prophets; (persons speaking by immediate impressions from the Holy Spirit;) and some, evangelists; (assistants to the missionaries;) and some, pastors; (of particular flocks;) and teachers;" helpers to the pastors.

JUNE 1.

Scripture selected for the day.—John, xii. 12—32.

In our meditations hitherto we have traced the progress of the true religion from the dawn of Divine Revelation to the return of the Messiah to heaven; and we are now led to make this inquiry,—In a dispensation, all the events of which are, manifestly, in the estimation of the Deity, of inconceivable importance, and connected with the progress of which through time we observe the ministration of angels, the constant descent of the Holy Spirit, and the incarnation, the death, the resurrection, and ascension of "the Lord from heaven,"—What does the Divine design comprehend? Is it to be confined to the accomplishment of some small discomfiture of the powers of darkness, or does it intend their complete subjugation?—Does it contemplate the recovery of such a remnant of fallen men as we have hitherto seen in the christian church, or, during numerous ages, will it infallibly accomplish the salvation of a world?

If it were possible for a doubt to remain on this subject, the commission of our Lord Jesus Christ to his apostles would be sufficient to remove it. By this his last command he directed, that the gospel should be preached throughout the world, not once merely, and then to be confined to the places where christian churches continued to exist; but that the church should consider it to be the duty of every age, of every year, and of every day, to the end of time,

to carry the gospel to every creature, and not to relax its efforts till all the effects of the apostasy shall be removed, and the whole world be recovered to God.

JUNE 2.

Scripture selected for the day.—Matthew, x. 1—23.

The distinguishing feature of the christian church, as it came from the forming hand of its Founder, was, unquestionably, *Missionary*.

At the head of this institution, we see the Lord Jesus, as *the Sent* of the Father; and in this sacred character the Divine word thus speaks of him:—"The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant." "Thou shalt be my Salvation unto the end of the earth." "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." "God sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our sins; and not for our's only, but for the sins of the whole world." "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

In the prosecution of the work which his Father gave him to do, our Lord Jesus Christ became an humble itinerant, travelling from village to village; and in private dwellings, in public places, in the streets, the fields, the highways, on mountains, or on the borders of rivers, addressed his discourses to individuals, to families, and to large companies; thus condescending to appear in the character of the Missionary from heaven:—"And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom." "And he said, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities, for therefore am I sent."

JUNE 3.

Scripture selected for the day.—Matthew, iv. 12—24.

Almost every founder of a sect has chosen, before his death, some individual as his successor, to keep up his name, and to carry his views into effect. Our Lord Jesus Christ left no human successor: retaining in his own hands all power in heaven and upon earth, his only successor and representative is *the incorruptible word of truth:* the word *which liveth and abideth for ever.* Still he condescended to use human instruments; and in the first instance he chose twelve, whom he called Apostles, or Messengers, of whom Peter, Andrew, James, and John, were fishermen.

The reason for the selection of such weak instruments to accomplish a work so mighty, and connected with infinite results to individuals, and to the world at large, is thus given in 1 Corinthians, i.—"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; that no flesh should glory in his presence." It is true, he imparted to these persons extraordinary energies; but, after all, the world was not converted by the sight of miracles. If miracles had possessed the power of producing conversion, surely he who spake as never man spake, and who wrought the most stupendous miracles daily, would not have been "despised and rejected of men." Indeed, our Lord took care to impress on mankind the fact, that the progress of his cause did not depend on the power, the wisdom, or the efforts of men; but that his gospel was *the power of God* to salvation to every one that believeth.

JUNE 4.

Scripture selected for the day.—Luke, x. 1—24.

The sending out of the seventy disciples by the Lord Jesus, (see Luke, x. 1.) forms another proof of his extensive designs respecting the gospel; especially when we hear him directing these seventy to pray for more labourers.

In this Divine arrangement we observe our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sent of the Father, labouring in the propagation of the gospel, as though he had been a simple itinerant. He next appoints twelve apostles, and after this, selects seventy evangelists, and sends them forth, two and two. Finally, he leaves it in charge to his assembled disciples, as he ascends to heaven, to preach the gospel throughout the earth, to the end of time, so that every creature might hear it, and promises that in this work he would be unceasingly with them. The manifest aim of the Redeemer in the christian dispensation, is, principally, the conversion of the world by the instrumentality of preaching; the agents are apostles, or missionaries, which terms are synonymous: the inferior object,—the preservation and spiritual perfection of the recovered, by pastors, elders, and other servants of the church. Such would have been the order and the nature of the labours of the church in every age, had its true interests been consulted. Yet it is a most delightful idea, that every step of advance in the progress of the gospel, is evidently a return to the primitive spirit, and to primitive order. The spirit of missions will thus baptize the church anew, and then will be poured upon it more abundantly the influences of the Holy Spirit.—Acts, xix. 5, 6.

JUNE 5.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, ii. 1—21.

No event celebrated in the christian church, the coming of Christ excepted, is more important than this miraculous out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon the heralds of salvation. Well might it excite the astonishment of the Jewish multitude, and well may that astonishment be continued to the present hour. To a mind not specially illuminated, the prospect must have been a gloomy one, when Jesus Christ said,—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" considering the smallness of the number who received this commission, their talents, and the extent of the theatre upon which they were to act. But when the day of Pentecost was past, the christian church appeared "terrible as an army with banners." Men prepared by the gift of tongues, by power over evil spirits and diseases, and by a large measure of the Spirit of grace, presented a sight at which all the gates of hell trembled.

How wrong, with such a precedent before us, to look with dismay at the power of the enemy, at the numbers of the heathen, the strength of their strong holds, and the dangers attending long campaigns in their different countries! One day of Pentecost visiting all the churches on earth would dissipate all our doubts.

O Lord, though the day of miracles has done its work, and is not to be again expected; yet pour upon thy servants such a measure of zeal, of courage, of consummate wisdom, of holy enterprise, and of ardent devotion to Christ Jesus, as distinguished thy servants in the apostolic age; then thine invisible power shall strike through the hearts of thy foes, and we shall be constrained to say,—"The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly; the right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the

Lord doeth valiantly." Then converts, like the morning dew, shall refresh heathen countries; and, receiving power from on high, shall go forth every where preaching the word. They shall plant churches, and these churches shall send forth other messengers, till the leaven shall ferment, and the whole lump be leavened, and till even New Testament prophecy shall be prophecy no longer, but it shall be said,—"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." The Lord shall hasten it in his own time, for he must reign till all enemies be put beneath his feet.

JUNE 6.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, ii. 22—41.

It is very probable, that among the hearers of this sermon, preached to the multitude who came to hear the apostles speak in other tongues, there were some of the actual murderers of our Lord; for, the apostle says in his discourse,—"God hath made that same Jesus, whom *ye have crucified*, both Lord and Christ." But behold the wonderful change wrought in them: before, they dared the Divine vengeance, saying,—"His blood be upon us and upon our children;" now they cry,—"Men and brethren, what shall we do?" In this manner the word was brought home with a convincing power; and "they were pierced to the heart;" they were pained at the remembrance of what they had done, and now they dreaded the Divine displeasure.

The sermon which in the hands of God produced this wonderful effect, consisted of a plain recital of facts in which the hearers were deeply interested, and a faithful application of those facts to their minds. The Apostle Peter first quotes a passage from

the Prophet Joel, where the Divine Being promises that he will pour out of his Spirit in the latter days, reminding his hearers that what they saw was the fulfilment of that prophecy. He then quotes a passage from the sixteenth Psalm, which he applies to the resurrection of Christ, proving that the words of this Psalm could not be true of the Psalmist, who was still in his grave, but must apply to him whose miracles they had seen, and whom they had with wicked hands crucified and slain; but whom God had raised up again, and exalted at his own right hand, that he might send down the Holy Ghost upon them, as they had now seen and heard. This was the substance of the discourse which produced such a deep impression, and which introduced not less than three thousand persons into the christian church in one day.

How encouraging must this event have been to the apostles, proving to them that the Almighty himself would work by them in their labours! This is the encouragement which the messengers of Christ among the heathen are to receive from this part of the Divine word. O Lord, reveal the day of thy power: thou hast made many of thy servants willing to leave all and enter upon this arduous work. O make the heathen a willing people, and gather them by thousands into thy church.

JUNE 7.

Scripture selected for the day.—Matthew, iii.

"Go ye, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—The ordinance of initiation into the christian church received a peculiarly solemn and impressive sanction at the baptism of the Redeemer;—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" and its perpetual obligation is enforced

by his reply to his forerunner;—"Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

The person admitted into the profession of the name of Christ by this rite, unquestionably declares that he has a cordial and influential belief of all the truths constituting what is called the Christian Religion; and the renunciation of any of these truths is most certainly a violation of his baptismal vows.

Such a person is supposed to have entered into covenant with God, and to have consecrated his whole heart and life to the Divine Author of this covenant; to have devoted himself to the Father as his heavenly Parent, and as the Source of mercy and salvation; to the Son as his Redeemer from all iniquity and from everlasting destruction; and to the Holy Spirit, to yield all his powers to his purifying and consoling influences, avoiding all occasions of grieving that Spirit, and causing him to depart from him. All this is most surely implied in being baptized into this mysterious and blessed Name.

The individual thus initiated by baptism, binds himself to "walk in newness of life;" to own the Redeemer before men, and to "walk worthy of his Divine vocation."

If baptized persons were to recollect the nature of those engagements into which they entered with the blessed God, when, in the awful name of Jehovah, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and in the presence of this glorious Being, in the presence of angels and of men, they assumed the christian profession, surely these facts, connected with their baptism, would make a deep impression on the mind, and constantly excite them to a holy watchfulness, and to a dread of that abandonment of christian belief and christian practice, into which so many millions of nominal christians have fallen.

Finally, it may be profitable to the person who has taken upon himself the christian vows, to recollect frequently that the hour is approaching when they

who have been ashamed of Christ, or a scandal to his name, before an evil and adulterous generation, will be disowned of that Redeemer whose name they assumed:—"Of him will I be ashamed before my Father and his holy angels."

JUNE 8.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, xi. 19—30.

It was naturally to be expected, that sooner or later the disciples of Christ would be called "Christians;" but this name was first given them, perhaps by Divine command, at Antioch. This indeed is the only name which does honour to a sincere disciple of Christ, while the consenting either to receive or to bestow any human name, as the designation of a religious class, would seem indicative of a willingness to merge the highest authority, in deference to that which is subordinate and fallible.

Every person believing in Christ, and exemplifying that belief by suitable tempers and conduct, is a *Christian;* but the name has, it is to be deplored, become hereditary where neither the faith nor the practice of a Christian is to be found.

But what is it to be a true Christian?—It certainly implies, that the person so called has some knowledge of the christian religion, and desires to be more perfectly acquainted with it. This knowledge may be very imperfect, but it must extend so far, that the person shall perceive that Christ is the only Saviour.

It implies, further, that the person is seeking, in an humble manner, in the use of means, the knowledge of his case as a sinner, and of the way in which he may be saved by Christ; and that herein he is truly sincere and diligent.

Nor can a person be congratulated on his having

attained this "highest style of man," unless he possess a devoted attachment to Christ, as well as an entire dependance upon his merits. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *anathema, maranatha.*"

But the term Christian implies, also, that the person has placed himself among the pupils of Christ, that he looks up to him with reverence as his Master, and that he listens with affection and profound deference to his instructions.

Nothing short of these attainments can give a claim to the dignified name of christian. Am I then found in these circumstances; and have I that knowledge of Christ by which I am led to seek an interest in him as my Saviour; and to sit at his feet as my heavenly Guide? If I have, grant, O Lord, that I may more and more depart from all iniquity, and, by my humility, philanthropy, purity of manners, patience under injuries, and courage to own my principles and my Master, give proof that I am a Christian indeed, in whom there is no guile.

JUNE 9.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, ii. 37—47.

Whatever disputes may have arisen respecting the officers left in the christian church by our Lord and his apostles, every Christian ought to be thankful that the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles, are an unquestionable part of the Divine word; for these writings exhibit a most pleasing view of the internal peace, and the elevated piety, of these primitive societies.

They were steadfast in maintaining the apostolic doctrines, and in living under their influence; they urged upon their ungodly neighbours the glorious

truths they had embraced, and they exemplified them in their lives as "the living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men."

They continued steadfast too in the fellowship taught by the apostles, which appears to have included in it the greatest benevolence, the going up with one accord to the temple, the breaking of bread in the Lord's Supper, and continuance in prayer and praise. These Christians, far from being men of the world, were so occupied in the concerns and pleasures of religion, that they had neither time nor inclination for secular pursuits: and though this was not intended to be a permanent state, we may be sure, that, so far as it is compatible with our other duties, it forms a bright example. Happy, happy church! Free from the inventions of men, walking in love, ardent in zeal, warm in devotion, the world beneath your feet! No wonder that ye were in favour with all the people, and that the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. If we would judge of the church as christian, we must look at it in those days, and not as it was after being marred by the hands of man, and as we see it described, for the most part, in ecclesiastical history. If we would ascertain whether the works of God at the creation deserved this description or not;—"And God saw every thing that he had made; and *behold, it was very good;*"—we must go into the garden of Eden,—not to the siege of Ismael.

JUNE 10.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, vii. 51—60.

We find the name of Stephen in the list of deacons first chosen after the creation of that office. It is said of him, that he was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," and that he did great wonders and miracles among the people. But his eminent piety

and gifts raised him up many enemies, especially among the men in power. He was therefore summoned before the council; and there he made a most noble defence, going over in a rapid summary the Jewish history to the time of Solomon, and making application of those parts which developed and confirmed the events in the life of Christ. Nor did he spare his auditory, but, full of the Holy Ghost, he concluded his address to them in the cutting terms contained in verses 51, 52, and 53.

Thus far they listened; but this bold and pointed appeal to facts so disgraceful to them as a nation, cut them to the very heart: they gnashed upon him with their teeth, and hurried him on to a violent death. But before he left the council, God gave him a glorious manifestation of his presence, which seemed to say to him,—"Well, done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Then, dragging him out of the city, they stoned Stephen calling upon God, and saying,—"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" To the spectators it appeared a most cruel and horrid death: to Stephen, thus supported, and blessed with such a vision, it was

"A gentle wafting to immortal life."

But a young man is present, like one placed here by the accuser of the brethren, the roaring lion prowling about, seeking whom he may devour. Saul was known to be a thorough friend to these persecutions, but as yet he was not a ringleader; he kept the clothes of the executioners, while they perpetrated the murder.

God never fails his people, but grants them extraordinary supports, to meet extraordinary trials;—"In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." Thus, when the world cast him out, Stephen saw "heaven opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," to plead for his servant, that, "as his days, his strength might be." How worthy of the

name for which he suffered are his last words;—"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! Having said this, he fell asleep."

Happy church, blessed with deacons so full of the Spirit, and capable of bearing such a faithful testimony! Stephen is called the first martyr.

JUNE 11.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, viii. 26—40.

It is well known, that persons attached to the Jewish religion were found in all the countries around Judea, and that among these were many persons of considerable distinction. In this way the Old Testament scriptures were extensively known; and we may hope that their influence was not inconsiderable. These persons often came to Jerusalem, (as others go on pilgrimage,) especially at the great festivals.

We have before us an interesting narrative of an Ethiopian eunuch, treasurer to the queen of Ethiopia, who had been to Jerusalem to worship the one God: he was returning home in his vehicle through a desert place, and was reading, as he passed along, a part of the prophecies of Isaiah; but he read it as a sealed book: he knew not the person of whom the prophet spake. But God, who accepts all in every nation who fear him and work righteousness, did not permit him to remain ignorant of Christ; though it does not appear that his late journey to Jerusalem had made him acquainted with any of the disciples of our Saviour. How many who have some correct views, and some appearances of good desire, are kept from the knowledge of real Christians by their peculiar situations or prejudices! By an extraordinary commission, Philip, the deacon, was sent to this Ethiopian; and, beginning at the 53rd of Isaiah, he explains to him the whole doctrine of Christ: the eunuch listens,

believes with all his heart, is baptized, and goes on his way rejoicing. What a vast body of new and most interesting facts had been made known to him in one short hour! He is going into a dark region; he is a man of influence: perhaps he may be able to lead his queen and her court to the knowledge of Jesus, and their example may have vast influence on the future spread of the gospel in Ethiopia. Surely here was enough to fill his mind with gratitude, and make him go on his way rejoicing.

JUNE 12.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, ix. 1—9.

This conversion and its consequences form a subject of exultation to the christian church, more interesting than any other event connected with the history of the world;—not that the conversion of Saul was absolutely necessary either to the preservation or to the extension of the church; for he, like other enemies, might have been crushed by the most trifling alteration in the animal economy, and a thousand such instruments would spring forth, at the Divine command, in every emergency of the church. But this was a glorious event, as an amazing display of the power and mercy of God.

The state of the apostle's mind before conversion was remarkably awful.—We have seen him consenting to the murder of Stephen; but now he breathes nothing but threatenings and slaughter; his very breath is pestilential.

The time of his conversion was equally remarkable:—he was just about to leap upon his prey, the poor inoffensive Christians at Damascus, where even the very women were doomed to feel the effects of his fury. Here the Saviour arrested the culprit, in order to change the lion into a lamb.

The manner of his conversion was still more wonderful. As he was hurrying on with his fellow-persecutors, suddenly a light from heaven, clearer than that of the sun, fell upon him; and he heard a voice from heaven calling to him,—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goads." The way of ordinary transgressors is hard:—his was much more so. All his ferocity leaves him in a moment; and he becomes a suppliant to that very Saviour against whom his heart had till that moment boiled with rage.

The effects of this change were still more extraordinary: instead of a bitter persecutor, he becomes the tenderest shepherd to that flock which he had doomed to be "the flock of slaughter." Instead of hating the Saviour, he determines to make him his constant theme; and he counts all things but dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. Instead of continuing full of vain glory, he considers himself the least of all saints. Instead of the proud Pharisee, expecting salvation by the works of the law, it becomes the great object of his life to win Christ, and to be found in him, not having on his own righteousness. Instead of making havock of the church, he adds to it thousands and thousands: the effects of his labours continue to be seen in every age, and will not cease till time shall be no more.

How easy does the conversion of the whole world seem while we meditate on Pentecost, and on the conversion of the "man breathing out threatenings and slaughter!"

JUNE 13.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, ix. 10—22.

"Behold, he prayeth!"—Had this been said of some profligate, of Ahab, or of Herod, it would have been recognised as an indication of a great change of mind; but it is said of a man who was at the head of

the Pharisees who loved to pray standing in the market-places, and who made long prayers. It would appear hence, that much which passes for prayer among men is not really prayer in the sight of God; and therefore we are to consider our Lord here as bearing a remarkable testimony to the Divine nature of true prayer: that it is something which follows true conversion; that it is more than raised affections, more than eloquent and forcible expressions, something that cannot be infused by the mere power of man. True prayer proceeds from the exciting influences of the Spirit of God, who is called the Spirit of Grace and Supplication. Christians are said to pray in the Spirit; and this blessed Being is said to help their infirmities; to reveal, through the word, to the mind of the person upon whom he has bestowed the spirit of prayer, the knowledge of his wants; for instance, the person's sinfulness is opened to him, and this leads him to pray,—"Pardon my sin, for it is great." The person's danger is shown, and then he prays,—"What shall I do to be saved?" And in this manner through the whole of those exercises of mind which lead to the acquisition of what is called christian experience, the Christian realizes the necessity of prayer. Not only is the knowledge of our spiritual wants necessary to constitute our petitions real prayer; but the Holy Spirit excites desires after spiritual blessings, so that a disposition is produced which can assimilate itself with these blessings, and make the person exceedingly glad to possess them. He also communicates the spirit of adoption, that is, a liberty of confidence, and encouragement, to draw near to God. He delivers the person from what the apostle calls "The spirit of bondage again to fear;" from that slavish dread of the Almighty as a severe Judge, which deprived him of all freedom to express his feelings, so that he could not unbosom himself, or open his heart, before God. He can now say, Abba, Father; and henceforward the mind engages in those solemn acts which our old

divines termed closing with Christ, and to which the apostle alludes when he mentions his having committed his eternal salvation into the hands of Christ. In this act the Christian gives his whole self to the Redeemer, intreating him for ability to enable him to rest on what he has done for sinners, and on what he is to them in his different offices. He receives, while thus drawing near to Christ, the hope of pardon, and daily strength to follow him in all his dispensations. After this, prayer rises into sweet communion and fellowship with God, so that eminent saints have passed hours at once in thus holding converse with God before the mercy seat.

How much, then, passes for real prayer, which is not prayer at all! It may be talking before God, or to him, but it is not inwrought prayer. It is not the language of our desires, of those desires excited by the Holy Spirit.

JUNE 14.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, xvi. 22—40.

The case of this person proves that conversion, or a change of mind, may be very sudden. The jailer, the night before his conversion, displayed no proof of attachment to the Lord Jesus and his servants; and the first thing that he attempts when awaked from sleep, is, an act of self-murder. As soon, however, as he sees this providential interference on the behalf of the apostle and his fellow-labourer, he becomes sensible of his guilt, and cries for mercy; and the apostle, without waiting for a greater maturity of his repentance and faith, directs him to the refuge from the storm and tempest;—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." As a proof that a great change had been wrought in him, he now not only takes the two prisoners, probably, to the tank in

the yard, washes the clotted gore from their backs, and is baptized; but he invites them into his house, sets food before them, and rejoices in the amazing goodness of his Saviour.

How wonderfully sovereign and unmerited is the favour of God to man, and especially to this man, this cruel oppressor! Had not the Redeemer thus made him a monument of mercy, he must have felt the full weight of his denunciation:—"Whoso shall offend one of these little ones who believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast into the sea." What a glorious dispensation is this of the gospel, which is accompanied by so much of the gracious and saving power of God; a power that converts in a moment the most determined and cruel enemies into the most sincere and decided friends!

JUNE 15.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, x. 30—48.

This account of Cornelius appears to establish two very important facts. That men may be in a state of acceptance with God, who have not been actually instructed in the faith of Christ, and that the Almighty will never permit any to seek him in vain. The apostle Peter says, "God accepteth all in every nation who fear him and work righteousness;" and he applies this to the case before him. The testimony of the Holy Ghost respecting Cornelius, is, that he was a devout man, fearing God, a man of prayer; and that his prayer was heard before he was instructed in the doctrine of Jesus. It may be said, that he worshipped God according to the Jewish rites. Still the knowledge of such persons, and even of pious Jews themselves, as it respects the doctrine of the atonement, must have been so obscure, that their faith can hardly

deserve the name of evangelical. We may suppose that all such well-disposed persons as died before the giving of the types relative to the Messiah in the Levitical law, were saved by faith in the sacrifice represented by those enjoined on Adam, and then on Noah. Or, they were saved as infants are, by the imputation of the merits of Christ. The ordinary method of salvation is thus described;—"He that believeth shall be saved;" and, to those who hear the gospel at an age when they are capable of understanding it, there is no other way of life; they must believe, or they must perish. Without the teachings and the saving influences of the Holy Spirit, none are saved;—"All thy people shall be taught of God:" and the Holy Spirit is generally given through the preaching of the gospel;—"Faith cometh by hearing." It was necessary, therefore, to the complete accomplishment of the gracious designs of God towards Cornelius, that he should actually hear the gospel; and still more necessary to his ignorant neighbours. The importance of preaching the gospel among all nations, in the present age, is obvious. I never saw a heathen who appeared to fear God and work righteousness; all seem to be perishing in the deepest immersion in every kind of transgression; to deliver from which the gospel is the only remedy.

God wrought a miracle to provide means that Cornelius might hear the joyful sound; and this affords another proof, that "every one who asketh, receiveth, and that he who seeketh, findeth."

JUNE 16.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, xvii. 16—34.

At the time the apostle arrived at Athens, that city had attained to literary eminence. The people of this

city had been instructed by Socrates, by Plato, and by Aristotle. Here the fairest possible experiment had been made, how far man, by wisdom, could attain to the knowledge of God. Paul, however, found the city wholly given up to idolatry, or, as it is in the margin, full of idols; so that the instructions of the philosophers had not delivered this city from the most stupid and degrading superstitions. Nay, it seems there were more idols in the vicinity of their schools than in any other part of the city.

Paul did not pass through Athens as an inattentive observer.—"As I passed by, and beheld the gods you worshipped, I saw a pillar" (without an idol on it) "bearing this inscription, *To the unknown God.*" Some philosophers taught that God was *The unknown;* that nothing could be affirmed of his nature; that, after every thing in the universe had been named, God was that which remained unnamed. Some one, taking up this idea, had erected this pillar to the unknown God; and the apostle, with his wonted acuteness, takes up this inscription, and says,—"Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." As much as though he had said, This is the utmost result of all your speculations, the last, the definitive conclusion of your most profound inquiries into nature. Of God, we only know, that he is *The unknown.* Listen, then, to one taught in the school of Christ, and I will carry you to the certain and saving knowledge of the Deity. Christ has shown us plainly of the Father of the universe, and has put us in possession of eternal life, which consists in the knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

After showing the Athenians the absurdity of idolatry, he directs them, as the offspring of God, to seek their heavenly Father, reminding them of his infinite goodness, and assuring them, that God now commanded all men every where to repent, as he had appointed a day in which he would judge the world. Paul's visit to this city was followed by the conversion

of several individuals, but his stay was short; he only waited for Silas and Timothy, and then he left Athens:—"To the poor the gospel is preached."

JUNE 17.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, xix. 21—41.

Ephesus, the place where the image of Diana was set up, was famous for idol-worship; but it was not corrupted, equally with Athens, by an unfounded and vain philosophy: therefore the apostle stayed two years at Ephesus, and hence spread the news of salvation over all that part of Asia. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed in this city, that the converted heathens brought their books of magic and other injurious arts, worth fifty thousand pieces of silver, and burnt them; and the priests of Diana began to fear that the magnificence of their great goddess would be destroyed.

Such a wonderful work as this could not be established without exciting the opposition of Satan and of wicked men: the image-makers collected a vast concourse of idolaters, and these, for two hours together, continued crying, — "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." The spirit of Paul was so roused, that he would have ventured into the midst, to have expostulated with them, but his friends prevented him. Indeed he had done enough in saying, "that they were no gods which were made with hands;" and for this *blasphemy* he would, no doubt, have been sacrificed, if he had not remained concealed. In the establishment of idolatry, Satan seems to have tried how low he could sink men, and make them crouch in his service: he has selected not only monsters of iniquity, and turned them into gods, but the most filthy and most degrading objects that infernal ingenuity could invent: thus triumphing, for a time, in the

most complete degradation of those created in the image of God, and in the point where his honour is most concerned, that is, in Divine worship.

How noble, how glorious, and Divine, were the triumphs of the apostle at Ephesus! The great moral change produced by Christianity in this city may be judged of by the epistle which the apostle wrote to this church, and which contains such profound matter, that we may be sure the people to whom it was addressed must have made very great advances in Divine knowledge.

JUNE 18.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, xx. 1—16.

We have in this short history a most pleasing view of the religion of apostolic times. Paul stayed at Troas seven days; the disciples assembled for worship in a room, in the third story of a house belonging, no doubt, to one of their number. On the Lord's-day evening, Paul preached, and administered to them the Lord's Supper. This service lasted till midnight; and the room was so crowded, that some of the company sat in the window seats. What a happy meeting! Paul, whose darling theme was redemption, preaching, and administering to heathen converts the sacred supper, and continuing in these exercises till midnight! What deep and affecting ideas on this profound subject! What impressive remarks on the life of faith on the Son of God, and on the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: on the supports of the Christian in his fight of faith, and on the glories which await him when he has finished the warfare! What persuasions to holiness, and to constancy in adherence to Christ! But who shall describe a sermon continued to such a length, when delivered by such a preacher? Before he left them, the apostle took some

refreshment, but continued talking, a long while, even till break of day, on the blessed subjects which filled his whole soul, and then he departed.

Some persons have concluded, from what is said in the commencement of this account, that the first Christians partook of the Lord's Supper every sabbath. The words are,—"Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread." The opinion is highly probable. No Christian supposes that he can be too often put in mind of his Redeemer. However, as the times of communion are not a part of the command, it would seem that some latitude is left by the Institutor; though frequent communion appears to be implied in his words. It is well with those who live in such close communion with Christ, that very frequent opportunities of this kind are equally welcome and edifying.

JUNE 19.

Scripture selected for the day. Acts, xx. 17—38.

In this most interesting and affecting discourse the apostle, like a dying pastor, delivers his last charge to the elders of a church which he had planted on his first arrival in Asia.

He called them, he said, to take a solemn leave of them; for he knew that they should see his face no more, seeing bonds and imprisonment awaited him. Still he assures them, that, if he might but finish joyfully his course, and the ministry of the grace of God which he had received of the Lord Jesus, he was not moved by the appearance either of sufferings or of death. After taking a review of his ministry among them, a review which may well alarm those now in the ministry, he gives them his solemn charge, recommending them first to watch over themselves as overseers or bishops appointed by the Holy Ghost, and

then to feed the flock. In "taking heed to themselves," the apostle did not mean that they should look well after their temporal interests; but he enjoined an earnest care respecting the life and power of religion in their own minds, and the exemplification of such a state of religious prosperity in a holy conversation. Feed with care and diligence the flock so precious in the sight of God, that it was purchased with his own blood. What words are these! Well may it be said,—"Ye are not your own." "They shall never perish." But what a charge is this,—to guard a treasure which has cost the blessed God so much!

At length, this venerable, this heavenly man kneels down, and prays with them all; at the close of which they all fall on his neck, and weep, especially under the idea that they should see his face no more,—that they should hear no more the blessed words of the Lord Jesus from his lips.—They then accompanied him to the ship.

JUNE 20.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, xxi. 1—17.

After thus taking leave of the elders of the church at Ephesus, the apostle prosecutes his journey, and in a few days arrives at Tyre, where he and his friends remain seven days; and where he is again warned, but without effect, not to go to Jerusalem. At the time of his departure, these disciples also go down to the ship with him, (for primitive Christians could not easily say, Farewell,) kneel down on the shore, and pray together; and then bid each other farewell. In another day or two, the apostle and his company come to Cesarea, where Philip, chosen one of the first deacons of the church at Jerusalem, and here called "the evangelist," entertains them for many days. While here, a man came down from

Judea, a disciple and a prophet, who took Paul's girdle, and bound with it his own hands and feet, and said,—Thus saith the Holy Ghost,—So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and deliver him to the Gentiles. It does not seem that the Divine Spirit forbade Paul to take this journey; but, to try his faith and zeal, he gave him these repeated warnings. They were his spiritual brethren and sisters that hung about him, desirous of detaining him, and preventing his sufferings. But now Paul, feeling as he had done at Miletus, breaks out in these impassioned strains, worthy of a perpetual record; — "What mean ye, to weep, and to break my heart? I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, they ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done."

Surely, they who say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country, a better country, that is, a heavenly one. In this conduct of the apostle we perceive a mind unalterably fixed on the accomplishment of what it conceives to be duty, without consulting for a moment with flesh and blood. We see a devotion of body and soul to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the work of saving men, which no terrors, no sufferings, could subdue. Oh, blessed Paul, thou art not urged forward by a blind enthusiasm to this wonderful immolation, but thy soul is filled with the love of Christ, with desires to suffer for him on the very spot where thou consentedst to the death of the first martyr, and where Christ, and Stephen, and James, had already died; thou desirest that his name may be glorified by thy death.

JUNE 21.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, xxii. 26—30.

Bigotry, when it inflames a mixed multitude, transforms them frequently into wild beasts; they

exhibit a frantic enthusiasm for points which they understand not, and against men whom they know not. O that my zeal may ever be directed by knowledge and humility! The Jews had heard, from the most distant parts, of the success of Paul in bringing men to believe on Christ; and were convinced that every such convert considered them as the betrayers and murderers of the Son of God. The apostle was now on a visit to Jerusalem, and was seen in the temple by some Jews from Asia, who soon recognised him as the man who had, in their country, so successfully aimed to overturn the whole system of the Jewish religion; and they cried out, Men of Israel, help!—Here is the enemy:—"Here is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place,"—this holy temple, this sure pledge of your safety. An immense crowd was soon collected, and news was brought to the Roman officer who commanded in the city, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. When Paul was about to be torn in pieces, he was rescued; and, by favour of this officer, he obtained leave to speak to the multitude, whom he addresses in the most respectful manner, as "Brethren and fathers." He tells them, that he was a Jew,—that he was educated by Gamaliel in the strictest principles of the Jewish religion; and that he had, like themselves, formerly persecuted the Christians even unto death; but that in a wonderful manner Christ had appeared to him; had convinced him of his error, had changed his disposition, and had directed him to propagate the faith which he once destroyed. Moreover, the same Saviour had appeared unto him afterwards, and had assured him that the Jews would not receive his message; on which account he must go the Gentiles. As soon as they heard this charge against themselves, and this preference of the Gentiles, whom they treated as dogs and unclean, their anger broke out into a flame; and, had not the apostle been protected, they would, doubtless, have torn him to pieces. The chief captain places

him in a state of detention, and would have examined him by scourging, had not Paul claimed the privilege of a Roman citizen.

JUNE 22.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, xxiii. 1—24.

The case of Paul perplexed the chief captain: he thought, from the violence and loud complaints of the Jews, that the man must be some murderer; he asked the apostle, whether he had not once been at the head of four thousand murderers in the wilderness. Unable to bring the matter to a decision, or to let the apostle go, he summons the Jewish council, and the next day the apostle appears before them, where, finding that there was no hope of a fair and honest hearing, he takes advantage of the division in sentiment which there was in the council, and declares that he was a pharisee, the son of a pharisee, and that, in fact, for his hope in the resurrection, and in a future state, he was now called in question. This declaration soon divided and broke up the council; but Paul remained in confinement.

The enemies of the apostle, being thus disappointed in their hopes of a public execution, were determined on a private assassination; and more than forty persons bound themselves by a desperate oath to take away the life of the apostle. Knowing that this diabolical plan would be quite welcome to the chief priests and to the elders, they propose it to them. But the Redeemer is never at a loss to preserve his own; as, by mere accident, Paul's sister's son, a lad who was of too little consequence to be noticed, overhears these conspirators make this proposal to the chief priests and elders; and he tells Paul, who sent him privately to the chief captain. This officer, to his honour, and the honour of the Roman name, be it

spoken, sends this christian prisoner, by night, to Felix the governor, at Cesarea, the very place where the prophet from Judea had so strikingly predicted these sufferings of the apostle. Felix had long been a judge among the Jews, and had a Jewish wife; and it is most probable, that, as the chief captain could not understand these subjects, he determined to take this opportunity of sending him to Felix. If he had dismissed the apostle, as Gallio did, as being charged with things which human laws could not touch, he would perhaps have done better. But he deserves the highest praise for his care of the life of a Roman citizen, and for his concern that every man should have a fair trial. In this praise other Roman officers in these parts deserved to share. The apostle's conduct on this occasion intimates that Christianity is not the friend of arbitrary power; that it does not require an unremonstrating surrender of civil rights; and that, while it guards the authority of kings and laws, it breathes good-will to men, even in reference to their civil and religious interests.

JUNE 23.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, xxiv. 10—27.

The apostle was assisted by the Holy Spirit, in a wonderful manner, in this instance, as he was in the former one, when called upon to make a good confession before many witnesses. Nothing can be more ingenious and forcible than this speech before Felix. He nobly confesses, however, that he believed truths which they called "heresy;" but avers, that in this he believed nothing but what was contained in the Jewish scriptures, upon which writings he built his hope of the future resurrection, and by which he was guided in keeping a conscience void of offence, both towards God, and towards man. A few days

afterwards, Felix, bringing his wife Drusilla, sent for the apostle, to hear of the faith in Christ; and Paul, before these auditors, so reasoned on righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, that Felix trembled.

How forcible is truth when it gains access to the conscience! Here Felix trembles; and a few days after this, king Agrippa tells Paul that he had almost persuaded him to be a Christian; and yet, it is to be feared, that both these persons perished in their sin. Who would not have been Paul, the prisoner, with an interest in Christ, rather than Felix or Agrippa? Who would not prefer the present condition of Paul? How often do unconverted men, when they see an eminently pious man, sigh deeply, and say to themselves,—Oh, that I had the portion, the hope, of that good man! At such times, how far, in the apprehension of these persons, does the hope of the gospel outweigh all worldly advantages!

JUNE 24.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, xxvi. 1—15.

As soon as Festus had entered upon his government, the Jews move him against Paul, and beg that he may be sent to Jerusalem, to be tried, intending to assassinate him on the way. This was the second attempt of this kind by the Jews. Oh, the horrid infatuation of bigotry; as though an infinitely wise and just Being needed assassins to assist him in the government of the world, or would be glorified by such crimes! The Roman governor, however, whose heart was in the hands of Paul's God, refuses them; and thus a heathen government becomes a better shelter to the church than that (such as it was) in the hands of the descendants of Abraham.

Bernice and king Agrippa about this time coming

to salute Festus on his appointment to the government of Cesarea, the governor mentioned Paul's case to them, declaring that he could make nothing of the charge laid against him, except that it related to certain questions of their own superstition, and of one Jesus who was dead, whom Paul had affirmed to be alive. This is just the amount of what many worldly men know of the gospel, even in a christian land. They call real Christians enthusiasts, but never inquire into the cause of their ardour, nor why they count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

Agrippa wishes to hear the man himself.—"To-morrow," said Festus, "thou shalt hear him." After a fine exordium, the apostle gives an account of his education among the Pharisees, the most religious order among the Jews, and of his firm belief in the resurrection. He then describes his conduct as a fierce persecutor of the Christians; his unexpected and miraculous conversion; his ardour in preaching the faith which once he destroyed; his being unjustly seized in the temple, where he urged nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come. A small interruption was here given by Festus, upon whom the apostle's eloquence had made a considerable impression; but Paul very politely answers him, and then improves the interruption, by offering a delicate compliment to the king:—"The king knoweth these things, before whom also I speak freely: for this thing was not done in a corner." And now, in the most masterly and captivating manner, he offers a direct address to the king;—"King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." And Agrippa said unto Paul,—"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."—How remarkably in this instance was our Lord's prediction fulfilled:—"Ye shall be brought before kings and magistrates for my name's sake. And I will give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries shall be able to gainsay or resist!"

JUNE 25.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, xxvi. 16—32.

Who, while he stands in the judgment-hall at Cesarea, and hears the Apostle Paul thus speak before king Agrippa, is not filled with joy at being a Christian?—"I would to God, that not only thou, but all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am,—except these bonds."—These are the closing words of an address which is scarcely exceeded by any effort of human eloquence, ancient or modern, and yet it is delivered by a man in irons. No doubt, some present, deeply affected by what they heard, added a silent Amen to the prayer of the apostle. Taking up the frank and honest acknowledgment of the king, the apostle seems to say, Ah! there are circumstances in my case, there is a blessedness in the state of every true Christian, which may well excite the most earnest and unceasing wishes even of a king.

What is this to which the apostle alludes in the state and character of a Christian, which makes his condition so enviable?—1. He is brought into a state of acceptance with God; which includes deliverance from wrath, as well as pardon and justification.—2. He is restored to a life of solid happiness, founded on a tranquil conscience, the pursuit of benevolent objects, and correct views of the Divine government.—3. He is restored to a state in which he enjoys the highest privileges,—adoption, communion with God, and a participation of the Divine nature.—4. Finally, he obtains victory over death, and has the blessed hope of everlasting happiness.—Who then would not be a Christian?—But in order to our becoming heirs to these blessings, we must give ourselves up to the influences promised, and to the laws laid down, in the gospel.

Paul saw before him king Agrippa, and a number of distinguished persons, proud of being Romans, and whose apparently happy lot had, no doubt, often excited the envy of the gazing crowd; and yet, although a prisoner, through the grace of Christ, his enjoyment of the blessings of salvation, and his prospects of the recompense of reward, left him nothing to wish for in all this grandeur. All he feels is a benevolent wish, that this king, like himself, might be heir of that "crown of righteousness which Christ would give him in that day;" that these spectators might be "citizens with the saints and of the household of God." He wished not his chain to be attached to his accusers,—the Jews present, who sought his blood; but, as far as his devout wishes and prayers could go, he brought down even upon their heads all the blessings and privileges contained in the covenant of redemption.

JUNE 26.

Scripture selected for the day.—Acts, xxviii. 16—31.

Paul might have been set at liberty, if he had not been compelled by assassins to appeal unto Cæsar, and if Felix and Festus had not acted corruptly. But the very sins of the wicked are made to promote the Divine purposes. The Almighty, no doubt, brought much good to his own cause by giving Paul such an opportunity of speaking before such men, and so large a company; and the confession of king Agrippa would, one should think, excite many to inquire further into the religion of Christ. Not only had Paul then all this to do for his Divine Master, as a prisoner; but a much greater work awaited him in the capital of the world. Here he lived "two whole years in his own hired house, receiving all that came to him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those

things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, no man forbidding him." Immense good was, no doubt, done by his preaching during these two years. While here, he wrote the Epistles to the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, the second letter to Timothy, and the Epistle to Philemon, if not that to the Hebrews also. We need not wonder, therefore, that Paul should have so strong an impression on his mind, that he must see Rome also. Thus, however great his sufferings, they worked for him an exceeding weight of glory: and here also, "the weakness of God was stronger than men, and the foolishness of God was wiser than men."

But the apostle is not yet arrived at Rome. It is true, immediately after his defence before Agrippa, he, with other prisoners, under Julius, a centurion, sails for Italy. At Sidon, Julius gives the apostle leave to go and see his friends, that is, his christian friends; for Paul has imbibed so much of the spirit of his Divine Master, that he says respecting every one who "hears the word of God and keeps it, The same is my brother, and sister, and mother." At Myra they embark in another ship, but they meet with such tempestuous weather, that they give themselves up for lost: they throw their very food into the sea, to lighten the ship; neither sun nor stars are seen for many days, and at last the vessel, which contained not less than two hundred and seventy-six souls, becomes a total wreck. At this time the soldiers wished to kill the prisoners, lest they should escape; but, "the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose." Some swam to the shore, and the rest, some on boards, and others on broken pieces of the ship; and so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land. Here is a crew saved for the sake of one Christian.—"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."—Who would have thought, that God was carrying forward successfully eternal purposes of mercy to millions, in such a scene of oppression, disorder, and danger!

JUNE 27.

Scripture selected for the day.—Galatians, i.

Such is the account which the Apostle Paul gives of himself before and after his conversion. In the following chapter the history is continued; and in the eleventh chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, we have a most interesting detail of the apostle's labours and sufferings.

According to the Acts of the Apostles, the conversion of the Apostle Paul, it is supposed, took place about the year A. D. 35. Shortly after his baptism he went into Arabia, (Galatians, i. 17.) where he received special instruction in the gospel, by Divine revelations, and by the study of the word.—In the year 38 he returned to Damascus, and preached the gospel boldly there, and thence went, for the first time after his conversion, to Jerusalem. Here he stayed about fifteen days, preaching without fear; but, being persecuted, the brethren brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.—In the year 39, while at Cilicia, it is supposed he had those revelations, mentioned in 2 Corinthians, xii.—In A. D. 42, Saul and Barnabas proceeded to Antioch, (Acts, xi. 26.) where they met with great success. Hence they carried alms to the poor at Jerusalem, Acts, xi. 27—30.) and in A. D. 44, during this second visit to Jerusalem, it is conjectured that the Apostle fell into the trance mentioned in Acts, xxii. 17.—They returned to Antioch, taking Mark with them, the nephew of Barnabas; whence they were sent forth to the Gentiles. They first travelled to Seleuca, a sea-port town, near the mouth of the Orontes, in Syria; and thence sailing to Cyprus, they proceeded to Salamis, and to Paphos, where the proconsul Sergius Paulius was converted, (Acts, xiii. 1—12.) and from whom, some say, the apostle derived his name, Paul, assuming this name in honour of the

proconsul. In the year 46, the apostle sailed from Cyprus to Perga, a city of Pamphylia: thence went to Antioch, to Iconium in Lycaonia, to Lystra, (Acts, xiv.) Derbe, and through Galatia and Phrygia, traversing all Pisidia to Antioch in Syria; thus occupying two years. During the years 47 and 48, Paul resided at Antioch. In A. D. 49 he went up to Jerusalem about the question of circumcision, travelling through Phenice and Samaria. Hence he returned to Antioch. In the year 50 Paul revisited the churches he had planted in Asia Minor, going over the ground we have already traced. While at Troas, Paul was called to preach the gospel in Macedonia, and visited Samothracia, Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and many other places. At Corinth he remained a year and a half, the latter part of A. D. 51, the whole of 52, and the beginning of 53. Paul next proceeded to Ephesus, to Cesarea, and Jerusalem. In the year 54 he was again at Antioch, and thence visited the churches of Galatia and Phrygia, and came to Ephesus, when the priests of Diana raised a persecution against him. In A. D. 56 he again travelled in Macedonia. In 57 he is supposed to have preached on the confines of Illyricum, and in this year he delivered his charge to the elders of the church of Ephesus, at Miletus. Part of the year 58 appears to have been spent at Cos, Rhodes, Patata, Tyre, Ptolemais, Cesarea, and at Jerusalem. At the two last places, the scenes described in Acts, xxii. and xxiii. took place; and here the sacred historian closes the active labours of the Apostle of the Gentiles;—an account which comprehends more of what is interesting to heaven and earth than all the annals of time beside;—"Glory to God in the highest, good-will to men."

JUNE 28.

Scripture selected for the day.—Matthew, xxiv. 1—14.

The Evangelist Luke carries the apostolic history no further than Paul's arrival at Rome. Some historians, however, conjecture, that after his first imprisonment, at Rome, he travelled through Judea, and afterwards visited the churches, and preached to the heathen in Syria, Cilicia, and Asia Minor, continuing for some time at Colosse, and proceeding thence into Macedonia. Having visited the churches of Greece, for the second time, he passed the winter of A. D. 64 at Nicopolis, a city of Epirus. Hence he passed to Crete, and perhaps to Corinth for the third time, and early in 65 arrived at Rome, where he was apprehended for preaching the gospel, and, after being confined about twelve months, was beheaded, according to tradition, on the 29th of June, A. D. 66. —The apostle himself thus speaks of the extent of his labours;—"From Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." "That by me the preaching might be fully known; and that all the Gentiles might hear." "The gospel was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I Paul am made a minister." Mosheim thus mentions the labours of the apostles:—"The apostles, having finished their work at Jerusalem, went to diffuse their labours among other nations, visited with that intent a great part of the known world, and in a short time planted a vast number of churches among the Gentiles. Several of these are mentioned in the sacred writings, particularly in the Acts of the Apostles; though these are, undoubtedly, but a small part of the churches which were founded either by the apostles themselves, or by their disciples under their immediate inspection."

JUNE 29.

Scripture selected for the day.—Romans, i. 1—16.

One of our best writers on church history makes the following striking and just remarks on the facts connected with the first propagation of Christianity throughout the world:—"When we consider the rapid progress of Christianity among the Gentile nations," says Mosheim, "and the poor and feeble instruments by which this great and amazing event was immediately effected, we must naturally have recourse to an omnipotent, an invisible hand, as its true and proper cause. For, unless we suppose here a Divine interposition, how was it possible that men, destitute of all human aid, without credit or riches, learning or eloquence, could, in so short a time, persuade a considerable part of mankind to abandon the religion of their ancestors? How was it possible, that a handful of apostles, who, as fishermen and publicans, must have been contemned by their own nation, and, as Jews, must have been odious to all others, could engage the learned and the mighty, as well as the simple and those of low degree, to forsake their favourite prejudices, and to embrace a new religion, which was an enemy to their corrupt passions?—And, indeed, there were undoubted marks of a celestial power perpetually attending their ministry. Their very language possessed an incredible energy, an amazing power of sending light into the understanding, and conviction into the heart. To this were added, the commanding influence of stupendous miracles, the foretelling of future events, the power of discerning the secret thoughts and intentions of the heart, a magnanimity superior to all difficulties, a contempt of riches and honours, a serene tranquillity in the face of death, and an invincible patience under torments still more dreadful than death itself;—and all this accompanied with

lives free from stain, and adorned with the constant practice of sublime virtue. Thus were the messengers of the Divine Saviour, the heralds of his spiritual and immortal kingdom, furnished for their glorious work, as the unanimous voice of ancient history so loudly testifies. The event sufficiently declares this; for without these remarkable and extraordinary circumstances, no rational account can be given of the rapid propagation of the gospel throughout the world."

JUNE 30.

Scripture selected for the day.—2 Thessalonians, ii.

In reflecting on Christianity as a revelation of the Divine will, suited to remove the errors and the miseries of mankind, and containing especially the annunciations of pardon, acceptance, and eternal life, so necessary to wipe away the tears of humanity, and cheer the benighted mortal in his passage through the valley of death,—in considering, that with this dispensation stand connected the glory of the Divine Being, and the illustration of all his perfections to the minds of his intelligent creatures, as well as the interposition of the incarnate Son of God, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, and that all the other Divine works are but the appendages of this dispensation,—how wonderful does the interruption of the progress of the gospel, for so many centuries, appear, after it had made such stupendous conquests before the close of the labours of the apostles! That a system of anti-christianity, framed as if on purpose to subvert the authority of the Founder of the christian religion, its doctrines, offices, discipline, and its whole saving tendency; and exhibiting to the affrighted world, under the name of Christianity, a disgusting picture of heathenish superstition, priestly domination and rapacity, and moral corruption,

should be permitted to prevail, through so many ages, over the whole world, is a mystery so profound as to baffle all our conjectures.

It is true, there is in the Divine proceedings, and particularly in the Christian dispensation, a process of instruction going forward, to which the enemies of the Almighty are compelled materially to contribute; and it is possible that this interruption to the progress of Christianity may be designed to make the grace of God in the salvation of man more illustrious, and the final conquests and universal triumphs of the gospel, through many long ages, the more glorious. Then, in the universal extension of moral light, heavenly peace, and evangelical righteousness,—when the long night which has covered the whole world shall be turned into universal day,—when anarchy, war, devastation, and death, shall give place to order, peace, and mental culture, and happy existence; and when, instead of a state of dreadful moral disorganization and corruption, the whole race of man shall be recovered to the image of the Deity, then will be manifested the sublime nature of those triumphs which the Great Deliverer of mankind will have accomplished, in spite of the mightiest efforts of the powers of darkness. Then "there shall be no more curse, no more death. The former things shall be passed away. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

JULY 1.

Scripture selected for the day.—1 John, iv.

In nothing does the stupidity of mankind more appear than in the worship of idols. When we see a man, endued with reason, prostrating himself before