PERSECUTION OF OLD TIMES.

One great blessing the church of the Latter Day Saints enjoy above those of former ages, is, a knowledge of the persecution of olden times; For the which purpose we extract the 2d chapter from Fox's Martyrs.

Chap. II.

FROM THE DEATH OF ST. JOHN, AND THE CONCLUSION OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

The malignant spirit of the Jews was ever predominant, and the apostles, as their Master before them, were on all occasions, and in every place where that spirit could shew itself, violently persecuted. The apostle Paul was by this means, driven from Antioch to Icomum; yet there were the apostles opposed by Jews and Gentiles, until they found it expedient to escape to Lycaonia. At Lystra, notwithstanding the partiality of the Gentiles for them, on account of curing the important man, the Jews to such a degree prevailed, that Paul was even stoned by them. This induced them for a time to remove to Derbe, though they afterwards visited both Lystra and Antioch, to confirm the disciples of Christ in the profession of the gospel. Though the apostle Paul received a divine intimation to extend his labors, in propagating the gospel into Macedonia, an insurrection was here stirred up, and both Paul and his adopted companion, Silas, were cast into prison. Here we have a very different account of this Gentile apostle's deliverance to that of Peter. The prison-doors and the gates were not thrown open, as on that occasion, at least, though the doors were opened as an effect of the earthquake, they were not commanded to go out, and conducted thence by an angel, as in the other case. The providence of God had other ends to serve on the present occasion. Here was no escape, as on the former interposition. "We are all here; do thyself no harm," says Paul to the terrified jailor. Conversion followed this extraordinary scene. The jailor was convinced of their innocence, made profession of their faith, and "was baptized, he and all his straightway." This advantage to the cause of the gospel was obtained by this short imprisonment, though the rulers, ashamed of their conduct, sent orders the next morning for their release; and at last, on Paul's asserting that they had grossly violated their privileges, he being a Roman citizen, with much submission they persuaded him to accept of a discharge.

Going to Lydda, and from thence to Thessalonica, the Jews, as usual, stirred up a commotion against them, so that Jason and others were obliged to enter into a recognizance to keep the peace. Escaping by night to Berea, the Jews of Thessalonica pursued him, and he was compelled to take a circuitous route to Athens. His dispute at Athens, and his being brought before the
the Areopagus, or chief court of Justice, is beside our purpose; but, proceeding to Corinth, the Jews manifested there their violence, and he henceforth associated with the Gentiles.

During his stay here, for a year and six months, St. Philip is supposed to have suffered martyrdom in Phrygia. A change of deputy at Corinth encouraged the Jews to foment a disturbance against the Christians; but though Gallio did not punish their violence, he would not hearken to their idle accusations. The ruler of the synagogue, whose name was Sosthenes, perhaps the successor of Crispus, who had been baptized, and therefore removed, was equally favorable to the apostles, notwithstanding the spleen of the Gentiles; and the new deputy was equally regardless of their proceedings. A respite from persecution was thereby obtained, which enabled Paul to remain there for some time longer.

From Corinth he passed to Cesarea, and thence to Antioch. At Ephesus, to which he came afterwards, a strong party, as in other places, opposed him; yet it only obliged him to change the scene of his labors, and in the public lecture-room of Tydrannus, to secure free admission of the Gentiles. The son of a certain Jewish priest attempted indeed to imitate St. Paul's miracles there; but he paid rather dearly for his rash adventure, and this proved an occasion of many converts, and the destruction of great numbers of improper books. Yet a violent opposition was there raised on account of the goddess Diana, instigated by the silver-smith Demetrius, which, with much difficulty the town-clerk appeased. In his passage through Macedonia and Greece, the Jews were there intent upon his destruction; but he left them and came to Troas, where he performed a signal miracle upon a young man named Eutychus, by restoring him to life. When he came to Jerusalem, some of those who had opposed him at Ephesus, and other places, occasioned his being apprehended in the temple, and dragged violently out of it, until he was rescued by the Roman governor; though detained in custody for the purpose of identifying his person and character. The clamor of the Jews had nearly succeeded to occasion his being scourged; but 'he demanded the privilege of a free-born Roman citizen, whom the laws protected against such a degrading punishment.' [See the Author's History and Life of our Blessed Savior, Book VIII. Chap. III. p. 399.] Though this powerful appeal stopped their present violence, on the following day he was brought forth to be examined; and, whilst he was defending himself in a way which must evidently criminate the Jews, the high-priest, with a view to silence him, commanded those who stood near him to strike him on the mouth. "At such conduct he turns indignant. He calls him a whitened wall, which, like a whitened sepulchre, was fair without, but full of corruption within." Though, by an ingenious address, he divided his clamorous accusers, he was "retained in custody, with a guard of soldiers, to preserve him from the mischiefs of a tumult." Then the Jews conspired to kill him, on being brought to farther examination; but the chief captain caused him to be safely escorted by night on his way to Cesarea, and thus defeated their iniquitous design. Yet their persecution still continued. In five days after, the high-priest and elders followed him thither to Felix the governor, bringing with them a fulsome advocate to blacken Paul, and cajole the governor by flattery and dissimulation; whilst Paul, in his reply, despised the arts of this hireling sycophant, and defied them to prove a single article of their glaring accusation. The governor was fully aware of the nature of the case, but wanted honesty to release him, and humanity to provide for his personal safety, pretending that he was desirous of the arrival of the chief captain, to be more fully acquainted with the true nature of his accusation. Yet every liberty was permitted which could possibly consist with safety and protection.

Curiosity was not then a stranger, as on many occasions in our own times, to persons who sought only a momentary gratification. The governor's wife was a Jewess, and Paul was to be brought forward to be re-examined merely to satisfy and indulge this unmeaning propensity; and, on this occasion, Paul used a language which was far from being welcome or acceptable to the ears of the governor. He was nevertheless detained a prisoner, though not very strictly, for two years, until a new governor had been appoint-
that Matthew suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia, being slain with a halberd. —
But we have to notice the death of the apostle James, at Jerusalem, in the
year preceding Paul's discharge on:
of custody, by a violent insurrection
of the Jews, through which means he
closed his life by martyrdom, in the
interval between the death of the gov-
ernor Festus and the succession of Al-
binus. About this time, also, the death
of Matthias is generally placed by
means of stoning, though we have less
account of him than of most of the oth-
er apostles. On Paul's permission to
depart from Rome, he is said to have
tavelled into Spain, and, as some think,
though the reasons are not fully de-
monstrative, into Britain. He return-
ed to Crete, and there fixed Titus as
their bishop; and from that island he
is supposed to have passed into Judea,
and thence to Ephesus and Colosse,
and back to Ephesus, before he passed
into Macedonia to Philipphi, to Nicopo-
is in Epirus, Corinth, Troas, Antioch,
and Iconium, during which he appears
to have endured many conflicts. (2
Tim. III. 11.) Of his last visit to
Rome, where he suffered martyrdom,
we shall presently take notice; and in
the mean time we have to remark that
St. Peter did not settle at Rome till
about four years before his death, and
the time that St. Paul had returned to
Crete from Spain. At this time he
found Simon Magus, whom he had be-
fore defeated in Samaria, exercising his
infernal arts, and bewitching men's
minds, so as to be had in great vener-
ation by the Romans, and much in fa-
vor with the emperor. Defeated and
opposed by Peter, the emperor was
disgusted, and mitigated his destruc-
tion; and on that account principally
the FIRST GENERAL PERSECUTION
comenced, during which, the apostle St.
Andrew, "after preaching in Scythia
and Asia, and afterwards in Greece,
was martyred in Achaia," by crucifix-
ion, by command of the pro-consul.

In this persecution it is observed
from Tacitus, that persons, who "made
profession of this new religion were
treated with all the instances of scorn
and cruelty; that some were wrapped
up in the skins of wild beasts, to be
worried and devoured by dogs; others
were crucified; others burnt alive, clad
in paper-coats smeared with pitch or
wax, or some combustible matter; that
when day-light failed they might serve for torches and illuminations in the night." Even these spectacles were exhibited in the emperor's own gardens. Thus barbarously were the Christians treated at Rome; besides which, similar edicts were issued against them through most of the provinces of the empire. In the list of martyrs of that period, we find the names of Tecla, Torques, Torquatus, and Macce-lus, and many others; and there were martyrs also at Milan, and other places. Though Peter was more immediately the object of the emperor's rancour, he seems to have escaped the first violence of the storm. But on Paul's coming to Rome in the following year, both these apostles were cast into prison; the former on account of the emperor's hatred for his opposition to Simon Magus, and the latter for having converted one of his concubines.—They were confined in prison for eight or nine months; but they were at length condemned, and Peter as a Jew and a foreigner was ordered to be crucified, with his head downwards, as his own desire, and Paul as a Roman was on the same day beheaded about three miles without the city, but a few months before the death of the monster Nero.

The bishop of Antioch, Euodius, suffered martyrdom during the same year, as we are informed; but whether under Galba, Nero's successor, or the wicked Otho, whose two reigns scarcely exceeded ten months, is not altogether certain. But the miseries of the Jews, provoked by their rebellions, were productive of a breathing time for the Christians, who had escaped from Jerusalem at the commencement of the siege; but it afforded leisure to disaffected and ambitious spirits to hatch new opinions, and to propagate strange and heretical doctrines to the disturbance of those who professed the true Christian faith. It is foreign from our purpose here to state them; and that in the second year after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Christians, who had left it about six years before, returned thither with their bishop Simeon, the successor of James.—In this year, however, it is generally supposed, that St. Jude was put to death in Persia, where he had successfully preached Christ's gospel, for his free reproofs of the superstitious rites of their Magi, being shot to death with arrows; and Bartholomew also is now said to have been crucified at Albania, on the Caspian sea, for opposing their idolatry, by order of the governor of the city. It was also remarkable for the death of Barnabas, who is also generally considered to have terminated his life at Salamis, in his own country of Cyprus, at the instigation of the Jews, by stoning.

It was not until the following year that St. Thomas is commonly understood to have suffered martyrdom, from the opposition of the Bramins of Parthin, in revenge for his having converted the prince of the country and many others. Accustomed to retire to a certain tomb near the city for devotion, they poured in upon him a shower of stones and darts, and one of his assailants afterwards advanced and ran him through with a lance. In the next year, or the fourth from the destruction of Jerusalem, "it is generally supposed, the evangelist Luke died; and the prevailing opinion is, that he was crucified in Greece on an olive-tree for want of a cross, by a party of infidels." Simon also is said to have been crucified by infidels in this year in Britain, after making many converts in various places. The reign of Titus, which followed that of Vespasian, unfortunately was but short; but his death was not without suspicion of poison from his brother and successor, Domitian. He was a good prince; yet, during his short reign of little more than two years, Linus, Bishop of Rome, successor to St. Peter or St. Paul, as bishops of the Jewish or Gentile converts, is now said to have suffered martyrdom, about five years after the death of St. Luke. The professors of the gospel lived peaceably for several years afterwards, excepting the disturbances which were fomented or occasioned by heretics, of whom indeed there was but too prolific a produce, though they were in some degree kept under by the vigilance of the apostle St. John.

When Domitian had reigned about nine or ten years, it has been generally considered that he began to look with an unfavorable eye on the Christians, perhaps from a suspicion that they might be secretly disposed to support the insurrection of Lucius Antonius against him and his unpopular
government. But the second general persecution did not break out till the fourteenth or fifteenth year of that emperor's reign, when the bloody edicts were issued for that purpose, and numerous martyrdoms followed at Rome and other places. Antipas, in Pergamus, one of the seven churches of St. John's foundation, Rev. II. 13. and Dionysius, first Bishop of Athens, Acts XVII. 34. suffered many torments, and death; and the emperor executed Flavius Clemens, the consul and his cousin-german, for embracing Christianity, and banished his wife and niece to different islands. In this persecution St. John was sent for to Rome, and was there put into a cauldron of oil set on fire, from the effects of which he was miraculously preserved, and had the honor of martyrdom without the torments, or putting it in the power of man to deprive him of life.—Yet the stubborn emperor persevered in his enmity to this faithful servant of Christ, though his first design was defeated by a miracle, and banished him "to the desolate isle of Patmos, one of the islands of the modern Grecian archipelago, to dig in the mines," being the usual labor of persons banished thither for any crime against the state of its economy.

It was here that this aged apostle, instead of being compelled to the usual slavery, for which the advanced period of his life was so little adopted, was favored with various visions and revelations, by which he had a sufficient prospect of the future condition of the Christian religion. Of these we have an account in the comprehensive and important Book of Revelation, which afterwards committed to writing; containing many truths, by which the humblest Christians may profit, without concerning themselves in the explanation of prophesies, to which their capacities or uncultivated faculties cannot possibly be commensurate. The accomplishment of some of them was then, as it were, commencing, especially those of the second and third chapters, describing the state of the 7 Asian churches; for these would shortly come to pass, or begin to be fulfilled, but their progress and final completion, those of the subsequent visions especially, in which many dreadful persecutions were predicted, would be protracted to far distant periods, as the long continuance of many of them so frequently repeated most fully demonstrates. Though St. John despaired of life in this barren and desolate spot, his own liberation is first assured to him, that, aged as he was, he should "prophesy before many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings." (Rev. X. 11.) In this year we have an account of the martyrdom of Mark, the first Bishop of Aïna in Latium, whom is said to have been struck in the head with tenter-hooks, of Pellicula, an illustrious woman of Rome, whose body was cast into a common sewer, and of Nicodemus, a presbyter of the same city, who was beaten to death. The emperor became intolerably jealous of every one; and Jews, as well as Christians, were persecuted as atheists and dis-owners of the gods. All the posterity of David were assiduously sought out, as marked for slaughter; which occasioned the apprehension of two grand-children of the apostle St. Jude, the kinsman of our Lord, who, after interrogation and examination, were dismissed, on account of their meanness and simplicity, as beneath his jealousy. From this period he issued an edict for terminating the persecution, which had raged so violently.

The violent death which the emperor soon after suffered, by means of conspirators whom he himself had marked for destruction, gave a new face to the affairs of the Christians.—Both they and the dispersed Jews, who had either been banished from Rome and other cities during the last reign, or become voluntary exiles to escape his fury, were immediately recalled by his successor; and their confiscated property, as far as practicable, restored to them. Yet even in this mild reign, we are informed, that Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus, fell a martyr to the fury of the votaries of Diana, being so cruelly beaten with stones and clubs for opposing them in a festival procession, that he expired in two days after. This is the same whom St. John (Rev. II. 1.) calls the angel of the church of Ephesus. Soon after this, St. John, no longer considering his continuance in Patmos to be necessary, from this happy change of the times, removed to Ephesus to his most intimate friends, and was prevailed upon, since they had lost Timothy, to take upon him the government of
church. In this situation he continued about three years, and at last "died in peace at the close of the century, being then little more or less than one hundred years of age." During this interval he had written his General Epistle, and the two shorter ones to individuals; and in a little time he undertook the task of writing his gospel, at the request of the Asian churches.—In his gospel he had a special eye to the heresies of Ebion and Corinthus, following the argument, but more concisely, of his General Epistle. Nerva's mild reign was, nevertheless, a short one, little more than sixteen months; but his successor Trajan, though otherwise a good prince, was excessively zealous for Paganism and all its superstitions, inasmuch that St. Clement, if we are to credit Metaphrastes, was banished from Rome in the first year of his reign to the mines in Taurica Chersonesus, for having converted Theodora, a noble Roman lady, and others, to the profession of the gospel. The rigidity of Trajan for Paganism gave occasion to his subjects to persecute Christians, though no edict was issued against them. Under the pretence of illegal societies, they were severally persecuted by governors and other officers; and great numbers of them suffered by means of popular tumults, and by laws and processes, under the notion of malefactors and traitors, and under an emperor famed through the world for justice and moderation. This has been usually called the third general persecution; in which many martyrs suffered. Amongst these, we have an account of Cesarius, a deacon of Terracins, in Italy; and Zosimus, of Pisidia, in Asia; but particularly we must notice St. Clement, as just related, who made many converts in his exile, who was condemned to be thrown into the sea, with an anchor about his neck. But this storm of persecution happily never reached Ephesus, so that the venerable apostle St. John remained there until his death quietly and unmolested. And our account of his death, already stated, as it closes the first century of the Christian era, terminates what may be called the apostolic age, and introduces us to their successors.

Died—In Clay Co. Mo. on the 21st of October last, Rachel Rank, aged about 43 years.

TO THE SAINTS.

Beloved brethren and sisters: You undoubtedly are well assured that this is the day and generation in which the prophecies are to be fulfilled, concerning the upbuilding of Zion, in which men are to be made partakers of the fulfilling of the covenants made with the fathers; consequently, of the glories that are to be brought unto the saints at the revelation of Jesus Christ. But remember that it is written, "After much tribulation, cometh the blessing," and that it is no where said, that we shall attain unto the unutterable blessings of the celestial kingdom, but through great tribulation. You who have and do keep the commandments of the Lord, (for it is to such that I now address myself) have great reason to rejoice, seeing you have already been brought to pass through many tribulations because of your faith in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, be not discouraged, neither cast down because of your distresses and great afflictions which you have to pass through, but rather count it a blessing, seeing that "we must, through great tribulation, enter the kingdom," Acts, 14:22. Again, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." Rom. 5:3, 4. And we have been begotten again unto a lively hope which is sure and stedfast, through the manifestation of the truth shed forth upon us by the opening of the heavens, the ministering of angels, and by the raising up a prophet in these last days, by whom the word of God cometh unto us, which word maketh our hope the more lively because it teacheth us plainly that the time draweth nigh, when the things spoken of and hoped, by the former day saints, are to be made manifest in very deed; of which things we shall be made partakers, if we faint not.

I well remember the time when the first little branch of the church of Latter Day Saints removed from this place to the land of Zion; the place of the city of the living God, which was at that time pointed out by revelation.—And from that day to this, these, together with other branches which have since moved to the same place, have been suffering tribulations and afflic-