

Chapter XXIII: Reign Of Julian.--Part III.

In the midst of a rocky and barren country, the walls of Jerusalem [59] enclosed the two mountains of Sion and Acra, within an oval figure of about three English miles. [60] Towards the south, the upper town, and the fortress of David, were erected on the lofty ascent of Mount Sion: on the north side, the buildings of the lower town covered the spacious summit of Mount Acra; and a part of the hill, distinguished by the name of Moriah, and levelled by human industry, was crowned with the stately temple of the Jewish nation. After the final destruction of the temple by the arms of Titus and Hadrian, a ploughshare was drawn over the consecrated ground, as a sign of perpetual interdiction. Sion was deserted; and the vacant space of the lower city was filled with the public and private edifices of the Aelian colony, which spread themselves over the adjacent hill of Calvary. The holy places were polluted with mountains of idolatry; and, either from design or accident, a chapel was dedicated to Venus, on the spot which had been sanctified by the death and resurrection of Christ. [61] [61a] Almost three hundred years after those stupendous events, the profane chapel of Venus was demolished by the order of Constantine; and the removal of the earth and stones revealed the holy sepulchre to the eyes of mankind. A magnificent church was erected on that mystic ground, by the first Christian emperor; and the effects of his pious munificence were extended to every spot which had been consecrated by the footstep of patriarchs, of prophets, and of the Son of God. [62]

[Footnote 59: Reland (Palestin. 1. i. p. 309, 390, 1. iii. p. 838) describes, with learning and perspicuity, Jerusalem, and the face of the adjacent country.]

[Footnote 60: I have consulted a rare and curious treatise of M. D'Anville, (sur l'Ancienne Jerusalem, Paris, 1747, p. 75.) The circumference of the ancient city (Euseb. Preparat. Evangel. 1. ix. c. 36) was 27 stadia, or 2550 toises. A plan, taken on the spot, assigns no more than 1980 for the modern town. The circuit is defined by natural landmarks, which cannot be mistaken or removed.]

[Footnote 61: See two curious passages in Jerom, (tom. i. p. 102, tom. vi. p. 315,) and the ample details of Tillemont, (Hist, des Empereurs, tom. i. p. 569. tom. ii. p. 289, 294, 4to edition.)]

[Footnote 61a: On the site of the Holy Sepulchre, compare the chapter in Professor Robinson's Travels in Palestine, which has renewed the old controversy with great vigor. To me, this temple of Venus, said to have been erected by Hadrian to insult the Christians, is not the least suspicious part of the whole legend.-M. 1845.]

[Footnote 62: Eusebius in Vit. Constantin. 1. iii. c. 25-47, 51-53. The emperor likewise built churches at Bethlem, the Mount of Olives, and the oa of Mambre. The holy sepulchre is described by Sandys, (Travels, p. 125-133,) and curiously delineated by Le Bruyn, (Voyage au Levant, p. 28-296.)]

The passionate desire of contemplating the original monuments of their redemption attracted to Jerusalem a successive crowd of pilgrims, from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, and the most distant countries of the East; [63] and their piety was authorized by the example of the empress Helena, who appears to have united the credulity of age with the warm feelings of a recent conversion. Sages and heroes, who have visited the memorable scenes of ancient wisdom or glory, have confessed the inspiration of the genius of the place; [64] and the Christian who knelt before the holy sepulchre, ascribed his lively faith, and his fervent devotion, to the more immediate influence of the Divine Spirit. The zeal, perhaps the avarice, of the clergy of Jerusalem, cherished and multiplied these beneficial visits. They fixed, by unquestionable tradition, the scene of each memorable event. They exhibited the instruments which had been used in the passion of Christ; the nails and the lance that had pierced his hands, his feet, and his side; the crown of thorns that was planted on his head; the pillar at which he was scourged; and, above all, they showed the cross on which he suffered, and which was dug out of the earth in the reign of those princes, who inserted the symbol of Christianity in the banners of the Roman legions. [65] Such miracles as seemed necessary to account for its extraordinary preservation, and seasonable discovery, were gradually propagated without opposition. The custody of the true cross, which on Easter Sunday was solemnly exposed to the people, was intrusted to the bishop of Jerusalem; and he alone might gratify the curious devotion of the pilgrims, by the gift of small pieces, which they encased in gold or

gems, and carried away in triumph to their respective countries. But as this gainful branch of commerce must soon have been annihilated, it was found convenient to suppose, that the marvelous wood possessed a secret power of vegetation; and that its substance, though continually diminished, still remained entire and unimpaired. [66] It might perhaps have been expected, that the influence of the place and the belief of a perpetual miracle, should have produced some salutary effects on the morals, as well as on the faith, of the people. Yet the most respectable of the ecclesiastical writers have been obliged to confess, not only that the streets of Jerusalem were filled with the incessant tumult of business and pleasure, [67] but that every species of vice--adultery, theft, idolatry, poisoning, murder--was familiar to the inhabitants of the holy city. [68] The wealth and preeminence of the church of Jerusalem excited the ambition of Arian, as well as orthodox, candidates; and the virtues of Cyril, who, since his death, has been honored with the title of Saint, were displayed in the exercise, rather than in the acquisition, of his episcopal dignity. [69]

[Footnote 63: The Itinerary from Bourdeaux to Jerusalem was composed in the year 333, for the use of pilgrims; among whom Jerom (tom. i. p. 126) mentions the Britons and the Indians. The causes of this superstitious fashion are discussed in the learned and judicious preface of Wesseling. (Itinrar. p. 537-545.) ----Much curious information on this subject is collected in the first chapter of Wilken, Geschichte der Kreuzzuge.--M.]

[Footnote 64: Cicero (de Finibus, v. 1) has beautifully expressed the

common sense of mankind.]

[Footnote 65: Baronius (Annal. Eccles. A. D. 326, No. 42-50) and Tillemont (Mem. Eccles. tom. xii. p. 8-16) are the historians and champions of the miraculous invention of the cross, under the reign of Constantine. Their oldest witnesses are Paulinus, Sulpicius Severus, Rufinus, Ambrose, and perhaps Cyril of Jerusalem. The silence of Eusebius, and the Bourdeaux pilgrim, which satisfies those who think perplexes those who believe. See Jortin's sensible remarks, vol. ii. p 238-248.]

[Footnote 66: This multiplication is asserted by Paulinus, (Epist. xxxvi. See Dupin. Bibliot. Eccles. tom. iii. p. 149,) who seems to have improved a rhetorical flourish of Cyril into a real fact. The same supernatural privilege must have been communicated to the Virgin's milk, (Erasmi Opera, tom. i. p. 778, Lugd. Batav. 1703, in Colloq. de Peregrinat. Religionis ergo,) saints' heads, &c. and other relics, which are repeated in so many different churches. * Note: Lord Mahon, in a memoir read before the Society of Antiquaries, (Feb. 1831,) has traced in a brief but interesting manner, the singular adventures of the "true" cross. It is curious to inquire, what authority we have, except of late tradition, for the Hill of Calvary. There is none in the sacred writings; the uniform use of the common word, instead of any word expressing assent or acclivity, is against the notion.--M.]

[Footnote 67: Jerom, (tom. i. p. 103,) who resided in the neighboring

village of Bethlem, describes the vices of Jerusalem from his personal experience.]

[Footnote 68: Gregor. Nyssen, apud Wesseling, p. 539. The whole epistle, which condemns either the use or the abuse of religious pilgrimage, is painful to the Catholic divines, while it is dear and familiar to our Protestant polemics.]

[Footnote 69: He renounced his orthodox ordination, officiated as a deacon, and was re-ordained by the hands of the Arians. But Cyril afterwards changed with the times, and prudently conformed to the Nicene faith. Tillemont, (Mem. Eccles. tom. viii.) who treats his memory with tenderness and respect, has thrown his virtues into the text, and his faults into the notes, in decent obscurity, at the end of the volume.]

The vain and ambitious mind of Julian might aspire to restore the ancient glory of the temple of Jerusalem. [70] As the Christians were firmly persuaded that a sentence of everlasting destruction had been pronounced against the whole fabric of the Mosaic law, the Imperial sophist would have converted the success of his undertaking into a specious argument against the faith of prophecy, and the truth of revelation. [71] He was displeased with the spiritual worship of the synagogue; but he approved the institutions of Moses, who had not disdained to adopt many of the rites and ceremonies of Egypt. [72] The local and national deity of the Jews was sincerely adored by a polytheist, who desired only to multiply the number of the gods; [73]

and such was the appetite of Julian for bloody sacrifice, that his emulation might be excited by the piety of Solomon, who had offered, at the feast of the dedication, twenty-two thousand oxen, and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. [74] These considerations might influence his designs; but the prospect of an immediate and important advantage would not suffer the impatient monarch to expect the remote and uncertain event of the Persian war. He resolved to erect, without delay, on the commanding eminence of Moriah, a stately temple, which might eclipse the splendor of the church of the resurrection on the adjacent hill of Calvary; to establish an order of priests, whose interested zeal would detect the arts, and resist the ambition, of their Christian rivals; and to invite a numerous colony of Jews, whose stern fanaticism would be always prepared to second, and even to anticipate, the hostile measures of the Pagan government. Among the friends of the emperor (if the names of emperor, and of friend, are not incompatible) the first place was assigned, by Julian himself, to the virtuous and learned Alypius. [75] The humanity of Alypius was tempered by severe justice and manly fortitude; and while he exercised his abilities in the civil administration of Britain, he imitated, in his poetical compositions, the harmony and softness of the odes of Sappho. This minister, to whom Julian communicated, without reserve, his most careless levities, and his most serious counsels, received an extraordinary commission to restore, in its pristine beauty, the temple of Jerusalem; and the diligence of Alypius required and obtained the strenuous support of the governor of Palestine. At the call of their great deliverer, the Jews, from all the provinces of the empire, assembled on the holy mountain of

their fathers; and their insolent triumph alarmed and exasperated the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem. The desire of rebuilding the temple has in every age been the ruling passion of the children of Israel. In this propitious moment the men forgot their avarice, and the women their delicacy; spades and pickaxes of silver were provided by the vanity of the rich, and the rubbish was transported in mantles of silk and purple. Every purse was opened in liberal contributions, every hand claimed a share in the pious labor, and the commands of a great monarch were executed by the enthusiasm of a whole people. [76]

[Footnote 70: Imperii sui memoriam magnitudine operum gestiens propagare Ammian. xxiii. 1. The temple of Jerusalem had been famous even among the Gentiles. They had many temples in each city, (at Sichem five, at Gaza eight, at Rome four hundred and twenty-four;) but the wealth and religion of the Jewish nation was centred in one spot.]

[Footnote 71: The secret intentions of Julian are revealed by the late bishop of Gloucester, the learned and dogmatic Warburton; who, with the authority of a theologian, prescribes the motives and conduct of the Supreme Being. The discourse entitled Julian (2d edition, London, 1751) is strongly marked with all the peculiarities which are imputed to the Warburtonian school.]

[Footnote 72: I shelter myself behind Maimonides, Marsham, Spencer, Le Clerc, Warburton, &c., who have fairly derided the fears, the folly, and the falsehood of some superstitious divines. See Divine Legation, vol.

iv. p. 25, &c.]

[Footnote 73: Julian (Fragment. p. 295) respectfully styles him, and mentions him elsewhere (Epist. lxiii.) with still higher reverence. He doubly condemns the Christians for believing, and for renouncing, the religion of the Jews. Their Deity was a true, but not the only, God Apul Cyril. l. ix. p. 305, 306.]

[Footnote 74: 1 Kings, viii. 63. 2 Chronicles, vii. 5. Joseph. Antiquitat. Judaic. l. viii. c. 4, p. 431, edit. Havercamp. As the blood and smoke of so many hecatombs might be inconvenient, Lightfoot, the Christian Rabbi, removes them by a miracle. Le Clerc (ad loca) is bold enough to suspect to fidelity of the numbers. * Note: According to the historian Kotobeddym, quoted by Burckhardt, (Travels in Arabia, p. 276,) the Khalif Mokteder sacrificed, during his pilgrimage to Mecca, in the year of the Hejira 350, forty thousand camels and cows, and fifty thousand sheep. Barthema describes thirty thousand oxen slain, and their carcasses given to the poor. Quarterly Review, xiii.p.39--M.]

[Footnote 75: Julian, epist. xxix. xxx. La Bleterie has neglected to translate the second of these epistles.]

[Footnote 76: See the zeal and impatience of the Jews in Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. iv. p. 111) and Theodoret. (l. iii. c. 20.)]

Yet, on this occasion, the joint efforts of power and enthusiasm were

unsuccessful; and the ground of the Jewish temple, which is now covered by a Mahometan mosque, [77] still continued to exhibit the same edifying spectacle of ruin and desolation. Perhaps the absence and death of the emperor, and the new maxims of a Christian reign, might explain the interruption of an arduous work, which was attempted only in the last six months of the life of Julian. [78] But the Christians entertained a natural and pious expectation, that, in this memorable contest, the honor of religion would be vindicated by some signal miracle. An earthquake, a whirlwind, and a fiery eruption, which overturned and scattered the new foundations of the temple, are attested, with some variations, by contemporary and respectable evidence. [79] This public event is described by Ambrose, [80] bishop of Milan, in an epistle to the emperor Theodosius, which must provoke the severe animadversion of the Jews; by the eloquent Chrysostom, [81] who might appeal to the memory of the elder part of his congregation at Antioch; and by Gregory Nazianzen, [82] who published his account of the miracle before the expiration of the same year. The last of these writers has boldly declared, that this preternatural event was not disputed by the infidels; and his assertion, strange as it may seem is confirmed by the unexceptionable testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus. [83] The philosophic soldier, who loved the virtues, without adopting the prejudices, of his master, has recorded, in his judicious and candid history of his own times, the extraordinary obstacles which interrupted the restoration of the temple of Jerusalem. "Whilst Alypius, assisted by the governor of the province, urged, with vigor and diligence, the execution of the work, horrible balls of fire breaking out near the foundations, with

frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place, from time to time, inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen; and the victorious element continuing in this manner obstinately and resolutely bent, as it were, to drive them to a distance, the undertaking was abandoned."

[83a] Such authority should satisfy a believing, and must astonish an incredulous, mind. Yet a philosopher may still require the original evidence of impartial and intelligent spectators. At this important crisis, any singular accident of nature would assume the appearance, and produce the effects of a real prodigy. This glorious deliverance would be speedily improved and magnified by the pious art of the clergy of Jerusalem, and the active credulity of the Christian world and, at the distance of twenty years, a Roman historian, care less of theological disputes, might adorn his work with the specious and splendid miracle.

[84]

[Footnote 77: Built by Omar, the second Khalif, who died A. D. 644. This great mosque covers the whole consecrated ground of the Jewish temple, and constitutes almost a square of 760 toises, or one Roman mile in circumference. See D'Anville, Jerusalem, p. 45.]

[Footnote 78: Ammianus records the consults of the year 363, before he proceeds to mention the thoughts of Julian. Templum. ... instaurare sumptibus cogitabat immodicis. Warburton has a secret wish to anticipate the design; but he must have understood, from former examples, that the execution of such a work would have demanded many years.]

[Footnote 79: The subsequent witnesses, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, Philostorgius, &c., add contradictions rather than authority. Compare the objections of Basnage (*Hist. des Juifs*, tom. viii. p. 156-168) with Warburton's answers, (*Julian*, p. 174-258.) The bishop has ingeniously explained the miraculous crosses which appeared on the garments of the spectators by a similar instance, and the natural effects of lightning.]

[Footnote 80: *Ambros.* tom. ii. epist. xl. p. 946, edit. Benedictin. He composed this fanatic epistle (A. D. 388) to justify a bishop who had been condemned by the civil magistrate for burning a synagogue.]

[Footnote 81: *Chrysostom*, tom. i. p. 580, *advers. Judaeos et Gentes*, tom. ii. p. 574, *de Sto Babyla*, edit. Montfaucon. I have followed the common and natural supposition; but the learned Benedictine, who dates the composition of these sermons in the year 383, is confident they were never pronounced from the pulpit.]

[Footnote 82: *Greg. Nazianzen*, *Orat.* iv. p. 110-113.]

[Footnote 83: *Ammian.* xxiii. 1. *Cum itaque rei fortiter instaret Alypius, juvaretque provinciae rector, metuendi globi flammaram prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes fecere locum exustis aliquoties operantibus inaccessum; hocque modo elemento destinatius repellente, cessavit inceptum.* Warburton labors (p. 60-90) to extort a confession of the miracle from the mouths of Julian and Libanius, and to employ the evidence of a rabbi who lived in the fifteenth century. Such witnesses

can only be received by a very favorable judge.]

[Footnote 83a: Michaelis has given an ingenious and sufficiently probable explanation of this remarkable incident, which the positive testimony of Ammianus, a contemporary and a pagan, will not permit us to call in question. It was suggested by a passage in Tacitus. That historian, speaking of Jerusalem, says, [I omit the first part of the quotation adduced by M. Guizot, which only by a most extraordinary mistranslation of *muri introrsus sinuati* by "enforcemens" could be made to bear on the question.--M.] The Temple itself was a kind of citadel,

which had its own walls, superior in their workmanship and construction to those of the city. The porticos themselves, which surrounded the temple, were an excellent fortification. There was a fountain of constantly running water; subterranean excavations under the mountain; reservoirs and cisterns to collect the rain-water. Tac. Hist. v. ii.

12. These excavations and reservoirs must have been very considerable.

The latter furnished water during the whole siege of Jerusalem to 1,100,000 inhabitants, for whom the fountain of Siloe could not have sufficed, and who had no fresh rain-water, the siege having taken place from the month of April to the month of August, a period of the year during which it rarely rains in Jerusalem. As to the excavations, they served after, and even before, the return of the Jews from Babylon, to contain not only magazines of oil, wine, and corn, but also the treasures which were laid up in the Temple. Josephus has related several incidents which show their extent. When Jerusalem was on the point of

being taken by Titus, the rebel chiefs, placing their last hopes in these vast subterranean cavities, formed a design of concealing themselves there, and remaining during the conflagration of the city, and until the Romans had retired to a distance. The greater part had not time to execute their design; but one of them, Simon, the Son of Gioras, having provided himself with food, and tools to excavate the earth descended into this retreat with some companions: he remained there till Titus had set out for Rome: under the pressure of famine he issued forth on a sudden in the very place where the Temple had stood, and appeared in the midst of the Roman guard. He was seized and carried to Rome for the triumph. His appearance made it be suspected that other Jews might have chosen the same asylum; search was made, and a great number discovered. Joseph. de Bell. Jud. 1. vii. c. 2. It is probable that the greater part of these excavations were the remains of the time of Solomon, when it was the custom to work to a great extent under ground: no other date can be assigned to them. The Jews, on their return from the captivity, were too poor to undertake such works; and, although Herod, on rebuilding the Temple, made some excavations, (Joseph. Ant. Jud. xv. 11, vii.) the haste with which that building was completed will not allow us to suppose that they belonged to that period. Some were used for sewers and drains, others served to conceal the immense treasures of which Crassus, a hundred and twenty years before, plundered the Jews, and which doubtless had been since replaced. The Temple was destroyed A. C. 70; the attempt of Julian to rebuild it, and the fact related by Ammianus, coincide with the year 363. There had then elapsed between these two epochs an interval of near 300 years, during which the

excavations, choked up with ruins, must have become full of inflammable air. The workmen employed by Julian as they were digging, arrived at the excavations of the Temple; they would take torches to explore them; sudden flames repelled those who approached; explosions were heard, and these phenomena were renewed every time that they penetrated into new subterranean passages. This explanation is confirmed by the relation of an event nearly similar, by Josephus. King Herod having heard that immense treasures had been concealed in the sepulchre of David, he descended into it with a few confidential persons; he found in the first subterranean chamber only jewels and precious stuffs: but having wished to penetrate into a second chamber, which had been long closed, he was repelled, when he opened it, by flames which killed those who accompanied him. (Ant. Jud. xvi. 7, i.) As here there is no room for miracle, this fact may be considered as a new proof of the veracity of that related by Ammianus and the contemporary writers.--G. ----To the illustrations of the extent of the subterranean chambers adduced by Michaelis, may be added, that when John of Gischala, during the siege, surprised the Temple, the party of Eleazar took refuge within them. Bell. Jud. vi. 3, i. The sudden sinking of the hill of Sion when Jerusalem was occupied by Barchocab, may have been connected with similar excavations. Hist. of Jews, vol. iii. 122 and 186.--M. ----It is a fact now popularly known, that when mines which have been long closed are opened, one of two things takes place; either the torches are extinguished and the men fall first into a swoor and soon die; or, if the air is inflammable, a little flame is seen to flicker round the lamp, which spreads and multiplies till the conflagration becomes

general, is followed by an explosion, and kill all who are in the way.--G.]

[Footnote 84: Dr. Lardner, perhaps alone of the Christian critics, presumes to doubt the truth of this famous miracle. (Jewish and Heathen Testimonies, vol. iv. p. 47-71.)]

The silence of Jerom would lead to a suspicion that the same story which was celebrated at a distance, might be despised on the spot. * Note: Gibbon has forgotten Basnage, to whom Warburton replied.--M.