

ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE.

WHEN we come to inquire closely about the Apostles, and when we consider the acknowledged part played by them in an event so stupendous as the spread of Christianity, we may well be astonished to find how very little we know about any of them, except two or three. How immense was the dignity assigned to them is shown by the promise of Christ, "When the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." And how rapidly the grandeur of their position was acknowledged, even among the earliest groups of Gentile converts, we see from St. Paul's allusion to "the Twelve" as a recognised designation, and from the fact that St. John, as far back as the days in which he wrote the Apocalypse, sees the names of "the Twelve Apostles" graven on the twelve precious stones which are the foundations of the City of God. And yet, from this little body of the first Preachers and Witnesses of the Gospel, who had been with Jesus from the beginning, two only—St. Peter and St. John—are really well known to us. There are three of "the glorious company of the Apostles"—James the Little,¹ Jude the son of James, and Simon the Cananæan or Zealot—of whom we cannot be said to know anything whatever, though St. John does record a single question of "Judas, not Iscariot."² Of Matthew nothing is recorded except his call and his farewell feast; of Bartholomew absolutely nothing, unless we regard as certain the conjecture which identifies him with Nathanael; of Thomas

¹ ὁ μικρός. He is never called "the Less." The word probably describes his stature.

² John xiv. 22.

and Philip and Andrew only two or three incidents are narrated, some of which have little bearing on their history or character. We are enabled indeed to see deep into the hearts of Simon Peter and of Judas Iscariot, and the figure of John stands out clear to us, not only in the Gospel story, but in his own writings, and in the subsequent history and tradition of the Church. But of James the son of Zebedee we have little told us, except that, with Peter and John—and to a lesser degree Andrew—he belonged to the innermost circle, the *ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτότεροι*, of our Lord's disciples. In this capacity the first three alone were admitted into His immediate presence at the raising of the daughter of Jairus, at the Transfiguration, and in the Garden of Gethsemane. But in the three *special* incidents with which St. James is connected in the Gospels, he is associated with his brother John. John was the younger brother, yet greater prominence is accorded to him as being especially "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and as having been marked out earlier for the ranks of the Apostolate. It is a remarkable fact that in his own Gospel he never mentions his elder brother by name; though this may be due to the same sublime reticence which made him pass over the name of his mother,¹ and only speak of himself by periphrasis and in the third person.

It would be very interesting to know the extent to which the Apostles were drawn from the immediate families of Christ's own relatives, but unfortunately we are left to conjecture. The early tradition of the Christian Church was to a great extent fragmentary and anecdotal, and we are only able to arrive at possible or probable hypotheses on many subjects of which we would fain have known more. Our difficulties are further increased by the astonishing paucity of names among the Jews of the poorer classes at this epoch. There seem to have been only a few dozen

¹ John xix. 25, compared with Mark xv. 40, xvi. 1; Matt. xxvii. 56.

names in common use, and those who bore them had to be distinguished from each other by patronymics or descriptive adjectives. Even in the little group of Twelve Apostles there were two Simons, and two Judes, and two Jameses ; and besides these there was another James, another Simon, another Jude among "the brethren of the Lord."¹ In the same narrow circle there were also three Maries, and three or four who bore the name of Joseph and Joses. Perhaps however it was by the express purpose of Providence that we were left in ignorance about the mere personal biographies of the earliest followers of our Lord. We were meant to draw the lesson that they were less than nothing in comparison with Him. What, after all, are the saints? They are still but mortal men, "inspirati a Deo, sed tamen homines." "They are," said Luther, "but sparkling drops of the nightdew on the head of the Bridegroom, scattered about His hair." Even the deep silence of the Gospels concerning them has not prevented them from being elevated into objects of adoration throughout a great part of Christendom. How much would the danger have been increased if they had been permitted to occupy a larger space in the Gospel record!

The notion that "*brethren*" means "*cousins*," and that the word "*brethren*" is misleadingly and invariably used when "*cousins*" might have been used with equal ease and greater accuracy, may now be regarded as an exploded fiction, invented mainly by the casuistry of St. Jerome with the aid of an apocryphal gospel, and practically abandoned even by its inventor as soon as it had served its immediate controversial purpose. Whatever "the brethren of the Lord" may have been, it is superfluously clear from the Gospels themselves that they were *not* among the number of the Apostles.² On the other hand, James and John were,

¹ Matt. xiii. 55.

² Matt. xii. 46 ; Mark iii. 31 ; Luke viii. 19. To an unprejudiced mind, which

almost beyond the possibility of doubt, the first cousins of the Lord, since Salome was the sister of the Virgin Mary.¹ Nor is it impossible that four of the remaining ten stood in the same or a similar relation to Him. For tradition—in spite of the difficulty that two sisters will then have borne the same name²—persistently holds that Mary the wife of Klopas was another sister of the Virgin; that though Cleopas is a shortened form of Cleopater,³ it was yet used as a Greek synonym for Chalpai, Clopas, or Alphæus; and that Alphæus was a brother of Joseph. If that tradition be correct, Matthew and his twin brother Thomas and James the Little, being sons of Mary and Alphæus, were also first cousins of Jesus; and Jude the son of James (unless this be *another* James, which does not seem likely) was His first cousin once removed.⁴ The previous relationship in which these Galilæan youths stood to our Lord, the fact that they must thus have known or heard of Him in earlier years, throws light on the instantaneous enthusiasm with which some of them were ready to accept His call.

James does not seem to have been among the multitudes who streamed to the preaching of the Baptist; or, if he did, his presence on the banks of the Jordan is not mentioned in any of the records. It is probable that the necessities of earning his bread, and of aiding his father Zebedee in his

refuses to be misled by the fatal facility of ecclesiastical casuistry, John vii. 5 is decisive on this question.

¹ Four women, not three, are mentioned in John xix. 25. The Peshito even inserts "and" before "Mary the wife of Klopas."

² This difficulty would not be in any case insuperable, as there are certainly historic instances of the same thing; and it would be all the more likely to occur in a country which laboured under such a sparseness of appellatives.

³ Luke xxiv. 18.

⁴ See Matt. x. 3; Mark ii. 14, iii. 18; Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13. But who was Joses? Mary is not only called "the mother of James and Joses" (Mark xv. 40), and "the mother of James" (Luke xxiv. 10), but simply "the mother of Joses" (Mark xv. 47). Joses therefore must have been exceedingly well known in the group of early disciples. It is a painful illustration of the extreme fragmentariness of our record that we know absolutely nothing about him. He is not even mentioned in Christian traditions.

precarious trade of a fisherman at Capernaum, may have detained him in Galilee. It is known from the Talmud that there was a regular sale at Jerusalem for the fish caught in the Lake of Galilee, and this may have necessitated the occasional residence of the younger brother at the Holy City, where we are told that he—alone of the Apostles—had a house or lodging, and where he was known to the servants of the High Priest.¹

Zebedee, Zabadja or Zabdía, since he had a boat of his own and hired servants, seems to have been in more prosperous circumstances than his partners Simon and Andrew.² But when Jesus called the sons of Zebedee to leave all and follow Him, without a moment's hesitation they left the boat, and the nets, and the hired servants, and their father, to become the close and constant attendants on the ministry of Jesus. With Him they stood the storm, and the sultry heat of the Plain of Gennesareth, and the homelessness, and the days and nights of incessant labour and anxiety, and the taunts, and the pressing crowds, and afterwards the wanderings in heathen lands, the flight, the concealments, the anathemas of Pharisees and Priests. Such self-sacrifice shows their heroic faith; but their instant obedience would have been unnatural and unaccountable if St. John had not already heard the witness of the Baptist, and been present at the miracle of Cana, and perhaps in the early scenes at Jerusalem. James had doubtless also known something of that sinless childhood at Nazareth which was "like the flower of roses in the spring of the year, and lilies by the watercourses," and had heard much from his younger brother of "the Lamb of God that taketh

¹ John xix. 27, xviii. 15. This not improbable conjecture has been facetiously characterized by flippant critics as a suggestion that St. John was "a fishmonger." The supposed irreverence lies only in the insincerity and hopeless conventionality of those who are incapable of seeing that there is nothing more incongruous in the notion that an Apostle *sold* fish at Jerusalem than that an Apostle *caught* fish at Gennesareth.

² Mark i. 20.

away the sin of the world." His heart had been already prepared, both by spiritual influences and by the leadings of providential circumstance, to obey the call which transformed him from a young fisherman of the inland lake to be a leader among the Apostles, to have Churches dedicated to his honour in barbarous islands of northern seas of which he had never so much as heard the name, and to become the patron-saint of a chivalrous nation by the Pillars of the West.¹ Strange life, strange death, strange glory—glory greater than that of earth's kings and conquerors—for the poor Galilæan boy who had once played on the bright sands of Bethsaida, thinking to live a life of safe and happy obscurity "beneath the Syrian blue," dreaming in no wise of the destinies to come! In the miraculous draught of fishes after the night spent in fruitless toil he saw the proof that the hour had come in which Jesus should manifest Himself to the world²; and losing his life that he might find it, he left the little boat in which he had so often drawn out the fish from life to death to enter into that other little boat of Christ's infant Church, wherein, amid the tossing of far fiercer storms, he was to be a fisher of men.

His task began at once. Very soon after the first year—the bright Galilæan spring and dawn of Christ's ministry—St. James must have become well aware that the call of Christ meant a lifelong sacrifice; that it involved poverty and hatred; that he would often be obliged to face peril and malediction, and perhaps to die at last, not happy with children's faces round his bed, but amid the execration of the religious authorities of his day, by the hand of the executioner, as a man charged with sedition, heresy, and crime. And yet how infinitely was he the gainer! Who would change the lot of the Apostles, with its persecutions

¹ St. Jago of Compostella.

² Luke v. 1-11; comp. Mark i. 16-20, Matt. iv. 18-22.

and its hundredfold reward, for that of the rich young ruler who made "the great refusal"?

"The worst of miseries
Is when a nature framed for noblest things
Condemns itself in youth to petty joys,
And sore athirst for air breathes scanty life,
Gasping from out the shallows. The life *they* chose
Breathed high, and saw a full-arched firmament."

Yet it may save us from many *à priori* hypotheses and errors if we observe the curious and significant fact, that—apart from the incidental mention of his name as having been present on certain solemn occasions—in each of the three events in which St. James becomes for a moment prominent together with his brother, his conduct is marked by reprehension rather than approval. The blame was infinitely tender, yet it was distinctly blame. A man's goodness, a man's self-sacrifice, does not make him in the smallest degree infallible. It gives him no immunity from error, either in opinion or in practice. Because the Gospels are true and faithful, therefore the Apostles are not represented to us as faultless, nor is the language used respecting them like that of modern biographies, the language of unbroken eulogy. In all the stately and splendid picture gallery of saintly lives which Scripture presents to us we find that One was sinless, and One alone. The Apostles were holy and noble men; but they set themselves forth to us as often dull of understanding, jealous, narrow, impatient, lacking (as we all are) in perfect charity. Peter denies his Lord, and Thomas doubts, and, in the hour of His deepest need, all the disciples—even James, even the disciple whom Jesus loved—forsook Him and fled. Great was their work, eternal their reward, beautiful even their stormy impetuosity as "Sons of Thunder," in that cluster of young life which Jesus gathered round Him. Yet their life too was only a beginning and a setting forth, not a finishing.

Let us take the three sentences addressed to these two brothers by their Lord.

Luke ix. 55 : "*Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.*"

Matthew xx. 22 : "*Ye know not what ye ask.*"

Mark xiv. 41 : "*Sleep on now, and take your rest.*"

We see at once that the three sentences, deep as was their gentleness, were three reproofs.

I. James and John had to unlearn the spirit of intolerance. Intolerance is sometimes represented as a virtue, and as a beautiful proof of flaming zeal ; while tolerance, and comprehensiveness, and the readiness to make allowance are often condemned, especially by priests and the supporters of party religionism, as proofs of indifference and coldness. The lesson which Christ taught was invariably the reverse of this ; only, in most ages of the Church, unhappily, many have not guided themselves by the words and example of Christ, but by their own party interests, perverted texts, and fierce traditions.

The rude and fanatical people of the frontier village of Engannim had refused to receive our Lord, because they were Samaritans, and His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. This inhospitable rejection involved direct insult, as well as painful discomfort ; and in that very country Elijah was recorded to have twice called down fire from heaven to avenge an insult far more excusable. Immediately the Sons of Thunder ask Christ if they may call down fire from heaven to punish these insolent villagers, even as Elijah did. They want to perform, in their own persons, a violent and exterminating miracle. It is the voice of the inquisitor, the voice of the partisan, the voice of religious hatred. It was the voice of Torquemada ; the voice of Innocent III. and Arnold of Citeaux ; the voice of Calvin ; the voice of John Knox ; the voice of Gardiner and Bonner ; the voice of Philip II. and Alva ; the voice of

sects and partisans—not the voice of Christ. Two words for themselves; one for Christ; none at all for the poor wretches, innocent and guilty alike, whom, for God's glory and their own, they want to consume. "*Even as Elias did.*" There we see a little touch of shame as to their request. Merciless anger and personal indignation justify themselves, as usual in such cases, with a real or supposed Scripture precedent.¹ There have always been adepts in the art of murdering the spirit of Scripture by its own dead letter. Popes quoted Scripture when they wanted to exterminate the opponents whom they called heretics; and Crusaders, when they waded bridle-deep in blood; and Romanists, when they burnt Protestants; and Jesuits, when they plotted to get kings assassinated; and the clergy, when they preached the Divine rights of despotism; and slave-owners, when, with the approval of countless clerical bibliolaters, they stole men from Africa, and kept them in bitter bondage. But Christ, with Divine wisdom, set aside their Scripture precedent as worse than valueless, as a pernicious anachronism. He tells them that the Elijah-spirit is not the Christ-spirit. The fire of wrath and destruction is in God's hands, not in the polluted hands of erring and feeble men. Fire is the only element in which Christ wrought no miracle. It is the brambles and bramble-men whose voices are most full of it, and they have used it chiefly against the cedars of Lebanon. But Jesus rebuked the two erring and vehement brothers, and said, "Ye know not of what spirit ye are. For the Son of man is not come"—as the representatives of the Church have so often and so fatally supposed—"to destroy men's lives, but to save."²

¹ It is clear that the passage has been tampered with, probably in more than one direction, by ecclesiastical bias. These words are omitted in \aleph B, L, Ξ , etc.

² This glorious utterance is omitted in \aleph , A, B, C. There were scribes so ignorant and so steeped in the Elijah-spirit of persecution as to regard it as "dangerous."

II. Nor was the lesson of intolerance the only lesson which these two great Apostles had to unlearn. They had also to be purged from the secret religious selfishness from which all intolerance springs.

The incident occurred at a later stage of the great journey, after Jesus had taken refuge for a time from the ban of His enemies at the little village Ephraim. He only left it when, from its conical hill, he saw the Galilæan pilgrims beginning to stream down the Jordan valley towards Jerusalem. He had been walking in front of His disciples in the transfiguration of majestic sorrow, when He beckoned them to Him, and for the first time revealed to them the awful fact that He should be, not only mocked and scourged, but—the crowning horror—that He should be *crucified*. It was at that most inopportune moment that, instigated by her sons, the fond mother Salome mysteriously came to Him with them, and asks as a favour that they may sit at His right hand and His left in His kingdom. Jesus gently bore with the error and ambitious selfishness of the young men whom He loved, knowing that in their blindness they had asked for that position which, five days afterwards, should be occupied in shame and anguish by the two crucified robbers. “*Ye know not what ye ask,*” He said. Heaven is not a heaven of the selfish, ambitious, exclusive sort. There are no beggings and schemings there, no selfish jostlings and elbowings in the press, no competitive comparisons of which has done the maximum of service on the minimum of grace. *There* no one wonders why this man succeeds, or envies because another has been rewarded. There the highest and the lowest are all equally happy, because all are in full accord with the will of God.

“Frate, la nostra volontà quieta
La Virtù di Carità, che fa volerne
Sol quel ch'avenno, e d'altro non chi asseta.

Se desiassimo esser più superne
 Foran discordi gli nostri disiri
 Dal voler di colui che qui ne cerne.

Chiaro mi fu allor, com' ogni dove
 In cielo è Paradiso, e sì la grazia
 Del sommo ben d' un modo non vi piove."¹

The ten, when they heard the request of the two brothers, had great indignation among themselves. They too wanted *their* thrones and places of distinction. But Jesus, who was patient because eternal, only taught the two poor disciples that His cup and His baptism were far different from what they supposed. And they, rising in their fall, showed themselves no less ready to taste His cup of bitterness and to partake of His baptism of fire. But the painful discipline did not come till they had been more trained to bear it.

III. St. James was indeed the first martyr of the Apostles, as St. John was their last survivor. We catch the last glimpse of him in the Gospels first sleeping and sharing in the gentle rebuke, "What, could ye not watch one hour?" then, with the rest, flying from his forsaken Lord.

"What should wring this from thee?' ye laugh and ask.
 What wrung it? Even a torchlight and a noise,
 The sudden Roman faces, violent hands,
 And fear of what the Jews might do! Just that,
 And it is written, 'I forsook and fled':
 There was my trial, and it ended thus.
 Ay, but my soul had gained its truth, could grow:
 Another year or two—what little child,
 What tender woman that had seen no least
 Of all my sights, but barely heard them told,

¹ Dante, *Paradiso* iii. 70, *seq.* "Brother, a virtue of Charity sets at rest our will, which makes us wish that only which we have, and lets us not thirst for aught else. If we desired to be more on high, our desires would be out of harmony with the will of Him who distributes us here. . . . It was clear to me then how everywhere in Heaven is Paradise, even if the grace of the highest Good falls not there in one fashion" (A. J. Butler's translation).

Who did not grasp the cross with a glad laugh,
Or wrap the burning robe round, thanking God?"

But this was his last recorded imperfection. In the Acts of the Apostles we find James named first, before even Peter and John, though he afterwards became less prominent in the popular recollection than the Apostle of Love, for he is described later on as "James the brother of John." We read no more of him till fourteen years later, and then we see nothing but the flash of a sword. Herod Agrippa, being but an alien usurper, supported mainly by the swords of Rome, is anxious to please the Jews. He knows that he cannot do so more effectually than by putting to death a leading Christian. And so "he slew James the brother of John with the sword." *Ἀνεῖλε μαχαίρα*—just two words, and no more, suffice to narrate the martyrdom of the first of the Apostles, and, what is very remarkable, of the *only* Apostle whose death is recorded. How St. Peter died, how St. Paul died, how St. John died, how any one of the rest of the Twelve died, we simply do not know. We do not know how they were martyred, nor even—except by vague and late tradition—whether any of them, except the Apostles of the Circumcision and of the Uncircumcision, were martyred at all. St. James has the signal honour of being the only Apostle whose martyrdom is recorded in the Sacred Book.

But what "Acts of Martyrdom" are these! How brief, how quiet in their solemnity, how entirely unsurrounded by any blaze of miracles or of superhuman sanctity in the sufferer! The story of tradition, recorded by Clement of Alexandria and preserved in Eusebius, may or may not be true—that, on his way to execution, he forgave and converted his accuser, and that when this man desired to die with James, the Apostle looked at him for a little time, then kissed him, and said, "Peace to thee, my brother." But if the story be true, Scripture, at any rate, does not narrate it.

Scripture differs greatly from common biographies. It is indifferent to earthly glories and death-bed scenes. It would seem to say to us—

“Why do ye toil to register your names
On icy pillars which soon melt away?
True honour is not here.”

There is, as I have said elsewhere, a spiritual fitness in the lonely, slightly recorded death-scene of the Son of Thunder. There is a deep lesson in the fact that, meekly and silently, in utter self-renouncement, with no visible consolation, with no elaborate eulogy, amid no pomp of circumstance, with not even a recorded burial, he should perish, first of the faithful few to whom, in answer to his request to sit at his Lord's right hand, had been uttered that warning and tender prophecy, that he should drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism of his Saviour. Nor was the day far distant when the Herods and High Priests would be forced to say of him: “We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints!”

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EARLY CHRISTIAN MONUMENTS IN PHRYGIA :

A STUDY IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

IV.

MULTITUDES flocked to listen to the ministrations of Aberkios from the neighbouring provinces, Greater Phrygia, Asia, Lydia, and Caria. He restored sight to a noble lady named Phrygella, and afterwards to three old women of the country. Observing that the country stood in need of medicinal baths, to which invalids might resort for the cure of their ailments, he fell on his knees beside a river near the