rome and Constantinople.—Mohammed and his Career.—His Personal Appearance.—His System of Religion.—His Death.—Military Expeditions of the Moslems.—The Threatened Conquest of Europe.—Capture of Alexandria.—Burning of the Library.—Rise of the Feudal System.—Charlemagne.—Barbarian Antagonism to Christianity.



HE sixth century of the Christian era passed away like a hideous dream of the night. Wave after wave of barbaric invasion swept over Europe and Asia. Rome was sacked five times, in the endurance of violence and woes which no pen can describe. Paganism was overthrown; but gradually Christianity became paganized. Still, corrupt as Christianity became, it was an immense improvement over the ancient systems of idolatry. The past narrative has given the

reader some faint idea of what morals were under the old Roman emperors. The depravity of man, vanquished in its endeavor to uphold idolatry, with all its polluting rites, endeavored to degrade Christianity into a mere system of dead doctrines and pompous ceremonies. In this it partially succeeded; but it was utterly impossible to sink Christianity to a level with paganism.

The disordered state of the times had swept the rural population from the fields, and they were huddled together for protection in the villages and walled cities. Immense tracts of land all over Europe were left waste. Herds of cattle grazed over these desolate expanses, guarded by armed serfs, who watched them by day, and slept in the fields by their side at night. Slavery was universally practised, the conqueror almost invariably enslaving the conquered. Hence labor became degrading: none but slaves would work. It was gentlemanly, it was chivalric, to obtain wealth by pillage: it was vulgar, boorish, entirely derogatory to all dignity, to move a finger in honest industry. The highest offices of the Church were often assigned by unprincipled kings and princes to their worthless favorites. Marauding bands, not unfrequently led by these false bishops, often fell upon the flocks grazing in the fields, slaughtered the herdsmen, and drove off the herd.

A very zealous and enlightened Christian, by the name of Benedict, endeavored to counteract this ruinous spirit of the times: he formed a society quite similar in its organization to our temperance associations. This body of reformers soon assumed the name of Monks of St. Benedict. For protection against the marauding bands which were ever abroad upon expeditions of plunder, they built a massive, strongly-fortified castle, which they called a monastery, to which the industrious community could retreat when assailed.

“Beware of idleness,” said this noble Christian man, “as the great enemy of the soul. No person is more usefully employed than when working with his hands, or following the plough.”

This was the origin essentially of many of the monasteries of Europe: they were noble institutions in their design, and thousands of Christians breathing the spirit of Christ found within their enclosures peaceful and useful lives when the billows of anarchy were surging over nearly all other portions of the globe. But that innate proneness to wickedness, which seems everywhere to reign, gradually perverted those once holy and industrious communities into institutions of indolence and sin. Wherever the monastery arose, there originally waved around it fields of grain, and fat cattle grazed in the meadows. Prayer and labor, faith and works, were combined, as they ever should be. The ruins of these monastic edifices still occupy the most enchanting spots in Europe: they were usually reared upon some eminence which commanded an extensive prospect; or in some sheltered nook, by the banks of a beautiful stream. The eye of taste is invariably charmed in visiting these localities. The pristine monks were a noble set of men; and, for ages, learning and piety were sheltered in the cloisters which their diligent hands had reared.

The modern tourist, witnessing the worldly wisdom evidenced in their whole plan, and conscious that there is no longer occasion for such institutions, forgets the necessities of the rude days in which they were constructed, and is too apt sneeringly to exclaim,—

“Ah! those shrewd old monks had a keen eye to creature-comforts. They loved the banks of the well-filled stream sparkling with salmon and trout: they sought out luxuriant meadows, where

their herds could roll in fatness amidst the exuberant verdure; or the wooded hills, where the red deer could bound through the glade, and snowy flocks could graze, and yellow harvests, sheltered from the northern winds, could ripen in the sun."

Indeed they did. This was all right,—Christian in the highest degree. "Godliness is profitable unto all things." "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." The prior of the monastery was not a despot revelling in the toil of others: he was the father of the household; he was the head workman, accompanying his brethren to the field of honest toil and remunerative industry.

Benedict, usually called St. Benedict, early in the sixth century established a monastery, which subsequently attained great celebrity, upon the side of Mount Cassano, near Naples. None were admitted to it but men of pure lives, and who had established a reputation for such amiability of character as would insure their living harmoniously with the other brethren. It became the home of piety, industry, and temperance: the persecuted sought refuge there; scholars sought a retreat there; missionaries went out from it into the wastes which war and vice had desolated.

The cloistered convent may with some propriety be called a divine institution: it was the creation of necessity. But, in the lapse of ages, royal gifts and the legacies of the dying endowed many of them with great wealth. Opulence induced indolence, till these cradles of piety became the strong fortresses of iniquity; and modern Christianity has been compelled to frown them down.

From the commencement of these institutions, during a period of five hundred years, until the tenth century, many of these monasteries exerted a beneficent and noble influence. Christianity had begun to break the fetters of the slave; these freedmen, the emancipated slaves, were placed under the protection of the clergy; and they often found shelter from oppression within sacred walls which secular violence did not dare to profane. These convents were for ages the only post-offices in the country. Few could read but the higher clergy. It is said even of the Emperor Charlemagne, that he could not write, and that his signature to any document consisted of his dipping his hand in a bowl of red ink, and then impressing the broad palm upon the parchment. There were but few letters passed, save those conveying some important state intelligence. These documents were rapidly transferred by the brethren from one convent to another. For many centuries, the monks were better informed than almost any other persons of what was transpiring throughout Europe and Asia.

The warriors were men of muscle only, not of cultivated mind. Intelligence is always a power: hence the Church rapidly gained ascendency over the State, and the mitred bishop took the precedence of the helmed warrior. The bishops, or pastors, of the large churches in the metropolitan cities, had then, as now, distinction above the rural clergy. Constantinople, outstripping decaying Rome, had become the chief city of the world in population and splendor. Rome, proud of her ancient renown, regarded her young rival very much as an old, aristocratic, decaying family regards some successful adventurer of lowly birth who has newly become rich.

There was strong rivalry between the bishops of these two renowned cities, each struggling for the pre-eminence. The Bishop of Rome gradually assumed the title of Papa, or Pope. Indeed, in the first century, all the bishops in the East were entitled Pope, or Father. Subsequently, in the fifth century, the Bishop of Constantinople took the title of Patriarch. The strife eventuated in a

division between the Greek and Roman churches. The Pope at Rome took the Western churches, and the Patriarch at Constantinople the Eastern. Swaying the sceptre of spiritual power, both of these ecclesiastics gradually grasped temporal power also. Christianity was virtually banished from the Church, though there were here and there devoted pastors; and thousands of Christians, some of them even in the highest walks of life, were, with prayers and tears, struggling, through the almost universal corruption, in the path to heaven. Both the Grecian and the Roman hierarchies became mainly but ambitious political organizations, ministering to pride and luxury and splendor. There were some good popes, as there have been good kings; and many bad popes, as there have been bad kings.

It was near the close of the sixth century that Mohammed commenced his marvellous career. Whether this extraordinary man were a self-deceived enthusiast, or a designing impostor, is a question which will probably ever be discussed, and never settled.

Born of wealthy parents in the city of Mecca, in the interior of Arabia, about the year 569, he, when a lad of but thirteen years of age, travelled to Syria on a commercial expedition. Here he was entertained in one of the Christian monasteries,—almost the only resort of travellers in those days. One of the fathers, perceiving in him indications of genius, paid him marked attention, and probably made strenuous exertions to secure his conversion, not only to Christianity, but to the superstitious observances which had grown up around the pure religion of Jesus.

All great men are of a pensive temperament: the tremendous mystery of human life oppresses them. Young Mohammed was thoughtful, contemplative, with a tinge of melancholy pervading his whole character. It is evident that he was much impressed by the scenes which he had witnessed and the instructions he had received in the convent; for he formed the habit of retiring every year to the Cave of Hera, about three miles from Mecca. Here, in a natural cloister, he annually spent a month in solitude, meditation, and prayer.

In the seclusion and silence of these hours he conceived and matured his plan for the establishment of a new religion. There were still remnants of the ancient idolatry all around him: and, in his view, idolatry had crept into the Christian Church; for statues of the saints filled the niches of the great cathedrals, and image-worship in churches and convents had become almost universal. The reflections of Mohammed upon this subject must have been profound and long-continued; for he was forty years of age before he commenced active operations in that enterprise which has given him world-wide renown.

Mohammed affirmed, that, in his cave, he held interviews with the angel Gabriel, who had inspired him, as the apostles were inspired, to proclaim a new and purer religion. He assumed that the Jewish religion was from God, but that its end was accomplished; that Christianity was true, a divine revelation, but that, having fulfilled the purpose for which it was proclaimed, it was now also to pass away, and give place to a third and final revelation, which God had revealed to Mohammed, his prophet, and which, as the perfection of divine wisdom, was to endure forever.

The first disciple he gained was his wife; then some of his relatives and a few neighbors avowed their faith in his divine mission. But progress was very slow. At the close of ten years of tireless perseverance, but very few could be counted among his followers. Then, quite suddenly,

converts began to multiply; and he gave them a military organization, boldly declaring that he was divinely empowered to put any one to death who should reject his claims, and that the property of such unbelievers was to be divided among the faithful. The world was just in the situation for a fanatic band of desperate marauders successfully to commence their march. The prospect of booty brought thousands of the vagabonds of Asia to his standard. His first exploit was the capture of a rich caravan, which greatly elated and enriched his followers, and extended his fame. At length, he encountered governmental resistance. His little army was utterly routed; and Mohammed fled, wounded and bleeding, from the field. Though the repulse seemed for a short time to shake the faith of his followers, he soon rallied them by the assurance that it was in consequence of their sins that God had given them this transient reverse, but that God had promised that all who were slain in his battles should be immediately translated to a paradise of exquisite and eternal bliss.

Crowds flocked to his camp. New battles were fought, and victories won. His disciples became rich and exultant. His religion, consisting mainly of outward forms, was as easy of practice as any part of the military drill. He was soon at the head of ten thousand soldiers inspired with all the ferocity which religious fanaticism could engender. The number rapidly increased to thirty thousand. No power could be brought into the field to resist him. Nearly all Arabia, ignorant, religionless, and greedy of plunder, enlisted under a banner which brought its followers fame, adventure, and wealth. It is no longer to be wondered at that Mohammed by these means eventually found himself at the head of a hundred and fifty thousand of the fiercest warriors earth had ever known. To the pagans, one religion was as good as another. To exchange religions was like exchanging garments. It was comparatively easy to make proselytes among a barbarian people who had no settled convictions of truth, and to whom there could be offered the most attractive of temporal as well as eternal rewards.

Gibbon gives the following account of the personal appearance and intellectual endowments of this wonderful man:—

“According to the traditions of his companions, Mohammed was distinguished by the beauty of his person. Before he spoke, the orator engaged on his side the affections of a public or a private audience: they applauded his commanding presence, his majestic aspect, his piercing eye, his gracious smile, his flowing beard, his countenance that painted every sensation of the soul, and his gestures that enforced each expression of the tongue.

“In the familiar offices of life, he scrupulously adhered to the grave and ceremonious politeness of his country. His respectful attention to the rich and powerful was dignified by his condescension and affability to the poorest citizens of Mecca. The frankness of his manners concealed the artifice of his views; and the habits of courtesy were imputed to personal friendship or universal benevolence. His memory was capacious and retentive, his wit easy and social, his imagination sublime, his judgment clear, rapid, and decisive.

“He possessed the courage both of thought and action; and, although his designs might gradually expand with his success, the first idea he entertained of his divine mission bears the stamp of an original and superior genius. The son of Abdallah was educated in the bosom of the noblest race, in the use of the purest dialect; and the fluency of his speech was corrected and enhanced by the

practice of discreet and seasonable silence. With these powers of eloquence, Mohammed was an illiterate barbarian. His youth had never been instructed in the arts of reading and writing. The common ignorance exempted him from shame and reproach; but he was reduced to a narrow circle of existence, and deprived of those faithful mirrors which reflect to our mind the minds of sages and heroes."

Mohammed, like Emanuel Swedenborg, accepted both the Old and New Testament as of divine origin. He professed the most profound respect for both Moses and Jesus Christ as prophets sent from God. "Verily Christ Jesus," writes Mohammed, "the son of Mary, is the Apostle of God, and his Word, which he conveyed unto Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from him, honorable in this world and in the world to come, and one of those who approach near to the presence of God."198

Our Saviour had promised, that, after his departure from this world, he would send the Paraclete, or Holy Ghost, as a guide and comforter to his disciples. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."199 Mohammed assumed that he was this divinely-commissioned Comforter. The Koran was produced in fragments to meet emergencies; and it was not until two years after the death of Mohammed that these fragments were collected in a single volume. This Koran is one of the most stupid of books, full of incoherent rhapsody and turgid declamation, from which it is difficult to extract a sentiment or an idea. Very few men in Christendom have found patience to read it.

Mohammed at first imposed upon his disciples the daily obligation of fifty prayers. Finding this too onerous to be borne, he diminished the number to five, which were to be performed daily, regardless of any engagements or any surroundings. These seasons of prayer were at daybreak, at noon, in the middle of the afternoon, in the evening, and at the first watch of the night. His precepts of morality were drawn from the Old and New Testaments. Friday was appointed as the Mohammedan sabbath, and vigorous fasts were enforced. All intoxicating drinks were positively interdicted. The Mussulman was enjoined to consecrate one-tenth of his income to charitable purposes. The doctrines of the resurrection and the final judgment were maintained.

"The sword," says Mohammed, "is the key of heaven and of hell. A drop of blood shed in the cause of God, or a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting or prayer. Whoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven. At the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermilion, and odoriferous as musk; and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied with the wings of angels and cherubim."

This remarkable man died on the 7th of June, 632. His character was by no means blameless when judged by the standard of Christianity. Whenever he wished to indulge in any crime, he could easily find a fresh revelation authorizing him to do so. Major Price, after the most careful examination of documentary evidence, speaks as follows of his death:—

"In tracing the circumstances of Mohammed's sickness, we look in vain for any proofs of that meek and heroic firmness which might be expected to dignify and embellish the last moments of the apostle of God. On some occasions he betrayed such want of fortitude, such marks of

childish impatience, as are in general to be found in men only of the most ordinary stamp; and such as extorted from his wife Ayesha, in particular, the sarcastic remark, that, in herself or any of her family, a similar demeanor would long since have incurred his severe displeasure. He said that the acuteness and violence of his sufferings were necessarily in the proportion of those honors with which it had ever pleased the hand of Omnipotence to distinguish its peculiar favorites."200

Immediately after the death of Mohammed, his disciples pushed their conquests with amazing energy. In the course of a few centuries, they overran all of Egypt and of Asia Minor, and established the most stern and unrelenting despotism earth has ever known. Their military organization and prowess were such, that they could bring into the field a more powerful army than any other nation.

They crossed the Bosphorus into Europe, and stormed Christian Constantinople with six hundred vessels of war and an army of three hundred thousand troops. Sixty thousand of the inhabitants of Constantinople were massacred in cold blood. The Christian maidens were dragged shrieking into the Moslem harems. The boys of tender age were compelled, under the blows of the scourge and of the cimeter, to adopt the religion of the Prophet, and to enlist under his banner. Thus the whole Eastern or Greek empire was soon blotted out. The crescent of Mohammed supplanted the cross of Christ over all the towers of the imperial city. The head of the Christian was crushed by the heel of the Turk.

The conqueror, assuming the title of Mohammed II., prepared to invade Italy. It was his boast that he would feed his horse from the altar of St. Peter's, in Rome. He crossed the Adriatic, took Otranto, and was in the onward career of victory, with every prospect of annexing Italy to the Mohammedan empire, when he died. There was then a short respite for imperilled Christendom. But soon the flood of Mohammedan invasion rolled up the Danube in surges of flame and blood. Year after year, and generation after generation, the valley of this majestic stream was but a constant battle-field, where Christian and Moslem grappled each other in the death-struggle.

One of these marches up the Danube is worthy of more minute record. It was leafy June: luxuriant foliage and gorgeous flowers decorated the banks of the river with loveliness which attracted the admiration even of semi-barbarian eyes. The turbulent host, counting within its ranks two hundred and fifty thousand veteran warriors, for many days sauntered joyously along, encountering no foe. War seemed but the pastime of a festival-day. Banners floated gayly in the breeze; music enlivened the march. Arabian chargers pranced proudly beneath their riders, glittering in Oriental gorgeousness of costume. A fleet of gayly-decorated barges filled the stream, impelled by sails when the wind favored, and urged by rowers when the winds were adverse.

Each night, upon some smooth expanse of the river's banks, the white tents of the invaders were spread, and a city of nearly two hundred thousand inhabitants rose as by magic, with its grassy streets and squares, its busy population, its trumpet-peals from martial bands, and its bannered magnificence blazing in all the regalia of war. Like a fairy vision the city rose in the rays of the declining sun; and like a vision it disappeared in the early dawn of the morning, and the mighty host moved on.

But the black day came. The Turks had ascended the river about a hundred and fifty miles, when they came to a small island called Zigeth. It was strongly fortified, and commanded both banks of the stream. Not another mile could the Moslems advance till this fortress was battered down. Zrini, the heroic Christian commander, and his whole garrison of six thousand men, took an oath that they would surrender the post only with their lives.

Day and night, week after week, the assault continued unintermitted. The besieged, with guns in battery to sweep all approaches, mowed down their assailants with awful carnage; but bastion after bastion was crumbled by the tremendous cannonade of the Moslems: the walls of solid masonry were battered down till they presented but a shapeless pile of rocks. The Turks, reckless of life, like swarming bees swept over the smouldering ruins. They had apparently cut down every inmate of the fort; and, with shouts of victory, were raising the crescent over the blackened and blood-stained rocks, when there was an earthquake roar, and an explosion almost as appalling as the thunders of the archangel's trump.

Zrini had fired the subterranean vaults containing thousands of kegs of powder. The whole citadel—men, horses, rocks, and artillery—was thrown into the air, and fell a commingled mass of ruin, fire, and blood. The Turks, having lost their leader and a large part of their army, retreated, exhausted and bleeding, but only to gather strength to renew the strife.

Thus year after year these Moslem assaults were continued. Such were the measures the Turks used to convert Europe to Mohammedanism; such were the persuasions urged by the missionaries of the Koran. Shortly after this, the banners of the advance-guard of the Turkish army were seen even from the steeples of Vienna: the majestic host invested the city on all sides.

The renowned John Zobieski, King of Poland, came to the rescue with sixty thousand men. Uniting with the German troops, the combined army fell upon the invaders with almost frenzied courage, utterly routed them, and drove them in wild disorder back to Belgrade. Still, through years of blood and woe, these Moslem assaults were continued. The conquering armies of the Prophet took all of Asia, Egypt, Africa, and Greece. They crossed the Straits of Gibraltar from Africa into Spain, overran the whole Spanish Peninsula, and hung like a black cloud upon the northern cliffs of the Pyrenees, threatening the provinces of France. They swept both banks of the Danube to the walls of Vienna. The Austrian royal family fled at midnight. It seemed inevitable that all Europe was to be overrun by the Moslems, and that all Christendom was to be cut down beneath their bloody cimeters.

This conflict of Mohammedanism against Christianity continued for five centuries. At one time, the Austrian ambassador at Constantinople wrote to the Emperor Ferdinand in Vienna,—

"When I compare the power of the Turks with our own, the consideration fills me with dismay. I see not how we can resist the destruction which awaits us. They possess great wealth, strength unbroken, a perfect knowledge of the arts of war, patience, union, order, frugality, and a constant state of preparation.

"On our side are exhausted finances and universal luxury. Our national spirit is broken by mutinous soldiers, mercenary officers, licentiousness, intemperance, and a total contempt of

military discipline. Is it possible to doubt how such an unequal conflict must terminate? The all-conquering Mussulmans will soon rush with undivided strength, and overwhelm all Europe as well as Germany."

Such was the career and the final menaces of Mohammedanism. But the Church is safe: God interposed by his resistless providences. Mohammedanism, everywhere on the wane, exists now only through the toleration of the Christian powers: it is ere long to be buried in the same grave in which the paganism of Greece and Rome lies mouldering in the dust. One foe after another Satan has been marshalling against Christianity; but ever, though sometimes after a strife truly terrific, Christianity has come off the victor. Eighteen centuries have rolled away since the death of Christ; but never was Christianity so vigorous and efficient a power in the world as now.

Mohammed himself ever remembered the kindness he had received in the Syrian convent. He left it as one of the injunctions of the Koran,—

"Respect all religious persons who live in hermitages or convents, and spare their edifices; but, should you meet other unbelievers in the Prophet, be sure you cleave their skulls unless they embrace the true faith."

The capture of Alexandria by the Mohammedans is one of the most renowned events, and apparently one of the greatest calamities, of past ages. The magnificent city, the capital of Egypt, possessed almost fabulous wealth. It contained four thousand palaces, five thousand baths, and four hundred theatres. Its library surpassed all others in the world in the number and value of its manuscripts. The Moslem general who had captured the city wrote to his superior at Bagdad, inquiring what was to be done with the library. The bigot returned the reply,—

"Either what those books contain is in the Koran, or it is not. If their contents are in the Koran, the books are useless: if they are not, the books are false and wicked. Burn them."

The whole priceless treasure, containing the annals of many past centuries, was committed to the flames. The irreparable loss Christendom will ever mourn.

Nations are not born, and do not die, in a day. During several centuries, Mohammedanism was rising to its zenith of power, until it vied with ancient Rome in the extent of its territory, the invincibility of its legions, and the enormity of its luxury and corruption.

The seventh century was, perhaps, the darkest and the most hopeless, so far as the prospects of humanity were concerned, of any since the birth of Christ. When the eighth century dawned, several hundred years of war, anarchy, and blood, had lingered away since the breaking-up of the Roman empire. The people, weary of anarchy and crushed with woe, were glad to make any surrender of personal liberty for the sake of security. Females sought refuge in nunneries, and timid men in monasteries: bold barons built their impregnable castles on the cliffs; and defenceless peasants clustered around these massive fortresses of rock for protection as the sheep gather around the watch-dog.

The baron, with his fierce retainers armed to the teeth, was ever ready to do battle. The serf purchased a home and safety by toiling with his wife and children, like cattle in the field, to support his lord and his armed warriors. Thus feudalism was the child of necessity: it was the natural outgrowth of barbarous times. The ruins of these old feudal castles are scattered profusely over the hillsides and along the romantic streams of Europe. As the tourist now glides in the steamer over the water of the beautiful Rhine, where the "castled crag of Drachenfels" frowns down upon the scene of solitude and beauty, and sees

"On yon bold brow a lordly tower,

In that soft vale a lady's bower,

In yonder meadow, far away,

The turrets of a cloister gray,"

creative imagination leaps back over the ages which are gone, repairs the ruins, digs out the moat, suspends the portcullis, stores the dungeon, and peoples the battlemented towers with armed defenders. Again the winding of the bugle echoes over the hills and the valleys, warning the serfs of approaching danger. We see the rush of the frightened peasants in at the massive portals; we hear the clatter of iron hoofs, the defiant challenge pealing from the trumpet: the eye is dazzled with the vision of waving plumes and gilded banners as steel-clad knights sweep by like a whirlwind.

Breathless we gaze, in fancy, upon the attack and the defence; listen to the cry of onset, and to the resounding blows upon helmet and cuirass. Heroic courage, chivalric adventure, invest the crumbling stones with life. Such was life in this sad world ten centuries ago.

But, through all these tumults, the Church of Christ, with many mingling imperfections, was rising to be the ruling power on earth. In seasons of anarchy, the community is ever ready to cast itself for protection into the arms of dictatorial power. The Church, imperilled, felt its need of a dictator; and the Bishop of Rome, by almost unanimous consent, became its recognized head. The Moslem empire had swept over all the East, trampling Eastern Christians in the dust. The few disciples of Jesus who in those regions were permitted to live were exposed to the most humiliating oppressions and insults.

It was in the year 732 that Charles Martel met the Moslem host near Tours, in France, to fight the battle which apparently was to decide the fate of Europe. Christianity and Mohammedanism met on that field in their greatest strength. The battle which ensued was one of the most terrific which earth has ever known. Victory followed the banner of the cross. The annalists of those days declare that over three hundred thousand Moslems bit the dust upon that bloody field: the remnant, in a series of desperate conflicts, were driven pell-mell over the Pyrenees, across the whole breadth of Spain, and over the Straits of Gibraltar into Africa.

As we traverse these weary years in their dull monotony of woe, we occasionally come to some event over which we are constrained to pause and ponder. Such an event was the rise of

Charlemagne, towards the close of the eighth century. His name has reverberated through the corridors of history until the present day. By his genius, and the power of his armies, he brought two-thirds of all Europe under his sceptre. He created an empire almost rivalling that of the Cæsars. Seated in his palace at Aix la Chapelle, he issued his orders, which scores of nations obeyed. Dukes, princes, counts, became his subordinate officers, whose powers were limited according to his will.

At the death of Charlemagne, near the close of the eighth century, his empire broke to pieces in large fragments. Europe emerged from the wreck, organized essentially as now. The overthrow of the ancient Roman empire was like a mountain crumbling down into sand. The then known world became but a vast arena for the conflict of petty barbarous tribes, ever surging to and fro. The demolition of the empire of Charlemagne was like the breaking-up of a majestic iceberg into a number of huge islands, each floating imperially over the waves, defying alike gales and billows. The spiritual empire of the Papacy had kept pace with the secular empire of Charlemagne: indeed, the Bishop of Rome swayed a sceptre before whose power even Charlemagne himself was compelled to bow.

As a temporal ruler, Charlemagne had no rival in Europe. The antechamber of this great European conqueror was filled with suppliant kings. Though unlearned himself, he did all in his power to encourage learning throughout his realms. He ordered every monastery to maintain a school; he encouraged manufactures and agriculture; and with a strong arm repressed violence, that all branches of industry might be secure of a reward. It was during his reign that the first bell was cast by the monk Tancho. The emperor was so much pleased with its sweet and solemn tones, that he ordered it to be placed on his chapel as the call to prayer. Hence the origin of church-bells.

Until nearly the ninth century, the Island of Great Britain was essentially a barbaric land, filled with savage, warring tribes. Each district had its petty clans of fierce warriors, arrayed against each other. But again there bursts upon Europe one of those appalling irruptions of barbarians from the North which seems so weird-like and supernatural.

One day, Charlemagne with a friend was standing upon a cliff, looking out upon the sea, when he saw quite a fleet of galleys passing by. “They are traders, probably,” said his companion. “No,” replied Charlemagne sadly: “they are Norman pirates. I know them. *I* do not fear them; but, when I am gone, they will ravage Europe.”

These were the fierce men who enslaved the Saxons of Britain, and put brass collars around their necks. Descending from the islands of the Baltic and the mainlands of Denmark and Norway in their war-ships, infuriated by a fanatic faith which regarded mercy as sin, these ferocious warriors, hardy as polar bears, and agile as wolves, penetrated every bay, river, and creek, sweeping all opposition before them. Devastation, carnage, and slavery followed in their train.

The monasteries had gradually degenerated into institutions of indolence and sensuality. The Normans assailed the inmates of these gloomy retreats with the most relentless cruelty. They surrounded with their armed bands these cloistered walls, and, barring the monks within, applied the torch, and danced and sang as the vast pile and all its contents were wrapped in flames. They

hated a religion which taught (to them the absurd doctrine) that man was the brother of his fellow-man; that the strong should protect, and not oppress, the weak; that we should forgive our enemies, and treat kindly those who injure us. Like incarnate fiends, they took special pleasure in putting to death, through every form of torture, the teachers of a religion so antagonistic to their depraved natures.

Such was the condition of the world at the commencement of the tenth century. Joyless generations came and passed away, and life upon this sin-stricken globe could have been only a burden. From this sketch, necessarily exceedingly brief, it will be seen that man has ever been the most bitter foe of his brother-man. Nearly all the woes of earth are now, and ever have been, caused by sin. What an awful tragedy has the history of this globe been!

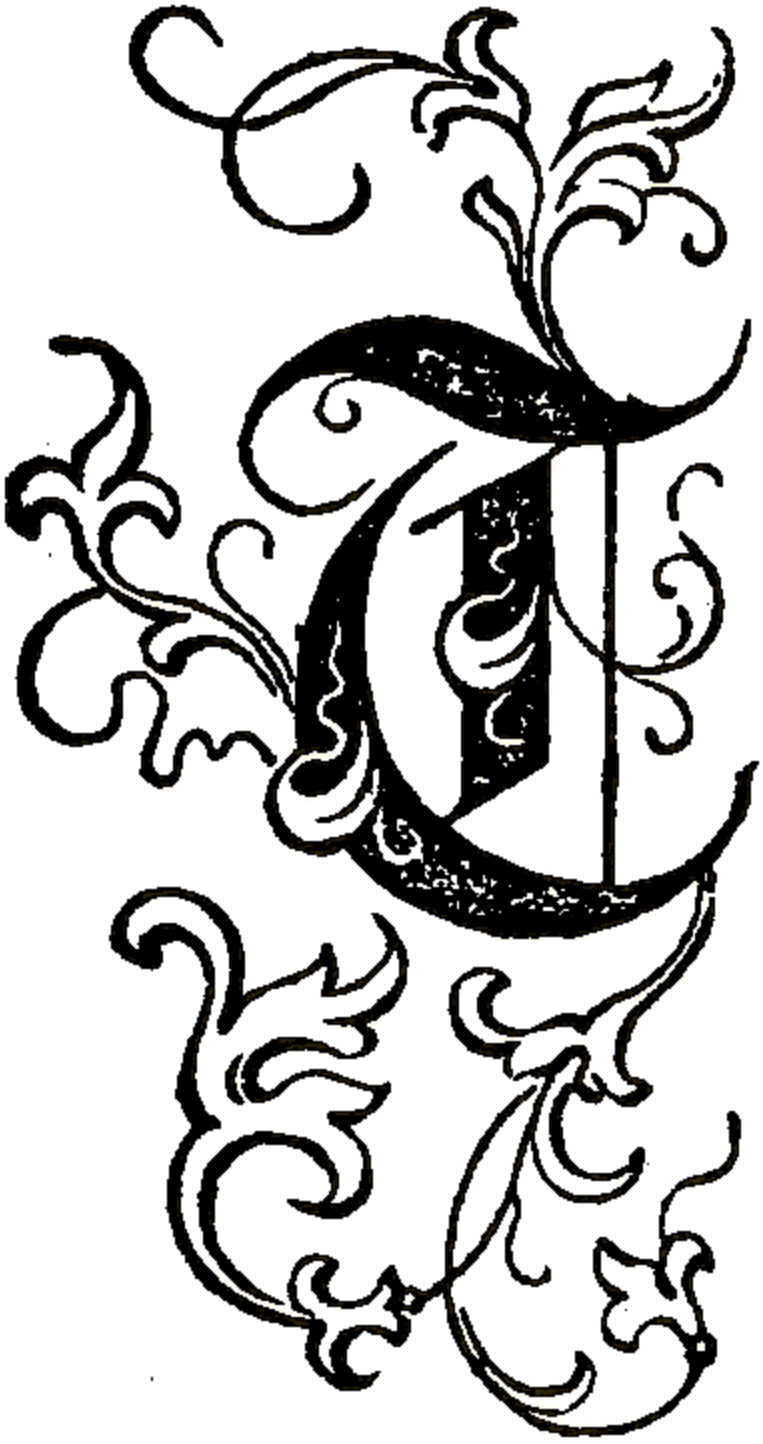
Almost with anguish, the thoughtful and benevolent mind inquires, “Is there to be no end to this? Is humanity forever to be plunged into the abyss of crime and woe?”

It would seem that it must be manifest to every candid mind that there can be no possible remedy but in the religion of Jesus Christ. Love God, your Father; love man, your brother: these are the fundamental principles of the gospel. Every one must admit that the universal adoption of these principles would sweep away from earth nearly all its sorrows. Sin and holiness in this world are struggling for the supremacy: it is a fearful conflict. Every individual is on the one side or the other. Some are more, and some are less zealous. But there is no neutrality: he that is not for Christ is against him.

Is there not an influence coming down to us through these long centuries of woe potent enough to induce each one to declare, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”? Accept the religion of Jesus; live in accordance with its teachings: then you will do all in your power to arrest the woes of humanity; and, when Death with his summons shall come, he will present you a passport which will secure your entrance at the golden gate which opens to the paradise of God.

CHAPTER XXI.
THE DARK AGES.

The Anticipated Second Coming of Christ.—State of the World in the Tenth Century.—Enduring Architecture.—Power of the Papacy.—Vitality of the Christian Religion.—The Pope and the Patriarch.—Intolerance of Hildebrand.—Humiliation of the Emperor Henry IV.—Farewell Letter of Monomaque.—The Crusades.—Vladimir of Russia.—His Introduction of Christianity to his Realms.—Marriage with the Christian Princess Anne.—Extirpation of Paganism.—The Baptism.—The Spiritual Conversion of Vladimir.



HERE had gradually arisen an almost universal impression in the Church, that, in just a thousand years after the advent of Christ, the world was to come to an end. Notwithstanding the emphatic declaration of Jesus, that not even the angels in heaven know the period of his second coming, through all the ages of the Church individuals have been appearing who have fixed upon a particular year when Christ was to come in clouds of glory.

The year of our Lord 999 was one of very solemn import. There was a deep-seated impression throughout all Christendom that it was to be the last year of time; and, indeed, all the signs in the heavens above and on the earth beneath indicated that event. There was almost universal anarchy,—no law, no government, no safety, anywhere. There were wars, and rumors of wars. Sin abounded. There were awful famines, followed by the fearful train of pestilence and death. The land was left untilled. There was no motive to plant when the harvest could never be gathered. The houses were left to fall into decay. Why make improvements, when in one short month they might be swallowed up in a general conflagration?

It is an almost inexplicable peculiarity of human wickedness, that danger and death are often the most intense incentives to reckless sin. While Christians were watching and praying for the coming of the Saviour to bring to a triumphal close this fearful tragedy of earth and time, the godless surrendered themselves to all excesses, and shouted, "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die!"

The condition of society became quite unendurable. Robbers frequented every wood: in strong bands they ravaged villages, and even walled towns. As all were consuming, and few were producing, provisions soon disappeared. Despair gave loose to every passion. In many places the famine was so severe, that, when even rats and mice could no longer be procured, human flesh was sold in the markets: women and children were actually killed and roasted.

But, while many were thus stimulated to awful depravity, others, inspired by Christian principle, were impelled to prayer, and to every exercise of devotion which those dark days taught them could be acceptable to God. Kings, in several cases, laid aside their crowns, and, as humble monks, entered the monasteries, performing all the most onerous and humiliating duties of midnight vigils, fastings, penances, and prayers.

Henry, the Emperor of Germany, entered the Abbey of St. Vanne as a monk. The holy father in charge, who was truly a good man, enlightened and conscientious, received the emperor reluctantly. After much remonstrance, he, however, administered the oath by which the monarch vowed implicit obedience to the authority of his spiritual superior.

"Sire," said this good monk to the emperor, "you are now under my orders: you have taken a solemn oath to obey me. I command you to retire immediately from the convent, and to resume the sceptre. Fulfil the duties of the kingly state to which God has called you. Go forth a monk of the Abbey of St. Vanne; but resume your responsibilities as Emperor of Germany."

The emperor obeyed with simplicity of trust, and nobility of character, which have commanded the respect of all subsequent ages.

Robert, King of France, son of the illustrious Hugh Capet, entered the Abbey of St. Denis. Here he became one of the choir of the church, singing hymns and psalms of his own composition. Many of the nobles emancipated their slaves, and bestowed large sums in charity,—benevolence, indeed, which did not, perhaps, require a large exercise of self-denial, if sincere in their belief that the fires were just ready to burst out which were to wrap the world in flames.

As the year 999 drew near its end, men almost held their breath to watch the result. For a whole generation, all the pulpits of Christendom had been ringing with the text,—

"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more; and, after that, he must be loosed a little season."[201]

But the dawn of the eleventh century rose, and all things continued as they were from the beginning of the creation. Christians, finding that the world was not coming to an end, rallied for more energetic effort to make the world better. All Christendom combined in the crusades to arrest the progress of Mohammedanism, and to reclaim the Holy Land from Mohammedan sway. The churches were repaired. Stately cathedrals rose,—those massive piles of imposing architecture which are still the pride of Europe.

The impression that the world was to be stable for some centuries longer led to the projection of buildings on the most gigantic scale and of the most durable materials. Architecture became a science which enlisted the energies of the ablest minds; and here originated that Gothic architecture so much admired even at the present day. The foundations of these time-defying edifices were broad and deep; the walls of immense thickness; the roofs steep, effectually to shed rain and snow; the towers square, buttressed to sustain the church, and also to afford means, then so necessary, of military defence.

The castle of the noble rose by the same impulse which reared such majestic sacred edifices. Thus Melrose and Kenilworth, Heidelberg and Drachenfels, came into being.

In France alone, at the beginning of the eleventh century, there were a thousand four hundred and thirty-four monasteries. Poverty was universal. The cottages of the peasants were mere hovels, without windows, damp and airless,—wretched kennels in which the joyless inmates crept to sleep. By the side of these abodes of want and woe the church rose in palatial splendor, with its massive walls, its majestic spire, its spacious aisles, and its statuary and paintings, which charmed the docile and unlettered multitude. The whole population of the village could assemble beneath its vaulted ceiling. It was the poor man's palace: he felt that it belonged to him. There he received his bride. In the churchyard he laid his dead. The church-bell rang merrily on festal-days, and tolled sadly when sorrow crashed. Life's burden weighed heavily on all hearts. To the poor, unlettered, ignorant peasant, the church was every thing: its religious pageants pleased his eye; the church-door was ever open for his devotions; the sanctuary was his refuge in danger; its massive grandeur filled his heart with pride; its gilded shows and stately ceremonies took the place of amusements; the officiating priests and bishops presented to his reverential eyes an aspect almost divine.

We see the remains of this deep reverence in the attachment to their forms of religion of nearly all the peasantry of Catholic Europe at the present day. The Church, with its imposing ceremonies, hallowed to them by all the associations of childhood and by the traditions of past generations, still exerts over them a power which seems almost miraculous.

The wonderful vitality which there is in the Church of Christ, and the amazing influence which the teachings of Jesus exert over the human mind, are in nothing more remarkable than in the stability with which Christianity and its doctrines survive all the ordinary changes of time. Dynasties rise and fall like ocean-waves, leaving no perceptible influence behind them; but Christianity rides over all these storms of time with immortal life. The Roman empire crumbles to dust; the Eastern and Western empires moulder away; the Gothic kingdoms appear, and vanish like a vision of the night; the Vandals and the Huns, the Ostrogoths and the Normans, flit across the scene, each with their brief span of life.

Yet Christianity, like the sun struggling through the clouds of a stormy day, calmly, steadily, surely, continues on its course. Though a storm-cloud may transiently obscure its brightness, nothing can impede its onward progress; and, at the present day, Christianity, triumphant over all the conflicts of centuries, shines brighter, clearer, with more world-wide healing in its beams, than ever before.

The Bishop of Rome had become the recognized head of the Western Church. Wielding both temporal and spiritual power, the pope towered in dignity above all the monarchs of Europe. Towards the close of the eleventh century, Hildebrand, with the title of Gregory VII., occupied the pontifical chair. Henry IV., Emperor of Germany, claimed the right of appointing bishops in his own realms. The pope haughtily summoned the emperor immediately to repair to his presence in Rome, and answer for his conduct. Henry, indignant at such an insult, issued a decree declaring Gregory VII. no longer worthy of being regarded as pope.

In retaliation, the exasperated pontiff excommunicated the emperor, deposing him from his throne, and prohibiting his subjects, under pain of eternal damnation, from supporting the emperor, or from ministering in any way to his wants. The superstitious people, believing that the pope had entire power to send them all to hell, in their terror simultaneously and universally abandoned the emperor. No servant dared to engage in his employ; no soldier dared to serve under his banner. The emperor found himself in an hour utterly crushed and helpless. The pope summoned a congress, and appointed another emperor in the place of his deposed victim.

Henry, finding himself thus overwhelmed beyond all possibility of resistance, in dismay and despair crossed the Alps in the dead of winter to throw himself at the feet of the offended pontiff, and implore forgiveness. Gregory VII. was then at the Castle of Canossa, in Tuscany. For three days, in mid-winter, the abject monarch stood a suppliant at the gate of the castle before he could be admitted. Barefoot, bareheaded, and clothed in a woollen shirt, he was compelled thus to wait, day after day, that all might witness his abject humiliation. At length, the haughty pontiff consented to grant absolution to the humiliated and penitent emperor.

The extravagance of the claims of Hildebrand seem to approach insanity. He published a collection of maxims, which is still extant. Among them are the following, which evince his spirit, and the arrogance of the papacy at that day:—

“There is but one name in the world; and that is the pope’s. All princes ought to kiss his feet. He alone can nominate or displace bishops, or dissolve councils. Nobody can judge him. He has

never erred, and never shall err in time to come. He can depose princes, and release subjects from their oaths of fidelity."

All the monarchs of Europe sustained these assumptions of the pope; for, by sustaining them, they easily held their subjects under perfect control. Nothing can be conceived more awful than was then the idea of excommunication to the popular mind. It exposed one to almost all possible misery in this world, and to the eternal flames of hell in the next.

One becomes weary of the recital of the crimes and woes of those days. There is, however, one truth which stands forth prominent from every page of history: it is, that in the religion of Jesus alone can be found the remedy for the ills of earth; it is the democracy of the gospel, the recognition of the brotherhood of man, where only is to be found hope for the world. Forms of government are of little avail so long as the men who wield those forms are selfish and depraved. Governments will become better only so fast as the men who administer them become better.

It is one of the signal developments of human depravity that men will reject and oppose the religion of Jesus because bad men, assuming the Christian name, ignore, and trample beneath their feet, all the teachings of the gospel. Christianity advocates every thing that is lovely and of good report, urging all "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God; to visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world;" while at the same time it denounces, under penalty of the divine displeasure, every act which is not consistent with love to God and love to man.

Notwithstanding papal pride and corruption, the spirit of Christ, in those dark ages, was beautifully developed in thousands of hearts, among the lofty as well as among the lowly. There is a great deal of false religion now, a great deal of ritualistic pomp and of empty profession. It was so then. Still, everywhere, then as now, could be seen the most attractive evidences of the power of true religion. Devoted missionaries had penetrated the most remote and savage wilds; and not a few who wore regal crowns and ducal coronets were numbered among the disciples of Jesus.

On the 19th of May, 1126, Monomaque, one of the most renowned of the early sovereigns of semi-barbaric Russia, died at the age of seventy-six. He had developed a very beautiful character, often praying with a trembling voice and tearful eyes for suffering humanity. Just before he fell asleep in Jesus, he wrote a farewell letter to his sons and daughters. The letter was written in the Palace of Kief, nearly a thousand years ago, and is still preserved on parchment in the archives of the monarchy. Every reader will admire its truly Christian spirit.

"My dear children," he wrote, "the foundation of all religion is the love of God and the love of man. Obey your heavenly Father; and love man, your brother. It is not fasting, it is not monastic seclusion, which will confer the favor of God: it is doing good to your brother-man. Never forget the poor: take care of them. Do not hoard up riches: that is contrary to the teachings of our Saviour. Be a father to orphans; protect widows; and never permit the powerful to oppress the weak.

“Abstain from every thing that is wrong. Banish from your heart all pride. Remember that we all must die: to-day full of life, to-morrow in the tomb. When you are travelling on horseback, instead of allowing your mind to wander upon vain thoughts, recite your prayers, or at least repeat the best of them all: ‘O Lord! have mercy upon us.’

“Never retire at night without falling upon your knees before God in prayer. Always go to church at an early hour in the morning to offer to God the homage of your first and freshest thoughts. This was the custom of my father, and of all the pious people who surrounded him. With the first rays of the sun they praised the Lord, and exclaimed with fervor, ‘Condescend, O Lord! with thy Divine Spirit to illumine my soul.’”

Near the commencement of the twelfth century, nearly all Christendom combined for the recovery of Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Moslems. The crusades are generally regarded as among the strangest of all earthly frenzies. In the first crusade, a rabble, unorganized band of three hundred thousand persons, of all ages and both sexes, set out on an insane expedition to drive out of Syria the warlike Moslems. Though the crusaders deemed their enterprise a sacred one, their conduct was often such as could scarcely have been exceeded in wickedness by incarnate fiends. Not one of those who embarked in this first crusade ever reached Jerusalem: only a remnant of about twenty thousand, after extreme sufferings, ragged and starving, regained their homes. The well-armed and organized Turks cut down the fanatic rabble as the mower does the grass.

The next year there was another campaign commenced, still more imposing in numbers, and a little more formidable in warlike character. All the steel-clad knights of Europe mounted their chargers, eager to gain and to win the favor of Heaven by the slaughter of the infidel Turk. Six hundred thousand men—as motley an assemblage as ignorance and fanaticism ever brought together—commenced their march across Europe to the Holy Land. Trusting that they should receive supernatural aid, they made but slight provision for their wants. Soon all the horses died: famine and sickness decimated their ranks. There was no discipline, no self-command; and the wildest excesses reigned. Their track was strewn with the bodies of the dead.

As they drew near to Jerusalem, their numbers had dwindled to sixty thousand; but these were the boldest, the strongest, the hardiest. With energy which religions enthusiasm alone could inspire, they hurled themselves upon the defences of Jerusalem, broke open the gates, clambered the walls, and, after a scene of awful carnage, succeeded in recapturing the city. This was in July, 1099. Of the vast army which had left Europe, not ten thousand survived to return to their native land.

Though Jerusalem was taken, there were many portions of Palestine still in the hands of the Moslems. The insane idea then arose of organizing a crusade of children against them. Fanaticism affirmed that Christ would interpose in their behalf, and give the weak a victory over the strong; thus showing how God, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, could perfect his praise. It seems almost incredible, but it is apparently well authenticated, that ninety thousand boys, of but ten or twelve years of age, commenced their march across Europe to present their innocence and helplessness to the cimeter of the bearded Turk.

"When the madness of the time," writes Rev. James White, "had originated a crusade of children, and ninety thousand boys, of but ten or twelve years of age, had commenced their journey, singing hymns and anthems, and hoping to conquer the infidels with the spiritual arms of innocence and prayer, the whole band melted away before they reached the coast. Barons and counts, and bishops and dukes, all swooped down upon the devoted march; and, before many weeks' journeying was achieved, the crusade was brought to a close. Most of the children had died of fatigue or starvation; and the survivors had been seized as legitimate prey, and sold as slaves."202

The introduction of Christianity into Russia early in the eleventh century is one of the most interesting events in the history of the Church. Vladimir the king, a pagan, but a thoughtful man, had heard of Christianity, and became anxious respecting his own destiny beyond the grave. He made earnest inquiries of the teachers of all forms of religion respecting their peculiar tenets.

He summoned the Mohammedan doctors from Bulgaria, the Jews from Jerusalem, and Christian bishops from the Papal Church at Rome and the Greek Church at Constantinople. He soon rejected the systems of Jews and of the Mohammedans as unworthy of further consideration, but was undecided respecting the apparently-conflicting schemes of Rome and Constantinople.

He therefore selected ten of the wisest men in his kingdom, and sent them to visit Rome, and then Constantinople, and report in which country divine worship was conducted in a manner most worthy of the Supreme Being. The ambassadors seem to have made a very thorough investigation in both capitals. Upon their return to Kief, they reported in favor of the faith and ceremonies of the Greek Church. The king, still undecided, and impressed with the importance of the measures upon which he had entered, assembled a number of his most virtuous and distinguished nobles, and took counsel of them. Their voices also were in favor of the Greek Church.

This wonderful event is well authenticated. Nestor gives a recital of it in its minute details. An old Greek manuscript, preserved in the royal library of Paris, records the visit of these ambassadors to both Rome and Constantinople.

There must have been a commingling of many motives which influenced Vladimir in his course. He had been a very wicked man. He had sought, but in vain, to appease the gnawings of conscience by the debasing rites of paganism. Some light from Christianity had reached his mind, as Christian missionaries occasionally traversed his semi-barbaric realms. Indeed, the gospel had been already preached in idolatrous Kief, and some converts had been won to it. Vladimir had also sufficient intelligence to perceive that the paganism into which his realms were plunged was brutalizing. It is not probable that thus far he had been the subject of a change of heart: it was merely a change of policy,—an intellectual rather than a spiritual transformation.

Having resolved to renounce paganism, and to adopt Christianity, he deemed it important that the event should be accompanied with pageantry so imposing as to produce a deep impression upon his simple and ignorant subjects. The extraordinary measures he adopted show how little he then comprehended the true spirit of Christianity.

He assembled an immense army; with it descended the Dneiper in boats; sailed across the Black Sea; and entering the Gulf of Cherson, near Sevastopol, after several bloody battles took military possession of the Crimea. Thus victorious, he sent an embassage to Basil and Constantine, the two emperors then unitedly reigning at Constantinople, announcing that he wished the young Christian Princess Anne, daughter of one of the emperors, for his bride; and that, if she were not immediately sent to him, he would advance upon Constantinople, and utterly destroy the city.

The emperors, trembling in view of this menace, which they were conscious they had not the power to avert, after much anxious deliberation returned the answer, that they would accede to his request if he would first embrace Christianity. To this proposition Vladimir cordially assented, as it was quite in accordance with his plans. He, however, demanded that the Princess Anne should be sent immediately to him, stating that he would be baptized at the time of his nuptials.

The unhappy maiden was overwhelmed with anguish in view of what appeared to her a dreadful doom. She regarded the pagan Russians as ferocious savages, and would have preferred repose in the grave to her union with Vladimir. But policy, which is the religion of cabinets, demanded the sacrifice. The princess, weeping in despair, was conducted to the camp of Vladimir, accompanied by several of the most distinguished ecclesiastics and nobles of the empire. She was received with the most gorgeous demonstrations of rejoicing. The whole army was drawn up in battle-array to add the brilliancy of military pageantry to nuptial festivities.

The ceremony of baptizing the king was performed in the church of Basil, in the city of Cherson. Immediately after this ceremony, the marriage-rites with the princess were solemnized. Vladimir ordered a large church to be built at Cherson in memory of his visit. He then returned to Kief with the bride whom the sword and diplomacy had won, taking with him several preachers distinguished for their eloquence. He also obtained from Constantinople a communion-service wrought in the most graceful proportions of Grecian art, and also several exquisite specimens of statuary, that he might inspire his subjects with a love for the beautiful.

With great docility the king accepted the Christian teachers as his guides, and devoted himself with untiring energy to the work of abolishing idolatry and establishing Christianity throughout his realms. Vigorous and sagacious measures were adopted to throw contempt upon the ancient paganism. The idols were collected, and burned in huge bonfires amidst the derisive shoutings of the people. The statue of Péroune, the most illustrious of the pagan gods, was dragged ignominiously through the streets with a rope round its neck, followed by the hooting multitude pelting it with mud and scourging it with whips; until at last, battered and defaced, it was dragged to the top of a precipice, and tumbled headlong into the river.

Vladimir now issued a decree to all the inhabitants of the capital and of all the adjoining region to repair to the banks of the Dneiper, in the vicinity of Kief, to be baptized. The rich and the poor, the nobles and the serfs, were alike summoned. At the appointed day the multitude assembled by tens of thousands, and crowded the banks of the stream. The emperor himself at length appeared, accompanied by a large number of ecclesiastics from Constantinople. He took his seat upon an elevated throne that he might witness the imposing ceremonies.

At a given signal, the whole multitude waded slowly into the stream. Some boldly advanced up to their necks; others, more timid, ventured only up to their waists. Fathers and mothers led their children by the hand. When all were standing quietly in the stream, the clergy upon the shore offered baptismal prayers, chanted hymns of thanksgiving, and then declared that all were Christians, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The multitude then came up from the water nominal Christians.

Vladimir, who was sincere and truthful in all these strange movements, was in a transport of joy. Profoundly excited by the sublimity of the scene, he raised his flooded eyes to heaven, and, with great fervor, offered the following simple and touching prayer:—

"O thou Creator of heaven and earth! extend thy blessing to these thy new children. May they know thee as the true God, and be strengthened by thee in the true religion! Come to my help against the temptations of the Evil Spirit, and I will praise thy name."

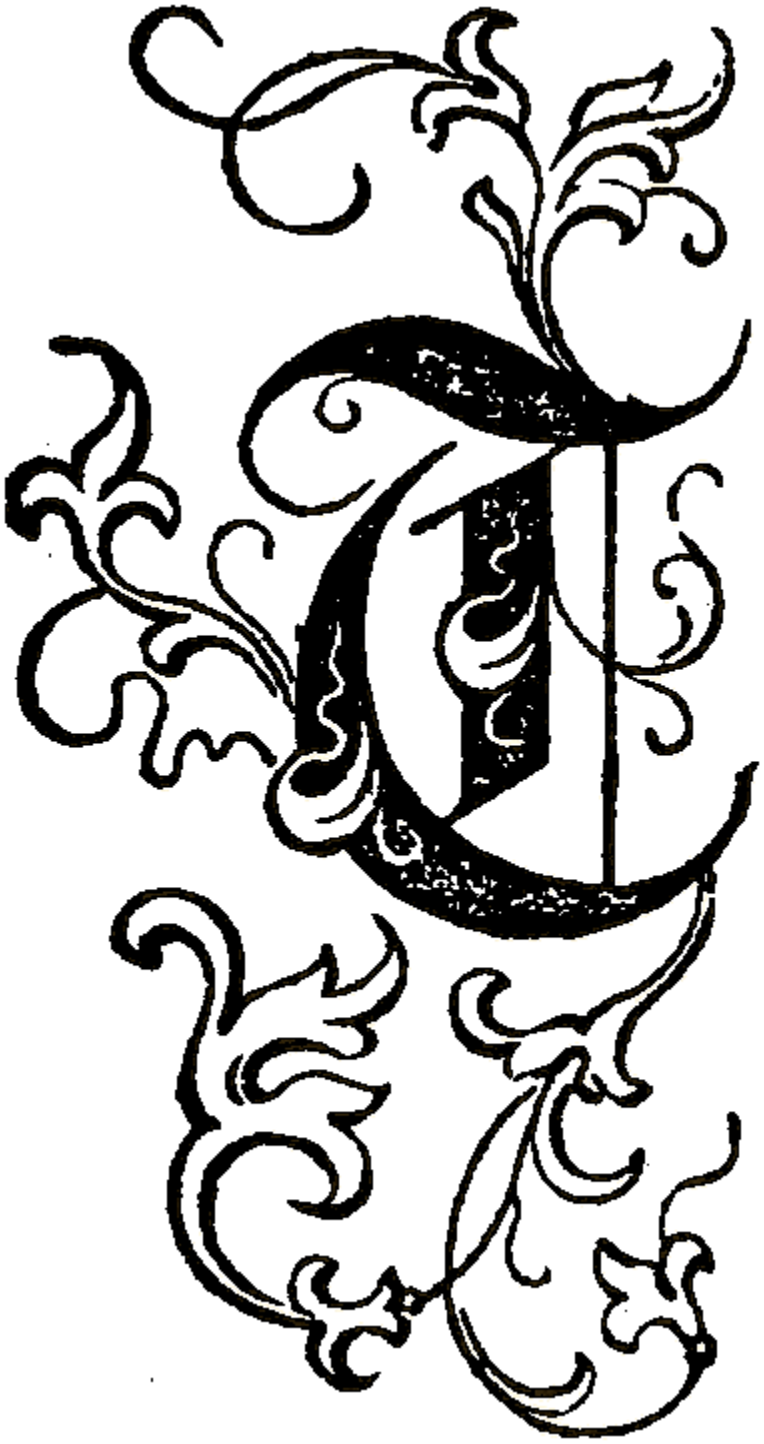
Thus, at a blow, paganism was demolished throughout nearly all Russia, and Christianity was introduced in its place. Imperial energies were expended in rearing artistic churches of stone all over the empire. Christian missionaries, under the patronage of the emperor, traversed the realm, teaching the people the new religion. Nearly all the population gladly received the Christian faith. Some, however, still adhered to paganism. Vladimir respected their rights of conscience, and for a few years the wretched delusions of idolatry lingered in secluded spots; but Russia became nominally a Christian land.

Light dawned rapidly upon the mind of Vladimir, and he became a warm-hearted Christian,—one of the most loving and lovable of men. War had been his passion. In this respect his whole nature seemed to be changed. Nothing but dire necessity could lead him to an appeal to arms. The Princess Anne appears to have been a sincere Christian. She found a happy home in the Palace of Kief. Her virtues and piety won the love and reverence of her husband. Her whole life was devoted to doing good; and, when this Christian sister fell asleep in Jesus, she was soon followed to the tomb by her grief-stricken husband.

The name of Vladimir is still revered throughout all Russia. He was the greatest benefactor Russia ever knew. In his career we see how noble is the life of the Christian: it is the only life which is truly noble. Christianity, as a principle, embraces every virtue which can glow in an angel's bosom: as an agent of beneficence, it promotes all conceivable good for time and eternity; as an agent of happiness, it fills all homes and all hearts with joy; as a motive to action, it combines all the conceivable joys of an endless life to inspire one with tireless energies to promote God's glory and man's welfare.

CHAPTER XXII.
THE REFORMATION.

Two Aspects of Catholicism.—Jubilee at Rome.—Infamy of Philip of France.—Banditti Bishops.—Sale of Indulgences.—Tetzel the Peddler.—The Rise of Protestantism.—Luther and the Diet at Worms.—Intolerance of Charles V.—Civil War and its Reverses.—Perfidy of Charles V.—Coalition against the Protestants.—Abdication of Charles V.—His Death.



HE Papal Church presents two aspects quite different from each other. The one is that of a spiritual and practical religion, in which that branch of the Church of Christ has furnished some of the most lovely exhibitions of piety the world has ever seen. Fénelon and Pascal were among the noblest of the disciples of the Redeemer. Through all the darkest ages of the Church there have been a multitude, which no man can number, who have followed their Saviour, even to the cross, in his lowly life of benevolence, and his self-sacrifice for others.

The Catholic Church was, for centuries, almost the only organized representative of the religion of Jesus. It contained within its bosom all the piety there was on earth. These humble Christians, sometimes buried and almost smothered beneath the ceremonies which the Church imposed upon them, manifested through life the true spirit of Jesus, and passed away, in death, triumphant to their crowns.

But there is another aspect in which the Papal Church presents itself on the pages of history. It is that of a political organization, grasped by ambitions men, and wielded by them as an instrument of personal aggrandizement.

The Bishop of Rome, claiming to stand in God's stead, with power to admit to heaven or to consign to hell, became, in many cases, a conspirator with kings and princes to inthrall mankind. As an illustration of this infamous perversion of Christianity, it may be mentioned, that, early in the fourteenth century, Pope Boniface designed to get up a magnificent celebration in honor of the popedom.

He appointed a jubilee at Rome. As an inducement to lead an innumerable band to cluster in homage around him, he promised that all who came to Rome to attend the jubilee should not only have their past sins pardoned, but should also receive an indulgence, or, as it was popularly understood, permission to commit any sins they wished for a limited time to come. We easily believe that which we wish to believe. The proud and dissolute barons of Europe were glad to accept a doctrine by which they could so easily escape the penalty of their enormous sins. They were also only too eager to support the pope in all his pretensions, receiving in return his powerful, almost supernatural influence in holding the fanatic peasantry in subjection to their will.

At this magnificent jubilee the pope led the procession, dressed in imperial robes. Two swords, the emblems of temporal and of spiritual power, and the globe, the emblem of universal sovereignty, were carried before him. A herald went in advance, crying,—

"Peter, behold thy successor! Christ, behold thy vicar upon earth!" Such crimes not unfrequently in this life meet with conspicuous punishment. Pope Boniface became insane, broke from his keepers, and foaming at the mouth, and gnashing his teeth, died uttering the most horrid blasphemies.

After the death of Boniface, Philip, King of France, surnamed the Handsome, who was then the most powerful monarch in Christendom, bribed a majority of the cardinals to elect one of his creatures to the pontifical chair. There was a vile, unscrupulous courtier in the palace, who had been promoted to the high ecclesiastical position of Archbishop of Bordeaux. He made as little

pretence to piety as did the hounds he followed in the chase. The king summoned the archbishop, whose name was Bernard de Goth, to meet him at one of his hunting-lodges in the forest. There he said to him,—

"Archbishop, I have power to make you pope if I choose. If you will promise me six favors which I shall ask of you as pope, I will confer upon you that dignity."

The astonished and overjoyed archbishop threw himself at the king's feet, saying, "My lord, it is for you to command, for me to obey. I shall be always ready to do your will."

"The six special favors I have to ask are these: first, that you will reconcile me entirely with the Church, that I may be pardoned for my arrest of Pope Boniface VIII.; second, that you will give me and all my supporters the communion; third, that you will grant me tithes of the clergy for five years, to meet the expenses of the war in Flanders; fourth, that you will destroy the memory of Boniface VIII.; fifth, that you will confer the dignity of cardinal upon Messrs. Jacobo, Piero, and others of my friends. The sixth favor I reserve for the proper time and place: it is a great and secret thing."

The archbishop, having taken the most solemn oaths to grant these requests, ascended, by the intrigues of the king, the papal throne, with the title of Clement V. He became as obsequiously the servant of the King of France as any slave is submissive to his master. The king and his pope joined hands to oppress and rob the world.

"His Holiness Clement V. was, therefore, the thrall and servant of Philip le Bel. No office was too lowly or sacrifice too large for the grateful pontiff: he became, in fact, a citizen of France, and a subject of the crown. He delivered over the clergy to the relentless hands of the king. He gave him tithes of all their livings. As the Count of Flanders owed money to Philip which he had no means of paying, the generosity of the pope came to the rescue; and he gave tithes of the Flemish clergy to the bankrupt count, in order to enable him to pay his debt to the exacting monarch. The pope did not reduce his own demands in consideration of the subsidies given to those powers: he completed, indeed, the ruin the royal tax-gatherers began; for he travelled in more than imperial state from end to end of France, and ate bishop and abbot and prior and prebendary out of house and home."[203]

Christendom, then miserably poor, became impoverished by their exactions. These imperial robbers turned to the Jews, and robbed them mercilessly. The unarmed peasantry could present no resistance to the steel-clad warriors mounted on powerful chargers; which steeds were also caparisoned in coats of mail. These knights, in their impenetrable armor, could plunge upon almost any multitude of the peasantry, and disperse them like sheep when wolves rush into the fold. But it is not always that the battle is to the strong. We can often see in history the indications of God's retributive providence. There were seasons when these proud knights fell before their despised victims.

In the beginning of the fourteenth century an army of these mailed warriors entered Flanders, hacking and hewing in all directions. The manufacturing citizens at the town of Courtrai secretly dug a blind ditch in the path of the invaders. The impetuous knights, breathing through their

cross-barred visors, and goggling through the holes left for their eyes, spurred their horses forward in solid mass, and fell headlong, horse and rider, with their heavy and inextricable weight of armor, into the trap set for them. It was a horrible massacre,—an avalanche of overthrown, struggling horses and human bodies cased in steel.

The momentum of the vast mass was such, that their onward movement could not be checked. The pressure behind forced forward those in the advance, till thousands were plunged into the abyss, writhing, struggling, choking, like vipers in a vase. The infuriated peasants and mechanics on the other side of the ditch, with clubs and every other available weapon, beat out the brains of those who endeavored to escape from the maelstrom of death. This enormous slaughter nearly depopulated France of its lords and princes.

The corruptions which had crept into the secularized Church more and more appalled the more devout both of the clergy and of the laity. True men began to speak loudly against these corruptions, and continued so to speak, notwithstanding all the denunciations of temporal and ecclesiastical power.

The leading cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, appointed by infamous popes and kings, were almost universally irreligious and corrupt men. There were some noble exceptions; but sincere piety was more generally found only with the more humble of the clergy, and with the common people.

In order to raise money, Pope Leo X., early in the sixteenth century, devised the plan of selling indulgences. A regular tariff of prices was fixed for the pardon of all crimes, from murder downwards. If a man wished to commit any outrage, or to indulge in any forbidden wickedness, he could do so at a stipulated price, and receive from the pope a full pardon. These permits, or indulgences as they were called, were peddled all over Europe, and an immense revenue was gathered from them. There was one man, by the name of John Tetzel, a brazen-faced miscreant, who made himself very notorious as a peddler of these indulgences. He traversed Northern France and Germany, engaged in this nefarious traffic.

In a cart gorgeously embellished, and accompanied by a musical band, he would approach some populous town, and tarry somewhere in the suburbs until his emissaries had entered the place and informed the inhabitants of the signal honor which awaited them from the advent of a nuncio from the pope with pardons for sin at his disposal.

All the church-bells would be set ringing for joy: the whole population would be thrown into the greatest excitement to receive the brilliant pageant. At the annotated hour the cavalcade entered, bedizened with all the gorgeous finery of a modern menagerie display. Tetzel carried, in the capacious box of his peddler's cart, the parchment certificates of pardon for every imaginary sin. Murder, adultery, theft, sacrilege, blasphemy,—every crime had its specified price.

One could purchase pardon or absolution for any crime which had already been committed, or he could purchase permission to commit the crime if it were one he wished to perpetrate. With music and banners the procession advanced to the public square. Here Tetzel, mounted upon his box, with all the volubility of a modern mountebank palmed off his wares upon the eager crowd.

“My brothers,” said this prince of impostors, “God has sent me to you with his last and greatest gift. The Church is in need of money. I am empowered by the pope, God’s vicegerent, to absolve you from any and every crime you may have committed, no matter what it may be. The moment the money tinkles in the bottom of the box, your soul shall be as pure as that of the babe unborn.

“I can also grant you indulgence; so that any sins you may commit hereafter shall all be blotted out. More than this: if you have any friends now in purgatory suffering in those awful flames, I am empowered, in consideration of the money you grant the Church in this its hour of need, to cause that soul to be immediately released from purgatory, and to be borne on angel-wings to heaven.”

Enlightened as the masses of the people are at the present day, we can hardly imagine the effect these representations produced upon an ignorant and superstitious people who had ever been trained to the belief that the pope was equal in power to God. These peddlings of indulgences for sin were carried on all over Europe, and enormous sums of money were thus raised. The certificates, which were issued like government-bonds, ran in this form:—

“I, by the authority of Jesus Christ, his blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and the most holy pope, absolve thee from all thy sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they may be. I remit to thee all punishment which thou dost deserve in purgatory on their account, and restore thee to the innocence and purity thou didst possess at baptism; so that, when thou diest, the gates of punishment shall be shut against thee, and the gates of paradise shall be thrown wide open.”

It was this sale of indulgences which opened the eyes of Luther and other devout men to the corruptions which had crept into the Church. We have not space here to enter into the details of the great Protestant Reformation which ensued: the reader can find in the pages of D’Aubigné, which are easily accessible, a graphic narrative of its incidents. Notwithstanding the ferocious hostility of popes and kings, the Reformation spread rapidly among the masses of the people; and several sovereigns and princes of high rank, disgusted with the arrogance of the popes, espoused its principles. The Emperor Maximilian wrote to one of the leading men in the Saxon court in reference to Luther,—

“All the popes I have had any thing to do with have been rogues and cheats. The game with the priests is beginning. What your monk is doing is not to be despised. Take care of him: it may happen that we shall have need of him.”

Providentially, the Elector of Saxony was the friend and protector of Luther. The intrepid monk wrote to the pope a remonstrance against the iniquities which were practised at Rome.

“You have three or four cardinals,” he wrote, “of learning and faith; but what are these three or four in so vast a crowd of infidels and reprobates? The days of Rome are numbered, and the anger of God has been breathed forth upon her. She hates councils, she dreads reform, and will not hear of a check being placed on her desperate impiety.”

A diet was summoned at Worms, composed of the princes and potentates of the great German empire. The Emperor Charles V. presided. Such a spectacle the world had never witnessed

before. Luther was summoned to appear before this body to be tried for heresy. In those treacherous days it was not deemed safe for Luther to place himself in the hands of his enemies, though he had obtained a safe-conduct from the emperor. His friends urged him not to go to Worms. He replied,—

"If there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses, I would still go there."

Before that august assembly, which had predetermined his condemnation and death, Luther made an eloquent defence, which he concluded in the following words:—

"Let me, then, be refuted and convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures, or by the clearest arguments; otherwise I cannot and will not recant; for it is neither safe nor expedient to act against conscience. Here I take my stand. I can do no otherwise, so help me God! Amen."

He was suffered to depart under his safe-conduct; but he was closely followed, and measures were taken to arrest him the moment his safe-conduct should expire.

As, on his return home, he was passing through the gloomy paths of a forest, some horsemen suddenly appeared, seized him, dressed him in the disguise of military costume, put on him a false beard, mounted him on a horse, and drove rapidly away.

"His friends were anxious about his fate; for a dreadful sentence had been uttered against him by the emperor on the day when his safe-conduct expired, forbidding any one to sustain or shelter him, and ordering all persons to arrest and bring him into prison to await the judgment he deserved."[204]

To rescue him from this doom, the Elector of Saxony had sent these troops, who conveyed him secretly, but in safety, to the Castle of Wartburg. Thus, while it was generally supposed that he had been waylaid and slain, he was peacefully prosecuting his studies within the walls of the fortress, safe from his foes.

The conflict between the reformers and the opponents of reform soon became the all-engrossing question of the age. Many were of the opinion that the end of the world was at hand. The whole continent of Europe was shaken by religions and political commotions. The religious question rallied powerful princes on the opposite sides. The Turks, in apparently overpowering numbers, were thundering at the gates of many of the Eastern cities. France was a maelstrom of excitement. Bigoted Spain declared "heresy" punishable with death. Terrible earthquakes shook the globe. A large portion of Lisbon in a moment was whelmed in ruin, burying thirty thousand of the inhabitants beneath the *débris*. An enormous ocean-wave swept the coast of Holland, consigning four hundred thousand people to a watery grave.

In the year 1530, the Emperor Charles V. determined to enforce by military power the oppressive decrees adopted by the Diet at Worms. But the Reformation in Germany had made extraordinary progress. Many German princes had adopted its principles, and were ready to draw the sword in its defence. These princes united in a solemn protest against this papal intolerance. This protest

was signed by such men as John, Elector of Saxony, George, Margrave of Brandenburg, two Dukes of Brunswick, the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, and the governors of twenty-four imperial cities. From this formidable protest, which was issued in the spring of the year 1529, the reformers took the name of Protestants, which they retain at the present day.

The Emperor Charles V., alarmed by this protest, after several long interviews with the pope, assembled a new diet at Augsburg in April, 1530. Hoping by menaces or bribes to silence the voice of Protestantism, he assumed the air of candor. "I have convened," he said, "this assembly to consider the difference of opinion upon the subject of religion. It is my intention to hear both parties impartially, to examine their respective arguments, and to reform what requires to be reformed, that there may be in future only one pure and simple faith, and that, as all are the disciples of the same Jesus, all may form one and the same church."

The Protestants appointed Luther and Melancthon to draw up a confession of their faith. Luther was a stern, unyielding man: Melancthon was amiable and pliant. Though they agreed in their confession, it did not exactly suit either. It was a little too yielding for Luther, and too uncompromising for Melancthon. Subsequently the document was revised by Melancthon, and somewhat softened to meet his own views. As thus modified, it was adopted by the German people who took the title of German Reformed. The Lutherans adhered to the original document.

The emperor, in co-operation with the pope, now threw off the mask, and resolved by force of arms to compel all to conform to the doctrines and usages of the Papal Church. He began to gather his armies to crush the Protestants. They entered into a league for mutual protection. A civil, religious war was just about to burst upon Germany, when the Turks, with an army three hundred thousand strong, commenced the ascent of the Danube. The emperor, alarmed by this terrible invasion, was compelled to call upon the Protestants for aid; but they feared the dungeons and flame of the Papal Inquisition more than they did the cimeter of the Turk. They knew full well, that, as soon as the Turks were repelled, the emperor would turn the energies of his sword against them. Still Germany, Protestant and Catholic, had every thing to fear from the ravages and outrages of the barbarian Turk.

After long negotiations, the Protestants consented to co-operate with the emperor in repelling the invasion, upon receiving his solemn pledge to grant them freedom of conscience and of worship. Charles was astonished at the energy with which the Protestants came forward to the war. They even tripled the contingents which they had promised, and fell upon the invaders with such intrepidity as to drive them back pell-mell to the banks of the Bosphorus. Charles then, in violation of his pledge, began to proceed against the Protestants. But they, armed, organized, and flushed with victory, were in no mood to submit to this perfidy. Some of the more considerate of the Papal party, foreseeing the torrents of blood that must flow, and the uncertain issue of the conflict, succeeded in promoting a compromise.

Still Charles was merely temporizing. He at once entered into vigorous efforts to marshal a force sufficiently powerful to crush the Protestants. He concluded a truce with the Turks for five years; he formed a league with Francis King of France, who promised him the whole military force of his kingdom. In the mean time, the Protestants were busy wielding those moral powers more potent than sabres or artillery, than chains or flames. Eloquent preachers were everywhere

proclaiming the corruptions of the Papacy. The new doctrines of the Protestants involved the principles of civil as well as religious liberty. The most intelligent and conscientious all over Europe were rapidly embracing the new doctrine. Several of the ablest of the Catholic bishops espoused the Protestant cause. The emperor was quite appalled when he learned that the Archbishop of Cologne, who was one of the electors of the empire, had joined the Protestants. So many of the German princes had adopted the principles of the Reformation, that they had a majority in the electoral diet. In Switzerland, also, Protestantism had won the majority of the people. Still, throughout Europe, Catholicism was in the vast ascendency.

Charles resolved to attempt by stratagem that which he recoiled from undertaking by force. He proposed to the Protestants that a general council should be convened at Trent, and that each party should pledge itself to abide by the decision of a majority of votes. The council, however, was to be summoned by the pope; and Charles, by co-operation with the pope, had made arrangements that the overwhelming majority of the council should be opposed to the reformers. The Protestants, of course, rejected so silly a proposition.

Still the emperor and the pope resolved to hold the council, and to enforce its decrees by their armies. The pope furnished the emperor with thirteen thousand troops and over a million of dollars. Charles raised two large armies of his own subjects,—one in the Low Countries, and one in the States of Austria. His brother Ferdinand, King of Hungary and of Bohemia, also raised two armies of co-operation, one from each of those countries. The King of France mustered his confederate legions, and loudly proclaimed that the day of vengeance had come, in which the Protestants were to be annihilated. The pope issued a decree, in which he offered the pardon of all their sins to those who should engage in this war of extermination of the Protestants.

The reformers were in consternation: the forces marshalled against them seemed to be resistless. But Providence does not always side with the heavy battalions. With energy which surprised both themselves and their foes, they raised an army of eighty thousand men, nearly every individual of whom was a hero, fully comprehending the cause for which he had drawn the sword, and ready to lay down his life in its defence. Battles ensued, blood flowed, and a wail of misery spread over the unhappy realms, which we have no space here to describe. Charles was apparently triumphant. He crushed the Protestant league, subjected the pope to his will, and was about to convene a council to confirm all he had done, when wide-spread disaffection, which had long been slumbering, blazed forth all over the German empire.

The intolerance of the haughty monarch caused a general burst of indignation against him. Maurice, King of Saxony, which was the most powerful State of the Germanic confederacy, headed the insurrection. France, annoyed by the arrogance of the emperor, readily joined the standard of Maurice. The Protestants in crowds flocked to his ranks; for he had issued a declaration that he had taken up arms to prevent the destruction of the Protestant religion, to defend the liberties of Germany, and to rescue from the dungeon innocent men imprisoned for their faith alone. Nominal Catholics were found shoulder to shoulder in co-operation with the Protestants. Whole provinces rushed to join this army. Maurice was regarded as the advocate of civil and religious liberty. Imperial towns threw open their gates joyfully to Maurice. In one month, the aspect of every thing was changed.

The Catholic ecclesiastics, who were assembling at Trent, alarmed at this new attitude of affairs, dissolved the assembly, and fled precipitately to their homes. The emperor was at Innspruck—seated in his arm-chair, with his limbs bandaged in flannel, enfeebled, and suffering from a severe attack of the gout—when the intelligence of this sudden and overwhelming reverse reached him. He was astonished, and utterly confounded. In weakness and pain, unable to leave his couch, with his treasury exhausted, his army widely scattered, and so pressed by their foes that they could not be concentrated, there was nothing left for him but to endeavor to beguile Maurice into a truce. But Maurice was as much at home in all the arts of cunning as was the emperor, and, instead of being beguiled, contrived to entrap his antagonist. This was a new and very salutary experience for Charles. It is a very novel sensation for a successful rogue to be the dupe of roguery.

Maurice pressed on, his army gathering force at every step. He entered the Tyrol, swept through all its valleys, and took possession of all its castles and sublime fastnesses; and the blasts of his bugles reverberated through the cliffs of the mountains, ever sounding the charge and announcing victory, never signalling a defeat. The emperor was reduced to the terrible humiliation of saving himself from capture only by flight. He could scarcely credit the statement when he received the appalling tidings that his foes were within a day's march of Innspruck, and that a squadron of horse might at any hour cut off his retreat.

It was night when this communication was made to him,—a dark and stormy night,—the 20th of May, 1552. The rain fell in torrents, and the wind howled through the fir-trees and through the crags of the Alps. The tortures of the gout would not allow him to mount his horse, neither could he bear the jolting in a carriage over the rough roads. Some attendants wrapped the monarch in blankets, took him into the courtyard of the palace, and placed him upon a litter. Servants led the way with lanterns; and thus, through the inundated and storm-swept defiles, they fled with their helpless sovereign through the long hours of the tempestuous night, not daring to stop one moment, lest they should hear behind them the iron hoofs of their pursuers.

What a change for one short month to produce! What a comment upon earthly grandeur! It is well for man, in the hour of exultant prosperity, to be humble: he knows not how soon he may fall. Instructive, indeed, is the apostrophe of Cardinal Wolsey, illustrated as the truth he uttered is by almost every page of history:—

"This is the state of man: To-day he puts forth

The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms:

The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,

And—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely

His greatness is a-ripening—nips his root;

And then he falls as I do."

The fugitive emperor did not venture to stop for refreshment or repose until he had reached the strong town of Villach in Corinthia. The troops of Maurice soon entered the city which Charles had abandoned, and the imperial palace was surrendered to pillage. Heroic courage, indomitable perseverance, always command respect. These are noble qualities, though they may be exerted in a bad cause. The will of Charles was unconquerable. In these hours of disaster, tortured with pain, driven from his palace, impoverished, and borne upon his litter in humiliating flight before his foes, he was just as determined to enforce his plan as in the most brilliant hour of victory.[205]

The emperor was at length constrained, in view of new menaces from the Turks, to assent to the celebrated Treaty of Passau, on the 2d of August, 1552. The spirit of true toleration was then scarcely known in the world. After long debate, in which both parties were often at the point of grasping arms, it was agreed that the Protestants should enjoy the free exercise of their religion in the places specified by the Augsburg Confession. In all other places Protestant princes might prohibit the Catholic religion in their States, and Catholic princes might prohibit the Protestant religion; but in each case the expelled party were to be at liberty to sell their property, and to emigrate without molestation to some State where their religion was dominant. Even this wretched burlesque of toleration was so offensive to the pope, that he threatened to excommunicate the emperor and his brother Ferdinand if they did not immediately declare these decrees to be null and void throughout their dominions.

Charles V. unquestionably inherited a taint of insanity. His mother, the unhappy Joanna, daughter of Isabella, Queen of Spain, after lingering for years in the most insupportable glooms of delirium, died on the 4th of April, 1555. Her imperial son had already become the victim of extreme despondency. Harassed by disappointments, mortified by reverses, and annoyed by the undutiful conduct of his son, he shut himself up in his room, refusing to see any company but his sister and servants, and rendering himself insupportable to them by his petulance and moroseness. For nine months he did not sign a paper. He was but fifty-five years of age, but was prematurely old, and the victim of many depressing diseases. There was probably not a more wretched man in all Europe than the Emperor Charles V.

He resolved, by abdicating the throne, to escape from the cares which tortured him. The important ceremony took place with much funereal pomp on the 4th of April, 1555.

The emperor had fixed upon the Convent of St. Justus, in Estremadura, Spain, as the place of his retreat. The massive pile was far removed from the busy scenes of the world, imbosomed among hills covered with wide-spread and gloomy forests, with a mountain rivulet murmuring by its walls. There is considerable diversity in the accounts transmitted to us of convent-life. According to the best evidence which can now be obtained, it was as follows:—

The emperor caused to be erected within the walls of the convent a small building, two stories high, with four rooms on each floor. These rooms, tapestried in mourning, were comfortably furnished. Choice paintings ornamented the walls, and the emperor was served from silver plate. Charles was not of a literary turn of mind, and a few devotional books constituted his only library. A pleasant garden, with a high enclosure which sheltered the recluse from all observation, invited the emperor to gravelled walks fringed with flowers.

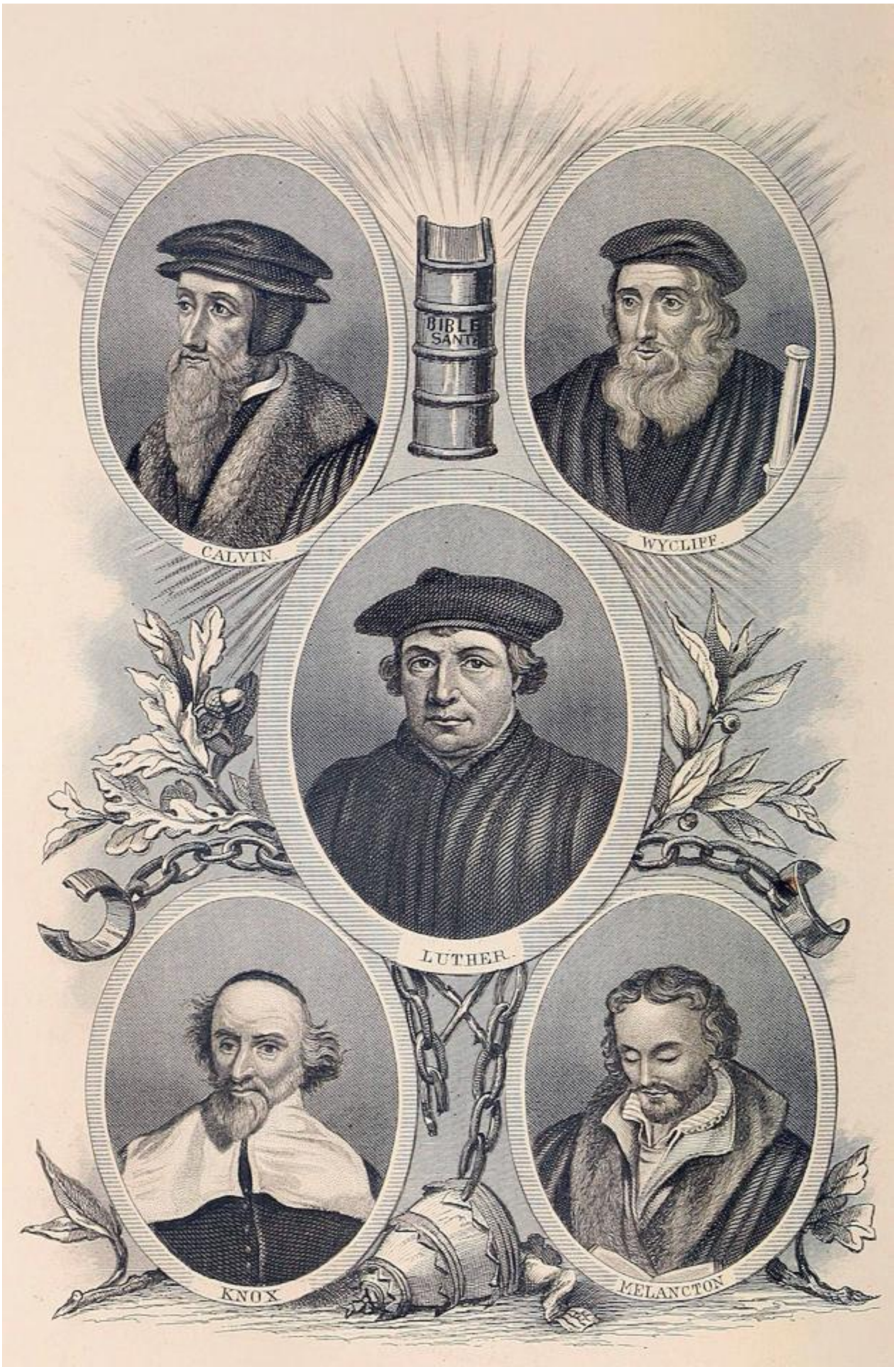
The days passed monotonously. The emperor attended mass every morning in the chapel, and dined at an early hour in the refectory of the convent. After dinner he listened for a short time to the reading of some book of devotion. He was scrupulously attentive to the fasts and festivals of the Church, and, every evening, listened to a sermon in the chapel. In penance for his sins, he scourged himself frequently with such severity of flagellation, that the cords of the whip were stained with blood.

Being fond of mechanical pursuits, he employed many hours in carving puppets and children's playthings, and constructed some articles of furniture. His room was filled with timepieces of every variety of construction. It is said, that, when he found how impossible it was to make any two of them keep precisely the same time, he exclaimed upon his past folly in endeavoring to compel all men to think alike upon the subject of religion.

His bodily sufferings were severe from the gout, by which he was helplessly crippled. Most of the time he spent in extreme dejection. It was evident that his health was rapidly failing, and that, ere long, he must sink into the grave. Under these circumstances, he adopted the extraordinary idea of rehearsing his own funeral. As the story has generally come down to us, all the melancholy arrangements for his burial were made, and the coffin provided. The emperor reclined upon his bed as if dead: he was wrapped in his shroud, and placed in his coffin. The monks and all the inmates of the convent attended in mourning; the bells tolled, requiems were chanted by the choir, the funeral-service was read; and then the emperor, as if dead, was placed in the tomb of the chapel, and the congregation retired.

The monarch, after remaining some time in his coffin to impress himself with what it is to die and be buried, rose from the tomb, kneeled before the altar in the chill church for some time in worship, and then returned to his room to pass the night in meditation and prayer. The shock and chill of these melancholy scenes were too much for the feeble frame and weakened mind of the monarch. He was seized with a fever, and in a few days breathed his last; and his spirit ascended to that tribunal where all must answer for the deeds done in the body.

The reformers of the sixteenth century, in the various countries of Europe, have acquired renown which will never die. We give a group containing the portraits of five, who were among the most illustrious of these men, with the accompanying brief sketch of their lives.


BIBLE
SAINTE
CALVIN.
WYCLIFF.
LUTHER.
KNOX
MELANCTON

REFORMERS OF THE 16th CENTURY

John Calvin was born at Noyon, in Picardy, one of the northern provinces of France, on the 10th of July, 1509. In his earliest years he developed remarkable intellect; and his father, who was a cooper, dedicated him to the Church. When twelve years of age, he received a benefice in the cathedral of his native city; and, when but eighteen years old, was appointed to a cure. While still pursuing in Paris his theological studies, the great truths of the reformers dawned upon his mind, and so disturbed him, that he renounced his intention of serving in the priesthood, and devoted himself to the study of the law.

When but twenty-two years of age, he published a Latin commentary upon the "De Clementia" of Seneca; and, being suspected of favoring the new doctrine of the reformers, he was compelled to flee from Paris. The Canon of Angoulême gave him refuge; and under his hospitable roof he commenced writing his world-renowned work, "The Institutes of the Christian Religion." He devoted two years to this treatise, and in the mean time repaired to Navarre. Queen Margaret of Navarre, who was the cordial patron of learned men, received him hospitably. Here Calvin continued to pursue his studies, and made the acquaintance of many of the most eminent men of Europe in all the various branches of learning. After a time, returning to France, he was again compelled to seek safety in flight; and he established himself at Basle.

Here he published, in August, 1535, his "Institutes." It was a carefully-drawn-up confession of the faith of those who in France were condemned to the most terrible persecution, and even to the stake, for their opinions. The excitement and peril of the times were such, that the work had an immense circulation among the reformers all over Europe, and placed Calvin at the head of the advocates of the new doctrines.

"Scattered far and wide through schools, the castles of the *noblesse*, the houses of the citizens, even the workshops of the people, 'The Institutes' became the most powerful of preachers. Around this book the Protestants gathered as around a standard. They found every thing there,—doctrine, discipline, church organization."[206]

The work was dedicated to the king, Francis I. In this dedication Calvin said, "It is your office, sire, not to turn away your ears or your heart from so just a defence, especially since it is a question of great importance to know how the glory of God shall be maintained on the earth. Oh subject worthy of your attention, worthy of your jurisdiction, worthy of your royal throne!"

It is said that the king did not deign even to read this epistle. In 1536 Calvin was appointed pastor of a church, and professor of a theological school, in Geneva. His voluminous writings continued to attract the attention of all Europe, and the French Protestants generally took the name of Calvinists. The amount of labor performed by Calvin seems almost incredible. He preached daily, delivered theological lectures three times a week, and attended all the meetings of the Consistory of the Association of Ministers, and was the leading mind in the councils. He was continually consulted for advice upon questions of law and theology. He issued a vast number of pamphlets in defence of his opinions, commentaries on the Bible, and maintained a very extensive correspondence with distinguished men all over Europe. Besides his numerous printed sermons, he left in the library of Geneva two thousand and twenty-five in manuscript.[207]

The burning of Michael Servetus at the stake for heresy is often urged as an irreparable blot upon the character of Calvin. Candid men will attribute much of the intolerance of individuals in those days to the spirit of the times. Speaking upon this subject, M. G. de Félice says very judiciously,—

"The execution of Michael Servetus has furnished the subject of a disputation constantly renewed. An able historian of our day, M. Mignet, has just devoted a long and learned dissertation to it. It would lead us entirely beyond our plan to enter into these details. 1. Servetus was not an ordinary heretic. He was a bold pantheist, and outraged the dogma of all Christian communions by saying that God in three persons was a Cerberus,—a monster with three heads. 2. He had already been condemned to death by the Catholic doctors at Vienna, in Dauphiny. 3. The affair was judged, not by Calvin, but by the magistrates of Geneva; and, if it is objected that his advice must have influenced their decision, it is necessary to recollect that the councils of the other reformed cantons of Switzerland approved the sentence with a unanimous voice. 4. It was, in fine, of the highest interest for the Reformation to separate distinctly its cause from that of such an unbeliever as Servetus. The Catholic Church, which in our day accuses Calvin of having participated in his condemnation, much more would have accused him in the sixteenth century with having solicited his acquittal."[208]

Naturally, Calvin was impatient and irascible. In one of his letters to Bucer, he writes,—

"I have no harder battles against my sins, which are great and numerous, than those in which I seek to conquer my impatience. I have not yet gained the mastery over this raging beast."

Calvin died the 27th of May, 1564, in the fifty-fifth year of his age. He was of middle stature, pale countenance, brilliant eyes, and was extremely abstemious in his habits of living. For many years, he partook of but one meal a day. In the will which he dictated a short time before his death, he called God to witness the sincerity of his faith, and rendered thanks to him for having employed him in the service of Jesus Christ.

Philip Melancthon was alike distinguished for his native force of character, his intellectual culture, his piety, and his amiability. He was born in the palatinate of the Rhine, on the 16th of February, 1497. In early boyhood, his progress in study, especially in the acquisition of the ancient languages, was very extraordinary. At the age of thirteen, he entered the University at Heidelberg. Here he so distinguished himself by his scholarship, that in one year he took the degree of bachelor of arts, and became tutor to several of the sons of the nobility. In 1512, when fifteen years of age, he repaired to the University of Tübingen, where he devoted himself with great assiduity to the study of theology. At the age of eighteen he received the degree of master of arts, gave lectures on the Greek and Latin authors, and published a Greek grammar. His erudition and eloquence gave him such celebrity, that, when twenty-two years of age, he was invited to Wittenberg as professor of the Greek language and literature. Here he warmly embraced the cause of evangelical truth as advocated by the reformers. His sound judgment, rich classical taste, ardent piety, and fervid imagination, gave a peculiar charm to every thing which proceeded from his pen. Bringing these qualities into alliance with the energy, impetuosity, and enterprise of Luther, he contributed greatly to the spread of the doctrines of the Reformation. His mild spirit in some degree softened the rigor of Luther, and his writings were universally

admired by the Protestant world. Associated with Luther, he drew up the celebrated "Confession" of Augsburg in 1530. This, with the "Apology" for it which he subsequently composed, gave him renown through all Europe.

"He was nowhere more amiable than in the bosom of his family. No one who saw him for the first time would have recognized the great reformer in his almost diminutive figure, which always continued meagre from his abstemiousness and industry. But his high, arched, and open forehead, and his bright, handsome eyes, announced the energetic, lively mind which this slight covering enclosed, and which lighted up his countenance when he spoke. In his conversation, pleasantries were intermingled with the most sagacious remarks; and no one left him without having been instructed and pleased. His ready benevolence, which was the fundamental trait of his character, embraced all who approached him. Open and unsuspicious, he always spoke from the heart. Piety, a dignified simplicity of manners, generosity, were to him so natural, that it was difficult for him to ascribe opposite qualities to any man."209

For nearly half a century, Melancthon was one of the most prominent actors in that tremendous conflict between the Papal Church and Protestant reform which then agitated all Europe. Few men have been so universally and ardently loved. Notwithstanding the vehemence of Luther's character, and the mildness of Melancthon's spirit, the friendship between these two remarkable men continued unabated through life. From all parts of Europe students flocked to Wittenberg, lured there by the mental and moral attractions of Melancthon.

It is recorded of this illustrious man, that, in the commencement of his ministry, he fancied that no one could resist the glad tidings of the gospel. With powers of eloquence which fascinated thronging audiences, he depicted the love of God, the joys of heaven, the companionship of angels,—all offered to the repentant sinner without money and without price; but the multitudes who listened with delight to his glowing descriptions and his powerful appeals scattered from the church with no disposition manifested to give their hearts to the Saviour, or to consecrate their lives to his service. At length, the preacher, around whose pulpit the incense of popular applause was continually ascending, was heard to say in bitterness of lamentation, "Old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon."

This great and good man died at Wittenberg on the 19th of April, 1560, in the sixty-third year of his age.

Martin Luther has generally been regarded as the father of the Reformation. He was certainly one of the greatest men of the sixteenth century. He was the son of very poor parents, his father being a miner; and was born at Eisleben, Nov. 10, 1483. Martin's childhood was simply such as was to be expected in the home of poor but very religious parents. At the age of fourteen he was sent to school at Magdeburg; but his destitution was so great, that he often obtained a few pence, which contributed essentially to his support, by singing in the streets. Still he made rapid progress in study; and, being taken under the care of a maternal relation, at the age of eighteen he entered the University of Erfurt. Here the closeness of his application and his attainments soon attracted the attention of his teachers.

The Bible at that time was a sealed book to the laity. Luther, to his great delight, found a copy in the Latin language in the library of the university. He studied it with the utmost diligence, and became so interested in its contents, that he resolved to devote himself to the study of divinity. The sudden death of a friend at this time, who fell dead at his side, so impressed him with melancholy emotions, that he decided to withdraw from the world, and immure himself in the glooms of the cloister. Accordingly, he entered the monastery of the Augustines at Erfurt in the year 1505, and patiently submitted to all the rigors and penances imposed upon him by his superiors. But he was tortured with a sense of sin: none of his self-inflicted sufferings appeased his conscience. His mental agitation threw him into severe and dangerous illness. He felt that he had no good works upon which he could rely as atonement for his many infirmities, and his good sense enabled him to contemplate with thorough disgust the traffic in indulgences.

But a gleam of new light dawned upon his mind as one of the brothers spoke to him of salvation from sin and its penalty through faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ,—salvation through faith, and not by works.

The high intellectual endowments of Luther could not be concealed. The provincial of the order released him from the menial duties of the cloister that he might devote himself to the study of theology. In 1507 he was ordained a Catholic priest; and, one year after, was made professor of philosophy in the University of Wittenberg. Here his commanding intellect, and independence of character, collected around him a large number of disciples. A visit to Rome in 1510 revealed to him the corruption of the clergy, and utterly destroyed his reverence for the pope. Upon his return to Wittenberg, at the age of twenty-nine, he was made a doctor in theology, and became a preacher.

At this time the impudent charlatan Tetzel was traversing Germany, peddling out his indulgences. The zeal and indignation of Luther were aroused: he preached against the outrage vehemently, and published ninety-five propositions, which contained an irrefutable attack upon the infamous traffic. The propositions were at once declared to be heretical; but no arts of flattery, or terrors of menace, could induce the fearless Luther to recant. Pamphlet after pamphlet proceeded from his pen, assailing the corruptions of the Church; while thousands gathered to listen to his bold denunciations from the pulpit. In 1520 the pope issued a bull of excommunication against Luther and his friends, and his writings were publicly burned at Rome, Cologne, and Louvain. Luther, unintimidated, publicly burned the bull of Papal excommunication at Wittenberg on the 10th of December, 1520.

Several of the German princes, and many of the most illustrious nobles, had embraced the doctrines of Luther; so that he was not left without powerful support. Still the world was amazed at the boldness of an obscure monk, who thus ventured to bid defiance to the Catholic clergy, to the fanatic emperor of Germany, and to the pope himself. Luther was summoned by the emperor to appear at the Diet of Worms, and was provided with a safe-conduct from his Majesty. Yet his friends trembled in fear of his assassination. It was upon this occasion, when urged not to expose himself to such danger, that he gave his memorable reply:—

“If there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses, I would still go there.”

As Luther approached Worms, when within three miles of the city, a cavalcade of two thousand citizens came out to honor him with their escort. The Emperor Charles V. presided at the diet. The body was composed of the Archduke Ferdinand, six electors, twenty-four dukes, seven margraves, and many princes, counts, lords, and ambassadors. Luther's defence was considered by his friends unanswerable; and his foes seemed to think that the only reply to be made was by the dagger of the assassin. To rescue him from this peril, his powerful friends kidnapped him on his return, as we have mentioned, and conveyed him to the Castle of Wartburg, where for ten months he was concealed. These months of retirement he devoted to the translation of the New Testament into German.

But his impetuous spirit chafed to escape from the prison-bars which protected him. Through a thousand perils he at length returned to Wittenberg, and there commenced anew his life of tireless zeal in assailing the corruptions of the Church. He drew up a new liturgy for the service of his followers, expurgated of its empty forms; urged the abolition of monasteries, which had mainly become the resort of ignorance and vice; and trampled under his feet the prejudices of papal ecclesiasticism by marrying a nun, Catherine von Bora. Luther was forty-two years of age when he took this important step.

The virtues as well as the imperfections of this extraordinary man were those of impetuosity, courage, self-reliance, and indomitable zeal. He was often very severe. "The severity which he used in the defence of his faith by no means diminishes the merit of his constancy. An apology may easily be found for the frequent rudeness of his expressions in the prevailing mode of speaking and thinking; in the nature of his undertaking, which required continual contest; in the provocations with which he was continually assailed; in his frequent sickness; and in his excitable imagination."[210]

Even the enemies of Luther, who so bitterly censure the severity often found in his writings, are constrained to admit that he was impelled by honest and honorable motives. Luther says of himself,—

"I was born to fight with devils and factions: this is the reason that my books are so boisterous and stormy. It is my business to remove obstructions, to cut down thorns, to fill up quagmires, and to open and make straight the paths. But, if I must necessarily have some failing, let me rather speak the truth with too great severity than once to act the hypocrite, and conceal the truth."

No one can be informed of the amount of labor performed by Luther, without astonishment. While preaching several times each week, and often every day, conducting a very extensive and important correspondence with the reformers all over Europe, he was one of the most prolific writers of any age, and rendered his name immortal by translating the Bible into the German language. This latter work alone one would deem sufficient to have engrossed the most industrious energies for a lifetime. His admirable hymns are still sung in all the churches; and the tune of "Old Hundred," which he composed, will last while time endures. In the performance of such labors, he lived until he was sixty-three years of age. Just before he died, he wrote to a friend in the following pathetic strain:—

"Aged, worn out, weary, spiritless, and now blind of one eye, I long for a little rest and quietness. Yet I have as much to do, in writing and preaching and acting, as if I had never written or preached or acted. I am weary of the world, and the world is weary of me. The parting will be easy, like that of the guest leaving the inn. I pray only that God will be gracious to me in my last hour, and I shall quit the world without reluctance."

A few days after writing the above, Martin Luther died, at Eisleben,—on the 18th of February, 1546. He was buried in the Castle Church at Wittenberg.

John Wickliffe is often called "the morning star" of the Reformation. He was born in Yorkshire, England, about the year 1324. In his earliest years he developed unusual mental endowments, and graduated at Queen's College, Oxford, with high honors. At the age of thirty-two he published a treatise upon "The Last Age of the Church," in which he ventured to assail some of the assumptions of the pope, and severely to attack the encroachments of the mendicant friars. In 1372, Wickliffe, having received the title of D.D., delivered lectures on theology at Oxford with great applause. At that time a controversy was beginning to arise between the pope and Edward III., King of England. Edward, sustained by his parliament, refused to submit to the vassalage which the pope had exacted of his predecessors. Wickliffe with his pen very successfully defended the position taken by the king. He thus secured the favor of his monarch, but exasperated the pope, Gregory XI. Wickliffe was accused of heresy. The pope issued a bull, and nineteen articles of alleged false doctrine were drawn up against him. Gregory issued three bulls addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, ordering the seizure and imprisonment of Wickliffe.

In the mean time, Edward III. had died; but the British court and the populace of London rallied so enthusiastically around Wickliffe, that no judgment could be taken against him. Soon after this, Gregory XI. died; and all proceedings against the English reformer were dropped. But the zeal of Wickliffe was thoroughly aroused; and, encouraged by the powerful support he received from the British court and from the people, he assailed with increasing freedom the exorbitant pretensions of the court of Rome. Speaking of his labors, McIntosh says,—

"The new opinions on religion which now arose mingled with the general spirit of Christianity in promoting the progress of emancipation, and had their share in the few disorders which accompanied it. Wickliffe, the celebrated reformer, had become one of the most famous doctors of the English Church. His lettered education rendered him no stranger to the severity with which Dante and Chaucer had lashed the vices of the clergy without sparing the corruptions of the Roman see itself. His theological learning and mystical piety led him to reprobate the whole system of wealth and worldliness, by which a blind bounty had destroyed the apostolical simplicity and primitive humility of the Christian religion."

This eminent man, who in the end of the fourteenth century commenced the assault upon the corruptions of the court of Rome, died of a paralytic stroke on the 31st December, 1384. His doctrine and his spirit survived him, and paved the way for the final and entire separation of the Church of England from that of Rome. The exasperation which his writings created in the bosoms of the advocates of the Papacy may be inferred from the fact, that in the year 1425, forty-

one years after his death, the Council of Constance pronounced his writings heretical, and ordered his bones to be taken up and burned; which sentence was executed.

John Knox, who was the most distinguished of the advocates of the Reformation in Scotland, was born of an ancient family, at Gifford, East Lothian, in 1505. In early youth he took the degree of master of arts at St. Andrew's, and entered upon the study of theology. He soon became weary of studying the dogmas taught in the Catholic schools, and eagerly sought light in the plainer precepts of a more common-sense and practical philosophy. Thus instructed, he abandoned all thoughts of officiating in the Church of Rome, whose pageants and encroachments, both secular and ecclesiastical, disgusted him. Some of the doctrines of the reformers had already penetrated Scotland. Two of the lords who had embraced these principles employed him as tutor to their sons. Here he preached, not only to his pupils, but to others, who were drawn in ever-increasing numbers by his fervid eloquence.

The Catholic Church was still an immense power in Scotland; and Cardinal Beaton, Archbishop of St. Andrew's, commenced proceedings against Knox, which compelled him to take shelter in the Castle of St. Andrew's. Here, under powerful protection, he continued boldly to preach the principles of the Reformation, notwithstanding the hostility of the Papal priesthood. In July, 1547, the Castle of St. Andrew's capitulated to the French, with whom Scotland was then at war. Knox was taken captive, and was carried with the garrison to France, where he remained a prisoner on board the galleys for nearly two years. Upon being released, he returned to London, where he recommenced preaching as an itinerant, with vehement eloquence which gave him thronged audiences wherever he went.

Upon the accession of Mary, a fanatic Catholic, to the throne of England, the most sanguinary laws were revived against the reformers. Knox fled to Geneva, and was soon invited to become the minister to a colony of English refugees at Frankfort. Notwithstanding the persecution by Mary, the advocates of the reformed religion, both in England and Scotland, rapidly increased, so that in 1555 Knox ventured to revisit his native land, and preached with increasing energy and boldness. His fearlessness won for him the admiration of his friends, and the execration of his foes. Knox being at one time absent on a visit to Geneva, the Papal bishops condemned him to death as a heretic, and burned him in effigy at the stake at Edinburgh. Knox drew up an energetic remonstrance against this condemnation of a man absent and unheard, and published a pamphlet, written in his most furious style of eloquence, entitled, "The First Blast of a Trumpet against the Monstrous Regimen of Women." This violent pamphlet was aimed at Bloody Mary, Queen of England, and Mary of Lorraine, widow of James V., Queen-Regent of Scotland.

But the shaft aimed at Mary the Papist pierced the bosom of Elizabeth, a Protestant queen who succeeded her. This haughty princess could not forgive a man who had written a diatribe against the "monstrous regimen of women." But Knox, surrounded by menaces, and in constant peril of liberty and life, continued fearlessly to assail the corruptions of the Church. Though the Papal powers in Scotland were sustained by the armies of Catholic France,—for Mary of Lorraine was sister of the powerful Duke of Guise,—still, marshalled under so dauntless a leader as Knox, the reformers of Scotland advanced from victory to victory. At one time he so inflamed the populace by a vehement harangue against idolatry, that the excited multitude broke into the churches, destroyed the altars, tore the pictures to shreds, dashed the images into fragments, and levelled

several monasteries with the ground. These lawless proceedings were severely censured by the prominent men of the reform party in Scotland, and by the leaders of the Reformation throughout Europe.

Protestant England sent an army to aid the Protestants in Scotland. The Papal queen-regent Mary, with her army of French supporters, was driven from the kingdom; the Scottish parliament was re-established, the majority of the members having embraced Protestant opinions; the old Papal courts were abolished; the exercise of religious worship according to the rites of the Roman Church was prohibited, and the doctrine and discipline of the Presbyterian Church established as the religion of the realm.

In August, 1561, the unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots, arrived in Scotland to reign in her own right. She was a zealous Catholic, and immediately commenced measures to re-establish the religion of Rome throughout her dominions. Knox, from the pulpit, opened warfare upon the queen and her partisans with consummate ability, and with intrepidity which never flinched from any danger. Upon the marriage of the queen with the youthful Darnley, Knox declared from the pulpit,—

"God, in punishment for our ingratitude and sins, has appointed women and boys to reign over us."

At length, worn out with incessant toil and anxiety, and shocked by the tidings of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, he took to his bed, and died Nov. 24, 1572, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. The most distinguished men in Scotland attended his funeral, paying marked honor to his memory. As his body was lowered into the grave, Earl Morton, then Regent of Scotland, said,—

"There lies one who never feared the face of man; who hath been often threatened with dag and dagger, and yet hath ended his days in peace and honor; for he had God's providence watching over him in an especial manner when his life was sought."

Robertson the historian, commenting upon the character of this illustrious reformer, remarks, with obvious truthfulness, that the severity of his deportment, his impetuosity of temper, and zealous intolerance, were qualities which, though they rendered him less amiable, fitted him to advance the Reformation among a fierce people, and to surmount opposition to which a more gentle spirit would have yielded.211

It is pleasant to turn from these scenes of sin and misery to a beautiful exemplification of true piety,—a spirit of devotion to God so true, that it is scarcely sullied by the errors and imperfections of an age of darkness.

In every denomination you can find those who are a disgrace to the cause of Christ. There was a Judas even among the apostles. In every Christian denomination you will find those who are burning and shining lights in the world; who live the life of the righteous, die the death of the righteous, and go home to glory.

About a hundred and sixty years ago, there was in the heart of Germany a young duchess, Eleonora, residing in the court of her father Philip, the elector palatine. In childhood she became a Christian,—an earnest and warm-hearted Christian. Guided by the teachings of her spiritual instructors, who, though doubtless sincere, had ingrafted upon the precepts of the Bible the traditions and superstitions of that dark age, she was taught to deprive herself of almost every innocent gratification, and to practise upon her fragile frame all the severities of an anchorite. Celibacy was especially commended to her as a virtue peculiarly grateful to God; and she consequently declined all solicitations for her hand.

Leopold, the widowed emperor of Germany, sent a magnificent retinue to the palace of the grand elector, and solicited Eleonora for his bride. It was the most brilliant match Europe could furnish; but Eleonora, notwithstanding all the importunities of her parents, rejected the proffered crown.

As the emperor urged his plea, the conscientious maiden, that she might render herself personally unattractive to him, neglected her dress, and exposed herself, unbonneted, to the sun and wind. She thus succeeded in repelling his suit; and the emperor married Claudia of Tyrol.

The elector palatine was one of the most powerful of the minor princes of Europe; and his court, in gayety and splendor, rivalled even that of the emperor. Eleonora was compelled to be a prominent actor in the gorgeous saloons of her father's palace, and to mingle with the festive throng in all their pageants of pleasure.

But her heart was elsewhere. Several hours every day were devoted to prayer and religious reading. She kept a minute journal, in which she scrupulously recorded and condemned her failings. She visited the sick in lowly cottages, and with her own hands performed the most self-denying duties required at the bedside of pain and death.

After the lapse of three years, Claudia died; and again the widowed emperor sought the hand of Eleonora. Her spiritual advisers now urged that it was her duty to accept the imperial alliance, since upon the throne she could render herself so useful in extending the influence of the Church. Promptly she yielded to the voice of duty, and, charioted in splendor, was conveyed a bride to Vienna.

But her Christian character remained unchanged. She carried the penance and self-sacrifice of the cloister into the voluptuousness of the palace. The imperial table was loaded with every luxury; but Eleonora, the empress, drank only cold water, and ate of fare as humble as could be found in any peasant's hut. On occasions of state, it was needful that she should be dressed in embroidered robes of purple and gold; but, to prevent any possibility of the risings of pride, her dress and jewelry were so arranged with sharp brass pricking the flesh, that she was kept in a state of constant discomfort. Thus she endeavored, while discharging with the utmost fidelity the duties of a wife and an empress, to be ever reminded that life is but probation.

These mistaken austerities, caused by the darkness of the age, only show how sincere was her consecration to God. When Eleonora attended the opera with the emperor, she took with her the Psalms of David, bound to represent the books of the performance, and thus unostentatiously

endeavored to shield her mind from the profane and indelicate allusions with which the operas of those days were filled, and from which, as yet, they are by no means purified.

She translated the Psalms and several other devotional books into German verse for the benefit of her subjects. She was often seen, with packages of garments and baskets of food, entering the cottages of the poor peasantry around her country palace, ministering like an angel of mercy to all their wants.

At length her husband, the emperor, was taken sick. Eleonora watched at his pillow with all the assiduity of a Sister of Charity: she hardly abandoned her post for a moment, by day or by night, until, with her own hands, she closed his eyes as he slept in death.

Eleonora survived her husband fifteen years, devoting herself through all this period to the instruction of the ignorant, to nursing the sick, to feeding and clothing the poor. All possible luxury she discarded, and endeavored as closely as possible to imitate her Saviour, who had not where to lay his head.

Her death was like the slumber of a child who falls asleep upon its mother's bosom. At her express request, her funeral was unattended with any display. She directed that there should be inscribed upon her tombstone simply the words,—

"ELEONORA,—a POOR SINNER."

This brief narrative shows very truly what is the true nature of religion,—the religion of Jesus. It shows its spirit independently of all external customs and manners. No one can doubt that Eleonora was a Christian; and yet we can all see, that, in that dark age, she was not well instructed. She practised austerities which Jesus does not require; and yet who can doubt the cordiality of her welcome at the celestial gates?

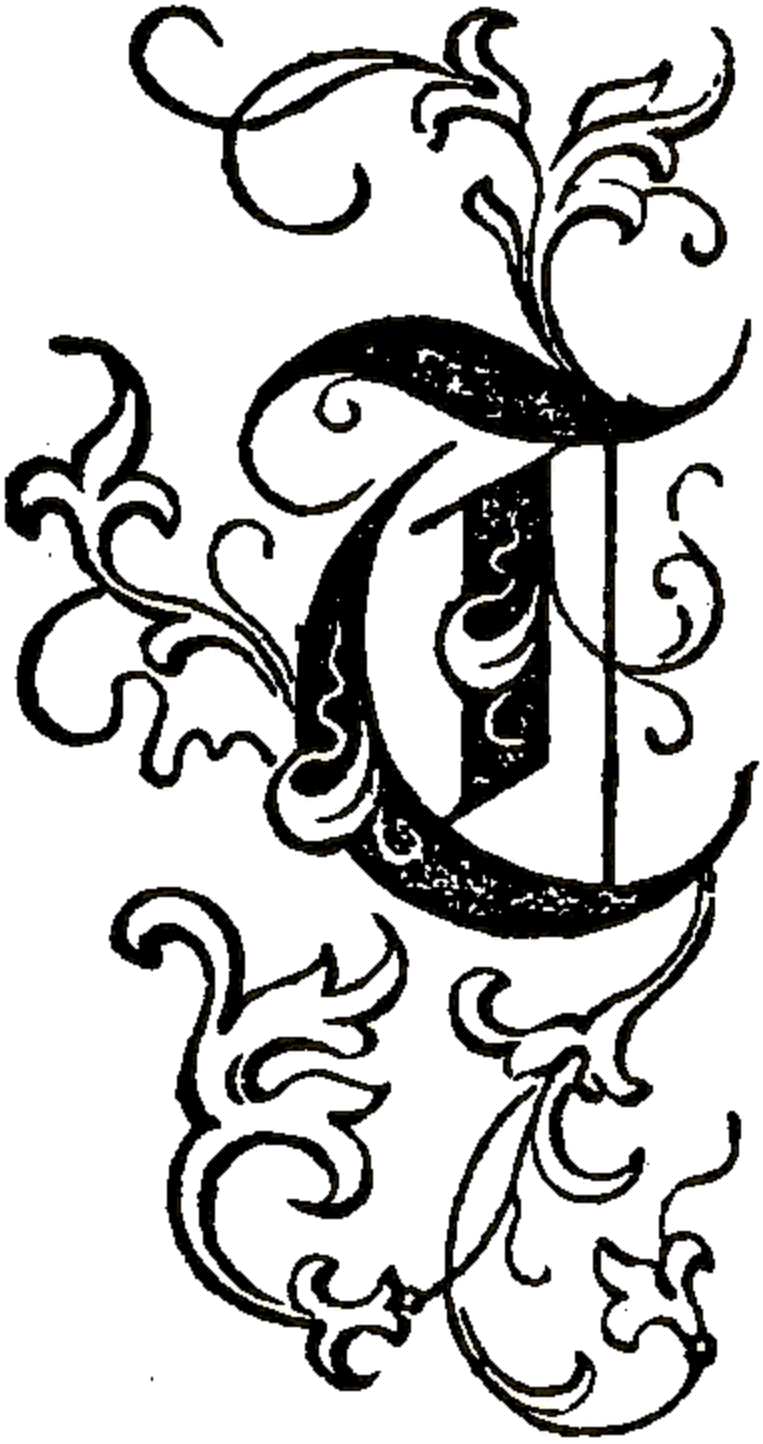
She took up a far heavier cross than any which the disciples of Jesus are ordinarily required to lift. She simply did what she thought it her duty to do as a disciple of Jesus. And now, for a century and a half, she has been an angel in heaven; and she finds that all these light afflictions of her earthly life have indeed worked out for her a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Mothers and daughters, Jesus loves you; he loves you with inconceivable love. He has died to redeem you. He now lives to intercede for you. With tearful eyes he says, "How can I give thee up? My daughter, give me thy heart: come unto me, and be saved."

He is ready to meet you at the celestial gates, and to give you a cordial welcome. He is ready to lead you to the heavenly mansion, and to say, "This is your home forever." He is ready to introduce you to angel-companionship, that you may, through endless ages, share their songs and their everlasting joy.

CHAPTER XXIII.
THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

Principles of the two Parties.—Ferdinand's Appeal to the Pope.—The Celibacy of the Clergy.—Maximilian.—His Protection of the Protestants.—The Reformation in France.—Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre.—Proposed Marriage of Henry of Navarre and Marguerite of France.—Perfidy of Catharine de Medici.—The Nuptials.—The Massacre of St. Bartholomew.—Details of its Horrors.—Indignation of Protestant Europe.—Death of Charles IX.



HE Papal party was mainly a political party, consisting of those who were rioting in possession of despotic power. They considered the Protestant religion as peculiarly hostile to despotism in the encouragement it afforded to education, to the elevation of the masses, and to the diffusion of those principles of fraternal equality which Christ enjoined. The Catholic religion was

considered the great bulwark of kingly power, constraining, by all the terrors of superstition, the benighted multitudes to submit to civil intolerance.

Ferdinand I., brother of Charles V., was king of the two realms of Hungary and Bohemia. He devoted all his energies to eradicating the doctrines of the Reformation from his domains: the most rigorous censorship of the press was established, and no foreign work, unexamined, was permitted to enter his realms; the fanatic order of Jesuits was encouraged by royal patronage, and intrusted with the education of the young.

Still Protestantism was making rapid strides through Europe. It had become the dominant religion in Denmark and Sweden, and was firmly established in England by the accession of Elizabeth to the throne: in France, also, the reformed religion had made extensive inroads, gathering to its defence many of the noblest in rank and intellect in the realm: in Spain and Portugal, the terrors of the Inquisition had checked the progress of religious truth.

Ferdinand, King of Hungary and Bohemia, as Archduke of Austria, inherited the Austrian States, and thus became virtually the founder of the Austrian monarchy. The majority of the inhabitants of the Austrian States had become Protestants. They were so strong in intelligence, rank, and numbers, that Ferdinand did not dare to attempt to crush them with a merciless hand; though he threw every obstacle he could in the way of Protestant worship, forbidding the circulation of Luther's translation of the Bible. The Protestants insisted that communicants at the Lord's Supper should receive both the bread and the wine: this the Papal court vehemently rejected. Ferdinand was in favor of granting this concession: he wrote to the pope,—

"In Bohemia, no persuasion, no argument, no violence, not even arms and war, have succeeded in abolishing the use of the wine as well as the bread in the sacrament. If this is granted, they may be re-united to the Church; but, if refused, they will be driven into the party of the Protestants. So many priests have been degraded by their diocesans for administering the sacrament in both kinds, that the country is almost deprived of priests. Hence children die or grow up to maturity without baptism; and men and women of all ages and of all ranks live, like the brutes, in the grossest ignorance of God and of religion."

The celibacy of the clergy was another point upon which the Protestants were at issue with the Papal councils. Upon this subject Ferdinand wrote to the pope in the following very sensible terms:—

"If a permission to the clergy to be married cannot be granted, may not married men of learning and probity be ordained, according to the custom of the Eastern Church; or married priests be tolerated for a time, provided that they act according to the Catholic or Christian faith? And it may be justly asked whether such concessions would not be far preferable to tolerating, as has unfortunately been done, fornication and concubinage. I cannot avoid adding, what is a common observation, that priests who live in concubinage are guilty of greater sin than those who are married; for the last only transgress a law which is capable of being changed, whereas the first sin against a divine law which is capable of neither change nor dispensation."

The pope, thus pressed by the importunity of Ferdinand, reluctantly consented to the administration of the cup to the laity in his domains, but resolutely refused to tolerate the marriage of the clergy. Ferdinand was so chagrined by this obstinacy, which rendered any conciliation between the antagonistic parties in his State impossible, that he was thrown into a fever, of which he died on the 25th of July, 1564.

The eldest son of Ferdinand succeeded to the throne of the Austrian monarchy with the title of Maximilian II. He appears to have been a truly good man,—a sincere disciple of Jesus, of enlarged and cultivated mind. Though he adhered nominally to the Catholic faith, he was the consistent and self-sacrificing friend of the Protestants. Before his accession to the crown he appointed a clergyman of the Protestant faith for his chaplain, and received the sacrament in both kinds from his hands. When warned that by such a course he could never hope to win the imperial crown of Germany, he replied,—

"I will sacrifice all worldly interests for the sake of my salvation."

His father threatened to disinherit him if he did not renounce all connection with the Protestants.

But this noble man, true to the teachings of his conscience, would not allow the loss of a crown to induce him to swerve from his faith. In anticipation of disinheritance, and banishment from the kingdom, he wrote to the Protestant elector palatine,—

"I have so deeply offended my father by maintaining a Lutheran preacher in my service, that I am apprehensive of being expelled as a fugitive, and hope to find an asylum in your court."

Though Maximilian, upon succeeding to the throne, maintained in his court the usages of the Papal Church, he remained the kind friend of the Protestants, ever seeking to shield them from persecution, claiming for them a liberal toleration, and endeavoring in all ways to promote fraternal religious feeling throughout his domains.

The prudence of Maximilian greatly allayed the bitterness of religions strife in Germany, while other portions of Europe were desolated with the fiercest warfare between the Catholics and the Protestants. In France particularly, the conflict raged with merciless fury. John Calvin soon became the recognized head of reformation there.

Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, was a Protestant. Her husband was a Catholic. They had one son,—Henry, subsequently Henry IV. of France. Gradually the strife between Catholics and Protestants became so fierce, that all Europe was in arms,—the Catholics combining to annihilate the Protestants, the Protestants arming for self-protection. Anthony of Bourbon, Duke of Vendôme, the husband of the Queen of Navarre, and father of Henry IV., abandoned his Protestant wife and his child, and placed himself at the head of the Catholic armies. The Queen of Navarre, the most illustrious Protestant sovereign on the Continent, was then recognized as the head of the Protestant armies. Henry, her son, following the example of his noble Christian mother, espoused the same cause.

The kingdom of Navarre, a territory of wild ravines and majestic swells of land, often rising into towering mountains upon the northern slope of the Pyrenees, bordered France upon the south: its annexation to France was deemed important by the French court. An impotent, characterless, worthless boy, Charles IX., was nominally king of France: his mother, the infamous Catharine de Medici, was the real sovereign. She was as fanatical, as cruel, as wicked a woman as ever breathed. History, perhaps, records not another instance where a mother did every thing in her power to plunge her own son into every species of debauchery, that she might enfeeble him in body and in mind, so as to enable her to retain the supreme power.

This vile woman had a daughter, Marguerite, as infamous as herself. That Navarre might be annexed to France, the plan was formed of uniting in marriage Henry and Marguerite, the heirs of the two thrones. The scheme was formed by the statesmen of the two countries. Henry and Marguerite, though thoroughly detesting each other, made no objection to the arrangement, which would promote their mutual ambition. The marriage-tie had no sacredness for either of them. Catharine was delighted with the arrangement; for she had formed the plan of inviting all the leaders of the Protestant party to Paris to attend the nuptials, and there to assassinate them. Out of respect to their devoted friend, the Protestant Queen of Navarre, and her Protestant son, they would be all likely to attend. The leaders being all thus assembled in Paris, she would have them entirely at her disposal. Then, having cut off the leaders, in the consternation which would ensue, she would, by a wide-spread conspiracy, have the Protestant population throughout all France—men, women, and children—put to death.

With measureless hypocrisy, feigning the highest satisfaction in prospect of the union of the Catholics and the Protestants, Catharine sent very affectionate messages to the nobles, and all the men of prominence of the reformed faith, begging that there might be no more hostility between them. She entreated them to attend the nuptials, and assured them of the high gratification with which she contemplated the marriage of her daughter with a Protestant prince, who was thus destined to become king of France.

While plotting the details of perhaps the most horrible massacre earth has ever known, she did every thing in her power to lull her unsuspecting victims into security. The Queen of Navarre and her son were invited to the Castle of Blois to make arrangements for the wedding. They were received by Catharine, and her weak, depraved son, Charles IX., with extravagant displays of affection. The Protestant nobles and influential clergy flocked to Paris. The Admiral Coligni, one of the most illustrious of men in all excellences of character, was received as the special guest of the king and his mother. He was unquestionably the most influential man in the Protestant party in France. His death would prove an irreparable blow to the cause of reform. Some of his friends urged him not to place himself in the power of so treacherous a woman as Catharine de Medici.

“I confide,” said the noble admiral, “in the sacred word of his Majesty.”

The admiral, as he entered the palace, was greeted with lavish caresses by both mother and son. The king threw his arms around the admiral’s neck, and hugged him in an Iscariot embrace, saying, “This is the happiest day of my life.”

At length, the nuptial morn arrived. It was the 15th of August, 1572. The unimpassioned bridegroom led his scornful bride to the Church of Notre Dame. Before the massive portals of this renowned cathedral, and beneath the shadow of its venerable towers, a magnificent platform had been reared, canopied with gorgeous tapestry. Hundreds of thousands thronged the surrounding amphitheatre, swarming at the windows, and crowding the balconies and the house-tops.

The gentle breeze, breathing over the multitude, was laden with the perfume of flowers. Banners, pennants, and ribbons, of every varied hue, waved in the air, or hung in gay festoons from window to window, and from roof to roof.

Upon that conspicuous platform Henry received the hand of the haughty princess, and the nuptial oath was administered. Marguerite however, even in that hour and in the presence of all those spectators, gave a ludicrous exhibition of her girlish petulance and her ungoverned wilfulness. When, in the progress of the ceremony, she was asked if she willingly received Henry of Navarre for her husband, a sudden freak of perversion seized her. She pouted, coquettishly tossed her proud little head, and was silent. The question was repeated. The spirit of Marguerite was now up, and all the powers of Europe could not give pliancy to the shrew.

The question was again repeated. She fixed her eyes defiantly upon the officiating bishop, and, refusing by word or gesture to give the slightest assent, remained as immovable as a statue. Embarrassment and delay ensued. There was a pause in the ceremony; and every eye was fixed, in wonder as to what would be the result.

Suddenly the king, Marguerite's brother, who with his court was conspicuously seated upon the platform, fully conscious of his sister's indomitable spirit, quietly walked up to the termagant at bay, and placing one hand upon her bosom, and the other upon the back of her head, compelled an involuntary nod. The bishop smiled and bowed, and acting upon the politic principle, that small favors are gratefully received, proceeded with the ceremony. Such were the vows with which Henry of Navarre and Marguerite of France were united. Such is too often love in the palace.

We must now pass by the festival-days which ensued, and turn from the nuptials to the massacre. Admiral Coligni, anxious to return home, called at the Louvre to take leave of the king. As he was passing through the streets to the lodgings which had been provided for him, two bullets from the pistol of an assassin pierced his body. His friends bore him bleeding to his apartment. Though the king and queen feigned great indignation, the evidence was conclusive that they had instigated the crime. The Protestants were thunderstruck. All their leaders had been lured to Paris; and there they were,—caught in a trap, unarmed, separated from their followers, and helpless. Henry of Navarre immediately hastened to the bedside of his revered and wounded friend. While he was sitting there, Catharine and Charles were deliberating whether Henry himself should be included in the general massacre. After much debate, it was decided to spare him, as he would be powerless after all the Protestants were cold in death.

The Duke of Guise led the movement of the Catholics. Troops had been stationed at all the important positions in Paris, and the Catholic population had been secretly armed. The Catholics

were enjoined to wear a white cross upon the hat, that they might be distinguished. The conspiracy extended throughout the whole of France, and the storm of death was to burst at the same moment upon the unsuspecting victims in every city and village of the kingdom.

While Catharine and Charles were arranging the details for the massacre, they employed all their arts of duplicity to disarm suspicion. The very evening of the fatal night, the king invited many of the most illustrious of his victims to a sumptuous entertainment at the Louvre. In a fine glow of spirits he detained them until a late hour with his pleasantries, and induced several to remain in the palace to sleep, that they might be slain beneath his own roof.

The conspiracy had been kept a profound secret from Marguerite, lest she should betray it to her husband. In the mean time, aided by the gloom of a starless night, preparations were making in every street of Paris for the enormous perpetration. Soldiers were assembling at their appointed rendezvouses. Guards were stationed to cut off flight. Fanatic men, armed with sabres and muskets which gleamed in the lamplight, began to emerge through the darkness, and to gather in motley assemblage. Many houses were illuminated, that, by the blaze from the windows, the bullet might be thrown with precision, and the dagger might strike an unerring blow.

Catharine and her son Charles were now in one of the apartments of the Louvre, waiting for the clock to strike the hour of two, when the signal was to be given. Catharine, inexorable in crime, was very apprehensive that her son might relent. Petulant and self-willed, he was liable to paroxysms of stubbornness, when he spurned his mother's counsels.

Weak as well as depraved, the wretched king was feverishly excited. He paced the room nervously, peering out at the window, looking at his watch, wishing yet dreading to have the appointed hour arrive. His mother, witnessing these indications of a faltering spirit, urged him to order the alarm-bell immediately to be struck, which was to be the signal for the massacre to commence. Charles hesitated, and a cold sweat oozed from his brow.

"Are you a coward?" tauntingly inquired the fiend-like mother.

This is a charge which no coward can stand. It almost always nerves the poltroon to action. The young king nervously exclaimed, "Well, then, let it begin!" There were in the room at the time only Catharine, Charles, and his brother, the Duke of Anjou. It was two hours after midnight. There was a moment of dreadful suspense and of perfect silence. All three stood at the window, in the Palace of the Louvre, looking out into the rayless night.

Suddenly through the still air the ponderous tones of the alarm-bell fell upon the ear, and rolled the knell of death over the city. The vibration awakened the demon in ten thousand hearts. It was the morning of the sabbath, Aug. 24, 1572,—the anniversary of the festival of St. Bartholomew.

The first stroke of the bell had not ceased to vibrate upon the ear when the uproar of the carnage commenced. The sound, which seemed to rouse Catharine to frenzy, almost froze the blood of the young monarch. Trembling in every nerve, he shouted for the massacre to be stopped.

It was too late: the train was fired. Beacon-fires and alarm-bells sent the signal with the rapidity of light and of sound through entire France. The awful roar of human passion, the crackling of musketry, the shrieks of the wounded and of the dying, blended in appalling tumult throughout the whole metropolis. Old men, terrified maidens, helpless infants, venerable matrons, were alike smitten down mercilessly to the fanatic cry of "Vive Dieu et le Roi!"—"Live God and the King!"

The Admiral Coligni, who had been shot and desperately wounded the day before, faint and dying, was lying upon his bed, surrounded by a few faithful friends, as the demoniac clamor rolled in upon their ears. The Duke of Guise, a fanatic Papist, with three hundred followers, hastened to the lodgings of the admiral, stabbed the sentinels, and burst through the gates. A wounded servant rushed to the chamber of the admiral, exclaiming,—

"The house is forced; and there are no means of resisting!"

"I have long," said the heroic Christian admiral, "prepared myself to die. Save yourselves if you can: you cannot defend me. I commend my soul to God."

The murderers were now rushing up the stairs. They pursued, shot, stabbed, and cut down the flying friends of Coligni. The admiral, thus for a moment left alone, rose from his bed, and, being unable to stand, leaned against the wall, and, in fervent prayer, surrendered himself to the will of his Maker. The assassins burst into the room. They saw a venerable man in his night-robe, with bandaged wounds, engaged in his devotions.

"Art thou the admiral?" demanded one with brandished sword.

"I am," replied Coligni; "and thou, young man, shouldst respect my gray hairs. Nevertheless, thou canst abridge my life but a little."

The wretch plunged his sword into the bosom of Coligni, and then, withdrawing it dripping with blood, cut him down. The admiral fell, calmly saying,—

"If I could but die by the hand of a gentleman, instead of by the hands of such a knave as this!"

The rest of the assassins immediately fell upon him, each emulous to bury his dagger in the bosom of his victim. The Duke of Guise, ashamed to encounter the eye of the noble Coligni, whom he had often met in friendly intercourse, remained impatiently in the courtyard below.

"Breme!" he shouted to one of his followers, looking up to the window, "have you done it?"

"Yes," Breme replied: "he is done for."

"Let us see, though," replied the duke: "throw him out of the window!"

The mangled corpse fell heavily upon the paving-stones. The duke wiped the blood from the lifeless face, and, carefully scrutinzing the features, said, "Yes: I recognize the man." Then,

giving the pallid face a kick, he exclaimed, “Courage, comrades! we have happily begun. Let us now go for others.”

The tiger, having once lapped his tongue in blood, seems to be imbued with a new spirit of ferocity. There is in man a similar temper: the frenzied multitude became drunk with blood. The houses of the Protestants were marked. The assassins burst open the doors, and rushed through all apartments, murdering indiscriminately young and old,—men, women, and children. The gory bodies were thrown from the windows, and the pavements were clotted with blood.

Charles soon recovered from his momentary wavering, and, conscious that it was too late to draw back, with fiend-like eagerness engaged himself in the work of death. Fury seized him: his cheeks were flushed, his lips compressed, and his eyes glared with frenzy. Bending eagerly from his window, he shouted words of encouragement to the assassins. Grasping a gun, he watched like a sportsman for his prey; and when he saw an unfortunate Protestant, wounded and bleeding, flying from his pursuers, he would take deliberate aim from the window of his palace, and shout with exultation as he saw him fall pierced by his bullet.

A crowd of fugitives rushed into the courtyard of the Louvre to throw themselves upon the protection of the king. Charles sent his own body-guard into the yard with guns and daggers to butcher them all.

Just before the carnage commenced, Marguerite, oppressed with fears of she knew not what, retired to her chamber. She had hardly closed her eyes when the outcry of the pursuers and the pursued filled the palace. She sprang up in her bed, and heard some one struggling at the door, and shrieking “Navarre! Navarre!”

The door was burst open; and one of her husband’s attendants rushed in, covered with wounds and blood, and pursued by four soldiers of her brother’s guard. The captain of the guard at that moment entered the room, pursuing his victim.

Marguerite, almost insane with terror, fled to the chamber of her sister. The palace was filled with shouts and shrieks and uproar. As she was rushing through the hall, she encountered another Protestant gentleman flying before the crimsoned sword of his pursuers: he was covered with blood flowing from many ghastly gashes. Just as he reached the young Queen of Navarre, his pursuer plunged a sword through his body; and he fell dead at her feet.

No tongue can tell the horrors of that night: it would require volumes to detail its scenes. While the carnage was in progress, a body of soldiers entered the chamber of Henry of Navarre, and conveyed him to the presence of the king. The imbecile monarch, with blasphemous oaths and a countenance inflamed with fury, ordered him to abandon Protestantism, or prepare to die. Henry, to save his life, ingloriously yielded, and, by similar compulsion, was induced to send an edict to his own dominions, prohibiting the exercise of any religion but that of Rome.

When the gloom of night had passed, and the sabbath sun dawned upon Paris, a spectacle was witnessed such as even that blood-renowned metropolis has seldom presented. The city still resounded with tumult; the pavements were gory, and covered with the dead; men, women, and

children were still flying in every direction, wounded and bleeding, pursued by merciless assassins, riotous with demoniac laughter, and drunk with blood.

The report of guns and pistols, and of continued volleys of musketry, from all parts of the city, proved the universality of the massacre. Miserable wretches, smeared with blood, swaggered along with ribald jests and fiend-like howlings, hunting for the Protestants; corpses, torn and gory, strewed the streets, and dissevered heads were spurned like footballs along the pavements; priests in sacerdotal robes, and with elevated crucifixes, urged their emissaries not to grow weary in the work of exterminating God's enemies; the most distinguished nobles of the court and of the camp rode through the streets with gorgeous retinue, encouraging the massacre.

"Let not one single Protestant be spared," the king proclaimed, "to reproach me hereafter with this deed."

Charles, with his mother and the high-born profligate ladies who disgraced the court, emerged in the morning light in splendid array into the reeking streets. Many of the women contemplated with merriment the dead bodies piled up before the Louvre. One of the ladies, however, appalled by the spectacle, wished to retire, alleging that the bodies already emitted an offensive odor. Charles brutally replied,—

"The smell of a dead enemy is always pleasant!"

The massacre was continued in the city and throughout the kingdom for a week. On Thursday, after four days spent in hunting out the fugitives from all their hiding-places, the Catholic clergy paraded the streets of Paris in a triumphal procession, and with jubilant prayers and hymns gave thanks to God for their victory. The Catholic pulpits resounded with exultant harangues. A medal was struck off in honor of the event, with the inscription, "La Piété a réveille la Justice,"—"Religion has awakened Justice."

In some of the distant provinces in France, the Protestants were in the majority; and the Catholics did not venture to attack them. In some others they were so few that they were not feared, and were therefore spared. In the sparsely-settled rural districts, the Catholic peasants, kind-hearted and virtuous, refused to imbrue their hands in the blood of their neighbors. In these ways, several thousand Protestants escaped.

But in nearly all the cities and populous towns the slaughter was indiscriminate and universal. The number who perished in the awful massacre of St. Bartholomew is estimated at from eighty to a hundred thousand.

But there were some noble Catholics, who, refusing to surrender conscience to this iniquitous order of the king, laid down their own lives in adhering to the principle, that they would "obey God rather than man" when God's law and man's law came into antagonism.

The governor of Auvergne, an heroic and a noble man, replied in the following terms to the king's secret missive commanding the massacre:—

“Sire, I have received an order, under your Majesty’s seal, to put all the Protestants of this province to death; and, if (which God forbid!) the order be genuine, I still respect your Majesty too much to obey you.”

The infamous decree of the king was sent to the Viscount Orthez, commandant at Bayonne. The following was his intrepid reply:—

“Sire, I have communicated the commands of your Majesty to the inhabitants of the town, and to the soldiers of the garrison; and I have found good citizens and brave soldiers, *but not one executioner*. On which account, both they and I humbly beseech your Majesty to employ our arms and our lives in enterprises in which we can *conscientiously engage*. However perilous they may be, we will willingly shed therein the last drop of our blood.”

Both of these men of intrepid virtue soon after suddenly and mysteriously died. Few entertained a doubt that poison had been administered by the order of Charles.

From these revolting scenes of blood let us briefly glance at the impression which the massacre of St. Bartholomew produced upon Europe.

The pope received the tidings with exultation, and ordered the most imposing religious ceremonies in Rome in gratitude for the achievement. The Papal courts of Spain and of the Netherlands sent thanks to Charles and Catharine for having thus effectually purged France of heresy.

But Protestant Europe was stricken with indignation. As fugitives from France, emaciate, pale, and woe-stricken, recited, in England, Switzerland, and Germany, the story of the massacre, the hearts of their auditors were frozen with horror.

In Geneva, a day of fasting and prayer was instituted, which is observed to the present day. In Scotland, every church resounded with the thrilling tale. John Knox proclaimed, in language of prophetic nerve,—

“Sentence has gone forth against that murderer, the King of France; and the vengeance of God will never be withdrawn from his house. His name shall be in everlasting execration.”

The French court, alarmed by the foreign indignation it had aroused, sent an ambassador to the court of Queen Elizabeth with a poor apology for the crime. The ambassador was received by England’s queen with appalling coldness and gloom. Arrangements were studiously made to invest the occasion with solemnity. The court was shrouded in mourning, and all the lords and ladies appeared in sable weeds. A stern and sombre sadness was upon every countenance. The ambassador, overwhelmed by this reception, was overheard to exclaim to himself,—

“I am ashamed to acknowledge myself a Frenchman!”

He entered, however, the presence of the queen; passed through the long line of silent courtiers, who refused to salute him even with a look; stammered out his miserable apology; and, receiving no response, retired covered with confusion.

It has been said, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." There are apparent exceptions to this rule. Protestantism in France has never recovered from this blow. But for this massacre, one-half of the nobles of France would have continued Protestant. The reformers would soon have constituted so large a portion of the population, that mutual toleration would have been necessary. Intelligence would have been diffused; religion would have been respected; and, in all probability, the horrors of the French Revolution would have been averted.

God is an avenger. In the mysterious government which he wields,—mysterious only to our feeble vision,—"he visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children even unto the third and fourth generation."

As we see the priests of Paris and of France, during the awful tragedy of the Revolution, massacred in the prisons, shot in the streets, hung upon the lamp-posts, and driven in starvation and woe from the kingdom, we cannot but remember the day of St. Bartholomew. The 24th of August, 1572, and the 2d of September, 1792, though far apart in the records of time, are consecutive days in the government of God.

Henry of Navarre, by stratagem, soon escaped from Paris, renounced the Catholicism which he had accepted from compulsion, and was accepted as the military leader of the Protestant party throughout Europe. The surviving Protestants rallied in self-defence, and implored aid from all the courts which had embraced the principles of the Reformation. England and Germany sent troops to their aid. Catholic Spain, the Netherlands, and Italy sent armies to assist the Papists. Again France was deluged in the woes of civil war, and years of unutterable misery darkened the realm.

Charles IX., as weak as he was depraved, became silent, morose, and gloomy. Secluding himself from all society, month after month he was gnawed by the scorpion fangs of remorse. A bloody sweat, oozing from every pore, crimsoned his bedclothes. His aspect of misery drove all companionship from his chamber. He groaned and wept, exclaiming incessantly,—

"Oh, what blood! oh, what murders! Alas! why did I follow such evil counsels?"

He saw continually the spectres of the slain with ghastly wounds stalking about his bed; and demons, hideous and threatening, waited to grasp his soul. As the cathedral bell was tolling the hour of midnight on the 30th of May, 1574, his nurse heard him convulsively weeping. Gently she drew aside the bed-curtains. The dying monarch turned his dim and despairing eye upon her, and exclaimed,—

"O my nurse, my nurse! what blood have I shed! what murders have I committed! Great God, pardon me, pardon me!"

A convulsive shuddering for a moment agitated his frame: his head fell upon his pillow, and the wretched man was dead. He was then but twenty-four years of age. He expressed satisfaction that he left no heir to live and suffer in a world so full of misery.

The order of knighthood deserves record, as one of the outgrowths of Christianity. This institution, originating in the eleventh century, was continued through several hundred years as one of the most potent of earthly influences. Guizot, speaking of its origin, says,—

"It was at this period when in the laic world was created and developed the most splendid fact of the middle ages,—knighthood, that noble soaring of imaginations and souls towards the ideal of Christian virtue and soldierly honor. It is impossible to trace in detail the origin and history of that grand fact, which was so prominent in the days to which it belonged, and which is so prominent still in the memories of men; but a clear notion ought to be obtained of its moral character, and of its practical worth."212

The young candidate for knighthood was first placed in a bath,—the symbol of moral and material purification. After having undergone a very thorough ablution, he was dressed in a white tunic, a red robe, and a close-fitting black coat. The tunic was the emblem of purity; the red robe, of the blood he was bound to shed in the service of his order; and the black coat was a reminder of death, to which he, as well as all others, was doomed. Thus purified and clothed, the candidate underwent a rigid fast for twenty-four hours. He then, it being evening, entered a church, usually accompanied by a clergyman, and passed the whole night in prayer.

The next morning, after a full confession of his sins, he received from the father-confessor the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. A sermon was then preached to him directly, usually in the presence of a large assembly, enforcing the duties of the new life of knighthood upon which he was about to enter. The candidate then approached the altar with a sword suspended at his side. The officiating priest took the sword, implored God's blessing upon it, and returned it to the young man. The young knight then kneeled before his sovereign, or the lord of high degree, who was to initiate him into the honors of knighthood; and the following questions were proposed to him:—

"Why do you purpose to become a knight? If it be that you may become rich, or to take your ease, or to acquire honor, without performing deeds worthy of renown, you are unworthy of the sacred order."

The young man replies, "I desire to acquit myself honorably of all the noble deeds of knighthood, without regard to wealth or ease."

A number of beautiful ladies then approached the candidate: and one buckled upon his feet the spurs; another girded around his chest the coat of mail; a third placed upon his breast the cuirass; a fourth brought the highly-polished and glittering helmet; while a fifth presented him the armlets and gauntlets. Thus clothed by the fair hands of ladies, he again kneeled at the altar; and his sovereign, or the officiating lord, supported by a splendid retinue of veteran knights, approached him, and, giving him three slight blows with the flat of the sword, said, "In the name of God, St. Michael, and St. George, I make thee knight. Be valiant, bold, and true."

The young man, thus arrayed as a knight, went from the church, and mounted a magnificent horse held by a groom. Brandishing both sword and lance, he displayed to the assembled multitude the wonderful feats of horsemanship to which he had been trained.

Such was, in brief, the ceremony in the admission of knights. It will be seen that the religious element entered largely into its spirit. Indeed, the knight took a solemn oath to serve God religiously, and to die a thousand deaths rather than ever renounce Christianity. A poet of the fourteenth century, in verses upon the character and duties of knighthood, in the following lines shows us what was then understood to be the true elevation of knighthood:—

“Amend your lives, ye who would fain

The order of the knights attain;

Devoutly watch, devoutly pray;

From pride and sin, oh! turn away;

Be good and true; take nought by might;

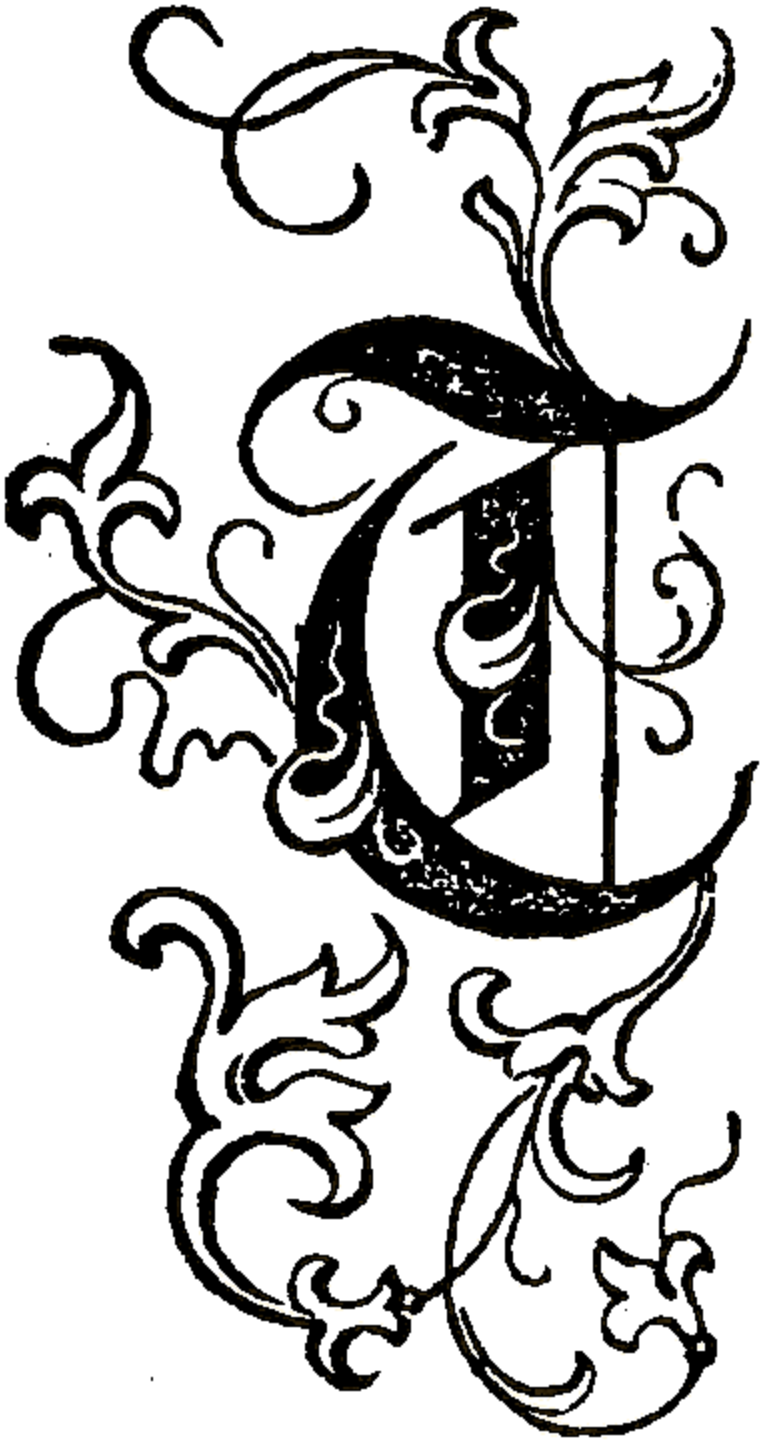
Be bold, and guard the people’s right:

This is the rule for the gallant knight.”

This institution, which manifestly sprang from Christianity, exerted a powerful influence, amid the anarchy and barbarism of the middle ages, in rectifying disorders, and in protecting the weak against the strong.

CHAPTER XXIV.
THE CHURCH IN MODERN TIMES.

Character of Henry III.—Assassination of the Duke of Guise.—Cruel Edicts of Louis XIV.—Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.—Sufferings of Protestants.—Important Question.—Thomas Chalmers.—Experiment at St. John.—His Labors and Death.—Jonathan Edwards.—His Resolutions.—His Marriage.—His Trials.—His Death.—John Wesley.—His Conversion.—George Whitefield.—First Methodist Conference.—Death of Wesley.—Robert Hall.—His Character and Death.—William Paley.—His Works and Death.—The Sabbath.—Power of the Gospel.—Socrates.—Scene on the Prairie.—The Bible.



HE seventeenth century opened with almost universal corruption, outside of the limited circle of the true disciples of Jesus Christ. The moral and political world presented the aspect of a raging sea darkened by storm-clouds, with the waves dashing upon every shore. The utmost profligacy of manners prevailed generally in courts; while the masses of the people were ignorant and

degraded. The Papal Church, which had degenerated into a towering organization of worldly ambition, had become corrupt almost beyond the power of the pen to describe.

Henry III. had succeeded his miserable brother, Charles a IX., upon the throne of France. While Duke of Anjou, he had distinguished himself by his malignant hostility to the Protestants, or Huguenots as they were there called. He was as weak as he was wicked, and never hesitated to employ the dagger of the assassin to rid himself of those he feared. Impelled by his infamous mother, Catharine de Medici, he endeavored to wage exterminating war against the Protestants who had survived the massacre of St. Bartholomew. But they, led by Henry of Navarre,—subsequently Henry IV. of France,—and aided by other Protestant powers, made a vigorous defence. Wretched France was thus devastated by the most cruel civil war.

Fearing the rising power of the Guises, who were the devoted partisans of the Papacy, Henry secured the assassination of the Duke of Guise, and of his brother the cardinal. This exasperated the pope. Henry was stabbed by a fanatic monk. The Pope, Sixtus V., in full consistory, applauded the deed. He apparently wished to encourage the assassination of all sovereigns who were not obsequiously obedient to the Papacy. The regicide he pronounced, in declamatory phrase, "to be comparable, as regards the salvation of the world, to the incarnation and the resurrection, and that the courage of the youthful assassin surpassed that of Eleazar and Judith."

The Catholic historian, Chateaubriand, declares that "it was of importance to the pope to encourage fanatics who were ready to murder kings in the name of the Papal power." The annalist Brantome says that he saw a bull of the pope ordering the assassination of Elizabeth, the Protestant queen of England.

Upon the accession to the throne of France of Henry IV.,—who, with his mother, had been at the head of the Protestant armies of Europe,—Henry, who had been politically a Protestant, not spiritually a disciple of Jesus, found it expedient to adopt the Catholic faith, saying with nonchalance, "A crown is surely worth a mass." He, however, continued to befriend the Protestants. In the year 1598 he issued a famous decree, called the Edict of Nantes, which allowed Protestants the free exercise of their religion, and gave them equal claims with Catholics to all offices and dignities. They were also left in possession of certain fortresses which had been ceded to them for their security.

But Louis XIV., grasping at absolute power, grew more and more fanatic during his long reign, oppressing the Protestants with ever-increasing cruelty. Edict after edict deprived them of their civil rights; and dragoons were sent into their provinces to compel them to abjure their faith. The persecution was so merciless, that, notwithstanding the king guarded his frontiers with the utmost vigilance, more than five hundred thousand Huguenots escaped to the Protestant countries of Switzerland, Germany, Holland, and England.

The fanaticism of the Catholics was such, that the Edict of Nantes undoubtedly cost Henry IV. his life. The assassin Ravaillac, who twice plunged his dagger into the bosom of the king, said in his examination,—

“I killed the king, because, in making war upon the pope, he made war upon God, since the pope is God.”

Louis XIV., while assuring the Protestant powers of Europe that he would continue to respect the Edict of Nantes, commenced issuing a series of ordinances in direct contravention of that contract. He excluded Protestants from all public offices; forbade their employment as physicians, lawyers, apothecaries, booksellers, printers, or even nurses. In many of the departments of France, the Protestants composed nearly the entire population. Here it was impossible to enforce the atrocious decrees. In other places, where parties were more equally divided, riots and bloodshed were excited.

These ordinances were soon followed by others prohibiting marriages between Catholics and Protestants. Catholic servants were forbidden employment in Protestant families; and Catholics were also forbidden to employ Protestant servants. On the 17th of June, 1680, the king issued the following decree:—

“We wish that our subjects of the pretended reformed religion, both male and female, having attained the age of seven years, may, and it is hereby made lawful for them to embrace the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion; and that, to this effect, they may be allowed to abjure the pretended reformed religion, without their fathers and mothers and other kinsmen being allowed to offer them the least hinderance under any pretext whatever.”

This law enabled any one to go before a Catholic court, and testify that any child had made the sign of the cross, or kissed an image of the Virgin, or had expressed a desire to enter a Catholic church, and that child was immediately wrested from its parents, and placed in a convent for education, while the parents were compelled to defray all the expenses.

A decree was then issued, that all Protestants who would abjure their faith might defer the payment of their debts for three years; should be exempt from taxation, and from the burden of having soldiers quartered upon them. Those who refused were punished with a double portion of taxation and a double quartering of soldiers. Officers were sent to the sick-beds of Protestants, that, by importunity and urgent solicitation, they might convert them to the Catholic faith. Physicians were ordered, under a heavy penalty, to give notice if any Protestants were sick. If any convert from Catholicism were received into any Protestant church, that church edifice was immediately closed, and the further privilege of public worship prohibited; while the Catholic convert was punished with confiscation of property, and banishment from the realm.

From four to ten dragoons were lodged in the house of every Protestant. These fanatic and cruel men were ordered not to kill the Protestants with whom they lodged, but to do every thing in their power to constrain them to abjure their Christian faith.

“They attached crosses to the muzzles of their muskets to force the Protestants to kiss them. When any one resisted, they thrust these crosses against the face and breasts of the unfortunate people. They spared children no more than persons advanced in years. Without compassion for their age, they fell upon them with blows, and beat them with the flat of their swords and the butt of their muskets. They did this so cruelly, that some were crippled for life.”213

The Protestants were prohibited from attempting to leave the kingdom, under penalty of perpetual consignment to the galleys. Every book in advocacy of Protestantism, which the most rigorous search could find, was burned. When a representation was made to the king of the terrible suffering these enactments were inflicting upon two millions of Protestants, he replied,—

"To bring back all my subjects to Catholic unity, I would willingly with one hand cut off the other."

The king flattered himself that he was thus absolutely exterminating Protestantism from France. His officers wrote him very flattering but false accounts of the success which was attending their efforts. It was reported to him, that, by the persuasive energies of this rigorous persecution, sixty thousand Protestants in the district of Bordeaux, and twenty thousand in Montauban, had been converted to the Catholic faith.

In September, 1685, Louvois wrote to the king,—

"Before the end of the month, there will not remain ten thousand Protestants in all the district of Bordeaux, where there were a hundred and fifty thousand the 15th of last month."

The Duke of Noailles wrote, "The number of Protestants in the district of Nîsmes is about a hundred and forty thousand. I believe, that, at the end of the month, none will be left."

Deluded by these reports, Louis XIV., on the 18th of October, 1685, signed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In the preamble to this fatal act, he said,—

"We see now, with the just acknowledgment we owe to God, that our measures have secured the end which we ourselves proposed, since the better and greater part of our subjects of the pretended reformed religion have embraced the Catholic faith; and the maintenance of the Edict of Nantes remains, therefore, superfluous."

By this act it was declared that the Protestant worship should be nowhere tolerated in France. All Protestant pastors were ordered to leave the kingdom within fifteen days, under penalty of being sent to the galleys. Protestant pastors who would abjure their faith were promised a salary one-third more than they had previously enjoyed. Parents were forbidden to instruct their children in the Protestant religion. Every child born in the kingdom was to be baptized and educated by a Catholic priest. All Protestant Frenchmen, out of France, were ordered to return within four months, under penalty of confiscation of property. Any Protestant layman or woman who should attempt to leave France, was, if arrested, doomed to imprisonment for life.

Such were the infamous decrees enacted in France but two hundred years ago. The woes they caused can never be gauged: the calamities they entailed upon France have been awful. Hundreds of thousands, in defiance of poverty, the dungeon, and utter temporal ruin, adhered to their faith: thousands, haggard with want and despair, through all conceivable suffering, effected their escape.

At the time of the Revocation, the Protestant population of France was estimated at between two and three millions. Though the edict was enforced by the government with the utmost severity, many noble-hearted Catholics sympathized with the Protestants, befriended them in various ways, and aided them to escape. Though guards were placed upon every road leading to the frontiers, and thousands of fugitives were arrested, still thousands escaped. Some, in armed bands, fought their way with drawn swords; some obtained passports from kind-hearted Catholic governors; some bribed their guards; some travelled by night from hiding-place to hiding-place; some assumed the disguise of peddlers selling Catholic relics. It is estimated by Catholic writers that about two hundred and thirty thousand escaped. Antoine Court, one of the Protestant pastors, places the number as high as eight hundred thousand. M. Sismondi thinks that as many perished as escaped: he places the number of each at between three and four hundred thousand.

The suffering was awful. Multitudes perished of cold, hunger, and exhaustion. Thousands were shot by the soldiery. So many were arrested, that the prisons and galleys of France were crowded with victims. Among these were many men illustrious in rank and culture. The arrival of the fugitives, emaciate and woe-stricken, upon the soil of Protestant countries, created intense sensation. From every Protestant court in Europe a cry of indignation arose. England, Switzerland, Holland, Prussia, Denmark, Sweden, received the sufferers with warm demonstrations of hospitality and sympathy.

The loss to France was irreparable. Only one year after the Revocation, Marshal Vauban wrote,—

"France has lost a hundred thousand inhabitants, sixty millions of coined money, nine thousand sailors, twelve thousand disciplined soldiers, six hundred officers, and her most flourishing manufactures."

The fanatic king, instead of being softened by these woes, became more unrelenting. He issued an ordinance requiring that all the children between five and sixteen years of age, of parents suspected of Protestantism, should be taken from their homes, and placed in Catholic families. All books which it was thought in any way favored the Protestant faith were seized and burned. "The Bible itself, the Bible above all, was confiscated and burned with persevering animosity."[214]

But no power of persecution could utterly crush out between two and three millions of Protestants, nearly every one of whom was ready to go to the stake in defence of his faith. In some of the provinces the Protestants were in so large a majority, and were organized under such able military leaders, that the king was unable to enforce with any efficiency his sanguinary code.

In contemplation of such scenes of fanaticism and suffering, one is led to inquire if Christianity has, on the whole, proved a blessing to mankind. But let it be remembered, that as secular history is mainly occupied with a record of the wars and the woes of humanity, while years of tranquillity and peace have no annalists; so historians of the Church have been mainly occupied with the corruptions which human depravity have introduced into the pure, simple, and beneficent principles of the religion of Jesus. But there is little to be recorded of the millions

upon millions of Christians in private life, who, from youth to old age, have had their hearts purified, their manners softened, their homes cheered and blessed, by those quiet virtues which their faith has inculcated. Every joy of their lives has been magnified, and every grief solaced, by their piety.

They have fallen asleep in Jesus, triumphant over death and the grave, and are now with angel-companions in the paradise of God. No man can estimate the multitude of these redeemed ones: their number is "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." And now, to use the glowing language of inspiration,—

"Are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."215

In the accompanying group of portraits, the reader will find correct likenesses of some of the most distinguished of the Protestant clergy during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.


JONn EDWARDS
THOS CHALMERS
JOHN WESLEY
WM PALEY
ROBERT HALL

EMINENT CLERGY OF THE 18TH CENTURY

Thomas Chalmers, one of the most eloquent and renowned of the Presbyterian clergy of Scotland, was born at Anstruther, in Fifeshire, the 17th of March, 1780. At the early age of twelve, he entered the University of St. Andrew's. Distinguishing himself as a scholar, he was licensed to preach in his nineteenth year. When he was first ordained minister of a small parish at Kilmany, his mind was chiefly occupied with studies of natural science, and in speculating upon moral, social, and political questions. Though he devoted little time, comparatively, to the pulpit, still, with powers of glowing and impassioned eloquence which drew great multitudes to hear him, he enforced the highest principles of worldly morality. Though the audiences listened, charmed by his eloquence, he testifies, that, at the close of twelve years, he could not perceive that any good had been accomplished by his preaching. This led him to inquire why the preaching of the gospel by the apostles produced results so different from those which he witnessed.

These anxious questions, in connection with a dangerous illness and severe domestic bereavements, led him to a renewed examination of the New Testament. He then perceived that he had been a stranger to the gospel of Christ, and that he had been preaching simply a code of morals, without regard to those great doctrines which are the "wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation." From his sick-bed he returned to the pulpit, a new man, to proclaim to his congregation, with increasing fervor of utterance, salvation through faith in an atoning Saviour. The style of his preaching was thoroughly changed. The themes upon which he dwelt, and upon which he brought to bear all the powers of his rich and varied culture and his impassioned eloquence, were the lost state of mankind by the fall; the atonement for human guilt made by the sufferings and death of the Son of God upon the cross at Calvary; redemption from sin and its penalty, obtained through penitence and faith in this atoning Saviour; regeneration,—the recreating of the soul by the energies of the Holy Spirit; and the endeavor to live a Christ-like life, as the result of this renewal by the Holy Ghost.

There was vitality in these doctrines; they inspired the preacher with zeal unknown before; and, from that hour to the day of his death, Thomas Chalmers preached the glad tidings of the gospel with power, and with success unsurpassed, perhaps, by any other preacher in Great Britain or America. He still continued to prosecute his literary and scientific studies, but brought all his resources to the advocacy of the gospel. In one of his published articles, he alludes with admiration to the history of Pascal, "who, after a youth signalized with profound speculations, had stopped short in a brilliant career of discovery, resigned the splendors of literary reputation, renounced without a sigh all the distinctions which are conferred upon genius, only to devote every talent and every hour to the defence and illustration of the gospel."216

His pulpit eloquence attracted listeners from great distances. An article which he wrote for "The Encyclopædia" in 1813, upon "The Evidences of Christianity," attracted great attention, and was immediately republished in separate volumes. Several review articles which he wrote upon scientific and political questions added greatly to his renown. In 1815 he was invited to the pastoral charge of a parish in Glasgow. Here, for eight years, he stood, as a pulpit orator, without a rival. The most distinguished philosophers and the most unlettered men were alike charmed by his address.

Jeffries describes the impression produced by his sermons as similar to the effect created by the most impassioned strains of Demosthenes. Wilberforce wrote in his diary, “All the world is wild about Dr. Chalmers.” He delivered a series of weekly lectures on “The Connection of the Discoveries of Astronomy and the Christian Revelation.” They were listened to with intense admiration, and, being published in 1817, secured an immense sale, rivalling even the Waverley Novels in popularity.

His fame was such, that, being invited to London to preach, the most distinguished men in the kingdom crowded the church, and listened with admiration to his glowing utterances. Several articles which he contributed to “The Edinburgh Review” added much to his celebrity as a philosopher, a statesman, and an accomplished scholar. Through his influence, the old parochial system of Scotland was thoroughly revised; and the whole community was divided into small sections, so as to bring every individual under educational and ecclesiastical influences. The parish of St. John, which contained two thousand families, eight hundred of whom were not connected with any Christian church, was intrusted, as an experiment, entirely to his supervision. The support of the poor in that parish had been costing seven thousand dollars a year. In four years the poor were in far more comfortable circumstances, and the expense of their support amounted to but fourteen hundred dollars a year. Every street and lane was systematically visited.

In the year 1823, Dr. Chalmers accepted the professorship of moral philosophy in the University of St. Andrew’s; and in the year 1828 he was transferred to the higher sphere of professor of theology in the University of Edinburgh. Here he remained for fifteen years. The enthusiasm inspired by his ardor and eloquence crowded his lecture-room, not only with students, but with men of the highest literary distinction, and clergymen of every denomination. In the year 1833 he made a tour through Scotland, collecting funds, and urging forward a movement which would so increase the churches of the country, that the claims of religion should be urged upon every individual heart. He had became the recognized leader of what was called the Evangelical party. In the General Assembly of 1834—of which Dr. Chalmers was moderator—a resolution was passed, that no minister should be forced upon any parish against whom a majority of the congregation should remonstrate. This gave rise to a very violent controversy. The civil courts declared this to be contrary to the law of the land. Thus the church and the civil courts came into collision.

The result was, that, after a struggle of ten years, four hundred and seventy clergymen withdrew from the Established Church, and associated themselves as the “Free Church of Scotland,” choosing Dr. Chalmers their moderator. The last four years of Dr. Chalmers’s busy life were spent in organizing the new church, in performing the duties of president of the Free Church College which had been founded, and in writing for “The North-British Review,” which had been established under his superintendence. In the midst of these arduous labors, Dr. Chalmers was suddenly called to his final rest. He had just returned from London, where he had been consulting some eminent statesmen upon his views of national education, when he was found, on the morning of the 31st of May, 1847, dead in his bed, at Morningside, near Edinburgh. During the night, he had “fallen asleep in Jesus.” The tranquillity of his features showed that the soul had taken its upward flight from the body without a struggle or a pang. He had attained the age of sixty-seven years.

Jonathan Edwards, perhaps, takes the rank of the most illustrious of American divines. He was born at East Windsor, Conn., on the 5th of October, 1703. Dr. Chalmers said of him,—

"On the arena of metaphysics, Jonathan Edwards stood the highest of his contemporaries. The American divine affords, perhaps, the most wondrous example in modern times of one who stood gifted both in natural and spiritual discernment."

Sir James Mackintosh says of him, "This remarkable man—the metaphysician of America—was formed among the Calvinists of New England. His power of subtle argument, perhaps unmatched, certainly unsurpassed, among men, was joined with a character which raised his piety to fervor."

Robert Hall writes, "Jonathan Edwards ranks with the brightest luminaries of the Christian Church, not excluding any country or any age."

In a family of ten sisters, Jonathan was an only son. His father and his grandfather, on his mother's side, were both eminent ministers of the gospel. His father was distinguished for scholarship in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Under the tuition of his father and his accomplished elder sisters, the youthful intellect of Jonathan was very rapidly developed. Before he was ten years of age, he became deeply concerned for his soul's salvation, and engaged very earnestly in a life of devotion, praying five times a day in secret. At that early age he wrote a treatise, ridiculing the idea that the soul is material. When twelve years of age, there was a remarkable revival in his father's parish. In a letter to an absent sister, he wrote,—

"The very remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God still continues: but I have reason to think that it is in some measure diminished; yet, I hope, not much. Three have joined the church since you last heard; five now stand propounded for admission; and I think above thirty persons come commonly on a Monday to converse with father about the condition of their souls."

In September, 1716, when in his thirteenth year, Jonathan entered Yale College. He devoted himself assiduously to study; and the character of his mind may be inferred from the fact, that, when but fifteen years of age, he was discussing with the utmost interest such questions as "whether it were possible to add to matter the property of thought:" he argued that "every thing did exist from all eternity in uncreated idea;" that "truth is the agreement of our ideas with the ideas of God;" that "the universe exists nowhere but in the divine mind;" &c.

When about sixteen years of age, while in college, his mind seems to have settled into a calm trust in God. His theological opinions became unalterably formed. The peace which thus dawned upon his mind he describes in his diary in glowing language:—

"The appearance of every thing was altered. There was, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance, of divine glory in almost every thing. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water, and in all nature."

After taking his degree, he remained for two years at New Haven, studying theology; and, before he was nineteen years of age, was invited to preach in a Presbyterian church in New York. He preached with great fervor, and in the enjoyment of intense spiritual delight, for eight months, when he returned to his father's home in East Windsor, where he continued his severe and unremitting studies. Here, with much prayer, the young Christian wrote a series of seventy resolutions to guide him in the conduct of life. We find in them the resolves,—

To act always for the glory of God and for the good of mankind in general; to lose not one moment of time; to live with all his might while he did live; to let the knowledge of the failings of others only promote shame in himself; to solve, as far as he could, any theorem in divinity he might think of; to trace actions back to their original source; to be firmly faithful to his trust; to live as he would if it were but an hour before he should hear the last trump; to strive every week for a higher and still higher exercise of grace.

In the diary of this young man of nineteen we find the following narrative: "They say there is a young lady in New Haven who is beloved of that great Being who made and rules the world; and that there are certain seasons in which this great Being, in some way or other, comes to her, and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight; and that she hardly cares for any thing except to meditate on him; that she expects after a while to be received up where he is,—to be raised up out of the world, and caught up into heaven, being assured that he loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from him always. There she is to dwell with him, and to be ravished with his love and delight forever. Therefore, if you present all the world, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards it, and cares not for, and is unmindful of, any path of affliction.

"She has a singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do any thing wrong or sinful if you would give her all this world, lest she should offend this great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness, and universal benevolence, especially after this great God has manifested himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing sweetly; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure, and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking the fields and groves; and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her."

This young lady, Sarah Pierrepont, eventually became the wife of Mr. Edwards. Though several congregations invited him to become their pastor, he decided to devote two more years to study before assuming the responsibilities of a parish. In June, 1724, he was appointed tutor in Yale College. The duties of this station he fulfilled with great success, devoting himself with tireless assiduity to study, practising great abstinence both from food and sleep. In February, 1727, he entered upon the office of colleague-pastor with Rev. Solomon Stoddard, his mother's father, in Northampton, Mass., then, as now, one of the most beautiful towns in New England. Immediately after his settlement, he sought the hand of Sarah Pierrepont as his bride.

"She listened to his urgency; and on July 28, about five months after he was settled, the youthful preacher was joined in wedlock at New Haven with the wonderfully-endowed bride of his choice. She was pure and kind, uncommonly beautiful and affectionate, and notable as a housekeeper; he, holy and learned and eloquent, and undoubtedly the ablest young preacher of

his time; she seventeen, he twenty-three. What was wanting to their happiness? The union continued for more than thirty years; and she bore him three sons and eight daughters."

Rapidly the fame of the young preacher spread; for in his sermons were found a union of the closest reasoning, glowing imagination, and fervid piety. A wonderful revival of religion soon followed his earnest ministrations, exceeding any thing which had then been known in North America. Edwards wrote an account of the surprising conversions which took place, which narrative was republished in England and in Boston.

Thus the years passed rapidly, prosperously, and happily away, as his powers of eloquence and the productions of his pen extended his fame through Europe and America. But suddenly a bitter controversy arose in the church to which he ministered. The Rev. Mr. Stoddard, a man of mild character and lax discipline, had introduced to the church many who did not profess to be in heart Christians, the subjects of renewing grace. It had been tacitly assumed that the Lord's Supper was a converting ordinance, and that any person of respectable character might unite with the church, and partake of the Lord's Supper, as he might attend upon the preaching of the gospel. But Edwards urged that true conversion should precede admission to the communion. In these views Edwards was overborne by the majority of the church, who refused to allow him to deliver a course of lectures upon the subject. Thus, after years of a very unhappy controversy, Mr. Edwards was driven from his parish in the twenty-fourth year of his pastorate. He was drawing near the decline of life, had ten children dependent upon him, and was left without any visible means of support. The magnanimity and firmness which Mr. Edwards displayed has won for him the admiration of posterity.

In the town of Stockbridge, among the mountains of Berkshire, there was a remnant of a band of Indians called Housatonics. A few white settlers had also purchased lands, and reared their farm-houses in that region. A society in London, organized for the purpose of propagating the gospel, appointed him as missionary to these humble people. His income was so small, that it was found necessary to add to it by the handiwork of his wife and daughters, which was sent to Boston for sale.

As Mr. Edwards preached to the Indians extempore, and through an interpreter, he found more leisure for general study than he had ever before enjoyed; and from this retreat in the wilderness, during six years of intense application, he sent forth productions which arrested the attention of the whole thinking world. His renowned dissertations upon "The Freedom of the Will," upon "God's Last End in the Creation of the World," upon "The Nature of True Virtue," and on "Original Sin," placed him at once in the highest ranks of theologians and philosophers.

While thus laboring in his humble home in the then inhospitable frontiers of Massachusetts, he was invited to the presidency of Princeton College, one of the most prominent seminaries in the country. The small-pox was raging in the vicinity, and he was inoculated as an act of prevention. The disease assumed a malignant form; and on the 22d of March, 1758, he died at Princeton, N.J., thirty-four days after his installation as president. He had attained the age of fifty-four years. Fully conscious that death was approaching, he sent messages of love to the absent members of his family. His last words were, "Trust in God, and you need not fear."

There is probably no name in the modern history of Christianity more prominent than that of John Wesley. It is certain that the denomination of Methodists, of which he is the father and the founder, has exerted an influence in reclaiming lost souls to the Saviour second to that of no other branch of the Church of Christ. In November, 1729,—less than a hundred and fifty years ago,—John Wesley, then a young student but twenty-six years of age in Oxford University, England, with his younger brother Charles and two other students, united in a class for their own spiritual improvement. Their strict habits and methodical improvement of time led their fellow-students to give them, somewhat in derision, the name of Methodists. They accepted the name, and made it honorable.

Such was the origin of a denomination of Christians which has now become one of the largest and most influential in the world. According to the statistics given in the Methodist Almanac for 1872, the denomination now numbers, in the United States alone,—

21,086	Preachers.
1,436,396	Church-members.
193,979	Sunday-school teachers.
1,267,742	Sunday-school scholars.
$64,098,104	Value of church edifices and parsonages.[217]

John Wesley was the son of a mother alike remarkable for her piety and her intellectual endowments. He was born at Epworth, England, on the 17th of June, 1703. At the age of seventeen, he entered the University at Oxford. Taking his first degree in 1724, he was elected fellow of Lincoln College, and graduated master of arts in 1726. He was at this time quite distinguished for his attainments, particularly in the classics, and for his skill as a logician. Being naturally of a sedate, thoughtful turn of mind, he had from childhood been strongly inclined to the Christian ministry. The teachings of his noble mother had inspired him with the intense desire of being useful to his fellow-men. Being ordained to the ministry, he was for a short time his father's curate. Returning to Oxford still further to prosecute his studies, he expressed strong dissatisfaction at the want of zeal manifested in the Established Church for the conversion of sinners. This led him to consecrate himself with great solemnity to the more strict observance of the duties of religious life.

He formed a society for mutual religious improvement, which consisted at first only of himself, his younger brother Charles, and two others of his fellow-students. The number was, however, soon increased to fifteen. Ten years passed away with their usual vicissitudes, nothing occurring worthy of especial note. In 1735, Mr. Wesley was induced to go to Georgia to preach to the colonists there, and more especially to labor as a missionary among the Indians. The mission proved very unsuccessful. The disturbed state of the colony was such, that he could get no access to the Indians. Though at first he had a large and flourishing congregation of colonists to address in Savannah, there soon sprang up very bitter alienation between him and the people of his charge. They rebelled against the strictness of discipline which he attempted to introduce. He refused to admit dissenters from the Episcopal Church to the communion, unless they were rebaptized; insisted upon immersion as the mode of performing that rite; and became involved in a very serious matrimonial difficulty.

The result was, that he soon found his influence at an end in Georgia. After a residence of two years at Savannah, he returned to England, “shaking the dust off his feet,” as he said, in testimony against the colonists. Recrossing the Atlantic, he visited the colony of Moravian Christians, or United Brethren as they were also called, at Hernhult, in Upper Lusatia. This colony was founded by Count Zinzendorf upon what he considered as the model of the primitive apostolic Christians. Leaving out all the distinctive doctrines of the various Protestant denominations, he adopted as articles of faith only those fundamental scriptural truths in which all evangelical Christians agree.

Mr. Wesley soon made the extraordinary discovery, as he himself states, that he had never been truly converted. While crossing the ocean to lead others to the Saviour, he had never come to that Saviour himself. “He felt,” he said, “a want of the victorious faith of more experienced Christians.” Agitated by these thoughts, he at length, in his estimation, became a subject of that renewing grace entitled in the Bible being “born again.” So sudden was this change, that he could not only point out the day and the hour, but the moment also, when it took place. “It was,” he says, “at quarter before nine o’clock on the evening of May 24, at a meeting of a society in Aldergate Street, when one was reading Luther’s Preface to the Epistle to the Romans.”

In this respect, the experience of Mr. Wesley was somewhat similar to that of Dr. Chalmers. He at once began his labors of preaching the gospel of Christ, with zeal and success, perhaps, never surpassed. George Whitefield, one of the most impassioned and eloquent of sacred orators, joined him. They both preached several times a day in the prisons, and at all other places where they could gain an audience. Their fervor attracted crowds; and strong opposition began to be manifested against them. As the Established clergy refused to open their churches to these zealous preachers, they addressed audiences in the open fields, and particularly in an immense building called the Foundery at Moorsfield. Here Mr. Wesley organized his first church of but eight to ten persons. There was at that time great deadness in the Established Church. Many of the nominal pastors were utterly worldly men, who made no profession of piety. The clergy were often younger sons of nobles, who had been placed over the churches simply through the influence of their fathers, that they might enjoy the revenues of the church. Reckless men, devoted to pleasure, they were called “fox-hunting parsons;” and the church became often the scene only of a heartless round of ceremonies. The masses of the people found nothing in such a religion either to cheer them in their sorrows, or to animate them to a holy life.

The preaching of Wesley and his companions came directly home to the hearts of the people. It was the earnest and impassioned utterance to weary souls of the good news and glad tidings of the gospel. The little church of eight or ten members which he established at the Foundery was composed of those who, as Wesley testifies, “came to him and desired him to spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to escape from the wrath to come.”

The church at the Foundery rapidly increased in numbers: crowds flocked to listen to the earnest preaching. The building was converted into a chapel, and became the centre of operations. From this centre, Wesley and his associates made constant journeys into the surrounding country, sometimes to a great distance, preaching wherever they went. They generally preached twice every day, and four times on the sabbath. At Kensington Common, Wesley at one time addressed a concourse estimated to be not less than twenty thousand persons.

"Wesley devoted himself to his work in Great Britain with such completeness, that scarcely an hour was abstracted from the cause on which he had set his heart. He seldom travelled less than forty miles a day; and until near the close of life, when he used a chaise, generally went on horseback. It is said that not an instance can be found, during a period of fifty years, wherein the severest weather hindered him for a single day. His journeys extended to Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, in each of which countries he preached with great success. He formed societies, and placed lay preachers over them; appointed class-leaders, and established schools, the most important of which was that of Kingswood, near Bristol, which was designed more particularly for the education of the sons of preachers. The most extraordinary revivals followed his ministry, especially among the poor and destitute in the mining and manufacturing districts."218

Though Wesley continued to adhere to the Established Church, still the principles of tolerance which he advocated tended more and more, every day, to cause the rapidly-increasing Methodist churches to be regarded as a distinct sect. At the first conference of the Methodist clergy at the Foundery Chapel, in 1744, eight preachers were present. Wesley then said,—

"You cannot be admitted to the church of Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, or any others, unless you hold the same opinions with them, and adhere to the same mode of worship. The Methodists alone do not insist upon your holding this or that opinion; but they think, and let think. Neither do they impose any particular mode of worship; but you may continue to worship in your former manner, be it what it may. Now, I do not know any other religious society, either ancient or modern, wherein such liberty of conscience is now allowed, or has been allowed since the days of the apostles. Here is our glorying, and it is a glorying peculiar to us."

In the year 1752, Wesley married a widow with four children. But the religious zeal which inspired him was singularly manifested in the marriage contract, in which it was stipulated that he should not preach one sermon the less, nor travel one mile the less, on account of his change of condition. It is, perhaps, not strange that the marriage did not prove a happy one. After a life of activity and usefulness to which few parallels can be found, John Wesley died in London on the 2d of March, 1791, in the eighty-third year of his age. The last four days of his life were days of Christian triumph, in which the veteran servant of Christ found that faith in Jesus did indeed make him victor over death and the grave. It is estimated, that, during his ministry of sixty-five years, he travelled about two hundred and seventy thousand miles, and delivered over forty thousand sermons, besides addresses, exhortations, and prayers. The denomination of which he was the founder is now exerting in England and the United States an influence second certainly to that of none other; and it is every hour increasing in all the elements of prosperity and power.

Robert Hall, one of the brightest ornaments of the Baptist Church, by universal assent occupies one of the most prominent positions among men of genius and of culture, his works having given him renown throughout Christendom. The celebrated Dr. Parr, who was his intimate friend, says of him,—

"Mr. Hall has, like Jeremy Taylor, the eloquence of an orator, the fancy of a poet, the subtlety of a schoolman, the profoundness of a philosopher, and the piety of a saint."

Robert Hall was born at Arnsby, Leicestershire, England, in August, 1764. His father, who was a Baptist clergyman of considerable note, early perceived a wonderful degree of intellectual development in his child. He said to a friend,—

"Robert at nine years of age fully comprehended the reasoning in the profoundly argumentative treatises of Edward on the Will and the Affections."

When fifteen years old, Robert became a student in the Baptist College at Bristol; and in his eighteenth year entered King's College, Aberdeen. Here he became acquainted with Sir James Mackintosh, which acquaintance ripened into a life-long friendship.

Upon leaving college, Mr. Hall commenced preaching, and with a power which immediately drew around him, and elicited the admiration of, crowds of the most intellectual of hearers. His biographer says of him,—

"Mr. Hall's voice is feeble, but very distinct: as he proceeds, it trembles under his energy. The plainest and least-labored of his discourses are not without delicate imagery and the most felicitous turns of expression. He expatiates on the prophecies with a kindred spirit, often conducting his audience to the top of the 'Delectable Mountains,' where they can see from afar the gates of the Eternal City. He seems at home among the marvellous revelations of St. John; and, while he dwells upon them, he leads his hearer breathless through ever-varying scenes of mystery far more glorious and surprising than the wildest of Oriental fables. He stops where they most desire he should proceed, where he has just disclosed the dawnings of the inmost glory to their enraptured minds, and leaves them full of imaginations of things not made with hands, of joys too ravishing for similes."

Robert Hall's life was devoid of adventure, having been spent almost exclusively in the study and the pulpit. His conversational powers were of the highest order; and, in every social circle, crowds gathered around him, charmed by the unstudied eloquence which flowed from his lips. He was an indefatigable student; and, though one of the most profound thinkers, was one of the most childlike of men in unaffected simplicity of character. His pre-eminence in the pulpit was universally acknowledged, and his extraordinary powers ever crowded his church with the most distinguished auditors. During his life he issued several pamphlets, which obtained celebrity throughout all Christendom. A sermon which he preached upon Modern Infidelity was published in repeated editions, and "sent a thrill to every village and hamlet of Great Britain." Its arguments were so unanswerable, that no serious attempt was made to reply to them.

"Whoever," Dugald Stewart wrote, "wishes to see the English language in its perfection, must read the writings of that great divine, Robert Hall. He combines the beauties of Johnson, Addison, and Burke, without their imperfections."

A very severe chronic disease of the spine caused him throughout his whole life severe suffering. Once or twice the disease so ascended to the brain, that the mind lost its balance; and Mr. Hall was compelled for a short time to withdraw from his customary labors.

The works of this distinguished man are still read with admiration, and will be ever regarded as among the highest productions of the human intellect. He died, universally beloved and lamented, on the 21st of February, 1831, in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

There is, perhaps, no divine of the Church of England whose name is more prominent in ecclesiastical annals, or more widely known throughout the Christian world, than that of William Paley. He was born in Peterborough, England, in July, 1743. His father, who was curate of a parish, carefully instructed him in childhood, and, when his son was sixteen years of age, entered him at Christ College, in Cambridge. The superior intellect even then developed by the young man is evidenced by the remark of his father, "He has by far the clearest head I ever met with."

At the university he applied himself very diligently to his studies, and rapidly attained distinction. After graduating in 1763, he spent three years as a teacher, and then returned to his college as a tutor. In 1775 he was presented to the rectory of Musgrove, in Westmoreland; and, marrying, he retired from the university to his living.

The life of Paley was in many respects quite the reverse of that of Wesley. He was by no means an ardent Christian. His piety, and his appreciation of Christianity, were intellectual far more than spiritual or emotional. He was not a popular preacher: his appropriate field of labor was the silence and solitude of the study. From this retreat he issued works upon God, Christian Morals, and the Evidences of Christianity, which greatly baffled infidelity, and silenced its cavils.

Being promoted from one living to another as he gained reputation, in 1782 he was advanced to the Archdeanery of Carlyle. Three years after this he published his first important work, entitled "The Principles of Moral and Political Economy." Though some of its principles were violently assailed, it commanded the respectful attention of all thoughtful men. The work became exceedingly popular even with the masses, as Paley had the power of making the most abstruse truths clear and entertaining to the popular mind.

Five years after this, in 1790, Paley published another work, entitled "Horæ Paulinæ," which is generally deemed the most original and ingenious of all his writings. In this work, which obtained renown through all Christendom, he maintained with irresistible force of logic the genuineness of St. Paul's Epistles and of the Acts of the Apostles, from the reciprocal supports they received, from the undesigned coincidences between them. This work added greatly to the celebrity of the already distinguished writer, and secured for him still more lucrative offices in the English Church.

Four years later, in 1794, he issued another volume, entitled "View of the Evidences of Christianity." It may be safely said that the arguments here brought forward in attestation of the divine origin of the religion of Jesus of Nazareth never have been, and never can be, refuted. In clearness of diction, beauty of illustration, and force of logic, the work has never been surpassed. It has been adopted as a text-book in many of the most distinguished universities, and is considered one of the most cogent arguments to be found in any language in favor of the divine authority of Christianity.

Thus does God raise up different instruments to accomplish his great purposes of benevolence. While Wesley and his coadjutors were traversing thousands of miles, and, by their impassioned eloquence, were rousing the humble and unlettered masses to an acceptance of the glad tidings of the gospel, Paley, in the lonely hours of entire seclusion in his study, was framing those arguments which intellectually enthroned Christianity in the minds of the thoughtful and the philosophic.

At the close of a studious life of sixty-two years, spent in his study and his garden, with but few companions and few exciting incidents, this illustrious servant of the Church of Christ fell asleep on the 25th of May, 1805.

For nearly nineteen centuries, Christianity has struggled against almost every conceivable form of human corruption. All the energies of the powers of darkness have been combined against it. In this unholy alliance, kings have contributed imperial power; so-called philosophers, like Voltaire, have consecrated to the foul enterprise the most brilliant endowments of wit and learning; while all "the lewd fellows of the baser sort" have swelled the ranks of infidelity with their legions of debauchees, inebriates, and blasphemers; but all in vain: generation after generation of these despisers have passed away, and perished.

Christianity has been steadily triumphing over all opposition, and was never before such a power in the world as at this day. Could you, upon some pleasant sabbath morning, look down from a balloon, as with an angel's eye, over the wide expanse of Europe, witnessing the movement of its myriad population, and, as with an angel's ear, listen to the sounds which sweep over its mountains, its valleys, and its plains, how wonderful the spectacle which would meet the eye, and the vibrations which, like the fabled music of the spheres, would fill the air! Suppose it to be such a sabbath morning as Herbert describes,—

"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,

The bridal of the earth and sky:"

you would hear the chime of millions of church-bells floating in Æolian harmony over crowded cities and green fields, melodious as angel-voices proclaiming the praises of God. As you inquire, "What causes this simultaneous clangor of sweet sounds over thousands of leagues of territory, regardless of the barriers of mountains and rivers, of national boundaries and diverse tongues? whence comes the impulse which has created this wondrous summons to hundreds of millions of people, spread over a majestic continent, under diverse institutions, speaking different languages, inhabiting different climes, and under all varieties of forms of government?" you would be told,—and not an individual on the globe would dispute the assertion,—"It is the religion of Jesus of Nazareth."

As you listen, you look; and, lo! thronging millions are crowding towards innumerable temples of every variety of form, size, and structure. The gilded chariot waits at the portals of the castle and the palace for the conveyance of nobles and kings to these sanctuaries. Through all the streets of the cities, and over many green-ribboned roads of the country, vehicles of every description may be seen, crowded with men, women, and children, all peacefully pressing on to

alight at the doors of these temples. The pavements of the crowded towns are thronged; pedestrians, in their best attire, are hastening along the banks of the rivers, and crossing the pastures and the flowery plains; while, some in wagons, some in carts, some on horseback, the mighty mass, unnumbered and innumerable, moves on to ten thousand times ten thousand cathedrals and village churches, and to the humblest edifices, where coarsely-clad and unlettered peasants meet for praise and prayer.

The innumerable throng sweeps along the base of the Carpathian Mountains, threads the passes of the Tyrol, and winds its way through the gorges of the Alps and the Apennines. In Russia, wrapped in furs, they struggle through snow-drifts, and breast the gale, as they crowd to the Greek Church. On the sunny banks of the Mediterranean, in Italy, France, and Spain, through vineyards and orange-groves, cheered by the songs of birds and the bloom of flowers, nobles and peasants, princes and subjects, press along to the massive, moss-covered churches where their ancestors for centuries have worshipped according to the rites of the Catholic Church. In Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and through all the highways and byways of England, Scotland, and Wales, the inmates of lordly castles, and humble artisans from mines and manufactories, are moving onward to the churches where the religion of Jesus is inculcated in accordance with the simple rites of the Protestant faith.

And, if we cross the Atlantic, we witness the same sublime spectacle, extending from the icy regions north of the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Atlantic coast almost to the base of the Rocky Mountains, and again repeated upon the Pacific shores through the rapidly-populating plains of California and Oregon. Scarcely have the hardy settlers reared half a dozen log-huts ere the spire of the church rises, where the religion of Jesus is taught as the first essential to the prosperity of the growing village. And so through South America: through its conglomeration of States, where light is contending with darkness; through Chili, Peru, Bolivia, and along the majestic streams and wide-spreading savannas of the vast empire of Brazil,—the religion of Jesus of Nazareth, notwithstanding the imperfections which fallen humanity has attached to it, is potent above all other influences in enlightening the masses, and in moulding their manners and their minds. And now we begin faintly to hear, along the western coast of Africa and the southern shores of India, and upon many a green tropical island emerging from the Pacific, the tolling of the church-bell, indicating that that religion which has became dominant in Europe and America is destined to bring the whole world, from pole to pole, under its benignant sway.

And it is worthy of note that the most thoroughly Christian nations are the most enlightened, moral, and prosperous upon the globe. Where we do not find this religion, we meet effeminate Asiatics, stolid Chinamen, wandering Tartars, and Bedouins of the desert. They are the Christian nations who stand forth luminous in wealth, power, and intellect. These are the nations which seem now to hold the destinies of the globe in their hand; and it is the religion of Jesus which has crowned them with this wealth and influence.

And again: it is well to call attention to the fact, that every literary and scientific university in Christendom, where the ablest men in all intellectual culture do congregate, is mainly under the control of those who bow in cordial assent to Jesus of Nazareth as their Teacher and Lord.

The Universities of Cambridge and Oxford in England, of Edinburgh and Glasgow in Scotland, of Harvard and Yale in the United States, declare through their learned professors, with almost one united voice, that the salvation of humanity can come only through the religion of Jesus the Christ. In France, Italy, Germany, Russia, in all the renowned, time-honored universities of Continental Europe, the name of Jesus is revered as above every name, and his teachings are regarded as the wisdom of God and the power of God. There is hardly a university of learning of any note, in Europe or America, where Jesus of Nazareth is not recognized as the Son of God, who came to seek and to save the lost.

The standard of what is called *goodness* in this world greatly varies. "There is honor among thieves." A gang of debauchees, gamblers, and inebriates, has its code of morals. The proudest oppressors who have ever crushed humanity beneath a merciless heel have usually some standard of right and wrong, so adroitly formed as to enable them to flatter themselves that they are to be numbered among the good men.

Socrates, unenlightened by revelation, simply through the teachings of his own honest mind, declares him only to be a good man who tries to make himself, and all whom he can influence, as perfect as possible. The definition which Jesus gives of goodness, even more comprehensive and beautiful, is, that a man should love his Father, God, with all his heart, and his brother, man, as himself. This is the only real goodness,—angelic goodness, divine goodness. Now, it may be safely said that you cannot find at the present time, or through all past ages, a truly good man, in either of the above definitions of the term, whose character has not been modelled by the principles laid down by Jesus of Nazareth.

Let the mind run along the list of great and good men, who, with loving hearts and pure lives and beneficent actions, have been the ornaments of humanity; men and women who have made their own homes happy, who have ever had an open hand to relieve the distressed, whose hearts have yearned over the wandering, and whose lips have entreated them to return to the paths of virtue; and where can you find one who has not manifested the spirit of Jesus, and drawn his main inspiration from the principles which he has inculcated?

There are now many men and women all over Christendom, of self-denying lives, active in every good word and work, sympathizing with the afflicted, helping the needy, praying for and trying to reclaim their brothers and sisters of the human family who are crowding the paths of sin; searching out the children of abandonment, destitution, and woe, from the depravity of the streets and from homes of wretchedness, that they may be clothed and educated and made holy,—there are thousands of such; and yet it would be difficult to find one, a single one, who does not recognize the religion of Jesus as the only moral power which can reclaim a lost world.

We have in the Bible the history of the world, and the biography of its leading individuals, from the dawn of creation until those modern days in which secular history takes up the record. Through all these ages not a single man can be found, who by the purity of his own life, by the beneficent influence of his example, and by his self-denying efforts to promote the happiness of others, has not developed the principles uttered by the lips of Jesus.

Indeed, there is an absolute, invincible necessity that every truly good man should embrace these principles, and diffuse them to the utmost of his power. The moment one awakes to the grandeur of his own being,—an immortal created in the image of God,—and begins to breathe the prayer, "O God! help me to resist every sin, and aid me to cherish every virtue," he finds at once, that, infinitely above all other books, the Bible is the book to help him in this new and noble life. He finds that every duty which his conscience suggests that he ought to perform, the religion of Jesus urges upon him by motives of infinite weight. He finds that every allurement, every indulgence, which would retard his moral growth, the religion of Jesus urges him, by motives of infinite weight, to avoid.

All through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, there is one continual strain of urgency, enforced by every variety of argument, warning, and illustration, to aid a man to attain a celestial character.

Ought we to watch over our bodies, that by appetite and passion they be not defiled; over our thoughts, that impurity enter not the secret chambers of the soul; over our words, that we may ever speak as in the audience-chamber of God; over our minds, that we may store them with all valuable knowledge; over our hearts, that we may love God our Father, and man our brother; over our actions, that every deed may be such as God will approve? Then it is to Jesus of Nazareth we must look as our teacher, our guide, our helper.

The Bible is the book which the good mother gives her boy as he goes from home; and she knows full well, that if her boy will read that book daily, and make it the guide of his life, he will be safe for time and for eternity. Many a man has said years after a sainted mother has ascended to her crown, "It was the Bible which my mother gave me which rescued me from ruin."

How noble is the character of the Christian wife and mother formed upon the model of Jesus the Christ! Many of our readers have seen the most beautiful exemplification of this in their own homes. You have seen your mother all-forgetful of herself in her generous devotion to others. You have seen her moving like an angel of light in the dark homes of poverty, and around beds of suffering and death, ever unmindful of her own ease if she could only heal broken hearts and soothe the cry of anguish. Such nobility the world will ever recognize, and love to honor.

Many such are found in the homes of our own land. Many a reader can say, "Such was my mother, God bless her!" You have seen her bending over the cradle, pale, gentle, loving as an angel; you have seen her placid and cheerful amidst all the annoyances and wasting cares of domestic life; you have seen her return home in the morning, after watching during the night with a sick neighbor, to toil all day long with fingers which never seem to tire, and with a gentle spirit which even your waywardness could never discompose.

And, when the village-bell tolled her funeral, you have seen every house emptied as rich and poor came together to weep over the departure of one who was the friend and benefactor of them all. Oh, how glorious must be the flight of such a spirit, ennobled by suffering, victor over death and the grave, to join the peerage of heaven, and to receive a coronet in the skies! Now, characters of this stamp—of imperial type, though found in lowly homes—are invariably formed upon the model which Jesus Christ has presented.

The men of true nobility who are found in almost every village of our land—men devoted to every thing that is good, opposed to every thing that is bad—are men who have deliberately enlisted in the service of Jesus Christ as his disciples, his imitators. They perseveringly struggle against all that is unworthy; they hunger and thirst for every celestial virtue; they battle against temptation in whatever form it may come; cultivate moral courage, that they may boldly advocate the cause of their Saviour, amidst opposition and derision if need be; and thus they are nerved to glorious achievements in triumphing over the allurements to sin, and in bringing themselves into entire subjection to their divine Master.

Material grandeur of crag and cataract has its sublimity; but there is something in moral excellence which far surpasses, in all the elements of the sublime, any combinations of ocean, earth, or sky. When a man towers above his fellow-men in self-denial, in devotion to the welfare of others, in the endeavor to extend virtue, piety, and happiness, a spectacle is presented upon which angels gaze with admiration. When we reflect upon what we may become in social loveliness, in majesty of virtue, in dignity of character, we can hardly wonder that even the Son of God should be willing to die upon the cross to save such a one from the ruin of sin. Here below, in the midst of all man's frailties and wickedness, we catch glimpses of the angel dignity from which he has fallen, and to which he may again soar.

The wreck is to be repaired; the ruin is to be rebuilt. What a glorious creation will man become, when, redeemed, regenerated, created anew in Christ Jesus, he emerges from the fall in more than the majesty of his original grandeur, no longer but a "little lower" than the angels, but on an equality with the loftiest spirits who bow before God's throne!

And, oh! it is so sad—the saddest sight of earth—to see one who is created of a noble nature, with glowing intellect and gushing affections, formed to move like an angel of light amidst sorrowing humanity, to cheer the heart-stricken, to strengthen the tempted, to support the weak, to win and save the lost,—it is, indeed, a sad sight to see such a one, all unmindful of his lofty lineage and glorious inheritance, casting every thing that is noble away, and living miserably for self and sin! Earth is full of such melancholy wrecks, as of archangels ruined. All material ruins, all mouldering turrets, and towers of baronial castles,—Melrose, Drachenfels, Heidelberg,—before such moral wrecks, pale into insignificance.

There is a ship in a foreign port. The rude sailors from the forecastle have gone on shore to the drinking-saloon and the dancing-hall to spend the night in revelry and sin. But one has remained behind. With the moral courage of a martyr, he has braved the insults and ridicule of his companions. And now it is midnight. He is kneeling beside his berth in prayer. There is a half-closed book by his side. Does any one doubt what that book is? Is there any other book but the Bible which can inspire him with such moral courage as this? It is from its pages that he has learned that it is better "to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."[219]

Far away upon the lonely prairie, there was a settler in his solitary log-cabin. From his humble door-sill, nought was to be seen in the wide expanse of many leagues but the prairie's undulating ocean of grass and flowers, broken here and there with a clump of trees, emerging as an island from the silent sea. In that vast solitude there was a Christian family, impoverished by

misfortune, struggling to rear for themselves a new home: it consisted of a father, mother, and nine children. Death came. The mother, who had ever been an angel of light in her home, was stricken down by death. There were no neighbors to help; there was no Christian minister near to offer the supports of the gospel. Sadly the father dug the grave; sadly, with the aid of his weeping children, he bore the sacred remains to their burial; sadly, silently, with a broken heart, he filled up the grave, which entombed all his earthly hopes and joys.

The evening sun was just sinking beneath the distant horizon of the prairie: that Christian father, in his desolated cabin, crushed with grief, had assembled, as had ever been his wont, his little household around him, to seek the blessing of God. They were all bowed together upon their knees. The angels hovering over them could hear the sobs of the children and the moaning prayer of the father.

Upon the table there was one book,—one open book, from which the husband and father had been reading. Can any one doubt what that book was? It was opened at the consoling passage,—

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."220

What words of comfort to the mourner! O precious Bible! thou instructor of the ignorant, guide of the erring, consoler of the afflicted, supporter of the dying; thou unfailing friend of all the weary and the heart-crushed; thou only hope of humanity,—thou art indeed God's best gift to our fallen race.

In the natural world there is infinite variety,—room for the gratification of every diversity of taste. Here rise the craggy mountains, with their eternal glaciers,—their pinnacles, thunder-riven, storm-torn, piercing the skies; there sleeps the placid lake, embowered in groves, fringed with blooming meadows, and upon whose bosom float the graceful many-colored waterfowl undisturbed: here extends the limitless prairie, an ocean of land, embroidered with flowers whose hues Solomon, arrayed in all his glory, could not outvie; there Sahara's boundless sands in dreary desolation glisten in the sun; and there the Dismal Swamp, which even the foot of the moccasoned Indian cannot penetrate, frowns in eternal gloom,—all subserving some good end, all ministering to the glory of God and the good of his children.

So in the Bible, God's Word, we find that which is adapted to every variety of taste, every condition of mind, every gradation of intellect and of culture. One page conducts you back to the pastoral simplicity of the world's infancy: you wander with the patriarchs as they pitch their tents and tend their flocks beneath the sunny skies of the Orient. Another page moves your soul with the sublime denunciations of the prophets, before which denunciations monarchs trembled, and empires crumbled to ruin. You turn the leaf; and the majestic dynasties of the long-buried ages pass before you in sombre procession, with all their vicissitudes of pomp and of death, of revelry and of wailing. You open to another chapter; and your soul is soothed with the penitential sweetness of the Psalms of David, whose pensive strains bring solace to your soul in its hours of deepest sadness. Again your spirit is ennobled by the precepts of Jesus, who spake as never man

spake; and your whole being is inspired by the magnificent revelations of life and immortality brought to light in the gospel.

Here is food alike for all,—for the peasant, for the philosopher, for the dairyman's untutored daughter, and for the profoundest philosopher who ever honored humanity by his intellectual achievements. Indeed, Christianity carries its own evidence. "If any man will do his will," says Jesus, "he shall know of the doctrine."221 And again: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."222

It is true that any child can ask questions which no philosopher can answer. The infidel, be he never so weak in mind and shallow in attainments, can easily present difficulties which no philosopher can solve. The infidel is almost invariably a self-conceited man of "little learning." To him the remark of Lord Bacon is applicable: "A little learning tendeth to unbelief; but more bringeth us back to religion."

And what is this religion of Jesus, which is ever winning in such increasing numbers the homage of human hearts? What are those principles which have undermined and overthrown the proudest systems of ancient idolatry, and which seem to be now commanding the assent of every honest mind?

There is one God, existing as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He is the common Father of us all; and therefore we are bound to love and worship him. All men are brothers, of whatever race, color, or condition: as kind brothers, they should seek to promote each other's welfare. All men have been and are sinners: they should therefore repent, implore forgiveness, and abandon every thing which an enlightened conscience teaches to be wrong. The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, assumed human nature, and, by his sufferings and death, made atonement for sin. Salvation is now freely offered to all who will accept that Saviour, and honestly and perseveringly endeavor to return to a holy life. God's desire to save his rebellious children is so strong, that not only has he given his Son to die for us, but he has sent the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, on a special embassage to plead with us, that we may return to him. All who yield to these strivings of the Spirit, and, with penitence and faith, try to live as the Son of God by example and precept has taught us, will be received to heaven, and made eternally happy there, as if they had never sinned. All those who refuse and continue in rebellion will be forever excluded from heaven, and will be imprisoned with the Devil and his angels, where their wickedness will make them ever wretched, but where they can no longer mar the happiness of those who love and serve God.

Now, these are the fundamental principles of Christianity, as avowed in the creeds and confessions of the overwhelming majority of Christians, of all languages and every name, through all the centuries. How simple and how grand are these principles! It must be manifest to every candid mind, that in their acceptance is to be found the only hope of our lost world. It is manifest that each individual can here only hope for any permanent happiness in this life or in that which is to come. In this wilderness of time, in the midst of the storms with which we are driven and shattered here, there can be no repose for the soul but in the well-founded conviction that peace is made with God through penitence for sin, and the cordial acceptance of salvation through the atonement of Jesus Christ.

One fact is certain,—no man will deny it,—there have been hundreds and thousands, who, on a dying-bed, have mourned most bitterly, with anguish more dreadful than words can describe, that they have not lived in accordance with the teachings of Christianity. In that dread hour, gloom impenetrable has settled down upon the soul as the dying sinner has exclaimed, "The harvest is past; the summer is ended; and we are not saved."223

Another fact is equally certain: there never was an individual, who, on a dying-bed, regretted that he had repented of sin, accepted Jesus as an atoning Saviour, confessed him before men, and that he had endeavored to live the life of the Christian. There cannot be found, in the history of the world, one single such case. On the contrary, there are millions—more than can be numbered—who have found, in the hour of death, that faith in Jesus has dispelled all gloom from the dying-chamber, and has inspired the departing soul with the most triumphant and rapturous joy. It is the Christian alone who can say with Paul, when upon the pillow of death,—

"I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."224

Footnotes.

1 – Luke i. 5–38.
2 – Isa. vii. 14.
3 – Mic. v. 2.
4 – Mark i. 15.
5 – Mark i. 22.
6 – Luke iv. 32.
7 – Life of Christ by William Hanna, D.D., p. 198.
8 – Luke iv. 40.
9 – Jesus of Nazareth. p. 178.
10 – Luke vi. 12.
11 – Matt. x. 2–4.
12 – Luke vii. 12–16.
13 – Matt. xi. 20–30.
14 – Mark v. 18–20.
15 – Matt. ix. 35.
16 – No commentator has given a satisfactory explanation of the meaning, in this connection, of these last words.
17 – So called from their want of wealth, rank, learning, and whatever the world calls *great*.
18 – John vi. 25–71.
19 – Mark vii. 35.
20 – Mark viii. 26.

21 – Matthew expresses the same idea by the words, “Till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” This wonderful expansion of the kingdom of Christ was indeed witnessed on the day of Pentecost, and in many subsequent scenes.

22 – Matt. xvii. 20, 21.

23 – Matt. xviii. 2–4; Mark ix. 31, 33–36.

24 – Matt. xviii. 6–9; Mark ix. 44–50.

25 – John vii. 34.

26 – John viii. 2–7.

27 – John viii. 13–18.

28 – John x. 25–31.

29 – The Author of the resurrection, and the Giver of eternal life.

30 – Luke ix. 51.

31 – Luke ix. 58.

32 – Luke x. 30–37.

33 – Luke xi. 2–4.

34 – Luke xiv. 9–25.

35 – Luke xiv. 1–24.

36 – Luke xvi. 1–31.

37 – Luke xvii. 24–30.

38 – Luke xii. 5–8.

39 – Luke xviii. 11–14.

40 – Matt. xix. 3–12.

41 – Matt. xix. 29.

42 – Mark x. 33, 34.

43 – Matt. xx. 26–28; Mark x. 43–45.

44 – Matt. xxvi. 10–13.

45 – John xii. 12, 13.

46 – Matt. xxi. 8, 9.

47 – Luke xix. 41–43.

48 – Matt. xxi. 28–42.

49 – Matt. xxi. 24–30; Mark xii. 18–25; Luke xx. 27–36.

50 – Luke xx. 37, 38.

51 – Matt. xxii. 32.

52 – Luke xxi. 3, 4.

53 – Luke xii. 42, 43.

54 – John xii. 44–50.

55 – See Matt. xxiii. 13–37.

56 – Mark xiii. 9–13.

57 – Matt. xxiv. 30–34.

58 – The Life of Christ, by Rev. William B. Hanna, D.D., LL.D., p. 567.

59 – Matt. xxv. 31–46.

60 – John xiii. 18–21.

61 – John xiii. 28, 29.

62 – Converted,—when thou art *turned* to me, after having forsaken me.

63 – By "works" is here probably meant *all that the apostles did* to make an impression upon mankind.

64 – "Ye shall continue to see me by faith."

65 – John xvi. 1–23.

66 – John xvii.

67 – Luke xxii. 43, 44.

68 – "Cruel hands disrobed the still uncomplaining sufferer. Brawny arms wielded upon his naked back the fearful scourge, whose thongs of leather, loaded with sharp metal, cut at every stroke their bloody furrow in the quivering flesh. This torture, beneath which many a strong man had given up his life, could not extort from the steadfast heart of Jesus a single groan."—*Life of Jesus of Nazareth by Lyman Abbott*, p. 469.

69 – This probably refers to Caiaphas, the high priest, as representing the Jewish authorities.

70 – Luke xxiii. 13–16.

71 – This last phrase was a proverbial expression. A "green tree" represented the righteous; the "dry tree" the wicked, fit only to be burned.

72 – Matt. xxvii. 64.

73 – Matt. xxviii. 5, 6.

74 – This was a kind message to Peter, who had so recently denied his Lord. It assured him of his forgiveness.

75 – The word translated "*fools*" does not imply reproach, as the word does with us. It means that they were thoughtless, not attending to the evidence that Jesus was to die and rise again.

76 – Luke xxiv. 17–31.

77 – See Luke xxiv. 34, and 1 Cor. xv. 5.

78 – Doubts, suspicions.

79 – The meaning of this passage is supposed to be, that, in founding the Church, the apostles should be taught by the Holy Ghost on what terms and to what characters God would extend forgiveness of sin.

80 – John xx. 30.

81 – Matt. xxviii. 17–20.

82 – About a hundred and thirty-two yards.

83 – The third time to the disciples collectively.

84 – More than these other apostles. Peter had professed, before his fall, superior attachment.

85 – John xxi. 2–23.

86 – Luke xxiv. 44–49.
87 – Acts ii. 38.
88 – Acts iv. 12.
89 – Acts iv. 19, 20.
90 – Acts v. 15, 16.
91 – Acts v. 29–32.
92 – Acts vii. 51–53.
93 – Acts vii. 57–60.
94 – Acts xxvi. 10.
95 – Acts xxvi. 11.
96 – Acts viii. 3.
97 – Acts ix. 1, 2.
98 – Acts xxii. 6–12. In the account which Luke gives of this event (Acts ix. 1–6), some incidents are recorded which Saul omits.
99 – Acts ix. 16.
100 – Acts xxvi. 19, 20.
101 – Acts ix. 22.
102 – Gal. i. 17, 18.
103 – Acts ix. 26.
104 – Acts iv. 36.
105 – Gal. i. 18.
106 – Acts xxii. 18–21.
107 – Saron was the well-inhabited plain which extended from Lydda to Joppa (Acts ix. 36).
108 – Acts x. 20.
109 – All that have lived and died, or shall live when the archangel's trump shall sound, will stand before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ.
110 – Acts x. 34, 43.
111 – Acts x. 45, 46.
112 – Acts xi. 21.
113 – Acts xi. 24.
114 – Acts xii. 6–17.
115 – Josephus, Ant. xix. 8–12.
116 – Acts xiii. 16–41.
117 – Acts xiii. 45.
118 – Isa. xlix. 6.
119 – Acts xiv. 21–23.
120 – About ten years before.
121 – Acts xv. 7–11.

122 – Acts xv. 22–29.
123 – Gal. ii. 11–16.
124 – 2 Pet. iii. 15.
125 – Acts xv. 36.
126 – 2 Tim. i. 5.
127 – Phil. ii. 22.
128 – Acts xvi. 5.
129 – Acts xvi. 14, 15.
130 – Acts xviii. 2.
131 – "How often," says Cicero, "has the exclamation, '*I am a Roman citizen!*' brought aid and safety, even among barbarians in the remotest parts of the earth!"—*Cicero,* Verr. v. 57.
132 – 1 Thess. iv. 13–17.
133 – 2 Thess. ii. 1–4.
134 – Acts i. 11.
135 – 2 Pet. iii. 1–13.
136 – Acts xvii. 5–7.
137 – Acts xvii. 11, 12.
138 – Paradise Regained.
139 – Acts xvii. 18.
140 – *Too superstitious.*—The meaning of the words thus translated would be better conveyed to us by the phrase, "More than others, ye reverence the deities."
141 – Acts xvii. 22–31.
142 – 1 Cor. i. 14.
143 – Acts xviii. 18.
144 – Probably the Pentecost.
145 – Acts xviii. 23
146 – Acts xviii. 28.
147 – Acts xix. 10.
148 – Acts xix. 25–27.
149 – The original image of Diana was supposed to be a gift from heaven.
150 – Matters beyond the jurisdiction of the courts.
151 – Acts xix. 35–40.
152 – See John xx. 26, and 1 Cor. xvi. 2.
153 – Acts xx. 18–38.
154 – Acts xi. 28.
155 – Acts xxi. 11.
156 – Life, Times, and Travels of St. Paul, Conybeare and Howson, vol. ii. p. 235.
157 – Acts xxi. 28.

158 – A name of reproach which the Jews gave the Christians.
159 – Acts xxiv. 2–8.
160 – Acts xxiv. 26.
161 – Acts xxv. 10, 11.
162 – Acts xxv. 14–21. Augustus and Cæsar were the titles adopted by the Roman emperors.
163 – Acts xxv. 24–27.
164 – Acts xxvii. 21–26.
165 – Acts xxviii. 7–10.
166 – The hope which the Jews cherished of the coming of the Messiah.
167 – Works of Tacitus, Oxford translation, p. 423.
168 – Histoire du Christianisme, par l'Abbé Fleury. The abbé gives all the authorities upon which he bases his narrative.
169 – Luke xxi. 20–24.
170 – Matt. xxiv. 15–22.
171 – L'Abbé Fleury, p. 101.
172 – Luke vi. 31.
173 – 1 John v. 10.
174 – 2 Thess. ii. 11.
175 – Rev. ii. 8–10.
176 – Acts xvii. 26.
177 – Matt. vii. 12.
178 – Mark xii. 31.
179 – Isa. xiv. 9–12.
180 – Histoire du Christianisme, par l'Abbé Fleury.
181 – Histoire du Christianisme, par l'Abbé Fleury, t. i. p. 432.
182 – Eusebius, Vit. 11, c. 34.
183 – Histoire du Christianisme, par l'Abbé Fleury, t. i. p. 480.
184 – Encyclopædia Americana.
185 – Matt. xii. 30.
186 – Histoire du Christianisme, par l'Abbé Fleury, livre quinzième, s. liii.
187 – Theod. iv. c. 2, 3.
188 – Histoire du Christianisme, par l'Abbé Fleury, t. i. p. 639.
189 – Gibbon, after a careful calculation, estimates the number of inhabitants at a million two hundred thousand.
190 – Gibbon.
191 – Gibbon.
192 – Gibbon, chap. xxxii.
193 – Rom. viii. 28.

194 – Vol. iv. p. 84.
195 – Vol. v. p. 8.
196 – Encyclopædia Americana.
197 – Encyclopædia Americana.
198 – Koran, iii. 40.
199 – John xv. 26.
200 – Price, vol. i. p. 13.
201 – Rev. xx. 2, 3.
202 – Eighteen Christian Centuries, p. 269.
203 – Eighteen Christian Centuries, Rev. James White, p. 131.
204 – Eighteen Christian Centuries.
205 – Empire of Austria, by John S. C. Abbott.
206 – The History of the Protestants in France, by G. de Félice, p. 58.
207 – Encyclopædia Americana.
208 – The History of the Protestants of France.
209 – Encyclopædia Americana.
210 – Encyclopædia Americana.
211 – Encyclopædia Americana.
212 – The History of France, M. Guizot, vol. i. p. 530.
213 – Histoire de l'Édit de Nantes, t. iv. p. 479.
214 – History of the Protestants in France, by Prof. G. de Félice.
215 – Rev. vii. 15–17.
216 – New American Encyclopædia.
217 – According to the same authority, there are, in the United States, Baptist church-members, of the various divisions of that body,—Calvinist, Freewill, Seventh-day, Campbellite, and Winnebrunarians,—amounting to 1,795,406. The Presbyterians number 615,776; the Congregationalists report 300,362; and the Episcopalians, 176,685. The Catholics, counting all nominal Catholics as church-members, irrespective of moral character, number between three and five millions.
218 – New American Encyclopædia.
219 – Heb. xi. 25.
220 – John xiv. 1–3.
221 – John vii. 17.
222 – John v. 10.
223 – Jer. viii. 20.
224 – 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

Transcriber's Notes.

The following corrections have been made in the text:

- ♦ – duplicated word removed ‘a’
(John was not “a reed shaken)
- ♦ – ‘martrydom’ replaced with ‘martyrdom’
(and won the crown of martyrdom.)
- ♦ – ‘Bythinia’ replaced with ‘Bithynia’
(the principal cities of Bithynia,)
- ♦ – Illustrated dropcap of the letter “J” retained.
(JN reference to the death)
- ♦ – ‘Protestanism’ replaced with ‘Protestantism’
(the voice of Protestantism,)
- ♦ – ‘Wittenburg’ replaced with ‘Wittenberg’
(return to Wittenberg,)
- ♦ – ‘but’ replaced with ‘butt’
(and the butt of their muskets.)

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