

# THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

## S A I N T J O H N .

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**S A I N T J O H N ]** *This gospel is universally agreed to have been written after all the rest, with a view of completing whatever was deficient in them all. Saint John, independently of his divine and infallible inspiration, must be allowed to have a most perfect knowledge of the facts that he relates; and as he undoubtedly examined all the other gospels before he wrote, he is an authentic witness of their veracity. He was of our Lord's near kindred, according to the testimony of the ancients. Before he became acquainted with our Lord, he was a disciple of John the Baptist, and probably one of those two whom he sent to Christ. Our Saviour honoured him with his most intimate confidence, and loved him beyond his other disciples. He, and Peter, and James, were, exclusive of the rest, witnesses of the raising Jairus's daughter, of Christ's transfiguration, and of his agony in the garden. He was the only Apostle who stood under the cross, when Christ was crucified. Michaelis thinks that Saint John, in the life-time of his Master, wrote down some of the heads of his discourses; at least that his stile perfectly resembles that of those who relate the discourses of another, after having taken down the heads while they were spoken. But we are not to consider this gospel merely as an historical narrative, but also as a controversial treatise, designed to refute various heresies; for no sooner was the Christian church established, but its doctrines were obscured, debased, and corrupted by errors and heresies of various kinds. The first heretics assumed the name of Gnostics, that is knowing ones, pretending to superior light and knowledge. They were afterwards followed by the Nicolaitans, whose false tenets were propagated by Ebion and Cerinthus. These heretics prevailed most in Asia: wherefore the Asiatic bishops desired Saint John to draw up a refutation of them; and he, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as well as in compliance with their request, composed his gospel, with a view "to put these heretics to shame, and to shew that God the Father by Christ, "his eternal Word and Son, made all things." Wherefore, he does not relate the birth and parentage of Christ, or even those facts of which he, Saint Peter, and Saint James, were eye-witnesses, exclusive of the other apostles; but he meant only to collect such discourses and miracles as might confirm the doctrines laid down in the first chapter, which were counter-positions to Cerinthus and other heretics, who maintained the grossest errors concerning Christ.*

*Cerinthus is said to have taught, 1. That the most high God was entirely unknown before the appearance of Christ, and dwelt in a remote heaven, called Pleroma, with the chief spirits or æons. 2. That this supreme God first generated an only-begotten Son, who again begat the word, which was inferior to the first-born. 3. That Christ was a lower æon, though superior to some others. 4. That there were two high æons distinct from Christ; one called life,*

*and*

and the other light. 5. That from the æons again proceeded inferior orders of spirits; and particularly one Demiurgus, who created this visible world out of eternal matter. 6. That this Demiurgus was ignorant of the supreme God, and much lower than the æons, who were wholly invisible. 7. That he was however the peculiar God and protector of the Israelites, and sent Moses to them; whose laws and injunctions were to be of perpetual obligation. 8. That Jesus was a mere man, the real son of Joseph and Mary. 9. That the æon Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove, when he was baptized; revealed to him the unknown Father, and empowered him to work miracles. 10. That the æon light entered John the Baptist in the same manner, and therefore that John was in some respects to be preferred to Christ. 11. That when Jesus had propagated the knowledge of God, and came to suffer, Christ left him, and fled to the uppermost heaven. 12. That Jesus Christ should reign on earth a thousand years, and his disciples enjoy all sensual delights. Some of the Cerinthian sect denied also the resurrection of the dead, and many of them maintained that Jesus Christ was not yet risen.

Now, we shall find Saint John's gospel divided into three parts. The first, contains doctrines laid down in opposition to those of Cerinthus, Ch. i. 1—18. The second, delivers proofs of these doctrines in an historical manner, Ch. i. 19.—xx. 29. The third, is a conclusion, or appendix, giving an account of the person of the writer, and of the view he had in writing, including also some additional facts, Ch. xx. 30. to the end. In what year this gospel was written, is not agreed among the ancients. It should seem to have been before the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened in the year of our Lord 70; for Saint John speaks of that city as subsisting, Ch. v. 2. There is at Jerusalem, by the sheep-market, a pool, &c. On the other hand, it appears from the gospel itself to have been written after the death of Saint Peter, which is generally placed in the year 78: for the other evangelists, when they relate the cutting off the high-priest's servant's ear, conceal the name of Peter, lest the Jews should have a legal pretence to prosecute him, and deliver him to the Romans, to be capitally punished: whereas Saint John mentions him expressly by name, Ch. xviii. 10. Nor could Saint John probably have interpreted the words of Christ, Ch. xxi. 18. thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, concerning the manner of Saint Peter's death, if it had been written before the crucifixion of that apostle; for before that time the words were ambiguous. This limits the writing of this gospel to the year 69, a year expressly specified by an ancient writer. Others give the date of it so late as the year 97. According to either computation, however, Saint John is allowed to have closed the whole gospel history, to have ratified and confirmed the former gospels, and to have established the evangelical canon on the firmest ground, and most venerable authority.

## CHAP. I.

*The divinity, humanity, and office of Jesus Christ. The testimony of John. The calling of Andrew, Peter, &c.*

[Anno Domini 26.]

**I**N the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

\* Gen. 1. 1. Pf. 2. 7. Prov. 8. 22—30. Col. 1. 17. Rev. 19. 13. 1 John, 1. 1, 2. & 5. 7. Heb. 1. 3. Ch. 3. 34. Prov. 8. 30.  
Ch. 17. 5. Zech. 13. 7. Ch. 10. 30, 33. Phil. 2. 6. Heb. 1. 3. 1 John, 5. 7, 20. Tit. 2. 13. Rom. 9. 5. 11. 9. 6. Pl. 33. 6.  
Ver. 10. Eph. 3. 9. 1 Cor. 8. 6. Col. 1. 16, 17. Heb. 1. 2. Ch. 5. 17, 19. Rev. 4. 11. Ch. 5. 26. & 6. 63. & 12. 50. 1 John, 5. 11.  
Gal. 3. 3, 4. Gal. 2. 20. Ch. 8. 12. & 9. 5. & 12. 46. If. 42. 6, 7. & 49. 6.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

## CHAP. I.

*Ver. 1. In the beginning was the Word,*] “*In the beginning, before the foundation of the world, or the first production of any created being, a glorious Person existed, who may properly be called the Word of God, not only because God the Father at first created, and still governs, all things by him, but because, as men discover their sentiments and designs to one another by the intervention of words, speech, or discourse, so God, by his Son, discovers his gracious designs in the fullest and clearest manner to men. All the various manifestations which he makes of himself, whether in the works of creation, providence, or redemption; all the revelations that he has been pleased to give of his will, are conveyed to us through him, and therefore he is, by way of eminence, fitly stiled the Word of God.*” The evangelist seems here to allude to the first word of Genesis, *Berashith*, translated by the LXX, *ἔν ἀρχῇ*, in the beginning. See on Gen. i. 1. As this divine Word existed at the time when *all things were created*, (see Ver. 3—10.) he existed, consequently, from all eternity. This verse therefore is a direct contradiction of the tenets of Cerinthus, as represented in article 2, 3, and 8, of the foregoing argument. *Λόγος*, [*Logos*,] the name which St. John applies to the eternal Son of God, signifies, according to the Greek etymology, both *discourse* and *reason*. Le Clerc, in his notes on this passage, takes it in the latter sense, when applied to the Son, because, long before St. John wrote, the Platonists, and after them several learned Jews, particularly Philo, had used it in the same sense, to signify the Creator of the world. The Stoics too seem to have affixed a similar idea to the word *Logos*, when they affirmed that all divine things were formed by reason, or the divine wisdom, in opposition to the Epicurean system, which taught that the world came into being by chance, or was made without reason. Induced by these particulars, Le Clerc fancies, that as the name *Logos* was familiar to the philosophers and learned Jews, who had imbibed Plato's principles, such Christians as admired the writings of Plato and his followers, must very early have adopted, not the name of *Logos* only, but all the phrases which the Platonists used in speaking of the person to whom they gave that name, and consequently were in danger of corrupting Christianity with the errors of Platonism. At the same time he imagines, that though the notions of these philosophers concerning the second person of the Godhead were in general very confused, they

had derived certain true ideas of him from tradition; and that the evangelist St. John, for this reason, in speaking of the same Person, made use of the term *Logos*, to shew in what sense, and how far, it might be used with safety by Christians. But as it is very uncertain whether the primitive Christians studied the writings of Plato and Philo, it is not probable that St. John would think it necessary, in composing his gospel, to adopt the terms and phrases of these philosophers. Accordingly, the generality of commentators have rejected Le Clerc's suppositions, believing that St. John, under the infallible direction of the Holy Spirit, borrowed the name *Logos*, either from the Mosaic history of the creation, or from Psalm xxxiii. 6. where, in allusion to that history, it is said, the heavens were created by the word of God; or from the Jewish Targums, particularly the Chaldee Paraphrases, where the word of God is often substituted for what in the text is *Jehovah*. Nay, the term is used in such a manner, as to have personal attributes, even the attributes of the Godhead, ascribed to it; and is introduced in all or most of those places where the Hebrew mentions the *face*, the *hands*, or the *eyes of God*. St. John asserts that this *Word was with God*; namely, before any created being had existed. This perhaps is spoken in allusion to what the Wisdom of God says of himself, Prov. viii. 30. Our version of the Greek particle *σὺν*, rendered *with*, is supported by the best classical writers among the Greeks. This sentence is in opposition to the following verses, wherein we are told, that the *Word was made flesh*, that *he dwelt among us*, and *was seen*, which intimates his pre-existence before these circumstances. It is added, *and the Word was God*; upon which some have remarked, that as there is no article before the word *Θεός*, *God*, it should be read, *and God was the Word*: but this manner of expression is made use of by this same apostolic writer, Ch. iv. 24.; and several of the purest writers among the Greeks have frequently sentences wherein the substantive with an article, though placed after the verb, is to be construed first, and as the nominative to the verb. Many have eagerly contended, that the word *God* is used here in an inferior sense; the necessary consequence of which is, as they affirm, that this clause should be rendered *the Word was a God*, that is, a kind of inferior Deity, as governors are called gods: but it is impossible he should here be so called merely as a governor, because he is spoken of as existing before the production of any creatures whom he could govern; and it is most incredible, that when the

Jews

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

6 ¶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 3. 19. Rom. 1. 19. Heb. 7. 1. Rom. 8. 7. Eph. 5. 8. 1 Cor. 2. 14. <sup>1</sup> Mal. 3. 1. & 4. 5, 6. If. 40. 3—6. Mat. iii. xi. xiv. Mark, 1. 1—11. Luke, i. iii. Ch. 3. 22—36. & 5. 33, 35. Acts, 13. 24, 25. & 19. 3, 4. Ver. 33.

Jews were so exceedingly averse to idolatry, and the Gentiles so unhappily prone to it, such a plain writer as this apostle should lay so dangerous a stumbling-block at the threshold of his work, and represent it as the Christian doctrine, that in the beginning of all things there were two Gods, one supreme, and the other subordinate; a difficulty which, if possible, would be yet further increased, by recollecting what has been mentioned in the argument, that this gospel was written with a particular view of opposing Cerinthus and the Ebionites; on which account a greater accuracy of expression must have been necessary. There are so many instances in the writings of this apostle, and even in this chapter, (see ver. 6, 12, 13, 18.) where the word Θεός, without the article, is used to signify God, in the highest sense of the word, that it is surprising any stress should be laid on the want of that article as a proof that it is used in a subordinate sense. But indeed St. Paul has fully determined this point; for he evidently insinuates that no being can be God, who is not God by nature. Gal. iv. 8. It is observable, that St. John's discourse here rises by degrees: he tells us, first, that the Word in the beginning of the world existed; thus asserting his eternity: next, that he existed *with God*, thus asserting his co-eternity: and then, that he was *God, and made all things*; thus asserting his co-equality. I cannot conclude my annotation on this important passage in properer words than those with which Dr. Doddridge closes his note: "I am deeply sensible of the sublime and mysterious nature of the doctrine of Christ's Deity as here declared; but it would be quite foreign to my purpose to enter into a large discussion of that great foundation of our faith. It has often been done by much abler hands: it was, however, matter of conscience with me, thus strongly to declare my belief of it; and I shall only add, with Bishop Burnet, that had not St. John and the other apostles thought it a doctrine of great importance in the gospel scheme, they would rather have waved than inserted and insisted upon it, considering the critical circumstances in which they wrote."

Ver. 2. *The same was in the beginning with God.*] The Socinians, who have laboured hard to subvert the authority of this stubborn portion of scripture, most perversely understand this passage of Christ's being taken up into heaven after his baptism, in order to be instructed in the will of God; for which they think they have Christ's own testimony, John, iii. 13. But they mistake the meaning of that passage (see the note). Besides, the evangelist is here describing the existence of the Word before he was made flesh, ver. 14. and therefore he cannot be understood as speaking of any thing which happened after his incarnation.

Ver. 3. *All things were made by him;*] Although the word *make* is capable of an extensive sense, yet, as in other passages Jesus is said to have *created all things*, Col. i. 16.

we cannot doubt that St. John uses the word *ἐγένετο* in the sense of *creation*, a meaning which it often has in the Jewish scriptures. It is true, this and the other passages which speak of Christ's making all things, are by some explained of his erecting the Christian dispensation. But let it be observed here, once for all, that if the Socinian explication of the texts, which attribute to the Lord Jesus the names, perfections, and actions of the true God, be admitted, it will be impossible to clear the evangelists from the imputation of having laid in man's way a most violent temptation to idolatry: for it is well known that, as in all ages men have been exceedingly prone to worship false gods, so it was the prevailing vice of the Gentile world when the New Testament was written: that the grossest corruption of morals has ever flowed from this poisonous spring, Rom. 1. 24, &c. and that to destroy idolatry, and bring mankind to the spiritual worship of the true God, was the great end proposed by God in all the revelations which he made of himself to men. This being the case, is it to be imagined, that either Christ himself, who brought the last and best revelation of the divine will, or his apostles, who committed that revelation to writing, would on any occasion have used such expressions, as in their plain and obvious meaning could not fail to lead the believers in that revelation to ascribe to Christ the names, perfections, and actions of the true God, and to pay him divine worship as the true God; while in reality they meant no more than that he was miraculously formed, was commissioned to deliver a new religion to the world, was endowed with the power of miracles, and, in consideration of his exemplary death, was raised from the grave, and had divine honours conferred upon him? Instead of reforming the world, this was to have laid in their way such a temptation to idolatry as they could not well resist; nor has the effect been any other than what was to be expected: for the generality, even of nominal Christians, moved by these expressions, have all along considered Christ as God, and honoured him accordingly, as the God *who made all things, and without whom was not any thing made that was made*: not so much as any single thing (*ἐδὲ ἐγὼ*) having existence, "whether among the noblest or meanest of God's works, was made without him." But, if all things *were made by him*, he cannot be himself of the number of the things that were made: he is superior therefore to every created being. Besides, it should be remembered, that in the Old Testament the creation of the heavens and the earth is often mentioned as the prerogative of the true God, whereby he is distinguished from the heathen idols. The design of the evangelist in establishing so particularly and distinctly the dignity, but especially the divinity of Christ, was, first, to give due weight to the fundamental doctrine of his atonement, and, secondly, to raise in mankind the profoundest veneration for his instructions: and without doubt he who is *the Word of God*, the interpreter of the divine counsels, and who is himself *God*, ought to be heard

7 <sup>k</sup> The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8 <sup>l</sup> He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.

9 *That* <sup>m</sup> was the true Light, which lighteth

<sup>k</sup> Mal. 3. 1. If. 40. 3—9. Mat. iii. Mark. i. Luke, iii. & 1. 16, 17, 76, 77. See on ver. 6. <sup>l</sup> Ver. 20. Ch. 3. 28. <sup>m</sup> Ver. 4, 5, 7, 8. Ch. 8. 12. & 9. 5. & 12. 46. If. 49. 6. & 42. 6, 7. & 28. 26—29. Luke, 2. 32. <sup>n</sup> John, 2. 8. & 5. 20. Mal. 4. 2.

with the deepest attention, and obeyed with the most implicit submission. It is this circumstance,—that the Son of God, who is God, came down from heaven to earth, and in person instituted the Christian religion,—which gives it a dignity beyond any thing that can be imagined by men. It would be the work of a treatise rather than of a note, to represent the Jewish doctrine of the creation of all things by the divine *Logos*, to which, rather than to the Platonic, there may be some reference here.

*Ver. 4. In him was life,*] The most ancient fathers who quote this text, so generally join the words at the end of the last verse, *ὁ γενόμενος*, which we render *that was made*, with this 4th verse; and St. John uses so frequently to begin the following sentence with what ended the foregoing, that many judicious commentators think it to be the true reading, and therefore render it,—*that which was in him was life*; “that fulness of power, wisdom, and benignity which was in him, was the fountain of life to the whole creation;” and the life which was in him, St. John goes on to observe, *was the light of men*; that is, reason and revelation, the greater and lesser lights of the moral world, were the effects of his energy on the minds of intelligent beings: but, above all, the Light of the divine Spirit, by which alone any thing can be spiritually discerned (1 Cor. ii. 10—14.), is the gift of Jesus, and the purchase of his Blood. The reader will recollect, that Cerinthus (as we have shewn in article 4.) asserted that there were two high *æons* distinct from Christ, one called *Life*, and the other *Light*; in opposition to which St. John here asserts, that the *Word*, *Life*, and *Light* were the same identical person. As having *life in himself* is the characteristic of God, St. John, by saying this of Christ, asserts his proper divinity, and intimates, at the same time, that he was the great fountain of life to all creatures. *Life* and *light* are frequently connected in scripture; if any one should question how the *Logos* could be the author of so many things, it is here fully explained, *In him was life*. And, lest it should be imagined that this power of life could be exhausted in calling so many creatures into being, it is added, that *this life was light*; light being of that nature, that, though it enlightens many, it is not in the least diminished thereby. The apostle, in another place, tells us, that *God is light*; here the Word is so called, and consequently was *God*, as the evangelist asserts in ver. 1. It is remarkable, that in *Midrash* the Messiah is described in a most glorious light, exceeding the sun in radiance.

*Ver. 5. And the light shineth in darkness;*] We have observed in the former verse, that Christ is the fountain of all spiritual light, so that nothing can be spiritually discerned but by his Spirit. This light shone in the heathen world, and under the dispensation of Moses, and still shineth in darkness, even upon the minds of the most ignorant and wicked part of mankind; *darkness* being not only used for a state of ignorance, whether wilful or natural,

but likewise for a state of obstinate wickedness. See Eph. v. 8. It is not easy to determine with exactness the sense of the original word *παρίστανειν*, which we render *comprehend*. Some have observed, that it signifies to *attend to*, or *embrace*, so as to attain or enjoy the end and benefit designed by a thing. Thus it is applied to the knowledge of the law, Ecclus. xv. 7. and to *justice*, or *righteousness*, ch. xxvii. 8. of the same book. *Darkness*, as we have intimated, is used for persons involved in *darkness*.—*Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are light in the Lord*; where we may note the same double use in the word *light*, which *darkness*, in St. John’s gospel is capable of admitting; as it first signifies persons enlightened, and then simply light itself.

*Ver. 6. There was a man sent from God,*] The evangelist, in giving the history of the Baptist’s ministry, tells us, in the first place that he was merely a man, in opposition to article 10. in the argument wherein Cerinthus represents John as superior to our Saviour, whom the apostle has already shewn to be God. The evangelist tells us next, that John had a special commission from God, being called to his office by divine inspiration, as the prophets were of old; and that he was *sent to bear witness of the light*, or, *to point out the Messiah*, whom he had called in the 4th verse *the light of men*; because it was one of the principal prophetic characters of the Messiah, that he was to enlighten the world. Hence he is called by one prophet, the *Sun of righteousness*, by another, *the light of Zion*, and a *light to lighten the Gentiles*. See ch. v. 35.

*Ver. 7. The same came for a witness,*] *To bear testimony.* The next sentence may be understood as explanatory of that which goes before, *He came for a testimony*, that is, *to bear testimony concerning that light*. Some commentators apply the word *Him*, in the next clause, to the *Light* here spoken of, and others to *John*, as the instrument of men’s belief. By *believing* we are to understand the acknowledging with the understanding and heart, and receiving Christ as the Messiah.

*Ver. 9. That was the true light,*] “The true light of which he spake, was Christ, even that Sun of righteousness and source of truth, which coming into the world, enlighteneth every man; dispersing his beams, as it were, from one end of the heavens to the other, to the Gentile world, which was in midnight darkness, as well as to the Jews, who enjoyed but a kind of twilight.” See John, iii. 19. xii. 46. Heinsius would read the 8th, 9th, and 10th verses, thus: *He, John, was not that light; but he was, (that is, he existed or came, taking the sense at the beginning of the 9th verse,) that he might bear witness to that light:—ver. 9. The true light which, &c. Ver. 10. Was in the world, &c. Some read ver. 9. The true Light, who came into the world, to enlighten every man, &c. Ver. 10. And the world had been made by him, but, &c. To these interpretations it has been objected, that where Christ is said*

every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them

gave he \* power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name :

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 ¶ And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory,

\* Heb. 11. 3. & 1. 2. Eph. 3. 9. Col. 1. 16, 17.    † If 53. 1-3.    ‡ 1 Cor. 1. 21. & 2. 8, 14.    § Rom. 9. 5. Gal. 4. 4. Mat. 10. 6. & 13. 24. Acts, 3. 25. & 13. 46. Rom. 15. 8.    ¶ Luke, 10. 14. If 53. 2, 3. Mat. 21. 38, 39. Heb. 10. 29. Ch. 15. 24.    \* Or the right or privilege.    † Rom. 8. 15. Gal. 3. 26.    ‡ 2 Peter. 1. 4.    § 1 John, 3. 1. If 56. 5.    ¶ 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18.    \* Ch. 3. 3, 5. James, 1. 18.    † 1 Pet. 1. 23.    ‡ 1 Cor. 3. 6. Deut. 30. 6. Ezek. 36. 26.    § Gal. 4. 4. Rom. 1. 3. & 3. & 9. 5. If. 7. 14. Mat. 1. 16-25. Luke, 1. 26-35. & 2. 1-7.    ¶ Phil. 2. 6-8.    † 1 Tim. 3. 16. Heb. 2. 14, 16.    ‡ 1 John, 3. 8.

said to have come into the world, that expression seems to refer to the manifestation of him to the world, or his appearance in the flesh. Now this appearance of Christ seems to be expressed by St. John, in the two next verses, by the past tense; *He was in the world, He came unto his own*: whereas the use of the present tense, in the verse before us, rather leads us to think of that spiritual illumination which Christ still imparts,—though no longer manifest in the flesh,—to all who will receive him; according to that of St. Paul, Eph. v. 14. To which may be added, that as the original word ἐρχόμενον, rendered *cometh*, immediately follows the word ἀνθρώπου, *man*, it seems rather more natural to construe it with that word, than with a word more remote. It may be added further, that this construction is more suitable to St. John's particular design, which was to oppose the doctrine of Cerinthus, who asserted, (article 1.) that the most high God was entirely unknown before the appearance of Christ; in opposition to which the evangelist asserts, that men had received such lights on this head, under the various dispensations through which they passed, as rendered them inexcusable if they remained ignorant. And though this heretic had pretended, (article 7.) that his Demiurgus was the peculiar God and protector of the Israelites; yet is it here shewn, that the true Christ had pity and affection for the rest of mankind; and that the light to be diffused by him, was not to be confined to the narrow circle of the Jewish commonwealth, but, like that of the sun, communicated to every man that cometh into the world.

Ver. 10. *He was in the world, &c.*] The Word and Son of God came down to earth; and though the world was made by him, all the inhabitants thereof being the work of his hands, yet that very world, that is, those inhabitants of it, did not know and acknowledge him as their Creator, and as the Word sent to reveal the will of God to them. This is in opposition to the doctrine of Cerinthus, (article 5.) See the *Inferences and Reflections* on this chapter.

Ver. 11. *He came unto his own,*] “He came to the Jewish nation, who were under the most distinguished obligations to him, and to whom he had been expressly promised as their Messiah: yet his own people did not receive him, as they ought, but, on the contrary, treated him in the most contemptuous and ungrateful manner.” Thus we have endeavoured to express the difference between the phrase *εἰς τὰ ἴδια*, and the other *εἰς ἴδιον*, in the

original, which is so difficult, that few versions have attempted it: yet, as Grotius has well observed, the energy of the text cannot be understood without attending to it. That the Jewish nation was in some peculiar sense under the care and guardianship of Christ, before his incarnation, this passage strongly intimates, as well as a variety of texts in the Old Testament, where we have not failed to remark this particular.

Ver. 12. *gave he power, &c.*] *Gave he the privilege to become sons, &c.* Doddridge, &c. See the 12th position in the argument. The word *name* is frequently used, as we have had occasion to observe, for the person or man who bears it; as likewise for that characteristic by which he is distinguished from all others. The verb πιστεύω, *to believe*, is, in the Greek classics, used with a dative case signifying the person, and with an accusative signifying the thing. Thus when joined to the word *man*, in the dative, it denotes *to believe a man*, or *to rely upon him*; but when joined with the word *thing*, in the accusative, it signifies *to believe that it is true*; but in the words *to believe in his name*, where the word *believe* is followed with a preposition governing the accusative, the passage has a sense different from the examples produced above, and signifies a religious belief in Christ; which is understood to include a confidence in him as the Saviour of mankind, and ours in particular.

Ver. 13. *Which were born, not of blood,*] They who thus believed on him, became possessed of this privilege; not in consequence of their being *born of blood*, or of their being descended from the loins of the holy patriarchs, or sharing in circumcision and the blood of the sacrifices; nor could they ascribe it to the will of the flesh, or to their own superior wisdom and goodness; as if by the power of corrupted nature they had made themselves to differ; nor to the will of man, or to the wisest advice and most powerful exhortations which their fellow-creatures might address to them; but must humbly acknowledge that they were *born of God*; and indebted to the efficacious influences of his unmerited and regenerating grace for all their privileges, and for all their hopes. Compare ch. iii. 1-8. and Titus, iii. 3-7. This is a very important and edifying sense of the present passage, which is very difficult, and has been variously translated and understood.

Ver. 14. *And the Word was made flesh,*] This divine and eternal Word was made flesh; united itself to our inferior miserable nature, with all its innocent infirmities, (see the

the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) <sup>2</sup> full of grace and truth.

15 ¶ John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, <sup>7</sup> This was he of whom I spake, He

that cometh after me is preferred before me: for <sup>2</sup> he was before me.

16 <sup>2</sup> And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

<sup>1</sup> If. 9. 6. Heb. 1. 3. Phil. 2. 6. Col. 1. 15. & 2. 9. Mat. 17. 2. <sup>2</sup> Peter, 1. 17. If. 40. 5. <sup>3</sup> Col. 1. 19. & 2. 3, 9. <sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 1. 30. <sup>5</sup> Ad. 13. 24, 25. Mat. 3. 11. Ch. 3. 30, 31. & 5. 33. Ver. 27, 30. <sup>6</sup> Ver. 1. Micah, 5. 2. Prov. 8. 22—30. Ch. 17. 5. & 8. 58. If. 9. 6. Ch. 1. 17. <sup>7</sup> Col. 1. 19. & 2. 9, 10, 19. Ch. 15. 1—5. & 3. 34. Ver. 14, 17. Eph. 1. 3—7.

the 9th article in the argument;) and not made a transient visit, but for a considerable time pitched his tabernacle among us, — ἐσκήνωσεν, which manifestly alludes to the tabernacle of Moses, where the Shechinah, or divine glory, inhabited. So the Logos, or divine nature, *shechinized*, or *tabernacled* in the human body, which Christ assumed. The word *glory* here alludes to this *Shechinah*, or splendid light, which the Chaldee paraphrase always interprets by the word *glory*. “We, his disciples, (says St. John,) beheld his glory with admiration, and knew it to be such as became the only-begotten of the Father;” for he was not decked with the glitter of worldly pomp and grandeur, but he shone most beautiful with the glory of the divine perfections; and withal he wrought the greatest and most beneficent miracles, expressly called by this evangelist, *His glory*, ch. ii. 11. Perhaps also there is an allusion here to the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Jesus at his baptism; to the glory with which his body was adorned at the transfiguration, and to the voice from heaven a little before his crucifixion. The particle *ὡς*, rendered *as of*, does not denote similitude or comparison, but reality and confirmation. In this sense it is used by the LXX, Pl. lxxiii. 1. Truly, God, is, &c.—And here it signifies the glory of the true and real *Monogenes*, or *Only-begotten*. For this verse asserts, that the *Logos* and *Monogenes* were not distinct beings, but one and the same person, in opposition to Cerinthus, (article 2.) The last words *full of grace and truth*, seem much more naturally and properly to belong to the *Word*,—the preceding sentence being read in a parenthesis,—than to the Father, as some would connect them. The meaning is, that as this *Word* who dwelt among us, was in himself most benevolent and upright, so he made the amplest discoveries of pardon to sinners, which the Mosaic dispensation could not possibly do; and exhibited the most important and substantial blessings; whereas that was at best but a shadow of good things to come. *Truth* is here used, as it often is in the scripture, not so much in opposition to falsehood, as to *hieroglyphics*, *types*, and *shadows*. See ver. 17. Heb. x. 1. viii. 2. ix. 24. Dan. vii. 17. and Col. ii. 3. 17.

Ver. 15. *John bare witness of him, &c.*] This might probably happen at the time when Jesus made his first appearance among those who came to be baptized by John; when at his offering to receive his baptism, though John had been a stranger to him before, and knew him not by any personal acquaintance with him, yet, by some powerful impression of the mind, he presently discerned that *this was He*, whom he before had taught the people to expect, and of whose person he had given them so high a character; for it was plain from his knowledge of Jesus, that John at first would have declined baptizing him, as an honour of which he looked upon himself to be utterly unworthy.

Nor is it to be doubted, but that when first he knew the Person of whose appearance he had raised such expectations by his preaching, he would immediately be ready to acquaint his hearers that this was he who was intended by him; which they themselves might have been ready to conclude, from the uncommon veneration and respect wherewith he was treated by the Baptist, who had been always used to treat men with the greatest plainness. Comp. ver. 27. 30. with Matth. iii. 14. Erasmus supposes that St. John, in the words, *He that cometh after me, is preferred*, &c. refers to the honours which he knew had been paid to Jesus in his infancy by the angels, who announced his birth to the shepherds; by the shepherds themselves; by the eastern magi; by Simeon and Anna, &c. honours which could not be paralleled by any thing that had happened to him: but the words have, I doubt not, a more extensive meaning; comprehending the superior dignity of Christ's nature, office, commission, and exaltation as Mediator, as may be collected from Matth. iii. 11. the passage here referred to. The Baptist adds, *For he was before me*; “It is fit that Jesus should be raised above me, because he is a Person superior in nature to me; for though he was born after me, he existed before me.” This undoubtedly refers to that state of infinite and eternal glory in which Christ existed before his incarnation, of which the Baptist speaks so plainly, ch. iii. 31. See the 10th article in the *Argument*.

Ver. 16. *And of his fulness, &c.*] “And I, (John the apostle) who had the honour of being numbered among his most intimate friends, would with pleasure, in my own name, and that of my brethren, add my testimony to that of the Baptist, as I and they have the greatest reason to do; for of his overflowing fulness have we all received whatever we possess as men, as Christians, or as apostles; and he hath given us even grace upon grace—a rich abundance and variety of favours, which will ever make his name most dear and precious to our souls.” It is evident, that what is said in this verse, must be considered as the words of the evangelist. John the Baptist had never yet mentioned the name of Jesus; and the expression *we all*, shews it could not be his words; for those to whom he addressed himself, do not appear to have received grace from Christ. The last French version, with great propriety, includes ver. 15. in a parenthesis, and so connects the 16th with the 14th verse; as if it had been said, *He dwelt among us,—full of grace and truth;—and of his fulness have we all received, &c.* The interpretation which we have given of *Καὶ χάριν ἀπὸ χάριτος, even grace upon grace*, is approved by Sir Richard Ellis, Doddridge, and many others, and seems the most easy sense. Grotius would render it, *Grace of mere grace*; that is, “the freest grace imaginable;” and others approving the

17 <sup>b</sup> For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

18 <sup>c</sup> No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

19 ¶ <sup>d</sup> And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

<sup>b</sup> Exod. xx. to Deut. xxxi. Col. 2. 17. Heb. i.—x. <sup>c</sup> 1 Tim. 6. 16. & 1. 17. Ch. 5. 37. 1 John, 4. 12. Mat. 11. 27. & 3. 17. Luke, 10. 22. Ch. 6. 46. & 14. 9. Exod. 33. 20. Deut. 4. 12. If. 48. 17. & 61. 1. Jer. 31. 34. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 5. 32. Luke, 3. 15. Ch. 3. 28—36. Acts, 13. 24, 25. & 19. 4.

the present translation, observe, that the meaning is, that under the gospel dispensation all men receive grace for grace; —privileges and advantages, in proportion to the improvement which they make of those already bestowed upon them. Comp. Matth. xiii. 12. James iv. 6.

Ver. 17. *Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, &c.*] The word *ἐγένετο*, rendered *came*, here implies, that *grace and truth were exhibited, or appeared*. This verse is delivered in opposition to the Ebionites, who preferred Moses to the Lord Jesus. The gospel is here, as in other places, called *grace*. The word *grace*, in its most obvious meaning, signifies *favour*; favour flowing from mercy and beneficence, to which the person who receives it can make no claim as of right. In this sense, the gospel is most particularly and emphatically *grace*; in all and every part of it, it was the gift of God, which we could not in any manner be said to deserve. The gospel is *grace*, as it promises the faithful saints, not only an exemption from punishment, but a resurrection to eternal life. The gospel is *grace*, as it promises us the divine assistance to comfort us in afflictions, and enable us to work out our salvation. The gospel may be called *grace*, with respect to the manner in which it was revealed. The law was delivered with a pomp and majesty that struck terror; but the gospel made its appearance with mildness and condescension, and was introduced by the Son of God, conversing familiarly with men, teaching them by his doctrine and example. Whatsoever was burdensome in the law of Moses, was abolished in the gospel. The gospel is *grace*, as it contains righteous and equitable laws; the duty that it teaches towards God is a reasonable service, which we are bound in gratitude to perform; and that duty which we owe to our neighbour promotes the happiness of mankind, while that which is enjoined by it to ourselves tends to moderate and subdue every unruly passion. The gospel is *grace*, as it is a gift offered to all, an invitation from which none are excluded. Again, *grace* in some places of the New Testament means those extraordinary powers which the Holy Ghost conferred upon the apostles and first believers, as well as the ordinary influences of the Spirit; and in this sense the gospel emphatically is *grace*. Lastly, *grace* means holiness, goodness, and moral virtue; in which sense the gospel is *grace*, as it sets pure morality in a clear light, and enforces the practice of it by the best and most effectual motives. The gospel is called *truth*, in opposition to the falsehood of paganism, which had over-run the world—*truth*, as it is the accomplishment of the prophecies of future favours made under the law, and because an image and representation of *good things to come* was contained in the law; whereas in the gospel these good things are brought to light. The gospel therefore is *truth*, in op-

position to the Jewish dispensation, as it is the substance and reality of all those things which are figured by the law; or as they were mere shadows compared to that solid and substantial *truth* which Christ has discovered to us.

Ver. 18. *No man hath seen God at any time;*] Neither Moses nor any of the prophets, who in former ages delivered the will of God to men, ever saw the divine Being in his essence, and therefore they could not make a full discovery of his perfections and counsels to men. The only Person who ever enjoyed this privilege was the *Son of God, who is in the bosom of the Father*: he always was and is the darling object of his tenderest affection, and the intimate partner of his counsels; and therefore he was able fully to declare the great purpose of God concerning the redemption of the world. *To be in one's bosom*, denotes the greatest familiarity and intimacy, a communication of counsels and designs, and entire and tender affection. Hence it is used, Deut. xiii. 6. xxviii. 54. to signify a man's best beloved wife. The word *ἐκνήψατο*, rendered *declared*, signifies to *explain*, to *interpret*, to *declare*, and is particularly applied by the heathen writers to the explanation or declaration of things relating to religion.

Ver. 19, 20. *And this is the record of John, &c.*] These verses would be better rendered thus, *Now this is the testimony of John, (mentioned ver. 15.)* When the Jews sent priests, &c. ver. 20. *then he confessed, &c.* The rulers at Jerusalem having been informed, that the Baptist's extraordinary sanctity, zeal, and eloquence, together with the solemnity of his baptizing, had made so great an impression on the people, that they were beginning to think he might be the Messiah, resolved that certain of their number, whose capacity and learning rendered them equal to the task, should go and examine him. When these messengers arrived at Bethabara, they asked the Baptist if he was the Messiah, or Elias, or that prophet who was said to arise and usher in the Messiah, of whose coming there was at this time a general expectation? *And this is the record of John; this is the testimony which John bare publicly to Jesus when the Jews, that is, the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, who took cognizance of the pretension which any person made to the character and office of a prophet, sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, persons of the first consideration for learning and office, and who, being maintained at the public expence, had better opportunities of studying the law, and acquiring knowledge, to ask him, Who art thou? "What character dost thou assume to thyself!"* The question is not concerning his office, but his person. *And he confessed and denied not, but in the strongest terms solemnly protested I am not the Messiah;* "I know that the people begin to look on



21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, ° I am not. Art thou † that prophet? And he answered, No.

22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent

° Not: 1 Kings, 17. 1. but Mal. 4. 5. Mat. 11. 14. & 17. 10—12. Mat. 3. 3. Mark, 1. 3. Luke, 3. 4. Ver. 15. Mal. 3. 1. & 4. 5.

us. What sayest thou of thyself?

23 † He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

24 And they which were sent were of the † Pharisees.

† Or a prophet. Deut. 18. 15—18. with Mat. 11. 9—11. † If 40: 1. Luke. 7. 30. Mat. 21. 31, 32. Acts, 23. 8. & 76. 5. Phil. 3. 5, 6.

“me as their long-expected Deliverer; but I tell you plainly, they are mistaken.” To every candid judge, the declaration which on this occasion John made so freely to the priests and Levites, and which on other occasions he repeated publicly in the hearing of the people, will appear a strong proof of his divine mission, notwithstanding he performed no miracle; for when deputies from so august a body as the senate of Israel seemed to signify, (though probably with an ill design,) that, in order to their acknowledging him as the Messiah, they wanted only a declaration from himself; if he had been an impostor, he would immediately have grasped at the honours offered him, and have given himself out for the Messiah; but he was animated by a different spirit; integrity and truth were evidently the guides of his conduct. Why then should we entertain any doubt of his mission, seeing that he expressly claimed the character of a messenger from God?

Ver. 21. *Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not.*] It is plain by this question, that they were strangers to the parentage of John the Baptist: and with regard to the reply that he makes to this inquiry, there is no scruple to be made, but that the Baptist might justly deny that he was Elijah; that is, the true and real Elijah, whom the Jews expected personally to return before the coming of the Messiah, though he came in his spirit and power. See on Luke, i. 17. The Baptist therefore might truly deny himself to be Elijah in the sense of the inquirers. But still some have asked, why he did not express himself more fully, by acquainting them with his true character, and who he really was; which, as they apprehend, would have best suited with the simplicity and openness of his conduct at other times. But in the evangelist, after the answer given them by the Baptist, it is said, ver. 24. *And they which were sent were of the Pharisees:* which account of the persons was doubtless not subjoined without some good reason; and may seem to intimate, that they came not barely as inquirers, but with some ill design, which they would have improved, had he given them a more explicit answer. So that he treated them in no other manner than Christ himself thought fit to do upon some like occasions;—as in the case of the tribute-money, Matth. xxii. 17, &c. and when they asked him if *he was the Christ*, John, x. 24, 25. And this method our Lord took while it was necessary in some measure to conceal himself: but afterwards *when his time was come*, upon the same question being put to him by the high-priest, he answered *I am*; Mark, xiv. 62. and added further what he knew they would so interpret as to condemn him. Their next question is, *Art thou that prophet?* by which cannot be meant, as some interpret it,

“That prophet, namely, the Messiah, whom Moses has assured us God will raise up, and of whom we are in daily expectation;” (see Deut. xviii. 15—18. John, vi. 14.) because he had already assured them that he was not this prophet, ver. 20. *I am not the Christ*. The Greek should be rendered, *Art thou a prophet?* That is “of the former generation, raised from the dead!” And it is absolutely necessary that this question should be understood with such a limitation, because John the Baptist was really an illustrious prophet, as we may plainly see from what is said by Christ himself, Matth. xi. 9. This interpretation, which is largely vindicated by Castalio, seems much preferable to that of Theophylact and Erasmus; who, because of the article *ὁ προφήτης*, would render it as we do, *that prophet*; concluding, without any proof, that the Jews understood Deut. xviii. 18. not of the Messiah himself, but of some prophet of considerable note, who was to introduce him. Grotius has supposed the question which they offer, to refer to *Jeremiah*, of whose return to life there was a mighty rumour prevailing among the Jews. See on Matth. xvi. 14. But there seems no reason to restrain it to a particular prophet; and since, as Limborch well observes, in his dispute with Orobio the Jew, that text in Deuteronomy was the clearest and strongest in all the Mosaic writings, to enforce the necessity of submitting to the Messiah; it is most probable that John would have corrected so great a mistake, if they had put the question to him upon this presumption. The best French versions render it as above; and it seems the word *prophet* in the evangelist generally signifies one of those holy men, who were the messengers of God to Israel of old; which appears especially from Mark, vi. 15. where *to be a prophet*, and *to be as one of the prophets*, are spoken of as distinct; which they could not be but on this interpretation.

Ver. 23. *I am the voice, &c.*] It is to be feared that Clemens of Alexandria, and Archbishop Fenelon, lay too great a stress on the word *φωνη*, *voice*, when the former of these excellent men says, “Does not John call men to salvation, and is he not entirely an exhortatory voice?”—And then the latter endeavours to illustrate the humility of John the Baptist’s reply, as if he had said, “Far from being the Messiah, or Elias, or one of the old prophets, I am nothing but a voice, a sound, which as soon as it has expressed the thought, of which it is the sign, dies into air, and is known no more.” Had the Baptist said only, *I am a voice crying in the wilderness*, there might have been more room for such a supposition: but since he calls himself *the voice of one crying in the wilderness*, the words are plainly to be understood with very great latitude; for they would else imply that he was not the very person that

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoes' latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 ¶ The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not: but that he

<sup>1</sup> Dan. 9. 25, 26. <sup>2</sup> Kings, 17. 1. <sup>3</sup> Kings, 2. 11. Deut. 18. 15-18. 19. 4. & 13. 24. <sup>4</sup> Ver. 10. <sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. 2. 14. Mat. 3. 11. Acts, 19. 4. & 13. 25. Ver. 15, 18, 30. Ch. 3. 28-36. & 5. 33. <sup>6</sup> passage. Joh. 3. 17. Ch. 10. 40. <sup>7</sup> Ver. 36. Exod. 12. 3. If. 53. 7. <sup>8</sup> 1 Peter, 1. 19. & 2. 24. Heb. 9. 12, 14. Acts, 8. 32. <sup>9</sup> 1 John, 1. 7. & 3. 5, 8. <sup>10</sup> Or bear-eth. <sup>11</sup> See ver. 15, 18, 27. Ch. 3. 28-36. Luke, 3. 16. <sup>12</sup> Luke, 1. 80. & 2. 39, 51. <sup>13</sup> Luke, 1. 16, 17, 76-79. Mal. 3. 2. & 4. 5, 6. If. 40. 3. Mat. iii.

<sup>14</sup> Mat. 3. 11. Mark, 1. 7. Luke, 3. 16. Acts, 1. 5. & 11. 16. & 13. 25. Ver. 15, 18, 30. Ch. 3. 28-36. & 5. 33. <sup>15</sup> House of passage. <sup>16</sup> Luke, 1. 16, 17, 76-79. Mal. 3. 2. & 4. 5, 6. If. 40. 3. Mat. iii.

fo cried; and designedly referring his hearers to the words of Isaiah, who cannot be imagined to have intended a diminution of this saint's character, they are an instance of that remarkable liberty of expression which the Hebrew language, wherein they were spoken, admits. It is as if he had said, "I am the person of whom Isaiah speaks, when he says, *the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness.*" By a like liberty, *the kingdom of heaven* is said, Matth. xiii. 24. to be likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field, that is, as Dr. Doddridge paraphrases the words, "The kingdom of heaven, or the Gospel dispensation, may be compared to that which happened to a man who had sown good seed in his ground." Several very considerable Greek writers express themselves in much the same manner.

Ver. 25. *Why baptizest thou then,*] The Jews, it seems, had conceived an opinion that they were all to be baptized, either by Messiah himself, or by some of his retinue; which they drew from Zechariah, xiii. 1. though that prophecy is to be taken in a most spiritual sense. The decisions of the Pharisees were held by the common people as infallible; wherefore they are mentioned ver. 24.; and as this sect had determined that only proselytes were to be baptized, they found fault with John for baptizing the Jews, seeing he was neither the Messiah, nor Elias, nor a prophet. They thought his altering, in this manner, their institutions, was an exercise of authority, which, by his own confession, did not belong to him. It is not to be certainly determined from this text, whether the baptism of proselytes was then in use among the Jews or not. The words indeed will make a strong and well-adapted sense, should they be understood as if it had been said, "Why is it then that thou dost institute such a new rite as this?" But surely too they will be very proper in the other sense, if we understand them to imply, "Why is it then that thou takest upon thee, without any commission from the Sanhedrim, to administer baptism; and that not only, as is usual, unto those who before this were heathens, but even to the Jews?" And this seems to be the more probable sense; while the Baptist's use of this ceremony in such a manner was a strong intimation that Jews, as well as Gentiles, must become proselytes to the new dispensation which was then opening to the world; and that however holy they imagined themselves, yet they all stood in

absolute need of being washed from their sins, as he had before most emphatically declared, Matth. iii. 8, 9.

Ver. 26-28. *John answered them, saying, &c.*] "I baptize, to shew you the nature and necessity of repentance; but it is with water only, which cannot cleanse you from your sins, as the washing predicted by Zechariah will do" (see the preceding note). "That more efficacious baptism will be dispensed unto you by the Messiah, who is at present among you, though you do not know him, because he hath not manifested himself. Besides, in dignity, he is infinitely my superior; for I am not worthy to be his servant, or to do him the meanest offices." *These things were done in Bethabara, or the house of passage; it lay near that part of the river which was miraculously dried up for the Israelites, under the command of Joshua.* See Joh. iii. 16. and Judg. xii. 6.

Ver. 29. *The next day John seeth Jesus, &c.*] It seems Jesus returned from the wilderness about the time that the priests and Levites arrived at Bethabara; for the day after they proposed their questions, he happened to pass by while the Baptist was standing with the multitude on the banks of the Jordan. The great business of the Messiah's forerunner being to lead the people to that Messiah, John embraced this new opportunity of pointing him out to them; "Behold," said he, "with the strictest attention and regard that innocent and holy Person, who may properly be called the Lamb of God, as he is the great atoning sacrifice, of which the lambs, daily offered by divine command in the temple, were intended to be types; which expiates and takes away the sin of the whole world; and is set forth to be a propitiation, not only for the Jews, for whom alone the sacrifices of the law were offered, but for the Gentiles too; that through his name whosoever believeth in him, may receive remission of sins." It is well observed by the author of the treatise called, "Christ the Mediator," that this is the only sense in which a lamb can be said to take away sin. Comp. Heb. ix. 26, 28. Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14.

Ver. 30. *For he was before me.*] *For he existed before me.* See ver. 15.

Ver. 31. *And I knew him not:*] "St. Matthew relates, ch. iii. 14." says Dr. Clarke, "that when Christ came to be baptized, John forbid him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" By the history, as

should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

35 ¶ Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where dwellest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come and see.

<sup>r</sup> Mat. 3. 16. Mark, 1. 10. Luke, 3. 22.  
<sup>s</sup> Ver. 6—8, 18. Mat. 3. 17. 2 Peter, 1. 17.

<sup>t</sup> John, 5. 20.

<sup>v</sup> Rom. 10. 17. Mat. 4. 18. 11. 55. 10, 11.

<sup>u</sup> Mat. 3. 11. Luke, 3. 16, 22. Acts, 1. 5. & 2. 4. Joel, 2. 28. John, 3. 34. Prov. 1. 22—24.

<sup>w</sup> Mat. 11. 2. Mat. 1. 16.

<sup>x</sup> Ver. 29. 11. 42. 1. & 65. 1, 2. Heb. 1. 1.

<sup>y</sup> Luke, 18. 41. Mat. 7. 7.

<sup>z</sup> Or *abidest*.

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 6. 37. 11. 55. 1, 6. Rev. 22. 17.

“ given by St. Matthew, John seems to have known Christ before he had baptized him: whereas in this gospel, Christ seems to have been first made known to him by the descent of the Holy Ghost after his baptism. See ver. 33. It is most probable that God the Father, having before given John that token to know Christ, did, upon Christ’s coming to be baptized, reveal to John that this was the person upon whom he should presently see the signal.” Though this supposition be approved by several commentators, there does not appear any necessity for having recourse to it. When the Baptist says, *he knew not Jesus*, he may be understood to mean that he knew him not with certainty to be the Messiah, and consequently was not yet authorized to declare him such. As he was related to Christ, it is possible that he might personally have known him, and observed him from his infancy; and though we should suppose him not to have been informed by his parents Zechariah and Elizabeth, of the marvellous circumstances which attended Christ’s birth, yet a character of such unparalleled sanctity might reasonably draw from so modest and humble a person as St. John, an acknowledgment of his own inferiority, and prompt him to say, “ *I have need to be baptized of thee, rather than perform this office to a person so far my superior in purity and holiness.*” A circumstance mentioned by St. Matthew himself in the same chapter, ver. 6. and by St. Mark, i. 5. makes it still less surprising that the Baptist should thus express himself. These evangelists inform us, that the people were baptized in Jordan, confessing their sins. If these words imply, as well they may, that every person who came to be baptized, confessed his sins; this circumstance alone might sufficiently distinguish the blessed Jesus from all others, as he alone had no sins to confess, and might lead the Baptist to conclude, that he was the Person appointed to take away the sins of the world. Conscious then as he was of his own imperfections, how naturally might he say to this sinless person, *I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?* But however strongly he might thence presume him to be the Messiah, yet he could not be said to know him to be so, nor therefore, as yet, bear testimony to him under that character. In this sense then he might properly say, *And I knew him*

*not*: that is, *I knew him not to be the Messiah*; for so the words *whom ye know not*, ver. 26. are probably to be understood; and the same expression is used in a like restrained sense by Christ himself, ch. xiv. 9. *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?* where the words, *Hast thou not known me*, certainly did not imply that Philip had no personal knowledge of Christ: nor could Socrates (if I may compare infinitely small things with great,) mean that his friend Apollodorus had no personal knowledge of him, when, as Ælian relates, he said, “ *If Apollodorus imagines that the corpse, which you will soon see lying at your feet, is Socrates, it is plain that he does not know me.*”

*Ver. 35. Two of his disciples:]* It appears from ver. 40. that Andrew was one of these, and perhaps John himself might be the other; who frequently conceals his own name in his gospel. See Ch. xiii. 23. and xx. 2.

*Ver. 36. And looking upon Jesus:]* Looking steadfastly on Jesus, seems the exact signification of the original ἐπιθεωρεῖν. See on ver. 29.

*Ver. 37—39. And they followed Jesus, &c.]* As Jesus was a person who had no attendants, and was a stranger, as it were, in this country, we may conclude that he had only some obscure and private lodging here, which must have been at no great distance from the place where John baptized, as may be gathered from his appearing there from day to day: by this means he did an honour to John’s ministry, and had an opportunity of receiving his testimony. Jesus, knowing the intentions of the two disciples who followed him, gave them an invitation to his lodging, ver. 38. for they had asked him, “ *Rabbi, πῶς μὲνεις, where dost thou lodge?*” intimating their inclination to converse with Jesus. Their calling him *rabbi*, which was a title of great honour and respect, given to men famous for their abilities and instructions, intimates, that they had been informed of this part of his character from John the Baptist. It was about the tenth hour, that is to say, ten in the morning, when they came to him; for this evangelist uses the Roman method of reckoning the hours of the day in his gospel; wherefore the two disciples conversed with Jesus almost a whole day, and no doubt were highly edified and instructed by our Lord’s discourses to them.

*Ver.*

They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was \* about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was <sup>b</sup> Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the <sup>c</sup> Messias, which is, being interpreted, <sup>d</sup> the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called

Cephas, which is by interpretation, <sup>e</sup> A stone.

43 ¶ The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and <sup>f</sup> findeth Philip, and saith unto him, <sup>g</sup> Follow me.

44 Now Philip was of <sup>h</sup> Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom <sup>i</sup> Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, <sup>k</sup> Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 And <sup>l</sup> Nathanael said unto him, <sup>m</sup> Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, <sup>n</sup> Come and see.

\* Two hours before noon. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 6. 8. Mat. 4. 18. & 10. 2. <sup>c</sup> Pf. 2. 2. Dan. 9. 25. If. 61. 1. & 11. 2. <sup>d</sup> Or the anointed. <sup>e</sup> Sam. 2. 10. Pf. 2. 7. & 89. 20. & 84. 9. Dan. 9. 24—26. Ch. 4. 25. <sup>f</sup> Or Peter. Mat. 10. 2. & 16. 18. <sup>g</sup> If. 65. 1. <sup>h</sup> John, 4. 19. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 4. 19, 21. & 9. 9. & 16. 24. <sup>j</sup> Mar. 11. 21. Mark, 6. 45. & 8. 22. Luke, 9. 10. Ch. 12. 21. <sup>k</sup> Gen. 3. 15. & 22. 18. & 49. 10. Deut. 18. 15—18. <sup>l</sup> Sam. 7. 12. If. 7. 14. & 9. 6. & 42. 1—7. & xlix. liii. Jer. 2. 5, 6. & 31. 22. Ezek. 17. 22. & 21. 27. & 34. 23, 29. & 37. 24. Dan. 9. 24—26. Micah, 5. 2. Zech. 6. 12. & 9. 9. Mal. 3. 1. & 4. 2. See on Luke, 24. 27, 44. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 2. 23. Luke, 2. 4, 39, 51. & 24. 19. <sup>n</sup> Or Bartholomew. Ch. 21. 2. Mat. 10. 3. <sup>o</sup> John, 7. 41, 42, 52. Luke, 4. 29. <sup>p</sup> Ch. 4. 29. <sup>q</sup> 1 Theff. 5. 21.

Ver. 40. Which heard John speak,] Who had received information from John; namely, that mentioned ver. 36.

Ver. 41. He first findeth his own brother Simon,] Hence it should seem that both these disciples sought St. Peter different ways. He may perhaps be called Andrew's own brother, to distinguish him from some other who belonged to the family, and who possibly might be his brother-in-law, or was related to him only in half-blood. St. Peter was so remarkable a person, that it might be proper to tell us who was the first instrument of bringing him acquainted with Christ; and if St. John was the other disciple here referred to, he might mean this as a humble intimation, that St. Andrew's zeal in this respect was greater than his own. We may observe here, by the way, that St. Peter was not the first of Christ's disciples,—in which the Papists would have been ready to have gloried; but that another was the occasion of bringing him to an acquaintance with Jesus. The great king whom the Jews expected, is called *Messiah* by none of the prophets but Daniel; who has named him, Ch. ix. 25. *Messiah* the Prince: wherefore, as by the present, and many other passages of the gospels, it appears that this name was now familiar to the Jews; it shews how much their attention was turned towards Daniel's prophesy of the *seventy weeks*, and how firmly they expected the arrival of their king, according to the time fixed in that prophesy.

Ver. 42. Thou art Simon, &c.] Though Jesus had never seen Simon before, immediately on his coming in, he saluted him, in full proof of his omniscience, by his own and his Father's name; adding, in proof of his being possessed of the gift of prophesy, that he should afterwards be called *Cephas*, which means the same in Syriac that *Peter* does in the Greek, namely, a rock; a name well adapted to his character, on account of that resolute and patient firmness with which he should maintain the cause of the gospel. See on Matth. xvi. 18. Some have thought that when our Lord said *Thou art Simon*, he intended an allusion to the name of *Simon*, which may signify a bearer; intimating the

candour and impartiality with which he was willing to hear Christ's instructions.

Ver. 43. Jesus would go forth] Jesus determined to depart thence. The force of the word *ἔβη* seems to be greater than our translation expresses, and perhaps may here intimate, that our Lord on this occasion broke through the importunity of some, who would rather have persuaded him to continue at Bethabara, for the advantage of further testimony from the Baptist; or to have gone to Jerusalem, where they might imagine that his ministry would have opened more honourably than in Galilee; compare John, vii. 3, 4.

Ver. 44. Now Philip was of Bethsaida,] As it appears from the subsequent part of the history, that Philip was already acquainted with our Lord's character, and believed on him, this observation is made by the evangelist to shew by what means he was brought to Jesus. His townsmen Andrew and Peter had done him the favour. Bethsaida was a town in Galilee, on the sea of Tiberias.

Ver. 45. Of whom Moses—and the prophets, did write,] Whom, &c. have described. The verb *ἔγραψον* is frequently used in the same sense elsewhere; and in particular is justly rendered thus, Rom. x. 5. It seems, Peter and Andrew, in their conversation with Philip, had persuaded him to believe on Jesus, by shewing him how the types and predictions of the law and the prophets were fulfilled in him. Perhaps, this was the method which Jesus himself had taken to confirm Peter and Andrew, Philip's instructors, in the good opinion they had conceived of him, by means of the testimony which their master, John the Baptist, had given concerning him; though the evangelist has not thought fit to mention this circumstance. Nathanael is thought, as we have observed on Matth. x. 2—4. to have been the same with Bartholomew, that is *the son of Tholomew*; and the supposition is probable, were it for no other reason but this, that all the other persons who became acquainted with Jesus at Jordan, when he was baptized, and who believed on him there, were chosen to be his apostles.

Ver. 46. Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?] Philip,

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and faith of him, Behold ° an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

48 Nathanael faith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when

thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.

49 Nathanael answered and faith unto him, Rabbi, ° thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the

\* Rom. 9. 6. & 2. 28, 29. Pf. 32. 2. 1 Tim. 1. 5. Ch. 6. 69.

° Ch. 1. 14. & 3. 16. Pf. 2. 6, 7. 1 Tim. 6. 15. Rev. 17. 14. Mat. 16. 16. & 21. 5.

Philip, not knowing that Jesus was born at Bethlehem, calls him *Jesus of Nazareth*: upon which occasion Nathanael applies a proverb, by which the rest of the Israelites ridiculed the Nazarenes; and he applied it the rather, as the Messiah's nativity had been determined by the prophet Micah to be at *Bethlehem*. Nazareth was a mean town, inhabited by fishermen and mechanics of the lowest degree, made up of ignorant Jews, and a mixture of Gentiles: as Nathanael was a native of Galilee, it appears that the Galileans themselves had but an ill opinion of Nazareth, as worse than the rest of that country; and, indeed, by the figure its inhabitants make in the evangelists, they seem to have deserved it. See Matth. xiii. 54, &c. and Luke, iv. 16, 28, 29. In this place Jesus spent a great part of his life, and in that respect might fairly be called a *Nazarene*. But the Jews, in calling him *Jesus of Nazareth*,—the *prophet of Nazareth*, &c. added, to that of his country, the idea of scorn and contempt: "What! that poor despicable fellow, that mean mortal,—he our Messiah! Can any good, any great and enterprising person, any thing suitable to the character of Christ, come out of Nazareth?" Pilate wrote his inscription, *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*, with design probably to have it read in this light. He joins together two contradictory titles, in his opinion, that of *Nazareth*, and that of a *king*, in order to expose the Jewish hope, and the Christian belief: but the evangelist prepares his reader against prejudices from this appellation. Though the Jews call him a *Nazarene* in derision, we are not ashamed of that name. What do they mean by it, but a despised, afflicted, suffering man?—And so the Messiah is foretold to be, not in one, but in all the prophets. While therefore they reproach Jesus as a *Nazarene*, they actually fulfil the prophecies which describe him as such, and prove Jesus to be the Messiah. See the note on Matth. ii. 23. To obviate Nathanael's objection, Philip replies to him, "Do not suffer yourself to be borne away by a vain popular prejudice; but come and see; converse with him yourself, and you will soon be satisfied." The same answer had been received from our Lord the day before. By the way, we may hence learn how cautiously we should guard against popular prejudices, which possessed so honest a heart as that of Nathanael, and led him to suspect that the blessed Jesus himself was an impostor, and that no good could be expected from him, because he had been brought up at Nazareth. But his integrity prevailed over that foolish bias, and laid him open to the conviction of evidence, which a candid inquirer will always be glad to admit, even when it brings the most unexpected discovery.

Ver. 47. *Jesus saw Nathanael*] Nathanael, being a man of a candid disposition, resolved to go and converse with Jesus, that he might judge with the more certainty con-

cerning his pretensions. He was coming therefore with Philip on this errand, when Jesus, who knew his thoughts, honoured him with the amiable character of a *true Israelite, in whom there was no guile*; a plain, upright, honest man, free from hypocrisy, and open to conviction; who not only derived his pedigree from Abraham, but who inherited his virtues. Compare Rev. iii. 9. and John, viii. 39. This contains the character given to Jacob, Gen. xxv. 27. according to the sense of the Hebrew, which fully shews in what sense our Lord is to be understood, when he calls Nathanael an *Israelite without guile*.

Ver. 48. *Whence knowest thou me?*] "I am a perfect stranger to thee: how is it then that thou canst at once undertake to answer for the most secret part of a stranger's character?" *Jesus replied*, "I am not so entire a stranger to thy character as thou art ready to suppose: nor do I take it merely from uncertain report: for before Philip called thee, when thou wast alone under the fig-tree, I saw thee; and as I was present in spirit to observe what passed in that secret retirement, I know how well thou deservest the testimony which I have now borne to thine integrity." See the next note.

Ver. 49. *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God,*] It is not improbable but Nathanael had been praying under the fig-tree, and that in his prayer he had made confession of his sins in such a particular and ample manner, as to claim, in that respect, the character which Christ gave of him. Accordingly, when Jesus insinuated that he had given it to him on account of what had passed under the fig-tree, Nathanael immediately perceived that he not only knew what was done at a distance, but could also look into men's hearts; and therefore cried out in great astonishment, that he was the long-expected Messiah of the Jews. It may not be improper to observe here, that the Jews universally believed the *Son of God* would appear on earth, and be that *great King* whom they had for so many ages expected; as appears from the passage before us, and from John, vi. 69. xi. 27. Matth. xxvi. 63. It is remarkable, that the woman of Samaria draws the same inference with Nathanael from a similar circumstance; (see ch. iv. 29.) which plainly intimates, that they supposed that the Messiah would be endowed with the most perfect knowledge, and have the gift of prophecy in the highest degree. There was a great deal of courage in Nathanael's making such a declaration as that before us, if it was made before a mixed company: for Christ's assuming the title of *Son of God*, was afterwards interpreted to be no less than blasphemy. See ch. x. 36. xix. 7. and ix. 22. 34.

Ver. 50. *Because I said unto thee, I saw thee*] "You believe, because I told you that I had seen you under the fig-tree: You shall see greater things than these." It is supposed that,

fig-tree, believest thou? 'thou shalt see greater things than these.

§1 And he saith unto him, ' Verily, verily,

I say unto you, ' Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the ' Son of man.

Mat. 13. 12. & 25. 29. & iv—xxviii. Acts, i—xii. ' Only Christ, who is truth itself, uses this phrase. Ch. 3. 3, 5. ' Gen. 28. 12. Mat. 4. 11. Luke, 22. 43. & 24. 4. Acts, 1. 10. 1 Tim. 3. 16. 2 Thess. 1. 7. Jude, 14. ' Mat. 16. 13. Dan. 7. 13. Pf. 80. 17. Zech. 13. 7-14. Heb. 2. 11, 14, 16.

that, under the fig-tree, Nathanael had some revelation or divine impression upon his mind concerning the Messiah, to which our Lord here alludes. Schoettgenius proves that it was then the hour of prayer. See the preceding note.

Ver. 51. Hereafter ye shall see, &c.] Instead of hereafter, many commentators translate the Greek ἀπ' ἄρτι,—from this time—henceforth,—“ From this time you shall see the whole frame of nature subject to my commands, and such a surprising train of miracles wrought by me, in the course of my succeeding ministry, that shall seem as if heaven was opened, and all the angels of God were continually, as they appeared in a vision to Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 12.), ascending and descending to wait upon the Son of man, and to receive and execute his orders.” Accordingly, within three days one glorious miracle was performed by Christ at Cana of Galilee; which being the town whereunto Nathanael belonged, there is great reason to believe he was present with the rest of Christ's disciples at it; and if he was the same person with the apostle Bartholomew, he must regard the vision of angels attending Christ's ascension, as a glorious accomplishment of these words; as his final appearance at the day of judgment, when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, will yet more eminently be. “ If we understand this prediction,” says Mr. Merrick, “ concerning the opening of heaven and the vision of the angels, in a literal sense, which seems the most easy method of interpreting it, we may, with Dr. Hammond, refer it to Christ's ascension, when the heaven was opened to receive him, and the angels came down from thence to wait on him, and ascended after him. The appearance of an angel in his agony, might also be referred to: and as many transactions of Christ's life are omitted in the gospels, there might be other appearances not recorded, which, if any of them were exhibited soon after Nathanael's coming to Christ, would determine the phrase ἀπ' ἄρτι, as we have observed, to its most obvious signification, from this time. But we may observe, that as the descending of the angels was previous to their ascending, the order of the facts seems to be inverted, which is not unusual in the classic writers, and is the same in Gen. xxviii. 12. to which our Saviour evidently alludes.”—Though there may be much truth in what Mr. Merrick observes, and our Lord's resurrection and ascension may be referred to, as among the greatest of his miracles, and by which the truth of his mission is incontestably proved; yet I cannot help thinking that the passage is of more general import, and means, upon the whole, “ You shall be witnesses to such mighty works, and such remarkable interpositions of my divine power, as will leave you no room to doubt of my mission as the true Messiah.” It is evident from the change of

number in this verse,—ye shall see—ὄψεσθε, that the words do not refer to Nathanael only.

Inferences.—How solemn and sublime, magnificent and awful, is the account here given of our blessed Lord, as God co-eternal with the Father, a distinct and yet inseparable Person from him, and as intimately present to him, as thought is to mind; as the Creator of all things without restriction or limitation, the proper Fountain of life and honour, and the true Light, who was in the world to illuminate, uphold, and govern it, ever since it was created by him; and as the Object of faith, the divine Author of evangelical truth, whose Verily I say unto you, demands our faith and obedience, and who is the Discerner of the thoughts, and the Ruler of the heart! How adorable is the constitution of his Person, as the eternal Word made flesh, the Son of God, and the Son of man! And what dignity and honour does his divinity put upon his condescension, who tabernacled in flesh among men, full of grace and truth; and died a sacrifice to take away their sins! Behold this Lamb of God; look to him, and be saved; look and love, and follow him. And O how should we exalt him, and abase ourselves before him, as thinking it honour enough to be employed in the meanest services for him! How evidently divine were the testimonies given to this wonderful Person! To him give all the prophets witness, and the eternal Father himself discovered him to John, and miraculously owned him from heaven by an express notification and infallible signal at his baptism. How excellent is a gospel-ministry, which leads us not to man, but to Christ, as God-man Mediator, the great Prophet of the church, and the only propitiation for sin, that all who believe in him might receive of his fulness grace for grace; and as the Author of all the efficacy of gospel-ordinances by the baptism of the Spirit! And yet, alas! how many wilfully remain in darkness in the midst of noon-day light; and how many professing Christians do in reality reject him and his genuine gospel! But, blessed be God, there are a goodly number, who receive him with a true and saving faith by an assent and approbation of the mind, and by a full consent of the will: and O how great is their happiness! They are made partakers of the dignity and privileges of sons of God by adoption, and of a divine nature by regeneration. Whatever objections or prejudices they might before have in their hearts against him, how will a true acquaintance with him effectually cure and answer them all! The souls that cordially believe in Christ, and faithfully rely on his testimony, shall see still greater things, for his glory, and their own consolation and establishment. And O how happy is it to have his approbation of us, as Israelites indeed, in whom there is no deceit or guile. And what a grateful and generous turn does the grace of God give to the temper of a man's

## C H A P. II.

*Christ turneth water into wine : departeth to Capernaum, and also to Jerusalem where he purgeth the temple of the buyers and sellers : he foretelleth his death and resurrection. Many believed because of his miracles, but he would not trust himself with them.*

[Anno Domini 30.]

**A**ND the <sup>a</sup> third day there was a marriage in <sup>b</sup> Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

<sup>a</sup> Ch. i. 43.  
<sup>26.</sup> Deut. 33: 9.

<sup>b</sup> Josh. 19. 28. Ch. 4. 46.

<sup>c</sup> Josh. 22. 24. Judges, 11. 12.

<sup>d</sup> Mat. 11. 19. Luke, 7. 34.

<sup>e</sup> 2 Sam. 16. 10. & 19. 22.

<sup>f</sup> Ch. 7. 3. with Luke, 1. 35. Mat. 3. 17.

<sup>g</sup> Ch. 7. 6. Eccl. 3. 1-11.

a man's heart! He wants to have Christ exalted in every soul, and fain would have all his relations, friends, and acquaintance, brought to a saving knowledge of him, and interest in him. And how securely may we depend upon the infinite merit of his blood, commit our all to him, and surrender up ourselves entirely to his authority, guidance, and grace, as God manifested in the flesh, and as able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God the Father by him!

REFLECTIONS.—1st. St. John opens his gospel with an account of that divine Personage, concerning whom he was about to write. He is called the Word, or Logos; the essential Word of God, to whom he ascribes all the attributes peculiar to the One Jehovah. We have,

1. His eternal self-existence. *In the beginning was the Word, not only before his incarnation, but ere creation rose, or time began to measure its periods; from everlasting he existed, as the great I Am.*

2. His co-existence with the Father. *The Word was with God, and the Word was God; not as one God with another, but as one divine Person co-existing with another in the same Godhead, and partaking with the Father in the same divine nature and essential perfections. The same was in the beginning with God, before any creature had yet been spoken into being.*

3. His agency, in the formation of the world, and all things therein. *All things were made by him, not as a subordinate instrument, but as the self-sufficient Author of them; and without him was not any thing made that was made; from the highest to the lowest all are the creatures of his hand, and such power proves him to be very God. Isaiah, xliv. 24.*

4. He is the original of life and light to all the creatures that he hath made. *In him was life, self-existent and independent; and he is the eternal fount whence all beings, sensitive or rational, receive their life, and are maintained by supplies out of his fulness; and the life was the light of men; from him was communicated to us all that reason and understanding of which we are possessed; and from him comes all the divine light and life by which we can be restored to the knowledge and enjoyment of God.*

5. *The light shineth in darkness.* By the fall all divine light was utterly banished from the minds of men, and they are by nature sunk into the blackness of spiritual darkness. The glimmering of tradition, and the brighter

2 <sup>c</sup> And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, <sup>d</sup> They have no wine.

4 Jesus saith unto her, <sup>e</sup> Woman, <sup>f</sup> what have I to do with thee? <sup>g</sup> mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants,

light of revelation, shining in the shadows and types of the law, or in the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament, were utterly ineffectual to lead men to eternal life and salvation, without divine illumination: *the darkness comprehended it not*: the plainest and most obvious truths, without his illumination, the natural man can no more comprehend to the salvation of his soul, than the blind can discern the objects before them. He, therefore, who first gave eyes to our bodies, must, by the same divine power, give sight to our darkened minds, or we must for ever remain under spiritual darkness and ignorance; but he does in a measure bestow that divine light on every fallen son of Adam, and, if duly improved, will bestow a sufficiency of it for eternal salvation.

2dly, The clearest revelation of gospel light began with the Baptist's ministry. To him therefore the evangelist refers, as bearing the most glorious testimony of the uncreated Word.

1. He relates the mission and preaching of John. *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John: his miraculous birth, his extraordinary gifts, and remarkable sanctity, were plain indications of his mission from above. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light; to point out to their notice the sun of righteousness, that was now about to arise; but to whom, through the wilful blindness of their hearts, they were indisposed to pay due attention and regard: and to testify that this was the Messiah of God: that all men through him might believe; who were, without distinction, invited by him to look to Jesus and be saved. He was not that light: though his energetical discourses, and mighty influence, raised in the minds of many an apprehension that he was the promised Christ, he assumed no such title; but his honour was to be the morning-star, the harbinger of day, to usher in the rising sun: he was sent to bear witness of that light, and prepare the way of the Lord. While we rejoice in the light of ministers, we must remember that they are only witnesses to the light; and as they preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, to him must our eyes be alone directed.*

2. Before he proceeds farther with John's testimony, the evangelist enlarges on the glorious character and office of him, to whom the Baptist bore record. *That was the true light, in opposition to the false lights of Gentile philosophy, and in contradistinction to the glimmering taper of ceremonial types and figures: he was eminently the*

true

Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.  
6 And there were set there six water pots

of stone, <sup>1</sup> after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three fir-

<sup>1</sup> Exod. 23. 21. Deut. 5. 32. & 12. 32.

<sup>1</sup> Mark, 7. 2—4. Mat. 15. 2. & 23. 25.

... true light, the fountain from which all wisdom and knowledge flow, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; not only as the author of natural reason to all; but as bestowing such a measure of spiritual light on all the children of men, according to their different dispensations, that none shall have reason to accuse him as the cause of their perdition; but all, if faithful to that light, may come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved. *He was in the world, and the world was made by him*: from the beginning his power and providence were displayed; but such was the wilful blindness, the wilful stupidity of mankind in general, that *the world knew him not*, nor in the expanded volume of nature, opened to their view, discerned his eternal godhead. Nay, *he came unto his own*, appearing incarnate in the fulness of time, and manifesting himself by his doctrine and miracles to the Jewish people, who were *his own* in a covenant of peculiarity, and his kinsmen according to the flesh; and *his own received him not*; they were in general wilfully obstinate, and rejected their God and Saviour. *But as many as received him* in his real character as the promised Messiah, the prophet, priest, and king of his believing people, *to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*. By faith embracing him as their God and Saviour, and placing their whole dependance on his atonement and intercession, they were advanced to the high dignity and privilege of being accounted the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, entitled to the inheritance of glory as joint-heirs with Christ, and endued with all those heavenly graces and filial dispositions which proved their adoption of God. And all who truly believe in and receive the same Jesus into their hearts, trusting on him alone as the atoning Saviour, and continuing faithfully devoted to him as their Lord and Master, shall be made partakers of the same invaluable blessing and honours. We who were by nature *children of wrath*, are now become *the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ*. And this is not merely a *relative change*, but a *real one*: where God confers the dignity of a child, he gives the Spirit of adoption. Those therefore are his sons, *which were born, not of blood, not by natural descent*; for nothing but corruption naturally runs in the blood of all the fallen sons of Adam; nor by *circumcision*, which was only the outward sign of an inward and spiritual grace, without which that bloody rite availed nothing to the soul; *nor of the will of the flesh*; our regeneration springs not from any natural power or ability in ourselves; *nor does it come of the will of man*; the wisest reasoners, the most powerful orators, spend their rhetoric in vain, without divine aid accompanying them; moral arguments in this case are ineffectual, unless enforced by divine operation; and therefore the evangelist adds, *but of God*; the renovation of the soul is a work of grace, and we can only be quickened from the death of our pastimes and sins to spiritual life by the power and energy of the Spirit of Christ; though our own endeavours must

accompany this grace, and it is offered to all without exception. And in order to this great design of man's salvation, *the Word was made flesh*, became incarnate, *not by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God*: he took our nature, that, in the likeness of sinful flesh, he might make reconciliation; and dwelt among us, in all the fulness of the Godhead taking up his abode in the body which was prepared for him, as the Shechinah dwelt in the temple: (*and we beheld his glory*, the brightness of which darted through the veil that for a time obscured its lustre, and appeared in all the miracles that he wrought, in the transcendent wisdom, goodness, grace, power, and majesty that he displayed on various occasions, and particularly blazed forth at his transfiguration, his resurrection and ascension; all of which divine manifestations of himself, the more they considered, the more they were filled with reverence and godly fear, and could not but regard *the glory of Jesus as the glory of the only begotten of the Father*) such as it became this divine Personage to appear in, who was *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*; and who was *full of grace and truth*; full of grace, of all spiritual blessings to bestow on believers; and of truth, fulfilling, in his own person, as *the substance*, all those typical institutions which were *the shadows of good things to come*, together with the prophecies which chiefly centred in him, and accomplishing all the engagements that he had undertaken. With what entire satisfaction then may we rest our souls on this adored Redeemer, so admirably qualified for the office of Mediator, possessed of all the excellence which the human nature is capable of receiving, and infinitely exalted in the uncreated glory of the divine? The more we consider his humiliation in becoming incarnate, the more deeply should we be affected with a sense of his grace and love; and, while we view Christ Jesus as *the very God of very God*, the more confidently should we trust in his infinite merit and intercession.

3dly, We have,

1. The Baptist's farther testimony of Christ. *John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me, is preferred before me*. He was the herald sent to prepare the way of the king Messiah, to proclaim aloud the coming of the incarnate God, and at his baptism to point him out to the notice of the world, as infinitely his superior in dignity, though after him, in point of time, entering upon his ministry and mission. And this pre-eminence he justly ascribes to him, both in the view of his eternal existence as a divine Person, and also of his constitution to the office of mediator between God and man; *for he was before me*. Note; (1.) The greatest of ministers and the chief of saints are always most careful to ascribe nothing to themselves, but ever to exalt the name of their adored Lord and Master as alone worthy of all honour and glory. (2.) The younger in office is often seen to be the greater in grace.

2. The



kins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water pots

with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

2. The evangelist takes up the word, and expatiates on the unsearchable riches of Christ, in connection with what he had said, ver. 14. *And of his fulness*, the plentitude of gifts and graces resident in this Son of God's eternal love, everlastingly exercised towards him, *have all we received*: not only they, as apostles, were indebted to their incarnate Lord for all the wondrous abilities with which they were qualified for the discharge of the trust committed to them; but also all Christians, of every degree, in every age, draw from the everflowing, overflowing, fountain of a Saviour's grace, the supply of all their spiritual wants; and *grace for grace*; which singular expression is differently interpreted; either as representing the fulness as well as the freedom of the gospel blessings, as *grace upon grace*, heaped up unto glory; or as the supply suited to our necessities, and effectual to strengthen us for all the work and duty to which the Saviour calls us; or such grace as exactly corresponds to that which is in him, transforming us into the same image, as the wax bears the impression of the seal; or as descriptive of the more abundant measures of grace dispensed under the gospel than under the law, to which sense the following verse seems to direct us. *For the law was given by Moses*: he, as the minister of God, declared his will to the Jewish people; and it was a matter of grace and favour that God by him revealed himself and his law unto them: but one unspeakably greater than Moses is here, the author of a new dispensation, which in glory far excelleth, 2 Cor. iii. 10. *for grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*. He is the sum and substance of all the types and prophecies, and in him they receive their accomplishment: the gospel, which he declared, contained the brightest discoveries of the divine grace and goodness, and the most reviving promises, ratified with his own blood: and as he reveals the only way of obtaining the divine favour, and how we may walk so as to please God, he offers also the ability for that which he enjoins; and his gospel is a *law of the Spirit of life*, communicating spiritual life and power to the soul. The greatest prophets who went before him, are not to be compared with him; and his word must necessarily, in the clearness and fulness of it, excel all other revelations of his will which God has been pleased to vouchsafe to the sons of men; for *no man hath seen God at any time*; neither men nor angels are capable of that intimate knowledge of the divine counsels, nor were ever admitted into his secrets: *the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father*, and by his participation of the Godhead most perfectly understands the whole will of the Father—in nature one with the Father, and infinitely dear to him; *he hath declared him*, being most transcendently qualified to make such discoveries of God and his counsels, particularly of his wisdom and grace in the redemption of lost sinners, as none of the prophets, nor John himself, could be supposed to do, they being but servants over the house of God; he the Son in his own house; and therefore hath more gloriously and distinctly than ever before, brought life and immortality to light by

the gospel. They who went before us, saw but through a glass darkly; we with a distinctness of vision, like that of face to face. May the light of gospel truth, so clearly revealed to us in and by the Son, be accompanied, through believing, with the effectual power of gospel grace to our hearts!

4thly, The testimony of John is here re-assumed, which he delivered to those who were sent from Jerusalem to examine into his credentials.

1. The sanhedrim, whose business it was to take cognizance of all religious matters, sent priests and Levites to inquire who he was, and what character he assumed; the time being at hand when the Messiah, according to the prophets, was now about to appear? And as many took John to be the Christ, or at least an extraordinary personage raised up for some great purposes, they wanted to hear, from his own lips, what he professed himself to be.

2. John's answers to their questions were direct and faithful. As to his being the Messiah, he freely and earnestly disclaims every such pretension: *he confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ*. *No*; We must never arrogate to ourselves honours which do not belong to us; but should reject every temptation to pride with abhorrence. In reply to their question, *Whether he were Elias?* he said, No. The Jews looked for the person of Elias; John only came in the spirit and power of that zealous reformer; and therefore was not the Elijah whom they expected. He declares himself to be neither Jeremiah, nor that prophet of whom Moses spake, nor any of the ancient prophets risen again, one of whom they supposed would precede the coming of Elias. Hereupon they urge him to give them a positive answer who he was, if he was not one of those whom they had mentioned, that they might carry back something determinate to those who sent them. To this he gave a direct answer in the words of Scripture, Isaiah, xl. 3. *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias*. He was the harbinger of the Messiah: his office was to cry aloud and spare not, rebuking the sins, and rectifying the errors of the people, and thus calling upon them to prepare to meet their God incarnate. And this is the great work of every true minister of Christ: with zeal, which fires his discourses, he labours to call sinners to the Saviour; and, eager in his exhortations, desires to lead them to repentance unto life.—Since he disclaims the character of the Messiah and those prophets which they had mentioned, they expostulated with him on his assuming authority to baptize; for it seems those Pharisees, who were now delegated in this commission, tenacious of their traditions, and proud in the conceit of their own goodness, fancied they needed no repentance; and, unable to brook the freedom and severity of the Baptist's rebukes, would gladly have taken occasion to suppress and silence him. In answer to their question he replied, *I baptize with water, as the outward sign of an inward and spiritual grace, which I pretend not*

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, they bare it.  
and bear unto the governor of the feast. And 9 When the \* ruler of the feast had tasted

\* Perhaps a Levite who was chaplain to them.

to confer: but there standeth one among you, or there lately stood one among you, even Jesus who had been baptized by him, whom ye know not, he not having yet publicly appeared in his glorious character as the Messiah; He it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me, as infinitely my superior, whose shoes' latchet I am not worthy to unloose: so transcendently glorious and exalted is his dignity, that to be employed in the meanest office about his person, is an honour far beyond all that I can pretend to deserve. This conversation passed at Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing; but we find no inquiries made after Him concerning whom John informed them.

5thly, Jesus had now finished his glorious conflict with the great enemy of souls, and was returning from the wilderness victorious, to the banks of Jordan. There John saw him, and bore repeated testimony to him as the Christ of God.

1. He points out Jesus to the notice of his disciples, as he walked near the river's side, saying, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. He is the Lamb without spot and blemish, which the daily sacrifice and paschal lamb prefigured; he is the Lamb of God, appointed by him as the great oblation which should once be offered, with whose sacrifice he would be well pleased, taking away the sin of the world, the original sin of Adam, and the sins of all that believe in his name; and by the one oblation that he has once offered, hath fully and completely made the atonement; so that all, in every age or place, under whatever degree of guilt or power of corruption they lie, who come to him, are sure to find mercy and salvation through him: and therefore we are directed to behold him, to look to him with an eye of faith, that we may be made partakers of the redemption that is in him.

2. He declares that this is the Person to whom he had before borne witness: This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me; a man, yet more than man, even God-man. And I knew him not; there was no personal, or at least intimate acquaintance between them before, nor were they in league together to serve any sinister end or purpose: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water: this was the great end of John's ministry, to point out to Israel the anointed Saviour.

3. He mentions, the sign which the Lord had given to discover that distinguished Personage whose fore-runner he was, but of whom, till then, he had no personal knowledge, at least as the Messiah. The sign given was the visible descent of the Spirit as a dove: and on the part of those, who came to him to be baptized, they should see it light, he might be fully assured that this was he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. This he saw when Jesus came to be baptized of him, and when he heard the voice from heaven mentioned Matt. iii. 17. These are sure grounds, therefore, he bare record then, and after continued to repeat the same testimony, that this

is the Son of God incarnate, the true Messiah promised from the beginning.

4. The next day, again looking earnestly on Jesus as he walked, he pointed him out to two of his disciples, saying, Behold the Lamb of God, desirous to engage their attention to the heavenly Saviour, and to lead them to value, regard, and embrace him, as the one great atoning sacrifice for the sins of men, which all those under the law prefigured and represented. Note; (1.) The doctrine of Christ's sacrifice for our sins is one of the grand leading subjects on which ministers must continually insist. (2.) They who have beheld the excellency of Jesus, cannot but delight to recommend him to the regard of others.

6thly, The first disciples of Jesus now begin to commence their acquaintance with him.

1. The two, who were with John when he pointed out Jesus to their notice, immediately followed him, desiring to be indulged in a greater intimacy with him. And the gracious Lord, who observes and is delighted with the first steps that a soul takes in approaching him, kindly accosted them, and inquired what they sought. With humble and respectful address they replied, Rabbi, where dwellest thou? Rabbi was the title given to the most famed of their wise men; and most deserving of it must he be in whom dwell all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. They desired to be admitted to a longer conversation with him than they could enjoy as they walked, and would gladly, if they might be permitted, wait upon him to receive his divine instructions. Note; Abiding communion with Jesus, is the thing, that a soul which is at all acquainted with him importunately desires. Christ courteously invites them to his lodgings; Come and see: he was ready to give them an immediate welcome; for his arms are ever open to receive those who desire to come to him. With thankfulness and joy they immediately embraced the offer. Where the soul is at stake, every delay is dangerous. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour: so that they spent that day in delightful conversation with him. The name of one of these disciples was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother; the other probably the author of this gospel, who here, and in other places, modestly suppresses his own name, when the mention of it would be to his honour: a noble instance of his unfeigned humility.

2. A third disciple is added. Andrew, eager to communicate the glad tidings to his brother Simon, findeth him, and with exultation relates the important discovery that they had made, We have found the Messiah, (which is being interpreted in the Greek language the Christ) the anointed of God, so often spoken of in the Scriptures; and he brought him to Jesus, who took particular notice of him; and calling him by his name, which, though a stranger to him before, he well knew, he gives him a new name, Cephas, which signifies a stone, as adopting him into his family,

the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

family, and intimating the steadiness of his heart in the work of the gospel, and his being appointed one of those pillars on which, with his brethren and apostles, the church should stand firm, grounded on Jesus the chief cornerstone and sure foundation. *Note;* (1.) They who have tasted the riches of Christ's grace themselves, cannot but be active to draw others to him. There is in Christ enough for all. (2.) They who are nearly related to us in blood, claim a peculiar interest in our regard and prayers; and the best token of our love to them will be shewn in leading them to Jesus.

7thly, Our Lord, having begun to make choice of his disciples, adds two more to the number, in Galilee, whither he went the day following.

1. Christ himself calls Philip. *He saith unto him, Follow me;* and he instantly obeyed. *He was of Bethsaida,* a town on the lake of Genesareth, and a place very abandoned, Matth. xi. 21.: an encouragement to ministers of the gospel, to visit even the worst of places.

2. Philip immediately went in quest of some friends to whom he might carry the glad tidings; and finding Nathanael, he with joy communicated the news, *We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph.* Probably our Lord had opened these scriptures concerning himself to Philip's fullest satisfaction. But Nathanael, on the mention of Nazareth, starts an objection, *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?*—a place vile and despicable to a proverb. Philip, unable to solve the difficulty, yet not shaken in his own faith, says, *Come and see;* persuaded that Jesus himself could easily silence that and every other objection which might be raised against him. *Note;* (1.) They, who have found Christ, cannot but exult in this happy acquisition. (2.) Though we may not be capable of answering every objection which may be started, we are not therefore to conclude that our religion is a delusion, but examine farther, and then we shall find enough to satisfy us that we have not believed cunningly devised fables. (3.) When we are in doubt, we must come to Jesus, and by prayer and attention to his word may be confident that he will lead us into all truth.

3. Nathanael yielded to Philip's invitation, and quickly was convinced of the unreasonableness of the prejudices which he had entertained. (1.) Christ highly commends his character as he saw him coming near, saying to those who were in company with him at that time, *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile,* a genuine son of simple-hearted Jacob. *Note;* It is a great thing to be an *Israelite indeed,* in spirit and temper such as our profession demands, without allowed guile either towards God or man, but with regard to both keeping a conscience void of offence. (2.) Nathanael expresses his surprise how Jesus should know him whom he had never seen before; but the confirmation of it which Christ gave yet more amazed him, and silenced all his doubts, as it proved his omniscience: *Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.* Probably Nathanael had retired thither

for some religious exercises, where no eye might see him, and there had offered up his fervent supplications to God for the Messiah's coming; or might be employed in meditation, perhaps on that dream of Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 12, &c. to which our Lord refers, ver. 51.; and such an instance of his knowing both the place of his retirement, and the very sentiments of his soul, could not but give Nathanael the strongest evidence of his being indeed the Messiah, as Philip had affirmed. *Note;* The eye of Jesus is upon us in our most retired moments, and he is acquainted with every sentiment of our souls. And this cannot but afford as much comfort to a gracious soul, as it speaks confusion to every hypocrite. (3.) Nathanael, fully convinced, bows down before him, and makes solemn profession of his faith in him as the Messiah, *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.* His prejudices instantly vanished, and, assured of the divine mission and character of Jesus, he gladly yields himself up a loyal subject to Israel's King, trusting on him for salvation from all enemies.

4. Christ, with approbation of his faith, and admiration of his noble confession, assures Nathanael that he shall shortly see greater and more glorious evidences of his infinite wisdom and power, to confirm his confidence. *Verily, verily, I say unto you,* who am the faithful and true Witness, *Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, or from henceforth,* when entering upon his public ministry he should begin to manifest his glory in the miracles that he wrought and the doctrines he taught; *and ye shall see the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man;* either literally, in their ministrations to him at his resurrection and ascension; or, rather figuratively, such a friendly intercourse between heaven and earth would now appear to be restored, and such wonders wrought by Jesus in confirmation of his mission, that it would be proved with evidence as strong and striking as if they saw the heavens themselves opened, and the angels employed in carrying on a correspondence between God the Father and the Son, become *man* for us men and for our salvation. *Note;* Through the Son of man the kingdom of heaven is opened to all believers, the angels of God minister for the heirs of salvation, and we may now enter boldly into the holiest of all, ascending by him, who is unto the faithful as the ladder of Jacob, the way to God and glory.

#### CHAP. II.

*Ver. 1. And the third day there was a marriage*] On the third day after Jesus and his disciples arrived in Galilee, they went to a *marriage feast* (see on Matth. xxii. 1, 2) in *Cana*; which is mentioned, Josh. xix. 28. as situated in the possession of the tribe of Asher not far from the city of Sidon, and by consequence in the most northern part of Galilee. Hence it was called *Cana of Galilee*, to distinguish it from another *Cana* in the tribe of Ephraim, mentioned Josh. xvi. 8. xvii. 9. This latter *Cana* therefore was at no great distance from Jerusalem. Here Jesus furnished wine by miracle for the entertainment, at the desire

10 And faith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is

worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 43. 34. Song, 5. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 1. 50. 51. 14. & 3. 2. & 14. 11. & 9. 14. Pl. 90. 16, 17. & 102. 16.

desire of his mother, who was also bidden. Dr. Clarke thinks, that our Lord, in the course of his private life, had sometimes exerted his divine power for the relief of his friends; and that his mother, having seen and heard of those miracles, knew the greatness of his power, and so applied to him on this occasion. Or we may suppose that she had heard him speak of the miracles he was to perform, for the confirmation of his mission, and the benefit of mankind, and begged him to favour his friends with one in the present necessity. Probably Mary interested herself in this matter, because she was a relation, or an intimate acquaintance of the new-married couple, and had the management of the entertainment committed to her care. Some have supposed that this marriage was celebrated at the house of Cleophas or Alpheus, whose wife was sister to the mother of our Lord, (Ch. xix. 25.) and one of whose sons was Simon the Canaanite, whom some have thought to have been so called from being an inhabitant of this *Cana*, Mark, iii. 18. and this may be considered the more probable, as Mary was not only present at the feast, but was there—as a person concerned, and was solicitous about supplying them with wine, which, mixed with water, was the common beverage of the country: and when the feast was over, we are told, ver. 12. that Jesus was attended, on his leaving Cana, not only by his disciples, but by his brethren, or nearest kindred men, who most likely came thither, as relations, to be present at the marriage. As Mary here is spoken of alone, it may be reasonable to conclude, that Joseph was now dead, and that he lived not to the time when Jesus entered on his public ministry; especially as he is nowhere mentioned in the gospel afterwards.

Ver. 2. *Jesus was called, and his disciples,*] Was invited, &c. The persons called *his disciples*, who were with him at this marriage, as also at Jerusalem, and who accompanied him to the distant parts of Judea, and baptized those who offered themselves to his baptism, (see Ch. iii. 2. iv. 1, 2.) seem to have been *Philip, Simon, Andrew, and Nathanael*; the four mentioned in the preceding chapter; for as these transactions happened before the Baptist's imprisonment, (Ch. iii. 24.) we cannot think that the disciples present at them had followed Jesus in consequence of the call given near the sea of Galilee, Matth. iv. 18. or the spoken of Luke, v. 1, &c. because it is certain that neither the one nor the other was given till after the Baptist was put in prison.

Ver. 3. *When they wanted wine, &c.*] The wine began to fail;—*ὑπέφαυτος*. But a small stock possibly was used at first, as the persons were not in the highest instances; and that began to fail the sooner, as greater numbers of guests attended than were expected, probably on the account of Jesus, whose fame began to spread abroad. His mother, provident for the young couple, and having great expectations, as she had good grounds, of

her wonderful Son, whose miraculous conception she could never forget,—any more than the wonderful circumstances which attended his birth,—and whose entrance on his public ministry she now observed with joy, witnessed as it was by a voice from heaven, and by the testimony of the Baptist—in this situation of things his mother faith unto him, *They have no wine*; hinting, as our Saviour's answer shews, that he would afford some miraculous supply; and it is plain, that notwithstanding the rebuke she met with, yet she had still a view to this by her direction to the servants afterwards, ver. 5.

Ver. 4. *Woman, what have I to do with thee?*] The compellation with which Jesus addressed his mother, sounds harsh in our language, because with us it is never used, where respect is meant to be shewn. Nevertheless, *woman* anciently was a term of honour, being used in speaking to persons of the first quality, as we find in the politest writers of antiquity. Besides, it was that by which our Lord addressed her at a time when his respect and tenderness for her cannot be called in question,—ch. xix. 26. The clause which in our translation runs, *What have I to do with thee*, might be rendered so as to have a milder aspect. *What hast thou to do with me?* For the original words *τί ἔμοι καὶ σοί*, are evidently used in this sense, 2 Sam. xix. 22. Mark, v. 7. *What hast thou to do with me? Mine hour is not yet come.* “The season of my public ministry in this country is not yet come. Before I work miracles in Galilee, I must go into Judea and preach, where the Baptist, my forerunner, has been preparing my way.” Some translate the latter clause interrogatively, *Is not mine hour come?* “The season of my public ministry, at which period your authority over me ceases?” Upon the whole, our Lord's answer to his mother, though perhaps intended as a slight rebuke, was not in the least disrespectful; as is evident likewise from the temper with which she received it, and from her desiring the servants to do whatever he ordered them. The generality of writers upon this subject have observed, with great justice I have no doubt, that this rebuke was intended by our Lord, in his prophetic spirit, as a standing testimony against that idolatry, which he foresaw afterwards would superstitiously bestow upon his mother, even to the robbing him of the right and honour of his alone Mediatorship and intercession.

Ver. 6. *After the manner of the purifying of the Jews,*] Besides the purifications appointed by the law of God, there were a multitude of others then practised, in compliance with the tradition of the elders. Possibly this clause is thrown in by St. John, by way of explanation, as he wrote this gospel for the use of the Gentiles, who might be strangers to the Jewish customs. These water-pots are said to contain two or three firkins a-piece. Now the measures of the ancients are so very uncertain, that it is hardly possible to determine the exact contents of these vessels:

in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

12 ¶ After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his bre-

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 4. 13. & 11. 23. Luke, 4. 14, 31. & 10. 15.

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 12. 46. & 15. 57. Ch. 7. 5. <sup>c</sup> Cousins.

vessels: some have computed them to contain about two or three hogheads; and the Greek is so rendered in our translation, as to make them contain above one hundred gallons; but it is hardly probable the vessels were so large; and as the original word *μετρας* signifies no more than *measures*, it is much better that we should leave it as we find it, unless the quantity could be determined with more certainty. It seems most probable that as the Jewish *bath* was the most common measure used in liquids, this is the quantity designed, where measures are expressed without any limitation; and as the Jewish *bath* is reckoned to contain four gallons and a half, the contents of these vessels, if they are computed only at two measures each, will amount to no less than fifty-four gallons.

*Ver. 7. Fill the water-pots with water:]* Mary was without doubt blameable for presuming to direct her Son in the duties of his ministry, her parental authority not extending to those matters; therefore he very justly gave her the gentle rebuke, ver. 4. in which he insinuated that his miracles were not to be performed at the desire of his relations for civil and private reasons; but in pursuance of the great ends that he had in charge,—the conversion and salvation of mankind. But though Mary might have had only private reasons of conveniency for asking this miracle, yet Jesus, knowing that it would tend to the confirmation of his disciples' faith, and to the advancement of his great cause, thought proper to comply; being not the less willing to exert his power, because his friends would reap some benefit from the matter of the miracle. Ordering the servants therefore to fill the water-pots, which were at hand, to the brim, with water, he converted the whole mass of the liquid into excellent wine. The quantity of water turned into wine on this occasion, deserves notice. We have spoken something on the subject in the preceding note. The following is Dr. Macknight's remark: "The six water-pots in which the wine was formed, being appointed for such purifications or washings as required the immersion of the whole body, were of a very large capacity; so that, being filled to the brim, there was an abundance of wine produced: but the deists, a sort of people who look on all Christ's actions with an evil eye, have not let this escape their censure, making it the subject of ridicule. This might have been spared, had they considered that the speech made by the governor of the feast to the bridegroom, ver. 10. does not imply that any of the company were drunk, as they would have it believed: it is only a comparison between the order in which he had produced his liquor, and that commonly observed by other people. [But see the note on that verse.] Besides, it ought to be considered, that Jesus did not order all the wine he furnished to be drunk at this solemnity; though, according to the custom of Judea, it lasted a whole week. [See Judges, xiv. 12, &c. and the notes on Solomon's Song.] It is probable, that our Lord designed to provide for the future occasions of the new-married couple,

"making them a valuable and seasonable nuptial present  
"in this delicate though miraculous manner: and surely  
"he, who in the first creation made such liberal provision for the necessities of men, might on a particular  
"occasion, when he was forming nourishment for the  
"natural life of his friends, do it plentifully; because  
"thus the favour was enhanced, and by the quantity  
"furnished he both shewed his own exuberant goodness,  
"and gave such magnificence to the miracle, as removed  
"it beyond all probability of fraud. Whereas, had the  
"quantity been considerably less,—only the *cup*, for instance, which was borne to the governor of the feast  
"(as some have thought), who knows but the enemies of  
"Christianity might have affirmed that here was no miracle at all; but that the water was artfully changed,  
"and wine put into its place?—an impossible cheat in  
"so large a quantity, especially as the transmutation  
"happened the moment the vessels were filled. We need  
"not then dispute with the deists, concerning the capacity of the measure mentioned by the Evangelist: let  
"them make it as large as they please; let them suppose  
"it was the attic measure of that name, equal to our  
"firkin, and that each water-pot held three of those measures, the miracle will still be decent, and in all respects  
"worthy both of the wisdom and goodness of him who  
"performed it."

*Ver. 8. Bear unto the governor of the feast:]* Among the Greeks, Romans, and Jews, it was usual at great entertainments, especially at marriage feasts, to appoint a master of the ceremonies, who not only gave directions concerning the form and method of the entertainment, but likewise prescribed the regulations in respect to drinking. Jesus therefore ordered the wine which he had formed, to be carried to the governor of the feast, that by his judgment passed upon it, in the hearing of all the guests, it might be known to be genuine wine of the best kind. Our Lord's furnishing wine for the feast by miracle shews, that all the creatures which God's power hath formed for, and his bounty bestowed on man, may be used consistently with piety, provided that the benefits be *sanctified to us by the word of God, and by prayer*; that is, if they be used in moderation, as the word of God directs, and with due expressions of thankfulness. We may observe, that every circumstance in this miracle was wonderfully directed by our Lord to shew its reality. For this purpose, Jesus ordered the water-pots to be filled with water; for the servants who poured the water out of one vessel into the other, could easily see that there was nothing but water in the vessel from which they had poured; and when the other was filled to the brim, it was equally visible that the vessel which they had filled, had nothing but water in it likewise. Further, it was known to all the guests that these pots or vessels never contained any thing but water: and as all the guests had washed themselves with the fluid contained in them, they were convinced that they held nothing but water. The changing of the water in the vessels was another

thren, and his disciples : and they continued there not many days.

and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

14 And <sup>p</sup> found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the

Exod. 12. 6-14. & 23. 14-17. & 34. 23. Deut. 16. 1. Num. 28. 16. Luke, 2. 41.

Mat. 21. 12. Mark, 11. 15, 16. Luke, 19. 45.

another proof to the same purpose ; and the drawing out instantly shewed that there could be no fraud. The servants were so far from being parties with Jesus in any collusion, that they seem not to have known, or to have been willing to obey him, had not Mary ordered them to do it ; which is another proof of the reality of this miracle. The ignorance of the governor concerning the filling of the pots, and the change made in the water, shews that he could not have been concerned in any deceit ; as his, and not the guests tasting of the wine, and applauding it, shews that no other person could have been a party in the fraud, if there was any. These and other circumstances, which the diligent reader will observe, abundantly prove the reality of the miracle, and set it above the probability of a cavil.

in several instances in scripture it is applied to drinking where there could be no excess. See Ephes. v. 18. But, *thirdly*, allowing both these objections to be true, namely, that these guests had already drunk well, and that the word so rendered does import *criminal drinking* ; yet it will by no means follow, that the miracle which Christ now wrought was intended to encourage any vice of this sort. Far from the mouths of Christians, far from the hearts of men, be the least surmise or supposition of such a sort ! It is most reasonable to conclude, that the change of the water into wine drew off their attention wholly from the feast to this divine and wonderful Person, who thus manifested forth his glory, and obtained the faith of his disciples : it is most reasonable to conclude, that this was a great means of sobriety and seriousness, bringing the beholders to the usual admiration *What manner of man is this !*

Ver. 9, 10. *The governor of the feast called the bridegroom,*] The governor's application to the bridegroom, and not to Jesus, shews him to have been ignorant of the miracle ; and could have proceeded from no other reason than his persuasion, that this wine had been provided at the expence of the bridegroom. Surprised at the exquisite delicacy of the flavour, he said to the bridegroom, " It is usual with a most men to set forth the good wine—*τὸν καλὸν οἶνον*,—at the beginning ; and when men have drunk plentifully,—*ὅταν μεθυσθῶσι*,—then that which is worse : thou hast proceeded in a different manner ; thou hast kept the good wine until now." In which words every discerning reader must remark, that there is not the least room for those many blasphemous insults upon the pure and spotless character of the holy Jesus, which deists and infidels have the hardiness to throw out, as we hinted on ver. 7. For, in the first place, the governor of the feast does not say even so much as that the present guests had drunk plentifully ; he only urges the common proceedings in such festivals as these ; and the words rather countenance a contrary opinion, for he says, " Every man sets forth good wine at the beginning, and when it shall happen that men shall have drunk plentifully, then that which is worse : thou (without any connecting particle in the original) hast kept the good wine until now. Thou hast not done as others do ; the best wine comes last." Herein is the sole of the comparison: he by no means says that they drank plentifully, or to excess : it is more than probable, that there was no appearance of such irregularity or excess ; seeing that the governor was thus capable of distinguishing the relish of the good wine so instantly, which, when men have well drunk, is not the case ; and therefore that, as he says, bad wine is brought last. However, *secondly*, that the words, when men have well drunk, did refer to the present guests ; yet the true meaning of the original word *μεθυσθῶσι*, and its use in scripture shew that it signifies, not *criminal drinking*, or *drinking to excess* ; its proper and immediate sense is, *to drink with moderation*, and so it is used in a religious import ; and

Ver. 11. *And manifested forth his glory :*] That is, demonstrated his power and character to the conviction of the disciples, and in some sense and degree to that of all the guests. This being the first miracle that they had ever seen Jesus perform, it tended not a little to the confirmation of their faith, and made his fame spread over all the neighbouring country. Moses confirmed his mission by producing water from a rock ; but our Lord, by changing water into wine : and by that change he manifested himself to be the Lord of the creation. It was as easy for that Omnipotence which is the author of all things, to do this in the present method, as it is for him to do it every year from the moisture descending from heaven, which is imbibed by the roots of the vine, and after frequent filtrations is ripened in the grape. It is true the frequency with which this change occurs, renders it familiar and unnoticed ; but when water is changed into wine in the vessels, the novelty makes a stronger impression on the mind ; and the effect, though not a greater exertion of Almighty power than that which is produced by the common course of nature, strikes us much more than that which is become familiar.

Ver. 14. *And found in the temple*] Moses, in Deut. xiv. 24, 25. from considering the necessity of the Jews resorting to the capital of their country, and the inconveniences which would attend the driving the cattle which were to be offered, and could be offered only there, gave them liberty, under the direction of Jehovah, to carry money with them, and purchase their victims on the spot. When, therefore, the Jews were dispersed among all nations, this injunction seemed not only convenient and prudent, but even necessary ; and therefore it was appointed that those animals which were used in sacrifices, should be sold without the temple near the gates. This institution which was so convenient, was in process of time turned into abuse ; and the market was at length kept in the very court of the Gentiles, the only place which was allotted

changers of money sitting :

15 And <sup>1</sup> when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen ; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables ;

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence ; make not my Father's house an house of merchandize.

<sup>1</sup> Prov. 26. 3. Zech. 4. 6. Pf. 93. 5. 1 Cor. 5. 7. 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. Mat. 21. 13. Mark, 11. 17. Luke, 19. 46. If. 56. 7. Jer. 7. 11. <sup>2</sup> Pf. 69. 9. & 119. 139. Rev. 2. 2. <sup>3</sup> Ch. 6. 30. Mat. 12. 38. & 16. 1. Mark, 8. 17. Luke, 11. 29. 1 Cor. 1. 22. <sup>4</sup> Mat. 36. 61. & 27. 40. Mark, 14. 58. & 15. 29. 2 Cor. 5. 1. He meant their putting him to death. 3 Cor. 13. 3, 4.

to the Gentiles to worship in. The noise of the cattle, and the hurry of the place, were great obstacles to worship, especially when we consider that the numbers who thronged this court, amounted at one passover to no less than 3,000,000 ; when, according to Josephus, no less than 256,500 victims were offered. But the abuse did not rest here ; for it is generally supposed that the priests let out this part of the temple for profit ; and that the sellers, to enable themselves to pay the rent of their shops and stalls, demanded an exorbitant price for their commodities. Nay, it is said, that the priests and Levites very often sold the animals which they had received for sacrifices, to the dealers in cattle at a lower rate, that they might sell them again with profit ; so that the same sacrifice was often sold to different persons, and the spoils or gains of the sacrifices were divided between the priests and the salesmen. In order to expedite this traffic, there were *money-changers* at hand, who gave the Jews of foreign countries the current money of Judea, in lieu of the money of the countries whence they came ; and for this service they took a premium, which upon the whole became very considerable. Thus was the temple profaned by the avarice of the priests, and literally made a *den of thieves*. When our Lord viewed this scene of iniquity, we need not wonder at his indignation ; for it was a zeal, which shewed his high regard to religion, and his implacable enmity to vice ; while at the same time it illustrated the character given him by the prophet Malachi, iii. 1.

*Ver. 15. A scourge of small cords.*] It has been very justly observed, that this circumstance, seemingly slight, is inserted to shew that the instrument could not have been the cause of so wonderful an effect.

*Ver. 16. Make not my Father's house, &c.*] It is remarkable, that at this ejection of those who profaned the temple, our Saviour says, *Make not my Father's house, &c.* but when he repeated this miracle towards the close of his life, when he had proved his divinity by a variety of miracles, he says *My house*, (Matth. xxi. 13.) and rises in his expression there, respecting the abuse of this house ; in which the Jews were the more inexcusable, and therefore deserved severer rebuke the second time, on account of this first experience of his holy indignation.

*Ver. 17. And his disciples remembered, &c.*] In the apprehension of the disciples, their Lord exposed himself to great danger by turning out a body of factious and in-

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.'

18 ¶ Then answered the Jews and said unto him, 'What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou dost these things ?'

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'

terested men, whom the priests and rulers supported. On this occasion, therefore, they called to mind that text in the Psalms, where it is said, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up* ; imputing their Master's actions to such a concern for the purity of God's worship, as that by which David, his great type, was animated. See on Psalm lxi. 9.

*Ver. 18. Then answered the Jews, &c.*] A fact so public and remarkable as this, could not but immediately come to the knowledge of the priests and rulers of the Jews, whose supreme council sat in a magnificent chamber belonging to the temple ; a fine rotunda, called from its beautiful pavement, *Lishcath Hagazitb*, which stood on the wall of the temple, part of it within, and part of it without its sacred precincts. There seems to be no doubt that the Jews here mentioned were rulers ; because we know that the great assembly of the Jewish rulers,—the *sanhedrim*,—sat in the temple. Christ's driving out the buyers and sellers must undoubtedly have come to their knowledge ; and as their office seemed to authorize them to call him to an account, we are sure that their prejudices against him would incline them to do it. The truth is, this affair had the mark of an extraordinary zeal ; a zeal nothing inferior to that for which the prophets were famed ; and this was the reason why the rulers came to him, desiring to know by what authority he had undertaken singly to make such reformation in the house and worship of God, especially in reference to matters which had been declared lawful by the council, and by doctors of the greatest reputation : and if he had any real authority for doing such things, they required him to shew it them, by working a miracle for that purpose. See ver. 23.

*Ver. 19. Destroy this temple,*] The miracle which our Lord had already performed, in driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, was sufficient to convince them of the authority by which he made this reformation, if they were to have been convinced by any miracle at all. Therefore our Lord, instead of satisfying their unreasonable demands, refers them to the great miracle of his resurrection ; but refers them to it in such obscure terms, as prejudiced minds could not understand, till the prophecy itself was cleared and explained by the event ; yet, if he either pointed to his body, or alluded to their commonly received opinions, one would wonder that they should have mistaken his meaning so far, as to suppose that

*disciples remember  
The zeal of this  
answered the Jews  
at sign thereof  
doth these things  
answered and said  
temple, and in time*

20. Then said the Jews, \* Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21. But he spake of <sup>the</sup> temple of his body.

22. When therefore <sup>he</sup> was risen from the dead, his disciples <sup>remembered</sup> that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

23 ¶ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many <sup>believed</sup> in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 <sup>But</sup> Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because <sup>he</sup> knew all *men*,

25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

\* Since Herod began to rebuild it. x 1 Cor. 3. 16. & 6. 19. a Cor. 6. 16. Col. 2. 9. Heb. 8. 2. y Ps. 16. 10. If. 53. 8. Mat. 12. 40.  
16. 21. & 17. 23. & 10. 19. Acts, 2. 25. & 13. 32-34. & 26. 22. z Luke, 24. 8, 25, 26, 44, 45. John, 14. 26. Mat. 13. 5. 6, 30,  
31. Ch. 6. 14. Act, 8. 13. James, 2. 19. b Prov. 14. 15. Mat. 10. 16, 17. c Mat. 9. 4. Mark, 2. 8. Luke, 5. 22. Ch. 6. 64.  
1 Sam. 16. 7. 1 Chr. 28. 9. Act, 1. 24. Rev. 2. 23. Heb. 4. 13.

that he meant the temple in which they were at that time assembled. The temple itself was supposed to be inhabited by the Divinity, and to derive its holiness from that circumstance; but as the Divinity dwelt in the body of Christ, that body deserved the name of temple more justly than the building made with hands. One of the rabbies says expressly, that the Messiah, the holy Son of David, is the Holy of Holies; and if that opinion existed in the time of Christ, as probably it might, there could be no great obscurity in the application of this term then. By a similar figure of speech, the apostle calls the bodies of believers *the temple of God*, on account of the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost. See Mark xiv. 58. Instead of *destroy this temple*, Dr. Heylin reads, *ye will destroy*. In the prophetic style, says he, the imperative is often used for the future.

Ver. 20. *Forty and six years was this temple, &c.] Hath this temple been in building.* Heylin. Though Herod finished what he proposed in eight or nine years, yet the Jews continued to beautify and adorn the temple for many years afterwards, even to the year 65.

Ver. 22. *And they believed the scripture,] They yet more firmly believed the scripture in all its prophecies concerning the Messiah's kingdom; and their faith in him was confirmed by the word which Jesus had spoken; for such a wonderful event as the resurrection of Christ, considered in its connection with this solemn prediction, justly appeared as the fullest conceivable proof of the whole plan of redemption.*

Ver. 23. *In the feast-day,] At the festival,—iv τῆ ἑσπερῆ.* Dr. Heylin renders it *at the festival of the passover*. See on Matth. xxvi. 5. The miracles here spoken of, as well as those of Ch. iii. 2. and iv. 45. plainly refer to some miracles wrought by Christ, the particulars of which are not admitted to us.

Ver. 24. *Jesus did not commit himself unto them,] Did not trust himself to be the Messiah.* He did not trust to *who* believed merely on account of his miracles.— *For he knew all men.* He had perfect knowledge of *dispositions*, and was assured, on the present occasion, that the belief of many was not yet grown up to a conviction; and foresaw that they would quickly fall when they found that he was rejected by the great and did not erect a secular empire. From the caution Jesus used, we may learn, not rashly to put our

selves and our usefulness into the power of others; but to study a wise and happy medium between that universal *prejudice* and *suspicion*, which, while it wrongs the best and most worthy characters, would deprive us of all the pleasures of an intimate friendship; and an undistinguishing *easiness* and *openness* of temper, which might make us the property of every hypocritical pretender to kindness and respect.

*Inferences drawn from the marriage in Cana, ver. 1-11.* Was this then the first public miracle, O Saviour, that thou wroughtest? And could there be a greater miracle than this, that, having been thirty years upon earth, thou didst no miracle till now? That thy Divinity did hide itself thus long in flesh? That so long thou wouldst lie obscure in a corner of Galilee, unknown to that world which thou camest to redeem? That so long thou wouldst strain the patient expectation of those, who ever since the appearance of thy star waited for the revelation of a Messiah? We, silly creatures, if we have but a grain of virtue, are ready to set it out to the best appearance. Thou who receivedst not the Spirit by measure, wouldst content thyself with a willing obscurity, and concealedst that power which made the world—under the roof of a human breast, in a cottage of Nazareth! O Saviour, no one of thy miracles is more worthy of astonishment than thy not doing of miracles!

Thy first public miracle graceth a marriage. It is an ancient and laudable institution. That the rites of matrimony should not want a solemn celebration, the Son of the Virgin, and the mother of that Son are both at the wedding. He that made the first marriage in Paradise, bestows his first miracle upon a Galilean marriage. He that was the author of matrimony, and sanctifies it, doth, by his holy presence, honour the resemblance of his eternal union with his church of the faithful. How boldly may be contemned all the impure adversaries of wedlock, when the Son of God pleases thus to honour it!

Happy is that wedding, where Christ is a guest! O Saviour, there is no holy marriage whereat thou art not; however invisible, yet truly present by thy Spirit and gracious benediction. Thou who hast betrothed thy believing people to thyself in truth and righteousness, do thou consummate that happy marriage of ours in the highest heavens.

It was no rich or sumptuous bridal to which Christ, and his



## C H A P. III.

*Christ teacheth Nicodemus the necessity of regeneration: of faith in his death. The great love of God towards the world. Condemnation for unbelief. The baptism, witness and doctrine of John concerning Christ.*

[Anno Domini 30.]

**T**HERE <sup>a</sup> was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 7. 40. & 19. 39. 16. 33. Acts, 2. 22. & 10. 38. & 8. 34, 51, 58. & 10. 1, 7. & 12. 24. & 13. 16, 20, 21, 38. & 14. 12. & 16. 20, 23. See ch. 1. 51. Ezek. 36. 26. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Gal. 6. 15. Eph. 2. 5, 10. 1 John, 3. 9. Titus, 3. 5.

<sup>b</sup> Ch. 7. 13. & 12. 42, 43. & 19. 39. being ashamed to own him by day.

<sup>c</sup> Master. Ch. 20. 16.

<sup>d</sup> Ch. 9.

<sup>e</sup> Ver. 5. 17. Ch. 5. 19, 24, 25. & 6. 26, 32, 47, 53. Ch. 1. 13. James, 1. 18. 1 Pet. 1. 3, 21. Or from above. James, 1. 18. 1 John, 3. 9. & 5. 18.

his mother, and his disciples, vouchsafed to come. We find him not at the magnificent feasts or triumphs of the great. The proud pomp of the world did not agree with the state of a servant: this Galilean bridegroom, before the expiration of his festival, wants drink for the accommodation of his guests.

The blessed Virgin feels a charitable compassion; and, from a friendly desire to maintain the decency of a hospitable entertainment, inquires into the wants of her host, pities them, and seeks anxiously to redress them. How well does it become the eyes of piety and Christian love to look into the necessities of others!

To whom should we complain of any want, but to the Maker and Giver of all things? *When they wanted wine, The mother of Jesus said unto him, They have no wine.* The blessed Virgin certainly, in some degree, knew to whom she sued. It would have been hard if some of the neighbour-guests, when duly solicited, had not been able to furnish the bridegroom with so much wine as might suffice for the remainder of the feast: but Mary evidently thought it best not to lade at the shallow channel, but rather to go to the fountain-head, where she might dip and fill the firkins at once with ease. It may be she saw that the train of Christ might help forward that defect; and therefore she justly solicits Jesus for a supply. Whether we want bread, or water, or wine, necessities or comforts, whither should we run, O Saviour, but to that infinite munificence of thine, which neither denieth nor upbraideth? We cannot want if we cleave to thee: we cannot abound but from thee: give us what thou wilt, so thou give us contentment with what thou givest.

But what is this we hear?—A sharp answer to the suit of a mother.—*Woman, what have I to do with thee?* He, whose sweet mildness and mercy never sent away any supplicant discontented,—doth he only frown upon her who bare him?—He that commands us to honour father and mother, doth he disdain her, whose flesh he assumed? God forbid! But love and duty do not exempt parents from due admonition: she solicited Christ as a mother; he answers her as a woman: if she was the mother of his flesh, his Deity was eternal. She might not so remember herself to be a mother, that she should forget she was a woman; nor so look upon him as a son, that she should not regard him as a God: he was so obedient to her as a mother, that withal she might obey

2 The same came to Jesus <sup>b</sup> by night, and said unto him, <sup>c</sup> Rabbi, <sup>d</sup> we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, <sup>e</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man <sup>f</sup> be born <sup>g</sup> again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

him as her God. Neither is it for us, in the holy affairs of God, to know any faces; yea, *if we have known Christ heretofore according to the flesh, henceforth know we him no more*; much less do we substitute a woman as a mediator between God and man.

Yet even in this rough answer, as it may seem, doth the blessed Virgin descry cause of hope. If his hour was not yet come, it was therefore coming: when the expectation of the guests and the necessity of the occasion have made fit room for the miracle, it shall come forth and challenge their wonder. Faithfully therefore and observantly does she turn her speech from Jesus to the attendants, *Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*

However, she that had said of herself, *Be it unto me according to thy word*, now humbly says to others, *Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.* This is the way to have miracles wrought for us, and in us,—obedience to his word. The power of Christ did not depend on the officiousness of these servants: he could have wrought wonders equally without their contribution; but their perverse refusal of his commands might have rendered them incapable of the favour of a miraculous exertion.

This scanty house was yet furnished with many and large vessels for outward purification, as if iniquity had dwelt upon the skin. Alas! it is the soul which needs scouring; and nothing can wash that, but the Blood which they desperately wished upon themselves and their children, for guilt, not for expiation. *Purge thou us, O Lord, with hyssop, and we shall be clean; wash us, and we shall be whiter than snow.*

The waiters could not but think so unseasonable a command, as we read in ver. 7.—*Fill the water-pots with water*, to be very strange. “It is wine that we want; why do we go to fetch water? If there be no other remedy, we could have sought this supply unbidden:” and yet so far has the command prevailed, that instead of talking of carrying flaggons of wine to the table, they go to fetch water in their vessels from their cisterns. There is no pleading of improbabilities against the command of an Almighty power.

How liberal are the provisions of Christ! If he had but turned the water in one of those vessels into wine, it had been a just proof of his power. But the abundance magnifies at once both his power and mercy. The munificent hand of God regards not our wants only, but our honest

affluence;

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

affluence; it is our sin and our shame if we turn his favours into wantonnels.

There must be first a filling, ere there can be a drawing out. Thus in our vessels, the first care must be of our receipt, the next of our expence: God would have us to be first cisterns, and then channels. Our Saviour would not be his own taster, but he sends the first draught to the governor of the feast. He knew his own power, they did not; neither would he bear witness of himself, but draw it out of the mouths of others. They who knew not the original of that wine, yet praised the taste, ver. 10. Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, &c. but thou hast kept the good wine until now. The same bounty which expressed itself in the quantity of the wine, shews itself no less in the excellence: nothing can fall from that Divine hand which is not exquisite: that liberality would not provide mean accommodation for its guests. It was fit that the miraculous effects of Christ, which came from his immediate hand, should be more perfect than the natural. O blessed Saviour, how delicate is that new wine which we shall one day drink with thee in thy Father's kingdom! Yes, gracious Lord, thou shalt turn this water of our earthly afflictions into that wine of gladness, where-with our souls shall be richly replenished for ever and ever! Make haste, my beloved; and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The first miracle of Jesus was wrought at a marriage-feast in Cana of Galilee. It was probably a marriage of some near relation of his mother Mary's, who seemed not to be there merely as a guest, but as one of the family. Christ was invited, and refused not the invitation given him on this occasion, but went with his disciples to grace the bridal feast with his presence and company, and put an honour upon the institution. Note; (1.) Our marriages can only then be expected to issue happily, when Jesus with his benediction crowns the indissoluble union. (2.) Religion teaches none to be unsocial or uncivil, but commands us to rejoice with those that rejoice. We are told,

1. The concern expressed by the mother of Jesus to her Son on account of the deficiency of the wine at this entertainment. The number of the guests, perhaps more than were expected, consumed the small quantity which she provided, who were probably in mean circumstances, had she expected that he would soon begin to display his glorious power, and intimated that the present necessity afforded an opportunity for his miraculous assistance. A genuine Christian interests himself in the distresses of his friends; and, when he can do no more to relieve them, fails not to commend their case to the kind Saviour's care.

Our Lord gives her a reprimand for interfering in matters which did not belong to her. Though he was Son after the flesh, yet in the exercise of his miraculous powers he acted as the Son of God, and owed her no obedience. What a direct condemnation of the horrid

idolatry of that church, which prays to the mother to command her Son! Besides, he adds, My hour is not yet come: the time for the public manifestation of his glory, by his openly performing miracles, was not yet come.

3. Though his mother silently submitted to his pleasure, she entertained hopes that he would grant her request, and take the matter into his consideration; and therefore privately bade the servants obey whatever orders he should give them. Note; (1.) We must not be discouraged in our faith, if our prayers are not immediately answered. (2.) Christ's commands are implicitly to be obeyed, without reasoning or hesitation.

4. Christ performs the miracle; and with circumstances which eminently displayed his glory. Six water-pots of stone were placed there, containing about two or three firkins each (see the annotations.) These water-pots Christ bids the servants fill with water to the brim, that there might be no suspicion of fraud in the miracle. They obeyed, and instantly the strange conversion was wrought. He orders them hereupon to draw out and carry this liquor to the governor of the feast, the person who was master of the ceremonies, or sat in the most honourable place on that occasion. No sooner had he tasted the wine which had been water, than he was struck with the delicious flavour, and, unacquainted whence it came, he observed to the bridegroom with surprize his unusual method of procedure. Others usually produced their best wine first, and afterwards, when men had well drunk, that which was worse; but he had kept the good wine to the last, as the grace-cup, to conclude the entertainment. Note; (1.) God's creatures, and wine among the rest, are given for the good of man, and may be used with moderation; only we must be very careful that we do not, by intemperance, abuse our mercies, and turn our blessings into curses by excess. (2.) Feasts need a governor to restrain the irregularities of those, who else perhaps, to their shame, would have no government over themselves. (3.) Whatever consolations believers here enjoy, the greatest are reserved for them at last, when, at the marriage-supper of the Lamb, they shall drink the new wine in the kingdom of God.

5. At the conclusion of this miracle the evangelist observes, that this was the first which Jesus performed after his entrance on his ministry; wherein he manifested forth his glory in such displays of his power and grace, wrought by his authoritative word, as exalted his own great name, and proved his own eternal Godhead and glory; and his disciples believed on him, confirmed in their assurance of the truth of that high character which he assumed. Note; The more we become acquainted with Christ in his word, the more shall we be convinced that this is he who should come, and shall be engaged to rest our souls on him for life and salvation.

2dly, Capernaum was the place where Christ usually resided, Matth. iv. 13. Hither he came with his mother, brethren, and disciples, who, struck with what they had seen, attended him to observe the further manifestations of his divine power and glory which he should make.

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man <sup>b</sup> be born of water and of the Spirit, he <sup>c</sup> cannot enter <sup>d</sup> into the kingdom of God.

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 3. If. 44. 3, 4. Ezek. 36. 25—27. Titus, 3. 5—7. 1 Peter, 1. 2. & 3. 31. Mat. 3. 11. Eph. 5. 26.  
<sup>b</sup> Luke, 17. 20, 21. Rom. 14. 17. Ch. 18. 36. Rev. 21. 8, 27. & 22. 14, 15.

<sup>c</sup> Luke, 10. 41. & 13. 3, 5, 24.

His abode at this time at Capernaum was not many days, the Passover being at hand, which called him up to Jerusalem. Where we find him,

1. Purging the temple of those intruders who had defiled that holy place. Under pretence of accommodating with sacrifices, and change of money, those who came up to worship, a market was kept in the temple by the connivance of the priests, who probably made some considerable advantage by permitting such a profanation. But Christ, beholding with indignation such corruptions in the house of God, immediately began to vindicate the honour of that sacred inclosure, and, having made a scourge of cords, he drove out the traders with their beasts, overturned the tables of the money-changers, and bade those who sold doves to take them away; remonstrating with them on the wickedness of their conduct, *Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.* Note; (1.) The love of filthy lucre is generally at the root of the corruptions which creep into the church of God. (2.) If God is our Father, we cannot but be grieved to see him dishonoured, and should zealously appear in his cause. (3.) They who are bold and faithful for God, will often see that one can chase a thousand; and that, if we dare stand up in his name, the consciences of sinners will cover them with confusion.

2. The disciples remembered that it was written, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* And this still more confirmed their faith, as they observed the scripture prophecies accomplished in him.

3. Being questioned by the Jews concerning the authority on which he acted, and required to give a sign in proof of the mission to which he pretended, *He answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.* Since they refused to be convinced by other miracles, he refers them to the last sign which should be wrought, even his resurrection from the dead by his own divine power, after they had destroyed the temple of his body. As he had now cleansed his house from their profanations, so would he raise his own body which they should slay, and not suffer it to see corruption. They understood him as if he meant the material temple where he then was, which had now been forty-six years building and beautifying (see the annotations): and they looked upon it as the most absurd of pretensions, for a mer eman, as they presumed him to be, to assert that he could do that in three days, which had employed thousands of workmen so many years. Thus they ridiculed his assertion, though it appears they understood not his meaning. Note; (1.) It is just with God to give those up to their vain imaginations, who have no love of the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. (2.) The grossest mistakes have been entertained by understanding literally what the scriptures have spoken figuratively, as in the doctrine of transubstantiation, drawn from the words of Christ, *This is my body.* (3.) The body of Jesus was the true temple, in which the fulness of

the Godhead dwelt; and of him the temple at Jerusalem was but the type and figure. (4.) As the temple was the medium of worship, and they who prayed turned their faces thitherward, so is it through Christ Jesus alone that we can have access to and acceptance with God.

4. His disciples, though they, no more than the Jews, understood his meaning at that time, yet afterwards, when the events verified the prediction, and the Spirit poured out from on high opened their minds to understand the scriptures, reflected on this prophesy, and seeing the accomplishment of it in his resurrection, were the more deeply confirmed in their faith of the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. Note; The truths of scripture which we learn in younger years, though not understood at that time, yet are frequently of singular use when, at any future period, our souls are converted, and the eyes of our minds are opened, through the grace of God.

3dly, During the seven days of the feast Christ preached openly the doctrines of his kingdom, and wrought mighty miracles in confirmation of the truths that he taught. In consequence of which,

1. *Many believed in his name:* at least, for the time, they were so struck with his miracles as to give their assent to his doctrine, and own him as the Messiah. But,

2. *Jesus did not commit himself unto them,* did not trust himself with them, or repose any confidence upon them; because he knew all men; the wickedness of some who would play the hypocrite in order to betray him; and the weakness of others, who in a time of danger might, through timidity, be tempted to desert him, or, through mistake and indiscretion, raise some disturbance through their vain imaginations that his kingdom was temporal, and his throne to be established by arms. And, being thus all-wise, he needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man, was acquainted with his inmost thoughts, yea, knew them before they were formed. Note; (1.) We should be cautious in whom we confide, and try before we trust. (2.) Christ knows the secrets of all hearts; he sees the devices of his subtle enemies, and the faults of his pretended friends; and he will bring every sinner to judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

#### CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *There was a man of the Pharisees, &c.* Nicodemus was a member of the great council, and, as some suppose, a ruler of a synagogue; for ἀρχων, the title here given him, is often used in this sense by the evangelists: compare Matth. ix. 18. 23. with Luke, viii. 41. Accordingly, ver. 10. on this very occasion, Jesus calls him a *master, or teacher of Israel.* He might possess both dignities, many of the members of the council being rulers of synagogues. It is however certain, that he was one of the council; for we are told so expressly, ch. vii. 50. This doctor had heard our Lord's miracles often mentioned, perhaps had seen some of them; and, like many of his countrymen,

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh ;  
and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must  
be born <sup>m</sup> again.

<sup>1</sup> Job. 14. 4. Rom. 8. 1—13. Gal. 5. 17—24.

<sup>m</sup> Or from above. 1 Cor. 2. 12. Zech. 8. 6. Ver. 3.

countrymen, conceived some notions, that he who performed such things must be the Messiah: on the other hand, the means of our Lord's appearance occasioned scruples which he could not remove. In this state of doubtfulness he resolved to wait on Jesus, that by conversing with him personally, he might find out the truth. See the next note.

Ver. 2. *The same came to Jesus by night,*] Left any offence should be taken at his conversing openly with Jesus, by his brethren of the council, who from the very beginning were Christ's enemies, he came secretly, *by night*, in order to have a private conference with him at his own lodgings; and with the greatest reverence and respect said to him, in his own name, as well as in the name of several of his brethren, Rabbi,—a very remarkable appellation from a person of so great dignity, to one, who, in regard to his education and rank in secular life, made so low an appearance as our blessed Lord: *We know, &c.* Christ's miracles left Nicodemus no room to doubt of his mission from God; yet they did not fully prove him to be the Messiah, because he had not as yet called himself by that name, at least in the hearing of Nicodemus. Wherefore, when he told Jesus that he believed him to be a teacher sent from God; he insinuated, that at present he did not believe in him as the Messiah; but that he would believe, if he assumed that character; and by these insinuations Nicodemus requested Jesus to explain himself with regard to his pretensions. We may just observe, upon the foundation of that strong assertion which Nicodemus makes, *No man do these miracles, &c.* that the miracles ascribed to him, and his apostles recommend themselves to us, in the following account, exclusive of their being always performed among the Jews as credentials and proofs of the mission of those who claimed to themselves the authority of prophets and teachers: they were wrought by those who solemnly appealed to God; they were wrought in a public manner, before enemies and unbelievers; in a free and civilized country; not with any air of mystery, and ostentation; not for the sake of lucre, or worldly advantage; in confirmation of doctrines useful for mankind; at a time when men wanted power nor inclination to expose them, if they were persecuted, and were in no danger of being called atheists or infidels, of being insulted by the populace, and persecuted by the civil magistrate, if they ridiculed and exposed them: they were various and numerous; of a nature that might be reviewed and re-examined; not being fantastical and cruel in them, but were acts of wisdom and beneficence: they ceased for a long time after Christ appeared, and therefore would raise the attention of men. They were the means of converting multitudes to the faith; were attested by proper witnesses; were such as the Jews expected the Messiah, and were acknowledged even by Nicodemus, therefore, had great reason to believe in him, and to acknowledge their force.

Ver. 3. *Jesus answered and said*] It is remarkable, that the evangelist introduces this passage of the history, with observing that *Jesus knew the thoughts of all men*: probably he meant to signify, that in the course of the conversation, Jesus prevented Nicodemus by forming his discourse to him in such a manner, as to obviate all the objections which his thoughts had suggested, without giving him time to propose them. This remark seems to shew the force and propriety of the things which our Lord said to Nicodemus; and accounts for this ruler's being so speedily and thoroughly convinced, though Jesus did not assume either the name or character of the Messiah. It seems, his reasonings, besides their own intrinsic light, had an additional evidence arising from their being exactly adapted to Nicodemus's most secret thoughts; so that they demonstrated the extent of our Lord's knowledge with great advantage. We see this in all the branches of the conversation; wherein our Lord touches on the following grand points, of the utmost importance to Nicodemus and his brethren, and indeed to all mankind; namely, that no external profession, nor any ceremonial observances or privileges of birth, could entitle any man to the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom; that an entire change of heart and life was necessary to that purpose; that this must be accomplished by a divine influence on the mind; that mankind are by nature in a state of condemnation and misery; that the free mercy of God had given his Son, to deliver them from it, and to raise them to a blessed immortality, which was the great design and purpose of his coming; that all mankind, that is, Gentiles as well as Jews, were to share in the benefits of his undertaking; that they were to be procured by his being lifted upon the cross, and to be received by faith in him; but that if they rejected him, there was no other remedy; and their eternal aggravated condemnation would be the certain consequence of it. Our Lord might enlarge more copiously on these heads, which it might be the more proper to do, as some of them were directly contrary to the notions commonly entertained by the Jews concerning the Messiah's kingdom.

Conversion has, in all ages, been a great and surprising effect of the divine power upon the human soul, producing a change, the full extent of which cannot be better expressed than by the terms *regeneration*, begetting again, new-birth, which import the communication of a new nature; and upon the diversity of men's dispositions before and after that change, are founded the names of *old* and *new man*, by which the apostle denominates the unconverted and converted state. This, however, must not be so understood, as if the new nature was raised to its perfection immediately upon its being conveyed to us in regeneration; for as by the natural generation we are not born with the perfectly matured powers of men, but with the faculties for obtaining these full powers and perfections; so in the spiritual generation the habits of grace and holiness are not all at once raised to their maturity. We have the seeds of them conveyed to us, which must

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him,

How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, <sup>a</sup> We

<sup>a</sup> Or Spirit. Ezek. 37. 9. Ch. 20. 22. Acts, 2. 2. & 3. 31. Fecl. 11. 5. Mat. 20. 15. 1 Cor. 2. 11. & 12. 11. <sup>b</sup> Luke, 1. 34. Ch. 6. 37. 62. Ver. 4. 1 Cor. 2. 14. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 11. 25. 1 Cor. 1. 26. with Ezek. 11. 19. & 36. 26, 27. <sup>d</sup> Ver. 32. Ch. 1. 18. & 7. 16. & 8. 23. & 12. 19. & 14. 24.

be gradually nourished to their full measure by the Spirit of God through the means of prayer, habit, experience and practice; and, above all, by strong faith in the merits and intercession of our blessed Redeemer. In speaking to Jews there was a peculiar propriety in expressing this change by the term of regeneration, as it shews them that Abraham's begetting them, however much they might glory in it, was not sufficient to make them the people and children of God; but that, laying aside the glory of their descent, it was necessary that they should be begotten anew by a greater Father, even the Spirit of God, who would communicate a better nature to them than that which they had derived from Abraham. The phrase, *he cannot see the kingdom of God*, signifies, he cannot enter into it; just as *to see death*, Luke, ii. 26. is *to die*.

Ver. 4. *Nicodemus saith unto him, &c.*] Nicodemus, hearing Jesus affirm that the posterity of Abraham needed a second generation and birth to fit them for becoming the people of God, could not take his words in the sense which he, with the other doctors, commonly affixed to them, when speaking of proselytes, because so applied they signified conversion to Judaism; a thing not applicable to the Jews: not doubting, therefore, that Jesus spoke of a second natural generation and birth, he was exceedingly surpris'd, and his answer evidently proves, that the translation which some give of the word *ἀνωθεν*, in the former verse, *from above*, is wrong; for it is plain he thought that without entering a second time into his mother's womb, there was no being born in the manner Christ spoke of, *ἀνωθεν*, that is, *again*. What is added at ver. 5. explains what is left undetermined, ver. 3. as to the original of this birth. See 1 Peter, i. 3. and 1 John, v. 18.

Ver. 5. *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, &c.*] Jesus replied, that he was not speaking of a natural, but of a spiritual regeneration; *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water*, that is, be baptized, the only appointed means of admission into the visible church; and *of the Spirit*, that is, have a new nature given him by the Spirit, and shew forth in his life the fruits of that new nature; he cannot be a subject of God's kingdom here, nor have a share in his glory hereafter." Our Lord did not mean that baptism is, in all cases, absolutely necessary to salvation; for in the apostles' commission, Mark, xvi. 16. notwithstanding faith and baptism are equally enjoined upon all nations: not the want of baptism, but of faith, is declared to be damning. Besides, it should be considered that this is a mere ceremony, which in itself has no efficacy to change men's natures, or to fit them for heaven; and that in some circumstances it may be absolutely impracticable; nevertheless, as the washing with water in baptism fitly represents the purification of the soul ne-

cessary to its happiness, this ceremony is very properly made the rite by which we publicly take upon ourselves the profession of the Christian religion, the dispensation preparatory to heaven. Wherefore, the receiving of this rite is highly necessary in all cases where it can be had. If so, persons who undervalue water baptism, on pretence of exalting the baptism of the Spirit, do greatly err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the commandment of Christ.

Ver. 6. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh;*] That Nicodemus might see the absurdity of his notion, Jesus told him, that whatsoever is begotten, must necessarily partake of the nature of that which begets it; and therefore, that a man's being begotten and born a second time by his natural parents, were that possible, would not make him holy, or qualify him for the kingdom of God. After such a second generation, his nature would be the same sinful and corrupt thing as before, because he would still be endued with all the properties and sinful inclinations of human nature; and consequently would be as far from a happy immortality as ever:—*That which is born of the flesh is flesh*:—*But that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit*: spiritual, heavenly, divine, like its author.

Ver. 7. *Ye must be born again.*] "Even you, though the descendants of Abraham; even you, scribes, Pharisees, and doctors of Israel, however proud of superior sanctity and knowledge; even you *must be born again*, in this spiritual sense." The passage is remarkably strong and emphatical.

Ver. 8. *The wind bloweth, &c.*] Our Saviour observed, that there was no cause for Nicodemus to be surpris'd if there were some things in this doctrine of regeneration of an obscure and unsearchable nature; because even in the natural world many things are so. As much as to say, "It is true, thou mayest not understand how this second birth can be brought to pass, but that is no reason why it should be disbelieved; since there are many great effects in nature, which you must acknowledge, though you cannot explain their causes. For instance, the wind bloweth where it pleaseth, and you hear the sound of it, but you know not whence it comes,—*whence it comes, from what repository; or whither it goes, into what place*:" (alluding probably, to Psalm, cxxxv. 7. where God is said to bring the wind out of his treasures. See Eccles. xi. 5.) so is every one that is begotten and born of the Spirit. The influences by which he is begotten, are altogether imperceptible to sense, yet the effects thereof are far from being so. Moreover, to the actions and ends of the spiritual life, the new birth is as essential, as the natural is to those of the animal life.

Ver. 9, 10. *Nicodemus answered, &c.*] Our Lord's arguments were undeniable: nevertheless, Nicodemus, who had

11 speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

13 And no man hath ascended up to hea-

ven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

14 ¶ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

<sup>1</sup> If. 51. 1-3. & 49. 7. & 65. 2. Mat. 23. 37. Ch. 1. 11. & 5. 45. 2 Cor. 4. 4. Ver. 32. <sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 1. 7, 2. Heb. 5. 11, 12. <sup>3</sup> Deut. 10. 12. Prov. 30. 4. Mat. 11. 27. Ch. 1. 18. & 6. 13, 38, 51, 62. & 16. 28. 1 Cor. 15. 47. Eph. 4. 9. <sup>4</sup> Numb. 21. 9. Ch. 8. 23. & 12. 31, 33. <sup>5</sup> 15. 26. 54. Luke, 9. 12. & 17. 25. & 24. 7, 26, 46. 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24. Gal. 6. 14. <sup>6</sup> If. 45. 22. Ver. 36. Ch. 1. 12. & 11. 25, 26. & 6. 37, & 20. 31. Acts, 8. 37.

en accustomed to the pomp and ceremony of an external religion, surprised to hear that Jews (who by birth were people of God,) must be begotten and born again, urged that the thing was impossible; which it doubtless was, taking regeneration, as he did, for conversion to baptism, a notion which he was led into from what Jesus told him, ver. 5, 6. namely, that the regeneration he spoke of was a moral and spiritual one. Our Lord replies, *How can a man be born again, when he is old? how can a man be born again, when he is old? how can a man be born again, when he is old?* *How can a man be born again, when he is old?* *How can a man be born again, when he is old?* Our Lord having all along spoken of regeneration in the common dialect of the Jewish schools, might justly express his surprise, that he, who was a *teacher in Israel*, did not understand it: for he had affixed a meaning to the word *regeneration* different from what it bore in the mouths of the doctors, it being mainly analogous to their sense of it, and so might have been understood even by a novice; the admission of a proselyte being looked upon by the Jews as a new birth to him, in regard that his parents and relatives were no longer reckoned such, and the proselyte was thought to have received a new soul by the change of religion. It is strange that any should doubt whether proselytes were admitted into the Jewish church by baptism, by washing; when it is plain, from express mention in the Jewish law, that no Jew who had lived in idolatry for one single day, could be restored to the communion of their church, except by baptism. Compare Acts, 19, 20. and many other passages relating to the purifications, by which the Jews were rendered fit for appearing before God in the tabernacle or temple, and they were washed, either by bathing or sprinkling.

*We speak that we do know,*] Some have supposed that as Christ speaks here in the plural number, he alludes not only to the doctrine which was delivered by him, but to the testimony which was given to the truth of the doctrine by the Baptist, and to the preaching also of his disciples, who all concurred in testifying the same truth, and who were all assured of by the Holy Spirit, and by their own experience; while Jesus Christ by his omniscience, and by the assistance he had with all the counsels of the Father and the Spirit, who are expressly mentioned in other passages, as being witnesses to the truth of the doctrine, and as agreeing with him in the testimony which he gave. Compare ch. viii. 18. xiv. 20, 26. and 1 John, 1. 2. there is no necessity that we should suppose

him to refer to any other than himself, since nothing is more usual than for a person of authority to speak of himself in the plural number, as Christ may be observed to have done elsewhere; (Mark, iv. 30.) and here, in the next verse, he appears to have restrained it to himself, where he says only in the singular number, *If I have told you earthly things, &c.* In the next clause, *and testify that which we have seen*, Christ seems to allude to what is mentioned in the law as qualifying a man to be a witness, that he was able to declare of what he had testified, that he had seen or known it, Lev. v. 1.; and as he therefore had a clear perception and a certain knowledge of the truth of what he said, there was the highest reason to receive his testimony, and to regard him as a true and faithful witness.

*Ver. 12, 13. If I have told you earthly things,*] "If you believe not these obvious truths concerning the spiritual nature of God's kingdom, and the qualifications of his subjects, how shall you believe the more sublime doctrines of religion, which I am come to teach you?" Our Lord goes on, "In the mean time, you may safely receive my instructions; for I am vested with an authority, and endued with gifts far superior to all prophets that have ever appeared; *No man hath ascended up to heaven,*" &c. Perhaps Jesus mentioned his *coming down from heaven*, to put the Jewish doctor in mind of the acknowledgment with which, at the beginning of their interview, he had addressed him, namely, that he was a *teacher come from God*. This passage is a plain instance of what is usually termed the communication of properties between the divine and human natures, whereby what is proper to the divine nature is spoken concerning the human, and what is proper to the human, is spoken of the divine. Thus when it is said (1 Cor. ii. 8.) *The Lord of glory was crucified*, and (Acts, xx. 28.) when he is called *God, who purchased the church with his own blood*,—the meaning is not that he, as the Lord of glory, was crucified, or, as God, shed his blood, as if the Divine nature could be crucified and bled; but that the person, who was the Lord of glory in one nature, was crucified in the other; and the person, who was God in one nature, purchased the church with his own blood, which belonged to his other nature: so when it is said, *The Son of man is in heaven*, the meaning is not that he, as the Son of man, was there while he was on earth; but that he, who was here in his human nature, was there in his divine.

*Ver. 14, 15. And as Moses lifted up*] Our Lord, by telling Nicodemus that the death of the Messiah was prefigured by types in the law, shewed him, that it was agreeable

16 ¶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 ¶ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of

God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be \*reproved.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

<sup>1</sup> 1 John, 4. 9, 10, 19. Rom. 5. 8. & 8. 32. 1 Cor. 1. 30. <sup>2</sup> If. 4. 22. & 55. 1—7. Mark, 16. 15. Luke, 2. 10, 11. & 19. 10. <sup>3</sup> Ch. 12. 47. Luke, 9. 56. Ch. 5. 45. & 8. 15. & 9. 39. & 14. 6. & 4. 42. Ver. 36. 1 John, 4. 14. Mat. 18. 11. & 1. 21. & 20. 28. If. 43. 6, 7. & 49. 6, 8. <sup>4</sup> Ver. 36. Ch. 5. 24. & 6. 40, 47. & 20. 31. Rom. 8. 1, 33. Mark, 16. 16. 1 John, 5. 10—13. Heb. 3. 19. & 4. 1—3. & 10. 16—31. & 12. 25—27. <sup>5</sup> Ch. 1. 4, 5, 10, 11. & 8. 12, 37. Rom. 1. 32. 2 Peter, 2. 3. If. 5. 20. & 30. 9—12. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. Ch. 15. 22—24. <sup>6</sup> Job. 24. 13—27. Amos, 5. 10. 2 Tim. 4. 3. Acts, 13. 45. Eph. 5. 13. <sup>7</sup> Or discovered. <sup>8</sup> If. 8. 20. Ch. 5. 39. Acts, 17. 11. & 17. 47, 48. <sup>9</sup> Gal. 5. 22—24. Eph. 5. 8. Phil. 1. 6. & 2. 12, 13. If. 26. 12. 2 Peter, 1. 3—10.

agreeable both to the doctrine of Moses, and to the councils of heaven, that the Messiah should be in a suffering state; consequently he insinuated, that the meanness of his present appearance upon earth was no reason why Nicodemus should doubt of his having come down from heaven. The type that he mentioned as prefiguring his sufferings, both in their circumstances and consequences, was that of the *brazen serpent*, which, though it represented a thing noxious in its nature, was so far from being so, that all who were poisoned by the stings of real serpents, obtained a perfect and speedy cure, if they but looked at it. In like manner, the Son of God, though made in the similitude of sinful flesh, would, by his death on the cross, heal all true penitents; even such as had been guilty of the greatest and most deadly sins, when applying to him by faith for salvation. But see the note on Numb. xxi. 9.

Ver. 16. *For God so loved the world,*] Our Lord here assures Nicodemus, that men owed the unspeakable happiness spoken of in the preceding verse, to the free and unutterable love of God the Father, who desired their salvation with such ardency, that he sent his only-begotten Son to bestow everlasting life on those who perseveringly believe in him; so far was he from sending him to condemn them, as he had reason to fear. This is one of those bright and heart-affecting passages in the gospel, which shines too strong to admit the least attempt at illustration in a commentator. Reader! may your soul and mine feel and experience its energy now and for ever!

Ver. 17. *For God sent not his Son—to condemn the world;*] God is often represented as an avenger in the Old Testament: and as mankind had incurred his wrath by their iniquities, it might be expected that when he sent his Son into the world, it would have been to inflict punishments upon them, as the word rendered *condemn* also implies; but, on the contrary, the Son of God was sent to *save the world* and *to give life*, as the Syriac emphatically renders it.

Ver. 18. *He that believeth on him is not condemned:*] From the gracious design of God towards the world, mentioned in the preceding verses, our Lord concludes, that they who believe on the Son of God are not condemned;

whereas they who do not believe, are condemned already for that sin; and justly, because their unbelief is owing to their own wickedness, and not to any defect in the evidences of his divine mission, which, through grace are sufficiently full to work conviction in every unprejudiced mind. The *condemnation* mentioned here, and strongly implied in ver. 15. is thought by Dr. Doddridge and many others to refer to that natural state of condemnation wherein fallen man stands. “And till men enter deeply into this important truth,” says the learned expositor just mentioned, “the Gospel may indeed be their amusement, but I see “not how it is likely to be their joy or their cure.” We may just observe, upon the expression *in the name of the only-begotten*, &c. that though the *name* of a person be frequently put for the *person himself*, yet it seems further intimated in that expression, that the person spoken of is great and magnificent, and therefore it is generally used to express either God the Father, or God the Son, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ver. 19. *And this is the condemnation,*] That is, the *cause* of condemnation; they will not receive the light of the *Logos*, the God of Christians, because they will not obey him.

Ver. 21. *He that doeth truth*] *He that practiseth truth:* that is, “is exercised in righteousness and goodness.” See Eph. v. 9. This phrase often occurs as the character of a good man: compare PL cix. 30. If. xxvi. 2. 1 Pet. i. 22. 1 John, i. 6.; and it is used with peculiar propriety, since there is really truth or falsehood in actions as well as in words. Of the same kind is the phrase *to make a lie*, used more than once by St. John, perhaps in a beautiful opposition to this before us; and if it were rendered *practiseth a lie*, that opposition would be more apparent. See Rev. xxi. 27. xxii. 15. The phrase *that they are wrought in God* signifies, that they are always agreeable to the divine nature and will, and the consequence of that union of soul with God, which is the perfection and happiness of the intelligent nature.

Such was the purport of our Lord’s discourse with Nicodemus, which we may easily believe affected him greatly. He perceived that Jesus saw into his heart, was thorough-

convinc’d,

22 ¶ After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and was baptized.

23 ¶ And John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

25 ¶ Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness,

behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 14. 18. & 33. 18. <sup>1</sup> Sam. 9. 4. <sup>2</sup> Mat. 3. 5, 6. Mark, 7. 4, 5. Luke, 3. 3, 7. <sup>3</sup> Mat. 4. 12. & 14. 3. Luke, 9. 19. 20. & 9. 7—9. <sup>4</sup> Heb. 9, 10. with Mat. 3. 11. i. e. Whether John's baptism, or the legal and Pharisaical purifications, most effectually purged away sin. <sup>5</sup> Eccl. 4. 4. Job, 5. 2. James, 4. 5. Numb. 11. 28. <sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. 3. 4. <sup>7</sup> Mat. 3. 11, 12. <sup>8</sup> Ch. 1. 7, 15, 26, 27, 28—36. <sup>9</sup> Ver. 22. <sup>10</sup> Ch. 4. 1, 2. <sup>11</sup> Heb. 5, 4. James, 1. 17. <sup>12</sup> 1 Cor. 4. 7. & 15. 20. <sup>13</sup> Or take unto himself. <sup>14</sup> Ch. 1. 20, 30, 15. Mal. 3. 1. & 4. 4, 5. Mat. 3. 11, 12. & 11. 10—12. Mark, 1. 2. Luke, 1. 17. & 3. 16. <sup>15</sup> Song, 3. 11. & 5. 1, 2. Mat. 22. 2. <sup>16</sup> 1 Cor. 11. 2. Eph. 5. 25, 27. Rev. 19. 7. Hosea, 2. 19, 20. <sup>17</sup> Luke, 2. 10, 15, 28.

convinced, and from that time forth became his disciple, defended him in the great council of which he was a member, and, with Joseph of Arimathea, paid him the honours of a funeral, when all his bosom friends had deserted him. See ch. vii. 50. xix. 39.

[Ver. 22—24. After these things] Some time after the conference with Nicodemus, Jesus and his disciples, leaving Jerusalem, went into the land of Judea, or those parts of it which were remote from Jerusalem. As he took his journey that he might have an opportunity of baptizing his disciples, that is, the persons who believed in the Messiah, it is probable he went to Bethabara beyond Jordan, John having removed thence to Enon, a place of Scythopolis, about eight miles south of Scythopolis, renowned for its waters, and where he had great conveniency for baptizing. Jesus himself never baptized any with water, as appears from ch. iv. 2. but his disciples ministered that kind of baptism in his name, and he seems probable from the 24th verse, as well as from tradition, and from many other passages in the Gospel, that St. John wrote it as a supplement to what he speaks of the Baptist's imprisonment as a martyr, and yet says nothing of his martyrdom, which he had given so large an account of his mission, cannot suppose that he would have omitted so important a circumstance, had he not known that the other evangelists had recorded it at large.

[And the Jews] It should be observed, that there were two schools, in this place and some others, does not differ from that of that nation in general, but of the country (see ver. 22.), where baptism had just then been introduced under the direction of Jesus; and where, as appears from the foregoing verses, the disciples were of Galilee, it was natural that these two schools, to bring their respective schools into competition; and that some Jews or men of Galilee, under Christ, would, by invidious conduct, be the jealousy of some Galileans baptized by John, who called all sorts of ablutions prescribed

by their teachers purifications: the subject therefore of this debate was, how Jesus, who had been himself baptized by John, came to re-baptize John's disciples, Acts, xix. 4, 5. that is, assume a greater authority than John, and virtually declare, that his baptism was inefficacious for the purposes of purification. The Baptist's disciples, though they had often heard their master speak on the subject, not understanding the subserviency of his ministry to that of Jesus, were unable to give their antagonists a satisfactory answer, so came and proposed their question to John himself. See the next verse.

[Ver. 27, 28. A man can receive nothing, &c.] "A man of God, or prophet, can assume no greater dignity and authority, than God has thought fit to confer on him: you yourselves bear me witness, even by the words you have just now made use of, describing Jesus by the character of him, to whom I bear witness, that I said I am not the Christ, &c. I never pretended to be the Messiah, as you very well know; but when you asked me, I told you, I was only his harbinger, sent before to give you notice of his coming, and to prepare you for receiving him."

[Ver. 29. He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom:] "So far am I from envying his growing fame, or the number of his disciples, that I greatly rejoice in both; just as the bridegroom's friend, who is appointed to stand and hear him converse with his bride, rejoices in the love that she expresses to him; of which love the friend forms an idea likewise, by what he hears the bridegroom say to her in return. My highest joy therefore is, that men cheerfully submit to the Messiah, and pay him all due honour." Among the Jews there is frequent mention, in the marriage ceremonies, of the *Huppha*, a canopy or place where the bridegroom used to discourse familiarly with the bride, under a covering, as the means of conciliating her esteem, which he was not supposed to have done till he came cheerfully out of the *Huppha*. This custom is preserved by the modern Jews, either before the synagogue, in



30 <sup>a</sup> He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

31 <sup>x</sup> He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

32 <sup>y</sup> And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; <sup>z</sup> and no man receiveth his testimony.

33 He that hath received his testimony <sup>a</sup> hath set to his seal that God is true.

34 <sup>b</sup> For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: <sup>c</sup> for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him*.

35 <sup>d</sup> The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

36 <sup>e</sup> He that believeth on the Son hath

<sup>a</sup> 16. 9. & 52. 14. Daniel, 2. 35. 44. Phil. 3. 8, 9. <sup>x</sup> Ch. 8. 23. 1 Cor. 15. 47. Mat. 28. 18. Phil. 2. 9—11. with ch. 1. 15, 27, 30. <sup>y</sup> Ch. 5. 20. & 8. 26. & 12. 49. & 14. 10. & 15. 15. Ver. 11. 34. <sup>z</sup> Ch. 1. 11. Ver. 11, 12. If. 53. 1. 1 Cor. 2. 14. 2 Cor. 4. 4. Heb. 2. 3. Prov. 1. 24, 25. If. 31. 11. <sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. 1. 22. 1 John, 5. 10. Rom. 3. 4. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 1. 16, 18. & 7. 16. Eph. 4. 7. <sup>c</sup> Pf. 45. 7. If. 11. 2—5. & 61. 1—3. Col. 1. 19. & 2. 3, 9. Ch. 1. 14, 16. <sup>d</sup> If. 9. 6, 7. & 49. 6, 8. & 53. 12. Pf. 2. 8. & 89. 27. Daniel. 7. 14. Mat. 11. 27. & 28. 18. Ch. 5. 22. & 17. 2. & 13. 3. Heb. 2. 8, 9. <sup>e</sup> Heb. 2. 4. 1 John, 5. 10, 12. Ch. 5. 24. & 6. 47, 54. & 1. 14. See ver. 15, 16, 18. Rom. 1. 17. Mark, 16. 16.

in a square place covered over, or, where there is no synagogue, they throw a garment over the bridegroom and the bride. While the bridegroom is engaged in this conference with the bride, his friends stand at the door or entrance; and when they hear the voice of joy from the bridegroom, a signal of his success, they immediately rejoice and spread the happy news. These circumstances appear to give light to the present passage; and as the idea of a bridegroom is more than once affixed to our Saviour, and the gospel dispensation compared to a marriage-feast, this interpretation will need no farther proof to establish it.

Ver. 30, 31. *He must increase,*] “I am not ignorant that his fame and the number of his disciples shall every day increase, while mine shall decrease; for he is a person of infinitely greater dignity than I am, possessor far more intimate knowledge of the divine will; and the discoveries which he makes thereof as far transcend mine, as heaven exceeds earth.”

Ver. 32. *What he hath seen, &c.*] In allusion to his being from above, where he enjoys the most intimate communications of his Father's counsels; *that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony;* particularly concerning the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God, and the qualifications requisite in his subjects. There is a strong resemblance between this and what our Lord himself said to Nicodemus, ver. 11. 13. As the two senses of *seeing* and *hearing* furnish us with the most certain knowledge, they are mentioned to denote the certainty of the doctrines delivered by Christ.

Ver. 33, 34. *Hath set to his seal, &c.*] Hath made a most becoming and substantial acknowledgment of the veracity of God, who by his prophets in ancient times foretold what the nature of the Messiah's kingdom would be; and who speaketh now to men by his only-begotten Son, in such a manner as he never did by any mere prophet. *For he whom God hath sent,*—that is, his only-begotten Son, *speaketh the words of God;* doctrines, which by their own native truth and light shew themselves to be the oracles of God: and which besides have the confirmation of the most extraordinary miracles; *for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.* God has given him, as man, the inspiration of the Spirit, without those limitations and interruptions wherewith they were given to all other prophets whatsoever; for in sacred scripture, as well as in profane writers, *to do, or give a thing by measure,* is to do, or give it sparingly.

See Ezek. iv. 16. Jer. xlvi. 28. We may just observe, that it was customary among the Jews, for the witness to set his seal to the testimony which he had given.

Ver. 35. *The Father loveth the Son,*] The affection which the Father bears to his only-begotten Son, is altogether different from the regard which he shewed to his other messengers. They were *servants*, and were treated as such, being endued with scanty portions of the Spirit in comparison: whereas this is God's *Son*, for which reason he *hath anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows*, and made him not the greatest *Prophet* and *Priest* only, but the greatest King also that ever was; even King and Judge universal; by whose laws men must govern their lives, and at whose bar they shall all finally be tried.

Ver. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, &c.*] “This,” says the Baptist, “is the substance, and this is the end of my whole testimony; that *he who has a lively faith in this only Son of God, hath everlasting life; hath a title to it, and the beginning of it already wrought in his soul; but he who disobeyeth the Son* (for so the Greek should be rendered) *shall not see life.*” It is of great importance to preserve a difference in the translation corresponding to that in the original, because the latter phrase explains the former, and shews that the faith to which the promise of life is annexed, is an effectual principle of sincere and unreserved obedience; and it is impossible to make one part of scripture consistent with another, unless this be taken into our idea of saving faith. “He who believes on the Son, is opposed to him who *disobeyeth the Son,*” says Dr. Heylin: “the sense of the word *faith*, which was familiarly used among the Jews when Christ and his disciples first taught, began to be perverted when St. John wrote his gospel; and therefore he guards the primitive sense by ‘the antithesis.’” The Baptist adds, *But the wrath of God abideth on him.* In scripture the word *abide* has a particular signification, denoting the adhesion and permanency of the thing which is said to *abide*. Of this signification we have an example here; for there is a *momentary wrath* of God, which quickly passeth; but his *abiding wrath* torments, and does not kill; and being once inflicted, never draws to an end. Thus the Baptist bare testimony to Jesus anew, setting forth his dignity in the plenitude of his commission, the excellency of his gifts, the nearness of his relation to God the Father as his only Son, and the greatness of his power as universal Judge.

*Infernat.*

everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

<sup>f</sup> Gal. 3. 10. Pf. 7. 11. Heb. 2. 3. & 10. 29.

*Inferences.*—How could any one do such miracles as Christ did, unless he and his doctrines were owned of God! How plain and important were the doctrines of regeneration and faith in him, which he preached as necessary to salvation! And yet how natural is it for carnal minds to misjudge of spiritual things, to disbelieve them, to be prejudiced against them, because, after all, there be something incomprehensible in them! For who here below at least, fully explain the manner of the Spirit's operations in and upon the souls of believers? Who can tell how the divine and human natures are naturally united in God manifested in the flesh, who, as Son of God, always was in heaven, whilst, as the Son of man, he was only upon earth! And O how surprising a thought of the Lord of glory's being lifted up on a cross, that he might be proposed in the gospel as a subject for a sinner's faith; and that we, under a sense of guilt and danger, as wounded by sin, might look and be as effectually healed of our soul's diseases, as the Israelites were of their desperate wounds, by looking on a brazen serpent in the wilderness! And how infinitely rich and free is that love which is the original of salvation, and has displayed itself in the gift of the Holy Spirit to Gentiles as well as Jews, that who ever believes in him may have everlasting life! With respect to them, and preference to all others, should we think of Christ our only Saviour, who is originally from above, and anointed with the Holy Ghost without measure, who performed his greatest performances on earth, who is the object of the highest love, and who is the great Lord and Head of the church, and is Head over all things for its welfare, what an honour and delight is it to be entrusted with the commission of spousing souls to him! What his servants do in obedience to his authority, is as valid as if it were personally by himself; and they should go on in the discharge of it, according to the ability and opportunity that is afforded them for it, without envying others who excel them in the use of his graces and success; as knowing that no man can do any good thing for the service of others, or the redemption of his own soul, except it be given him from heaven, which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that the fruit of the Spirit is Spirit. But, alas! how often are we concerned are formalists in religion about an outward profession of faith, and purification, than about being baptised with the Holy Spirit, and having an experience in the power of a real work of heart-changing grace!—How often are we guilty of unbelief! It rejects the testimony of God for his Son, and is envious at Christ's glory; it is full of unreasoning prejudices against him, it is full of evil ways, and unwillingness to be reformed, it is full of a hatred of the pure light of God's word, it would disturb the soul's peace and pleasure in the use of his graces, and is full of beloved lusts! And how dreadful are the consequences of it, it binds all a man's other sins upon him, remedies, and subjects him to condemnation, and is full of the highest aggravations of guilt! But O

the excellence of true faith! It receives the Lord Jesus, and sets to its seal that God is true, and depends upon his faithfulness for the performance of all that he has said about his Son, and said to us in a way of grace and mercy through him; it rejoices in the prosperity of his interest, in the espousal of souls to him, and in every thought of his being exalted; it proceeds from a desire of coming to the light of God's word, and from the discovery that is thereby made of the sinner's own vileness, and of the relief there is in Christ for him, and from a willingness to be saved from sin, as well as from the curse of the law, and the wrath of God; and by means of this faith the sentence of condemnation is reversed, and the soul receives a title to eternal life. Which of these states is mine? and in which of them am I likely to be found at death and judgment?

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have a singular instance of a great man who submitted to be saved by grace.

1. *There was a man*, of great note and eminence, of the Pharisees, the sect which ever expressed the bitterest enmity against our Lord, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, a member of the Sanhedrim; *the same came to Jesus by night*, solicitous to have some particular discourse with him concerning the things that he had heard him preach; and he chose this time, as some suppose, out of shame and cowardice, as not daring to appear publicly with him, for fear of the Jews; or because this was the season when Christ would be most at leisure, being engaged all the day in public; and when he might more freely and at large talk over with him the important point concerning which he desired to be resolved. With great respect he addressed him, and said unto him, *Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.* These were such credentials of his divine mission, and wrought with such notorious evidence, that the more they were examined, the more forcibly they proved the author of them sent from God. *Note;* (1.) The grace of Jesus can reach those whose condition in life is most dangerous, if they will but come to him. (2.) When the profession of the true religion is reproachful and unfashionable, some, who dare not openly avow their sentiments, approve in secret the truths which others despise, and will slip in among the faithful, if they cannot be seen, as Nicodemus, by night. (3.) Christ is come to be a teacher of babes, to lead a dark world to the light of life, and guide the erring feet of sinners into the paths of everlasting peace. May we then be humble scholars, and learn of him!

2. In consequence of the application of Nicodemus, Christ addresses him in the following instructive discourse:

[1.] On the nature and necessity of regeneration. *Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* Nicodemus, like the rest of his countrymen, tinctured with the common prejudices concerning

## C H A P. IV.

*Christ talketh with a woman of Samaria, and revealeth himself unto her: his disciples marvel; he declareth to them his zeal for God's glory. Many Samaritans believe on him: he departeth into Galilee, and healeth the ruler's son that lay sick at Capernaum.*

[Anno Domini 30.]

**W**HEN therefore <sup>a</sup> the Lord knew how the Pharisees <sup>b</sup> had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 1. 7. 14, 18. & 3. 35. & 13. 13, 14. Acts, 10. 36. 7. 14, 15. Mat. 4. 12. Luke, 4. 14. Mat. 10. 23. John. 24. 32.

<sup>b</sup> Ch. 3. 1, 2, 22, 26. Luke, 17. 11. & 9. 51—53.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. 1. 17. Acts, 10. 48. Mat. 10. 5. Rom. 15. 8.

<sup>d</sup> Ch. 3. 22. Mat. Gen. 33. 19. & 43. 22.

cerning the Messiah's kingdom, supposed that the seed of Abraham would be all admitted to an honourable place in it. But Christ strikes at that radical mistake; assuring him, that no man's external privileges, religious profession, or moral attainments, availed any thing, if his heart and life were not effectually wrought upon by the regenerating influences of the Spirit of God. For, as we are born by nature corrupt and polluted with sin, and spiritually dead in trespasses, we must receive another, a new, a divine nature, the work of God. And unless this supernatural change pass upon us, we can neither understand the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, nor receive any of the blessings and benefits which it was designed to convey to us. Nicodemus, mistaking Christ's meaning, and understanding the words in a literal sense, expresses his surprise at the assertion, not comprehending how it was possible for a man, old as he was, to pass a second time through his mother's womb. In answer to his objection, Christ enforces and explains his declarations, *Verily, verily I say unto thee, a truth which is a most infallible certainty, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*: Christ's word, however strange and unintelligible to the natural man, cannot change. There can be no entrance into glory, without that new birth which gives a meetness for it. The soul, by the powerful agency of the Spirit of God, must be cleansed from its natural pollution, as water purifies the body from any filth which it has contracted. And the necessity of such a spiritual change is evident, because *that which is born of the flesh, is flesh*: could a man a thousand times pass through the womb, he would still come forth with the same corrupted nature, unfit for the kingdom of God; man's nature being utterly sensual in his mere fallen state, and all his appetites, delights, and pursuits being after the flesh, and the things which gratify his bestial part: so that the soul in this condition is utterly enslaved, and the whole man flesh, and not spirit. Whilst, on the contrary, *that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit*: when the Holy Ghost works effectually on the believing heart, it is refined from the dregs of sensuality, the soul is restored to spiritual understanding, and the whole man, now brought under the influence of a new, divine, implanted principle of grace, becomes spiritual, in his affections, pursuits, and designs, delivered from the bondage of base lusts and vile corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, and restored to a capacity of enjoying him. *Marvel not, therefore, adds our Lord, that I said unto thee, Ye must be born*

2 (Though Jesus himself <sup>c</sup> baptized not, but his disciples,)

3 <sup>d</sup> He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

4 <sup>e</sup> And he must needs go through Samaria.

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near <sup>f</sup> to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

again; nor, though we are ignorant of the manner in which this divine change is wrought, is that any objection to the thing: for, in the world around us, we see effects, of the immediate causes of which we are ignorant. As for instance, *The wind bloweth where it listeth, without controul from any creature, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth*: the effects produced by it are sensibly felt: but why it blows at one time stronger than at another, why from one point rather than another, where it begins and where it ends, these are secrets known only to him who bringeth the winds out of his treasuries. *So is every one that is born of the Spirit*: so mysterious are the operations of the Divine Spirit in his first movements and operations on the believing heart, when he bears down every obstruction, quickening, comforting, sanctifying the believer's soul, and giving him a blessed experience of his divine power and influence; though he works mysteriously, and leaves the manner of his operations still a secret to us.

[2.] When yet Nicodemus appeared ignorant, and questioned how these things could be; for to the natural man the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness: Christ proceeds to reprove his dulness, and to enlarge on the certainty and sublimity of those glorious truths which he had advanced: *Art thou a master of Israel, a famed teacher, and professor of divinity, and knowest not these things? Note*: It is a shame for those who undertake to instruct others, to be ignorant themselves, and, while they affect to pass for men of deep learning and erudition, to be unacquainted with the most important truths that pertain unto salvation. *Verily, verily I say unto thee, We speak that we do know*: the truths that Christ taught, were of infallible certainty; he spoke as commissioned by his Father, and in correspondence with what all the prophets and John had before declared: *and testify that we have seen*: not speaking on hearsay, but on the most undoubted evidence, and with the clearest assurance: *and ye receive not our witness*: such was the blindness, such the prejudices, that had spread over the Jews in general, and the Pharisees and rulers in particular, that they refused to receive and embrace the doctrines of salvation taught by the Son of God, though so infallibly true, so plainly delivered, and attested by such miracles: so that they were without excuse,—as all infidels are, who refuse to submit to the evidence of revelation. *If therefore I have told you earthly things, illustrating, with the familiar instances of water and the wind, the necessity of a*

spiritual

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus fat thus on the well: and it was about<sup>h</sup> the therefore, being<sup>e</sup> wearied with his journey, sixth hour.

<sup>e</sup> Heb. 4. 15. Rom. 8. 3.

<sup>h</sup> Mid-day. Mat. 27. 45. Mark, 15. 33. Luke, 13. 44. Ch. 19. 14. & 11. 9.

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which performs  
to any other

spiritual change in the hearts of sinners here below, and ye believe not, comprehend not the meaning, nor give credit to the truths advanced, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? of the more sublime doctrines of the gospel, the amazing union of the divine and human natures, the design of the incarnation of the Son of God; his sufferings, death, and exaltation; the nature of his spiritual kingdom, and of the beatific vision? how much more must these be mysterious, when delivered in language suitable to the vast subject, if the plainer truths appear so difficult to be understood? For instance, *No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven*: the prophets of God indeed had spoken under a divine inspiration, and what they said came from heaven; but none of them ever spoke of their own knowledge, nor had been with God in glory, acquainted with all the secrets of his will; this was the distinguished privilege of the Son of man, the Messiah, who from eternity lay in the bosom of the Father, and was now come down from heaven, as a teacher eminently sent from God; and who, though upon earth, was *even then the Son of man which is in heaven*; though in his human nature he stood and talked with Nicodemus, his divine nature filled heaven and earth, was every where present, and, in virtue of that communication of properties which subsists between the two natures, the Son of man, though on earth, was, as God, in heaven; that which was done by him in one nature being ascribed to him in the other. Note; (1.) There are mysteries above our comprehension, which are to be received on the evidence of God's word. Where reason fails, faith must be exercised. (2.) In all the humiliations of the Son of man, we must never forget that he is unchangeably the same, God over all, blessed for ever. [3.] As the great prophet, he proceeds to describe the end of his incarnation, and the eternal blessedness of those who truly and perseveringly believe in him. He came to seek and to save that which was lost, to heal our mortal wounds, and to recover our perishing souls. (1.) *He came to heal our mortal wounds*, as the antitype of the brazen serpent which Moses in the wilderness lifted up, that those who were stung by the fiery serpents might look and live. *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life.* (2.) We are mortally stung by the old fiery serpent Satan, the deadly poison of sin has been diffused through nature; the wound is incurable, the torment intolerable and eternal, unless more than human help and healing be vouchsafed to us. (2.) Christ is the only hope of the sinner, the brazen serpent lifted up, for the healing of sinners, on the pole of the everlasting gospel, as crucified on a tree, but now exalted to the throne, bright-shining from the beams of grace on every miserable soul that turns its eye of faith towards him. (3.) It is looking to him who performs the wondrous cure. The soul that looks to any other physician, or refuses this simple method

of cure, *Look unto me, and be ye saved*, Isa. xlv. 22. perishes without remedy; while faith infallibly brings health and healing: for, (4.) However obnoxious we are by sin to the wrath of God, however deep our guilt, or aggravated our iniquities, he is a Saviour to the uttermost: whoever looks to him, shall live, though, like the dying thief, reduced to the last gasp; not only the chief of sinners shall be rescued from the eternal ruin which he justly apprehends and fears, but, if he persevere in cleaving to Christ, shall have *eternal life*, all the bliss and blessedness of glory, through the salvation which is in Jesus Christ. (2.) He came to save our lost souls by the sacrifice of himself. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* (1.) Christ is the universal Saviour, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also; and, as his free salvation is preached to all, whoever will is invited to come to him. They who reject his calls, sin against their own mercies. (2.) He is the *only-begotten Son of God*, which bespeaks his infinite dignity and all-sufficiency to save. (3.) The love of God in thinking upon us in our ruined state, and sending his Son to be a propitiation for our sins, is the astonishment of angels, and should be matter of our increasing wonder, praise, and adoration. (4.) All who by faith receive the Lord Jesus, as the Son of God and the Redeemer of lost souls, placing their whole dependence on his infinite merit and intercession, are sure to obtain the remission of all their sins. *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world*, as the Jews supposed their Messiah would destroy the Gentile nations, and exalt their own; *but that the world through him might be saved*. Even the vilest and most guilty, who believe in him, whether Jew or Gentile, may now through him obtain salvation; while out of him, ruin and despair must seize the whole fallen race. *He that believeth on him is not condemned: there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*; no charge lies against those whom God justifieth through faith in the Blood of his Son. *But*, (5.) Destruction inevitable and eternal must be the portion of those who neglect or despise so great a salvation; *he that believeth not the gospel preached unto them, whether Jew or Gentile, is condemned already*; lies at present under the curse which is the wages of sin, and without repentance will as assuredly be lost, as when the sentence shall be executed in the great day, *because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God*. Unbelief is the great damning sin: there can be no cure for those who reject the only remedy; and when God hath been so rich in grace, as to give his only-begotten Son, the baseness of the ingratitude in rejecting him cannot but bring aggravated guilt and perdition on the sinner's soul. *And this is the greatest and most fatal cause of their condemnation, that light is come into the world, the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, in which he shines as the sun of righteousness arisen to guide our feet into the ways of peace: and men, notwithstanding, loved darkness rather than light.* The Jews held fast their corrupt tra-  
ditions;

7 There cometh \* a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto

\* An inhabitant of Shechem, called Sychar, i. e. drunkennes.

ditions; the Gentiles, their idolatrous superstitions; and both shunned the light of truth, which made manifest and condemned their works of darkness, *because their deeds were evil*; therefore do they lie under the divine wrath; and such wilful ignorance, and obstinate rejection of the truth, must needs fill up the measure of their iniquities. (6.) This then will be the test between the wilfully impenitent and the sincere inquirer after truth. *For every one that doeth evil*, makes it his practice and his delight, and is wedded to his sins, *hateth the light*, his carnal mind is at enmity with Christ and his gospel; *neither cometh to the light*, but shuns the means of grace, the ministrations of the faithful, and the company and converse of such whose words and works would be a rebuke to his darkness; *lest his deeds should be reproved*; lest his darling corruptions should be held up to him in their own hideous form, his danger faithfully set before him, and his conscience wounded with remorse. *But he that doeth truth*, in simplicity following the mind of God, as far as it is revealed to him, open to conviction, and willing to be searched, *cometh to the light* of God's word, desirous to know, and disposed to follow it, however contrary to his own natural inclinations or worldly interelts; *that his deeds may be made manifest*, his heart examined, his principles brought to the test, his mind enlightened, and his conduct regulated; so that it may appear he is now under the influence of a regenerate spirit, designing in all his works the divine glory, and evidencing *that they are wrought in God*, by his gracious influence, according to his holy will, and in a state of union and communion with him. Blessed and happy are the people who are in such a case!

2dly, When our Lord had finished his discourse with Nicodemus, we are told,

1. Whither he went, and what he did. He left Jerusalem, and travelled into the country of Judea, where he continued some time, preaching the gospel of the kingdom; and by the ordinance of baptism, which his apostles administered, admitted those who professed their faith in him into the number of his avowed disciples.

2. John continued his ministry in another part of the country with success. He did not join with Jesus, lest their enemies should pretend that there was a combination between them; nor did he desist from his labours, though he knew his Superior was now gone forth to minister, but continued to preach and baptize all who came to him; having fixed himself at a place where were many streams of water, which rendered it convenient to administer baptism to the multitudes which resorted to him; for as yet *he was not cast into prison*, as he shortly afterwards was, and a period put to his farther usefulness. *Note*; The work of the ministry is wide; there is room for the exercise of all our several talents, nor must any be discouraged by their own comparative inferiority: they are suited for their place, and may hope to see their labours successful.

3. A contest arose between some of John's disciples and

the Jews, concerning *purifying*. [See the Annotations.] Puzzled with the difficulty which embarrassed them, John's disciples carry the case to their master, and, jealous for his honour, and their own who were connected with him, report with concern what they had lately heard, *and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan*, and, among others, received baptism; *to whom thou barest witness*, pointing him out with peculiar distinction; *behold, the same baptizeth*, setting up himself as a rival to thee; and all men come to him. They look upon it as a piece of presumption in Jesus to assume the Baptist's office, and ungrateful to make use of the testimony which John had borne, in prejudice to him: nor could they, without envy, behold their master eclipsed by him whom they regarded as lately his disciple, and as one of themselves. So ready are good men to be under the temptation of a party-spirit, and to feel unbecoming jealousies and risings of envy against superior excellence, which seems to eclipse their own.

4. John's answer shewed what spirit he was of. Far from envying Jesus as his rival, he rejoices in his success; and, confirming the testimony that he had before borne to him, cheerfully turns over to him all his interest in Israel.

[1.] *John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.* God gives gifts to his ministers severally as he will. If he is pleased to bestow more on one than another, there is no room for complaint: whatever our measure is, it is a matter of favour to us, and we have reason to be thankful, nor ought to envy the superior honours or usefulness of others: and this consideration should, in every case, silence every murmur of discontent or envy.

[2.] He appeals to what he had uniformly advanced from the beginning. *Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.* All the honour that he had ever assumed, was that of being his harbinger, and going before the face of the Lord to prepare his way: if therefore he was now arrived, his forerunner, far from being grieved, must rejoice in it. *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom*; Christ hath alone the right over his church, and to him must the gathering of the people be. He is come from heaven to espouse it to himself, the heavenly bridegroom. There can be no reason therefore for murmurs or jealousy; but, far otherwise, *the friend of the bridegroom*, as he was, *standeth and heareth him*, waiting upon him as his attendant, helping forward his interests, and desiring to advance his honour, *rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice*, when he comes to take his bride, and issues his orders and institutions to those who wait in his train. *This mystery therefore is fulfilled*, to hear that Christ appears publicly, inviting sinners to come to him; and that multitudes flock to him, embracing the offers of his grace. And thus does every faithful minister stand before the great Bridegroom of souls, to receive his commands, and deliver his messages of love to his church; delighted to behold the happy effects produced by them; and rejoicing greatly

him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

2 Kings, 17. 24—41. Ezra, iv. v. Neh. iv. vi. Ch. 8. 48. Luke, 9. 51—53. Acts, 10. 28.

greatly in every soul converted to Jesus, and brought by faith and love to cleave to him alone.

[3.] Far from envying the rising glory of his Lord, John beholds with pleasure the fulfilment of the divine will, *He must increase, but I must decrease*; his fame must spread, his glory be manifested, his disciples multiply; and to him does John gladly turn over all his interest, content to fade before his superior brightness, as the morning star disappears before the rising sun; and well pleased to see that kingdom of the Messiah established and increasing, which must spread from pole to pole, and endure to the end of time. And to behold this, cannot but give the most singular delight to every faithful minister. The glory of his person, and the surpassing excellence of his office, cannot but give him this superiority. *He that cometh from above, is above all*: his nature and original being divine, he must needs have the undisputed precedency, and supreme authority, over all other messengers sent from God, who speak only in his name, and by his commission.

*He that is of the earth, and such are the greatest saints and prophets, is earthly, and speaketh of the earth*: as he is sprung from the dust, and must return to the dust, he is naturally attached to earthly things; his conceptions low and grovelling; and, when even under divine inspiration, unable adequately to express the sublime mysteries of infinite wisdom; while *he that cometh from heaven is above all*.

Contrasted with the teachings of Jesus, in whom for eternity dwelt all the treasures of wisdom, as being one of the sacred self-existent Godhead, the wisdom of the wise is weakness, and their speech not to be compared with his preaching. And the reason is evident, because *what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth*, from the most intimate knowledge of the divine nature and councils, both as God incarnate, and in the human nature possessing the Spirit without measure. But such was the blindness and obstinacy of those to whom he spoke, that, though he was greatly attended, and John's disciples apprehended that all who followed him believed in him, he lets them know the case was far otherwise: *no man receiveth his testimony; none, comparatively speaking*; so few of the multitudes who came to him would be found his real disciples.

Blissful and happy, however, are those who receive his gospel in the light and love of it; for *he that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true*. He subscribes the faithfulness and veracity of God, in having fulfilled the prophecies concerning the Messiah; and embraces, with full confidence of their completion, the gracious promises of his gospel, as being Yea and Amen in Christ.

And herein God is glorified, when we trust our rising hopes upon the word that he has delivered to us *Son*; for *he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of all his language* (spoke the Divinity resident in him; no word of human infirmity ever dropped from his mouth) *for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him*. All other prophets, who were sent of God, possessed but a part of the Spirit, and only spoke under his immediate

inspiration on some particular occasions, being at other times left to speak *their own words*; but he in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, ever spoke the *words of God*. *The Father loveth the Son* with a peculiar and transcendent regard, as being possessed with the same nature and perfections. He delights in his Son's undertaking as Mediator, *and hath given all things into his hand*; investing him in his human nature with all power and authority in heaven and in earth. All the great affairs of the kingdom of providence, grace, and glory, are committed to his management, that his enemies may feel his vengeance; that his faithful ones may experience his blessing, protection, and care; and all at last appear before him as their eternal judge. *He that believeth therefore on the Son, receives him as manifest in the flesh, and rests his hopes on the rich grace revealed in the gospel alone, hath everlasting life*; he shall not only hereafter, if faithful unto death, be put in possession of it, but has already in himself the beginning and foretastes of it: *and, on the contrary, he that believeth not the Son, rejecteth his divine authority and mission, incredulous of his word, and disobedient to his will, shall not see life*: while he remains under the power of unbelief, he is dead in trespasses and sins, and nothing but misery inconceivable and eternal awaits him, because *the wrath of God, which is for ever wrath to come, abideth on him*. How terrible is the end of all who believe not God, and obey not the gospel of his dear Son!

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1—3. *When therefore the Lord knew, &c.*] The Baptist's imprisonment happened while our Lord was in Judea (see Mark, vi. 17., &c.) where he continued till the fame of his doctrine, disciples, and miracles, reaching Jerusalem, gave umbrage to the Pharisees. These men, claiming it as the privilege of their sect to direct the consciences of the people, were enraged to find numbers of them acknowledging as the Messiah one whose birth and fortune so little suited the notions which they had taught concerning the great deliverer of the nation; wherefore, to shun the effects of their malice, Jesus, who knew all that passed, retired with his disciples into Galilee. His presence it seems was necessary there, as the ministry of his forerunner in that country was now brought to a period. The evangelist observes, ver. 2. that *Jesus himself baptized not, which perhaps he omitted to do, because he did not choose to baptize in his own name, and because it was of more importance to preach than to baptize*. (1 Cor. i. 17.) Besides, it might have given those who were baptized by him, occasion to value themselves above others; as happened in the church of Corinth, where the brethren valued themselves upon the character of the person who had baptized them. Perhaps too this might be partly to avoid importunate inquiries whether he was the Messiah, and partly to prevent those prejudices which might have arisen against the more perfect form of baptism afterwards instituted, if any had received this less perfect

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest <sup>k</sup> the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou

wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee <sup>l</sup> living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, <sup>m</sup> thou

<sup>k</sup> If. 9. 6. & 42. 6. & 49. 6, 8. & 55. 3, 4. Pf. 84. 11. If. 44. 3, 4. Ezek. 36. 27. Ch. 3. 16. 1 Cor. 1. 30. Rom. 8. 32. 1 Jer. 2. 14.  
If. 12. 3. & 44. 5, 4. Ver. 14. Ch. 6. 35. & 7. 38, 39. Zech. 13. 1. & 14. 8. Rev. 22. 1, 17. <sup>m</sup> Ch. 3. 4. 1 Cor. 2. 14.

perfect baptism from Christ himself. Indeed the baptism properly his, was that of the Holy Ghost.

*Ver. 4, 5. And he must needs go through Samaria.*] In his way to Galilee, Jesus was obliged to pass through Samaria, where one evening, being wearied with his journey, he sat down by Jacob's well, not far from the city of Sychar, which the evangelist tells us was near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now if, as Mr. Maundrell conjectures, the plain beginning at Jacob's well was part of that parcel, Sychar might justly be said to be nigh to it, though it was as far distant as the present Naplosa, which is about a mile from it; but if Sychar in our Lord's time, as is probable, extended further towards the well than Naplosa does at present, the propriety of the evangelist's expression will appear yet more fully. It seems evident, however, from this history, that Sychar was at some distance from the well: for the disciples are said to have gone away into the city to buy meat, ver. 8. while the woman talked with Jesus at the well; and ver. 30. we are told that the Samaritans, on hearing what the woman said concerning Jesus, went out of the city, and came to see him, ver. 40. Besides, that the town was at some distance from the well, seems highly probable from the earnestness wherewith the woman begged Jesus to give her such water as would prevent her from being athirst, and from coming thither to draw. It seems, her coming from the town to the well was a great labour, from which she wished to be free. The name of this place was originally Sichem, but was changed into Sychar by the Jews, as a name of reproach; for Sychar signifies, in the Syriac language, a drunkard and a liar.

*Ver. 6. Now Jacob's well was there.*] Mr. Maundrell, in his Travels, gives the following account of Jacob's well: "About one-third of an hour from Naplosa (the ancient Sychar, as it is termed in the New Testament) stood Jacob's well, famous not only on account of its author, but much more for the memorable conference which our blessed Lord had there with the woman of Samaria. If it should be inquired whether this be the very place it is pretended to be, seeing it may be suspected to stand too remote from Sychar for the woman to come and draw water, we may answer, that in all probability the city extended farther in former times than it does now, as may be conjectured from some pieces of a very thick wall, the remains perhaps of the ancient Sichem, still to be seen not far from hence. Over it stood formerly a large church, erected by that great and devout patroness of the Holy Land, the Empress Irene; but of this the voracity of time, assisted by the hands of the Turks, has left nothing but a few foundations remaining. The well is covered at present with an old stone vault, into which you are let down by a very straight hole; and then removing a broad flat stone, you discover the well itself. It is dug in a firm rock, is about

"three yards in diameter, and thirty-five in depth, five of which we found full of water. This confutes a story commonly told to travellers, who do not take the pains to examine the well; namely, 'that it is dry all the year round, except on the anniversary of that day in which our blessed Saviour sat upon it, but then bubbles up with abundance of water.' At this well the narrow valley of Sichem ends, opening itself into a wide field, which probably is part of the piece of ground given by Jacob to his son Joseph. It is watered by a fresh stream running between it and Sichem, which makes it exceed verdant and fruitful, that it may well be looked upon as a standing token of the kindness of that good patriarch to the best of sons." See Gen. xviii. 22.

*Jesus therefore—sat thus on the well*] Sat down immediately by the well. Doddrige. Whitby says "Sat down thus, means, weary as he was." And it was about the sixth hour, says the evangelist, that is, about six in the evening, and not, as commentators have generally thought, in the middle of the day, or at high noon; for in those countries the women never draw water in the middle of the day, but always about sun-setting, as is evident from Gen. xxiv. 11. Wherefore, as the woman came to draw water while Jesus was sitting by the well, it cannot be the Jewish but the Roman sixth hour, of which the sacred historian speaks. See on Ch. i. 39. By this time, as the verse informs us, Jesus was fatigued with his journey; and therefore, before he proceeded, he sent his disciples to the nearest town for refreshment, as there was no place upon the road where he could meet with any accommodation. It may be objected, that the circumstances of the history oblige us to suppose, that this journey through Samaria was made so late in the year, that the transactions could not happen at six in the evening. But it may be proved, that when Jesus preached in the synagogue of Nazareth, after leaving Samaria, it was about the beginning of September; whence it will appear, that he travelled through Samaria in August: if so, all the particulars here related may have happened in the time allotted to them on this supposition: for when Jesus sat down by the well, it was about the sixth hour, perhaps near half an hour before it; and from that time till it was dark, was sufficient for all the transactions mentioned in this history.

*Ver. 7. There cometh a woman of Samaria, &c.*] An inhabitant of the country, not the town of Samaria; for Sebaste, the ancient Samaria, according to Mr. Maundrell, is about two hours or six miles distant from Sychar, consequently about seven miles from the well; a distance by far too great for one, even in that country, to come and fetch water. Though Jesus did not choose to go to the town himself, he sent his disciples thither to buy meat; for it seems the Jews might buy what they would of the Samaritans, as they might likewise from heathens; but they were not to accept of any thing from them in the way

Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof

himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water

Ch. 8. 53. If. 49. 7. & 53. 2, 3.

2 Kings, 17—24.

Ch. 6. 27, 58.

If. 49. 10. & 58. 11.

Ch. 7. 38, 39. & 5. 27, 35.

68. & 12. 50. & 17. 2, 3. & 20. 31. & 10. 10. Rom. 5. 21. & 6. 23.

John, 5. 20. with Gal. 6. 14. Pf. 4. 6, 7. & 27. 4. & 73. 25, 26. & 147.

way of beneficence, (see on ver. 9.) that being a crime, in their opinion, equal to the eating of swine's flesh; so bitter was the animosity which subsisted between the Samaritans and the Jews! See Ch. viii. 48. and the note on Luke, x. 33.

Ver. 9. For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Have no friendly intercourse, &c. This must be the meaning of εὐχρηστία here; for it is evident from ver. 8. that the Jews had some dealings with them. It has been frequently observed, that many causes concurred to occasion this inveterate hatred of the Jews towards the Samaritans; such as their foreign extract,—and the early mixture of superstition and idolatry in their religion, 2 Kings, xvii. 24, &c.—the injurious manner in which they treated the Jews after their return from the captivity, Ezra, iv. 1—6. Neh. vi. 1—14. and especially their building a temple on mount Gerizim, which they made the centre of their worship, in opposition to that at Jerusalem: and perhaps nothing contributed more to expose them to the contempt and abhorrence of the Jews, than the infamous offer which they made to Antiochus, of dedicating that temple to Jupiter, and admitting the rites of his idolatrous worship, at a time when the Jews were suffering the utmost extremities in defence of their religion. We may observe, it is not said, that the Samaritans had no dealings with the Jews, but that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans; whence it is natural to conclude, that the enmity was greatest on the side of the Jews. As a proof of this, see a remarkable passage in Eccles. i. 25, 26.

Ver. 10. Jesus answered,—if thou knewest the gift of God,] If thou knewest what an opportunity God hath put into thine hand, of receiving the greatest blessing that ever was bestowed, as well as who, and how great a person, he is that speaks to thee; instead of scrupling to grant him so small a favour, thou wouldst surely have asked him: (for such the force of the original) and he, without objecting to thee on account of the people to whom thou belongest, would readily have given thee living water; far better than that thou art now drawing: by which our Lord intimated his ability and readiness to communicate those influences of God's holy Spirit, which afford the noblest refreshment to the soul, and are therefore often described by water. It is certain, that the phrase living water, signifies in many authors spring water, or running water, in opposition to that which stagnates; yet as our Lord elsewhere, in a remarkable passage recorded by this evangelist, Ch. vi. 51. himself living bread, because by feeding upon him life is to be obtained,—it is proper to adhere literally to the original in the version; though there is no doubt that the woman understood our Lord, not of living spiritual water, but of some fine spring water, which flowed so

easily as not to need the pains of drawing, and was, on this account, at least, preferable to that of Jacob's well: and our Lord's reply, ver. 13, 14. shews that the simile would hold in that respect. Our Lord, on this occasion, demonstrated the greatness of his condescension and benevolence; for though this woman was a person of an infamous character, and though he himself was pressed with thirst, he delayed refreshing himself that he might bring her who was spiritually dead, to the water of life. Comp. Lev. xiv. 6. Jer. ii. 13.

Ver. 11. Thou hast nothing to draw with, &c.] Literally, Thou hast no bucket. See ver. 28. and on ver. 6. In the dry countries of the East, the inhabitants find themselves obliged to carry with them great leathern bottles of water, which they fill from time to time as they have opportunity; but what is very extraordinary, in order to be able to do this, they, in many places, are obliged to carry lines and buckets with them. So Thevenot, in giving an account of what he provided for his journey from Egypt to Jerusalem, tells us, "He did not forget leathern buckets to draw water with." Rauwolf goes farther; for he gives us to understand, that the wells of inhabited countries there, as well as in the deserts, have no implements for drawing of water, but what those bring with them who come thither; for, speaking of the well or cistern of Bethlehem, he says, "It is a good rich cistern, deep and wide; for which reason, the people that go to dip for water, are provided with small leathern buckets and a line, as is usual in those countries; and so the merchants, who go in caravans through great deserts in far countries, provide themselves also with these, because in these countries you find more cisterns or wells, than springs that lie high." In how easy a light, says the author of the Observations, doth this place the Samaritan woman's talking of the depth of Jacob's well, and her remarking, that she did not observe our Lord had any thing to draw with, though he had spoken of presenting her with water.

Ver. 12. Art thou greater than our Father Jacob,] "Are you a person of greater power, or more in favour with God, than our common father Jacob, that you can procure water for yourself by supernatural means?—He was obliged to dig this well for the supply of himself and his family; can you create water?"—The mention of Jacob as a progenitor was highly proper in an address to a Jew; who might be supposed to reverence that patriarch in the highest manner, as well as the Samaritans, and could never be suspected guilty of the least disrespect to so venerable a name.

Ver. 13, 14. Whosoever drinketh of this water, &c.] "This water can allay the pain of thirst only for a little while, because, though it be drunk ever so plentifully, the appetite



that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said, I have

no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had \* five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

\* Ch. 6. 26, 34. James. 4. 3. 1 Cor. 2. 14. Pl. 4. 6. monger. Luke, 7. 16. & 24. 19. Ch. 6. 14. & 7. 40. for Manasseh, a Jewish priest, who had married his daughter. 69. & 87. 1, 2. & 132. 13, 14.

\* Who, it seems, had divorced her for whoredom, and now she lived with another whoremonger. Gen. 12. 6. & 33. 18—20. There Sanballat had, on mount Gerizim, built a temple for Manasseh, a Jewish priest, who had married his daughter. Deut. 12. 5, 11. 1 Kings, 9. 3. 2 Chr. 6. 6. & 7. 12, 16. Pl. 48. 1, 2. & 70. 68.

“ appetite will return again; but *whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst*; shall at no time be subject to any vehement painful sensations, arising from unmortified irregular appetites; but the water, &c. shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life; shall yield him divine satisfaction now, and shall be the source of happiness to the faithful to all eternity in heaven; where they shall feel none of the bodily appetites or wants so troublesome to men in this life.” Thus Jesus, under the image of *living, or spring water*, taken from the well beside which he was sitting, beautifully described, as his manner was, the efficacy of the influences of the Spirit of God; for, as water quenches thirst, so these, by quieting the agitation, and cooling the fervency of earthly desires, beget an unspeakable inward peace. By this image he also set forth the plenitude and perpetuity of the celestial joys, flowing from holy dispositions, produced by the influences of the Spirit of God. For these, by an innate power, satisfying all the capacities and desires of the soul, render it so completely happy, that it is not able to form a wish or a thought of any thing better.

Ver. 15. *Sir, give me this water,*] The woman still ignorant of his spiritual meaning, and understanding him only of natural water, says to him with great respect, *Sir, King, Lord*,—I claim thy promise, *Give me this water*. The title which she gives our Lord, though a Jew, and as such esteemed an inveterate enemy to her nation, indicates great reverence and delicacy, which indeed is visible in her whole behaviour on this occasion.

Ver. 18. *He whom thou now hast, is not thy husband*:] This can imply no less than that she was not married to the man she now lived with; for Christ seems to have allowed the other five to have been husbands, though her separation from some of the former, and her marriage with the rest, had probably been unlawful.

Ver. 19. *I perceive that thou art a prophet*.] To find a person who was a perfect stranger, and who, on account of the national animosity, could not be suspected of having any intercourse with her townsmen, or with the Samaritans in general, discovering, nevertheless, the most secret particulars of her life; made so sensible an impression on her mind, that she could not but confess such a degree of knowledge more than natural; and, consequently,

that the person possessed of it was a prophet, and had it communicated to him by divine inspiration. It is worth our while to trace the gradual progress of this woman's conviction: she at first gives him the appellation of a Jew only; she then wonders that he should so far have laid aside the prejudice of his nation, as to ask a favour of a Samaritan; the next calls him *Sir* or *Lord*; she then acknowledges his prophetic character; and, in consequence of that persuasion, proposes for his decision one of the most important questions in dispute between the two nations. When the Pharisees were reprov'd by our Lord for their hypocrisy, they furiously rejoined, *He was a Samaritan, and had a devil*; but when the Samaritan woman heard her most secret sins thus discovered, she was so far from recriminating, that she cries out, *Lord, I perceive thou art a prophet*.

Ver. 20. *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain*:] Whom the woman meant by the appellation of *fathers*, is a point much disputed: they who think that she meant the Ephraimites, from whom the Samaritans pretended their descent, hold that the mountain on which they worshipped was mount Ephraim, where was Shiloh, the seat of the tabernacle for several years. Another account, more generally adopted, is to this effect: Sanballat, by the permission of Alexander the Great, had built a temple upon mount Gerizim, for Manasseh his son-in-law, who, for marrying Sanballat's daughter, was expelled from the priesthood, and from Jerusalem. See Neh. xiii. 28. This was the place where the Samaritans used to worship, in opposition to Jerusalem; and it was so near Sichem, the scene of this history, that a man's voice might be heard from one to the other; Judges, ix. 7. Now as Gerizim was the mount which the woman meant, it will easily appear whom she meant by the *fathers* who worshipped there. It is generally known and acknowledged, that the Samaritans, though a mixture of Jews and foreigners, pretended to derive their origin from the patriarchs, especially from Abraham, Jacob, &c. Now it appears from scripture, that Abraham and Jacob erected altars in this place, where also the blessings were pronounced in the time of Joshua; and it is probable, likewise, that it had been a place consecrated to religious worship by the inhabitants of Sichem. See Gen. xii. 6, 7. xxxiii. 18, 20. Deut. xi. 29. Josh. viii. 33.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, \* when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when

\* Mal. i. 11. 1 Tim. 2. 8. Luke, 24. 47.

† 2 Kings, 17. 29, 41. Acts, 14. 16. & 17. 23, 30.

‡ Pl. 147. 19. Rom. 3. 2. & 9. 4, 5. Heb. 7. 14.

Ver. 21. Woman, believe me, &c.] To understand the force of our Lord's reply, it will be necessary to recur to the origin of this dispute between the two nations. We shall first premise that Christ waves the decision of the question put to him by the woman, and with good reason; for he was about to destroy all local worship, by introducing a religion suited to all climates, and to be observed in all nations of the world. To talk then of the preference of this or that mountain, or to decide the point in favour of either, would have been inconsistent with his doctrine. This premised, we observe, that at the time of the migration of the Hebrews from Egypt, the whole world was sunk into idolatry; they alone were blessed with the knowledge of the true God; yet even they were perpetually relapsing into the absurdities of idol worship. Hence that load of peculiar ceremonies was imposed upon them; tending particularly, amongst other wise purposes, to the keeping them pure from idolatry, to the separating them from the worship of the Pagan nations which surrounded them, and to the confirming them in that of the true God: to this end the temple was built, and the worship established at Jerusalem. Hither the whole nation was obliged to resort at stated times, to prevent their relapse into idolatry. The Samaritans, who had divided from the Jews, had built a temple, partly for the same ends, on mount Gerizim, where they periodically performed the ceremonies enjoined by the law. These ceremonies, and this separation of Jews from Gentiles, were designed by Providence to be continued till the coming of Christ, when a glorious change was to take place. The world was prepared by higher degrees of knowledge for the reception of the gospel. This was the hour appointed for the sun of righteousness to arise: now was to be done away every circumstance and ceremony tending to keep up the former separation; nothing was to be established, save what conduced to a general union of mankind; and the peculiar, the local, and periodical worship of Jerusalem, was to be swallowed up in that more spiritual dispensation, which was designed to produce universal peace and love. In his view, we have only to read over the passage before us, to discover at once its meaning and propriety.

Ver. 22. Ye worship ye know not what:] The Samaritans worshipped the true God, and seem to have had as just notions of his perfections in general as the Jews; for they drew them from the five books of Moses, the authority of which they acknowledged. If so, the meaning of the clause in the original, can hardly be what our version affixed to it, Ye worship ye know not what; but its translation seems to be, Ye worship the Deity whom ye know; viz. "by any revelation which he has made himself to you,"—the words το θεου, the Deity, being understood, "Whereas we Jews worship the Deity, whom we know; viz. by a revelation which he has made

of himself to us;—for salvation is of the Jews:—What knowledge you have of salvation, as well as the author of salvation, cometh, by your own confession, from us;—you have your religion from us." If the reader thinks that this interpretation makes too great a supplement necessary, let him look to the following passages, particularly the words inserted in italics merely by the translators, as they stand in the common version: Mark, vii. 4, 11. Luke, vi. 22. John, i. 8. ix. 1. xv. 25. and particularly John, xviii. 28. where the original words ελλα' ινα φαγωσι το πασχα, must be rendered, But stood without, that they might eat the passover. These examples prove, that the elliptical stile is familiar to St. John; and the one last mentioned is no less peculiar than that which may be supposed in the passage under consideration. See also 2 Thess. ii. 3. where the words, that day shall not come, are necessarily supplied in our language by our translators. Some indeed give our Lord's words a more easy sense, thus: "Since God has declared that Jerusalem is the place of offering sacrifices acceptably, ye worship him without just conceptions of him, when you fancy he has chosen Gerizim." Yet it may be doubted whether the error of the Samaritans concerning the place of worship, would be reckoned by our Lord as a sufficient reason for saying of them, that they worshipped they knew not what. There are others who would paraphrase the whole passage thus: "As you take me for a prophet, believe me, that the occasion of this dispute about the place of worship, will soon be removed; sacrifices, now offered at both places, shall ere long cease for ever; a new dispensation will be opened, which will require the true disciples of it to worship in all places; every where offering up their hearts to God, and disposed to obey him in all things. When your ancestors came into this land, they knew not the manner of God's worship; and indeed knew not God himself: And even you, though better instructed, are yet, in both respects, defective in your knowledge. Knowledge is more abundant with us the people of the Jews; and from among the Jews cometh salvation, by reason of the Messiah's birth among them, who is to introduce this new dispensation, and to render a temple unnecessary, either on Gerizim, or at Jerusalem."

Ver. 23. But the hour cometh,] The thing you are chiefly concerned to know is, that a dispensation of religion is now beginning, under which all languages, countries, and places being sanctified, men are to worship God, not in Jerusalem, but in spirit; by offering the sacrifice, not of beasts, but of themselves; to love and obey him in all things, which is the truth of worship; the thing signified by every sacrifice and service enjoined in the law, and what alone was acceptable to the Father, even under the legal dispensation. See Ch. i. 14. 17.

the <sup>a</sup> true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 <sup>b</sup> God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that <sup>c</sup> Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

26 Jesus saith unto her, <sup>d</sup> I that speak unto thee am *he*.

27 ¶ <sup>e</sup> And upon this came his disciples, and <sup>f</sup> marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

28 <sup>g</sup> The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29 <sup>h</sup> Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

30 <sup>i</sup> Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

31 ¶ In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

32 But he said unto them, <sup>k</sup> I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

33 <sup>l</sup> Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?

34 Jesus saith unto them, <sup>m</sup> My meat is to

<sup>a</sup> Phil. 3. 3. Rom. 1. 9. 1f. 26. 8, 9. Pf. 62. 8. Heb. 10. 22. <sup>b</sup> 2 Cor. 3. 17. 1 Tim. 1. 17. Rom. 1. 9. Phil. 3. 3. <sup>c</sup> Ch. 1. 41. 49. Dan. 9. 24—26. 1f. 42. 1. & 11. 2, 3. & 61. 1—3. Prov. 1. 20—23. <sup>d</sup> Deut. 18. 15—18. Ver. 29, 39. <sup>e</sup> Ch. 6. 69. & 9. 37. & 10. 36. <sup>f</sup> Gen. 35. 13. Luke, 24. 31. <sup>g</sup> Luke, 7. 39. Ver. 9. <sup>h</sup> Phil. 3. 7—9. Mat. 19. 27, 29. Ver. 7. Song, 5. 10. Ads, 10. 24. & 21. 13. <sup>i</sup> Ch. 1. 42. Pf. 34. 8. & 66. 16. Rev. 22. 17. Song, 3. 11. & 5. 10—16. Ver. 18—25. <sup>j</sup> Gen. 40. 10. 1f. 11. 10. & 47. 6. & 60. 8. & 45. 22, 23. Pf. 22. 27. & 68. 22. <sup>k</sup> Job, 23. 12. Pf. 19. 10. & 40. 8. Ver. 34. Ch. 6. 38. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 16. 6—7. Luke, 9. 45. Ch. 12. 16. & 3. 12. <sup>m</sup> Pf. 40. 8. Ch. 17. 4. & 6. 38. with 1f. 61. 1—3. Luke, 19. 10. It delights my soul to convert these Samaritans.

Ver. 24. *God is a Spirit, &c.*] As a further answer to the woman's question, our great Teacher delivered a doctrine which may justly be called his own, as it exhibits an idea of the Supreme Being, and of the worship due to him, far more sublime than the best things which the philosophers have said on that subject. *God is a Spirit, &c.* "God is the supreme mind or intelligence, who by one act sees the thoughts of all other intelligences, and therefore may be worshipped in every place. And the worship of God must partake of his nature: his nature is spiritual; his worship should be so likewise. Faith and love, therefore, constitute the true spiritual worship which we owe to the Supreme Being, and which cannot but be acceptable to him, wherever offered."

Ver. 25. *I know that Messias cometh,*] This, as well as ver. 29. and 42. plainly proves, both that the Samaritans expected the Messiah, and that they concluded he would be a prophet. The general expectation which now prevailed, that a great prince was to arise in Judea, together with Moses's prophecy concerning him, constrained the Samaritans to a right sentiment with respect to the Messiah's nation: for though they contended that the true place of acceptable worship was in their country, they did not assume the honour of being progenitors of the deliverer of mankind. They seem also to have formed some just, though partial, ideas of the Messiah's character. His kingly dignity being chiefly described in the prophetic books, which they are said to have rejected, they considered him only as a Saviour, ver. 42. and a prophet or teacher, according to Moses's description of him, Gen. xxiii. 18. Deut. xviii. 18. See also Neh. vii. 65. Hence the woman, speaking of the Messiah, said, *When he is come, he will tell us all things*; and therefore while our Lord industriously avoided the title of Messiah among the Jews, he without scruple discovered himself to the Samaritans, because he could do

it with success; the meanness of his condition being no way inconsistent with the prophetic character. We may just observe, that the words *which is called Christ*, should be in a parenthesis; they being the words of the evangelist, not of the woman.

Ver. 26. *I that speak unto thee am he.*] That Christ was very cautious of acknowledging himself to be the promised Messiah, in his conversation with the Jews, is very apparent. The reason for that caution has been frequently explained in this commentary, and is intimated in the foregoing note, together with his reasons for acting otherwise at present.

Ver. 27. *Talked with the woman.*] The wonder of the disciples was raised by their Lord's talking with a Samaritan woman.

Ver. 28, 29. *The woman then left her water-pot, &c.*] When the woman heard Jesus call himself the Messiah, she set down her pitcher, and ran into the city, where she published the news in the streets, and desired all the met to go with her, and see him, assuring them that he had told her the principal occurrences of her life; so strong an impression had that circumstance made upon her mind. The fulness of her conviction, and the haste she was in to communicate the joyful news to her countrymen, place her in an amiable light. She was so certain that our Lord was the Messiah, that she ran to call others, that they might be convinced likewise. What a contrast is there between this woman and the Jews! So far were they from bringing others to him, that they hindered them from coming, when desirous to do so. *In this respect* we should imitate the Samaritan woman.

Ver. 31—34. *In the mean while his disciples prayed him.*] While these things were doing, the disciples set the meat which they had bought, before their Master; but he regarded it not, though he then stood much in need of refreshment.

do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

37 And herein is that saying true, One

soweth, and another reapeth.

38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them; and he abode there two days.

Mat. 9. 17. Luke, 10. 2. Ver. 30. Mat. 11. 12. Luke, 7. 29. & 16. 16. Mat. 10. 10. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. 2 Thess. 2. 19, 20. Rom. 7. 23. Heb. 11. 40. Rev. 18. 20. Acts, 2. 41. & 4. 4, 32. & 5. 14. & 6. 7. 2 Chr. 36. 15. Jer. 44. 4. Acts, 10. 43. 1 Peter, 2. 10, 12. Rom. 15. 4. Acts, ii. xiii. & 26. 22, 23. & 28. 23. Gen. 49. 10. Il. 11. 19. & 35. 1. & 60. 3. with Ver. 29, 42. Gen. John, 16. 24.

refreshment. He was wholly intent on the duties of his mission, preferring them to his necessary food. Hence, when his disciples entreated him to eat, he told them, that he had meat to eat which they knew nothing of; meaning the satisfaction that he was about to receive from the conversion of the Samaritans; for meat is often used in the Jewish writings to signify that which satisfies the desires of the soul, as well as the wants of the body. Hence also our Lord says, ver. 34. "My meat, my true satisfaction, and best refreshment, is to do the will of him that sent me,—and to finish his work as fast as possible, in the conversion of souls, and in the propagation of his kingdom; and I with pleasure can assure you, that it is now going on successfully." See the next note. Ver. 35. Say not ye, There are yet four months, &c.] Whitby, Grotius, and many others, understand this as if our Lord had said, "It is a proverbial expression for the encouragement of husbandmen, that there are but four months between seed-time and harvest." The author of the translation of 1729 renders it, "You commonly say, The other four months, and the harvest will come." And indeed the passage itself is an iambic verse, and should be read thus:

Ἐτι τείρομένην, κ' ὁ θερισμὸς ἔρχεται:

Which, joined to the reasons arising from the text, proves that the passage is proverbial. It is taken from the time which commonly intervenes between sowing and reaping, and signifies, that after having used the means of procuring a thing, the effect must not be expected to follow on a sudden, but must be waited for with patience. Our Lord told his disciples, that in the present case, they should not apply that proverb, because, if they would lift up their eyes, they would see the fields white already to harvest; that is, would see a multitude, coming in a fit disposition to believe (see ver. 39—42.), notwithstanding they had been sown but an hour or two before; so that he had what was his proper food to eat,—a convenient opportunity of doing the will of him that sent him, and of finishing his work. Probably, when our Saviour said, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, &c. he might stretch

forth his hand, and point to the Samaritans, who were now coming from the city to him, on the report of the woman. This appears to be the true meaning of the passage, which is by no means to be taken in a literal sense.

Ver. 36—38. And he that reapeth, &c.] As the disciples laboured together with our Lord in this spiritual harvest, —to encourage them, he put them in mind of the reward. The passage should be read as follows: "He that reapeth and gathereth the fruit [of souls] unto life eternal; he that conducts others into heaven (alluding to the gathering of reaped corn into barns) such a person—receiveth wages; that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together; namely, in the reward bestowed on them, the pleasure of which will be increased by their joint participation of it." Our Lord then proceeds to apply another proverb, ver. 37. The words, whereon ye bestowed no labour, ver. 38. mean, "no labour of sowing;" Other men laboured, namely, in sowing the seeds of piety and holiness among the Jews, and thereby exposed themselves to great persecutions, (he meant the prophets of old;—) "and ye are entered into their labours, —into the field on which their labour had been carefully employed;" εἰς τὸν κόπον αὐτῶν.—Comp. 2 Cor. x. 15. "Ye are employed to reap that, which they with great difficulty sowed; for ye are gathering into the kingdom of heaven those, who, by the writings of the prophets and the grace of God, having been imbued with a sense of piety and virtue, are prepared for entering into it." This application of the proverb, one soweth and another reapeth, does not imply any discontent in the persons who sow without reaping, as it seems to do in common use; for the sower and the reaper are represented as rejoicing together in the rewards of this spiritual husbandry.

Ver. 39, 40. And many of the Samaritans—believed] Many of the Samaritans had been so struck with the account which the woman gave of Jesus, that they believed him to be the Messiah on her testimony. Accordingly, being come to him, they begged him to take up his residence in their city. Jesus, in compassion to their wants

41 <sup>a</sup> And many more believed because of his own word;

42 And said unto the woman, <sup>v</sup> Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that <sup>z</sup> this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

43 ¶ <sup>a</sup> Now after two days he departed thence, <sup>b</sup> and went into Galilee.

44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

45 <sup>c</sup> Then when he was come into Ga-

lilee, the Galileans received him, having seen <sup>d</sup> all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

46 So Jesus came again into <sup>e</sup> Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain <sup>f</sup> nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and <sup>g</sup> besought him that he would come down and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

<sup>a</sup> If. 42. 1, 6. & 60. 8. Rom. 15. 8—12, 16. <sup>v</sup> Gen. 49. 10. Ch. 17. 8. <sup>z</sup> 1 John, 4. 14. & 2. 2. Mat. 18. 11. & 20. 28. & 28. 18, 19. Luke, 2. 10, 11, 32. & 19. 10. Mark, 16. 15, 16. Ch. 3. 14—18. & 6. 37. 1 John, 4. 14. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 15. 24. Rom. 15. 8. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 4. 23, 24. Mark, 1. 14. Luke, 4. 31, 32. <sup>f</sup> Ch. 2. 13—23. Luke, 13. 1. Exod. 23. 14—17. & 34. 23. Deut. 16. 1. <sup>g</sup> Joh. 19. 28. Ch. 2. 1—11. <sup>h</sup> Or courier, or ruler. Mat. 9. 18. <sup>i</sup> Pl. 78. 34. Hof. 5. 15. Mac. 9. 18. & 15. 22. & 17. 14, 15. Pl. 50. 15. Mat. 7. 7.

and desires, complied so far as to stay with them *two days*; which was a proper medium between his entirely neglecting them, and the giving them so much of his time and company as would have broken in upon the design of his journey into Galilee. During the time of his stay, the discourses which our Lord delivered were attended with great power, as appeared by their success: for they brought many of the *Sycbarites* to believe on him as the Messiah.

*Ver. 41, 42. And many more believed*] This was the more extraordinary, as they not only had a natural prejudice against him as a Jew; but, living near mount Gerizim, had a particular interest in maintaining the usual worship there, which must have been very advantageous to the neighbourhood in a temporal point of view. Perhaps on this they would no longer worship there, which might irritate the rest of the Samaritans, and might in part excite the ill usage which Christ afterwards met with in this country. Luke, ix. 52, 53. It is observable, that the Samaritan woman expressed her expectation of the Messiah; that Jesus made a clear declaration to her of his being so; that she believed him to be so; that she went hastily into Sychar, full of the interesting discovery; that at the importunate request of the inhabitants, Christ continued in the town at the foot of Gerizim for two days; and that many of the Samaritans, through divine grace, were such candid judges, so ingenuously disposed to embrace the truth, that without the cogency of miracles they confessed, *We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world*; a confession of faith higher by some degrees, as Dr. Lightfoot remarks, than the Jews' common creed concerning the Messiah; for they held him only for a Saviour of the Jewish nation: whence we may see how deeply and cordially these Samaritans had drunk in the *water of life*, so as to acknowledge Christ in his proper character. Probably the Samaritans might have collected from Gen. xlix. 10. that Christ was to be *the Saviour of the world*; that the Gentiles were to receive some benefit from the Messiah's coming, and one way or other to be subjected to him; and our Lord's discourse might

confirm that apprehension: but there is no reason at all to believe, that they perfectly understood the doctrine of the calling of the idolatrous Gentiles, which was so long a mystery even to the apostles themselves.

*Ver. 44. For Jesus himself testified, &c.* It is plain that this is spoken as the reason why he rather chose to travel into those parts of Galilee, than to go directly to *Nazareth*, which is particularly called *his own country*, in distinction from Galilee, and even from Capernaum. Luke, iv. 23. The time when Jesus made the testimony in this verse, is not limited; for the tense of the verb *εμαρτυρησεν*, *testified*, is used in a vague sense, and applied to things past, present, and future; the testimony therefore might have been given some time after, without the least impeachment of the sacred historian's order. See Matth. xiii. 57.

*Ver. 45. Then—the Galileans received him,*] That is, treated him courteously, and attended his ministry with a disposition to believe. See Ch. ii. 23. iii. 2. and Luke, iv. 14, 15.

*Ver. 46. There was a certain nobleman,*] Though Herod was only *tetrarch* of Galilee, yet he was commonly distinguished by the title of *king*; and as Capernaum lay in his dominions, this person was probably a nobleman of some distinction belonging to his court; for this is the proper signification of the original *βασιλικός*, which the Syriac and Arabic versions render, a *minister* or *servant of the king*; and many have conjectured, that the person who is here spoken of was Chuza, Herod's steward, whose wife is thought to have been converted on this occasion, and to have become henceforth an attendant upon Christ. See Luke, viii. 3.

*Ver. 47. He—besought him that he would come down*] Though this nobleman's faith in our Lord's miraculous power was certainly very great, for he came at least a *day's journey* across the country to him,—which may be fairly inferred from ver. 52. as well as from the accounts which the best geographers give us of the situation of Cana and Capernaum;—yet it is plain, that it was not equal to that of many others mentioned in the gospels; for he appears to have thought it necessary that Jesus should be personally present,

48 Then said Jesus unto him, <sup>k</sup> Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

50 Jesus saith unto him, <sup>k</sup> Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man <sup>l</sup> believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, <sup>m</sup> Thy son liveth.

52 Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in the which Jesus <sup>n</sup> said unto him, Thy son liveth: <sup>o</sup> and himself believed, and his whole house.

54 This *is* again the second miracle *that* Jesus did, <sup>p</sup> when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

Cor. 1. 22. Acts, 2. 22. Ch. 2. 18. <sup>l</sup> Ch. 11. 21, 32, 37. Mark, 5. 35, 36. <sup>k</sup> Mark, 2. 9: & 3. 5. <sup>i</sup> Ch. 11. 25. Acts, 14-16. 13. & 9. 22. & 15. 28. <sup>m</sup> Pl. 71. 20. Mark, 9. 23. Mat. 8. 13. & 15. 28. <sup>p</sup> Pl. 107. 20. & 33. 9. <sup>o</sup> Acts, 16. 13, 18. 8. Gen. 18. 19. Joh. 24. 15. <sup>n</sup> In Cana. Ch. 2. 1-12.

not, if he were inclined to grant his petition, and permit the cure.

48. *Except ye see signs, &c.*] Jesus said to him, and to those that were about him, "I perceive that though the Samaritans shewed so great a regard to my word, so to believe without the cogency of miracles, (see on ver. 41.) yet unless you see with your own eyes some remarkable and repeated miracles, you will not believe;" and by justly reproving him and them for that mixture of credulity and slowness of faith which he discerned in them. See the preceding note. It seems necessary to make some such reference, to illustrate the justice of the cure; for in the general it was very reasonable to suppose that Christ would work miracles in proof of his mission, as he himself plainly intimates elsewhere. Mat. xv. 24. Possibly the person now applying to him, having made a declaration, that he would never believe in things till he saw them with his own eyes. He might mean, by this reflection, to humble him, to make him a specimen of his extraordinary knowledge as a physician, and thus to give increase and strength to

50. *The nobleman saith unto him, &c.*] Weak as he was, the nobleman urged only parental affection, and pressed the matter to the utmost; and without any explication or apology respecting our Lord's power, he entreats him to come down ere his child died, that the case was so extreme, that a delay attended with the most fatal consequences; but upon an idea that Christ, as the Lord of life as well as of health, could as easily remedy those consequences, as he had done. Jesus, upon this,—fully to convince them of his omnipotence, and to shew that it was possible for him, who could speak, and it was done, to accomplish the cure,—says to him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth; at the instant I am speaking, he is recovered from his illness." There is nothing remarkable and sublimely striking in our Lord's words, but that they had their influence upon this man's mind, that he believed the word which Jesus had spoken, and went away without any further importunity, and never seen or heard of a parallel case. It is remarkable, that he had heard of Christ's miracles; but

this is the first recorded in which he cured the patient at a distance.

*Ver. 52. Yesterday at the seventh hour, &c.*] That is, it was not long after he was cured; so that being restored to perfect health in an instant, the whole family knew that he was miraculously cured, and particularly the nobleman himself, who, by the time of the cure, perceived that it happened at the very moment that Jesus had pronounced it.

*Ver. 54. The second miracle*] Some render it, *A second*. Others translate it, *This second miracle Jesus performed, when he came out of Judea*; for it is manifest that the words must be taken with this limitation, as Christ had wrought many miracles in other places.

*Inferences drawn from the cure of the ruler's son, ver. 46-54.* The divine mercies are as comfortable in their issue, as in themselves; seldom or ever do blessings go alone: where our Saviour supplied the bridegroom's wine, there he heals the ruler's son: he had not in all the coasts of Galilee done any miracle but there.

We do not find Christ often attended with nobility; here he is: it was some noted courtier that was now a suitor to him for his dying son: earthly greatness is no defence against afflictions: we men pay homage to the mighty; disease and death know no faces of lords or monarchs: could these be bribed, they would be too rich: why should we murmur at not being privileged, when we see that there is no indulgence toward the greatest?

This noble ruler listens to hear of Christ's return into Galilee. Happy was it for him that his son was sick; he would not perhaps otherwise have been acquainted with his Saviour: his soul might have continued sick of ignorance and unbelief. Why does our God send us pain, loss, opposition, but that he may be sought to? Are we afflicted,—whither should we go, but to Cana, to seek Christ? Whither but to the Cana of heaven, where our water of sorrows shall be changed into the wine of gladness; to that omnipotent Physician, who healeth all our infirmities; that we may at once say, *It is good for me that I was afflicted.*

It was about a day's journey from Capernaum to Cana; thence did this courtier come hither for the cure of his son's fever. What pains even the greatest can be content to

## C H A P. V.

*Jesus, on the sabbath-day, cureth him that was diseased eight and thirty years: the Jews therefore cavil and persecute him for it: he answereth for himself, and reproveth them; shewing by the testimony of his Heavenly Father, of John, of his works, and of the scriptures, who he is.*

[Anno Domini 31.]

**A**FTER <sup>a</sup>this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

<sup>a</sup> Lev. 23. 2. Deut. 16. 1. Num. 28. 16. Exod. 23. 14—17. & 34. 23. & 22. 9. <sup>b</sup> House of mercy. <sup>c</sup> 1 Kings, 13. 4. Mark, 3. 1, 4. of the last types of Christ, and his gospel, as healing diseased sinners.

2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep <sup>b</sup>market a <sup>c</sup>pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue \* Bethesda, having five porches.

3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, <sup>d</sup>withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: <sup>e</sup>whosoever then first after the troubling of

Heb. 10. 25. <sup>b</sup> Or gate. Neh. 3. 1. & 12. 39. <sup>c</sup> It is 6. <sup>d</sup> Zech. 13. 1. & 14. 8. Rev. 22. 1, 2, 17. This healing pool was 22

to take for bodily health!—No way is long, no labour is tedious to the desirous. Our souls are sick of a spiritual fever, labouring under the cold fit of unbelief, and the hot fit of self-love; and we sit still at home, and see them languish unto death.

This ruler was neither faithless nor faithful; had he been quite faithless, he had not taken such pains to come to Christ. Had he been faithful, he had not made this suit to Christ, when he was come, ver. 47. 49. *Come down, and heal my son ere he die.*

“Come down;” as if Christ could not have cured him absent; “ere he die;”—as if that power could not have raised him being dead: How great a difference was there between the centurion (Matt. viii. Luke viii.) and the ruler! The one came for his servant, the other for his son. This son was not more above the servant, than the faith which sued for the *servant*, surpassed that which sued for the *son*: the one can say, *Master, come not under my roof, for I am not worthy; only speak the word, and my servant shall be whole.* The other can only say, “Master, either “come under my roof, or my son cannot be whole.” *Heal my son,* had been a good suit; for Christ is the only physician for all diseases; but, *come down and heal him,* was to teach God how to work.

There is good reason why he should challenge the right of prescribing to us, who are every way his own: it is presumption to limit him to our forms. What expert workman can endure to be taught by a novice? how much less shall the all-wise God be directed by his creatures! This is more egregious, than if the patient should take upon him to give a recipe to his physician: that God would give us grace, is a becoming suit; but to say, “Give it me by prosperity,” is a saucy motive.

As there is faithfulness in desiring the *end*, so is there a modesty and patience in referring the means to the author. In *spiritual things*, God hath acquainted us with the means whereby he will work even his own sacred ordinances: upon these, because they have his own promise, we may call absolutely for a blessing. In all others, there is no reason that beggars should be choosers. He who doth whatsoever he will, must do it how he will: it is for us to receive, not to appoint.

He who came to complain of his son's sickness, hears of his own; *except ye see signs and wonders,* (ver. 48.) *ye will not believe.* This nobleman, probably, was of Capernaum:

there had Christ often preached; there was one of his chief residences; either this man had heard our Saviour often, or might have so done. Incredulity was the common disease of the Jews; which no receipt could heal, but wonders. *A-wicked and adulterous generation seeketh signs.* Had they not been wilfully graceless, there was already proof enough of the Messiah: the miraculous conception and life of the forerunner, Zachary's dumbness, the attestation of angels, the appearance of the star, the journey of the sages, the vision of the shepherds, the testimonies of Anna and Simeon, the prophecies fulfilled, the voice from heaven at his baptism, the divine words which he spake:—and yet, they must have all made up with *miracles*; which though he be not unwilling to give at his own time, he will not be tied to at theirs. Not to believe without signs, was a sign of stubborn hearts.

It was a fond fault and a dangerous one; *Ye will not believe.* What is it that shall condemn the world, but unbelief? What can condemn us without it? No sin will condemn the penitent believer; where then true faith is, there can be no condemnation.

Oh what shall become of us, who reel and fall in the clearest sunshine that ever looked forth from heaven upon any people! Be thou merciful unto our sins, O God, and say any thing of us, rather than, *Ye will not believe.*

Our Lord tells this nobleman of his unbelief: he feels not himself sick of that disease: all his mind is on his dying son.—Yet, O the meekness and mercy of this Lamb of God! when we might have expected that he would have punished this sutor for not believing, he condescends to him, that he may believe, ver. 50. *Go thy way; thy son liveth.* If we should measure our hopes by our own worthiness, there could be no expectation of blessings; but if we measure them by *his* bounty and compassion, there can be no doubt of prevailing. As some tender mother, who gives the breast to her unquiet child, instead of the rod, so frequently deals the Saviour of sinners with our perversenesses.

How evidently doth God distinguish men according to the genuine living faith which they have in him! The centurion's *servant* was sick, so was the ruler's *son*; the centurion does not sue to Christ to *come*; he only says, *My servant is sick of the palsy*: Christ answers him, *I will come and heal him.* The ruler sues to Christ, that he would *come and heal his son*; Christ will not go; he only says, *Go*

the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

f Acts, 3. 2. Luke, 13. 16. Ch. 9. 1, 23.

*Go thy way; thy son liveth:* outward things carry no respect with God; the image of that divine majesty shining inwardly in the graces of the soul, is that which wins love from him, in the meanest estate: the centurion's faith, therefore, could do more than the ruler's greatness; and that faithful man's servant has more regard, than this great man's son.

The ruler's request was, *come and heal*; Christ's answer, *Go thy way; thy son liveth*. How sweetly does he correct our prayers! and while he does not give us what we desire, he gives us better than we could hope to obtain.

How doth he forbear to go down with this ruler, lest he should confirm him in an opinion of measuring his merit by conceits of locality and distance; but he doth in absence, for which his presence was required with advantage; *thy son liveth*; giving a greater demonstration of omnipotency than was desired: how often doth he not to hearken to our *will*, that he may hear us to our *prayer*! The believer sometimes would be *rid of temptation*—he hears of a *supply of grace*; the sick man asks for *patience*: let us ask what we *think best*; and give what he *knows best*.

In one word doth Christ heal two patients, the son and the father; the son's fever, the father's unbelief: that the word of our Saviour was not without the intention of a trial. Had not the ruler gone home satisfied with the intimation of his son's life and recovery, neither he nor his family had been blessed with success; now the news of the cure meets him one half of the way; and he that had somewhat ere he came, and more when he went, receives more faith in the way; and when he came home, he brings his faith to all the skirts of his family. A weak faith may be true, but a true faith is growing: he that has a full stature in the first moment of his ascent, may be *fallen*, but he does not *believe*.

Men cannot want clients; their example sways the multitude: their authority more: they cannot go to either of the worlds alone: in vain do they pretend to power, who labour not to draw their families to

IONS.—*ist*, Judea being now become a danger, through the malice of the Pharisees, our Lord went into Galilee, that he might be farther removed from them, where his bitter enemies chiefly resided: he had in Judea having been very successful, and multitudes having followed him, who were admitted into the number of his professing disciples, the wicked designs that his Pharisaical enemies had, on the information which they received of his growing fame and interest among the people; he therefore succeeded John in his popularity and number of disciples, and therefore was to be apprehended as a more dangerous man than the Baptist; though, in some particular instances given to the Pharisees seems to be not probable that they who were baptized

by the disciples of Jesus, were more than those whom John had baptized; so it is certain, that Jesus baptized not, but his disciples, maintaining the dignity of his character, as sent to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and far superior to John, or any others: this also might have been designed to remove all emulation from his disciples, which might arise, if he baptized some, and his servants others; or to shew, that the validity of the ordinance depended not on the worthiness of the ministry, but on his blessing and institution. *Note*; (1.) The enemies of the gospel are ever envious and exasperated at its success. (2.) When danger threatens, it is prudent to avoid the storm by flight, where duty does not require us to stand and suffer.

2dly, As Samaria lay between Judea and Galilee, he must necessarily pass through it on his way thither, unless he took a large compass about. That country was inhabited by the posterity of the colonies which the king of Assyria had planted there after the captivity; who, being mingled with many apostate Jews, became a mixed race, who, though retaining many heathen idolatries and superstitions, professed themselves worshippers of Israel's God, and received the books of Moses; were circumcised, and erected a temple on mount Gerizim, in opposition to that at Jerusalem, pretending that this was the spot where God ought to be worshipped. Hence arose the bitterest animosity between the Samaritans and the Jews, the latter regarding the former as the most abominable of mankind. In this journey we are told,

1. The place where our Lord stayed to rest himself awhile, being wearied with his journey. It was by a well-side belonging to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, which bordered on a piece of land that Jacob, having purchased of the sons of Hamor, had given to his son Joseph. The well was called *Jacob's*, either because he dug it, or used it for himself and family. Our Lord here appears as a truly man, subject to our sinless infirmities, weariness, thirst, and hunger; for it became him in all things to become like unto his brethren, sin only excepted. *It was about the sixth hour*, or six in the evening, if we follow the Roman method of reckoning.

2. The discourse which passed between Jesus and a woman of Samaria. She happened just at that time to come to draw water: so divine Providence ordered it, leading her to Christ in a way that she knew not. The disciples being gone into the city to buy meat, he was alone, and is pleased graciously to improve that moment's leisure for the benefit of this poor stranger's soul.

[1.] He addressed her first, begging a little water to drink; for though he was rich, for our sakes he became thus poor, and condescends to ask a cup of cold water. Yet he had a farther end in view, even to engage her in conversation, and thereby to make to her the gracious offer of salvation. Occasional discourse with strangers has been often found to have a blessed and abiding influence, and should encourage us, when travelling, to open our mouths, and speak a word for God, and for immortal souls.

[2.] The



6 When Jesus saw him lie, and <sup>c</sup> knew *case*, he saith unto him, <sup>h</sup> Wilt thou be made that he had been now a long time *in that* whole?

<sup>c</sup> Ch. 21. 17. Heb. 4. 13.

<sup>h</sup> If. 65. 1. Jer. 13. 27. Luke, 19. 41.

[2.] The woman expressed her surprise, that he, who appeared to be a Jew, should deign to receive an act of kindness at the hands of a Samaritan; or that he should expect the least favour would be granted from one to the other, where the enmity between the two nations was so bitter and irreconcilable, as to cut off all manner of friendly intercourse between them. Religious quarrels are thus usually seen to be the most implacable; but where the spirit of bigotry and uncharitableness dwells, which-ever side is right in the point disputed, the spirit of both is wrong, and utterly opposite to pure and undefiled religion.

[3.] Waving the subject of the controversy between the Jews and Samaritans, Christ designed to lead her to the knowledge of himself, and therefore replied, *If thou knowest the gift of God, what an amazing instance of his love he has given in sending his own Son into the world; and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; even that divine Person now become incarnate; thou wouldst have laid aside all these national prejudices, and have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water; those gifts of grace, and comforts of his Spirit, which to the sinner's soul are more desirable than the coolest and most refreshing stream to the parched throat and weary traveller.* Note; (1.) Christ is the fountain of gardens, and well of living waters, open for every poor sinner, and freely given, that whoever will, may come unto him, and drink of the riches of his grace. (2.) Many carelessly disregard the invaluable blessings of the gospel, because they are wilfully ignorant of their excellence, and of their want of them. (3.) They who would obtain the blessings of grace from Jesus, and his holy Spirit, must seek them in importunate prayer; and he who is faithful and true, hath promised, that none such shall ask in vain.

[4.] The woman, mistaking Christ's meaning, and taking his discourse literally, answered, *Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?* and therefore concludes that his boasts were absurd. They who are wholly taken up with the objects of sense, have no understanding of spiritual things; they are foolishness to them: the hidden springs of grace in Christ, being unseen, are disbelieved by such. Besides, she regards it as a great piece of presumption in him, to prefer any other waters before those of a well so highly distinguished. *Art thou greater than our father Jacob, from whom we Samaritans, as well as you Jews, claim our descent; which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?* Vain boasts these! when they had no poor a title to claim kindred with the patriarch, and were no better than usurpers of that country, which they pretended came to them by gift from Jacob to Joseph, and so in a right line of descent to them. The bitterest enemies of the church thus often usurp, and would monopolize its privileges.

[5.] Though she had spoken foolishly, Christ kindly bore with her, and continued his discourse, saying, *Whoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again; this was but com-*

mon water, and could only slake the present thirst, which must soon return: *but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst.* All the comforts of the world are insufficient to give any abiding satisfaction; Christ alone can bestow the substantial portion on the soul. They who pant after the earth, and its enjoyments, drink and thirst again; *but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.* Such is Christ, when formed in the hearts of the faithful.

[1.] He delivers the soul from the dominion of all the former unfeeling appetites and inclinations after sensual objects. [2.] He furnishes us with continual supplies of grace and consolation from himself, the everflowing overflowing fountain of mercies; so that in our heavenly journey we can never faint nor be weary, while we drink of these living streams, as of the water from the rock, which followed Israel's camp through the desert. [3.] Wherever his grace is thus implanted in the soul, it bears the affections heavenward.

[6.] The woman, desiring what, could it be possessed, would save her so much trouble, replied, *Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*

[7.] To impress deeper seriousness upon her soul, or to convince her of the dignity of his character, of which she was not at all apprized, Jesus turned the discourse to another topic, which he knew must nearly and deeply affect her; and, bringing her sin home to her conscience, might, through his blessing, engage her to embrace him as her Saviour. Therefore he says to her, *Go, call thy husband, and come hither.* Conscious of the guilty state in which she at present lived, she wanted to conceal her shame, and said, *I have no husband, conceiving it impossible for him to detect the lie.* But, to her amazement, she finds him intimately acquainted with all the most secret transactions of her life, which he lays before her. *Thou hast well said, I have no husband; so far is true; for thou hast had five husbands, from whom perhaps she had been successively divorced; and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly, the person with whom she now cohabited not being married to her, or her former husbands being yet living.* He does not reproach her either for her evasion or lewdness, but rather leaves it to her conscience to make the application. Gentle reproofs, by insinuation, are often more effectual than more immediate rebuke.

[8.] Struck with what she heard, and convicted in her own conscience, she would willingly have turned off the discourse from so painful a subject; and persuaded, by what he had told her, of his more than human knowledge, she proposes to him the grand point in debate between the Jews and Samaritans: *Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; there Abraham built an altar; and there the tribe of Joseph stood, when the blessings and curses were pronounced by the tribes on mount Ebal and Gerizim; and therefore on this mountain Gerizim, the Samaritans insisted that sacrifices*

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down<sup>k</sup> before me.

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 32. 36. Pf. 72. 12—14. & 142. 4. & 102. 17.

<sup>k</sup> And so he got no good. Ver. 4.

and offerings should alone be offered to God, in the temple which they built there: and ye who are Jews, say, that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship, at the temple on mount Zion, where alone the oblations of God's are accepted: and therefore she wished, that he, who seemed so able, would resolve her in this important point. That God should be worshipped, there was no doubt: the question was, Where was the place of divine appointment? wherein she did well to improve the present opportunity conversing about divine things, when she had with her an adviser.

[10.] Jesus kindly leads her even farther than her intention reached. He saith unto her, Woman, believe me, and ye shall esteem me a prophet, weigh well what I am about to declare, the hour cometh, when a final period shall be put to all ceremonial distinctions, and to the peccatoriness of places set apart for the worship of the true Being; when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father; that is to say, except; since under the gospel dispensation every place shall be alike acceptable to God, where holy hands were raised up without wrath or doubting; and shortly both the temple at Gerizim and that on mount Zion would be alike desolate, and no sacrifices be any longer offered here. Indeed at present the Samaritans were wrong in their worship ye know not what (See the Annotations): what we worship; for God is known in Israel; and one of that nation after the flesh, reckoned himself among the true worshippers, who paid their adorations according to the divine prescription, and were possessed of the whole of that revelation which he had been pleased to make of himself in his sacred oracles. The religion is of the Jews; the promises of salvation were chiefly made to them; and he who came to be the Father of the ends of the earth, sprang from them. In this respect the Samaritans were wrong, when compared with Abraham's true descendants, and distinctions of nations and places were now abolished; the hour cometh, and now is, when the true religion shall be all worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The ceremonial worship is now become indifferent; the commandment of the worshipper alone makes the acceptance. All carnal ordinances are abolished, and the true worship is introduced, where the heart, under the influences of the Holy Ghost, must be lifted up in love to God; and in truth, with simplicity and sincerity, according to the divine institution, and in Christ alone, who is the way, the truth, and the life. The Father seeketh such to worship him: he will not be served by their services, and can be pleased with nothing but the worship of God. God is a Spirit of infinite perfections, invisible, eternal, omniscient; requiring not the service of lip or knee, but of the heart; and they who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth: the place, the form, the manner of our worship avail nothing, and are in his view of no

account. And what Christ says to her, is an eternal truth and merits our most serious notice and regard; that so we may not mock God, and deceive ourselves, when we approach him in the ordinances of his worship.

[10.] The woman, though unable to object to the truths here advanced, yet professes to suspend her judgment till He should come, who would set all things right. She saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, (which is called in the Greek, Christ, or the anointed), this expectation being generally entertained by the Samaritans as well as the Jews. When he is come, whom we expect as ready to appear, he will tell us all things; will put an end to our controversies, clear up our doubts, and give us a distinct knowledge of all the will of God. Hereupon Jesus, in answer to her expectations of the Messiah's coming, plainly declares to her his character: I that speak unto thee, am he: so much nearer to us is the Saviour often than we are aware. Speak, Lord, to my heart, and make me know that thou art with me, in me!

3dly, Just as the Lord had so far advanced in his discourse, and manifested his glorious character to this poor Samaritan, we are told,

1. The interruption given to the conversation by the arrival of the disciples, who had been sent to procure provisions; and, influenced by the common Jewish prejudices, they wondered to see him thus engaged with a Samaritan woman. Yet, submitting to his will and wisdom, and with deepest reverence silent before him, none dared presume to ask him what he sought of the woman, or what he said to her. Note; We must not question the Lord concerning any of the dispensations of his providence or grace, but rest assured that he doth all things well.

2. Deeply convinced, by what Jesus had spoken, of his being indeed the Messiah, with eagerness and joy the woman ran back to the city, leaving her water-pot behind her, careless about that when greater concerns engaged her soul; and said to the men, the inhabitants of the place, Come, opportunity is precious, and not a moment to be lost: come, see a man which told me all things which ever I did: is not this the Christ? He told me such secret passages of my life, as none but God could know; and has impressed such a sense of them on my conscience, as fully convinces me he is the promised Messiah; haste therefore to him, and judge for yourselves, that you may be convinced also. Note; (1.) They who run on Christ's errands, gladly disencumber themselves of every thing which would retard their speed, and sit loose to all that they leave behind them. (2.) When we have ourselves tasted that the Lord is gracious, we cannot but delight to invite others to come and see how good he is, and to partake with us in his rich mercies. (3.) We never know Christ truly, till, experimentally feeling the convictions of his word and Spirit, and brought to a deep and humbling discovery of our sins, we feel the necessity of that salvation which he brings.

3. Multitudes, on this strange report, bad as the woman's character

8 Jesus saith unto him, ' Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and

<sup>1</sup> Mark, 2. 11. Luke, 5. 24. Mat. 9. 6. If. 65. 24. <sup>m</sup> Pf. 33. 9. & 107. 20. Ch. 9. 7. Mark, 1. 31, 41. & 2. 12. & 3. 5. & 5. 13, 19, 42. & 7. 30, 35. & 8. 25. & 9. 27. & 10. 52. If. 35. 6. Ch. 9. 14.

character had been, resolved to go and see for themselves.

4. Christ in the mean time improved the interval in profitable discourse with his disciples. So set was his mind on the blessed work before him, that, though hungry, he seemed to forget for a while to eat his bread. The disciples pressed him, as weary, and fasting too long, to eat of the provision which they had brought; but he said unto them, *I have meat to eat that ye know not of.* The gracious work begun on the heart of this poor Samaritan woman, and the prospect of multitudes flocking towards him, were more delightful and refreshing to his soul, than the richest entertainment to his body. *The disciples, who understood him literally, with surprise said one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? so dull were they of understanding.* But their Master soon corrected their mistake, saying unto them, *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work; this is my greatest satisfaction, to be engaged in the blessed work of seeking and saving that which was lost, for which great end I came into the world: and what was his delight, should be theirs, as the husbandman labours with satisfaction in the view of the approaching harvest. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Does this joyous season please you in the prospect? Behold, an infinitely better is in view; I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields (where probably multitudes of the Samaritans now appeared in view), for they are white already to harvest; immortal souls are ready to be gathered into the gospel church; and therefore this is no time to eat and drink, but to rise and labour. And, for an inducement hereunto, he suggests the glorious recompense of reward, which would be the wages of their fidelity: He that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; the wages of present comfort, increasing strength and success in his labours, and, if faithful unto death, life everlasting in the world to come: and this not only for himself, but for many of those among whom he ministers; the blessed effects of which will be, that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together.* The ministers who begin, and they who carry on the good work, will alike partake of the comforts of it. *And herein is that proverbial saying true, One soweth and another reapeth: the apostles reaped what the prophets sowed; and, after their Master's resurrection, gathered a plenteous harvest of souls. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours: the writings of the prophets, and the preaching of John, greatly facilitated their ministry and contributed to its success; and going forth with such advantages, they had peculiar encouragement, and double cause for their diligence.* *Note; (1.) Gospel ministers, like harvest-men, must labour diligently and cheerfully in the service of God, and of immortal souls. (2.) When the people appear eager and attentive to hear, it is a most powerful excitement to the*

minister, to preach with liveliness and zeal. (3.) Nothing will turn to so glorious an account in the day of God, as immortal souls gained to his kingdom through our ministry. (4.) The preachers of the gospel have different talents; some more adapted to break up the fallow ground, and sow the seed; others, to nourish up, and rear to maturity, the trees of righteousness: each are useful in their place, and, if faithful, will rejoice together at the last in the fruit of their joint labours.

5. Great was the effect of the woman's testimony concerning Christ. *Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.* She was indeed a weak instrument; but God can work by the most unlikely means. Persuaded of his prophetic character, and receiving him as the Messiah, they humbly besought him to favour them with his company for a while, that they might enjoy his holy instructions. Nor did he disdain their request, but abode with them two days, teaching them concerning the things that made for their everlasting peace. And so powerful was his ministry among them, that many more believed, because of his own word: not only those who believed in him on the woman's report, were confirmed in the faith; but those who had paid less regard to her, now felt the divine conviction of the Saviour's discourses, and said unto the woman, *Now we believe, not because of thy saying, merely, but on the most unshaken authority of the word of Jesus himself; for we have heard him ourselves, and know, by the powerful energy of his word upon our consciences, that this is indeed the Christ, the so long promised and expected Saviour of the world; not of the Jews only, but of the Samaritans also, and of all the nations of the earth, who would receive his word of salvation.* *Note; (1.) The greatest fruit is often reaped where it was least expected. The Samaritans readily embraced that Saviour whom the Jews rejected. (2.) Christ is indeed the Saviour of the world; but we must believe in him, before we ourselves can be experimentally acquainted with his salvation.*

4thly, Jesus made but a short visit to Sychar; he had other work to do, and therefore after two days he departed thence. Yet perhaps two more successful days passed not during his ministry; a gracious earnest of the success which his gospel should meet with in the heathen world.

1. Christ pursued his journey to Galilee, but went not to Nazareth; well knowing, as he had before observed and experienced, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country: those with whom we have been brought up from infancy, usually paying little respect to the person as their teacher, with whom they have been familiar, as their junior, their schoolfellow, or their companion.

2. The Galileans gladly received him, having seen his miracles at the feast of the passover; to celebrate which, distant as they were, they went up with the other Jews to Jerusalem. *Note; They who love God's ordinances will*

on the same day was the sabbath.

10 ¶ The Jews therefore said unto him that

was cured, It is the sabbath day: "it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.

<sup>a</sup> Jer. 17. 21, 22. Neh. 13. 10. Mark, 2. 24. Luke, 6. 2, 7, 9. & 13. 14, 15. & 14. 1, 3. Exod. 20. 10. & 31. 12. & 35. 3. Numb. 15. 32, 36. Mat. 12. 2.

will not grudge to go far to enjoy them, and never will have reason to regret their pains.

3. He visited, among other places, Cana, where his first miracle was wrought of turning the water into wine; and here another notable miracle is wrought by him, which is not recorded by any of the other evangelists.

[1.] The person who made application to him, was a nobleman; probably, one of Herod's courtiers, perhaps Abimelech, (Luke, viii. 3.) or Manaen, (Acts, xiii. 1.) and the patient was the nobleman's own son. *Note*; (1.) Great calamities are no protection from disease, nor from any of the common calamities incident to humanity. (2.) Afflictions drive those to Christ, who, otherwise, probably had not applied to him; and then indeed they are blessings in disguise.

[2.] His address was earnest, and bespoken his confidence in the power of Jesus. He came himself from Capernaum to beg his help. The case was desperate, and past all other aid but his; for his child was *at the point of death*; therefore he entreats him to hasten down without delay.

He thought the presence of Jesus was needful to him, herein dishonourably limiting the holy One of God. *Note*; Our sins have reduced us all to the point of death: unless Jesus save, we must inevitably perish.

Christ rebukes his confined notions of his almighty power, and the backwardness of the Jews in general to believe in him.

The Samaritans believed as soon as he had spoken; but they required repeated signs and wonders, not satisfied with those which they had seen him work at Jerusalem, during the feast.

The nobleman renews his importunate request. His moment of delay was, in his apprehension, imminent; for though he had faith in Christ, that he would cure his son if he was present with him; yet he would have no apprehension that he could heal at a distance, if the child was dead, restore him to life.

Christ relieves him of his pain, saying, *Go thy way; thy son lives*. Nothing more was needful to the cure: he sought as effectually at a distance, as if he had been present. He speaks, and it is done. O that we could all have the power to trust him at all times!

The power which wrought the cure of the son, as it influenced the heart of the father; so that in the moment of faith he departed, perfectly satisfied, that his son was safe, and that the word which Jesus had spoken was sure, and that his son was now alive and well. He appeared thus a true prophet, and none like him ever trusted the Lord, without success.

The servants met him, as he returned, with the joy of their son's recovery; and on inquiring when the cure took place, they told him, *at the seventh hour*; not gradually, but in a moment he remembered the father immediately remembered that that was the hour when Jesus had spoken to him.

[8.] The effect of this miracle was the conversion of himself and his family. *Himself believed and his whole house*. He had begun to believe before; now his faith was more confirmed in Jesus as the Messiah, and he became a professed disciple; while his household, who were eye-witnesses of the miracle, followed his example. *Note*; (1.) One word of Jesus spoken to the heart, brings salvation with it. (2.) When the master of the family sets the gracious example, it is often greatly influential to all his household.

Lastly, The evangelist remarks this as the second miracle which Jesus had wrought in Cana of Galilee. Thus by two or three witnesses he established the authority of his mission; and probably the quality of the patient made the cure to be the more observed. When persons of a superior rank submit to be saved by grace through faith, the change wrought on them engages more particular attention.

## CHAP. V.

*Ver. 1. There was a feast of the Jews.*] This, in all probability, was the feast of the *passover*, called *the feast*, by way of eminence; and therefore it might be rendered, *was the feast of the Jews*. See Matth. xxvii. 15. Mark, xv. 6. A further proof that this was the feast of the passover, arises hence, that, immediately after it, we find the disciples on the sabbath in the fields, rubbing the ears, probably of *barley*, a kind of grain which was always fit for reaping at the passover. See Matth. xii. 1—8.

*Ver. 2. Now there is at Jerusalem, &c.*] Some are of opinion from this passage, that Jerusalem was standing when St. John wrote his gospel; but others, on the strength of a different reading, controvert that opinion, rendering the verse, *Now there was, or There stood at Jerusalem*. But see the *Introduction* to this gospel. At Jerusalem, says Bishop Pearce, near the place called the *sheep-market*, or *sheep-gate* rather, which was built by Eliashib the high-priest, (Neh. iii. 1.) there was a *bath*, built for the use of such of the common people as loved to swim and bathe themselves in water. This is the proper sense of the original *κολυμβήθρα*, from *κολυμβάω*, *to swim*, (Acts, xxvii. 43.) rendered in the old Latin version, called the *Italick*, *Natatoria*, a *bath* or *swimming-place*. Nothing was more common, or more useful than such baths, in these warm climates, where the excessive heat was not only troublesome, but noxious to health. Josephus mentions some by this very name, *κολυμβήθρα* at Jericho, as used for the exercise and pleasure of swimming; and it may reasonably be presumed, that this at Jerusalem was built for the same purpose. That the sheep to be sacrificed were washed, or that all the blood of the sacrifices ran into it, whence it gained a kind of medicinal virtue, is an hypothesis not only void of all proof, but sufficiently exploded by the learned Bishop just mentioned, in his useful "Vindication of our Saviour's miracles," p. 8. This *bath* was called *Beth-esda*, that is, *the house or place of mercy*, not only for its singular usefulness, but also for the extraordinary circumstance attending it, recorded by the evangelist. Around the bath, which

11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

seems to have been of a pentagonal form, were built five porches, a kind of cloisters or porticos, Στάδι, which served to shelter both from the heat and cold those who frequented the place; but which were more particularly serviceable to the infirm people who crowded hither on account of the miraculous virtue of the water. See the next verse.

Ver. 4. For an angel went down, &c.] Some imagine that this was a proper officer or messenger, as the word ἀγγελος primarily signifies; yet as it is most commonly used by the inspired writers to signify a celestial being, employed by God, either for the service or punishment of men, and as the circumstances of this narrative import that the virtue communicated by the agitation of the waters, was not a natural quality inherent in them; our translators seem very justly to have retained the word in a sense which implies a miraculous operation. The phrase, Κατὰ καιρὸν, rendered, at a certain season, is understood by some to express at that season, the season of the feast mentioned ver. 1. confining the miracle of the pool to this particular feast. See Numb. ix. 6, 7. LXX: for, since the evangelist does not say that the waters of Bethesda had their sanative quality at any other feast, we are at liberty to make what supposition seems most convenient: but I cannot help thinking, that the mode of expression, and the waiting of the multitude, evidently imply that this event was frequent; as if it had happened once only, it is not easy to account for this attendance and expectation of the multitude. That the waters of Bethesda should at this period have a miraculous effect, was without doubt in honour of the personal appearance of the Son of God on earth. Some have thought that it was intended to shew that Ezekiel's vision of waters issuing out of the sanctuary, (ch. xlvi.) was about to be fulfilled; of which waters it is said, ver. 9. they shall be healed, and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. It is abundantly evident, that this was no natural virtue, nor a virtue acquired from natural causes in these waters, from the following reasons: 1. All manner of diseases were healed by them. 2. These cures were performed only at a certain season. 3. One person only was healed. And that, 4. only after the troubling of the water; whereas, in general, medicinal waters are required to be calm, and not troubled, for the use of patients.

Such is the account which St. John gives us of this miraculous pool of Bethesda. As to the time when this miraculous effect first took place, nothing precisely certain can be determined; but it seems most universally agreed, that it could not be long before the coming of Christ, and that the miracle was intended to lead men to him: for the gift of prophecy and of miracles had now been withdrawn from the Jews for above four hundred years; therefore to raise in them a more ardent desire for the coming of the Messiah, and to an observation of the signs of his now almost universally-expected coming, God was pleased to favour them with this remarkable sign of Bethesda; and because in these times the Jewish people lay open not only to the irruptions

and tyranny of the Gentiles, but had wholly lost their liberty; that they might not yet entirely despair of the fulfilling of the promises made to their fathers, nor entirely cast off their allegiance to God, he favoured them with this eminent token of his regard, this wonderful pool, in a place near to the gate of victims, which were figures of the propitiatory sacrifice of the Messiah. As this miracle then began, when the coming of the Messiah drew near, to advise them of the speedy and near approach of that promised salvation, (wherefore also this gift of healing was without the temple,) so there can be no doubt that Christ entered these porches, and performed the following miracle, to shew what was the true intent of this gift of healing, and to what it was designed by God to lead men; even to himself, the fountain opened for sin, and for all uncleanness. The water was thus troubled only at some certain season, to shew them at once the weakness of the law, and the great difference between that and the gospel dispensation; and to teach them, not to rest in the corporal benefit only, as in the ministrations of an angel, but to betake themselves to a careful consideration of the promises of His approaching advent, who, not at stated periods of times, but every day, performed, not a single cure only, but healed whole multitudes resorting to him.

Ver. 5. And a certain man was there,] Among the crowds who lay in the porticos of Bethesda, there was one, who had an infirmity,—ἀσθενία,—most probably a paralytic disorder, which hardly ever gives way to medicine, though recently contracted: how much less curable must it have been, after having continued 38 years! The inveteracy of this man's disorder must have been known to many in the course of so long a time; and the reality of his indisposition, which was even prior to the birth of Christ, must have been equally notorious, and shewn the impossibility of any collusion between them. The length and greatness of the man's affliction, well known to Jesus, (as appears from ver. 6.) together with his poverty, (ver. 7.) were sufficient reasons for our Lord's making choice of him, to experience the mercy of his healing power; a power infinitely superior to the virtue of the waters. Had our Lord at this time restored none of these impotent folk to health, he would not have acted contrary to the general account which the evangelists give of his goodness on other occasions, namely, that he healed all who came to him; for such diseased persons as left their habitations with a persuasion of his power and dignity, were fit objects of his mercy; while the sick at Bethesda were no more so than the other sick throughout the country, whom he could have cured barely by willing it, had he so pleased. They had no knowledge of him, or if they knew ought about him, they had no just idea of his power, and were expecting relief from another quarter.

Ver. 6. Wilt thou be made whole? Our Lord proposed this question, that the man might have an opportunity of declaring his case in the hearing of the multitude; (see ver. 13.) because such a declaration tended to make the miracle more conspicuous. It seems he designed to arouse

13 And he that was healed wist not who was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing

come unto thee.

15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

Luke, 4. 30. Ch. 8. 59. Or from the multitude that was. If. 38. 22. Pf. 84. 1, 2, 10. & 66. 13—15. Ch. 8. 11. Ezra. 9. 1 Pet. 4. 3. Lev. 16. 21. Mat. 12. 45. Mark, 1. 45. & 7. 36. Ch. 4. 29. Ch. 7. 23. & 9. 16. Luke, 6. 2, 6—11. & 13. 10 & 14. 1—6. Ver. 9.

attention of the inhabitants of the capital; resolving to give the evidences of his mission before them in the district which this miracle was to occasion.

7. Sir, I have no man, &c.] He complains for want of hands to help him in: "I have no man, no friend to whom I can refer that kindness." One would think some of those who had been themselves healed, would have lent him a hand; but it is common for the poor to be destitute of all assistance. *no man careth for their soul.* To the sick and infirm it is as true a piece of charity to work for them, as to the healthy; and thus the poor are capable of being of service to one another. We may observe how mildly the evangelist speaks of the unkindness of those about him;—a great deal in misfortunes.

9. Rise, take up thy bed, and walk, &c.] Though it was on the sabbath-day, and the doctors affirmed that it was a profanation of the holy day to order the man to carry his bed away, because the miracle should be rendered indubitable by the firmness and perfection of the cure, shewed in the exertion of the man's strength. Besides, when the man who on the sabbath ceased from working, met the people on their way, and reproved him for carrying his bed, it was not avoid telling them what had happened. It is a very proper method of making his signal of recovery generally known. The evangelist says, *inmediately he was made whole*; so that the cure being effected in an instant, while he was not expecting any assistance, nor knew to whom he owed it, ver. 13. he did not think that the power of imagination contributed in the least degree. By the *sabbath* here must be understood the first holy convocation in the feast of the Passover, that is, the morrow after the passover, which was one of the greatest sabbaths, called the *ordinary sabbath*, happening in the passover, and consequently the day on which the disciples were gathered to eat of the *corn*. We may just observe, that our Lord's command to the impotent man, "Rise, and step upon thy bed, and walk"; to shew that he was able to do that for us, which the law could not; that he fulfilled, and so abrogated; thus shewing the full completion of this miraculous cure in himself.

13. And he therefore said unto him that was cured, Behold, thou art made whole, that the Jews who met the man, and said unto him upon his cure,—though in all things they knew he had been long infirm;—the foolishness of carrying his bed. Such is the blindness and superstition! See Jer. xvii.

Ver. 11. He that made me whole, &c.] "He that with a word restored my strength in an instant, the same said unto me, *Take up thy bed and walk*; and his injunctions certainly could not be sinful, as he must have been both a prophet, and a worker of miracles." Instead of *the same said unto me*, it would be more emphatical, if it was rendered agreeable to the original, *even he said!*

Ver. 12. What man is that which said, &c.] The malignity of the Jews appears most flagrantly in this question. They take no notice of the miracle, which demanded their most serious examination; they do not ask him who it was that healed him; but they ask him with a malicious sneer, *who bade him take up his bed?* Had they inquired into the miracle, it might have appeared an action which deserved applause; but this was contrary to their intention.

Ver. 13. Had conveyed himself away,] Casaubon observes, that the word *ἐκείνου*, by which the evangelist expresses Christ's escape, being a metaphor borrowed from swimming, signifies, that he glided through the multitude, leaving no trace behind him of the way that he had taken.

Ver. 14. Jesus findeth him in the temple,] Jesus found the man in the temple, whither probably he repaired, to return thank to God for his signal recovery; when, to render the mercy that he had bestowed upon him complete, our Lord took that opportunity to put him in mind of his having brought the distemper upon himself by his wicked courses; for he exhorts him to abstain from sinning for the future, lest some heavier judgment should be inflicted on him.

Ver. 15, 16. The man departed, &c.] Overjoyed to have discovered the author of his cure, the man went away, and innocently informed the Jews of it; perhaps because he thought it his duty to give his benefactor the honour of the miracle, and believed that the Jews would have been glad to see so great a prophet: but instead of that, they attacked Jesus tumultuously in the temple, and, it may be, tried him before the sanhedrim, with a view to kill him, because, as they imagined, he had profaned the sabbath, by performing a cure upon it, and by ordering the person cured to carry away his bed. It seems plain from ver. 33. that by the Jews, ver. 16. we are to understand the rulers; for the messengers who were sent to John, we are told, ch. i. 19. were priests and Levites, persons of character, who would not have undertaken the office, unless by the appointment of the rulers, called on that occasion, as well as here, *the Jews*. Moreover, the apology which Jesus now made for himself, is such as was proper to be pronounced before the most capable judges, the chief priests and scribes, and the elders; for it is one of the most regular defences of his character and divine mission, that is anywhere

17 ¶ But Jesus answered them, ' My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

18 Therefore the Jews <sup>a</sup> sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, <sup>x</sup> making himself equal with God.

19 ¶ Then answered Jesus and said unto them, <sup>y</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, <sup>z</sup> The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 <sup>a</sup> For the Father loveth the Son, and

sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the Father <sup>b</sup> raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

22 For the Father judgeth no man, <sup>c</sup> but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23 <sup>d</sup> That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 21. Ch. 9. 4. & 14. 10. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 7. 19. & 8. 7. & 10. 32, 33. & 19. 7. <sup>c</sup> Phil. 2. 6. Ch. 10. 30. & 14. 9. Zech. 13. 7. <sup>d</sup> Ver. 21, 30. Ch. 8. 58. & 9. 4. & 12. 49. & 14. 10. & 1. 3. Heb. 1. 2, 3. Eph. 3. 9. Prov. 8. 22—31. 16. 6. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 3. 17. & 12. 18. & 17. 5. 2 Pet. 1. 17. Ch. 1. 18. & 3. 35. & 8. 28. & 14. 12. & 17. 2. & 10. 18. Ver. 21—29. <sup>f</sup> Rom. 4. 14. Dent. 32. 39. Luke, 7. 14. & 8. 54. Ch. 11. 25, 43. Mat. 27. 52, 53. <sup>g</sup> Ver. 27. Ch. 3. 35. & 17. 2. & 13. 3. Mat. 11. 27. & 25. 31—41. & 28. 18. 1 Pet. 4. 5. Rom. 2. 16. & 14. 10. 2 Cor. 5. 10. 2 Tim. 4. 1. Acts, 10. 42. & 17. 31. <sup>h</sup> Pf. 2. 12. & 45. 11. Ch. 4. 1. Mat. 28. 19. Rev. 5. 8—13. 1 John, 2. 23. & 5. 10.

to be found in the gospels, comprehending the principal arguments in behalf of both, and setting them forth with the greatest strength of reason, clearness of method, and conciseness of expression.

*Ver. 17. My Father worketh hitherto,*] Jesus began his defence with shewing the rulers the unreasonableness of their displeasure with him, because he had restored the infirm man to health on the sabbath-day. He told them, that, in performing cures on the sabbath-day, he only imitated his Father, who wrought every day of the week in doing good to men by his unwearied Providence; for, on the sabbath, as on other days, through the invisible operation of his power, God supports the whole frame of nature, and carries on the motion of the heavens, upon which the vicissitudes of day and night, and of the seasons, depend; which are so necessary to the production of food, and the other means of life. As the Jews built their observation of the sabbath upon God's having rested thereon from the works of creation, this argument was decisive. Some render it, *My Father worketh even till now*.

*Ver. 18. God was his Father,*] Our Lord's vindication offended the Jews exceedingly, as he claimed a peculiar, proper, and most high relation to God the Father, and, by asserting that he acted like God, set himself on a level with God. The original *πατέρα ἰδίον*, is emphatical, and should be rendered *his own Father*;—*his Father in a peculiar manner*, as Heylin reads it. The whole nation of the Jews thought God to be their Father, ch. viii. 41. They could not therefore have accounted it blasphemy in Christ, to use the same phrase, had they not interpreted it in so high and appropriating a sense.

*Ver. 19. Then answered Jesus,*] Jesus did not deny the conclusion in ver. 18. but shewed that, in all things, he acted agreeably to the will of God the Father, and that he was equal in power to God, doing whatever he saw the Father do; an honour which flowed to him from the immense and eternal love of the Father, and which was a clear and convincing proof of the Father's love towards him. *The Son can do nothing of himself*, means "nothing in opposition to the economy of the Father."

*Ver. 20. Sheweth him*] The word *δεικνυσθαι*, rendered *sheweth*, has a reference here to the ample, comprehensive, and infinite knowledge which the Son has of the whole plan of the Father's counsels in all their mutual relations and dependencies. *He will shew him greater works than these*, "Will enable him as man, to do greater miracles than any that he has done hitherto, and which, though they may not convince, will certainly astonish you, and make it impossible for you to gainsay him, at least with any show of reason."

*Ver. 21—23. For as the Father raiseth up the dead,*] "You have now seen the cure of one who had been long disabled by a disease; but I have not yet raised any from the dead: however, you shall quickly see that it is not for want of power; for, as the Father, whenever he pleases, raises up and animates the dead, so also you shall have sufficient evidence, that the Son animates whom he will; nor is it to be wondered at, that he should have so great a power; for the Father in his own person judges no man, but has given the administration of all judgment unto the Son, before whom all men are at last to appear, and by whom they are to be assigned to their final and eternal state; and this important power the Father has committed to me, that, notwithstanding the humble form in which I now appear, all may be engaged to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father himself; yielding an unreserved homage and obedience to him, as what is necessary to approve their duty and fidelity to God; for he that in such a circumstance, and on such a discovery, honoureth not the Son, as worthy of the highest veneration, honoureth not the Father who sent him; but affronting him in the person of his Son must expect to be treated as an enemy and a rebel." Our Saviour here rises in his discourse, and opens such a scene of glory to his auditors, as must have filled them with astonishment: to possess the power of raising the dead, argued great dignity; but our Lord claims a greater, in asserting that he was invested with the power of judging the world. The power of judging the world implies the executing of judgments temporal and eternal. This power

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

And hath given him authority to exe-

cute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

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

7. 24, 25. Ch. 3. 15, 16, 18, 36. & 6. 40, 47. & 8. 51. & 20. 31. Rom. 8. 1, 2. Eph. 2. 5, 6. 1 John, 3. 14. f See ver. 21. Eph. 2. 5, 14. Luke, 9. 60. & 15. 24, 32. Rom. 6. 4, 13. Gal. 2. 20. Col. 2. 13. 1 Cor. 15. 45. Rev. 3. 1. g Jer. 10. 10. Ch. 17. 2. 1 John, 5. 14. Tim. 6. 15. Ch. 1. 4. & 11. 25. 1 Cor. 15. 45. Ver. 21. h Dan. 7. 13, 14. Ch. 28. 18. Eph. 1. 20-23. Phil. 2. 9-11. 1 Per. 4. 17, 31. See ver. 21. Acts, 10. 42. i Ver. 25, 21. Luke, 7. 14. & 9. 54. Ch. 11. 43. Eph. 2. 1, 5. Gal. 2. 20. k Job, 19. 17, 19. Dan. 12. 2, 3. Mat. 25. 31-46. 1 Theff. 4. 16, 17. 2 Theff. 1. 8, 9. Rev. 20. 11-15. l Ver. 19. Ch. 6. 38. & 8. 28. m Heb. 3. 6. n Pf. 40. 8. Mat. 26. 39. Ch. 4. 34. & 18. 11. & 6. 38.

mitted to our Lord, that all men should honour him as they honour the Father; where the power is the same, the honour should be the same likewise. Men were not to honour the Son, as the maker and governor, or ruler of the world, by yielding to him the homage of love, and obedience, that they might be rewarded with everlasting life: so that being appointed of the Father to be the Judge, they who did not honour him, did not honour the Father. He who treats an ambassador ill, treats his master; but he who honours not the Son, who is beloved of the Father, honoureth not the Father that sent him for this purpose, that he might be honoured. He who believeth not the Son, believeth not the Father likewise, by whom he was sent into the world. Ch. i. 3.

[*with everlasting life,*] “He is already entitled to life, and it is already begun in his soul; and he, if he believeth on me, shall not come into condemnation for ever; but he hath passed from that state of death, which men naturally are, to a state of life everlasting.”

[*Verily, verily, I say unto you,*] These repetitions of the same words are by no means vain, and of great importance to the natural mind, that he, who stood before him so humble a form, was in reality the Lord God. “The season cometh, (says the Father) is now just at hand, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear it shall live; for within these few months shall some dead bodies be raised to life by his power (see Mark, v. 41. Luke, vii. 14.) and compare Matth. xxvii. 52, 53.): and they that are dead in sin, shall by his grace be made spiritually alive.” We explain the cause it is doubtful whether it may not be the resurrection. It is well known, that sinners

are often represented in scripture as *dead*; Matth. viii. 22. Ephes. ii. 1. v. 14. 1 Tim. v. 6. and if the expression of *ἀνοίασιν*, is to be taken as we render it, with the most literal exactness, for *they that hear*, or they, and they alone, that so attend to the voice of Christ as to believe in him, it will then limit it to this sense; which seems also favoured by ver. 24. where death plainly signifies a state of sin and condemnation.

[*Ver. 26. For as the Father hath life, &c.*] “For as the Father is the Fountain of life, who has it necessarily and in the most perfect manner in himself, and communicates it to all the living; so in the dispensation, whereby he has constituted his own essentially living Son to be the Messiah, he has granted to him, that in his incarnate state, and in the execution of his office, he shall have this life in himself, with authority to communicate life to others, in raising them from the dead, by his own fund of quickening power, which is inherent in himself.”

[*Ver. 27. And hath given him authority, &c.*] This may refer not only to the future and final judgment upon the sons of men, but also to the inflicting of temporal judgments; and possibly our Lord had the destruction of Jerusalem more particularly in his eye,—an exercise of judgment which he constantly ascribed to himself. See Philip. ii. 9, 11. and the next note.

[*Ver. 28-30. Marvel not at this:*] “Be not surprised at my saying that the Son has power to raise a few particular persons from the dead, and authority to inflict judgment on some particular offenders: a far greater power is committed to him, even that of raising all men at the last day, and of judging and rewarding them according to their works. Now in this judgment I will not act absolutely or arbitrarily, but according to the laws of equity unalterably established by my Father. So that I shall not act therein so properly by my own, as by my Father’s authority.” *I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge,* ver. 30. in allusion to human courts, where the judges found their sentences upon the testimony



31 ¶ If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

32 ° There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he

witnesseth of me is true.

33 P Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.

34 But I receive not testimony from man:

° i. e. I alone. Ch. 8. 14. Ver. 32, 33, 36. Ch. 14. 12. Numb. 35. 30. Deut. 17. 6. 3. 11, 12. Mark, 1. 7. Luke, 3. 16. Acts, 13. 25. or 11. 42. 1. Mat. 3. 17. & 17. 5.

° Ch. 1. 6—8, 15, 26, 27, 29—36. & 3. 21—26. Mat. P Ch. 1. 19—27. Mal. 3. 1. & 4. 5, 6. Il. 40 1—4.

testimony of witnesses, and the laws of their country; yet the expression by no means implies that our Lord, at the great day, shall receive information from any one whatsoever, concerning the persons whom he is to judge: having been himself privy to their actions, he needs no evidence; but knows all things that ever were thought, said, or done by mankind, from the beginning to the end of time, fully and certainly. He goes on, “*And my judgment is just; not only because it is thus a judgment according to truth and equity, but likewise because I seek not mine own will, &c. I have no interests to pursue, no inclination to fulfil, different from that of my Father.*” See Heb. x. 9, 10. Matth. xxvi. 39.

Ver. 31. *If I bear witness of myself, &c.*] These certainly were very grand assertions, which our Lord made of his own dignity. But he did not require his hearers to believe them merely on the authority of his own testimony; a circumstance by which the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, is distinguished from Mahomet and every other impostor. He told them, that he had the testimony of John given him in the hearing of their own deputies; but at the same time he observed, that the truth of his divine mission did not depend merely on human testimony, though it was given by one who was a burning and shining Light, and in whom they greatly rejoiced, because the prophetic spirit which had so long ceased seemed to be again revived in him. See ver. 35.

Ver. 32, 33. *There is another that beareth witness, &c.*] This proof, taken from the testimony of John the Baptist, though our Lord seems to speak slightly of it, when he compares it with the proof drawn from his own miracles, yet was an argument of particular force to the Jews, and could not fail to convince and confound them; for, as we read in another place, they durst not openly speak against John, because the people generally had him in esteem, and thought him a prophet. A proof, therefore, from his testimony would either remove their doubts, or reduce them to silence. The following observations will prove that the testimony of John ought to be received. He affirms that he knew Jesus to be the Messiah; and this knowledge he acquires, not by any observations which he made upon the life and behaviour of Christ, nor from comparing his actions with the prophecies relating to the Messiah; for it appears that at the time he gave his testimony, Christ had not discovered his divine mission, and was but just entering into his office; nor does it appear that Christ had declared any thing of it to him. He is not guided by conjectures, but by immediate revelation, and by a voice from heaven, declaring Christ to be the Son of God. He assures us, that God discovered to him that Christ was the Messiah. From the testimony which John gave, and from the manner in which he gave it, we may discover the cha-

acter of a great and a good man. We see in him great austerity of life, self-denial, contempt of the pleasures and vanities of the world, an active yet discreet zeal, a courage and constancy arising from true piety; and a sincere modesty and humility. He flattered not the Pharisees and Sadducees; he assumed no honours which belonged not to him; he said less of himself than he might have said with truth. When his disciples were afraid that Christ would draw all men after him, and lessen the reputation of their master, he was not to be moved by such improper motives; nor did he cease to bear testimony to Christ, and acknowledge his own inferiority. Appointed of God to exhort and approve, he reproved even Herod, though he could not be ignorant of the danger to which he exposed himself. By his blameless and upright behaviour he gained the esteem of the Jews; and, after his death, was spoken of with the greatest veneration. He was a man who practised the austerities that he preached, severely virtuous, exhorted all men to righteousness, and lived suitably to his own doctrine. He could not act this part with a view to any worldly profit, and to enrich himself; he sought no such advantages; and if he had sought them, he would never have attained them by pretending to slight them, by dwelling in a wilderness, and by exhorting men to virtues and graces of which he had not set them an example. Nothing therefore can be thought to have influenced him, unless religion, vanity, and the love of fame. If he was guided by ambition, he had reason to be satisfied with his success; all Jerusalem was moved at his preaching. They had so good an opinion of him, that they thought him certainly one sent from God, perhaps one of the old prophets returned into the world; perhaps the Messiah himself. What use did he make of this favourable disposition of the people? He spake of himself with much lowliness and modesty, and exhorted them to acknowledge Christ as the Messiah. If he had been a proud and ambitious man, he would not have set Jesus above himself; he would at least have been silent, and have left the Jews to judge for themselves. We may therefore affirm, that he was what he seemed to be, a gracious man and a sincere lover of truth; and that he would not have deceived the people in any case; above all, not in a case so important. He decided a question, not of small importance, but concerning the Messiah foretold by the prophets, expected at that time, to whom the nation was bound to pay obedience, who should be a ruler, a deliverer, and the founder of an everlasting kingdom. If we suppose him capable of deceiving the people in this point, we must suppose him to be wicked to the highest degree; one who feared not God, nor regarded man; who endeavoured to lead into a fatal error his own nation, by whom he was honoured and respected. But it is unreasonable to suppose him

these things I say, 'that ye might be saved.  
 5 'He was a burning and a shining light :  
 ye were willing for a season to rejoice in  
 light.

¶ But I have greater witness than *that*  
 John: for the 'works which the Father  
 given me to finish, the same works that  
 bear witness of me, that the Father hath

sent me.

37 And the Father himself, which hath sent  
 me, 'hath borne witness of me. "Ye have  
 neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen  
 his shape.

38 And ye have not his word 'abiding in  
 you: 'for whom he hath sent, him ye believe  
 not.

19. 10. Ch. 20. 31. Rom. 15. 4. 1 Tim. 4. 16. 1 Mat. iii. & 11. 7—14. & 21. 26. & 17. 12, 13. Mark, 1. 2—11. & 6. 14, 20.  
 5—17, 76, 77. & iii. Ch. 1. 6—36. & 3. 28—36. Gal. 4. 15. Mat. 13. 20, 21. 2 Pet. 1. 19. Ch. 10. 25, 38. & 14. 12. Mat.  
 6. 1. Mat. 3. 17. & 17. 5. If. 42. 1—7. 2 Pet. 1. 17. Ch. 8. 18. & 12. 28. & 14. 10. Exod. 20. 19. & 33. 20. Deut. 4. 12.  
 6. 1 John, 4. 12. Ch. 1. 18. 1 Pf. 119. 11. 1 John, 2. 14. Prov. 2. 1, 2. & 6. 21. & 7. 1, 2. Deut. 6. 6—9. If. 49. 7. &  
 Ch. 1. 11. Luke, 7. 30.

of so foul a crime. We may also conclude,  
 could not have borne testimony to one whom he  
 will know to be the Messiah, because common  
 sense would have kept him from throwing away, so  
 his good name and reputation. The character  
 of a Messiah could not be long personated by the most  
 impostor. He was to be a teacher of truth; in him  
 all things were to be accomplished, and by him many  
 things were to be performed. If therefore John had  
 testified of a false Messiah, to one in whom none  
 of the signs appeared, his fraud or his error would  
 have been discovered; he would have exposed himself to  
 the contempt of a false prophet; at least, he would have  
 lost the respect and favour of the Jews, and the fair and  
 reputation which till then he had preserved,  
 would have been the object of Jewish contempt and  
 derision. No man can make us suspect that he would have  
 been inconsistent and extravagant, or hinder us  
 from seeing that he spake as he was directed by the  
 Spirit. Nor is it less evident, that he acted on this  
 ground from motives of interest or partiality. It was  
 not to himself; on the contrary, he saw that if  
 he testified of the Messiah, he would be  
 despised and admired. Nor can we suppose  
 that he was partial out of friendship, for there ap-  
 pears to have been any intimacy between him and  
 the Jews; we observe, that John was a person of emi-  
 nent piety; that he had borne witness to Christ;  
 that he testified to him, and that, upon all these ac-  
 counts, he deserved distinguished marks of favour,  
 as we can learn from the evangelists,  
 who testified with him; the reason for which pro-  
 ceeds from the testimony of John might appear of  
 itself, and none could suspect him prejudiced  
 in his relation. But still it may be alleged  
 that he was an enthusiast. Some of  
 the disciples of our Saviour said, that John the  
 Baptist professed, because they had nothing else to  
 say, the accusation is groundless; his dis-  
 tinction sufficiently confute it; his pro-  
 phesies prove it to be false. He foretold the  
 coming of the Messiah, the calamities which should  
 befall the Jews, the death of Christ, and the  
 coming of the Ghost. Enthusiasm may make a man  
 have communications with God, and it may

lead him to austerities and self-denial; but it will not en-  
 able him to declare future events. If we put all these  
 things together, we may conclude as we set out, that the  
 Baptist's veracity in the testimony that he gave of Christ is  
 unquestionable.

*Ver. 34. But I receive not testimony from man:]* "I stand  
 in no need of the testimony of John, or of any other  
 man; nor do I seek after such kind of evidence with any  
 anxiety. But I say these things to you, on your own  
 principles, out of a tender and passionate concern for  
 your conviction; that you who are now conspiring  
 against my life, may be saved from that destruction which  
 he foretold, as the portion of those who should reject  
 me, and which the greatest of them shall not be able to  
 escape." See Matth. iii. 10.

*Ver. 35. He was a burning and a shining light:]* This is  
 the character given of Elias, Eccles. xlviii. 1. and is pro-  
 perly applied by our Lord to John, who came in the spirit  
 and power of Elias, being both a shining light, as he revealed  
 the mysteries of heaven, and a burning light, as he reproved  
 the vices of the Jews with sacred warmth and zeal.

*Ver. 36. But I have greater witness:]* Our Lord told  
 them that he had the testimony of one infinitely greater  
 than John: even the testimony of the Father, who was  
 continually bearing witness to him by the miracles which  
 he empowered him to perform, and who had given him a  
 peculiar and direct testimony at his baptism, by declaring  
 from heaven in a grand, audible, articulate voice, that he  
 was his Beloved Son; which voice many then living had  
 heard, and no doubt remembered. See the beginning of  
 ver. 37. and the note on ch. iii. 2.

*Ver. 37, 38. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time,  
 &c.]* "Nor have you any reason to dispute the testimony  
 which the Father hath thus given me, though you have  
 never heard his voice, nor seen his form; as being one  
 whom no man hath seen or can see. For he has testi-  
 fied the same concerning me in his word, where he has  
 spoken of me in the clearest manner. But, notwith-  
 standing the submission that you profess to his authority,  
 you will not be persuaded to receive the testimony he  
 has given; and after all that he has said, it is still evi-  
 dent that you have not his word cordially abiding in you;  
 nor do you shew a due regard even to those former re-  
 lations which you acknowledge as divine; for, not-  
 withstanding all the reasons which are there given to  
 induce

39 ¶ <sup>a</sup> Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: <sup>b</sup> and they are they which testify of me.

40 <sup>b</sup> And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

41 ¶ <sup>c</sup> I receive not honour from men.

42 But <sup>d</sup> I know you, that ye have not the

love of God in you.

43 <sup>e</sup> I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: <sup>f</sup> if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

44 <sup>g</sup> How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only?

<sup>a</sup> Deut. 6. 6—9. 11. 8. 20. & 34. 16. Acts, 17. 11. Luke, 16. 29, 31. 8. 7. Ch. 1. 11. & 3. 19. 11. 49. 7. & 53. 1—3. Pf. 81. 11. Hosea, 11. 2, 7. Heb. 10. 29. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 6. 15. Ver. 34. 2. Cor. 8. 9. 1. Thes. 2. 6. Mat. 20. 28. <sup>c</sup> Jer. 17. 9, 10. Rev. 2. 23. Luke, 16. 15. Mat. 23. 13—28. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 3. 16. Exod. 23. 21. Heb. 5. 4, 5. with 11. 33. 2, 3. Ch. 1. 11. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 24. 6, 24. Acts, 5. 36, 37. & 21. 38. <sup>f</sup> Ch. 12. 43. Rom. 2. 29.

<sup>g</sup> See Luke, 16. 29. & 24. 27, 44. Ch. 1. 45. Ver. 46. <sup>h</sup> Rom. 8. 7. Ch. 1. 11. & 3. 19. 11. 49. 7. & 53. 1—3. Pf. 81. 11. Hosea, 11. 2, 7. Heb. 10. 29. <sup>i</sup> Ch. 6. 15. Ver. 34. 2. Cor. 8. 9. 1. Thes. 2. 6. Mat. 20. 28. <sup>j</sup> Jer. 17. 9, 10. Rev. 2. 23. Luke, 16. 15. Mat. 23. 13—28. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 3. 16. Exod. 23. 21. Heb. 5. 4, 5. with 11. 33. 2, 3. Ch. 1. 11. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 24. 6, 24. Acts, 5. 36, 37. & 21. 38. <sup>m</sup> Ch. 12. 43. Rom. 2. 29.

“ induce you to it, *you do not believe him, whom he hath sent,* with a much fuller and clearer discovery of himself than any of his former messengers have brought.”

Ver. 39. *Search the scriptures;*] Because the Jews were exceedingly averse to acknowledge the Lord Jesus for their Messiah, notwithstanding that the evidences of his divine mission were so unexceptionable; he desired them, for further proof, to search their own scriptures, and particularly the writings of the prophets; which, says he, is certainly your duty, because those writings, as you justly suppose, contain the knowledge of eternal life, and therefore the knowledge of the Messiah; and I can with confidence refer you to them, knowing that they confirm my pretensions in the most ample manner, the characters of the Messiah pointed out by them being all fulfilled in my person. The word *ἐρευνᾶτε*, rendered *search*, implies the most diligent attention and scrutiny into the meaning of the scriptures. Several great writers contend, that this verse is in the present tense; and that the passage should be rendered, *Ye search the scriptures, because you apprehend that you have eternal life in them:* that is, the directions of heaven for obtaining it; Now these are they, the very writings, which testify of me; yet, ver. 40. *Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life.* The words which express their high opinion of the scriptures, seem rather to suit this translation; and it is highly probable, that, at the time when the Pharisees were so impatient of the Roman yoke, they would with great diligence search the sacred oracles for predictions relating to the Messiah; though it is too plain, they had a most unhappy bias on their minds, which prevented the good effects that might have been expected from that inquiry, had it been impartial. It is also well known, that refined criticism on the sacred writings made the most fashionable branch of learning among the Jews; in comparison of which, prophane literature was held in contempt, and indeed by many of the zealots in great abhorrence. Dr. Rutherford would read the verse interrogatively, as by way of reproach; *Do you search the scriptures,—and yet will not come to me?*

Ver. 41, 42. *I receive not honour from men, &c.]* “ Though I speak of your coming to me, let me remind you that it is not out of an ambition of drawing multitudes about me, to follow and applaud my teaching; for the whole of my conduct proves, that I receive not glory from men.” Our Lord insinuated, that the proofs of his divine mission were as full and clear as possible, being supported not only by miracles, but by the actions of his life,

which, in all points, agreed with his doctrine; for in no one instance whatever did he seek the applause of men, or affect secular power; but was always innocent and humble, though he knew that these qualities rendered him little in the eyes of persons void of the love of God, who expected to see their Messiah adorned with great secular glory; and therefore addressing himself to men of this character, our Lord says very emphatically, *I know you.* The whole series of his discourse excellently shews how far our Lord was from soothing the vanity of men in place and power, to obtain their favour.

Ver. 43. *I am come in my Father's name,]* He came with a commission from his heavenly Father, to promote his glory, and a spiritual salvation from sin and wrath; and produced several unexceptionable witnesses to establish his divine character and offices; and yet, because he opposed their vices, and did not appear with worldly pomp, nor gave them expectations of secular riches, honour, and power, they would not believe in him. Whereas if any other person came to them in *his own name;* that is, without a commission from God, they would joyfully embrace him, provided he assumed the majesty of a king, and promised temporal bounties to his followers. The Jews gave many signal proofs of this infatuation during their wars with the Romans, and a little before the destruction of their city; for then many impostors arose, pretending to be the Messiah, and promising them deliverance; by which they drew away great multitudes, as their own historian Josephus informs us, and we have observed in the note on Matth. xxiv. 26.

Ver. 44. *How can ye believe, &c.]* Our Lord observes, that this infidelity of the Jewish rulers (see on ver. 15.) was owing in a great measure to their pride. They who had all along preached glorious things concerning the empire and grandeur of the Messiah, would not ascribe that august character to one of so low a condition apparently as our adorable Lord, who was destitute even of the ordinary advantages of birth, fortune, and erudition; because it would have been such a confession of ignorance and unskilfulness in the scriptures, as must have exposed them to the contempt of those whom they had misled. *How can ye believe, &c.* “ How can such persons as you believe in me, whose character and station are entirely different from what you have all along told the people that the scriptures teach concerning the Messiah? This confession of your own ignorance is not to be expected from you, who in all your actions seek the praise of men.”

45 ¶ Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: <sup>b</sup> there is *one* that accuseth you, even Moses, <sup>c</sup> in whom ye trust.

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would

have believed me: <sup>d</sup> for he wrote of me.

47 But <sup>e</sup> if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

<sup>a</sup> Rom. 3. 19, 20. & 7. 9—14. Gal. 3. 10. Ver. 46. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 8. 6. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 19. 7. Acts, 6. 11, 14. <sup>d</sup> Gen. 3. 15. & 12. 3. & 17. 18. & 22. 18. & 49. 10. Deut. 18. 15—18. Exod. xii. xxv—xxx. Lev. i—xvi. Numb. iii. iv. viii. xv. xxviii. xxix. Rom. 10. 4. Gal. 4. 24. Col. 2. 17. <sup>e</sup> Luke, 16. 29. Rom. 10. 17.

men, (Matth. xxiii. 5.) and not the praise of God; which is the only true praise, and is to be obtained, through grace, by a steady regard to truth and holiness, in opposition to all earthly passions whatsoever."

Ver. 45. *Do not think, that I will accuse you, &c.*] *Do not think, &c.?* Syriac. Our Lord told them in conclusion that they were not to imagine that in rejecting *him*, they sinned against no person but him, and that he alone would accuse them to the Father for their infidelity. *He*, through whose law they trusted to have salvation, was likewise dishonoured by it; inasmuch as he wrote of *under the names of the Seed of Abraham,—Shiloh,—A son like to himself, &c.* Wherefore, seeing they refused to believe on him, Moses would accuse them as authors of disbelieving his writings. This is one of the most striking passages that can be imagined, in which Moses is represented as looking down with indignation upon these Jews who gloried in being the most distinguished of his people: and seeing how injuriously they treated the Lord who had predicted by Moses, that great Prophet, his coming as turning to God with a severe reproof against them, and urging his own predictions as a confirmation of their inexcusable infidelity.

Ver. 47. *For he wrote of me.*] "*Had you believed on the writings of Moses, which are daily read in your synagogues, you would have believed me; for these writings describe me, as by a variety of striking types and figures, so likewise by many strong and direct prophecies the last note: But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? If you do not believe the testimony of your own lawgiver, I have no reason to expect that you do not credit me upon my testimony. Thus the Lord Jesus asserted his own personal testimony as the Son of God, and Judge of the world; and at the same time proposed the evidences of his divine mission with such strength of reason, perspicuity, and consistency, that nothing can equal.*"

*Drawn from our Lord's miracle wrought at the Pool of Bethesda. — It is very pleasing to observe, that the Father, the most high God, when, as the Lord and great Messenger of the covenant, he suddenly appeared, and when he was about to deliver the discourse concerning his equality with the Father, on the sabbath-day, enter as a physician into the Pool, which were a kind of hospital, where he attended a multitude, so sad a spectacle of the suffering children of Adam!*

*Let us assure us, that Christ, though reigning in glory with the Father, does not therefore neglect his mercies; but exerts the office of a loving Father to the world, as a great hospital, assisting by his*

grace, and ready to help, the afflicted in soul as well as body, and not forgetting to extend continually his rich mercy and compassion towards both.

Nay, if he condescended to come down into this wretched world, this place of misery and woe, and to assume our nature, and to open from his most precious heart a fountain for all our uncleanness; can we doubt of his fatherly care over us? Can we doubt of his tender regard for us?—We must necessarily be dear to *him*, who, of his own free love, paid so inestimable a price for us! Let us learn hence, with full and humble confidence to repose ourselves upon him, and in all our miseries and necessities to commend ourselves into the hands of this faithful Redeemer; to wait upon him in all those means, which he himself has ordained and appointed, and wherein he has promised to meet and refresh our longing souls!

What a blessing was this pool of Bethesda, endowed with this miraculous virtue, to the Jewish people! You see how they thronged it; the five porches were full; all were wishing and striving to enjoy its advantages. Were there such a miraculous *bath* in this nation, there would be no less crowding thither. Each would be pressing towards it, when labouring under diseases; all desirous of stepping in first, that they might be made whole.

How amazingly do men, by their own conduct in temporal things, condemn themselves in *spiritual*! Such a pool, such a fountain there is for the soul, *a fountain opened for sin, and for all uncleanness*; a fountain, in which whosoever will, may come, wash, and be clean. Such a fountain is the most precious blood of Jesus Christ, streaming forth in all his divine ordinances,—those *waters of life*, by which spiritual maladies are healed, and vigour is restored to our enfeebled souls!

And yet, how little are they thronged by men, wishing and earnestly striving to be healed; how few comparatively are there who come to them with a full sense of their spiritual impotency, and a resolution to *step in* that they may be made whole! Multitudes were continually attending at this *pool*; and why then is the *house of God* forsaken, where not *one alone*, but *many*, at the same moment may receive spiritual light and strength, yea, and life from the dead? But, alas! under the diseases of the soul, how few comparatively desire to be *made whole*. Blessed Jesus! if thou hast awakened that desire in us, we would adore thee for it, as a *token for good*; and would lift up our believing eyes to thee, in humble expectation that thou wilt graciously fulfil it.

How many are there who never come to the ordinances of God at all; who have either found out some new methods of spiritual cure; or, proud in heart, will confess no spiritual infirmities, and despise the weakness of their professed cure; or, wise in their own inventions, have too

## C H A P. VI.

*Christ feedeth five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes. Thereupon the people would have made him king. But withdrawing himself, he walketh on the sea to his disciples: reprovethe the people flocking after him, and all the fleshly hearers of his word: declareth himself to be the bread of life to believers. Many disciples depart from him. Peter confesseth him. Judas is a devil.*

[Anno Domini 31.]

**A**FTER these things <sup>a</sup> Jesus went over the <sup>b</sup> sea of Galilee, which is *the sea of Tiberias*.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 14. 13—21. Mark, 6. 31—44. Luke, 9. 10—17.

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 4. 23—25. & 8. 1. & 11. 7. & 12. 13. & 13. 1. & 14. 13, 14.

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 4. 18. & 15. 29. & 14. 34. Luke, 5. 1. Numb. 14. 12. Jesh. 12. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Ver. 15. Mat. 5. 1. & 14. 23. & 15. 29. Luke, 6. 12. & 9. 25. 'Luk. 23. 5. Exod. 12. 6. Deut. 16. 1. Numb. 28. 6.

<sup>e</sup> Mat. 14. 15. Mark, 6. 35. Luke, 9. 12. Ch. 4. 35.

much sense to believe the gospel. God grant that they may all understand in time *how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God!* more especially, when so much grace, when so much goodness, when so much mercy, has been long and obstinately rejected; the *grace*, the *mercy*, the *goodness* of an eternal Saviour, who, unbounded in his voluntary love, hath endured sufferings unspeakable, to procure so divine a remedy for all our evils; a remedy infallible! All sicknesses, all disorders, however complicated, however inveterate, are here removed by one hand, and one water: none ever were, none ever will be sent empty away, who come desirous of relief; nor is that relief confined to the *first* only who steps in; it is a fountain flowing plenteously unto every draught!

And thus may *all* be cured; but their own *will* must concur: Christ first asked the man, *Wilt thou be made whole?* ver. 6. before he bid him *arise and walk*. There could be no doubt of *his* desire to be cured, who *waited* at the pool for this very purpose; and *you*, reader, must shew your *will* and *desire* to be cured in this same way; *you must wait at the pool*,—must wait for Christ in those general ordinances, which himself hath enjoined, in the *sacraments*, in *prayer* and the *word*: and if, with hope, duly sensible of your weakness and misery, you thus wait upon him, you need not fear but he will perfect the cure of all your spiritual maladies, and enable you to walk and glorify him.

But if you *attend at the pool*, if you frequent the ordinances of the gospel, with any other motive than a real desire to meet there the Saviour of your souls, and to be healed of all your infirmities by his blood; be assured you will frequent them in vain, and never find them, what they are to the contrite and humble, means of grace, and channels of heavenly life and support to the soul.

Should you frequent them, and still find them not efficacious, you must not therefore cease to frequent them. The man before us, was *thirty-eight years* in his infirmity, ver. 5. and yet was perfectly healed by the power of Christ at the last. God sometimes delays his mercies to make them more signal and acceptable; and *when we have no man to put us into the pool*, when none is able or willing to help, he speaks the word, and we are delivered. *Bethesda* must be *waited on*; he is worthy of his crutches, who

<sup>2</sup> And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

<sup>3</sup> And <sup>4</sup> Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

<sup>4</sup> And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?

will not stay God's leisure for his cure: there is no virtue, no success without patience; and here we all have need of it. One is sick of an overflowing of the gall,—the jaundice of malice; another of the swelling of pride; another of the fever of concupiscence; another of the vertigo of inconstancy; another of the choking quinsy of curies and blasphemies; another of the dropsy of covetousness; another of the pleuritical pangs of envy: one is consumed with emulation; another rotten with corrupt desires; and all are so much the sicker, if they feel not these distempers.

We work hard, and we endure much for the *body*; what toil do we take, that we may toil yet a little longer! We endure many certain pains for the addition of a few uncertain days. Why will we not do thus for the *soul*, for the immortal, the better part, when we know that our waiting will not be unsuccessful; and when we know that our *waiting* here, shall procure for us *eternal rest* hereafter? O wait then upon the Lord in all the means of grace, in all the paths of duty; come by these means, duly sensible of your spiritual evils; lay them before the Lord, confess your sins to him, and with earnest desire to be *delivered from the body of this death*, cry to him, and he will at length *give you the victory*, and by his grace enable you to *rise, take up your bed and walk*; to leave sin, and all the occasions of it, and to serve him in holiness and newness of living.

The sure evidences of a spiritual cure are these: 1. A forsaking of our former sins: 2. A laying aside the marks and occasions thereof: and, 3. A performing the contrary actions; particularly the duties of *praise* and *thanksgiving* to God, as this infirm man did, who, languishing as he was lately *on the couch*, we quickly after *see found by Jesus in the temple*, ver. 14. And where indeed should they be found, who have been raised up from *beds of weakness*, and brought out from chambers of *sorrow* and confinement, but in the *sanctuary*, rendering their praises to the *God of their mercies*? It was here that Christ said to him, for a lesson to us all, *Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee*; hereby shewing us, that diseases and sickness are the *punishment of sin*, and that of consequence the best remedy we can apply for their cure, is sincere repentance and *conversion* through the grace of God.

6 And this he said to <sup>e</sup> prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

<sup>e</sup> Gen. 22. 1. Deut. 8. 2, 16. & 33. 8. 2 Chr. 32. 31.

7 Philip answered him, <sup>a</sup> Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them,

<sup>a</sup> i. e. 61. 98. Numb. 11. 21, 22. Mark, 6. 37.

*Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* To deter from relapses into sin, Christ shews the danger of them. *was bad enough to lie thirty and eight years bound by a terrible disease: but it is worse, infinitely worse, than penitence can describe, or thought conceive, to lie bound in flames ever-during fire, not for thirty-eight, or thirty times thirty-eight years, but for ever and ever!*—Let them remember this admonition of our Lord, who have made on sick-beds good resolutions, and determined to turn and amend their lives, when the hand of God hath been upon them; but have forgotten all, when, to prove sincerity, he hath saved them awhile from the jaws of death! O let such remember, how fearful a woe hangs over their heads, who, having been made whole, have yet regarded as usual in the practice of sin; and left a worse even eternal misery, *come unto them*, let them make with broken hearts and humbled souls, to the heap of Bethesda, the blood of Christ, the fountain of life for sin and for uncleanness.

Christ is the fruitful parent of all human evils; and, till the resurrection, lies in the silent grave, the temptations to sin will be continual: so that we have continual need to be upon our guard, and to remember our Lord's warning. The best method to secure us from relapses, is a full dependence on the almighty grace of God, sought for in all our exerting powers with sincerity and humility, accompanied by a strict attendance on all the means of grace, on the sacred ordinances, and by a holy and conscientious and a strict watchfulness over all our thoughts, words, and actions. If endeavouring thus to wait, and persevere, we shall find God's grace *sufficient for us*; if we do not, *he will find us in the temple*, paying our grateful tribute of praise and adoration, he will enable us boldly to confess our sins, as this man did before the Pharisees; and if we perseveringly do so, we have his infallible promise, *he will also confess us* before his Father and all the angels, in the realms of glory and immortality. **32, 33.**

**NOTES.**—1st, The feast spoken of ver. 1. was the passover; the second which our Lord kept after his public entrance on the ministry; **works the following gracious and very remarkable miracle:** *the place where the miracle was wrought, is worthy of remembrance, as it was a pool of water near the sheep-gate, Neh. 3. 26. Bethesda, or the house of mercy, surrounded by covered walks, where the impotent lay on mats, and came with their several complaints, blind, lame, or palsied, waiting for the moving of the water, in the fourth month.* For this pool was impregnated with a certain virtue, at certain seasons, owing to the descent of the Spirit, troubled the waters; and the first person who stepped in, was cured of whatever disease his malady was. **2d,** *the healing power began to be communicated to*

the waters, or when it ceased, the Jewish historians are entirely silent; it served however to shew, that God had not left his people without witness, and represented that fountain which should be opened in the Saviour's side, in which whoever washed should be made clean: *This fountain has not at seasons merely, but at all times, the power of healing; and therefore whoever continues under his spiritual maladies, has only his own negligence to blame, that he will not come to Christ that he may be cured.*

2. The person on whom the cure was wrought, had been thirty-eight years under his infirmity, probably paralytic, and unable to move; and therefore when Jesus, passing by, compassionately observed his pitiable case, and graciously addressed him, *Wilt thou be made whole?* he relates his unhappy condition, and his continual disappointment, while some other stepped in, before he could find a friend to assist him to reach the troubled waters; so that he began now to despair of ever obtaining his cure. *Note;* (1.) What thankfulness do we owe to our preserving God, if we enjoy perfect health and strength, whilst others totter with weakness and disease, and wearisome days and nights are appointed to them? (2.) The compassionate eye of Jesus is on his afflicted but faithful people; and though he suffer them to be long exercised, he will pass by them in due season, and deliver them. (3.) They who would receive a cure from him of their spiritual maladies, ought at least to be waiting at the pool of ordinances, where Jesus usually manifests his power and grace.

3. Christ with a word heals his disease, bidding him arise, take up his bed, and walk; and such power accompanied his command, that the impotent man instantly felt his strength return; arose perfectly cured; and taking up his bed, walked away in the sight of, and to the amazement of the beholders; and *the same day was the sabbath.* *Note;* (1.) When Christ speaks to the penitent sinner, he gives ability for that which he commands. (2.) They who are healed by his grace, will instantly be obedient to his will.

4. As, according to the tradition of the elders, it was accounted unlawful to carry a bed on the sabbath-day; the Jews jealous, therefore, for the honour of that sacred day of rest, rebuked the healed person for being guilty of such a profanation. The man thought he had sufficient authority when he who healed him gave him his orders, and pleads the command of the person who had wrought the cure upon him. They suspected who had done the miracle, and wanted the man to accuse his kind benefactor, against whom they wished to proceed as a sabbath-breaker: *What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk?* With such contempt and indignation do they speak of Christ, as if he was a mere man, and a wicked man too, notoriously guilty of a breach of God's law. The man, who knew not Jesus, could give them no information; for he had disappeared immediately, mixing among the crowd, probably to avoid the admiration of some, and the malignity of others, who he knew would

that every one of them may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, <sup>1</sup> Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: <sup>k</sup> but what are they among so many?

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 1. 40—44. Mat. 4. 18.

<sup>k</sup> Numb. 11. 21, 22. 2 Kings, 4. 43. Mat. 14. 17. Mark, 6. 38. Luke, 9. 13. Ver. 6.

be offended at him for this glorious act of mercy, because it was the sabbath-day. *Note;* (1.) The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; therefore works of mercy and charity are always commendable. (2.) They who are eminent for well-doing, may expect to pass through evil report as well as good report.

5. Soon after this the poor man going up to the temple, probably to return thanks for his late mercies, met Jesus there, who gave him a solemn caution with regard to his future conduct; *sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* Should he provoke the wrath of God by his sins, it would yet be worse than his past long affliction. The man in the simplicity of his heart went, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole: probably he hoped that this notable miracle might engage them to acknowledge him as the Messiah; but so far were they from being led to admire his character, that, filled with envy and enmity, they sought to slay Jesus; and, for a pretext, pleaded that this work of mercy was a profanation of the sabbath. *Note;* (1.) They who have received signal mercies from God, are peculiarly obliged to be found in the temple, offering up their thanksgivings. (2.) In the Lord's house we may expect to be favoured with his presence. (3.) Sin is at the root of all sufferings, in time and eternity. (4.) They who are by grace delivered from the guilt and power of sin, should be doubly watchful not to return again unto folly. (5.) Many cover, with pretended zeal for religion, their enmity against the most faithful servants of Christ.

2dly, We have our Lord's vindication of himself from the charge laid against him as a sabbath-breaker.

1. He argues from his Father's works to his own. *My Father worketh hitherto;* by his continual operation, every day he administers the affairs of the kingdom of providence; *and I work as one with him,* in nature and operation; and therefore my works of power and grace can be no more the subject of blame, than his. Most absurd, therefore, was the charge laid against him as a sabbath-breaker, who was Lord of the sabbath, and one with the eternal Father, the Maker and Preserver of all things.

2. This defence exasperated them but the more. Such a claim to God, as *his own Father,* in that peculiar sense which implied a co-equality with him in power, authority, and operation, they regarded as the highest blasphemy, and more deserving of death than even the breach of the sabbath.

3. Far from blaming his enemies as perverting his words, he vindicates what he had said; asserting and proving in the most exalted sense the eternal union and co-equality between the Father and the Son, and his title to the dignity of the undivided Godhead. *Verily, verily, I say unto you,* what I speak is certain, and my word truth itself; *the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do;* such is the unity of their nature, that they are alike intimately acquainted with each other's councils and designs, having one eternal mind. The Son, therefore, never

acts separately from the Father, but with his consent and co-operation: *for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise;* whatever the Father doeth in the continual agency of his Providence, the Son, as one with him, is a co-worker, and acts with the same divine power and authority as the Father himself. *For the Father loveth the Son,* an infinite mutual complacence subsists between the divine Persons; *and sheweth him all things that himself doeth,* communicating to him all his councils and designs, and doing nothing in the kingdom of grace or providence, but in conjunction with him: *and he will shew him greater works than these,* performed by him and with him, greater miracles of power and goodness than this wrought on the impotent man, *that ye may marvel;* either led to admire my works, and believe in my divine mission, or to wonder and perish in obstinate infidelity.

4. In confirmation of what he had said, he instances his own divine power in two most remarkable particulars; both of which are interwoven in his discourse, and nearly connected.

[1.] He hath power equally with the Father to quicken the dead. He is *the prince of life:* self-existent as the Father, he hath life in himself; *for as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;* in the œconomy of man's redemption this life eternal is lodged in the hands of the Son, resides in him, and is to be derived from him; and he bestows it on all his faithful saints. By him,

(1.) The souls of penitent sinners are raised from the death of trespasses and sins, in which they lay; by the word of gospel-grace they are called from the grave of corruption, and awake to newness of life: *and the hour is coming, yea, now is,* when this great work shall be performed; *now* by his own ministry, hereafter more abundantly by the preaching of his apostles. *Note;* (1.) Our souls, by the fall, are become utterly incapable, in the mere state of nature, of all spiritual good, insensible to our real state of misery, and altogether dead before God. (2.) Our hearts must experience a spiritual resurrection to newness of life here, or we can never hope for eternal life hereafter. (3.) The voice of Jesus in his word made effectual by his Spirit, is the powerful agent which accomplishes this glorious work in the hearts of those who believe.

(2.) By him the dead bodies of men shall be raised up at the last day. Nor need any *marvel,* that he who first created men upon earth, should be able to repair the ruined tabernacle, and restore it from the dust: *all* from the first man whom God formed, *to* the last whom death shall seize, *shall bear the voice of the Son of God,* and instantly at his word *shall come forth,* leaving the prison of the grave, restored to life that never more shall end: though, according to their several characters, very different will their doom be; *they that have done good,* whose hearts were renewed by divine grace, and whose works and ways evidenced faith unfeigned, and love without dissimulation.

10 And Jesus said, **Make the men sit down. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.**

<sup>1</sup> Mat. 14. 19. Mark, 6. 39, 40. Luke, 9. 14, 15.

lation, they, and only they, will rise *unto the resurrection of life*, to that state of immortal bliss and glory, which shall be the reward of their fidelity; and they that have done evil, have continued under the power and dominion of their native corruption, have lived without experiencing a divine change upon their hearts, and died under the guilt of unpurged sin, they shall be raised *unto the resurrection of damnation*, condemned to those eternal torments which are the wages of sin, without measure and without end; lying down in hell under that wrath of God, which is for ever and ever to come. How awful! how alarming the admonition! oh that we might feel the weighty import of it, and prepare to meet our God!

2.] He hath the power of finally determining the everlasting state of men and angels. Not only as God the Son, the Judge of all, in common with the Father, administering the affairs of the kingdom of providence and grace, without him *the Father judgeth no man*—but as Messiah also, he has a peculiar authority delegated to him, to pronounce the last and final judgment as the Son of man; to pronounce sentence from his throne at the last day, to take vengeance on those who have been rebellious against his government, who have despised or rejected his salvation; and to fix, by an irrevocable decree, the eternal blessedness of his faithful, and the rule of his judgment at that day shall be his own word, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, shall never die, but shall have everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but shall pass from death unto life: where we may observe the effect of it; deliverance from all condemnation, if he persevere in this faith, eternal bliss. And those who have passed from spiritual death to spiritual life, shall have therein the earnest and foretaste of eternal life. The judgment of Jesus is just; for all that he doth is according to the will of the Father, and according to the commission that he has received from him. Such, as are his infinite dignity, the Son, who is in glory with the Father, majestic co-eternal, must be honoured, worshipped, glorified, even as the Father; and so far from its being derogatory, and derogatory from the Father's glory, that he claims equality with him, in nature, perfection, and exalted excellence; so inseparably connected are their honour and interest so entirely the same, that he regards every instance of disrespect shewn to his Father as dishonour done to himself; both as he is one with the Father, the same undivided Godhead, and also as he is the Son of man sent from him, commissioned by him, to represent him, and as his Ambassador, representing himself.*

3.] The confirmation of the glorious character which he bears, and his mission from the Father, our Lord, produce other evidence than his own; admitting, that he asserted were utterly unsupported, they are confirmed by the testimony of himself as untrue.

**Baptist bore witness of him; to his evidence, he bore witness, fully assured that it was true: and they**

themselves, who applied to him as a prophet, were bound to embrace his testimony, which in the most solemn manner he delivered to those deputies of the Sanhedrim who were sent to inquire who he was, and under what authority he acted. He plainly asserted Christ's divine character (See Ch. i. 19—30.); and his evidence they could not but allow to be most respectable. For though he was not *that light*, the Messiah, *he was a burning and a shining light*; his exemplary conduct and zealous preaching bespoke the simplicity of his soul, and *ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light*. They gloried in him at first, and raised their expectations high; but when he would neither himself assume the character of the Messiah, nor declare himself that Elias whom they expected, they could not bear the sharpness of his rebukes, and plainness of his testimony to that Messiah whom they rejected; and therefore they soon fell off and neglected him: not that Christ indeed needed human testimony; he had far greater. But for their conviction he mentions this, if any thing might be the means of rescuing them from ruin. *Note; (1.)* Every minister of Jesus, like John, should burn with zeal for his glory, and shine in all holy conversation, that he may adorn and give weight to the doctrine that he preaches. *(2.)* Many at first seem to rejoice in the light of the gospel, who soon grow cold and careless, and neglect so great a salvation. *(3.)* They who trifle with their mercies, are justly deprived of them.

2. He appeals to a greater witness than that of John, even his own works, which bore witness of him. His whole life and ministry bespoke his glorious character; and especially his miracles, wrought by his own divine power, evinced his mission from God. And greater works than he had yet done, remained for him to finish, to leave them at least without excuse, if they obstinately persisted in their infidelity.

3. God the Father himself had expressly borne witness to him by a voice from heaven at his baptism, Matth. iii. 16, 17. which was solemnly repeated, Matth. xvii. 5. at his transfiguration; and this was a singular attestation, such as had never before on any occasion been vouchsafed. *Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape: all the voices that were heard, and the appearances that were seen, under the Old Testament, were either those of the Son in a human form, or of the angels employed by him in this ministry: then first when the Father in person spoke from heaven at the baptism of his Son, was his voice audibly heard, and a most wonderful visible manifestation made of his glory. (See the Annotations for another view of this passage.) And ye have not his word abiding in you; neither this immediate testimony from heaven, nor his former word by his prophets, had ever made any abiding impression; for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not: after all this evidence they, notwithstanding, rejected the testimony of God, and refused to believe in the Messiah.* *Note; (1.)* When God sends, he will bear witness to his own servants, and attest with his Spirit the commission that he



11<sup>m</sup> And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had<sup>n</sup> given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were fat down; and likewise of the fishes as much

<sup>m</sup> Mat. 14. 19, 20. Mark, 6. 41—43. Luke, 9. 16, 17. Pl. 37. 16. Prov. 13. 25. & 15. 16, 17. <sup>n</sup> Neh. 9. 25. 1 Sam. 9. 13. Mat. 15. 36. & 26. 27. & 24. 45. Exod. 23. 25. Rom. 14. 6. 1 Tim. 4. 5.

he has given them. (2.) Many have the word of God in their hands, and sounding in their ears, and yet have it not abiding in their hearts.

4. He refers them to their own scriptures for the proof of his divine character and mission: *search the scriptures*. The scriptures were by many of them much studied, and they boasted of their wisdom in these sacred oracles, but they were great strangers to the meaning of them; they had need therefore look farther and deeper than ever yet they had done; and he ventures to rest his cause upon an appeal to these authentic records, which they themselves so highly and justly valued: *for in them ye think ye have eternal life*: they placed the chief strefs of their religion upon the knowledge of the law; and flattered themselves, that by constantly reading these sacred writings, and getting them by rote, they were sure of heaven. Now *these*, faith he, *are they which testify of me*; all the types, promises, prophecies, centre in him, and refer to him; *and yet ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*; such were their prejudices and wilful blindness, that though the scriptures were so express in pointing him out to their notice, they would not submit to apply to him, that they might obtain the pardon, life and salvation which he alone could give. Not that he affected to exalt himself, to gather a party, or obtain temporal dominion. *I receive not honour from men*; he neither courted nor needed human applause; his only aim was to advance his Father's glory and the salvation of men. *But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you*; he tried their hearts, and, notwithstanding all their high pretences of zeal for God's honour, the love of the world predominated in their affections, and they had really no heartfelt and sincere regard to God or godliness, and rejected him because he did not correspond with their earthly expectations. Hence, though *I am come in my Father's name*, with evidences of a divine mission so strong and striking, *ye receive me not*, because the salvation that he brought was spiritual salvation from sin, and death, and hell: and he so sharply rebuked their vices, and undeceived them in their vain expectation of a temporal Messiah, who should come with outward pomp and grandeur, therefore they rejected him: but *if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive*, eager to embrace every impostor who pretended to deliver them from the Roman yoke, and aggrandize their nation, though vouching no authority but his own boastings. And being under the influence of such a carnal mind, *how can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?* Their spirit and temper, and the proud affectation of pre-eminence, were the reverse of the kingdom which Christ came to erect, where humility and self-denial stood in the first and most distinguished place; and must for ever exclude them from the spiritual, substantial, and eternal honours which God alone bestows on his faithful children. Learn hence, (1.) The necessity of deep and serious examination of the scriptures, comparing spiritual things

with spiritual, and diligently seeking for Christ in them, who is the sum and substance of them; for without the practical knowledge of him, all other attainments in the letter, language, and phrases of the scripture, are really no better than splendid ignorance. (2.) In the scriptures eternal life is to be obtained, because they reveal to us that Redeemer, who is the author of it to all who obey him. The Old Testament, as well as the new, is full of him; the moral law drives us for refuge to him, the types of the ceremonial law all prefigure him, the prophecies all centre in him. He is indeed all, and in all. (3.) All who come by faith to Christ, perseveringly embracing the salvation which is in him, will assuredly find pardon, grace, and glory: the reason why any sinners perish is this, that, blinded by wilful ignorance, and perverted by pride and self-righteousness, they *will not come to Christ* that they may have life. Their eternal ruin, therefore, lies at their own door. (4.) Christ searches the heart, and trieth the reins; he knows what is in man; and, under the guise of the warmest profession of religion, can discover the enmity which reigns within against himself and his gospel. (5.) Where inordinate love of this world prevails, and ambition, covetousness, and a desire of human applause possess the soul, it is impossible that the love of God should dwell there. No man can serve two masters. (6.) When men choose those false prophets, who flatter them in their iniquities, and run without being sent; and, pleased with their smooth prophecies, turn a deaf ear to the warning voice of truth, justly does God give up such to the delusions which they have chosen. (7.) True honour comes from God alone; his estimation of us, not that of all the world beside, stamps our character with excellence or infamy. His approbation, therefore, a gracious soul desires in the first place. (8.) Whilst our hearts affect earthly honours, it is impossible that we should believe in, embrace, and submit to him, whose kingdom is not of this world, and whose first demand from us is to take up our crosses and follow him, as men who are wondered at.

Lastly, Christ turns them over to Moses, in whose writings they so much gloried, for a proof of his mission, and as their accuser, if they persisted in their infidelity. *Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father*, as if I came to spy out your faults, with a view to their condemnation; No, *there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust*. That law on which they trusted for salvation, must needs condemn them as transgressors: and Moses in person at the last day must, to their confusion, testify against their impotence and unbelief. *For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me, as the great Prophet who should arise; as the great end of the law, moral and ceremonial, to which both pointed; but if ye believe not his writings for whom you pretend such high veneration, and are not convinced by them of my divine mission, how shall ye believe my words? against whom you entertain such inveterate prejudices, and whom you treat*

ast hey would.

12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

\* 1 Kings, 17, 15, 16. Prov. 3, 9, 10. & 11, 24, 25. Phil. 4, 19. The disciples had much more left than at the beginning.

with such insolent contempt? *Note*; (1.) Many make their boast in those privileges which will at last prove their more aggravated condemnation, because they have abused them. (2.) They who refuse to fly by faith for refuge to the Gospel of Christ, must inevitably perish under the accusations of the law.

CHAP. VI.

ver. 1. *After these things*] That is, some time after: for John passes by a great many transactions related by the evangelists; and perhaps would not have given this notice, had it not been for preserving a remarkable discovery of our Saviour, which, though of great importance, is omitted by the other sacred historians. See ver. 18. and the parallel places.

4. *The passover, a feast of the Jews,*] This is supposed to be the third passover of our Lord's public life. The evangelist probably mentions this to shew the time of the year, &c.

*He saith unto Philip,*] Our Lord addresses him particularly, because he was a native of Bethsaida, and best acquainted with that country. See ver. 5. and on Luke, ix. 10.

*This he said to prove him:*] To try what idea he had of his divine power, as well as to give him an opportunity of observing more attentively what followed.

*Two hundred pennyworth of bread*] As much as would purchase for 200 denarii, which amounts to about five shillings of our money. The mensurum seems to intimate that their whole stock was no more. See Mark, vi. 37.

*Now there was much grass*] This circumstance shews, that the miracle of the loaves happened in February or March, when the grass is in the full in Syria; and to this agrees what we are told is observable, that in computing the number of persons fed at this meal, the evangelists mention only men, and of them only such as were of age; whereas it is probable that there were about 5000. In this computation by guess; for the disposition of the multitude is not of a determinate number, (see on Mark, vi. 10.) but to make the computation with certainty.

*five thousand* precisely, one of the ranks of the men, would make them less; and an additional rank of the women, would make them more: but besides the men, there were women also, and children, who, we are told, were not inferior in number to the men; and these were not fed with the men, as seems from the next verse, must have been set down by a separate meal; some of the disciples being sent out on them and serve them. St. John tells us why so great a crowd was now with him was at hand, ver. 4. consequently num-

bers from every quarter being on the road to Jerusalem, they might have been drawn round Christ by the fame of his miracles, of which they desired to be eye-witnesses.

*Ver. 11. And when he had given thanks,*] St. Matthew and St. Mark say simply that he blessed, ευλογησας, which most commentators refer to the loaves and fishes, because St. Luke says expressly, ευλογησας αυτους; he blessed them. Some, however, put a different sense upon the words. They apprehend, that our Lord's looking up to heaven, when he blessed, mentioned by St. Luke himself, shews that this blessing was directed to God the Father, and that it imported a thanksgiving for his great goodness. The reader, however, will remember, that the word in dispute has a sense which favours the common interpretation of this passage, Psalm lxxv. 10. *thou blessest the springing thereof,* that is to say, of the corn. It is not to be supposed, that twelve persons could put first a piece of bread, and then a piece of fish into the hands of 5000 men, besides women and children, who were all fed with such expedition, that notwithstanding the thing was not so much as proposed to the disciples till about three, all appears to have been over by five in the afternoon. See on ver. 10. Wherefore it is natural to conclude, that in distributing the meat the disciples used the most expeditious method, putting by their Master's directions, the bread first, and after that the fish, into the hands of those only who sat at the ends of the ranks; with orders to give it to their companions. On this supposition the food must have extended its dimensions, not in our Lord's hands only, but in the hands of his disciples, and of the multitude likewise; continuing to swell till there was a greater quantity than they who held it, could make use of; so that breaking off what was sufficient for themselves, they gave the remainder to the persons next to them, who in like manner saw the bread and fish swell in their hands, till they also had enough and to spare. See particularly the note on Mark, vi. 39, 40.

*Ver. 12. Gather up the fragments*] Though Jesus was entirely free from worldly cares, and from all anxiety about futurity, he did not think it unworthy of him, on this occasion, to order his disciples to take care of the broken pieces of meat left by the multitude. The reason mentioned by him for their doing so, namely, that nothing might be lost, deserves our notice: for it shews us, that he to whom the earth and the fulness thereof belong, willeth every man to take due care of all the goods he possesses; and that if he wastes any thing by carelessness or profusion, he is guilty of sin; namely, the sin of despising the creatures of God, which by so admirable a contrivance as the frame of the world, God hath produced for his use. Wherefore, as by feeding so many, Jesus hath set us an example of liberality; so by taking care of the fragments, he hath taught us frugality; and by joining the

14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, <sup>p</sup> This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

15 ¶ <sup>q</sup> When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

16 <sup>r</sup> And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea,

17 And entered into a ship, and <sup>s</sup> went over the sea toward <sup>t</sup> Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

18 And <sup>u</sup> the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty <sup>v</sup> furlongs, they see Jesus <sup>w</sup> walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: <sup>x</sup> and they were afraid.

<sup>p</sup> Gen. 49. 20. Deut. 18. 15—18. Il. 7. 14. & 9. 6. & 35. 4. Luke. 7. 16. & 24. 19. Ch. 1. 21. & 4. 19, 25, 42. & 7. 40. <sup>q</sup> Ch. 5. 41. & 13. 36. & 19. 14, 15. Mat. 21. 9. Acts, 14. 13. Mark, 6. 46. Mat. 14. 23. Ch. 2. 24. <sup>r</sup> Mar. 14. 27—31. Mark, 6. 45—54. <sup>s</sup> Westward, <sup>t</sup> Ch. 2. 12. & 4. 46. Mat. 4. 13. & 11. 21. <sup>u</sup> Pl. 107. 27. & 135. 7. <sup>v</sup> A furlong is the 8th part of a mile. Luke, 24. 13. <sup>w</sup> Job, 9. 8. Pl. 29. 10 & 93. 4. & 89. 9. <sup>x</sup> Mat. 14. 25—33. Mark, 6. 43—51. Il. 40. 27, 28. & 41. 10, 14. & 43. 1, 2. & 46. 3, 4. Rev. 1. 17, 18. Il. 51. 12, 13.

two together, he has shewn us that charity and frugality ought always to go hand in hand; and that there is great difference between the truly liberal and the lavish man.

*Ver. 14. Then those men, when they had seen, &c.]* This vast multitude of people finding their hunger removed, and spirits recreated, as well as their taste delighted by the meal, were absolutely sure it was no illusion: as St. John expresses it, *they had seen the miracle*, so could not entertain a doubt, or form an objection.

In this manner did he, who is the *bread of life*, feed probably upwards of ten thousand people with five loaves and two small fishes, giving a magnificent proof, not only of his goodness, but of his creating power; for, after all had eaten to satiety, the disciples took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces of meat, each disciple a basket; in which, as every one of the multitude may be supposed to have left a little, there must have been much more than the quantity at first set before the Lord to divide. This stupendous miracle therefore, without all doubt, was conspicuous, not to the disciples only, who, carrying each his basket in his hand, had an abiding sensible demonstration of its truth, but to every individual guest at this divine feast, who had all felt themselves delighted, filled, refreshed, and strengthened by the meal. We may just observe, that the expression *the prophet who should come into the world*, was the usual characteristic by which the Jews described their Messiah. See the Inferences on this chapter.

*Ver. 15. When Jesus therefore perceived]* The people thus fed by miracle were unspeakably astonished; for indeed it was wonderful to see the food extending itself among their hands. In the height of their transport, they proposed to *take Jesus by force, and make him a king*, that is to say, to constrain him to assume the title of *Messiah* without further delay. Anciently it was usual for great men, who courted the favour of the populace, to give public feasts, at which they invited all the inhabitants of a town or city. Le Clerc therefore fancies that the multitude took the miracle of the loaves for a thing of this kind; and that they expressed their gratitude to Jesus, by offering to aid him in what they supposed was his purpose. It is, however, full as probable, if not more so, that in this they fulfilled their own inclinations, which led them to wish for the coming of the Messiah's kingdom, wherein

they all expected to enjoy great secular advantages; for, to say the truth, they might very naturally imagine that he, who with five loaves and two fishes could feed so many thousands, was in a condition to support armies any length of time that he pleased. See the note on Math. xiv. 22. *Into a mountain* should rather be rendered *into the mountain*, mentioned above, ver. 3. Before Jesus went into this mountain, several things happened, which the other evangelists have related, and to which we refer.

*Ver. 16. And when even was now come]* We observed on ver. 11. that the whole of this miraculous transaction was over by five o'clock in the afternoon; which may be collected from the circumstance here mentioned, namely, that when the disciples departed some time after the dinner, the second evening approached; that is, it was a little before sun-setting, at which time the second evening began: but at that season of the year the sun set before six o'clock in the afternoon; for the passover, and consequently the vernal equinox, was not come: besides, they were in the midst of the lake by the time that the sun was set. See Math. xiv. 23. Mark, vi. 47.

*Ver. 17. And entered into a ship,]* Christ's order was, that the disciples should go to Bethsaida, as St. Mark informs us; but the wind becoming contrary, as we shall see immediately, they were obliged to sail towards Capernaum. St. John therefore describes the voyage, not as it was intended, but as it actually happened. The evangelists have not told us how the twelve baskets full of fragments were disposed of; probably the disciples carried them with them into the boat; so that having before their eyes this convincing evidence of the miracle, they no doubt discouraged about it among themselves as they sailed, and deliberately reflected on every circumstance which had accompanied it. The people, perceiving that Jesus intended to *stay*, made no scruple to let the disciples go: perhaps they imagined that he was sending them away to provide such things as he had need of in order to the expedition; neither did they refuse to disperse when he commanded them, proposing all to return next morning, as they actually did; a circumstance which proves that they did not go far away. See on Math. xiv. 24.

*Ver. 19. So when they had rowed, &c.]* Probably when they found the wind so violent, they were afraid of being ship-

20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

22 ¶ The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one wherinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone;

23 (Howbeit there came other boats from Bethsaias nigh unto the place where they sat, after that the Lord had given thanks:)

When the people therefore saw that

Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 \* Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God?

3. 4. Pf. 24. 7-10. Luke, 2. 28-30. Rev. 3. 20.  
 a A city on the west of the sea of Galilee. Ver. 17.  
 b Ch. 4. 13. Eccl. 1. 2. & 5. 11. Mat. 6. 19, 20.  
 c If. 55. 1-3. Ch. 17. 2. Rom. 6. 23. 1 Cor. 15. 10.  
 d 3. 16, 17. & 17. 5. e Deut. 5. 27. Mic. 6. 7, 8. Mat. 19. 16.

a Or *Cinneroth*. Josh. 11. 2. Numb. 34. 11. Ver. 1. b Ver. 10, 17.  
 c Pf. 78. 34, 37. If. 58. 2. Rom. 16. 18. Phil. 2. 21. James, 4. 3, 4.  
 Col. 3. 2. & 2. 22. 1 Cor. 6. 13. e Ver. 40, 54. Ch. 4. 14. Luke,  
 1 Acts, 2. 22. & 10. 38. If. 11. 2-4. & 61. 1. Ch. 3. 34. a Pet. 1.

ed, if they came near the shore; and therefore, perhaps sailed awhile before the wind they now to sea; for as they must have been several hours can hardly imagine, that with so brisk a gale, no more way in all this time than a little above unless we impute it to their having laboured all to avoid crossing the sea, and to get to Bethson Matth. xiv. 24.

24. *The day following, &c.*] Notwithstanding dered the people to go home after he had bles away, they did not leave the desert mounns they took notice that no boat had come he one belonging to the disciples; and bed not go with them, they concluded that he to leave his attendants; wherefore, though g into the mountain he modestly declined hich they had offered him, they persuaded he would be prevailed upon to accept it next s they might fancy the disciples were dif- are matters for that purpose. In this hope, morning was come, the people returned, t on Jesus; but not finding him, they be- ad gone off in one of the boats belong- hich during the storm had taken shelter other at the foot of the mountain. The the multitude therefore, entering those pernaum, the known place of our Lord's hey found him in the synagogue, teach- ee ver. 59.

seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, ot come after me, because ye were con- miracles of the truth of my divine mis- ow disposed to hearken to my doctrine, d eat of the loaves, and were filled. Having

“ been once fed, you expect that I will feed you fre-  
 “ quently by miracle; and the satisfaction which you found  
 “ in that meal, has made you conceive great hopes of tem-  
 “ poral felicity under my administration. These are the  
 “ views with which you are following me: but you are  
 “ entirely mistaken in them; for your happiness does not  
 “ consist in the meat that perisheth, neither is it that sort  
 “ of meat which the Messiah will give you: wherefore  
 “ you ought not to labour so much for *the meat which pe-  
 “ risheth*, ver. 27. which nourishes and delights the body  
 “ only, as for *the meat that endureth to everlasting life*,—  
 “ divine knowledge and grace, which invigorate all the  
 “ faculties of the soul, and can alone prepare it for eternal  
 “ glory. Neither ought you to follow the Son of man,  
 “ the Messiah, with a design to obtain the meat that pe-  
 “ risheth, but in expectation of being fed with the meat  
 “ that endureth unto everlasting life; for it is that meat  
 “ which the Son of man will give you: *for him hath God  
 “ the Father sealed* for the great work of redemption: and  
 “ by the miracle of the loaves, he particularly shews you  
 “ that he has authorized me, the Son of man, to bless  
 “ you with the meat enduring to everlasting life, the food  
 “ of your souls.” The epithet of *Father* is elegantly given  
 to God the Father in this passage, as it expresses the rela-  
 tion, that he stands in to his eternal Son, as the person who  
 in the preceding clause is called *the Son of man*.

Ver. 28. *Then said they—What shall we do, &c.*] The metaphors of meat and drink being very familiar to the Jews, and frequently used in their writings to signify wisdom, knowledge, and grace, (see Prov. ix. 1-5. Isaiah, lv. 2, 3.) they might easily have understood what Jesus meant by the meat enduring to everlasting life. Nevertheless, they mistook him altogether, imagining that he spake of some delicious, healthful, animal food, which should

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, <sup>1</sup> This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 ¶ They said therefore unto him, <sup>m</sup> What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

31 <sup>n</sup> Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily,

verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you <sup>o</sup> the true bread from heaven.

33 <sup>p</sup> For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, <sup>q</sup> evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, <sup>r</sup> I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall

<sup>1</sup> Exod. 23. 21. <sup>1</sup> John, 3. 23. & 5. 10—12. Ch. 3. 15—18, 36. & 14. 1. Pf. 2. 12. & 45. 10, 11. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 12. 38. & 16. 1. Ch. 1. 18. <sup>n</sup> Exod. 16. 4, 14. Numb. 11. 7. Neh. 9. 15, 20. Pf. 78. 24, 25. <sup>o</sup> Ver. 49. <sup>p</sup> Ver. 33, 35, 48, 50, 51, 53—58. Ch. 3. 16. <sup>q</sup> John, 4. 9, 10, 14. Gal. 1. 20. <sup>r</sup> Ch. 10. 9. & 3. 11, 16, 17. & 14. 6. & 1. 4. <sup>s</sup> Tim. 1. 15, 16. <sup>t</sup> Ch. 4. 15. Pf. 4. 6. Ver. 26. <sup>u</sup> Ver. 47—58. 41. Ch. 7. 37. & 4. 14. If. 55. 1, 2. Prov. 9. 5. Col. 2. 10, 19. Gal. 2. 20.

should make men immortal, and which was not to be had but under the Messiah's government. Accordingly, being much affected with his exhortation, they asked him, *What they should do to work the works of God?* They meant, What they should do to erect the Messiah's kingdom, and to obtain that excellent meat which Jesus said God had authorised the Messiah to give them?—works, which they imagined were prescribed them by God, and would be most acceptable to him. It is proper to observe, that a great part of the energy of this question is lost in our translation, by rendering the word *εργασασθε*, ver. 27. *labour*; it should be rendered *work*, as it is in this verse, and in ver. 30. for the Greek word is the same in all these places, and the propriety of the questions and answers depends upon it.

*Ver. 29, 30. 'This is the work of God,']* The Jews having their minds filled with the notion of the great empire which the Messiah was to erect, expected, no doubt, that Jesus would have bidden them first rise against the Romans, and vindicate their liberties, and then, by the terror of fire and sword, establish the Messiah's authority in every country. Wherefore, when he told them that the whole work which God required of them towards erecting the Messiah's kingdom, was, that they should believe on the Messiah, whom he had now sent unto them, they were exceedingly offended, thinking that he could not be the Messiah promised in the law and the prophets: and some, more audacious than the rest, had the confidence to tell him, that since he pretended to be the Messiah, and required them to believe in him as such, (notwithstanding his character appeared to them entirely different from that of the great deliverer whom they expected, being so humble and peaceable as to refuse the crown, which of right pertained to the Messiah, and which they had offered him,) it would be proper that he should shew greater miracles than their law-giver had performed; otherwise they could not be to blame, if, believing Moses and the prophets, they persisted in their ancient faith concerning the Messiah, and concerning the duty which they owed him. The sentiments of those who speak to Christ in this discourse, are so various, (comp. ver. 34. 41, 42.) and the evangelist so expressly declares that there was a debate between them, ver. 52. that it would be wrong to imagine the sentiments in the

30th verse to have been those of the whole multitude, who had followed Christ with so much eagerness from place to place for several days. See the following note, and particularly the notes on ver. 63. and on Matth. xii. 38, 39.

*Ver. 31—33. Our fathers did eat manna, &c.]* By extolling the miracle of the manna, by calling it *bread from heaven*, and by insinuating that it was Moses's miracle, the Jews endeavoured to disparage Christ's miracle of the loaves, which they affected to despise as no miracle in comparison of the former. It was only a single meal of *terrestrial food*, at which nine or ten thousand had been fed; whereas Moses with *celestial food* fed the whole Jewish nation, in number upwards of two millions; and that not for a day, but during the space of forty years in the wilderness: wherefore, as if Jesus had done no miracle at all, they said to him, *What sign shewest thou?—What dost thou work?*—And Jesus replied, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not the bread,—τον αβρον,—from heaven.* “It was not Moses, who in ancient times gave you the manna, neither was the manna *bread from heaven*; for it dropped from the air only, and is so called by the Psalmist on account of the thing which is typified: *but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.* By the miracle of the loaves, my Father has pointed out to you the true spiritual heavenly bread, which he himself giveth you, of which the manna was only a symbolical representation, and which is sufficient to sustain not a single nation only, but the whole world: ver. 33. *for the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*” The passage should be read in this ambiguous manner, or the explication which our Lord gives in ver. 35. is entirely superfluous. The purport of it is, “The manna which dropped from the air, and kept those who made use of it *alive only for a day*, cannot be called the bread of God; but that is the bread of God which cometh down from God, and maketh the eater holy and happy like God.” See on Chap. i. 9.

*Ver. 34, 35. Lord, evermore give us this bread.]* It is reasonable to imagine, as we have observed a little before, that the people who now heard our Lord were of different characters: many of them, no doubt, were obstinately perverse, heard him with prejudice, and wrested all his words;

never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36 But I said unto you, That ye also have

seen me, and believe not.

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 14, 26, 34, 64. Ch. 7. 11. & 5. 40. & 12. 37. If. 53. 2, 3. Mat. 11. 28. If. 45. 17, 22. & 55. 1. Mat. 24. 24. Ver. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Tim. 2. 19. Rom. 11. 5, 7. Ch. 17. 6. & 10. 26—29. 1 John, 2. 19.

words; but others of them might be men of honest dispositions, who listened to his doctrine with pleasure, and were ready to obey it. This latter sort, therefore, having heard him describe the properties of this celestial bread, were greatly struck with the thoughts of it, and expressed earnest desire to be fed with it always. To these our Lord replied, in words of boundless comfort, "I am the bread of life,—the bread of God which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. He that cometh to me, and makes his application to me, shall never hunger; and he that perseveringly believeth on me, shall never thirst, but may depend upon it that he shall find most restless desires of his soul satisfied; and, contents of the noblest refreshment and nourishment always received, shall grow up to a state of everlasting complete satisfaction and enjoyment." Thus our Lord gave one of the many reasons why he called himself the bread of life. See ver. 47, 48, 51. The conclusion of his part of his discourse is so evident, that he left no room to draw it for themselves. It was this: "Since ye are so, I am manifestly greater than Moses, in respect of that for which you extol him most, even your fathers manna, which was a bodily food and nourished nothing but the natural life; but I am the bread of life, the food of the soul, making both holy and happy." See on Ch. iv. 14.

[But I said unto you, &c.] He next turned his words to those of his hearers who did not possess that peace of mind which the former had expressed: that he would shew you a sign, that you may see and believe, ver. 30. but I must inform you, that you have seen me,—seen my character and divine mission in the works which I have performed already; that is to say, you have seen me perform many signs sufficient to convince you that I am the Messiah; nevertheless, you nevertheless reject that I am he, but reject me as an impostor, therefore your infidelity proceeds, not from ignorance, as you pretend, ver. 30. but from hardness of your own disposition."

[But the Father giveth me, &c.] For the explanation of these words it must be noted, that to believe in Christ, and to come to him, is the same thing. Compare John, v. ver. 38. with ver. 40. and ver. 37. with ver. 38. Again, ver. 35. of which our Lord said, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger," is the same thing as the following words, "He that believeth on me shall never hunger." When Christ had said, "Ye have seen me," he adds this reason of their incredulity, "because you are not given of the Father." This is the reason that cometh to me I will in no wise cast

me out, because I am given of the Father, cannot here signify that I am given and unconditionally chosen by him, for then the Jews could not reasonably be

accused for not coming to Christ, or not believing in him, much less that they would not believe, or come to him. Seeing, upon this supposition, that only they, whom God had absolutely and unconditionally chosen to eternal life, could come to him, it was impossible they should believe, who were not thus elected; and so it could not be imputed as their crime, that they did not that thing which it was impossible for them to do; whereas it is certain that our Saviour represents it as their great sin, that in him, whom the Father had sent, they believed not, John, v. 38. and that they would not come unto him, that they might have life, ver. 40. and that they had no excuse for that sin, Ch. xv. 22. 25. Whereas what better excuse could be made for them than this, that they could not come unto him, as not being elected by God to that life which he offered, to induce them so to do? (2.) Hence it must follow, that Christ could not rationally have invited them to come to him, or called them to believe in him, who were not given him by the Father: for this would have been to invite them to come to him that they might live, who, he well knew, could never come, as being never chosen to obtain that life: much less could he have told them, that this was the work which God required them to do, even to believe in him as the true Messiah; this being to require them, according to the present supposition, to believe a lie; that is to say, that Christ was sent to be the bread of life, and a Saviour to them, for whom the Father never did intend salvation by him: and yet Christ did manifestly say to those, who, seeing him, did not believe, "Labour for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you, ver. 27. and this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent, ver. 29. and my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven, even him that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life (not to those who are absolutely and unconditionally elected, but) to the world. I therefore here inquire thus, was our Lord truly willing that those to whom he spoke should have life? If not, why does he say, "These things I say, that ye might be saved, Ch. v. 34. but ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.—If so, why did he say, that he did always those things which pleased him, John, viii. 29. and could do nothing but what he saw his Father doing, seeing it was not the Father's will that they should be saved, or come to him that they might have life, whom he had not given to him, that is, had not unconditionally elected to salvation.

But, lastly, who are they whom the Father giveth to Christ? There is a prediction or prophesy of Christ, Ps. ii. 8. (of whom in the words immediately preceding it is said, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,") that God the Father will give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; where we discern what kind of giving is here meant—giving for an inheritance or possession, and that is for Christ to be Lord or owner of them, and they, as possessions,

will in no wise cast out.

38 For <sup>u</sup> I came down from heaven, <sup>x</sup> not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me <sup>y</sup> I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

<sup>u</sup> Eph. 4. 9. <sup>1</sup> Tim. 1. 15. <sup>x</sup> Pf. 40. 8. If. 42. 1. & 49. 3. <sup>y</sup> Ch. 10. 28. & 17. 12. & 18. 9. & 5. 28, 29. <sup>1</sup> John, 2. 19. Jude, 1. Ver. 37. <sup>a</sup> Ver. 52, 60, 61, 66. Luke, 5. 30. & 15. 2. & 19. 7. <sup>4</sup> Rom. 9. 5. & 8. 3. & 1. 3.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, <sup>z</sup> that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

41 The Jews then <sup>z</sup> murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread <sup>v</sup> which came down from heaven.

42 And they said, <sup>b</sup> Is not this Jesus, the

Mat. 20. 28. & 26. 39. Ch. 4. 34. & 5. 30. Phil. 2. 7, 8. Heb. 5. 3. Col. 3. 3. <sup>z</sup> Ch. 3. 15-18. & 14. 19. If. 42. 6, 7. & 49. 6. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 13. 55. Mark, 6. 3. Luke, 4. 23. with Mat. 23. 42-45. G.

feffions, subject to his power and disposal: and this is done in the conversion of them. Of this *possession* we find mention Tit. ii. 14. where the *peculiar people* are a *people for a possession*, and those are to be *purified* by Christ, *that he might redeem them from all iniquity*. But these are not any peculiar number of men absolutely (without all respect to any qualifications) chosen by God to eternal life; for it is apparent and expressly affirmed of one of this number, that he was finally lost: *Those that thou gavest me*, says Christ, *I have kept; and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition*, John xvii. 12. where, through his own wretched default, one of those who had been given to Christ by God the Father, totally and finally departed, and was lost from him. By the above negative considerations the positive will, I suppose, be best collected.—That they who are so qualified and disposed, as that, Christ being proposed to them, they will come to him, follow him, and be his disciples, those are they whom God the Father gives to Christ. For there is a sort and temper of mind which is most agreeable and proportionable to the believing on or receiving of Christ; and they who possess this temper of mind, are said to be *fit*, or *prepared*, or *disposed for the kingdom of God*, Luke, ix. 62. such as are ready and willing to accept of Christ's conditions, to part with all and follow him. And of such Christ says that they are *not far from the kingdom of God*, and that *of such is the kingdom of heaven*. If it be demanded what temper this is; I answer, it is the *honest heart* described in the parable of the sower, *desiring* sincerely to know the truth, and to *do God's will*, John, vii. 17. It is the temper resembled by the little children: and of those *poor in spirit* is the kingdom of God (or the Christian state) made up; and those are they who are evangelized, that is, wrought upon by the preaching of the gospel; and God *gives grace to the humble*, but *resists the proud*, refractory, confident person. Of these who are thus qualified, it is here truly said, that as God the Father gives them to Christ as his portion, the men who are to be his subjects; so when Christ calls all to come to him, these shall actually come; as soon as ever Christ is revealed to them, they receive him: as Josephus, speaking of Christ, Ant. l. xviii. c. 4. says, he was "a teacher of those men, who did with pleasure receive the truth." To those who by the preventing grace of God (and this preventing grace is offered to all) are thus qualified and disposed, it is said to be *given them from the Father to come unto Christ*; that is to say, their coming to Christ is consequent to that

probity of mind wrought by the grace of God in them. It is an effect of this grace, and of that probity produced by it, (which awakens the soul to an ardent desire after Christ,) that any man lays hold on and receives the genuine faith of Christ.

The expression <sup>z</sup> *μὴ ἐκάλω ἐξω*, *I will in no wise cast out*, is extremely beautiful and emphatical: it represents a humble supplicant, as coming into the house of some prince, or other great person, to cast himself at his feet, and to commit himself to his protection and care. He might fear that his petition would be rejected, and he thrust out of doors; but our Lord assures him to the contrary. His house and heart are large enough to receive, shelter, and supply all the indigent and distressed. How comfortable, how glorious an idea! No doubt many thousand souls have been sensibly supported by these most gracious words.

Ver. 38. *I came down from heaven, &c.*] "I came not to act according to the bent of human passions, which lead men to return whatever injuries are done them; and therefore I will not instantly leave off exhorting those who at first reject me. Neither will I inflict immediate punishment on them; but I will bear with them, and try all possible means to bring them to repentance, that they may be saved; for I am come to do the will of him that sent me."

Ver. 40. *And this is the will of him that sent me, &c.*] "My Father's will, which I am come to publish, is, that all who, being convinced of their need of me, and of my sufficiency for their help, look by faith to me, and per severingly depend upon me, as the true Messiah, for a whole salvation, shall be made partakers of eternal life."

Ver. 41, 42. *The Jews then murmured, &c.*] Thus Jesus placed the character of the Messiah in a light very different from that wherein his hearers had been accustom'd to view it; and taught them, that instead of the temporal blessings which they expected from him, they were to receive none but spiritual benefits. Hence, as the dispositions of the greatest part of them were carnal, his doctrine offended them; especially his affirming that he was the *bread of life*, and that he *came down from heaven*. The Jews did not find fault with Jesus for insinuating that the Messiah should come down from heaven; that was a point universally believed; but they were displeas'd because he said, that he had come down from *heaven*: a thing which

son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

44 No man can come to me, except the

Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

1 Cor. 4. 7. Ver. 65. Phil. 1. 29. Song. 1. 4. Jer. 17. 9. Rom. 8. 7, 8. Tit. 3. 3, 5. Gal. 1. 15, 16. Eph. 1. 17—20. Acts, 26. 17, 18. Phil. 1. 29. 2 Cor. 4. 6.

If. 54. 13. Jer. 31. 33, 34. Heb. 8. 10—12.

could by no means believe, because they were acquainted with his father and mother. Dr. Welis argues in this passage, that Joseph was yet alive; but its plain meaning appears to be only, "we know who were his father and mother." It seems, however, very certain that Joseph was dead quickly after; for if he had been living, it would not be supposed that Jesus, when dying on the cross, would have consigned his mother to the care of St.

44, 45. *No man can come to me, except the Father—him, &c.*] In explaining this passage, we will, *first*, give the propriety of our Lord's answer; *secondly*, give a full and plain explication of it; and, *thirdly*, confirm that answer by some remarks: I. There is some difficulty in explaining the propriety of the answer which the Lord makes. The objection of the Jews was, "How canst thou say that he came down from heaven, when he was born of earthly parents, whom we know?" Our Lord's answer to this is somewhat indirect; the violence of their objection made it necessary that it should be so; but it warns those who were prejudiced, without exempting them: for, 1st, when we consider the answer in a general view, the assertion that divine teaching is given by their receiving him as the Messiah, and the mention of a passage from the Old Testament, in which teaching had been foretold, implies a plain intimation that it would not be altogether so easy to discern the Messiah as they imagined; and that since they felt some difficulty, they should not be positive that he came down from heaven, merely because he came in that manner he did so. But, 2dly, still more immediate reference to their objection, that the Messiah should descend in a visible and glorious manner, and this was commanded, ver. 30. (see on ver. 63.) but this was accurately determined, and so minutely deduced, that if it had truly belonged to the Messiah, he must have known him instantly: there is no room for doubt, and consequently no occasion for teaching. By asserting therefore the contrary, he intimated, that they were mistaken in the nature of the sign, that is, concerning the nature of the Messiah's descent from heaven; and the mark as they expected would attend upon this account they could not conclude that he was the Messiah. 3dly, To be drawn by the Father, and properly understood of men's hearts, and convinced by the immediate influence of the Spirit; but it likewise implies their being

taught by the ancient revelations which God had given. According to this sense of the expression, the general import of Christ's answer is, "You cannot perceive me to be the Messiah, or to have come down from heaven, except you understand the intimations of his character, which God hath already given by the prophets: except you apprehend the true meaning of the predictions concerning him, you will mistake their meaning in the particular to which your present objection refers, as well as in many others: you ought therefore to study them the more carefully; by doing this you will attain the knowledge of the real character of the Messiah. For it is predicted, that in his time God will teach all who are disposed to learn, and then you will easily get over the difficulties which now perplex you: for every man that hath in this manner heard and learned of the Father, will, through the operations of my grace, discern me to be the Messiah, and come unto me."

II. The propriety of our Lord's answer being thus shewn, we proceed to give a plain and full explication of it. Our Lord replies to the murmurs of the Jews, "You cannot object my birth on earth, and the meanness of my relations, as things inconsistent with a heavenly extraction; for I assure you, that, while you believe your teachers, who have greatly corrupted divine revelation; while you entertain the prejudices wherewith they have filled your minds, and follow the sensual inclinations which have hitherto governed you, you cannot believe on me; for no man can do this except the Father draw him; that is, teach, convince, and persuade him. You need not be surprised when I tell you that no man can believe on the Messiah except the Father draw him; for though you may imagine that all men will flock with great cheerfulness to him, and yield themselves his willing subjects, without any extraordinary means made use of to persuade them; yet the prophets insinuate the contrary, when they promise, that, under the dispensation of the Messiah, men shall enjoy the teaching of the Father in a far more eminent manner than under any preceding dispensation. See Isai. liv. 13. Jer. xxxi. 34. Micah, iv. 2. Before the advent of Christ, the Father spake to the world concerning him by the prophets; and when he appeared in the human nature on earth, he demonstrated the truth of his divine mission by the testimony of John, and by voices from heaven, declaring him to be his beloved Son, and commanding all men to hear him. He did the same likewise by the doctrines which he inspired the Lord Jesus as man to preach, by the miracles which he gave him to perform, and by the influences of the Spirit, which he empowered him to dis-

"pense.



46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 I am that bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

51 I am the living bread which came down

<sup>f</sup> Mat. 11. 27. Ch. 1. 18. & 5. 37. & 14. 9, 10. Luke, 10. 22. 1 Tim. 6. 16. 1 John, 4. 12. 2 Cor. 4. 6. None but Christ hath any immediate knowledge of, or from, the father. <sup>g</sup> Ch. 3. 15, 16, 36. Ver. 27, 33, 35, 40, 54, 57, 58. Ch. 10. 28, 29. 11. 45. 17. <sup>h</sup> Ver. 35, 40, 47, 51, 54, 57, &c. Ch. 10. 10. Gal. 2. 20. Col. 3. 3, 4. <sup>i</sup> Exod. 16. 4, 15. Neh. 9. 15. 20. Pl. 78. 24. Ver. 31. Numb. 26. 65. Judges, 2. 10. <sup>k</sup> Ver. 32, 33, 38, 41, 47, 48. <sup>l</sup> Ver. 33, 35, 47, 48. Ch. 3. 13. Eph. 4. 9. 1 Cor. 15. 45, 47. 1 John, 5. 12.

“pense. Every one, therefore, who hath heard and understood what the Father has said concerning the Messiah, whether by the prophets, by John the Baptist, and by the voices from heaven, or by Christ’s doctrine, miracles, and Spirit, and has learned thereby to form a just notion of the Messiah, will *come to*, or believe on Jesus, as the Messiah.”

III. Such appears to be the exact meaning of this difficult passage. We observe further upon it, that the expression does not import any force or constraint, as is plain from Jer. xxxi. 3. where God says to Israel, *with loving-kindness have I drawn thee*. Thus also our Lord uses the expression, chap. xii. 32. *if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me*; that is, being put to death on the cross, and raised from the dead, exalted into heaven, and preached through the world, I will by my word and Spirit convince and persuade men to follow me. See also Solomon’s Song, i. 4. and Hosea, xi. 4. Wherefore, by the Father’s *drawing* men to Christ we may well understand, as explained above, his persuading them to believe on him by the several proofs wherewith he has supported the divine mission of his Son. Accordingly, in the following verse, the effect which the Father’s drawing has upon men, is described by their hearing and learning of the Father. What confirms this interpretation is, that our Lord himself ascribes the whole of the evidence of his mission to the Father: for he calls his doctrine *the word which his Father had given him*, chap. xvii. 8. and says expressly, that his miracles were done by the Father, chap. xiv. 10. Nevertheless, in the Father’s drawing men to Christ, we should at all times remember, that there is more included than merely establishing the divine mission of his Son by sufficient evidence; for in this sense, he has as really drawn those who do not believe, as those who do; contrary to the text, which says, that *every man who hath heard and learned of the Father*, that is, who is drawn by him, *cometh to Jesus*. It is plain therefore, that by the Father’s *drawing* men, we are likewise to understand his supplying whatever influences of his Spirit and grace are necessary to impress the evidences of religion on men’s minds. To conclude, a conviction supposes a teachableness of disposition, and a love of truth. His drawing men to Christ must imply, his bestowing on them dispositions and affections which qualify them for being drawn by him. These he offers to all, being *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*, 2 Pet. iii. 9. But too many reject them, resisting the first drawings of grace, and trampling under foot those divine seeds which would otherwise spring up into faith and regeneration. See ver. 65.

Ver. 46—48. *Not that any man hath seen the Father*, When I speak of men’s hearing and learning of God, I do not mean that they can see the Deity personally, and be taught of him in the manner that a scholar is taught of his master. No man hath seen the Father personally, except the Son, whom the Father hath sent, and whose peculiar privilege it is to have been eternally a full partaker of all the Father’s councils. In virtue, therefore, of my intimate union with the Father, and my perfect knowledge of his will, I testify it as a most sure and important truth, that this is the only method of salvation, and that it is *he*, and he alone, *who believes in me*, and faithfully reposes himself *on me*, that *hath everlasting life*, (ver. 47.) Remember, therefore, that it is in this respect I tell you, *I am the bread of life*; not only as a teacher of truth, and a messenger from God to men, but as the just Redeemer whom you must receive into your hearts, and on whom you must as it were feed by faith, if you would indeed have your spiritual life to be supported and secured.” Thus our Lord explained the nature of the dignity which he had assumed to himself in the foregoing part of his discourse, ver. 33. 35. 40. and demonstrated that it really belonged to him.

Ver. 49, 50. *Your fathers did eat manna*] Our Lord next drew a comparison between himself, considered as the bread from heaven, and the manna which Moses provided for their fathers in the desert, and which they admired so greatly. “Those who thus regard me,” said he, “as the bread of life, will receive far more important blessings than Moses, of whom you have now been boasting, could possibly give: for though indeed *your fathers*, under the conduct of that illustrious prophet, did eat manna in the wilderness; yet it was not sufficient to maintain their spiritual or temporal life; *they are long since dead*: but *this* of which I now speak, is the true bread which cometh down from heaven, and is of such a nature, that any one may eat of it, and have his life so nourished and supported by it, that he shall not die, but be assuredly delivered from the condemnation and ruin to which the breach of God’s righteous law has subjected every offender.” The opposition between *καὶ ἀποθάνον*, and *οὐκ ἀποθάνουσιν*, in ver. 49. and *μὴ ἀποθάνῃς*, may not die, in ver. 50. is elegant, and shews that in the former the spiritual death is meant, as well as in the latter.

Ver. 51. *I am the living bread*] Because it was a matter of infinite importance to his hearers, that they should form a just notion of his ability to save them, and believe in him as the Redeemer of the world, our Lord affirmed the third time, that he was himself the living bread which came

from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

54 Who so eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 51-57. If 51, 4, 5. Heb. 10. 5, 10. Mat. 20. 28. Tit. 2. 14. 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6. 1 Pet. 2. 24. & 3. 18. Rev. 5. 9. Prov. 9. 2. Ch. 7. 43. & 9. 16. & 10. 19. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 3. 4, 9. & 4. 11. 1 Cor. 2. 14. <sup>c</sup> Mark, 16. 16. Ch. 3. 18, 36. Gal. 2. 20. Phil. 3. 9, 10. Cor. 1. 30. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 1. 14 & 3. 15, 16, 18, 36. & 4. 14, 27, 40. Gal. 2. 20. Rom. 8. 1-4, 28-39. & 5. 21.

me down from heaven, to give eternal life and glory; and that all who would faithfully and perseveringly eat of it should live for ever, because he was about to give them his flesh to eat, by making it an expiation for the sins of the world. The word *Αρνιον* rendered *bread* in this discourse, might be better translated, according to the Hebrew idiom, the *meat*; and particularly in this verse. There is a beautiful gradation observable in our Lord's discourse. The first time that he called himself the *bread of life*, ver. 35. he signified the reason of the name somewhat obscurely; *that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth shall never thirst.* The second time that he called himself the *bread of life*, ver. 47, 48. he spake to the same purpose as before, but more plainly; *he that believeth shall have everlasting life, therefore I am the bread of life,* saying this with his affirmation, ver. 46. that he was the *teacher of mankind* who had ever seen and was intimately acquainted with all the councils of the Father, and that he gave life to men by his doctrine, being accounted also the *bread of life*. The third time he called himself *bread*, he added to the name, the epithet of *life* not only because he gives spiritual life to men, raises up the dead, and makes the faithful eternally happy, but because he gives them this life by means of his human nature, which was not an inanimate thing, like the *manna*, but a living substance; for he told them plainly, that the *meat* which he would give them, was *his flesh*, which would give for the life of the world; and spake of eating it, in order to its having that effect: but in the *signification* of this expression he had before directed them, in calling himself the *bread of life*, he always intended *believing on him*, as necessary to men's living by eating *before to eat*, in the remaining part of this discourse, *believing, including all the fruits of faith.* There is a beautiful gradation in this verse, compared

The Jews had insinuated, that feeding a man with the five loaves, was an inconsiderable thing, compared with what Moses did; but our Lord deposes of his grace and bounty to be far more reaching to the whole world, and giving life, not only to all that should believe in him, the great blessing for all mankind.

*Jews therefore strove*] All the terms made use of on this occasion, were such as the Jews were wont to interpret figuratively; for which they would not easily have understood them: nevertheless, when taken in a literal sense, they were astonished, and fell into keen disputes, — *μαχωντο*, —

about the meaning of them: they debated strongly, some being inclined to believe, others to reject this doctrine. Observe the degrees: the *Jews* are to be tried here, the *disciples*, ver. 60-66. the *apostles*, ver. 67, &c.

*Ver. 53. Then Jesus said, &c.*] Our Lord, knowing how unreasonable his hearers in general were, did not think fit to explain himself more particularly at this time; but persisting in the same figurative way of expressing himself, he repeated and affirmed more earnestly what he had asserted before. His meaning appears to be, "Except you be entirely united to me, by a hearty belief, experience, and practice of my doctrine, and partake of the merit of that sacrifice which I shall offer for the sins of the world, you cannot continue in the communion of my religion, and receive that spiritual nourishment by the continual participation of those means of grace which I shall purchase for you by my death, and bestow to you by the communication of my Spirit,—you can never attain eternal life." The *flesh* of Christ seems to be put here for the whole of his human nature; see ver. 51. as it is elsewhere in scripture; Ch. i. 14. Rom. i. 3. Wherefore, by *eating his flesh*, and *drinking his blood*, is not meant any corporeal action, but men's receiving with thankfulness those spiritual blessings, to confer which our Lord assumed the human nature, and, consequently, their believing, with the heart unto righteousness, the revelation that he came to make concerning the merciful counsels of God; or, as he himself expresses it, ver. 63. *the words that he spake unto them*; especially concerning his incarnation, and his dying to make atonement for sin. These articles of the Christian faith being particularly understood here, give peculiar propriety to the metaphors of *eating Christ's flesh*, and *drinking his blood*, by which the whole of that faith, with all its divine fruits, is denominated. The reason is, of all the discoveries made by Christ, those concerning his incarnation, and the nature and ends of his own death, received and meditated upon by a lively faith, afford sovereign and salutary nourishment to the minds of sinners. They are as effectual for sustaining the spiritual life in the soul, as *flesh*, fitly prepared, is for nourishing the animal life in the body. Dr. Doddridge observes, that the phrase before us, *except ye eat, &c.* naturally expresses a lively and habitual regard to Christ as the great support of the spiritual life. The mention of his *blood* as naturally leads to the thought of his atonement; for we are elsewhere told, that *we have redemption through his blood*, Ephes. i. 7. and *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, Heb. x. 19.

*Ver. 54, 55. Who so eateth my flesh,*] "Who so thus feedeth



55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and

I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this

<sup>1</sup> Gal. 2. 16, 20, 21. <sup>1</sup> Cor. 1. 30. <sup>2</sup> Cor. 5. 17, 21. <sup>Col.</sup> 2. 3, 9, 10. & 3. 11. <sup>Phil.</sup> 3. 7—10. <sup>Pf.</sup> 34. 8. <sup>Prov.</sup> 9. 5. <sup>1f.</sup> 25. 6. & 55. <sup>1—3.</sup> Ch. 1. 11. & 3. 15. <sup>1</sup> John, 3. 24. <sup>Ch.</sup> 14. 20. & 17. 23. & 15. 3, 4. <sup>1</sup> John, 4. 12—16. <sup>Eph.</sup> 5. 30. <sup>1</sup> Cor. 1. 30. & 6. 17. <sup>Gal.</sup> 2. 20. <sup>1</sup> John, 3. 24. & 5. 10, 12. <sup>Jer.</sup> 10. 10. & 2. 13. <sup>Deut.</sup> 5. 26. <sup>Ch.</sup> 5. 26. & 3. 34. <sup>Ch.</sup> 14. 6, 19. <sup>Col.</sup> 3. 3, 4. & 2. 19. <sup>Gal.</sup> 2. 20. <sup>Ver.</sup> 31—40, 47—57. <sup>Ch.</sup> 3. 13. & 10. 10. <sup>Rom.</sup> 5. 21.

“ feedeth upon me by living faith, has the principle of eternal life implanted in him, and, if faithful unto death, shall enjoy it, because I will raise him up at the last day; *For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* They are the true nutriment of the soul; they feed it, and make it grow. They give vigour to all its faculties, preserve it continually alive, and make it fit for heaven.” See ver. 32. Ch. xv. 1.

*Ver. 56. Dwelleth in me, and I in him,]* “ We are most intimately connected together in the closest union, communion, and friendship; and therefore whatever blessings I can bestow, whether by my own power, or by my intercession with the Father, or by the influences of my Spirit; my faithful friends shall enjoy them in full perfection.” The expression of persons dwelling in each other, occurs frequently in St. John’s writings, and denotes the closest union of affections and interests: wherefore, according to the grand figure made use of by St. Paul, it signifies that he who truly believes on Christ, is so united to him, as to be a member of his body, and consequently a partaker with him of his life, and, if faithful unto death, of his glory, and of all the happiness which he himself enjoys, or is able to communicate.

*Ver. 57. As the living Father hath sent me, &c.]* “ As it is my meat and drink to do the will of the Father, who is the fountain and author of life and happiness; as I nourish and delight my mind, as man, with the punctual execution of all the orders that he gave me when he sent me into the world; so he that eateth me, he that cordially and perseveringly believes my doctrine, experiences the power of the truths which I deliver, and obeys my precepts, shall find therein perpetual nourishment and refreshment to his soul.”

*Ver. 58. This is that bread which came down, &c.]* “ If you attend to these important hints which I have given, you may in general know what I meant, by saying, as I have done, *This is the bread that came down from heaven*; a kind of bread, infinitely superior to the manna, both in its nature and efficacy; for it is to be eaten by you, *not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead*: it is neither to be eaten the same way that your fathers did eat the manna, nor with the same effect; but he that eateth of this bread, shall live for ever: this bread shall nourish the faithful soul unto everlasting life.” See ver. 50. A brief analysis of this passage, respecting the bread of life, will perhaps make the whole more clear. We have heretofore observed, that it was customary with our Lord to accommodate his discourses to the occasions which gave rise to them, and to draw instructions and reflections from the objects which presented themselves.

See on Matth. v. 2. The tenor of the present discourse, considered in this view, will appear more beautiful. We are told, ver. 26. that the Jews followed our Lord because of the miracle of the loaves, and in expectation of further support. He reproves them on that account, ver. 27. and exhorts them to desire and seek that bread, which endureth to everlasting life; that divine knowledge and grace, which was the proper food of the soul, and which, being received by persevering faith in him, would bring them to eternal glory. They then ask him, *how they should do this?* and in reply he tells them plainly, ver. 29. by believing on him: on this they declare, that they will not believe, unless he give them some sign, some eminent miracle, ver. 30. and they mention *Moses* as having brought them manna from heaven, and intimate that they would expect no less a miracle from him, ver. 31. Upon this he compares himself with the manna; shews how much he surpassed it, and continues the comparison between himself and bread, ver. 33. This comparison, wherein he asserts, that *he was the bread which came down from heaven*, offends the Jews, ver. 41. Christ therefore resumes the subject, and confidently asserts, *I am that bread of life*, ver. 48. that is to say, “ that spiritual food, which can bring men to everlasting life.” And *this bread*, says he, *is my flesh*, which I will give for the life of the world; that is, “ I will die, as an atoning sacrifice, to bring men to life eternal.” As if they had not understood him all this while, though he had at first spoken to them in plain terms, and expressed the whole of his meaning by believing on him with a living faith, ver. 29. and 35. and made use of this figurative method in answer to their proposals,—they pervert his meaning, and ask, *how can this man give us his flesh?* ver. 52. In answer to which he replies, ver. 53. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat, &c.* still meaning what he had meant all this while, in opposition to the manna—that his doctrine, for the preaching whereof he was sent down from heaven, and that grace which should be purchased for them by his death, was the most excellent food for their souls; which would be able to maintain their spiritual and eternal life, and to be to them the source and fountain of perpetual happiness, ver. 54—58. From this analysis we learn, that the amount of the foregoing discourse is, that Christ,—the mortal, despised, and crucified Christ, who took our flesh, came down from heaven, lived and died among us; to reveal his Father’s will, and work living faith in us, is the food of our souls; the believing and obeying of whom will support our spiritual life, as the sustains the animal life: and we may hence infer what that faith is, which Christ represents as so highly necessary, and which can be no less than such a belief of the great doc-

bread shall live for ever.

59 These things said he in <sup>2</sup> the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

60 ¶ Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

61 When Jesus <sup>b</sup> knew in himself that his

disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

62 <sup>c</sup> *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

63 <sup>d</sup> It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are <sup>e</sup> spirit, and *they* are life.

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 18. 20. Pf. 22. 22. & 40. 9, 10. Rom. 15. 8. <sup>b</sup> Ver. 41, 42, 52, 66. Rom. 8. 7. 1 Cor. 2. 14. Deut. 29. 4. <sup>c</sup> Jer. 17. 10. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 3. 13. & 1. 18. Mark, 16. 19. Luke, 24. 51. Acts, 1. 9, 11. Eph. 4. 8. Ch. 16. 5, 15, 17, 28. & 17. 11. 1 Tim. 1. 1. <sup>e</sup> 2 Cor. 3. 6. 1 Peter, 3. 18. 1 Cor. 15. 45. Heb. 9. 14. <sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. 2. 10—14. Eph. 1. 17—20. 1 Thess. 2. 13. & 1. 5. Pf. 19. 7—10. Heb. 4. 12. Pf. 119. 50, 93, 130.

lines of Christianity, as through divine grace shall influence our hearts, lives, and practice.

Ver. 59. *These things said he in the synagogue,*] It is very probable that these discourses were introduced after prayer, and the reading of the law. We are not to wonder at the dialogue which passed here; there are many other instances of disputes which Christ and his apostles had with the Jews in their synagogues. See Matth. xii. 9. Luke, 10. Acts, xiii. 44. and xvii. 17.

Ver. 60. *Many therefore of his disciples, &c.*] As our Lord had a great number of disciples at large, who often attended his ministry, and made a profession of his name; many of them, whose hearts were not right with him, were highly offended at what he had said about his being the bread that came down from heaven, and about the manner of eating him in order to their living by him: who still took these things in a literal sense, thought his doctrine figurative: they who took them in a figurative sense, as Christ explained them, thought that he blasphemously assumed to himself a divine original and operation, and they who knew not what construction to put upon his words, thought there was something so mysterious in them, that no man in his senses could receive them. *They had been humble and childlike, and had really received spiritual blessings for their souls, they would have received our Lord perfectly well.*

Ver. 62. *Doth this offend you?*] “Are you offended, because I said my flesh is bread, and that it came down from heaven, and that you must eat my flesh and drink my blood, in order to your having eternal life?—Will ye shall see me ascend up into heaven bodily, as I was before? Will not that convince you of the nature of my having come down from heaven? Will not that shew you likewise, that I never intended you should eat *my flesh* in a corporeal manner, and confess that *my discourse* is to be taken in a figurative sense? See the next verse.

Ver. 63. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth,*] As a key to his discourse, our Lord added, “As in the human nature, the indwelling spirit which quickens every part, and the flesh, how exactly soever organized, is distinct, if separate from that, profits nothing, but is feeble and inactive corpse; so also the words that I speak unto you, are spirit; that is to say, they are taken in a spiritual sense; and if you receive them, my Spirit shall accompany them, and then shall you know that they are life to your souls. Whereas,

“to take them in a literal sense, would be most unfit and monstrous. It is indeed strange that you should think of them in this sense; but I know there are some of you who believe not, and would shelter your infidelity under these mean and disingenuous cavils.”

We will here, as promised on ver. 30. consider our Saviour’s discourse in reference to the sign which the Jews asked of him. The day after our Lord had first miraculously fed the great multitude, while he was teaching them in expressions borrowed from that miracle, and urging them to believe on him, they said, *What sign shewest thou, &c.* thus intimating, that it would be soon enough to receive him as the Messiah, when he assumed the kingdom in the manner which they imagined was fixed by Daniel’s prediction. See Dan. vii. 13, 14. and on Matth. xii. 38.—that without this no miracles of another sort could prove his claim; and they particularly insinuated, that his having given one meal to a multitude by miracle, was nothing extraordinary, but far inferior to that of Moses, who fed many more for a longer time with manna from heaven. His discourse on this occasion is much larger, and more complex, than any of the answers which he gave to the same demand at other times. There are many reasons for this; they expressed their contempt of the miracle of the loaves, as well as asked for a sign. He spake figuratively in allusion to that miracle, on purpose to inculcate its fitness for proving, that he was able to bestow eternal life. Several particular difficulties were moved in the course of his sermon; so that his answer to the demand of a sign is interspersed with a variety of other subjects. Many things, however, which he said, tended directly to shew them that they were mistaken in the nature of the sign which they expected, and to lead them into right apprehensions of the manner and purpose of the Messiah’s coming. Thus, though he came not down in the manner which they imagined Daniel had foretold, he assures them several times, that he actually came down from heaven, ver. 32, 33, 35, 38, 58. Particularly, when they insinuated that this could not be, because he was descended of earthly parents, he affirms very expressly, that, notwithstanding this, he did come down from heaven, and intimates that, according to the ancient prophets, the Messiah ought not to come from heaven in such a manner as they expected, which would have made the Jews flock to him eagerly, without the need of any extraordinary means. See ver. 41 to 51. Our Lord uses such expressions as may at the same time imply, that they



64 ' But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

66 ¶ From that time many of his disci-

ples went back, and walked no more with him.

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

69 <sup>k</sup> And we believe and are sure that thou

<sup>f</sup> Ver. 61. Ch. 2. 24, 25. & 13. 11. Ver. 61, 70, 71. Heb. 4. 13. Acts, 15. 18. If. 46. 9, 10. <sup>g</sup> Ver. 44. Ch. 10. 26. & 11. 37-40. Phil. 1. 29. Eph. 2. 8, 9. <sup>h</sup> Ver. 67. Gal. 3. 1, 3. <sup>i</sup> John, 2. 19. Phil. 2. 21. <sup>j</sup> 2 Tim. 1. 15. & 4. 10. <sup>k</sup> 2 Pet. 2. 21, 22. Heb. 10. 38. Luke, 9. 62. <sup>l</sup> Pf. 73. 25. Acts, 4. 12. & 5. 20. Ver. 63. Mat. 7. 29. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 16. 16. Luke, 9. 20. Ch. 11. 27. & 1. 45, 46, 47. Acts, 8. 37. & 16. 31.

exaggerated the miracle of the manna most extravagantly. In order to lead them to rectify their mistake, he further informs them plainly, that the salvation and life which he would bestow, were very different from the temporal deliverance and prosperity which they expected under the Messiah. Whence they might easily collect, that the manner of the Messiah's appearance would likewise differ from their notion, which suited only a temporal king. He constantly represents what he promises, as salvation and life, which would be completed and consummated for the faithful at the last day, in consequence of their being raised again from their graves; and therefore, obviously, as wholly spiritual and eternal. He seems even anxiously to keep this in view; (see ver. 39, 40. 44. 47. 50, 51. 54. 58.) nay, he tells them expressly, that far from being such a triumphant Messiah as they looked for, he was to die, and that the blessings which he promised would result from his death. *The meat that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world,* ver. 51. He assures them likewise, that he would ascend again into heaven, *What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?* ver. 62. This is equivalent to the mention of his resurrection on similar occasions: it is an intimation that he would be proved the Messiah by an appearance as remarkable as the sign which they demanded; and it is an intimation of the true nature of his kingdom, and the manner of his entering of it. Finally, to this intimation, he subjoins the caution in the present 63d verse, *It is the Spirit, &c.* which certainly implies a warning that his present discourse was designedly figurative, and therefore ought not to be grossly interpreted: but it may likewise imply a hint, that these mistakes about the Messiah, and particularly their expectation of what they called a sign from heaven, proceeded from their understanding the figurative expressions of the ancient prophecies in too strict and literal a sense, and that his account of himself and his kingdom was really agreeable to the spirit and true meaning of them. Thus the substance of our Lord's discourse on this occasion, is the same with that of his answer to the demand of a sign at all other times, though the form be different; and it had the direcest tendency to shew them that they were mistaken; and to warn them against suspending their faith on a sign, the expectation of which had no foundation except in their own imaginations; and against rejecting him, in opposition to the

strongest evidence, merely because this fancied sign attended him not.

*Ver. 64. For Jesus knew from the beginning*] Our Lord insinuates, that he knew who would believe in him among the vast multitude of his auditors; and more particularly, that he knew who would continue his disciples among those who had professed themselves such, even from their first attending him; and that even among his apostles he knew who was to betray him; and that, consequently, in choosing him he was guilty of no indiscretion, as, in continuing him among the apostles, he shewed that he did nothing in his greatest privacies which was culpable. It is plain from this verse, that God foresees future contingencies:

But his foreknowledge causes not the fault,  
Which had no less prov'd certain, unforeknown.

See on ver. 71.

*Ver. 65. Therefore said I unto you*] "Because I knew that there were false-hearted pretenders among you, therefore, for your conviction and caution, and for distinguishing real from nominal believers, I told you before" (ver. 41.) that no man can savingly believe in me, unless my Father draw him by his Spirit, and thereby give him grace and strength to come to me. But God commences and continues this divine drawing in every heart of man, till his influences be so resisted as to oblige him to withdraw himself from the soul; for he will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." See 1 Tim. ii. 4. and the note on ver. 37.

*Ver. 66. From that time many of his disciples, &c.*] This sermon was in all its different branches so offensive to the Jews, that many of them who till now had been our Lord's disciples, finding by the general strain of it, that their ambitious carnal views were to be utterly disappointed, went out of the synagogue in disgust, and never came to hear our Lord again.

*Ver. 67-69. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, &c.*] On occasion of this great apostacy among the disciples, our Lord, for the trial of the faith of the twelve apostles, and to give them a proper opportunity of professing it, said, in an affectionate and moving manner to them, See how many have forsaken me! will ye also follow their example? tell me what are the thoughts and purposes of your hearts about this matter. Then St. Peter replied,

art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

70 Jesus answered them, ' Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?'

71 He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, a being one of the twelve.

1 Mat. 10. 2-4. Mark, 3. 14-19. Luke, 6. 13-16. Ch. 8. 48. & 13. 2, 21, 27. \* Mat. 26. 14-16, 21-25, 47-56. & 27. 3-5. Mark, xiv. Luke, xxii. Ch. xiii. xviii. Acts, 1. 16-20. Pl. 41. 9. & 55. 13, 14.

in the name of all, as in charity believing that they were of the same mind with himself, " Lord, whatever others do, we dare not think of leaving thee: for to whom should, or can we go, with safety, and advantage, but to thee? shall we go to the world? that can never be a satisfying portion to us: shall we go to the service of sin? that would certainly ruin us: shall we go to the scribes and Pharisees? they would mislead and deceive us: shall we go to any schemes of our own or of others framing, for happiness? they would surely disappoint us: shall we go to Moses, and trust in the righteousness of the law? he could not help us, but would send us back to thee: or shall we go to John the Baptist? he has turned us already over to thee: 'tis thou, and thou only, that teachest the true doctrine of eternal life, and art able and willing to give us life, as thou thyself hast said us in this discourse: we therefore are determined to cleave to thee. And from what we have already heard of thee, and heard, and learnt, and felt from thee, we firmly believe, and are fully satisfied, that thou art the true bread of life, even that promised Messiah whom we expected, and that eternal Son of the only living true God, who, as a Divine Person, camest down from heaven." God is here styled the living God, not to distinguish the nature of the Father from that of the Son, but the nature of the true God from that of all false gods: Christ is called, by way of peculiar eminence, the Son of this living God, to intimate that the Son, partakes of the same divine life and perishes with his Father.

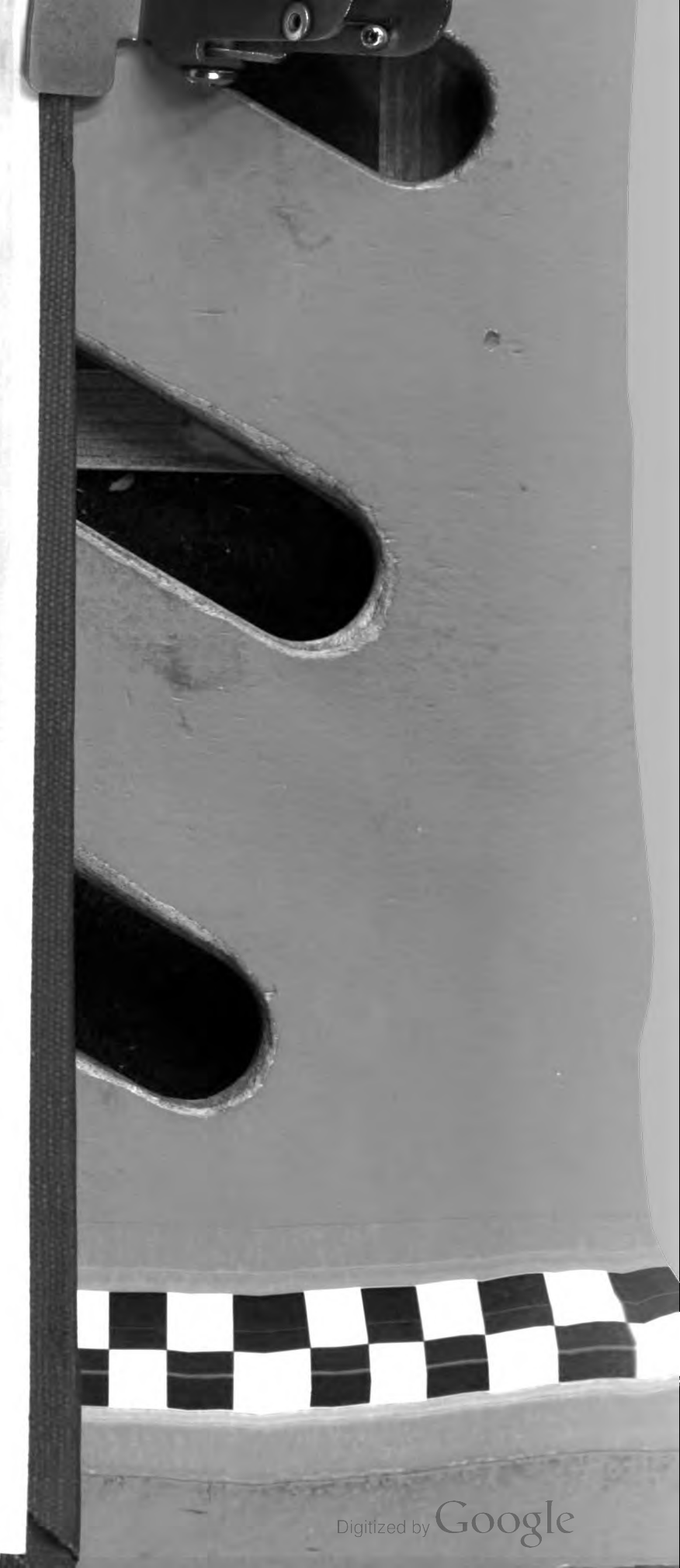
Jesus answered—have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? The opinion of my character and mission, which I have expressed in thine own name, and in the name of thy brethren, is just: however, I know, that you are not all agreed in this confession; for one of you is a devil, a malicious informer, and so perfectly acquainted with me, that he will betray me. It is true, I made choice of this very person equally with the rest, to be my friend and companion; but from what I now tell you, I hope you are convinced that I did not choose so unworthy a person through ignorance of his character, but as I was intimately acquainted with the character and mission of all of you, and in my choice of you had no other view, but to make each of you assist me, according to his talents, whether good or bad, in carrying on the grand design which I am come to execute. By this argument, you may know that I am the Messiah, the Son of God, and that your faith is well founded. According to some great writers, our Lord has given the reason why he had not more plainly declared himself to be the Messiah, was because he knew that he had been accused him of rebellion against the Roman Emperor, which sometimes signify

a false accuser. But there does not appear to be any proof that Judas from the beginning intended to betray Christ. It is more than probable, that he had first engaged with him principally in expectation of secular advantages; and, finding those views disappointed, he might now begin to form that detestable scheme which he afterwards executed. If this was the occasion on which he first entertained the thought, as appears highly probable, one would have expected that such an intimation of his secret wickedness would have struck him to the heart.

Ver. 71. He spake of Judas Iscariot] Though our Lord did not at that time think fit to mention Judas, the evangelist adds this gloss, to shew, that no other disciple was suspected. Jesus called Judas a devil, because he would be an apostate and traitor: so likewise in reproving St. Peter, who had expressed an utter aversion to our Lord's suffering at Jerusalem, he called him Satan, on account of that one act by which he opposed the great design of his coming into the world: wherefore he might much more give Judas the name of devil, who resembled Satan so nearly in the wickedness of his dispositions and actions. In fine, our Lord, by declaring that he had knowingly made choice of a traitor to be one of the twelve who constantly attended him, insinuated that in his most retired hours and secret actions he was not afraid of the eyes of his enemies; wherefore, having initiated a person of this character into all the mysteries of his fellowship, no man can suspect that he was carrying on a plot to deceive the world; for if he had, Judas, when he deserted and betrayed him to the priests, would not have failed to discover the imposture.

Inferences drawn from the miracle of the loaves and fishes, ver. 5-14. It is a misfortune, that truth, often presented to the mind in the same view, loses its force by repetition. According to reason, the more we are assured of it the more we should be affected: but we find by experience, that the most important truths, by being often repeated after the same manner, become gradually less affecting; they grow familiar; they grow insipid, and at last nauseous. The divine wisdom and goodness has therefore, in the holy scripture, diversified the same truths with an almost infinite variety of circumstances, exhibiting duty in new lights, proper to awaken attention, and persuade obedience with such efficacy, as may, through the grace of God and the influences of his divine Spirit, make due impressions upon us, if any thing will.

That we are continually maintained by the providence of God, is a notorious truth, yet grown so trite, that it rarely moves our gratitude: but the portion of scripture now before us, may serve to enliven it with the new circumstances, in which it represents our obligations to God for our daily food; which is as verily his gift to us, as the loaves and fishes



## C H A P. VII.

*Jesus reproacheth the ambition and boldness of his kinsmen: goeth up from Galilee to the feast of tabernacles: teacheth in the temple. Divers opinions of him among the people. The Pharisees are angry that their officers took him not, and chide with Nicodemus for his taking Christ's part.*

[Anno Domini 32.]

**A**FTER these things Jesus \* walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in

Jewry, <sup>b</sup> because the Jews sought to kill him.

2 <sup>c</sup> Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

3 His <sup>d</sup> brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples \* also may see the works that thou doest.

4 <sup>e</sup> For *there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known*

\* Acts, 10. 38. Luke, 4. 44. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 5. 16, 18. Ver. 19, 23. Mat. 21. 38. Mark, 12. 7. 1 Thess. 2. 15. <sup>c</sup> Lev. 23. 34—36. Deut. 16. 13, 19, 46. & 5. 44. Acts, 2. 3. <sup>d</sup> Kinsmen. Mat. 12. 46. Mark, 3. 31. Acts, 1. 14. <sup>e</sup> There. <sup>f</sup> Ver. 10. Ch. 12. 10. & 11.

fishes miraculously increased to feed thousands, were the gift of Christ to that multitude.

Had we been present at that wondrous feast, and seen the creating hands of our Lord actually producing food, increasing the small pittance of bread and fish to a quantity sufficient to feed so many thousands; with what pleasing wonder and awe should we have felt ourselves seized! with what devout thankfulness should we have received our portion of the miraculous entertainment!

Now every meal that we eat is in reality as much the gift of our Lord, as was that amazing banquet. His power created, and his goodness bestows our every morsel. The whole world indeed is his family, for which he daily provides, and gives to every creature his food in due season. *He causeth the grass (says the Psalmist) to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth.* Thus are all things living in the earth, air, and sea, subsisted by God: and as they are so subsisted chiefly for the sake of man, and subjected to his dominion; he, as the priest of this lower world, must pay their homage and service to the common Lord. God has made man to have dominion over his other works, giving him a kind of property in them: and it is therefore highly reasonable that man should pay their tribute of praise, they themselves not being capable of knowing their dependance on God. *The young lions are said to seek their meat from God, and the young ravens to cry unto him;* yet these are only the complaints of languishing nature, heard and relieved by the God of nature, but not directly addressed to him. Man alone is capable to hold such communion with God, to know his goodness, and celebrate his praise. Yet most men live as insensible to their obligations to him as the meanest animals, who have no capacity to apprehend them. Though they receive their daily sustenance from God, yet make they no returns of praise or thanksgiving. And one reason is, because their sustenance comes *naturally*, that is, by the ministry of second causes: for nature is the established method by which God produces it. But second causes do not derogate from the first; though, to the great reproach of human reason they too often obscure it. And therefore our Lord, in the case before us, acted without them, producing food immediately by his creative power, and shewing, without a veil, to whom we owe it. This is the sentiment which I purpose, with God's blessing, now to inculcate, after briefly reconsidering the history upon which it is grounded.

Great multitudes had followed our Lord from the neighbouring cities and villages into the wilderness. Their attention to his doctrine, and admiration of his miracles, had suspended the call of natural appetite: on this account our merciful Redeemer called his disciples and said unto them, *I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way,—for many of them came from far. And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?* The place indeed was a wilderness, a barren desert:—but *Christ was there*: he who furnished a table in the wilderness for their forefathers; he who gives the fruitful vallies their fertility, and whose open hand filleth all things living with plenteousness,—He was there; and could immediately have created food for their present supply, as he did the world from nothing. Why then did he inquire for the seven loaves?—seven stones, or seven clods of earth, were as sufficient in his hand to have fed his many thousand guests. All things were equally possible to his power, but not equally agreeable to his wisdom. He was to teach in every action, and set an example in all that he did. And therefore, though possessed of the inexhaustible stores of Omnipotence, he extended his power only in such degree as the present occasion called for. Seven loaves he had, and those he used: but seven were not sufficient, and therefore he produced a miraculous supply.—He used the ordinary means as far as they would go, and had recourse to the extraordinary only as a supplement to their deficiency.—A great lesson to us; as, on the one hand, not to tempt God with vain presumptuous expectations of assistance, when the abilities already given are sufficient, if we duly exert them; so, on the other hand, to rely with a steady assurance upon his goodness, after we have used our utmost endeavours, and done the best we can.

To instruct us in this, our Lord took the small pittance that was at hand, the seven loaves and few small fishes.—For these *He gave thanks (seeing these were all) and he brake them, and gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude: and they did all eat, and were filled; and at the same time, doubtless, their minds were affected with reverence, and the warm emotions of gratitude. For we read that those who saw and partook of this miraculous banquet, were so sensibly affected, that they immediately in some sense professed their faith in him as the great Messiah: an*

openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

Ch. 1. 11. Mark, 3. 21. Luke, 4. 24. Jer. 20. 10.

in the sudden transports of their zeal, they would have made him their King; and, at length, grew so importunate, that they would by violence constrain him to accept that office: for the evangelist adds, that *when Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a King, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.* He fled from offered royalty; for he came into the world for a far higher end, than to wear its crowns. He was indeed a King, and to this end was he born, (as he declared before Pilate) and for this cause came he into the world, that he should bear witness to the truth of his being so. His dominion was not of this world; it was a spiritual dominion, a rule over souls, an everlasting kingdom of spirits. All other empire was unworthy of him, and far beneath his innate supremacy.

gross and sensual as the opinion of the multitude concerning Christ in general was, their ideas were just in giving him to be the true Messiah, and consequently the King of Kings. Why then do we not practically agree to them,—we, who speculatively acknowledge him in the spiritual sense to be the King of kings? They would have Christ their King for one meal thus bestowed. We receive our daily sustenance from him, yet the greater part without return of homage and obedience. And why are we more affected than that multitude? The cause lies partly in the manner, not the matter of the obligation: it is because we receive it by the mediation of natural causes, which in a regular uninterrupted course, according to the appointment of God as the God of nature.

which we call *the course of nature*, is truly the will and a continual exertion of his Providence. St. John says, that *God gives us rain from heaven.* Yet rain comes from natural causes: but it is not less the gift of God, because bestowed by means that are ordinary and usual. So our Lord, in that part of his sermon on the mount which concerns providence, says, that *God feeds the fowls of the air: and God does as verily feed them, as they were by the appointment fed his prophet Elijah at the banks of the Jordan.* Yet no man doubts but they are fed by the ordinance of nature, which is not less providential, constant and regular.

the servants of God, and ministers our food, as he did the loaves multiplied by our Lord: and we should terminate in him, as theirs in some other king. Men are not affected with things that happen to them, but contract a certain familiarity with common things, because their daily wonders of nature grow cheap and their frequency. Things which rarely happen, whereas frequency lessens the admiration of them, in themselves ever so admirable. This multiplied loaves has its novelty to recommend it to the others as much deserve our devout ac-

judge of this by some other instances. Is it not that the rod of Aaron should bud, than

that ten thousand woods and forests, stripped by the frosts, should in the spring shoot forth buds innumerable, and make new shades with returning leaves, and bloom? Or, that food should descend nightly from heaven, as the manna did upon one certain spot where the Israelites were encamped,—is this more strange than that food should spring, as it does yearly, and all the world over, out of the ground? God is alike the Author in both cases, and man's obligations are the same: but when his productions appear frequent, and after the same manner, we heedlessly pass them by as natural: and when they appear in a manner new and unusual, then we cry miracle and prodigy! The strangeness of the thing, as it were, alarms us, and makes us raise our eyes to the hand that caused it.

In condescension therefore to our weakness and inadvertency, Almighty God has vouchsafed, upon some extraordinary occasions, to divert his power out of the common channel of nature, and, for this reason among others still more important, to shew it in some other manner that is new and surprizing. In the case before us, he quite threw off the disguise of second causes, and visibly and in person exerted that power, from which the earth gives its increase, and the fountains flow with perpetual streams.

His operations in nature proceed very leisurely from small and seemingly despicable beginnings: passing through various successive changes, and advancing by just degrees, they attain at last their due perfection. Thus a grain of corn, sown in the earth, and perishing there, by a virtue which God has implanted in it, communicates we know not what fecundity to the glebe. From that secret spark of vegetative life the tender roots spread, and the green blade springs forth; which, after a revolution of various seasons, with the concurrence of frost, and rain, and snow, and dew, and sunshine, displays the ear, first green, with little cells full of a milky substance, which ripens and hardens in the sun, till the grain, perfected and ready for the labours of men, is gathered, and, after various operations, becomes proper for our nourishment. So long a progress through natural causes, with divers arts and labours of men, is necessary to make a piece of bread. But the Lord of nature might, and did go a nearer way to work. It was *corn* in its maturity, it was *bread* in its perfection, at once, in his creating hands.

The ordinary method of producing food is in general the most proper, as it employs the time, quickens the industry, and exercises the ingenuity of men: the extraordinary way was fit only for those particular occasions whereon our Lord used it, and wherein he had particular views and designs. One important point which he had regard to, was to remind us in that sensible manner of our obligations to him for our daily bread; to teach us to reflect, that however wonderful the sudden increase of loaves may appear, yet every harvest renews the miracle for the subsistence of all the world.

I add one or two instances more of the same nature, because I am desirous to inculcate this sentiment so often as may render it familiar, that our minds may readily enter into



6 Then Jesus said unto them, ' My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.

7 ' The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 2. 4. & 8. 20. Ver. 7, 8, 30.

<sup>b</sup> Ch. 3. 19. & 14. 17. & 5. 18, 19. James, 4. 4.

into it upon all occasions; and as often as we partake of the gifts of God, we may at the same time see the hand that bestows them.

Had we fed upon the miraculous quails with the Israelites in the wilderness, and quenched our thirst at those sudden streams which the rock yielded, at the stroke of Moses, how should we have been transported with a sense of God's goodness! would not such a meal, while it fed our body, also have entertained our mind with holy wonder, praise, and thanksgiving? would not every morsel have renewed our gratitude, and excited our devotion?

And what difference is there between the food where-with God fed the Israelites in the desert, and that where-with he feeds us in this land of plenty? None in respect of the Author;—none in respect of our obligations to him. The food that he rained from heaven, and the corn he produces out of the earth, are both alike his creatures; and he that furnished that table in the wilderness, is the same that furnishes our table every day.

There is no room for argument upon this occasion. We all know that our food is the creature of God; that his power made, and his goodness bestows it, as verily as they did the food that fed these thousands. Yet many men make no returns to this universal Benefactor. How just therefore is that exhortation of the prophet, *Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy Father, that created, and fed thee?* who gave thee all thy faculties, and all the objects wherewith they are gratified? Why have men reason wherewith to trace effects to their causes? Why have they, through divine Grace, lively apprehensions of benefits, and capacities for grateful sentiments, if they do not exert those faculties in the instances that most require, that best deserve them? if receiving daily obligations, they continue as void of grateful reflections, as beasts grazing in the fields, or feeding in the stalls, which have no understanding? Yet even these from the blind instincts of nature express something like an acknowledgment of favours. *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, saith God; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.*

How justly might God punish the ingratitude of men by withdrawing the blessings which they have long abused? He frequently does so even in this life: and many, who have not been thankful for their daily bread, have lived to want it. But in most instances, perhaps, the case is otherwise; and *God maketh the sun to shine, and his rain to fall, and food to grow, for the evil and the good, the thankful and the unthankful, as long as this life lasts: and then the scene will be changed, and his blessings be no more bestowed promiscuously; but they who have not acknowledged his bounty, shall learn how great their obligations were, by the want of it; and, as a just punishment of their unthankfulness, be reduced to that sad state, in which they shall have nothing left to be thankful for.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The miracle recorded in the first part of this chapter, is the only one which all the four evangelists have mentioned. We have,

1. The time and place, when and where it was wrought. Christ had crossed the lake Gennesaret, called the sea of Tiberias from a city that Herod had built on the borders of it in honour of the emperor Tiberius. Multitudes followed him; not so much, it seems, affected by his doctrine, as drawn by his miracles. However, our Lord was ready to receive them; and, going up into the mountain, for the convenience of being heard, sat there with his disciples, and taught the listening crowd: *and the passover, the third since his entrance on the ministry, now approached.*

2. The miracle itself. Beholding with compassion the multitude who were assembled on this occasion, our Lord addressed himself to Philip, and asked him, in order to try his faith, being himself resolved what to do, Where they could get bread to feed that multitude? Philip, dull of apprehension, looked only to human aid, and suggests, that two hundred pennyworth of bread, which probably was all their common stock, would not be sufficient to give each a morsel. Andrew, hearing the discourse, suggests that there was a lad in the company that had five barley loaves and two small fishes; but these indeed would be as nothing among such a multitude. But where human means fail, the divine power is not straitened. Commanding his disciples, therefore, to seat the multitude in order, where the grass was their carpet, the earth their table, with his divine benediction he consecrated the scanty provision, and, breaking the bread and fishes, gave them to his disciples, who distributed them to the multitude; and, *marvellous to behold!* under their hands the meat continued to grow as it descended down the ranks; and not only afforded enough for a plentiful meal to all the vast multitude, but such a quantity of fragments as filled twelve baskets full. *Note;* (1.) When the Lord is pleased at times to leave us in perplexity, he has designs of his own to answer, and knows what he intends to do. (2.) Christ's disciples must not disdain coarse and scanty fare; but be content, when his providence so ordains, to put up with barley cakes, and be thankful for them; and then this poor provision, with the benediction of Jesus, shall yield a richer entertainment than all the delicacies of the luxurious. (3.) They who call a fish-meal fasting, seem to cast reproach on the rich feast with which Jesus entertained his followers. (4.) Bread must never be wasted; even the fragments of barley cakes are carefully gathered up. If we are full, others are fasting, who will be glad of our learnings; good economy is the means to enable us for more extensive charity.

3. Great was the effect, for the time at least, produced by this miracle on the minds of the people. They concluded that this must be that great prophet spoken of by Moses, Deut. xviii. 15. *who should come into the world.*

8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.

9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.

10 But when his brethren were gone up,

Ch. 2. 4. & 8. 20. Ver. 6, 30.

2dly, We have,

1. The retirement of the Lord Jesus. They, whom he had in so astonishing a manner fed, were immediately for proclaiming him king of the Jews, and erecting his standard; expecting, according to their mistaken prejudices, that he would set up a temporal dominion, rescue them from the Roman yoke, and place them at the head of the nations. But far different was the kingdom that he came to establish: therefore, lest their irregular zeal should hurry them into some seditious behaviour, and they might, against his will, attempt to force the royalty upon him, he left them, and went up again into the mountain alone. *Note*; (1.) Christ's kingdom is not of this world; his true disciples will never seek their portion here below. (2.) His disciples must avoid every thing that may give the shadow of offence to the secular powers, never intermeddling with their affairs, but teaching all dutiful submission to the powers that are.

While the Master was in the mountain, the disciples were tossing in the tempestuous waves. By the command of their Lord they had gone on shipboard, in order to cross the lake; but now the storm arose, the night was dark, and contrary, and their Master not come to them, heightened their distress. *Note*; (1.) After the most seasons of refreshment, sometimes severe temptations succeed. (2.) It is one of the heaviest afflictions to be under trials, when the presence of Jesus is withdrawn and we are left under darkness and desertion; but our trial is without some degree of previous unfaithfulness. (3.) They who embark in Christ's cause, must prepare for a storm. The way to glory lies in general through much tribulation.

When their extremity help approaches. In the way of trouble need not despair; Christ will deliver us in the time of trouble. He came to them, miraculously appearing in the waters; but they, affrighted, thought it an apparition, till his well-known voice quieted them: when he was so nigh, no evil could hurt them. (1.) We often terrify ourselves with unnecessary apprehensions of danger; and, when our minds are dejected, do not fear that the very means which are working for our relief, portend an increase of our misery. (2.) Jesus' all-powerful word, can speak peace to the troubled mind.

Why they welcomed their Master's arrival; and how the ship, by miracle, was at the place of their departure. *Note*; (1.) Christ is doubly precious to the mourning after him, and walking in darkness, and he lifts up the light of his countenance, and drives away the cloud of sorrow. (2.) It will be a pleasing sight to a trembling believer, when he shall find himself safely landed on the shores of eternal life.

Why the multitude seem to have waited for the Master from the mountain in the morning;

for as they saw the disciples embark, and leave their Master behind them, and there was no other boat in which he could follow them, they concluded that he must still be on that side of the water: but, not finding him there as they expected, we are told,

1. How carefully they followed him. Some boats arriving in the morning from Tiberias, near that place where they had been miraculously fed through the benediction of Jesus, they crossed the lake to Capernaum, hoping to find him there, where he usually made his abode. *Note*; (1.) They who love Christ truly will stop at no pains in following him. (2.) When we are found in God's way, his providence will soon be seen most graciously to second our good designs and desires.

2. They found him on the other side of the sea, and could not but express their astonishment how he could come thither, having no convenience for crossing the lake. *Note*; Many eagerly run after Christ and his gospel, pretending great zeal for hearing, who never truly come to him by faith, nor receive the ingrafted word to the saving of their souls.

3. Christ, who knew the spirit and temper with which they followed him, replies to their question in such a manner, as he saw their state required.

[1.] He rebukes them for the corrupt principle on which they acted: They followed him, not because they were convinced by his doctrine and miracles, and believed on him to the saving of their souls, but merely because they had been fed at his cost, and expected yet greater temporal advantages from him when he should set up his kingdom. *Note*; Many follow Christ for the loaves, who have no love for his gospel.

[2.] He exhorts them to seek a better portion. *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you.* The world and all the things thereof perish in the using; and we are dying daily, and cannot long possess any thing here below. It were therefore the most egregious folly to lay out all our labour on so transitory a portion, and most criminal to make our profession of religion subservient to the base purposes of earthly advantage. Christ proposes to us a nobler good, even that spiritual food of his grace by which our immortal souls may be fed, and we may grow up to the participation of that eternal life, which the Son of man has to bestow on every truly faithful soul: *for him hath God the Father sealed,* fully commissioned and authorized him to give this eternal life to his faithful saints. *Note*; (1.) All our blessings in time and eternity, must come from the free gift of our Redeemer. (2.) None who come to Jesus, seeking the living bread, will be denied, for *he feedeth the hungry.*

4thly, In consequence of what he had spoken, the persons who heard him entered into conference with him, how they might attain that everlasting life which he mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> then went he also up unto the feast, <sup>1</sup> not openly, but as it were in secret.

11 ¶ Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?

<sup>1</sup> Pf. 40. 3. & 26. 3. Mat. 3. 15. Gal. 4. 4. Rom. 10. 4.  
<sup>2</sup> Ch. 11. 56.

<sup>1</sup> Amos, 5. 13. Mat. 10. 16, 17. Eph. 5. 13, 17. Amos, 5. 13. Ch. 1. 9.

1. They said unto him, *What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?* He had commanded them to labour for the enduring meat, and they wanted to know what they must do; whether any thing more was necessary than obedience to the law of Moses: for they founded all their expectations on their own doings and duties, and thought of no other way of life or acceptance with God than by the works of the law. (See the Annotations for another view of this subject.)

2. Christ replied, *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* Faith in Jesus, in his divine character as the Messiah, and in the all-sufficiency of his death and intercession to justify the ungodly, is the leading point, without which it is impossible to please God. And this faith is his own work in the penitent soul.

3. They answered again, *What sign shewest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? what dost thou work?* They overlooked the miracles that he had already performed, and demanded greater. For since he seemed to assume higher authority than that of Moses, they thought he should produce greater evidences of a divine commission: it is true, he had by miracle yesterday fed five thousand, but they suggest that Moses did much more. *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.* The number was much greater, the miracle daily continued, and the fare far more delicious than barley loaves.

4. Christ rectifies their mistake. They ascribed to Moses what was not his, but God's gift. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; it does not appear that he had the least concern in procuring it; neither did it come from heaven, as they seemed to imagine, but merely from the air, and served only to support a mortal life: but my Father, who gave you the manna, giveth you the true bread from heaven, of which that was the type and figure. For the bread of God is he (or that) which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world, a provision as much superior to the manna in the wilderness, as the throne of God is beyond the clouds, and life eternal exceeds the present moment of mortality.*

5. Ignorantly mistaking his meaning, as if he spoke of material bread, they said unto him, *Lord, evermore give us this bread.* They eagerly desire that heavenly provision, whose properties were so excellent, and so far surpassed the manna which their fathers did eat in the wilderness. They indeed understood not what they asked; but if we have tasted the heavenly manna, have fed upon the word of Jesus, and feasted on the sweet and precious promises which are in him, we shall not cease with deep sensibility to cry, *Lord, evermore give us this bread!*

6. Christ plainly informs them of his meaning. *I am the bread of life: he spoke not of bread literally, or of a merely temporal happiness, but of himself; a divine Person become incarnate to give spiritual life to immortal souls. He is the bread of life; our bodies could better live without*

daily food, than our spirits without constant supplies of his grace. He is both the quickening principle of our spiritual life, and the constant support of it. Therefore, says Christ, *he that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst;* whoever by faith applies to Jesus, shall not want the richest provision to satisfy the most enlarged desires of his soul. *But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not;* they had seen his miracles, yet, through their earthly-mindedness and attachment to worldly interest, they received him not as a spiritual Redeemer, nor trusted in him for eternal life. "This," says our Lord, in other words, "is an evidence of great obstinacy and untowardness, of improbity and pride in you. For had the Father's preventing grace had any success upon you, had it wrought probity or humility in you, you would certainly come in at my call: and I will not reject any one who thus comes, under whatever load of guilt or corruption he groans; nor cast him forth afterwards, if he will abide with me." (See the Annotations.) The Saviour's arms of mercy are open to receive the miserable and the desperate: no sinner who flies to him, need fear a repulse; however great or aggravated his iniquities may be, pardon and peace are assured to him by the promises of the God who cannot lie. *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me; not to carry on any design separately from his Father; but as his ambassador, qualified and commissioned to execute that glorious work of man's redemption, to which he was appointed; and ready to do and suffer whatever the will of his heavenly Father had ordained for him. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day: "For this lies upon me as the office for which my Father hath sent me, (the fulfilling of which is all my care,) that I should be careful to preserve every one who with an honest heart shall thus come and believe on me; and give every one who thus perseveres (besides many excellent privileges here) eternal life of body and soul hereafter." (See the Annotations.) All those have a part in this salvation, who hear, and by faith embrace, the gospel which Christ declares. For this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day;* the gospel proposes a free salvation, through Jesus, to every miserable sinner; and whoever receives the record of God concerning his Son, and sees his own deep need of the Saviour and the all-sufficiency of Jesus, becomes a partaker of that present life of grace, which is an earnest of the eternal life of glory to the faithful soul. They who perish, owe it to their wilful infidelity; they reject the counsel of God against their own souls, and will not come to Christ that they may have life; either, through wilful ignorance, obstinately insensible of their own misery and want of a Saviour, or, through Pharisaic pride, going about to establish their own

12 And there was much murmuring said, He is a good man : others said, Nay ; among the people concerning him : for some but he deceiveth the people.

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 9. 16. & 10. 19. & 6. 14. Ver. 40. Luke, 7. 16. Mat. 16. 14. & 21. 46. & 19. 25. Pf. 22. 6. & 69. 20.

own righteousness, instead of submitting to the righteousness of God which is by faith.

7. Perceiving now that Christ plainly pointed at himself, as the living bread endued with such wondrous properties, the Jews murmured and cavilled at him, as if he presumed to himself extravagant honours, in pretending to come down from heaven, and to be the bread of life ; and they objected his known descent from Joseph and Mary. *How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven ? when his earthly original is so evident ?*

Christ confutes their cavils, and answers their murmurings. *He said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves ; renew their thoughts, and the prejudices that they entertained against him, arising from that native corruption of hearts, which nothing but divine grace through faith could subdue, and which they rejected. For no man can draw me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him ; is the present state of fallen man, that he is under an impotence to turn unto God, unless drawn by the Father of God, and enabled to believe in his dear Son, who sufficent grace to all without exception, and wills the death of any sinner, but that he should repent and be saved. And to as many as do repent, and submit to, and cheerfully improve his grace, Christ saith, I will raise him up at the last day ; and the way in which the sinner is brought upon, is according as it is written in the prophets. Isa. liv. 13. Jer. xxxi. 34. They shall be all taught of his revealed word and the illumination of his Spirit. Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, attending to him, speaking in his word, and by that to the soul, cometh unto me, trusting on Jesus for pardon and salvation ; and without such divine and spiritual illumination, and such yielding and obedience to those divine teachings, the natural man cannot receive the truths of revelation, nor believe in the Son of God. Not that any man hath seen the Father, visibly or distinctly instructing him, save he which is of God, his inwardly ; he hath seen the Father ; is privy to all his counsels and designs ; by him all divine discoveries are made ; through his agency divine power is communicated to the penitent soul, to receive the Gospel-word. Christ saith, I say unto you, as a most undoubted truth, whosoever eateth of me hath everlasting life ; the genuine gift of God at present a title to it by faith, embraces it, and has the earnest and foretaste of it in present enjoyment, if he perseveringly cleave to Christ, shall have the actual enjoyment of eternal glory hereafter. That bread of life ; it is derived from Christ through him it is supported, and by him it is perfected. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead ; miraculous as their provision was maintained for a while a temporal life, and did not ravages of death, or render them immortal. I say unto you, the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die ; for whoever by faith*

truly and perseveringly feeds upon Christ, shall never die eternally. *I am the living bread, which came down from heaven, to be the author of spiritual and eternal life : if any man eat of this bread, constantly hungering after the pardon, righteousness, and salvation which Jesus brings, he shall live for ever ; though not immortal upon earth, yet crowned with an eternity of glory in heaven : and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* His human body, offered up as the great sacrifice for sinners, would be the grand procuring cause of all those inestimable blessings which he had mentioned ; of which not only the Jews, but the Gentile world, would be made partakers.

9. The gross and carnal ideas of the Jews still prevented them from comprehending his meaning : and they strove among themselves, saying, *How can this man give us his flesh to eat ?* concluding his assertion to be absurd and improbable, because they understood him as if speaking of his human flesh, which should be eaten like bread,—an opinion as monstrous, as that which the Romish church has since adopted concerning the flesh of Jesus, as corporally eaten in the eucharist.

Lastly, Christ confirms and explains what he had said concerning his flesh. It was of absolute necessity, that, in a spiritual sense, that should be done which was figuratively represented by eating his flesh, and drinking his blood ; even that they should be vitally united to him by faith, and become one with him, as the food which is eaten incorporates with our bodies. For *Verily, verily I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you ; without this union of our souls to him, we can neither have spiritual life here, nor eternal life hereafter. But whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; not merely partaking of the elements which represent these ; depending on which, they may deceive themselves, and think if they can but receive the sacrament before they die, they shall infallibly be saved ; when neither living nor dying will these outward signs at all profit those who are strangers to the inward and spiritual grace ; I say, it is not partaking of the outward elements, but the spiritual feeding upon Christ and his saving benefits by faith which is here meant ; and whoever does that, hath eternal life, is now entitled to it, and, if faithful, will shortly be put in possession of it ; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed ; affording the most delightful nourishment and feast for the soul, infinitely exceeding any corporal refreshment. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, with spiritual appetite and discernment, dwelleth in me, and I in him. He is incorporated with Christ, as a member of his body mystical, is entitled to the remission of sins and acceptance with God, which, by the blood-shedding of Jesus, is obtained for all who believe in him, and has Christ as the quickening Spirit formed in his heart, the principle of spiritual life, which, in the faithful saints of God, shall reach its utmost perfection in eternal glory. For as the*

13 Howbeit no man spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

° Ch. 9. 22. & 12. 42, 43. & 19. 38. & 3. 2. Prov. 29. 25.

14 ¶ Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up<sup>p</sup> into the temple, and taught.

<sup>p</sup> Mal. 3. 1. Hag. 2. 7) 8. Ch. 5. 14. & 8. 2. & 18. 20.

living Father, who is the fountain of life to every living creature, hath sent me; and I, as man and Mediator, commissioned by him, live by the Father, supported and enabled to finish the work that he has given me to do; so he that eateth me, united to me by faith, even he shall live by me; receiving out of my fulness, as the branches are fed by the living root. Because I live, ye shall live also. This then is the conclusion of the whole; I am that bread which came down from heaven, concerning which I spoke before, and the properties of which are so transcendently excellent: not as your fathers did eat manna; far different is this bread; that was from the air, this from the highest heavens; that was but a type, this the antetype and substance; that only supported a momentary life; they who fed thereupon, were subject to all the diseases and decays incident to mortality, and are dead; but he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever; he shall be holy here, and, feeding till death, on this heavenly food, shall be glorious for ever.

This discourse Jesus held in the synagogue at Capernaum, publicly and openly, that all who desired it might hear and receive his heavenly doctrines. Note; Truth seeks no covert. The gospel of Jesus must be declared openly, and will bear the severest inquiry. His word is truth.

5thly, We have an account of the different effects produced by this discourse on the minds of the hearers.

1. Many who had followed him till then as his nominal disciples, were highly shocked at what they heard, taking it in a gross and carnal sense, and not entering into the spirit of his words; or they were offended at the divine original and operation which he claimed as co-equal with God the Father; or, because it was mysterious, they disbelieved his doctrine as absurd,—as the infidels and scoffers of our day, who, because the mysteries of grace appear not agreeable to their fallen reason, suppose it a mark of superior understanding to reject them.

2. Christ was apprized of their murmurings; for he sees the hard thoughts which sinners entertain of him, as well as hears their hard speeches. He searcheth the heart, and therefore replies, *Doth this offend you?* If the coming down of the Son of man from heaven appears so incredible, *What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?* This would perhaps yet more astonish them, considering the meanness of his present appearance; and might seem still more improbable to happen. As to what he had observed about eating his flesh, this must be understood not corporally, but spiritually: *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing*: the bare participation of the outward ordinances avails nothing to procure eternal life. The sinner's soul must be quickened by the power of the Spirit of Jesus, and brought to the discernment of spiritual things, otherwise the most nourishing words of his gospel convey no food to the inward man. *The words that I speak unto you, says he, they are spirit, and they are life*; to be understood not in a literal but spiritual sense, and, accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost, become the

means of quickening the dead sinner's soul, and maintaining the life which Christ bestows. *But there are some of you that believe not*; professing to be disciples, but in truth not at all experimentally acquainted with the doctrines of the gospel: *for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father*: "This was the reason that I told you, ver. 44. that no man cometh to the faith of Christ sincerely, but he who by my Father's preventing grace is qualified for it; (see the Annotations) because I saw that many who follow me, do not truly believe on me, nor intend to live as I command them; but one keeps his love of money, and for that will betray me; and others retain their other interests and their other sins. Note; Christ knows the heart, and sees the infidelity which reigns within, though covered with the most plausible cloak of profession."

3. Many who had murmured before, now utterly withdrew, and returned to their former occupations, to their own sinful ways, and Pharisaical teachers, and never made any farther profession, nor attended any more on his ministry. We are not to wonder if we see apostates; nay, many, of whom we had formed the most sanguine hopes, go back: it was so from the beginning.

4. Christ hereupon addressed his twelve chosen ones, that he might draw from them a profession of faith in him: *Will ye also go away?* Not that he doubted the sincerity of the eleven; but it bespoke his affection towards them, and his confidence in them, that, whatever others did, they would never follow such bad examples, but cleave to him with unshaken fidelity.

5. Peter's zealous heart cannot bear the suspicion which the question seemed to intimate, and therefore, in the name of his brethren, he nobly replies, *Lord, to whom shall we go?* Out of thee we can hope for neither pardon, peace, grace, nor glory. Turn where we will, misery and destruction meet us. *Thou, and thou alone, hast the words of eternal life; and we believe all that thou hast lately spoken, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* Note; (1.) St. Peter's reply must be the answer of every faithful soul, when tempted to quit his profession: *To whom shall we go, for life and peace?* To our sins? they will destroy us. To our own works and endeavours? they cannot justify or save us. To the world? it will deceive our expectations. Christ, and Christ alone, is the only foundation of hope and fountain of happiness to a fallen sinner: out of him, nothing but wrath and ruin remain for us. (2.) The more steadily and assuredly we trust the Son of God, the more we honour him. And that faith which gives him glory, will bring us the most reviving consolations.

6. Jesus answered them, to check too great self-confidence, and prepare them for the issue, *Have not I chosen you twelve to the distinguished honour of a postleship, and yet of you is a devil?* possessed by that wicked spirit, in his heart.

15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, ' How knoweth this man \* letters, having never learned ?

16 Jesus answered them, and said, ' My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 ' If any man will do his will, -he shall

\* Mat. 13. 54. Mark. 6. 8. Luke, 4. 16—22. \* Or learning. † Ch. 8. 28. & 12. 49. & 14. 10, 24. Exod. 23. 21. † Mat. 6. 22. & 13. 11. & 11. 25. Hosea, 6. 2, 3. Ch. 8. 31, 32, 47. & 10. 4, 27. & 18. 37.

heart a traitor and a murderer ? *He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon ; for he it was that should betray him, as Christ well knew ; though he was one of the twelve, which aggravated his guilt. Note ; (1.) A man, like Judas, may have been the means of casting out devils from others, and yet be a devil himself. Among the most blaming professors there will be found hypocrites and apostates. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. (2.) The purest societies on earth cannot answer for all their members. It is in heaven alone, or perhaps also in the great millennium, that the wheat will be free from the chaff.*

C H A P. VII.

Ver. 1. *After these things]* That is, after the miracle of the loaves, and the conversation in the synagogue at Capernaum. Sir Isaac Newton thinks, that these words intimate that our Lord did not celebrate the third passover at Jerusalem, (see ch. vi. 4.) and it must be owned that the evangelists do not say expressly that Jesus went up to it ; nevertheless, if we may judge from the religious regard which he constantly shewed to all the divine institutions, from his behaviour on other occasions of a like nature we may safely believe, that he went not only to this, but to all the feasts which the Jewish males were obliged to attend ; Deut. xvi. 16. Numb. ix. 13. and it is probable that the many cities and villages which our Lord is said to have visited, Mark, vi. 56. lay on his way to this feast ; a conjecture which appears to be favoured by the present passage ; for it implies, that, after the miraculous cure of the blind man, Jesus had been in Jewry, where an attempt was made upon his life, which made it dangerous for him to be there any longer at that time. But if any attempt were made upon our Lord's life in Jewry about this time, it was so fit for it as Jerusalem ; no time so proper for the passover, which happened during this period ; and persons so likely to be engaged in it, as the haughty scribes, and Pharisees, who were assembled at this feast. Perhaps Christ's disciples also, who were often his enemies in the metropolis, when they came up to the feast ; and incensed them anew, by rehearsing, with aggravations of fame, the miracle of the loaves, and the conviction of every individual present.

— 5. *His brethren therefore said, &c.]* By brethren are understood only cousins-german, or kinsfolk. They did not believe on him, they condemned him in their minds, and said that he acted altogether unbecomingly, passing so much of his time in Galilee and other parts of the country, while he pretended to possess the character as that of the Messiah : that it would be more for his interest to make disciples in Judea than in Galilee ; and that he ought to work his miracles in a public manner as possible before the great

and learned men of the nation, whose decision in his favour would have great influence to induce others to believe on him. The word rendered *openly*, ver. 4. *παρρησια*, has a variety of senses : it signifies intrepidity, or fearlessness of danger ;—freeness of speech, as opposite to restraint and reserve ;—perspicuity or plainness of speech, divested of figures or allegories ;—speaking in public, in the character of an orator ; and lastly, authority, consisting in popularity, dignity of character, and civil power : perhaps the last sense is that which belongs to this verse. The present passage seems to be a very invidious and groundless insinuation, as if our Lord was actuated by ostentatious views ; the contrary to which appeared so evidently from the whole of his conduct, that nothing but the meanest envy could suggest such a charge. It is astonishing, that these relations of Christ, who must have had so many opportunities of seeing the glory both of his character and miracles, which last they here expressly acknowledge, should continue in unbelief. But they unhappily laid it down as a first principle, that the Messiah must be a temporal prince ; and finding this mark of his mission wanting, and seeing more strongly than others could do, (who were not so intimately conversant with him,) his aversion to any such scheme, they would yield to no other proofs, and are, it is to be feared, on the fatal list of those who perished, as thousands now do, by opposing hypothesis to fact through worldly and carnal views of things. However, this circumstance serves to illustrate the character of our Saviour ; for had his relations been unanimous in owning his claims, it might have been objected by infidelity, that the pretension which Jesus made to the character of Messiah was an imposture carried on by him and his family to deceive mankind ; but when we find that he did not owe his success to their concurrence, but that they were rather obstacles in his way, all suspicion of collusion is removed, and the divinity of his mission shines forth with redoubled lustre.

Ver. 6, 7. *Then Jesus said—My time is not yet come, &c.]* Jesus, knowing the malice of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, did not incline to be among them longer than was absolutely necessary, knowing that they would take every opportunity to persecute and destroy him ; but *the time* for his death was *not yet come*. " It is not proper for me," says he, " to go up yet to this feast ; but you may go up at any time you please, since you have done nothing to make the Jews unfriendly to you, as I have done, who, by the purity of my doctrine and the freedom of my reproofs, have provoked their malice to the highest pitch." The words, *the world cannot hate you*, contain a most awful insinuation, that these kinsmen of our Lord were persons governed entirely by carnal views, and therefore destitute of the love of God, and all well-grounded hope from him.

Ver. 8, 9. *Go ye up unto this feast, &c.]* " Repair ye therefore unto Jerusalem as soon as you please, that you may



know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

19 Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

20 The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 5. 41. <sup>1</sup> Theff. 2. 6. Gal. 1. 10, 16 <sup>1</sup> Pet. 4. 11. <sup>1</sup> Exod. 24. 3. Ch. 1. 17. Acts. 7. 53, 53. Mat. 15. 6. <sup>1</sup> Ch. 5. 16, 16. & 20. 32, 36, 39. & 11. 53. Mat. 12. 14. Ver. 25. <sup>1</sup> Ch. 8. 48, 52. & 10. 20. Acts, 26. 24. Mat. 10. 25. & 12. 24.

“ may be there at the beginning of the feast: I shall not keep you company, nor indeed go yet awhile; for I must wait a little longer before it will be prudent for me to be seen there.” By this answer he sent them to attend divine ordinances, though they were persons of a carnal unbelieving heart: but, as they did not like his presence among them, he would not honour them with it.

*Ver. 10. Not openly,]* This suggests another reason for our Lord's delay. Had he taken his journey at the usual time, the multitudes who were on the road gathering round him, and accompanying him to Jerusalem, might have given fresh matter of offence to his enemies; for which reason he did not set out till the greater part of the people were gone; and then he went up not publicly, but as it were in secret; that is, he neither preached nor wrought miracles by the way, nor had any crowd attending him.

*Ver. 11–13. Then the Jews sought him, &c.]* Jesus did not appear publicly, immediately on his arrival in Jerusalem, which occasioned many doubts concerning his character: some affirmed, that he was a true prophet, and that his not attending the feast might be owing to several accidents. Others affirmed, that he was a deceiver, who paid no regard to the divine institution. Howbeit, his friends defended him only in private, not daring to speak openly on his behalf, for fear of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

*Ver. 14, 15. Now about the midst of the feast, &c.]* About the middle of the feast (which lasted eight days) Jesus came into the temple, and preached many important doctrines with such strength of reason, clearness of method, and elegance of expression, that his enemies themselves were astonished, knowing that he had never had the advantage of a liberal education. What is here more particularly meant by letters, appears from the Greek word Γραμματα, whence is derived that which signifies a scribe. The learning of the scribes consisted in the explication of the sacred writings of the Old Testament; so that these words most probably refer to our Lord's great acquaintance with the scriptures, and the judicious and masterly manner in which he taught the people out of them, with far greater majesty and nobler eloquence than the scribes could attain to by a learned education. Compare Matth. vii. 29. and Mark, i. 22.

*Ver. 16, 17. Jesus answered, &c.]* “The doctrine which I teach you, is not the product of human wisdom; I have neither been taught it by masters, nor have I acquired it by study; but it is the doctrine of God.” He told them likewise, that they could be at no loss to know whence he or any teacher derived his doctrine, provided they laid aside their prejudices, and were resolved to

do the will of God, how contrary soever it might prove to their own inclinations: *If any man be determined, or is desirous to do his will, θελη το θελημα ποιει,—he shall know, &c.* Good men can easily judge of any teacher, whether he and his doctrine come from God, not only because the divine wisdom and goodness are interested to secure such from capital errors, but because they themselves have no predominant evil inclinations to prejudice them against the truth when it appears, and because they can discern how far any doctrine is conformable to the principles of holiness, which they profess.

This important passage seems an express declaration that every upright man to whom the gospel is proposed, will see and own the evidence of its divine authority; which indeed might reasonably have been concluded from the awful judgment denounced on those who presume to reject it.

*Ver. 18. He that speaketh of himself]* If a person teaches what makes for the advancement of his own worldly interest, or for the gratification of his pride, or any other evil passion, the doers of the will of God will immediately know that such a teacher is an impostor; whereas, if a prophet proposes doctrines which have a tendency, through divine grace, to reform and regenerate mankind, and to advance the glory of God, without regard to the opinions of the world, or to his own interest, he must certainly be sent of God, and should not by any means be suspected of imposture; for so the word *αδυνα*, in opposition to *αδυσος*, true, most certainly signifies.

*Ver. 19. Did not Moses give you the law,]* There is a remarkable beauty in this sudden turn of the sentiment. Some of the Jews called Jesus a false prophet, because he had healed the paralytic at Bethesda on the sabbath-day, see ver. 21. pretending that it was a gross violation of the law of Moses, which no good man, much less a prophet, would be guilty of. In answer to these evil surmises, he told them plainly, that, however much they pretended to reverence the authority of Moses in the law, they made no scruple to violate the most sacred of his precepts. They had formed a resolution of murdering him, directly contrary to every law of God and man; and for the same end were laying secret plots against his life. This reproof came in with singular propriety and force immediately after Jesus had proved his divine commission by the most convincing arguments.

*Ver. 20. The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil:]* “The common people, especially those who came from the country to the feast, knowing nothing of the plot against him, and being under the influence of their rulers, cried out in a great rage, You talk like a madman.”

have done one work, and ye all marvel.  
 22<sup>a</sup> Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath-day circumsise a man.  
 23 If a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, \* that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day?  
 24<sup>b</sup> Judge not according to the appearance,

but judge righteous judgment.  
 25 Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill?  
 26 But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?  
 27 Howbeit<sup>c</sup> we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.  
 28 Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye

<sup>a</sup> Lev. 11. 3. Gen. 17. 10—14. Gal. 3. 17. \* Or without breaking the law of Moses. <sup>b</sup> In soul and body. Ch. 5. 8, 9. <sup>c</sup> Deut. 1. 16, 17. 16. 19. Prov. 24. 23. Ch. 8. 15. James, 2. 1. Mat. 7. 2. Gal. 2. 6. <sup>d</sup> Pl. 40. 9, 10. & 22. 22. Prov. 28. 1. If. 50. 7, 8. Eph. 6. 20. <sup>e</sup> Ch. 6. 42. Mat. 13. 55. Mark, 6. 3. Luke, 4. 22. Ver. 25. <sup>f</sup> Jer. 23. 5. & 30. 21. Micah, 5. 2. Ver. 42. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 2. 1, 23. Luke, 1. 26. & 2. 4, 39, 51. & 4. 16, 22. & 19. 37.

man, or one possessed of a devil: who intends or attempts to murder you? We cannot think that any have formed such desperate designs against your life."  
 [Ver. 21, 22. *I have done one work, &c.*] It is plain, that the miracle of Bethesda, here referred to, was wrought a day and a half before this feast; but they made use of it as an occasion to destroy him, because he had done it on the sabbath-day. The words *δια τῆς ἡμέρας*, at the beginning of ver. 22, should be joined with the last words of ver. 21. *may trust the judgment of some of the most learned*—*I have done one work, and ye all marvel at it.* And it should be acknowledged, that we have precisely the same construction in Mark, vi. 6. All the versions, however, receive a common pointing; and if we do so, the translation of ver. 22, must run thus: *Because that Moses gave you a precept concerning circumcision, ye circumsise a man on the sabbath-day.* But the pointing just proposed is the sense more clear and elegant thus: *Moses gave you a law of circumcision, and on the sabbath ye circumsise not because it is a precept of Moses only, but of the Father, Jesus, being charged by the Jews as a transgressor of the law of Moses for having cured a man on the sabbath-day, thus expostulates with his accusers: "You are angry at me, and object that I should cure a man, and order him to carry his couch, on the sabbath-day; yet a little more might convince you, that your cavil is very unreasonable, even on your own principles; for to instance in circumcision, which Moses enjoined you to observe, to omit the performance of it on the sabbath-day, if this happen to fall on the sabbath, you do not break its holy rest, by performing the rite without the law on this day, because you will not break the law of Moses, which has marked out a certain day for the observance of charity; are you therefore angry at me for doing a work of equal charity on the sabbath-day, and that with far less bodily labour than you require in the ceremony of circumcision?"*  
*because I have made a man every whit whole]*  
*wrought the total cure of a man, both in mind and body, may be collected from ch. v. 14.*  
*judge not according to the appearance.]* There are many wrong judgments of the same matter; but

the right can be but one: therefore the latter clause should be rendered, *But make the right judgment.*—"Judge impartially,—divest yourselves of your prejudices, and do not conceive nor an ill opinion of me, on account of the meanness of my birth, appearance, &c."  
 Ver. 25—28. *Then said some of them, &c.*] The inhabitants of Jerusalem, always Christ's bitter enemies, asked with surprize, if our Lord's boldness, and the silence of the rulers, proceeded from their having acknowledged him as the Messiah; at the same time, in derision of his pretensions they added, *howbeit, we know this man whence he is*, that is, we know his parents and relations, (ch. vi. 42.) *but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is*; alluding to the popular sense of Isa. liii. 8. *who shall declare his generation?* The Greek phrase *ποθεν ἐστίν*, rendered *whence he is*, signifies in the Hellenistic Greek of the Old Testament, *who is his father.* Thus 2 Sam. i. 13. David says to the young man, *Whence art thou?* and he answered, *I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.* If we judge of this question by the answer, to ask *whence art thou?* is as much as to ask "of what father, stock, and family do you come?" "of whom were you born?" Take the speech of the Jews in this sense, and their confession is in point: *we know this man whence he is*, "who is his father?" as they said before, chap. vi. 42. *but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is*, that is, who is his father? How could they say then, that the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem, and that they knew he was to be a descendant of David? David was his remote ancestor; and they knew that by father or mother Christ must descend from him; but who was his immediate father, if he was born of a virgin, they must own they were ignorant; but whatever they pretended, Jesus would not allow that they knew his Father, or whence he came; thereby intimating that they wanted not this character of the Messiah in him, ver. 28. The words should have been rendered interrogatively thus, "Do you indeed know me, and whence I am?" No; ye do not,"—as Tertullian resolves the question, negatively: and then, concealing his true original, as his manner was, that they might not ground an accusation before the time on what he had said, he passes to his works which were the proofs of his divine mission; yet so as to leave room to infer





know whence I am : <sup>b</sup> and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

29 But I know him : for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

30 <sup>i</sup> Then they sought to take him : but no man laid hands on him, <sup>k</sup> because his hour was not yet come.

31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he

do more miracles than these which this man hath done ?

32 The Pharisees heard <sup>l</sup> that the people murmured such things concerning him ; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

33 ¶ Then said Jesus unto them, <sup>m</sup> Yet a little while am I with you, and *then* I go unto him that sent me.

34 <sup>n</sup> Ye shall seek me, and shall not find

<sup>b</sup> Ch. 8. 14. & 1. 18. & 3. 2. & 5. 32, 43. & 8. 16, 18, 26, 42, 54, 55. & 10. 15, 36. & 12. 49. & 14. 10, 31. & 16. 3, 28. Mat. 11. 27. <sup>i</sup> Mark. 11. 18. Luke, 19. 47. & 20. 19. Ver. 19. Ch. 10. 39. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 8. 20. & 9. 4, 5. Luke, 13. 32, 33. <sup>l</sup> Ver. 7—31. Ch. 11. 45—53, 57. & 12. 19. Ver. 19. <sup>m</sup> Ch. 13. 33. & 16. 16. Mark, 16. 19. Heb. 1. 3. <sup>n</sup> Ch. 13. 33. & 8. 21, 24. Mat. 23. 39. Luke, 13. 35. Prov. 1. 3. —28. Hosea, 5. 6.

infer from his discourse, that he was the Son of God, and not the son of Joseph : *and, or yet, I came not of myself ; but he is true who sent me, whom ye know not ;* that is, “ God “ the Father is my true Father, whom you know not, “ though you say ye know *whence I am,* and who is my “ Father ; and this you may be assured of, from my doing “ the works of God.” It might be with respect to his extraordinary birth of a virgin, that the Jews at first spoke of the Messiah as the *Son of God* : and their asserting, that when Christ COMETH, or is born, none knoweth whence he is, might be an allusion to Isai. liii. 8. above mentioned. But be this as it may, this doctrine is expressed in the traditionary writings of the Jews to this effect, in *Beresb. Rab.* on Gen. xxxvii. 2. “ The Messiah “ is the Seed that shall come *from another place* :” by which they mean, that he shall have another principle of generation, as appears by the different ways of their varying the phrase in other places. Thus from Rabbi Berachia, in the same book, we are told that “ the birth of the Messiah alone shall be *without defect* ;” which could not be, if he was born as other men are. Jarclii cites the following passages from the same place : “ His birth shall “ not be like that of other creatures. *None shall know the “ Father before he tells it. The Redeemer that shall come, “ shall be without father.*” And in *Beracloth*, is the following remarkable passage : “ The birth of the Messiah “ shall be like the dew from the Lord,—as drops upon “ the grass, expect not labour (or action) of men.” It would be endless to enumerate all that has been said by the rabbinical writers to this purpose : what has been produced is sufficient to prove, that it was a Jewish opinion that the birth of the Messiah should be extraordinary, if not miraculous ; and that his Father should not be known, whatever his mother might be.

Ver. 29. *But I know him, &c.*] “ Were you acquainted “ with what the prophets have said concerning the Messiah, as you pretend to be, you would know this to be “ one of his principal characters, that he fully comprehends the perfections and will of God the Father, and “ will explain them unto men more clearly than any messenger from God ever did before. Withal, by considering the nature of my doctrine, you would see this character remarkably fulfilled in me, and thereby be sent

“ sible that I am from God the Father, and that he hath “ sent me.”

Ver. 30—32. *Then they sought to take him, &c.*] The defence made by our Lord did not pacify his enemies ; for some of them would gladly have apprehended him : however, none of them had the courage to lay hold of him, being restrained by his Divine Providence, because the season of his sufferings was not yet come. In the mean time, the miracle which he had lately performed on the infirm man was so great, and so well known, and this defence by which he justified himself so clear, and so convincing, that *many of the people believed on him*, publicly affirming that he was the Messiah, ver. 31. This attachment of the common people to the Lord Jesus greatly incensed the chief priests and Pharisees, with their adherents ; and therefore on the last great day of the feast, being met in council, (as appears from comparing ver. 32. 45. 50. 53.) they sent their officers to apprehend him, and bring him before them, thinking to confute his pretensions, and punish him.

Ver. 33, 34. *Yet a little while am I with you, &c.*] While the rulers were taking counsel against him, Jesus was preaching to the people concerning the improvement which it became them to make of his ministry among them : “ *Yet a little while*, said our Lord, and my ministry among “ you is at an end ; you ought therefore, while it lasts, “ to make the best possible improvement of it ; particularly, “ you should listen to my sermons with great attention, “ that you may have your minds stored with the truths of “ God before I go away : for after I am gone, you shall “ earnestly desire my presence with you, but shall not obtain it : *You shall seek me, and shall not find me.*” This seeking for the Messiah was general through the nation during the calamities in Judea occasioned by Titus and his armies, and has continued among the Jews ever since, in all the countries where they have been dispersed—but to no purpose ; for their Messiah having already appeared, it is in vain to expect another. By thus predicting his own death, our Lord insinuated, that he both knew the present disposition of the council, and foresaw that they would soon put an end to his ministry by taking away his life. Indeed, some suppose that our Lord spoke these words to the officers themselves, who were sent to take him ; as much

me: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come.

35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

36 What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come?

37 In the last day, that great day of the

feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

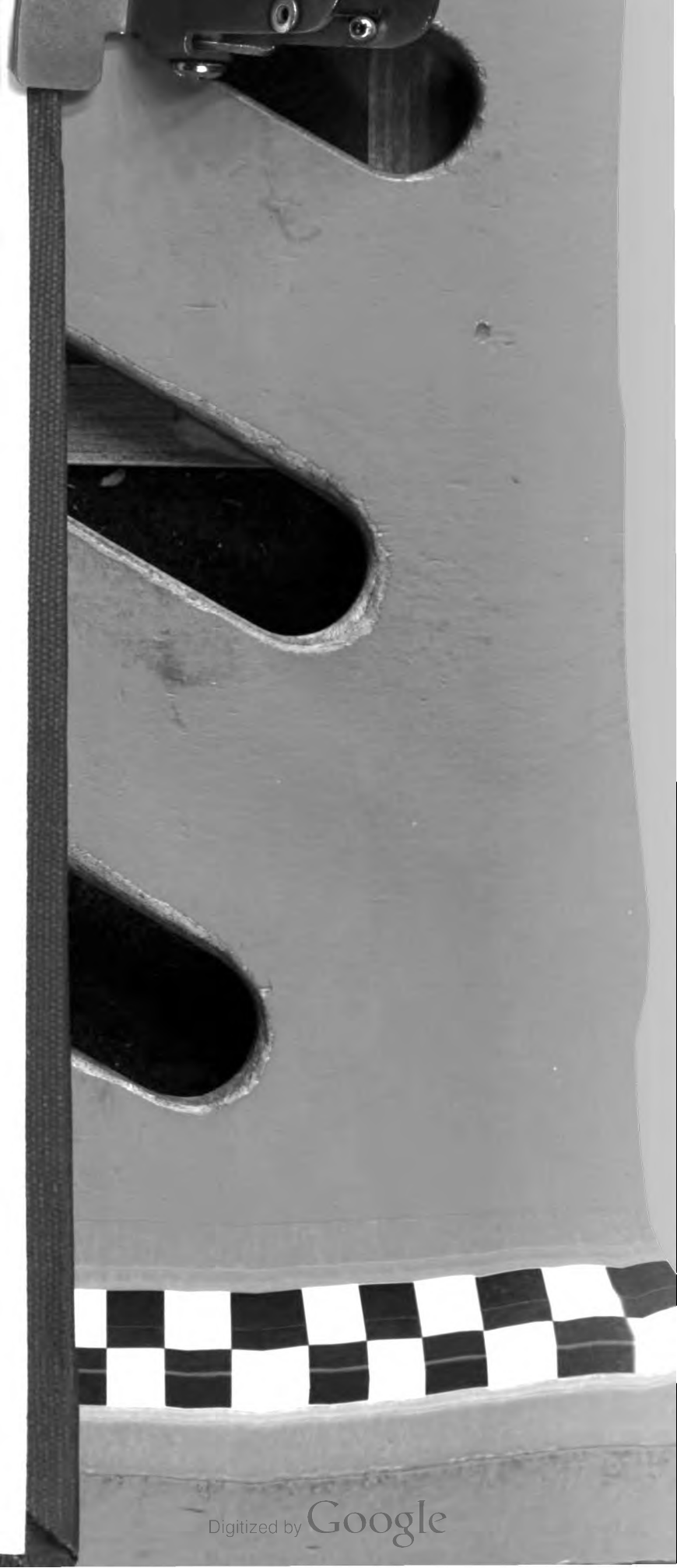
If. 11. 12. & 27. 12. 13. James, 1. 1. 1 Pet. 1. 1. Acts, 21. 21. \* Or Greeks. † If. 27. 17. & 29. 10 & 44. 18. & 6. 9, 10. Hosea, 6. 1 Cor. 2. 14. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. † Lev. 22. 36. Numb. 29. 35—38. † If. 55. 1. & 45. 22. Mat. 11. 28. Rev. 7. 20. & 22. 17. Ch. 1. † Deut. 18. 15. Prov. 18. 4. & 10. 11. If. 11. 3. & 35. 6. & 44. 3. & 58. 11. Joel, 2. 28. Zech. 14. 8. † If. 44. 3. Joel, 2. 28. 4. 14. Luke, 24. 49. Acts, 1. 4, 5, 8. & 10. 2. Eph. 1. 13. Prov. 1. 23. † Ch. 16. 7. Zech. 13. 1. Acts, 2. 3, 17, 33. & 4. 31. & 8. 17. 44. Eph. 4. 8—10. Ch. 12. 16. Pf. 68. 18.

as to say, "I know the design on which some of you are come; but my Father will not permit you immediately to execute it: for yet a little while longer I will be here, &c."—*Where I am, thither ye cannot come.* means, "You cannot come to heaven, where I am to be." The reason mentioned in the parallel passage, *John* viii. 21. shews this to be our Lord's meaning: *My way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sin: whither I go, ye cannot come, because ye shall die in your sins:*" or as it is expressed in this discourse, *Ye shall not find me, you cannot come to heaven.*

36. *Will he go unto the dispersed, &c.*] *Ελληνων*, Greeks, by whom we are to understand here idolaters, and not Hellenists, or Jews who used the Greek language; for these were the dispersed among them. There is therefore a sarcasm in these words beyond what is commonly observed. They insinuate, that Jesus would go into foreign countries, to address himself to those there, who might be supposed not so well acquainted with those who lived in Judea and at Jerusalem, and not be able to make any proselytes even among the Jews: would be constrained to apply himself to the ignorant Gentiles, to seek disciples among them; and therefore appeared to these haughty scorers on an infamous circumstance that could be imagined most incompatible with the character of the Messiah.

37. *In the last day, &c.*] It is commonly supposed that Jesus was thus discoursing in the temple on the great day of the feast, the water from the well of life brought into the women's court of the temple on solemnities, according to the directions of the Jews. *John* vi. 4. *John* viii. 12. *Zechariah*, if we may believe the part of this water they drank with loud acclamations, in commemoration of the mercy shewn to the Israelites, who were relieved by the miracle of a great well made to flow out of a rock, (see *Pf.* 105.) the nation was ready to die with thirst, and where was neither river nor spring: and they were tired out as a drink-offering, which they offered up in their prayers to Almighty God for a plentiful harvest the following seed-time; the people in the morning of the passage, *Isa.* xii. 3. *With joy*

*shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.* The exposition of the Talmud, which asserts that this ceremony had reference to the pouring out of the Holy Ghost, shews the peculiar propriety of our Lord's address, and his application of this circumstance; for the Lord Jesus, whose custom it was to raise moral instructions from sensible occurrences, took this opportunity of inviting, in the most solemn and affectionate manner, all who were in pursuit, whether of knowledge or happiness, to come unto him and drink, in allusion to the rite which they were then employed about. He probably stood upon an eminence, so as to be conspicuous, and spoke aloud, supplying the place of the trumpets used on these occasions; and by this address he taught them, that the effusion of the Holy Ghost, represented by their pouring out the water, was not to be expected from their rites and ceremonies, but from a belief in the doctrine which he preached: for that by coming to him and drinking, he meant believing on him, is manifest from the context, and from *John* vi. 35. Further to encourage them, our Lord promised them the gifts of his Spirit, which he represented under the image of a river flowing from their belly, to express the efficacy and perpetuity of these gifts, together with the divine pleasures which they produce, by quenching the desires of those who possess them, and fructifying others who come within their influence. See *John* iv. 14. *Isa.* lv. 1. The words of the 38th verse are not to be found literally in the scriptures of the Old Testament, but are to be understood, as Grotius observes, as a general reference to the several prophecies which refer to the effusion of the Spirit by the Messiah, under the similitude of pouring out water. See *Isa.* lii. 15. xlv. 3. lviii. 11. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 23—27. *Joel*, ii. 28. *Zech.* xiii. 1. xiv. 8. See also *Numb.* xxiv. 7. The flowing of rivers of living water out of the believer's belly is an idea taken from receptacles placed round springs, out of which great quantities of water flow by pipes; and perhaps there may be some allusion here to the prominence of that capacious golden vase, from which the water at this festival was poured out in a large stream. This figure therefore represented the plenitude of spiritual gifts to be possessed by believers, and the happy effects which they should produce in the world. By the faculty of speaking all the different languages of the earth fluently, which was the first gift of the Spirit, qualifying the apostles and others to preach



40 ¶ Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, \* Of a truth this is the prophet.

41 Others said, † This is the Christ. But some said, ‡ Shall Christ come out of Galilee?

42 § Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?

43 ¶ So there was a division among the people because of him.

44 And some of them would have taken him; but ¶ no man laid hands on him.

45 ¶ Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

46 The officers answered, † Never man spake like this man.

\* Deut. 18. 15—18. Mat. 21. 16. Luke, 7. 6. & 24. 19. Ch. 1. 21. & xix. & 6. 14. Ver. 31. Luke, 24. 19. † Ch. 1. 41, 45, 46, & 29. 42 & 6. 69. ‡ Ch. 1. 46. Ver. 32. § Vt. 132. 11. If. 11. 1. Jer. 23. 5. Ezek. 34. 23. Micah, 5. 2. Mat. 2. 1, 6. Luke, 2. 4 & Ch. 9. 16. & 10. 19. Ver. 12, 25, 31, 40, 41. Acts, 23. 7. ¶ Ver. 50, 46. Ch. 8. 20. † Mat. 7. 28, 29. Luke, 4. 22. Ver. 26.

such doctrines of the gospel as the Spirit revealed to them, they were both watered themselves, and in a condition to water the Gentiles, not with small streams, but with large rivers of divine knowledge; and so the land, which till then had been barren, was from that time forth to be exceeding fruitful in righteousness unto God. Accordingly the evangelist adds by way of explication, *But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.* These peculiar gifts of illumination and utterance were not yet communicated to believers, being what they received on the day of Pentecost, to fit them for converting the world. Nevertheless, if the universality of the invitation and promise inclines the reader to think, that, on this occasion, our Lord had the *ordinary influences* of the Spirit also in his eye, the evangelist's remark, that the *Holy Ghost was not yet given*, will not exclude them; because even these night, at that time, he said not to have been given, as they had been given but sparingly, in comparison of the plentiful distribution which was to be made of them to all believers after Christ's ascension. Accordingly, the ordinary influences of the Spirit are often in scripture represented as the consequences and reward of faith; Gal. iii. 14. Ephes. i. 12. And possibly in the words *shall flow rivers of living water*, our Lord might design a contrast to the stream which at this time was poured out of the golden vase. The quantity taken out of the waters of Siloam was such, as might be soon poured out and exhausted; but out of those believers on whom the Holy Ghost should come, *rivers* of living water should flow, whose effect and benefit should never cease as long as the world itself should endure. There had been some drops, as it were, of this Spirit, which had fallen upon some of the Jewish nation before; but those were no more to be compared with these rivers of water, than the waters of Siloam with the great river Euphrates. What was the spirit which Bezaleel had, when compared with that Spirit wherewith the apostles were inspired? What was that spirit of courage which was given to the judges, if compared with that which *convinceth the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*? What was that spirit of *Moses*, communicated to the seventy elders, compared with that of the Son of God, which he has shed abroad in the hearts of his people? What was that spirit of prophecy, which inspired a few prophets, when compared with that *pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh* upon and after the day of Pentecost? For

these rivers of water, though they began their course at Jerusalem upon that day, as the fruit of the glorious and triumphant ascension of Jesus into heaven, yet they soon overflowed the Christian church in other parts of the world: the sound of that *mighty rushing wind* was soon heard in the most distant places, and the fiery tongues inflamed the hearts of many who never saw them. See Lev. xxiii. 36. Num. xxix. 35. Acts, ii. 33.

Ver. 40—46. *Many of the people therefore,*] Our Lord appears to have been discoursing as above, when the officers sent by the council to apprehend him, ver. 32. came up: but as it was an uncommon topic, and he seemed to be speaking with great fervency, their curiosity made them willing to hear him a little before they laid hands on him, ver. 44, 45. The eloquence and power with which he spoke, struck them; every word that he had uttered being well chosen, aptly placed, and gracefully pronounced. There was not only a sweetness in his sermons which enchanted the ear, but a plainness, perspicuity, and weight, which made the beauties of truth shine before the understanding with that lustre which is peculiar to themselves. Even these his enemies, who were come with an intent to lay violent hands on him, were deeply smitten: the greatness of his subject made visible, as it were, by the divine speaker, filled their understandings: the warmth and tenderness with which he delivered himself, penetrated their hearts: they felt new and uncommon emotions. In a word, being overwhelmed with the greatness of their admiration, they silently stood astonished, condemning themselves for having come on the errand, and after a while returned without accomplishing it. Plutarch mentions it as a memorable proof of the extraordinary eloquence of Mark Anthony, when Marius sent soldiers to kill him, that when he began *παραιτεῖσθαι τὸν θάνατον*, to plead for his life, he dissipated their resolution, and melted them into tears. But these officers are thus vanquished merely by hearing Christ's gracious discourses to the people; which is a circumstance infinitely more remarkable. They return in a kind of amaze, and, instead of seizing him as their prisoner, or making a laboured apology for their failure, only break out into a pathetic exclamation, that *no man in the world ever spake like him*. This is a reflection which I hope we often make, as we read his discourses. The officers were not the only persons on whom this sermon made a deep impression: our Lord's hearers in general were greatly affected with it; for many of them gave it as their opinion

47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?  
 48 Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?  
 49 But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.  
 50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

51 Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?  
 52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.  
 53 And every man went unto his own house.

Ver. 26. Ch. 12. 42. & 9. 22. 1 Cor. 1. 20—24, 26, 27. & 2. 8. Acts, 6. 7. Mat. 11. 25. Ch. 3. 2. & 19. 39. Exod. 23. 2—8.  
 17. 8. & 1. 17. & 19. 15. 2 Chron. 19. 6, 7. 1 Kings, 3. 16—23. If 9. 1, 2. Mat. 4. 15. Ch. 1. 46. Ver. 41. 2 Kings, 14. 25.  
 Kings, 17. 1. Job, 5. 12, 13. Pf. 33. 10. & 76. 5. & 35. 4. & 40. 14. & 59. 11, 12. & 56. 9.

he was certainly one of the ancient prophets risen from the dead, to usher in the Messiah, ver. 40. Others held, that they believed he was the Messiah himself. Nevertheless, some of them, led away with a common mistake that he was born in Nazareth, asked Nicodemus if the Messiah was to come out of Galilee? There was a division among them, *σχίσμα*, a dissent and disagreement among them.

47—49. Are ye also deceived? &c.] “Ye who have the advantage of knowing our sentiments, and are actuated with the idea which we entertain concerning the person; surely you cannot be so weak as to be thus mistaken. Pray consider the conduct of those who are capable of judging on this point. Have any of the rulers or any of the Pharisees of a more private station, looked on him as the Messiah? Yet you know, these were the most eminent for their acquaintance with religion, and the most authentic interpreters of the sacred writings, in which it is contained. But this wretched herd of Pharisees, ver. 49.—ὁ ὄχλος οὗτος,—this rabble,—(so they used to call Christ’s friends) who know nothing of the meaning of the law, are cursed with a judicial curse, and given up to the most absurd and fatal errors.”

This was downright railing. The force of the curse, will appear more evident, when we reflect, that the rabbies and rulers among the Jews piqued themselves highly upon the knowledge of the law, and very much despised the inferior people. The Jews were divided, first, into scribes, or teachers of the law; secondly, into disciples or students, who were scholars of the rabbies, but neither rabbies nor teachers; and thirdly, those whom they were pleased to call the *orthodox*; here meant by the word ὄχλος, the multitude of the earth, despised by these proud Pharisees on account of their being illiterate. The reader may see the force of their contempt of the common people in *Hor. Heb.* on the place, and *Vitringa, Obi.* iii. c. 2.

Nicodemus saith unto them,] From the preceding conversation, it appears to have been a meeting of Nicodemus, whereof he was a member; for had it been a public assembly, the great men to take away Christ’s life, would never have been one of his disciples, would never have been one of his disciples, would never have been one of his disciples.

It seems the council was met to try the charge of his being a false prophet; (compare *John 7. 52.*) And as the priests had upbraided their ignorance of the law, Nicodemus’s reproof,

ver. 51. was smooth and sharp, “Doth our law, with which you boast so much acquaintance, judge and condemn any man before the magistrate appointed to execute it, without summoning him into his presence, that he may hear from him what he has to say in his own defence, and know from credible witnesses what he hath done to deserve punishment?” See Deut. xvii. 8. 11. and xix. 15, &c. This reproof was the more poignant, as it was well founded; and in effect it amounts to a charge, that, while they professed such a knowledge of the law, and zeal for it, they either knew not, or regarded not, some of its plainest precepts, and were even unmindful of those, which, as they were a court of judicature, were their peculiar concern.

Ver. 52. They answered—art thou also of Galilee?] Finding Nicodemus thus condemning their conduct, and speaking favourably of Jesus, they asked him with an air of disdain and surprize, mixed with fierceness, Art thou also of Galilee? “Art thou one of the ignorant low faction, which has leagued to support a Galilean Messiah, in opposition to the law, which has determined the Messiah’s nativity to Bethlehem? Search and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.” They meant no Messiah, the prophet foretold by Moses in their law; for they could not but know that Jonah was of Gath-hepher in Galilee, 2 Kings, xiv. 25. that Nahum also was probably a Galilean; and that Tishbe, the town of Elijah the Tishbite, was likewise in Galilee; unless they were as ignorant of the scriptures as they said the common people were, ver. 48. Be this as it may, such blind judges were these masters of law and learning, that an argument which had no force against Jesus, who was actually born at Bethlehem, weighed a great deal more with them, than all the solid proofs by which he so fully established his divine mission.

Ver. 53. And every man went unto his own house.] So that this short plain question of Nicodemus’s spoiled all their measures, and broke up the council. A word spoken in season how good is it, especially when God gives it his blessing! Our Lord, having perfect knowledge of the designs of the council, left the city, and went to lodge in the mount of Olives, that he might be out of their reach. The first verse of the next chapter is generally, by the best expositors, joined to this; and the particle *de*, in that verse, but Jesus went, seems strongly to point out the propriety hereof. See Luke, xxi. 37.

Inferences.—We see how little the greatest external advantages can do without the divine blessing, when some of the

## C H A P. VIII.

*Christ delivereth the woman taken in adultery: he preacheth himself the light of the world, and justifieth his doctrine; answereth the Jews, who boasted of Abraham, and conveyeth himself from their cruelty.*

[Anno Domini 32.]

**J**ESUS <sup>a</sup> went unto the mount of Olives.  
2 And <sup>b</sup> early in the morning he came

<sup>a</sup> Luk<sup>s</sup>. 21. 37. & 19. 37. Mark, 13. 9. & 11. 1. Ch. 11. 2, 18. Pf. 22. 22. & 40. 9, 10. Deut. 18. 15—18. 1f. 40. 11. Mic. 4. 4.

again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

<sup>b</sup> Eccl. 9. 10. Pf. 40. 8. Ch. 4. 34. Prov. 8. 17. <sup>c</sup> Luke, 21. 38.

the nearest relations of Christ himself, by whom he had been most intimately known, were not prevailed upon to believe in him. Who then can wonder if some remain incorrigible in the most regular and pious families? How much more valuable is the union to him, which is founded on a cordial and obedient faith, than that which arose from the bonds of nature; and how cautiously should we watch against those carnal prejudices, by which even the brethren of Christ were alienated from him!

Our Lord, we see, used a prudent care to avoid persecution and danger, till his time was fully come; and it is our duty to endeavour, by all wise and upright precautions, to secure and preserve ourselves, that we may have opportunities for further service, except where the good of the church loudly and clearly calls us to make a sacrifice of ourselves. In the course of such service we must expect, especially if we appear under a public character, to meet with a variety of censures. But let us remember, that Jesus himself went through *evil report and good report*; by some applauded as a *good man*, by others condemned as *deceiving the people*. Learn we of our great Master, patiently to endure such injurious treatment; always endeavouring so to behave ourselves, that we may have a testimony in the consciences of men, and in the presence of God, that, after the example of our divine Forerunner, *in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world*. Then will our names be had in remembrance, and the honour and reward of our faithful obedience continue, when the remembrance of those who reviled us is perished with them.

We may learn again, from our meek and humble Master, to refer the honour of all that we know and do, to the divine instructions communicated to us, and the divine grace working in and by us; that, seeking the glory of God, we may have the surest evidence that we are truly his. Integrity and uprightness will be a certain security to us against dangerous mistakes in matters of religion. If the light that we already have be faithfully improved, we may humbly hope that more will be bestowed; nor shall we then fail of convincing evidence, that the doctrine of the gospel is of God. For the experience of its power on our hearts, will check our passions, and destroy the prejudices which would prevent the truth from taking place in our minds.

Our Lord was reviled as a demoniac and a lunatic. But, instead of rendering railing for railing, he replied in the words of gentleness and sobriety. Thus should we endea-

your to conquer the rudeness of those attacks which we may meet with in his cause; that we may, if possible, remove the prejudices so fatal to those who entertain them, and form men to that equitable and impartial judgment, which would soon turn all their cavils against Christ into admiration, praise, and obedience.

How confident is error in its own decisions, and how vain in its self-applauses! These unhappy people of the Jews imagined themselves, no doubt, exceedingly wise in rejecting Christ, while they blindly took it for granted, that he was the son of Joseph; and had not patience to wait for the authentic history of his miraculous conception. Surely men had need to look well to the force of those arguments, on which they venture their souls by rejecting the gospel.

Our Lord answered their secret reasoning in a manner which might justly have alarmed them; charging them with ignorance of that God, whom they pretended to know, and whom with a presumptuous confidence they claimed as theirs: and would to God it may not be found at last, that many who have appeared most confident of their interest in the Lord, neither know him, nor are known by him! The blessed Jesus, who is the *brightness of his glory*, and *the express image of his person*, has the completest knowledge of the Father. May we be so wise, and so happy, as to seek instructions from him; that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened, and the temper of our hearts proportionably regulated by all the discoveries of the Divine Being which he makes.

How obstinately and desperately hardened were the hearts of those, who, notwithstanding all the proofs which Jesus gave of his divine mission, were yet so far from hearkening to him, as to seek opportunities to destroy him! So dangerous and fatal is the prevalence of error, in such as like not to *retain God in their knowledge*! How constantly ought we to pray, that God would preserve us from a spirit of delusion, and fill us with such wisdom, that we may know the things belonging to our peace; and, being ready to receive the truth in the love of it, may acknowledge and attend to Christ as sent of God, and as the eternal Son of his love.

With what delight and thankfulness should we listen to the gracious proclamations of Christ, which he made in the temple, ver. 37. and some time after repeated from the throne of his glory, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink:—yea, whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*, Rev. xxii. 17. Blessed Jesus, had we been allowed to have prescribed to thee a form of words, in which thy kind purposes towards us should have been expressed,

5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on

Lev. 24. 10. Deut. 21. 21. Ezek. 16. 38, 40. Mat. 16. 1. & 19. 3. & 22. 13, 18. Luke, 11. 53, 54. Pl. 95. 9. Amos, 5. 13. Job, 5. 12, 13. Eph. 5. 15.

ed, what could we have invented more pathetic, more ascending, or more reviving?—May we thirst for the gifts of thy grace, and, in the confidence of faith, apply unto thee for them; and particularly for those communications of thy Spirit, which are so highly excellent and desirable, and indeed so necessary for us: supply us with them; we entreat thee, supply us in so rich an abundance that we, in our different spheres, may supply others; and from us there may flow rivers of living water! I might such gracious words as those of our Lord, the rage of enemies and persecutors. Let us add testimony to theirs, and say, *Never man spake as Jesus*. Let us hear him with calm and thankful attention, and his voice still sounds in his word. Happy they who have the joyful sound! The Pharisees, like deaf adders, shut their ears to the voice of the charmer, and while they flattered the populace as a brutal herd, and gloried in their superior wisdom, they rejected the counsel of God, and indulging without serious inquiry, and weakly borne out by vulgar, senseless prejudices against names and persons, which is all that the senate of Israel opposes to the arguments of Nicodemus. That good man, already highly improved by his interview with Jesus, was unconvinced in his adherence to him by observing the fruits of their opposition: and where magistrates and authority to overbear argument, they will produce a judgment of impartial men, produce a sufficient proof, that they know their cause to be incapable of defence.

IONS.—1st, As the inveterate malignity of the Pharisees and Pharisees led them to determine the death of Jesus by popular fury or by form of law; to avoid which he continued in Galilee. They who have despised the light of truth, have it justly withheld from them; and where our enemies rage, and our danger, it is prudent to depart, and carry that to others, which sinners against their own conscience persecute, unless the existing church of God be injured thereby. We have, in the conversation which passed in Galilee between Jesus and Nicodemus, a view of his relations. The feast of tabernacles was celebrated when a great concourse of people would assemble at Jerusalem: he came to make his public appearance at the feast, in that obscure part of the country, called Bethaniam, near the metropolis, and shew himself and his works. *Really they would bear the test of examination could not fail of getting him disciples*. He made a great number of disciples at Jerusalem, and of confirming them. *And they suggest that this would be the best way to advance his own reputation and to glorify himself*. They sinfully imagined he, like the men of

the world, designed. For neither did his brethren believe in him. As he did not answer their expectations in erecting a temporal kingdom, they began to suspect that he was not the Messiah, which they at first hoped; and therefore wanted him to declare himself, and produce his credentials, or go up to Jerusalem, where his pretensions, if false, might be detected. Note; (1.) Many appear at public ordinances to shew themselves; not to ascribe glory to God, but to secure reputation to themselves. (2.) They who want a temporal kingdom, evidently prove that they are faithless followers of Christ.

[2.] Christ mildly replies to their perverse suggestions, *My time is not yet come* for going up to the feast; but *your time is always ready*, you may appear there at any time without any danger; they seek not your lives, as they do mine. *The world cannot hate you*, because your spirit, temper, and conduct, are but too conformable thereto; but *me it hateth*, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil, which cannot but exasperate those who determine not to part with their beloved sins. *Go ye therefore up unto this feast without delay: I go not up yet unto this feast, for my time is not yet full come.* Note; (1.) Sinners hate the light of truth, and cannot but be exasperated with those reproofs, to which they obstinately refuse to submit. (2.) Whatever pretences men make for their enmity against the gospel and the preachers of it, the true cause is this, they cannot endure the testimony borne against their evil deeds. (3.) They who go to ordinances with a hypocritical spirit, may never expect the comfort of Christ's presence in them.

2. The journey of Jesus to Jerusalem. He stayed a while longer in Galilee, till his brethren were gone up to the feast; and then, when his time was come, he went himself, *not openly, but as it were in secret*, that he might give no offence to the ruling powers, who, if he came with a multitude, might interpret it into a seditious design. Note; Though the cause of Christ cannot be carried on without notice, we need not provoke needless opposition: it will come fast enough upon us, if we are faithful.

3. The expectation which was raised of him. The Jews sought him at the feast, and said, *Where is he?* Some wished to see him out of curiosity; some out of malice, hoping to destroy him; and some out of better motives, expecting to receive some gracious instructions from him. *And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him*, their sentiments being greatly divided: some said he is a good man, convinced by his miracles, struck with his exemplary life, and influenced by his holy doctrine; others, hardened in infidelity, though they had not one single charge of evil to produce against him, said, *Nay, but he deceiveth the people*, as if there was some latent imposture under these specious appearances. *Howbeit, no man spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.* Whatever good opinion

the ground, *as though he heard them not.*

7 So when they continued asking him, he

lifted up himself, and said unto them, <sup>6</sup> He that is without sin among you, let him first

<sup>6</sup> Deut. 17. 7. Rom. 2. 1, 3, 22, 23.

nion any formed of him, they were very cautious how they spoke their sentiments, it being highly dangerous to appear among his approvers, when those who were in power were known to be the avowed enemies and bitter persecutors of him and his disciples. *Note*; (1.) Christ's ministers, like himself, must expect to pass *through evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true.* (2.) They who are obstinate in rejecting the truth, will find something to quarrel with in the most spotless characters, and suppose that those who act with the greatest simplicity for God's glory, are carrying on some design of their own.

2dly, When Christ was come up to Jerusalem, *about the midst of the feast*, we find him, where indeed we might expect to meet him, in the temple, teaching the people. He would shew, that he was neither ashamed of the doctrine he preached, nor afraid of the enemies who threatened him. We are told,

1. The admiration which the hearers expressed at his preaching, saying, *How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?* Though he had been brought up in none of their schools, he appeared so wise in the scriptures, opened them with such evidence, and reasoned upon them with such force of argument, as could not but astonish them; and probably led some to conclude, that such extraordinary gifts were not attained without diabolical assistance.

2. The reply of Jesus, *My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.* As Mediator, he received his mission, and ability to discharge his office, from his Father, and needed no human assistance, nor advanced ought of his own invention. What he taught was divine in its original, and designed ultimately to advance the glory of God, from whom it came. *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself*: he that, laying aside his prejudices, as a humble inquirer, comes, desiring to be taught, shall find such evidence in the gospel, as to demonstrate the divine authority of its author; and shall experience such powerful and blessed effects produced thereby, as shall most indubitably prove it to be the word (not of man, but) of God. *He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory*: an impostor would seek to advance his own reputation and interests, as the false teachers did: *but he that seeketh his glory that sent him*, as Christ did, and all his faithful ministers do, *the same is true*, he evidences hereby the simplicity of his heart; and no unrighteousness is in him, no fraud or falsehood in his preaching or designs. They pretended indeed great zeal for the law of Moses, and founded their suggestions of his being an impostor, on the supposition that he violated the sabbath, and taught men to disregard the Mosaic institutions; when in fact, they themselves were living in the grossest violation of the plainest precepts of it: *Did not Moses give you the law? and yet none of you keepeth the law.* *Why go ye about to kill me?* purposing to murder him, because of the miracle that he had wrought on the impotent man on the sabbath-day. *Note*; (1.) They who speak of themselves, without a divine call, and for

themselves, with a view to their own honour and advantage, evidently shew the falsehood of their religious pretensions: these God hath never sent. (2.) Many pretend a great zeal for the interests of morality, and a jealousy lest the grace of the gospel should entrench upon them, who live themselves in the open violation of the divine law.

3. The common people, who were really ignorant of the designs of the enemies of Jesus, or at least affected to be so, express their surprize at the accusation which he brought against them. *They answered and said, Thou hast a devil; thou talkest as one possessed: Who goeth about to kill thee?* They would insinuate that his fears were groundless, the charge unjust, and himself a liar. Let us not wonder, if we suffer the most vile aspersions, are counted madmen, liars, devils. The Son of God was thus reproached before us.

4. Overlooking their perverseness and abuse, our Lord proceeds to vindicate that action which they had so much condemned, and for which they went about to kill him. *I have done one work*, in healing the impotent man; and ye all marvel, because it was done on the sabbath-day; as if this was inconsistent with the character which he professed as a teacher sent from God. And yet they themselves commonly practised what might much more justly be regarded as a breach of the sabbath, than his healing a cripple by the speaking of a word. *Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision*, as an ordinance to be observed among them, (not because it is of Moses, instituted by him; but of the fathers, being commanded of God to Abraham long before the days of Moses) *and ye on the sabbath-day circumcise a man. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; which enjoins it to be performed on the eighth day, whenever that happened; are ye angry with me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day?* where they allowed themselves to circumcise and dress a wound on that day, how could they, with any shew of reason, censure him, who, without the least trouble, merely by a word, had cured an object so miserable? Partial judges were they indeed, and justly therefore does he rebuke them, *Judge not according to the appearance*, with respect of persons, condemning that in him which they allowed in their own countrymen; or, because of the meanness of his outward circumstances, paying a higher respect to the decisions of their own more specious and pompous rabbies than to his: *but judge righteous judgment*, weighing the real merits of the case without prejudice, and then they would be convinced that their own practice would be a full vindication of his conduct. *Note*; (1.) Unreasonable and wicked men they are indeed, who censure and condemn others for what they allow, and approve, in themselves. (2.) Such is the force of prejudice, that it often blinds the eyes against the most glaring conviction. (3.) We must look farther than appearance, if we would learn the true character of men. (4.) Christ's words and works demand nothing but an impartial examination to prove their excellence.

cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9<sup>b</sup> And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last:

<sup>a</sup> Job, 5. 13. Pf. 9. 16. Rom. 2. 15.

5. Some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to whom the signs of the chief priests and rulers were no secret, were exceedingly astonished at the boldness of Christ's discourse, and wondered that they did not immediately attempt to seize him; suggesting as if their withholding their hands from him gave suspicion that they had changed their sentiments concerning him, and began themselves to think of the Messiah. As for themselves, they could entertain no such imagination, because they knew whence he was: when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is; the figures having spoken of him as like Melchizedek, whose descent is unknown; as one whose goings forth have been from everlasting, and whose generation none can declare. Their reasoning however was fallacious: though these scriptures were true with regard to his nature, and his designation to his mediatorial office, they were expressly determined of whom he should spring, and where he should be born, in respect to his human nature.

Note; (1.) God hath restraints upon the hands of wicked men, and marvellously withholdeth from them the evil which they design and have an opportunity to perform. (2.) They who mistake the scriptures in their own imagination with the conceit of their authority.

8. His replies to these cavils. It was true, they knew his descent; their grand mistake lay in not looking for his original from above, and his mission from heaven, but to come of myself, assuming this honour; but the promise is true, and all his promises made of and to whom ye know not; for, though they speculated in one eternal Jehovah, they did not experientially know him; but I know him, his nature and purposes; for I am from him, by essential union, and he hath sent me, in the character of Messiah, to accomplish the salvation of his faithful saints.

9. Different were the effects produced upon his hearers: some were highly incensed by his declarations, and they instantly seized him; but they were under the sacred time to finish the atonement of the world. Others, especially of the common sort, who were moved with what they heard and saw, could not express their persuasion that this must be the Messiah; it could not be conceived, whenever he would do greater miracles than Jesus had done. (1.) Though the enmity of wicked men against us, it is a comfortable consideration, that we can do nothing without a divine permission; and that the power or policy of the world, or of the ministers of Christ, who bear testimony against him, unless he be pleased to suffer it for a season, will be of no avail. They who receive the gospel of Jesus, are in the eyes of the world despised, as being of the poor and despised sort. What therefore the world accounts

their reproach, that they are chiefly followed by such, the ministers of the gospel should esteem their honour.

8. The Pharisees and rulers, jealous lest his credit and influence with the people should increase, could not hear these murmurs without indignation, and therefore immediately dispatched officers to arrest him, and to bring him before the sanhedrim. Note; Wicked instruments will not be wanting, where power is in the hands of persecutors.

9. Christ, who knew what was plotting against him, addressed the officers and people, saying, Yet a little while am I with you, and till that time was expired, all their malicious attempts were impotent: and then I go unto him that sent me, to my Father, from whom I came. Ye shall seek me; when your calamity comes, you will wish for the Messiah; and shall not find me, nor obtain the least relief or respite, looking for help from heaven in vain: and where I am, thither ye cannot come, banished for ever from that glory where I am. Though Christ's human nature was on earth, he was still in his divine nature enthroned in light. Note; (1.) It is too late to cry for mercy, when it is the time of judgment. They who reject the Saviour upon earth, and die faithless and impenitent, must never hope to be with him where he is, in heaven. (2.) A little while will deliver the faithful out of all their troubles. Let us therefore patiently endure. The time is short.

Lastly, mistaking his meaning, they bewildered themselves in idle and vain reasonings whether he would go, that they should not find him; whether among the dispersed Jews, or among the Gentiles; as if he could find no disciples among those, who were judges of his pretensions; or as defying him to go where they could not follow him.

3dly, The officers returned without executing their commission, and Jesus went on in the public exercise of his ministry. We have,

1. His discourse on the last day of the feast, when a vast concourse attended at the temple, and they used with great solemnity to draw water from the pool of Siloam, and pour it out with great rejoicings: on which he took occasion to speak of himself as the living water. He cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. Earnest to invite poor sinners to partake of his rich grace, he lifted up his voice aloud, and urged them to come to him and be happy. The invitation is general, to any man that thirsts: and none can truly come to Christ but those who feel their want of him, and therefore hunger and thirst after him and the holiness which he has to bestow: to such Christ is a fountain of living waters, refreshing and satisfying the longing desires of their souls. He that believeth on me, as the only Saviour, and reposes his entire confidence on my all-sufficiency to supply his every want, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; such an abundance of spiritual gifts, graces, and



and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her,

and consolations, shall be bestowed upon him, that, like a perpetual and copious fountain, they shall flow forth in streams of righteousness, and diffuse blessings on every side, Isaiah, xli. 18. xliii. 20. xlv. 3. Joel, ii. 28.

2. The evangelist explains the meaning of Christ's words. *This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive*, in a more abundant and glorious manner than had been ever vouchsafed before: *for the Holy Ghost was not yet given*, in that most plentiful effusion of his divine influences which was promised, Joel, ii. 28. *because that Jesus was not yet glorified*: and it was needful that he should first pass through his state of humiliation, and enter into his glory; when on the day of Pentecost the most astonishing out-pourings of the Spirit should attest the Saviour's exaltation; and not only the miraculous powers communicated by him should evidence the divine authority under which the apostles acted; but the strongest demonstrations of his power should accompany their preaching; and under the gospel dispensation the souls of those who were converted, should be filled with the largest measures of light, holiness, and joy.

3. The people were divided greatly in their sentiments concerning Christ. Many, struck with his divine teaching, could not help expressing their persuasion of his mission from God, as one of the prophets risen from the dead, as a forerunner of the Messiah. Others went farther; thinking him not the harbinger, but the king Messiah himself. But others, prejudiced by their national pride and false notions of the Messiah, objected that he came out of Galilee, whereas Christ was to descend from the lineage of David, and to come from Bethlehem, the residence of David's ancestors; as he did, though they knew it not. Thus, while the sentiments of the people were divided, the officers and his enemies, though they would fain have arrested him, were restrained by a divine power, and offered him no violence. *Note*; (1.) The gospel of Christ often creates great divisions; for, though it breathes nothing but peace, they who refuse to receive the truth, cannot but oppose it. (2.) Many flatter themselves that they have right on their side for want of examining into facts and evidences, when their conclusions would often be found utterly unsupported.

4thly, While the chief priests and Pharisees, as in duty bound, should have been in the temple, leading the devotions of the people, we find them maliciously consulting how to destroy the Lord of that sacred place, for which they professed so high a veneration.

1. The officers returned without the prisoner, and are sharply questioned, why they have not executed their orders. They honestly acknowledged that they could not; they were so overawed with the majesty of Jesus, and with the power and evidence of his discourse, that their hearts failed them. *Never man spake like this man.* *Note*; There is a power accompanying the preaching of the gospel, which has often disarmed the rage of the bitterest enemies, and made those bow down before the word of truth, who came to disturb the preacher.

2. The Pharisees with indignation upbraided them with

their weakness. *Are ye also deceived? Can men of your sense and rank be imposed on by such a delusion? Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him? men of the greatest abilities, fashion, and reputation; the wisest and most devout? but this people, who knoweth not the law, the vulgar herd, are cursed, abandoned of God to every impostor, and through their ignorance of the law unable to judge of his pretensions.* *Note*; (1.) Few of the rulers and Pharisees, the great men, and few of the self-righteous devotees who value themselves on their own goodness, ever embrace the gospel in its power. (2.) Many are prejudiced against the gospel, because they see the profession of it is unfashionable, and not the way of this world's preferment. (3.) It is common with this world's wise men to treat the poor disciples of Jesus as an ignorant, contemptible, deluded set of creatures; yet to the babe hath God revealed, what they, who boast of their superior wisdom, never knew. (4.) The causeless curse will not fall, but upon the head of him that utters it.

3. Nicodemus, who had visited Jesus by night, Ch. iii. 2. and was secretly a disciple, could not hear those infamous and unjust reflections, unmoved; and therefore, assuming courage, he remonstrated against their unreasonable and illegal manner of proceeding. They condemned unheard, contrary to all rules of justice and equity; whereas, at least, they should have given Christ an impartial hearing, and examined thoroughly into facts, before they decided on the merit of the case. Nothing could be more sensible and just than the maxim, but it does not appear that any seconded or supported the motion. *Note*; (1.) Christ has some who dare own his cause, even among the great and noble. (2.) It is highly wicked and unjust to condemn any man till he has had a fair hearing, and liberty to speak in his own defence.

4. Instead of refuting the force of his argument, they fell to reviling; *Art thou also of Galilee? A disciple of this despicable Galilean? Search, and look; far out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.* They concluded that Jesus had been born in Galilee, because he had made it his chief abode; and as false was their assertion concerning the scriptures; for Jonah was of Galilee, and probably Nahum and Elijah also. *Note*; (1.) It is a sure sign of a bad cause, when men have recourse to abuse in the stead of argument. (2.) Many confidently appeal to the scriptures, as if it was the same thing to assert and prove; but we must examine for ourselves, and not take the scripture upon trust.

5. Hereupon the council separated, and each retired to his own home, unable to answer Nicodemus, and ashamed to proceed farther, where the injustice was so glaring. *Note*; One faithful man, who dares make a stand for Christ, will often silence and confound a whole company of gainfayers.

#### CHAP. VIII.

*Ver. 5. Now Moses in the law commanded* The law Levit. xx. 10. Deut. xxii. 22. required in the general that adultery should be punished with death, but did not determine

Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee:

<sup>1</sup> Luke, 9. 56. Ch. 3. 17.

determine the kind of it: only because it is ordered, Deut. xxiii. 23, 24. that the betrothed damsel guilty of adultery should be stoned, it is supposed that in process of time this kind of death was appropriated to such offenders; and that the punishment of the married adulterers, Lev. x. 10. was interpreted to mean *strangling*: agreeably to these suppositions, it has been conjectured, that the woman before Jesus was only betrothed; but the distinction no foundation; for it is evident from Ezek. xvi. that proper punishment of all kinds of adultery was stoning, 58. *I will judge thee as women that break wedlock are judged*; and ver. 40. *They shall stone thee with stones*. Besides, we find Philo, and the ancient Christian fathers, the phrases, "those that were stoned," and "those that were punished for adultery," as synonymous

6. *This they said, tempting him, &c.*] The reason which they grounded their insidious intention was, and he declared against stoning the adulterers, they would have represented him to the people, as striking Moses, and favouring adultery; hoping by this to have lessened his authority with them. On the other hand, had he ordered her to be stoned, it would have been a plausible pretence for accusing him to the governor as a person who stirred up the people to rebellion; and who had now taken the determination of life into their own hands, having new-modelled the law according to their own jurisprudence; and, instead of exercising such severity of punishment upon women who were guilty of adultery. We may observe, that the Jewish sanhedrim sat by licence of the Roman governor; and though they had a right to pronounce sentence, it was necessary that the sentence which should be recognized and allowed by the Roman governor, before it could be carried into execution. Luke x. and Matth. xxvii. 2. For Christ, by undertaking the decision of this case, would have rendered himself immediately obnoxious to the Romans, and the sanhedrim; and, had he condemned her, the offence must have arisen to Pilate in consequence, if execution had been ordered without his consent; and to the Jews, if Christ had declined application to be made; so that the snare was laid for him the same with that afterwards laid for him by the Pharisees about the lawfulness of paying the tribute. Luke xii. 17, &c. Jesus fully knew their craft and regulated his conduct toward these Pharisees accordingly; for he made them no answer, as on other occasions, declined answer and office of a civil magistrate. Be- who demanded his opinion, were by no means those to whom the execution of the law was committed; but the Pharisees who at bottom were grossly hypocritical, and therefore they expressed the greatest contempt of the divine law. But whatever was said did not encourage this prosecution, but

sloped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground as though he heard, or regarded, them not. There was most probably a language in the action itself, either to intimate that these hypocritical Pharisees should be themselves, as the prophet expresses it, Jeremiah, xvii. 13. *written in the earth*, or that they were to attend to what is written. But we do not pretend to determine any thing on this point; saying only with a great critic on these words, *Nescire velle quam magister optimus nescire nos vult, erudite inscitia est*: "To be willing to continue ignorant of what our great Master has thought fit to conceal, is no inconsiderable part of Christian learning."

Ver. 7. *He that is without sin among you, &c.*] Alluding to the law, Deut. xvii. 7. which ordered that the hands of the witnesses, by whose testimony an idolater was convicted, should be first upon him, and afterwards the hands of all the people. We learn from the *Mishna*, that the first stone, which was usually large and fatal, was always thrown by the witness who had been instrumental to the conviction of a person. It is evident that the accusers shewed great partiality, from their apprehending the woman only, and not the man also, when the law condemned both; and they must have favoured his escape, as it is said they were both taken in the fact. It is plain, however, that our Lord's certain knowledge of what the effect would be, at once vindicated the wisdom of his putting the matter upon this issue, and freed him from the snare which was laid for him.

Ver. 9. *And they which heard it, &c.*] "And as all their consciences were struck with horror by a secret power which set these words home upon them, and they thereupon could not but accuse themselves of one heinous crime or another, they were ashamed to plead innocence, or to proceed in a demand of justice against her; and were afraid, lest, if Jesus spoke again, he would say to them some severer thing: and therefore, instead of applying to him, as they ought, for cleansing from their own sins, they silently slipped away from him one after another; the eldest, who might be conscious of most guilt, going out first, and the younger following them, till they were all gone, and there was no one left with him, except the woman, and the people who, with his disciples, were there before attending on his ministry."

Ver. 10, 11. *Hath no man condemned thee?*] Hath no man punished thee, in casting the first stone at thee? For the critics observe, that the words *κρίνω* and *κατακρίνω* are frequently used in the sense of *chastising* and *punishing*. "Neither do I condemn thee: I do not order that thou shouldst be now punished; go, and sin no more. Though I do not order thee to be punished at this time, thou must not think that I approve of thy conduct. Thou hast committed a great sin; and therefore I warn thee, that thou beware of committing it any more; for such enormous practices must subject thee to a severer judgment than any human laws can inflict." It does not

go, and sin no more.

12 ¶ Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, <sup>k</sup> I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou barest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

14 Jesus answered and said unto them, <sup>l</sup> Though I bear record of myself, yet my re-

cord is true: <sup>m</sup> for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

15 <sup>n</sup> Ye judge after the flesh; <sup>o</sup> I judge no man.

16 <sup>p</sup> And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

17 <sup>q</sup> It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

<sup>k</sup> Ch. 1. 4, 5, 9. & 9. 5. & 12. 35, 46. If. 49. 6. & 42. 6, 7. Luke, 2. 32. <sup>l</sup> Ch. 5. 31. & 14. 6. Rev. 1. 5. & 3. 14. <sup>m</sup> Ch. 7. 14, 19. & 1. 18. & 3. 2. & 5. 32, 43. & 8. 16, 18, 26, 42, 54, 55. & 20. 15, 36. & 12. 49. & 14. 10, 31. & 16. 3, 28. <sup>n</sup> 1 Sam. 16. 7. Ch. 7. 14. <sup>o</sup> Ch. 3. 17. & 12. 47. & 5. 45. Luke, 9. 56. & 12. 14. <sup>p</sup> Ch. 2. 24, 25. & 5. 22, 42, 32, 43. Ver. 29. Ch. 16. 32. <sup>q</sup> Deut. 17. 1. & 19. 15. Mat. 18. 16. 2 Cor. 13. 1. Heb. 10. 28.

appear to me that this woman was a penitent, or that Christ forgave her sin; but only that he dismissed her, as not thinking it proper to take upon himself the office of the civil magistrate in condemning her.

Ver. 12. *I am the light of the world:*] In the transaction above related, Jesus appears unspeakably great, having displayed on the occasion a degree of wisdom, knowledge, goodness, and power, evidently more than human—*wisdom*, in defending himself against the malicious attacks of his enemies; *knowledge*, in discovering the invisible state of their mind; *power*, in making use of their own secret thoughts and convictions to disappoint their crafty intentions; and *goodness*, in pitying and not punishing instantly one who had been guilty of an atrocious act of wickedness; wherefore it was with singular propriety that, after this remarkable decision, addressing himself to his disciples and the multitude, he called himself *the Light of the world*; in allusion either to Malachi, iv. 2. or the bright shining of the sun lately risen, and now darting his beams with great lustre and beauty upon them. “*I am the Light of the world*; I am the spiritual Sun, that dispels the darkness of ignorance and superstition, with which the minds of men are overcast: for by my doctrine and example I shew clearly every where the will of God, and the way of salvation. But observe, this sun arises in a few hours to descend again, and may fail many of you before your intended journey is dispatched: whereas he that perseveringly follows me, and governs himself by the dictates of my word and spirit, shall not be left to walk in the darkness of ignorance, error, and sin, but shall have the light of life continually shining upon him, to diffuse over his soul knowledge, holiness, and joy, till he is guided by it to eternal happiness.” The reader will just recollect, to enter the better into the propriety and spirit of our Lord’s words, that this was the morning after the conclusion of the feast of tabernacles. See ver. 2.; and this discourse probably might have been delivered before the morning sacrifice; after which, no doubt, many would be setting out for their habitations in the country. Compare Isaiah xlii. 6. xlix. 6. Mal. ix. 2. Luke, ii. 32., and the passages in the margin.

Ver. 14, 15. *Though I bear record of myself,*] “*Though I call myself the Light of the world, ye are not to ima-*

“*gine that I do it from a spirit of pride and falsehood. I give myself the title for no other reason but because it truly belongs to me: and that it does so, you yourselves would acknowledge, if you knew as well as I do by what authority I act, for what end I am come, and to whom I must return after I have executed my divine commission. But of these things you are entirely ignorant; nor can be otherwise, in regard that you judge after the flesh. You judge of me according to outward appearances, and condemn me for this, among other things, that I judge no men. You think that I cannot be the Messiah, because I do not destroy those who oppose me, as you imagine the Messiah will do; but in this you are altogether mistaken; for the design of the Messiah’s coming is not to destroy, but to save mankind.” See Ch. iii. 17. It is to be observed, that the same carnal prejudices still prevail in the minds of the Jews, and prevent their reception of Christ; they laying it down as a first principle, that he is to be a great temporal prince and deliverer; and the admission of false principles, which are constantly taken for granted, and never examined, will, it is to be feared, be attended with fatal consequences to myriads more.*

Ver. 16—18. *And yet if I judge,*] At the same time our Lord told them, that if he should condemn any person for unbelief, such condemnation would be just, because his divine mission was true; being confirmed, not by his own testimony only, but by the Father’s also; and because every sentence of that kind which he should pass, would be pronounced by the authority, and agreeably to the will of his Father. “*Yet if I judge, my judgment is true, that is, just and equitable; for I am not alone; nor do I expect that you should believe me solely on my own testimony, but me, and the Father that sent me concurring in the same testimony.*” This led him to speak of the testimony which the Father bare to his divine mission. *It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true; you could not justly complain, if I should punish you for your unbelief in such a case as this, since your own law directs you to believe every matter confirmed by the concurrent testimony of two witnesses, as my divine mission evidently is; for I am one that bear witness of myself, ver. 18. not by words only, but by all the*

18 'I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, 'Ye neither know me, nor my Father: 'if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

20 These words spake Jesus "in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and "no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

21 Then said Jesus again unto them, 'I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall

' die in your sins: 'whither I go, ye cannot come.

22 Then said the Jews, 'Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

23 And he said unto them, 'Ye are from beneath; 'I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye 'believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.

25 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, 'Even *the same*

Rev. 1. 5. & 3. 14. Ch. 5. 36, 37. Mat. 3. 17. & 17. 5. Heb. 2. 4. ' Hof. 4. 1, 6. If. 27. 11. Ch. 16. 3. & 5. 18. If. 29. 10. & 44. ' Ch. 1. 18. & 5. 17. & 10. 30. & 14. 6, 9, 10. & 17. 3. Heb. 1. 3. Col. 1. 15. 2 Cor. 4. 6. Zech. 13. 7. Phil. 2. 6. ' Mark. 1. 1 Chr. 9, 26. ' Ch. 7. 30. Luke, 29. 43, 47. & 20. 19. & 22. 53. ' Luke, 19. 12. Mat. 25. 24. Ch. 7. 34. ' Job, 20. ' Ezek. 3. 18, 19. Prov. 14. 32. Pl. 9. 17. ' See Ch. 7. 34. & 13. 33. Prov. 1. 24-28. Mat. 7. 23. & 25. 41. ' Pl. 22. 6. & 69. ' Ch. 3. 3, 6. Pl. 17. 14. 1 Cor. 2. 14. Rom. 8. 7, 8. Rev. 1. 7. James, 3. 15. & 4. 4. 1 John, 2. 15, 16. Phil. 3. 19. ' Heb. 13. 1. 14, 18. & 3. 16, 35. 1 Cor. 15. 47. Rom. 9. 5. Ch. 18. 36. ' Ch. 3. 18, 36. Acts, 4. 12. Heb. 2. 3. & 10. 29. ' Heb. 13. 5. 17-47. If. 9. 6, 7.

of my life, which are perfectly agreeable to the character of the Messiah; and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me; that is, by the voice of his prophets, and by a voice from heaven, as well as by other witnesses.

19. If ye had known me, &c.] "If you had any notions of me, you would know who it is that I call my Father; that is to say, if you knew me to be the Messiah, you would know that my Father is God."

20. These words spake Jesus in the treasury.] The treasury was that part of the women's court, where the offerings were placed for receiving the offerings of those who worshipped, (see Mark, xii. 41.) and consequently a place of great concourse, being resorted unto even by kings and rulers. Wherefore, the evangelist's recollection of the preceding conversation happened in the treasury gives us a great idea of our Lord's intrepidity: in the midst of his enemies, he spake fearlessly, caring them in the least. It seems, his divine power over-ruled the spirits of these wicked men, so that they attempted to seize him, because the offering of his life was not yet come.

21. Go my way, and ye shall seek me, &c.] Our Lord said this to them in a former discourse, Ch. vii. and repeated it now, that it might make the deeper impression on them: his meaning here seems to be, that when you ascend into heaven, when the Roman army is reading desolation and death in every corner, they would earnestly desire the coming of the Messiah, in expectation of deliverance; but when they see their sins, and under the guilt of them, they are excluded from the Saviour whatsoever, and be excluded forever. Perhaps in this our Lord opposed the Jews, who imagined that by death they would be sent for all their sins. Instead of in your sins, the original is εν τῇ ἀμαρτία, in your sin, see Ezek. iii. 19.

22. I will kill myself, &c.] Our Lord's answer

to this question is, *Ye are from beneath*: "Such a vile insinuation evidently shews what sort of persons you are, and whence you have derived your original: being from the earth, you are the slaves of earth and heirs of hell, obnoxious to all the evil passions wherewith human nature is infested; and from what you feel in yourselves, you fancy that I am capable of murdering myself; but your thought is foolish, as is evident from hence, that, being actuated by no evil passion, I cannot have the least temptation to commit so gross an act of wickedness. My extraction is heavenly, and my mind pure; and therefore I cannot be guilty of self-murder, or of any other sin."

Ver. 24. If ye believe not that I am he, &c.] That is, "The person whom I have represented myself to be." There is evidently in the original an ellipsis here to be supplied by comparing the passage with ver. 12. See Ch. xiii. 19. Mark, xiii. 6. Acts, xiii. 25. "If ye do not believe that I am the bread of life, the heavenly manna, the light of the world, the Messiah, you shall die in your sins." The repetition of the threatening here from ver. 21. is an awful rebuke to the folly of their answer, ver. 22. as if our Lord had said, "It very ill becomes you to trifle and amuse yourselves with such silly and spiteful turns, when your life, even the life of your souls, is at stake; and to talk of my killing myself, when by your unbelief and impenitence you are plunging yourselves into death eternal." Thus do those passages in our Lord's discourses, which to a careless reader might seem flat tautologies, appear, on an attentive review, to be animated with a most penetrating spirit, and full of a divine dignity; a remark which will frequently occur, especially in reading those important discourses of Christ, which St. John, through the infinite goodness of God to his church, has recorded after they had been omitted by the other evangelists.

Ver. 25, 26. Even the same that I said unto you, &c.] On the supposition that this is the proper translation of the passage,



that I said unto you from the beginning.

26 <sup>a</sup> I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and <sup>b</sup> I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

27 <sup>c</sup> They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

28 Then said Jesus unto them, <sup>d</sup> When ye have lifted up the Son of man, <sup>e</sup> then shall ye know that I am *be*, and *that* <sup>f</sup> I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

29 <sup>g</sup> And he that sent me is with me: the

Father hath not left me alone; for <sup>h</sup> I do always those things that please him.

30 As he spake these words, <sup>i</sup> many believed on him.

31 ¶ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, <sup>j</sup> If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;

32 <sup>k</sup> And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

33 ¶ They answered him, <sup>l</sup> We be Abraham's seed, and <sup>m</sup> were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, *Ye shall be made free*?

<sup>a</sup> Heb. 4. 13. Ch. 7. 28. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 3. 32. & 15. 15. <sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. 2. 11. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. <sup>d</sup> If. 6. 9, 10. & 42. 19. <sup>e</sup> Ch. 3. 14. & 12. 32, 33. & 19. 18. <sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. 2. 8. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 27. 50—54. Acts, ii—vi. Luke, 21. 20—27. & 19. 43, 44. Rom. 1. 4. 1 Cor. 15. 4. <sup>h</sup> Ch. 5. 15, 31. & 3. 11. <sup>i</sup> Ver. 16. Ch. 14. 10. & 16. 31. <sup>j</sup> If. 42. 1, 6. & 49. 7, 8. & 50. 7, 8. <sup>k</sup> Heb. 9. 14. <sup>l</sup> If. 42. 1, 21. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 3. 15, 17. & 11. 5. Mark. 14. 36. Ch. 4. 24. & 5. 30. & 6. 38. <sup>n</sup> Heb. 10. 5—10. & 2. 10. & 5. 8. <sup>o</sup> Ch. 2. 23. & 6. 11. & 7. 31. & 10. 42. <sup>p</sup> Ch. 2. 24. & 6. 16. Mat. 24. 13. <sup>q</sup> Heb. 1. 14. & 10. 38, 39. Gal. 6. 9. <sup>r</sup> Ch. 7. 17. <sup>s</sup> Hof. 6. 3. Mat. 15. 11. <sup>t</sup> If. 43. 7. & 61. 1. 2 Cor. 3. 17, 18. Rom. 8. 2, 15. & 6. 14, 18, 27. & 7. 4. <sup>u</sup> Tit. 3. 5. Jam. 1. 25. & 2. 12. 1 Cor. 7. 22, 23. <sup>v</sup> Ver. 36. <sup>w</sup> Mat. 3. 9. <sup>x</sup> Ver. 59. <sup>y</sup> Exod. i—x. Judge, iii. iv. v. Ezra, ix. Neh. v.

our Lord's meaning was, "I am that which I said to you at the beginning of this discourse, namely, *the Light of the world*. But Raphelius, who is followed by Doddridge and many others, proposes to point the sentence in such a manner, as to give the following translation: *Truly because I am speaking to you, I have many things to say and judge concerning you*. It is well known, that the term *αληθινως* in the Greek frequently signifies *indeed*, or *truly*. According to this translation, the meaning is, "Because I have long exercised my ministry among you, and you have not profited by it as you ought, I have many reasons to give you, and a severe sentence of condemnation to pass upon you. Nevertheless, I shall waive them all at present, and tell you only one thing, that you may think upon it seriously, namely, that *he who sent me is Truth* and goodness itself; and that I speak to the world nothing but what I have received from him, however dark or disagreeable these things may be to persons of your dispositions."

Ver. 28, 29. *When ye have lifted up the Son of man,*]  
"When you have crucified me, you shall know both who I am, and who my Father is. The miracles accompanying my death, my resurrection from the dead, the effusion of the Spirit on my disciples, and the destruction of your nation, shall demonstrate that I am the Light of the world, the Messiah; and that I do nothing merely by my own authority, but by my Father's direction, speaking such doctrines only as he has commissioned me to teach. Besides, my Father is always *with me*;  
"ver. 29. for though I shall be crucified as a malefactor, that disaster will not come upon me because he has deserted me. In no period of my ministry, not even at my death, will my Father leave me; for I always act agreeably to his will."

Ver. 30. *As he spake these words, many believed on him.*]  
It seems probable, that by the phrase of *lifting up*, the Jews did not understand our Lord's crucifixion, but his exalt-

ation to the throne and kingdom of David. Hearing him, therefore, speak of a temporal kingdom, as they supposed, they began now to think that he entertained sentiments worthy of the Messiah; and on that account acknowledged him as such, believing the doctrine that he had delivered concerning his divine mission. Or, if this supposition be not admitted, and it be thought that they understood him in the proper sense, we may reasonably believe, that through grace they felt their hearts impressed with what they heard from him in the whole preceding discourse, as well as by observing his temper and conduct; seeing him bear the perverseness of his enemies with so much patience; hearing him speak of an ignominious and painful death with such holy composure, and expressing so genuine and lively a sense of his Father's approbation, and so sweet a complacency in it.

Ver. 31, 32. *If ye continue in my word, &c.*] "If you persevere in the belief and practice of my word, you are really my disciples, and have a just title to that honourable appellation. Moreover, you shall be fully instructed in every doctrine of the gospel, called here and elsewhere, by way of eminence, *Truth*; see Ch. i. 17. and so being related to me as my disciples, and experimentally understanding my gospel, you shall be made free, not only from the slavery of sin, and all its consequences, but from the ceremonial observances enjoined by Moses; nay, you shall be fixed in that state of glorious liberty, that constant access to God, and that free and continual enjoyment of his favour and love, which is the privilege of my disciples alone."

Ver. 33. *We be Abraham's seed, &c.*] "Then some of those who had professed to believe in him taking it as a high affront, that he should speak as if he thought them to be slaves, said to him in a vaunting manner, 'We are the descendants of the celebrated patriarch Abraham, who, being a sovereign prince, and a man in covenant with God, entailed all civil and religious liberties'"

34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, " Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.  
 35 " And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: <sup>7</sup> but the Son abideth ever.  
 36 " If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.  
 37 I know that ye are <sup>a</sup> Abraham's seed; but if ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.  
 38 " I speak that which I have seen with

my Father: and ye <sup>b</sup> do that which ye have seen with your Father.  
 39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were <sup>c</sup> Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.  
 40 " But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.  
 41 <sup>d</sup> Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; <sup>e</sup> we have one Father, *even* God.

<sup>a</sup> n. 6. 16. 20. <sup>b</sup> 2 Pet. 2. 19. Prov. 5. 22. Eph. 2. 2, 3. Tit. 3. 3. <sup>c</sup> Job. 17. 9. Prov. 4. 18. 1 Pet. 1. 5. Jude, 1. Col. 3. 3. <sup>d</sup> <sup>e</sup> Ver. 32.  
<sup>f</sup> Heb. 3. 6. & 13. 8. If. 9. 6, 7. Dan. 7. 14. <sup>g</sup> Job. 17. 9. Prov. 4. 18. 1 Pet. 1. 5. Jude, 1. Col. 3. 3. <sup>h</sup> Ver. 32.  
<sup>i</sup> Rom. 8. 2. Gal. 5. 1. Rev. 5. 9. & 7. 5, 6. & 2. 7, 10, 17, 26. & 3. 5, 12, 21. 2 Cor. 3. 17. <sup>j</sup> Mat. 3. 9. Acts, 13.  
<sup>k</sup> Ch. 5. 16, 18. & 7. 1, 19, 25. Mat. 13. 15. 1 Cor. 2. 14. <sup>l</sup> Ch. 3. 32. & 5. 19, 30. & 14. 10, 24. Ver. 26. <sup>m</sup> Ver. 37, 40, 44.  
<sup>n</sup> 28, 29. & 4. 12, 16. & 9. 7, 8. Gal. 3. 7, 29. with Mat. 3. 9. <sup>o</sup> Ver. 37. Ch. 7. 19. Gal. 4. 16. Pf. 109. 4. <sup>p</sup> Ver. 37, 38.  
<sup>q</sup> If. 63. 16. & 64. 8. Mal. 1. 6. Mic. 3. 11. Jer. 7. 4.

upon us, as our birthright; and we never lost it being enslaved to any foreign power, (which was a gross falsity,) or governed by any laws but our own. What therefore can you mean by pretending to be free, who are in right and fact so free already?

[*Whosoever committeth sin, &c.*] Ποσει ἀμαρταν, *practiseth sin*: to do, in the Hebrew dialect, im- the present act only, but the habit of doing. I render this, *Whosoever practiseth sin, is the slave of sin*.—There are no greater those who give themselves up to a vicious kind to the gratification of their sinful appetites. 16. 2 Peter, ii. 19.

[*And the servant abideth not in the house for ever:*] cannot be so assured of his master's favour, and upon it that he shall never be turned out of his house, since he is always his master's property, and he has no power, to sell or keep him as he shall think fit. The Father can, when he pleases, turn you, who are his children, out of his family, and deprive you of the inheritance of religion in which you have made yourselves free through sin you have made yourselves slaves to his justice; whereas, if you will become obedient persevering children, you shall remain in his love for ever.

[*The Son therefore shall make you free,*] "The Son who has arrived at the relationship above mentioned, and who is the *children of God*, is to believe in and obey the authority of his Son; in which case the Father will regard you as co-heirs with himself. *If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*; free from the bondage of sin, free to do good; free in respect of your inheritance, and free in your possession of the Father's promises and present blessings."

[*I know that ye are Abraham's seed:*] "I know that ye are the seed of Abraham by natural descent, as the Jews were; but morally ye are the offspring of

"the devil; and in every respect unlike Abraham in your temper and disposition; as is plain from hence, that many of you are endeavouring to kill me, because I endeavour to join a sanctity of soul which you are not willing to acquire." The original, which we render, *hath no place in you*, signifies, *profits you not*,—hath no weight or influence upon you. Heylin renders it, *has not admittance*. Our Lord spoke this, not to those who believed on him, but to some others of the company; and the phrase, *they answered him*, ver. 33. must only signify, that some of those who were present made such a reply.

[*Ver. 40. Now ye seek to kill me, &c.*] "If ye were the spiritual progeny of Abraham, ye would resemble that great and good man in his righteousness; and therefore instead of seeking to take away the life of any one who is come to you from God with a revelation of his will, ye would be much less that of the true Messiah, you would believe on him in imitation of Abraham; who for his faith in all the divine revelations, and his obedience to all the divine commands, however hard they were to flesh and blood, was ennobled with those most illustrious of all titles, *the father of the faithful, and the friend of God.*"

[*Ver. 41. We be not born of fornication, &c.*] The Jews, it seems, perceived at length that Jesus talked not so much of natural, as of spiritual bondage; and replied, "In that respect undoubtedly we are the children of God, as we are not born of fornication;" alluding to the marriage covenant, which in scripture is represented to have subsisted between God and the Jewish nation; and by which their obligation to reverence, love, and obey him, was held forth to them in a lively manner, "We are neither idolaters ourselves, nor are we sprung of idolatrous ancestors; and therefore, in respect of spiritual descent, we are, without dispute, the children of God." Accordingly, God himself calls all the Jewish males *his sons*, because he was the husband of their parents. See Ezek. xxxiii. 37. Jer. iii. 4. Hosea, ii. 4.

Ver.

42 Jesus said unto them, <sup>1</sup> If God were your Father, ye would love me: for <sup>k</sup> I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

43 <sup>1</sup> Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word.

44 <sup>m</sup> Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. <sup>n</sup> He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 And <sup>o</sup> because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.

46 <sup>p</sup> Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

47 <sup>q</sup> He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

48 ¶ Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art <sup>r</sup> a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

49 Jesus answered, <sup>s</sup> I have not a devil;

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 15. 23, 24. <sup>1</sup> John, 5. 1. & 4. 19. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 1. 14. & 3. 16. & 5. 43. & 7. 28, 29. & 16. 27, 28. & 17. 8, 25. Gal. 4. 4. <sup>1</sup> Ver. 21.  
<sup>2</sup> Cor. 2. 3, 4. Ch. 7. 17. <sup>1</sup> Cor. 2. 14. Rom. 8. 7, 8. <sup>m</sup> Ver. 38, 40. Tit. 3. 9. <sup>1</sup> Theff. 2. 14, 15. <sup>1</sup> John, 3. 8, 10. Mat. 12. 29. & 13.  
<sup>30.</sup> <sup>n</sup> Juor. 6. Gen. 3. 1—6. Rom. 5. 12. <sup>1</sup> Pet. 5. 8. <sup>2</sup> Cor. 2. 11. & 11. 3, 14. Eph. 2. 2. <sup>1</sup> John, 3. 8. <sup>1</sup> Kings, 22. 22. <sup>o</sup> Ver. 24.  
<sup>1</sup> Ch. 5. 17—43. <sup>1</sup> If. 53. 1. Gal. 4. 16. <sup>p</sup> Heb. 7. 26. <sup>2</sup> Cor. 5. 21. <sup>1</sup> Pet. 2. 22. <sup>q</sup> Ch. 10. 26, 27. Ver. 37, 43, 45. Ch. 6. 44, 45.  
<sup>r</sup> Ch. 4. 9. & 7. 20. & 10. 20. Mat. 10. 25. & 12. 24, 31. <sup>1</sup> P. 22. 6, 7. & 69. 20. <sup>s</sup> Mat. 11. 29. <sup>1</sup> Pet. 2. 23. <sup>1</sup> Tim. 2. 24, 25.  
<sup>1</sup> Prov. 15. 1.

*Ver. 42. I proceeded forth and came from God;]* “I originally proceeded from God the Father as his only-begotten Son, partaker of the same nature with him, and am come into the world immediately from him: I did not come merely of myself, like a false prophet, but by commission from him, who sent me, as the Messiah, to make known the way of salvation, and to do his will upon earth.” We must observe the difference between what Christ here says of himself, and what is ever said of any other: believers are said to be *of God*, ver. 47. and <sup>1</sup> John, iv. 4. and to be *born and begotten of God*, <sup>1</sup> John, v. 1. and the prophets were said to be *sent of God*, as John the Baptist also was, John, i. 6. But it is peculiar to Christ, that he *proceeded forth, and came from God*, which intimates his divine original, as well as mission; that he is of the Father as a Son of his own essence, proceeding from him; as well as that he came from the Father, as a divine messenger: for the form of expression, ἐγὼ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐξῆλθον, here rendered *I proceeded forth from God*, is often used by the LXX to signify a proper birth, when applied to man; as in Gen. xv. 4. it is said, *he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels, shall be thine heir*: also Ch. xxxv. 11. *Kings shall come out of thy loins*. And it is said of Christ with respect to his human birth, Isaiah, xi. 1. *there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse*. The phraseology is the same in all these places, with that which is here rendered *proceeding forth*.

*Ver. 43. Why do ye not understand my speech, &c.?* The latter clause of this verse may likewise be translated and pointed interrogatively; *Why do ye not understand my speech, λαλιαν*,—the spiritual stile that I make use of? *Is it because you cannot hear my word?* cannot give obedience thereto, it being contrary to your lusts? Or, can you pretend to say, that I decline giving you the most public and frequent instructions, or that those instructions are unintelligible and obscure? Your consciences in general know the contrary.

*Ver. 44. Ye are of your father the devil,]* “You inherit the nature of your father, the devil; and therefore you

are determined to gratify the lusts which you have derived from him. He was the enemy and murderer of mankind, and ever since has endeavoured to work their ruin; sometimes by seducing them into sin by his lies, and sometimes by instigating them to murder those whom God sends to reclaim them. Withal, having wholly departed from holiness and truth, the habit of lying is become perfectly natural to him: wherefore, being a liar, and the father of it, that is, the first and greatest liar, when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh what is proper to himself.” The words ἰδὲτε ποιεῖν, rendered *ye will do*, imply a resolute and obstinate persisting in any habit or action, Ch. i. 43. The account which Josephus, their own historian, gives of the wickedness of the Jews about this time, comes up fully to the assertion of our Lord in this verse. See his Jewish War, B. v. Ch. 10, &c.

*Ver. 45. And because I tell you the truth,]* “True children of your Father, ver. 44. you disbelieve me, because, instead of soothing you in your sins, and flattering you with lies, I tell you the truth; to which, like your father, you are utterly averse.”

*Ver. 46, 47. Which of you convinceth me of sin?]* Can convict me of sin? Heylin. The only reason for refusing assent to a person is, either because he is not deserving of credit, or because what he asserts is improbable. Our Lord shews that they could not object to him for either of these reasons, particularly the first; they could not convict him of sin; they could not shew that his conduct and life were reproachable; they could not prove that his doctrine was false; they could not say, that he reproved them unjustly for their actions; and as therefore they could not but acknowledge that his doctrine and life were such as became a divine messenger from God, he might well ask them what was the reason why they did not believe on him?—a question, indeed, to which he gives a full reply in ver. 47. See also ver. 41.

*Ver. 48, 49. Thou art a Samaritan, &c.]* The Jews and Samaritans bore a mortal hatred to each other on account of religion, as we have frequently observed: hence it

out ' I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour  
 50 ' And I seek not mine own glory :  
 here is one that seeketh and judgeth.  
 51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, ' If a  
 man keep my saying, he shall never see death.  
 52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we  
 know that thou hast a devil. ' Abraham is  
 dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If  
 a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of  
 death.  
 ' Art thou greater than our father Abra-

ham, which is dead ? and the prophets are dead :  
 whom makest thou thyself ?  
 54 Jesus answered, ' If I honour myself,  
 my honour is nothing : ' it is my Father that  
 honoureth me ; of whom ye say, that he is your  
 God :  
 55 ' Yet ye have not known him ; but I  
 know him : and if I should say, I know him  
 not, I shall be a liar like unto you : ' but I  
 know him, and keep his saying.  
 56 Your father Abraham ' rejoiced to see  
 my day : and he saw it, and was glad.

59. Ch. 17. 4. If. 42. 21. Mat. 3. 15. 17. ' Ch. 7. 18. & 5. 41. ' Ch. 5. 24. & 12. 43. or 5. 22, 23. Phil. 2. 9-11. ' Ch. 3.  
 6. & 6. 40, 47. & 5. 24. & 11. 26. ' Zech. 1. 5. Heb. 11. 13. ' Ch. 4. 12. with If. 9. 6. Rom. 9. 5. ' Ver. 50. Ch. 5.  
 2 Cor. 10. 18. Prov. 26. 11, 16. ' Ch. 13. 37, 38. & 16. 14. & 17. 5. & 5. 20-29. Eph. 1. 20-23. Phil. 2. 9-11. Acts. 3. 13.  
 41. ' Ch. 7. 28. Eph. 5. 18. If. 6. 9, 10. & 42. 19, 20. ' Mat. 11. 27. & 3. 15, 17. Ch. 1. 18. & 7. 29. & 14. 9, 10. & 4. 34.  
 & 17. 4, 6. ' Gen. 12. 3. & 22. 18. & 15. 6. Gal. 3. 6, 8, 16.

pals, that in common language, *Couthi*, or *Sama-*  
*ns* used to signify not merely a Samaritan, but a  
 by principle and disposition; and so denoted fren-  
*n inveterate* enemy to the Jewish nation and red-  
 d a man of wicked morals. *Thou art a Samari-*  
*st a devil.* As it was highly provoking to the  
 to be told that they were not the children of  
 as Jesus had often in the course of this conver-  
 fested them of that glory, nay, had expressly  
 the *children of the devil*, it is no wonder, con-  
 passions of evil men, that they now fell into  
 rage, and reviled him with the most oppro-  
 age. Disregarding the reproach which they  
 him in calling him a *Samaritan*, our Lord  
 ers, ver. 49. to the latter part of their charge,  
 neither a lunatic, nor actuated by a devil:  
 ured his Father, by delivering what he re-  
 py bearing a steady and consistent testimony  
 Whereas they robbed him of that honour  
 ed to him, by casting such opprobrious re-  
 him, and rejecting his doctrine. See

“ hast hardness enough to say, *If a man keep my saying,*  
*“ he shall never die.”* There is a great emphasis on the  
 word *my* in this place; the Jews usug it to insinuate both  
 the folly and the fault of Christ's boasting, as intimating  
 that *his word* was more efficacious than that of God him-  
 self, which Abraham and the prophets heard, and yet  
 were not able to procure an immunity from death for  
 themselves, far less for their followers. Many of the best  
 copies read the last clause of the 52d verse interrogatively:  
 “ *Dost thou, who art not to be compared with Abraham*  
 “ *and the prophets, say, If a man keep my saying, &c. ?*”  
 Ver. 55. *Yet ye have not known him, &c.*] Though you  
 profess to worship my Father as your God, you are ig-  
 norant of him: you neither form right conceptions of him,  
 nor acknowledge him in the manner you ought to do; so  
 that you give a lie to your profession: and though you  
 may think it vain glory, yet I must tell you, that if I  
 should say, I do not think justly of him, nor acknowledge  
 him as he deserves, I should be a liar like unto you; for  
 I am acquainted with his most intimate counsels, and in  
 every thing most perfectly know and do his will.

*a man keep my saying.*] Our Lord, having be-  
 that *there is one who seeketh his glory*, goes on  
 God the Father will not only finally glorify  
 of man, but will confer the highest honours  
 all his faithful persevering servants. *Verily,*  
*you, if any one KEEP my word, he shall never*  
 not fall under eternal damnation. Christ  
 to have abolished death, having destroyed the  
 /, and raised up the believer with himself,  
 t with him in heavenly places. Death,  
 me by the Captain of our faith, cannot  
 hful persevering disciples: as for the se-  
 have no power over them. See 2 Tim.  
 4. Ephes. ii. 6.  
 w we know that thou hast a devil.] “ We  
 certain that thou art under diabolic in-  
 e most righteous persons that ever lived,  
 Abraham and the prophets: yet thou

Ver. 56. *Your Father Abraham rejoiced, &c.*] When the  
 figurative word *day* is used not to express the period of  
 any one's existence, but to denote his peculiar office and  
 employment, it must needs signify that very circumstance  
 in his life which is the characteristic of such office or  
 employment: but Jesus is here speaking of his peculiar  
 office and employment, as appears from the occasion of  
 the debate, which was his saying, *if any man keep my com-*  
*mandments, he shall never taste of death*; intimating thereby  
 the virtue of his office as Redeemer. Therefore, by the  
 word *day*, must needs be meant that characteristic circum-  
 stance of his life; but that circumstance was the laying  
 it down for the redemption of mankind; consequently,  
 by the word *day*, is meant the great sacrifice of Christ.  
 But not only the matter, but the manner likewise of this  
 great revelation, is delivered in the text; *Abraham rejoiced*  
*to see my day*: this evidently shews it to have been made  
 not merely by revelation in words, but by representation  
 in action. The Greek word rendered *to see*, is frequently  
 used





57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, <sup>s</sup> Before Abraham was, I am.

59 <sup>h</sup> Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

<sup>s</sup> Ps. 2. 7. Prov. 8. 22—30. Mic. 5. 2. H. 9. 6. Ch. 1. 2. & 17. 5, 24. & 10. 30. Fr d 3. 14, 18. Heb. 13. 8. Luke, 24. 31. Mat. 10. 16, 25. Ch. 10. 39, 40. & 11. 54. & 7. 1.

<sup>h</sup> Luke, 4. 29, 30. Ch.

used in the New Testament in its proper signification, for to see sensibly; but whether used literally or figuratively, it always denotes a full intention. That the expression was as strong in the Syriac language, as in the Greek of this inspired historian, appears from the reply which the Jews made to our Lord; *Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou SEEN Abraham?* which plainly intimated, that they understood the assertion of Abraham's seeing Christ's day, to mean a real beholding him in person. We may therefore conclude from the words of the text, that the redemption of mankind was not only revealed to Abraham, but revealed likewise by representation: and we have shewn in the notes on Gen. xxii. that the command to offer up Isaac was the very revelation of Christ's day, or of the redemption of mankind by his death and sufferings. St. Chrysostom, in his comment on this place, says, "Christ, by the word *day*, seems to signify that of his crucifixion, which was typified in the offering up of Isaac and the ram." Erasmus says likewise, "Jesus meant, by these dark passages, that Abraham, when he was preparing to offer up his son Isaac, saw our Lord's being delivered up to the death of the cross for the redemption of mankind." We are sure that Abraham had in fact this desire highly raised in him: the verb *παλλιάζω* signifies to leap forward with joy to meet the object of one's wishes, as well as to exult in the possession thereof. Accordingly, the ancient versions, particularly the Syriac, render it by words which express earnest desire; and after them the best critics translate it, *earnestly desired* *ὅτι ἴδον, that he might see*; which implies, that the period of his desires was in the space between the promise made, and the actual performance of it by the delivery of the command; consequently, that it was granted at his request. The text plainly distinguishes two different periods of joy; the first, when it was promised that he should see; the second, when he actually saw: and it is to be observed, that according to the exact use of the word rendered *rejoiced*, which is noted above, it implies that tumultuous pleasure which the certain expectation of an approaching blessing, understood only in the gross, occasions; and the word rendered *was glad*, that calm and settled joy which arises from our knowledge and acquiescence in the possession of it: but the translators, perhaps, not apprehending that there was any time between the grant to see, and the act of seeing, turned it, he *rejoiced to see*. From the following words of this verse it will appear, that Abraham, at the time when the command to sacrifice his son was given, knew it to be that revelation which he had so earnestly requested. *He saw it and was glad*. Thus our Lord plainly and peremptorily assumed the character of the Messiah.

*Ver. 57. Thou art not yet fifty years old, ] Understanding*

what our Lord said in a natural sense, the Jews thought he affirmed that he lived as man in the days of Abraham: which they considered as ridiculous, he not being yet fifty years of age: for they had no conception of his Divinity, though he had told them several times that he was the Son of God. Christ was not now five and thirty; but Erasmus thinks, that, worn with labours, he might appear older than he was. Lightfoot imagines, that as the Levites were discharged from the temple service at fifty, (Numb. iv. 23.) that age was proverbially used; as it certainly might have been without any such institution relating to them, it being usual among most nations to express themselves on such occasions by some round number.

*Ver. 58. Before Abraham was, I am ] "Before Abraham was born, I had a glorious existence with the Father: and I am still invariably the same, and one with him." Our Lord here, in the strongest terms, asserts his proper Divinity, declaring himself to be what St. John more largely expresses, Rev. i. 8. the *alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty*. See also Exod. iii. 14. Heb. i. 12. Erasmus and Raphaelius would have this clause translated, *Before Abraham was born, I was, εγώ ειμι*: but, notwithstanding the nicest critical distinctions, it must be acknowledged, that this is a very unusual sense of the words *εγώ ειμι*, and the less necessary, as the proper and common translation affords us a just and important sense, and one to which none but the bitter enemies of our Lord's Divinity can object. It is indeed striking to observe the unnatural sense to which they have recourse, who stumble at this text. The Socinians, with the most perverse impropriety, render the passage thus: "Before Abraham was made Abraham, that is to say, the father of many nations, in the literal sense of the promise, I am the Messiah." That our Lord did truly exist at the time mentioned in the text, is plain likewise from Ch. xvii. 5. and many other passages in the divine oracles. Nor is it to be imagined, that if our Lord had been a mere creature, he would have ventured to express himself in a manner so nearly bordering on blasphemy, refine upon this text as they please; or have permitted his beloved disciple so dangerously to disguise his meaning; a meaning indisputably clear to every plain and unprejudiced reader; a full proof whereof is the manner in which his hearers now received it: for, filled with rage upon the blasphemy, as they thought, of his claiming Divinity to himself, they immediately prepare to inflict the punishment of a blasphemer upon him, by stoning him.*

*Ver. 59. Then took they up stones ] The Jews, thinking our Lord Jesus a blasphemer, because he made himself not only greater than Abraham, but equal with God, Ch. 18. fell into a violent rage, as Dr. Claggett expresses in*

CHAP. IX.

The man that was born blind restored to sight : he is brought to the Pharisees : they are offended at it, and excommunicate him ; but he is received of Jesus, and confesseth him. Who they are whom Christ enlighteneth.

[Anno Domini 32.]

AND as Jesus \* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Mas-

ter, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind ?

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents : but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work.

some months after. \* Ver. 34. Luke, 13. 2, 4. Acts, 28. 4. † Mat. 7. 1. Luke, 13. 1—5. ‡ Ch. 11. 4. If. 15. 5. Mat. 11. 5. †† Luke, 13. 32, 33. & 19. 42. Eccl. 9. 10. Eph. 5. 16. Ch. 4. 34. & 5. 19. & 13. 9. & 12. 35. & 17. 4.

ing him not worthy to be answered any other way by an immediate and zealous attempt upon his life; took up some of the stones which happened to be hereabouts for the reparation of the temple, and, with a great fury, were going with one accord to rush and murder him. But Jesus, making himself un- passed through the crowd, and so escaped safe.

—While Jesus is teaching, his enemies, in the adulterers, address him not only as an instructor, but as a judge; and yet by this specious form of honour and respect they sought only to ensnare and destroy him : so should it be always to judge of men's intentions by the appearances of their actions. But our Lord, in the wisdom of the serpent with the meekness and gentleness of the dove ; and, in his con- demnation before him, shewed at once that tender- ness and gentleness, which might most effectually conduce to reclaim her, *Go thy way, and sin no more.* How should we learn hence to improve their escapes from dan- ger, and to continue our exercise of divine patience towards the sinners, and our engagement to speedy and thorough refor-

mation of conscience, and the power of Christ over it, which is so conspicuously in the present instance, teach us to overcome the dictates of our own minds, and to do as he doth, and to bring them under a sense of guilt. Through the power of our Redeemer, they wrought so powerfully upon the Pharisees, that, hypocritical and vain-glorious as they were, they could not so far command themselves, as to appearances ; but the eldest and gravest among them were the first to confess their guilt, by with- drawing their presence of so holy a prophet, from the presence of the criminal whom they came to reprove. And from the criminal whom they came to reprove, they were made conscious of being themselves to blame, and of the guiltiness and freedom of our proceedings in our own faults, if, while we judge others, we do not judge ourselves. Nor will the authority of a superior, or the example of life, bear us out against these inward

—The Redeemer is the light of the world. With how much should we behold his rays ! With how much should we follow, whithersoever he leads us, and how glad that we shall not then walk in darkness, but that we should ever choose to continue in the light, and screen of wicked works.

With all humility, to regard and submit

to the testimony which the Father hath borne to the Son in so clear and express a manner. Dreadful would be the consequence of our refusing to do it ! The doom of these wretched Jews would be ours,—to die in our sins. And oh ! how insupportable will that guilty burden prove in a dying hour, and before the tribunal of God ! How will it sink us into condemnation and despair !—In vain shall those who now despise him, then seek admittance to the world where he is, *whither they cannot come* ; and, excluded from his presence, they must be excluded from happiness.

This might justly have been our case long since ; for surely he has many things to say of us, and to judge concerning us, should he lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet. After his having been so long with us ; yea, after we have, as it were, seen him lifted up, and set forth as crucified among us ; would to God his faithful admonition, ver. 28. might prevail to our conviction and reformation, that our everlasting condemnation may not further illustrate the reasonableness, nay, the necessity of it, and the madness of hardening our hearts against it ! May we approve ourselves the sincere disciples of Jesus, by continuing in his word, and being faithful unto death, as ever we expect a crown of life.

Without this, external privileges will turn to but little account. The children of Abraham may be the children of Satan ; and they are so, if they imitate the temper and works of the accursed fiend, rather than of the holy patriarch. The devil was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, and all falsehood and malice are from him. It is our duty to pray earnestly that we may be freed from them, and from the tyranny of every other sin to which we have been enslaved ; that *Christ the Son may make us free* of his Father's family, and of his heavenly kingdom ; *then shall we be free indeed*, and delivered from all spiritual bondage.

To prove ourselves the children of God, we must be ready to hear and receive the words of our blessed Redeemer ; the words of incarnate truth, and wisdom, and love ; whom none of his enemies could ever convict of sin, nor ever accused him of it but to their own confusion. Resembling him in the innocence and holiness of his life, we shall the more easily and gracefully imitate that courage and zeal with which he reproved the haughtiest sinners ; and bore his testimony against the errors and vices of that degenerate age and nation in which he lived.

Christ honoured his Father, and sought not his own glory ; so should we be careful of the honour of God, and then



5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and

\* Ch. i. 5, 9. & 3. 19. & 8. 12. & 12. 35, 46. Luke, 2. 32. Mal. 4. 2. If. 42. 6, 7. & 49. 6. with Rev. 3. 18. † Mark, 7. 33. & 8. 12.

cheerfully commit to him the guardianship and care of our reputation: we shall then certainly find that *there is one who seeketh and judgeth* in our favour.

It is a great and important promise which our Lord makes, ver. 51. *If any one keep my word, he shall never see death.* He is the resurrection and the life; and is no less able than willing to make good what he has here assured us to all his faithful faints. Strong therefore in the faith, let us give glory to God; though not only Abraham and the prophets, but Peter and Paul, and the other apostles, are dead, yet this word shall be gloriously accomplished. Still they live to him, and shortly shall they be for ever recovered from the power of the grave. With them may our final portion be: and, in the triumphant hope hereof, we may well set light by reproaches, clamours, and accusations of prejudiced, ignorant, and sinful men.

Adored be that gracious Providence which determined our existence to begin in that happy day, which prophets and patriarchs desired to see, and, in the distant view of which Abraham exulted. Let it be also our joy: for *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*; the great and immutable I AM: nor could the heart of those holy men fully conceive those things which God had prepared for them that love him, and which he has now revealed unto us by his Spirit.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, According to his usual custom, our Lord at evening went to the mount of Olives; perhaps to the house of his friend Lazarus; or to retire for communion with his Heavenly Father; or to avoid the danger of some popular tumult, which his implacable enemies might attempt to raise against him in the night. In the morning early he returned to the temple and sat down, as one having authority, to preach the gospel to the multitudes who crowded around him. *Note*; Early rising to wait upon God, is a gracious presage of a happy day.

While Christ was engaged in this blessed employment, we are informed of the interruption that he met with from his envenomed enemies.

1. They proposed a case to him, the decision of which they flattered themselves would either bring him into disgrace with the people, or embroil him with the government. They bring a woman, *taken in adultery, in the very act*; for though such deeds of darkness usually are concealed with deepest cunning, God is sometimes pleased strangely to bring to light such deadly works, and to expose to the infamy of the world those who were emboldened to transgress in the foolish confidence that *no eye seeth me*. The proof was evident, the law express; but, as he assumed authority to make alterations therein, they desire to know what was his judgment on the case, hoping to get some matter of accusation against him. On the one hand, if he should command the law to be put in force, they would accuse him to the Roman government as pronouncing sentence of death, and assuming judicial authority; and to the people, as acting inconsistent with himself, who

invited publicans and sinners to come to him, and willingly conversed, and ate and drank with them. On the other, if he should acquit her, refuse to confirm the sentence which the law had pronounced, they would brand him as an enemy to the divine institutions, a violator of the law, and a patron of the most scandalous enormities.

2. Christ, who knew their wickedness, seemed to pay no regard to the case which they proposed; stooping down and writing on the ground, as though he heard them not. But, as they now thought he was in a dilemma from which he could not disentangle himself, they urged him vehemently to answer their question. When, raising himself with a majesty and wisdom which confounded his enemies, he bids *him that was without sin cast the first stone at her*. Since the hands of the witnesses should be first upon the criminals, it became them who appeared so zealous in punishing the sins of others, to see that they were themselves free from the like or other infamous crimes; else it would be strangely absurd in them to execute the sentence, however just. Thus he testified his approbation of the law, without encouraging their prosecution; and effectually saved his own reputation, without any express condemnation of the poor criminal. *Note*; (1.) When we have to deal with crafty foes, a cautious answer is but needful prudence. (2.) Before we condemn others, we should first take care that we are not chargeable with the same or greater evils than we censure in them.

3. While he stooped again to the ground, to give them a moment's time to pause, reflect, and retire; they, convicted by their consciences, slunk away, fearing lest their own sins should be brought to light, to their confusion. The eldest led the way, and the younger followed: so that, all these malignant accusers being fled, the woman was left alone with Jesus and those who before had been attending his ministry. *Note*; (1.) Many are more afraid of being *shamed* for their sins than of being *damned*. (2.) They, who, under convictions, fly from Christ, to get rid of them, instead of coming to him with humble confusion to obtain pardon, wilfully destroy themselves.

4. The trembling criminal still stood at his bar; when, lifting up himself, the merciful Judge questions her, *Where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? nor offered to cast a stone at thee? She said, No, Lord.* And Jesus said unto her, *Neither do I condemn thee: Go, and sin no more.* As he came not upon earth to be a temporal judge, he left the sword of magistracy to the powers that ruled; and dismissed her, with a solemn warning to beware of returning again unto wickedness, lest a more dreadful punishment than the civil magistrate could inflict, should be her portion in the last great day. *Note*; Jesus is now a merciful Saviour: he will shortly be an inexorable Judge. Wise and happy are they who improve the moment of opportunity, and seek to him for mercy which mercy may be found. (2.) The greatest crimes, even adultery, may be forgiven to those who come by faith to a dying Redeemer, and wash their polluted souls in the fountain

he \* anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

7 And said unto him, <sup>e</sup> Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation,

<sup>a</sup> Or spread the clay upon the eyes of the blind man.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Kings, 5. 10.

<sup>c</sup> Neh. 3. 15. 1st 8. 6.

tain of his blood. (3.) Those whom Jesus pardons, lives, not in their sins, but from them: they go to lead a new life, whose sentence of death he reverses. A course of sanctification always accompanies justifying

y, Though the Pharisaical accusers of the adulterers were confounded, some of their brethren remained to see the gracious words which proceeded from the Saviour.

Christ, re-assuming his discourse to the people, took occasion to speak of himself under the glorious character of the Sun of righteousness, saying, *I am the light of the world. What the sun is to the world, that Christ must be to the soul.* Without him, universal spiritual darkness covers us its dreadful, baleful influence. But he who receives me, receives my gospel, and treads in my light; he will not walk in darkness; the eyes of his mind shall be opened to know the truth, and his soul enabled to be directed in the practice of it; so that the darkness of sin shall not deceive and mislead him; but he who receives the light of life, the saving light of gospel grace, shall be faithful to that light, the eternal life of glory. Blessed and happy are they who walk in this light.

Christ indicates himself from the objection which the Jews made, who said, *Thou bearest record of thyself; thy testimony is not true:* as if, in his own cause, those assertions were boasts of self-commendation; overlooking the fact which John bore to his character, and the truth which all the miracles that Christ did, brought to their remembrance. *He answered and said unto them, Though I bear witness of myself, yet my record is true.* If, in ordinary cases, a man's own testimony concerning himself may be questioned, yet, in the case of messengers sent from God, the matter is otherwise. The message that he sends is a proof of his mission, considering the manner in which he appeared. *For I know whence I come, and whither I go.* He knew his own divine mission, and the way he came from the Father, he must shortly return; of which he had given them striking proofs in his miracles that he had wrought. *But ye cannot see me, and whither I go,* wilfully blind to the light, and rejecting the credentials which he gave after the flesh, and, from the meanness of his appearance, concluded, it was impossible that he who should redeem Israel: and judge after the flesh in spiritual matters, should be wrong. *I judge no man, not at all by the outward appearance of judicial power, nor assuming any authority in his office at present to condemn any, but by that which was lost. And yet, if I am true, as being the Searcher of all hearts, I will bring all things naked and open before me, and I and the Father that sent me; and the union subsisting between us, as that my testimony is true to his, and all I speak is in express*

conformity with his will, who gave me my mission. *It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men, credible witnesses, is true, and sufficient for the proof of any matter of the greatest consequence. I am one that bear witness of myself, as the Messiah, which my doctrine and works declare me to be; and the Father that sent me, bears witness of me, not only in all the prophecies of old, but in repeated voices heard from heaven. Here therefore are two witnesses, of divine authority, to prove the truth.*

3. The Pharisees, with contempt of his pretensions, replied, *Where is thy Father? what, Joseph the carpenter? is he the witness?* *Jesus answered, Ye neither know me nor my Father;* are not acquainted with my divine original: *if ye had known me, as the Son of God, ye should have known my Father also,* as we are one in nature, counsel, and operation: the knowledge of me includes the knowledge of my Father, as I am the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. Thus freely and fully does Jesus assert his eternal power, godhead, and unity with the Father. *These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come;* the true reason why they did not seize him, was, that the hour in which, by divine permission, he was to be delivered into their hands, had not arrived.

3dly, Words of terror to awaken their consciences, as well as words of grace to engage their hearts, did the Redeemer employ, if any thing might at last effectually work upon them.

1. He warns them of their approaching ruin, and the cause of it. *Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, to the Father; and ye shall seek me, when your calamities overtake you; and shall long for the Messiah to save you from them; and shall die in your sins, or your sin, under the guilt of all your iniquities, and especially that capital one of unbelief, and rejection of me and my gospel: whither I go, ye cannot come;* the gates of eternal life and glory will be for ever barred against you, and no entrance permitted you into those regions of blessedness, where I shall shortly be. *Note;* (1.) Unbelief is the damning evil. It is the sin against our remedy, and necessarily leads men to destruction. (2.) They who refuse to embrace the Saviour in faith and love, and to follow him in holy obedience here, must never expect admission into his eternal kingdom of glory hereafter.

2. The Jews, instead of trembling before the warnings of Jesus, treated them with derision, saying, *Will he kill himself? to get rid of his enemies, and be out of their reach?*

3. In reply to their malicious suggestions he answers, *Ye are from beneath, earthly and sensual in your spirit and temper, and therefore cannot understand and follow me; I am from above, celestial in my original, and my conversation in heaven: ye are of this world, affecting and pursuing its honours, interests, pleasures, and esteem; I am not of this world, dead to it in my affections, and looking forward to that blessed world, to which I go. I said therefore unto you,*

1 Sent.) He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8 ¶ The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind,

1 Ch. 10. 36. Rom. 8. 3. Gal. 4. 4. Acts, 3. 26.

*you, that ye shall die in your sins, as you must infallibly do, if you continue in your present state of impenitence, worldly-mindedness, and unbelief: for if ye believe not that I am he, the eternal, unchangeable Jehovah, or the Messiah, the light of the world, the Saviour of the miserable, ye shall die in your sins, no pardon or redemption being possible for those who reject the grace of the gospel. Jesus alone can deliver the soul from the guilt, power, and punishment of sin; and out of him there is no help or hope of salvation.*

4. With a repetition of the like taunt as before, they replied, *Who art thou? that talkest such great things, and threatenest so highly? Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning, the great object of faith since the first promise was given, and the same Messiah whom, from the beginning of my ministry, I have proved myself to be. I have many things to say, and to judge of you, to upbraid your infidelity, and prove the inexcusable nature of your impenitence; these are reserved for an after-reckoning: but he that sent me, is true, both in fulfilling his promises, and his threatenings; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him, both the purposes of his grace to his faithful people, and the inevitable ruin which will attend those who reject his Christ, and which the issue will infallibly prove to be a true testimony. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father; their hearts were hardened in sin, and their minds blinded by prejudice. Note; The plainest truths of God, the most solemn warnings of danger, are not apprehended nor understood by the obstinately wicked or self-righteous. The God of this world hath blinded their minds, and they willfully continue stupid and insensible.*

5. Christ refers them to a future day for a full conviction of what at present they will not believe. *When ye have lifted up the Son of man upon a cross, as the brazen serpent, in consequence of which sufferings his exaltation to glory would follow, then shall ye know that I am he, the true Messiah, as the wonders which happened during his hanging upon the cross bespoke him to be; and as was proved by his resurrection and ascension to glory; as many of them, to their eternal comfort, perceived, when, by his Spirit, their souls were converted, and turned to him whom they had pierced; and as the rest would terribly feel, when shortly he should take vengeance on their nation, cut them off by the Roman sword, and doom them to eternal misery. Then will ye be convinced, says he, that I do nothing of myself, without divine authority; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things, in exact correspondence with the instructions that, as man and Mediator, I have received from him; and he that sent me, is with me, Christ being in nature and essence one with the Father, and having his presence, power, and Spirit, to enable him for, and encourage him in, the great work of redemption. The Father hath not left me alone, without the clearest demonstrations of his favour and regard; for I do always those things that please him; and therefore he cannot but take the*

highest complacency in me and my undertaking, which is in exact conformity to his will, and ultimately tends to highly to advance his glory. Note; (1.) All must know, by happy or dreadful experience, that Jesus is the Christ: they who are not convinced of it by his word and Spirit, will prove it in the judgment and punishments that he will inflict upon them. (2.) However much we may be deserted of the world, God will not leave nor forsake his faithful servants; and we can want neither company nor comfort, if his blessed presence be with us.

6. Great was the effect produced by these words. *As he spake them, many believed on him, as come with a divine commission from God, and the true Messiah.*

4thly, We have,

1. Christ's address to those Jews who believed on him. *If ye continue in my word, faithfully adhere to the gospel and the profession of it, unmoved with any opposition, and cordially prove your obedience to it in all holy conversation and godliness; then are ye my disciples indeed: I will own and accept you as such: and ye shall know the truth, obtain deeper and clearer discoveries of it; and the truth shall make you free, free from guilt, through the knowledge of the virtue of the Redeemer's blood and intercession; free from the dominion of sin and Satan, through the powerful operations of the Spirit; free from ignorance and error, through divine teachings; free from the bondage of the law and corruption, and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Note; (1.) We have need to be looking up continually for supplies of divine light and love; and Christ's faithful followers shall find both abundantly dispensed to them from on high. (2.) That is true liberty, when our souls are brought to God's happy service, and delivered from the servitude of sin and Satan.*

2. The Jews who heard him, felt their pride hurt by the insinuation of their subjection, which Christ intimated, and, with indignation, replied, *We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?* They boast of their descent from that patriarch as their great honour, and, with the strongest effrontery, to have enjoyed uninterrupted liberty as their birthright and privilege; when it was so notorious, that, under a multitude of enemies, they had suffered the most afflictive servitude and captivity, and formed now a conquered province of the Roman empire.

3. Waving the discussion of the point relative to civil liberty, concerning which he spake not, he lets them know that there is a more dreadful servitude than that of the body, even of the immortal soul, under the yoke of sin and Satan. *Whoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin: he that makes a practice of sin, and lives habitually under the power of it, is the worst of slaves, whatever his civil liberties may be, however noble his descent, or high his church privileges. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but as the son of the bondwoman was cast out of Abraham's family, so would all the impenitent and unbelieving among the Jews be cut off from the church of God;*

said, Is not this he that sat and begged?  
 9 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?  
 11 He answered and said, A man that is

God; as every unfaithful professor will be, who continues to live in his sins, however high an opinion he may have entertained of himself, or however respectfully others may have thought of him: but the Son abideth ever; he who is Abraham's promised Seed emphatically, the true Isaac, his is the inheritance; and all who claim under him, as the sons of God by faith, have a title to a place among the household of God. *If the Son therefore shall make you free, the Son of God, the Lord of the house, where Moses himself was but a servant, ye shall be free indeed; not with that imaginary freedom, of which the Jews boasted, but (ἐλευθερία) with that real liberty which only Jesus can give to the fallen, corrupt, and guilty soul.* (1.) He makes his people free from corruption; his Spirit both delivers them from the blindness of error, and from the power of sin. (2.) As free-born sons, they are adopted into God's family, have a title to the eternal kingdom, and, if through the power of grace they preserve themselves in this liberty, shall be put in possession of that kingdom.

4. He applies the case to them. *I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but, very unlike that patriarch in your spirit and temper, ye seek to kill me; and the reason is, because my word hath no place in you; your hearts are steeled against it; you cannot bear the humbling truths that I deliver; and your pride, prejudices, and self-righteousness, effectually prevent their influence; and where this is the case with any soul, there the gospel is as water spilt on the ground, utterly unprofitable.*

5thly, Christ proceeds in his discourse.

1. He points out the cause of the contrariety of sentiment which subsisted between them. *I speak that which I have seen with my Father, as perfectly knowing his mind and will, and from eternity acquainted with all his counsels and designs; and ye do that which ye have seen with your father; your works shew whose children you are, whose example you imitate, and under what father's tuition you have been brought up.*

2. Fired with repentment, as if he reflected upon their pedigree, they boasted their descent from Abraham, the friend of God, of whom they could surely learn nothing that was evil. Jesus answered them, *If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham; but, very opposite to his faith and obedience is your conduct, ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God,—a truth so needful to be known, that I am the very promised Messiah, the eternal Son of the Father: this did not Abraham; his submission to the first notice of God's will was eminent; and such a murderous spirit, as to contrive the death of any man, much less of a messenger sent from heaven, never dwelt in his bosom; therefore it is sufficiently evident, that your relation to him can never be proved by your temper; for ye do the deeds of your father; and who that is, let your conduct tell.* Note; It is often prudent, in conveying unpleasing truths, to state the premises, and let the persons themselves draw the conclusion.

3. With indignation they replied, perceiving that he spoke

not in a literal but a figurative sense, *We be not born of fornication; are not idolaters, nor their descendants; we have one Father, whom we worship and adore, even Jehovah, the one living and true God.* But alas, they who flatter themselves that they have the true religion, because they make profession of it, while their practice is utterly contradictory to sound godliness, deceive their own souls.

4. Christ shews them their fatal mistake. God could not be their Father, while their ways were so perverse before him: *If God were your Father, ye would love me, and embrace the truth that I deliver to you; for I proceeded forth, and came from God, as my Father, and one in nature with him: neither came I of myself, but he sent me, to accomplish the great designs of his grace.* *Why do ye not understand my speech?* The reason is, *because ye cannot hear my word; you are wilfully averse to the truth, and prejudiced against me; and how then can God be your Father? Ye are of your father the devil; he is the spirit which worketh in you; and the lusts of your father ye will do; obstinately bent on following the dictates of pride, malice, and envy, the grand characteristics of this foul fiend. He was a murderer from the beginning: seducing man in paradise from his allegiance to God, he thereby exposed the whole human race to death spiritual, temporal, and eternal; and ever since, from the days of righteous Abel, at his instigation, have those horrid deeds of bloodshed and murder been committed, under which the earth groans.* *And he abode not in the truth; he lost the purity and rectitude of his own nature; and then, by a daring lie, he tempted man to disbelieve the divine commination respecting the forbidden fruit; because there is no truth in him; his kingdom is supported by falsehood and delusion; all the errors and heresies which rend the church, and all the vain hopes that lull sinners to ruin, derive from him their origin.* *When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it: all his temptations from the beginning have been, and are, a tissue of falsehood; his own devising; the genuine offspring of his apostate spirit; and as he is in himself faithless in his nature, so is he the father of all lies and liars; they are his children; they bear his strong and striking lineaments, and evince clearly from whom they are descended; they obey his commands, and follow his example.* *And because I tell you the truth, the truth of my gospel, mission, and divine character, ye believe me not: such is your wilful and miserable infatuation and delusion, that you are more disposed to believe the devil's lie, than God's truth; so enslaved are you by this wicked spirit.* *Which of you convinceth me of sin? either of immorality in conduct, or unsoundness in doctrine? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?* When every circumstance conspires to prove my mission divine, how inexcusable is your obstinacy? *He that is of God, as you pretend to be, heareth God's words; desirous to know, and willing to obey them; ye therefore hear them not, and pay no regard to what I declare to you, because ye are not of God; are not his children, nor influenced by his Spirit, but under the*

called <sup>\*</sup> Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash : and I went and washed, and I received sight.

<sup>\*</sup> Mat. 1. 21, 25. Luke, 1. 47. & 2. 10, 11. 1 Theff. 1. 10. Titus, 2. 13, 14.

power and dominion of the god of this world, the Spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. *Note*; (1.) They who have God for their Father, will shew it by an unfeigned love to the Lord Jesus Christ; by a solemn attention to his word, and faithful obedience to his will. (2.) They who do the devil's works, are infallibly the devil's children. By their fruit ye shall know them: pride, envy, malice, enmity against those that are good, lying, rage, &c. these are the features of Satan, and mark his genuine offspring. (3.) Christ's ministers and people, like their master, must give diligence to keep a conscience void of offence, that their most envenomed enemies may have no evil thing *justly* to say of them. (4.) They who slight and disregard the Redeemer's gospel and his ministers, despise not men, but God, and therein prove the unbridled enmity and apostasy of their hearts.

6thly, The Jews, cut to the heart at this sharp rebuke, were exceedingly exasperated.

1. They began to abuse him with the most virulent language. *Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?* They would represent him as an enemy to their religion and nation; as one in league with Satan, to whose influence they ascribed the miracles which Christ performed; or as a lunatic and madman, possessed by this spirit, thus to call the children of Abraham the children of the devil. *Note*; It is no uncommon thing to hear the best of men branded with the most opprobrious names, abused as fanatical, or treated with contempt as madmen; but wisdom is justified in all her children.

2. Christ meekly replies to so unjust and malicious an accusation, *I have not a devil*; neither act in concert with him, nor am possessed by him: *but I honour my Father*; far from derogating from his honour, as you would infer from my pretensions, the great end that I propose in all my words and works is to advance it; *and I seek not mine own glory*, in contradistinction to his; *there is one that seeketh and judgeth*, who will secure me an interest in the hearts of his faithful people, will vindicate my injured character, and avenge the contempt and indignity which you cast upon me. But, however slightly and meanly you may think of me, *verily, verily, I say unto you*, as the most assured truth, *If a man keep my saying*, really and perseveringly believe, embrace, and obey my gospel, *he shall never see death*, the second, the eternal death, the wages of sin. *Note*; (1.) The most unprovoked abuse must be returned with mildness; the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. (2.) When we are conscious that our design is the advancement of the divine glory, we need not be concerned about any malignant interpretations put on our conduct. (3.) They are disciples indeed, who hear the word of God and keep it, embracing the promises as the most invaluable treasure, and obedient to the commands as the approved rule of duty. (4.) They who thus walk, have nothing to fear from death; the sting of it is taken away; the power of spiritual death is destroyed; and the grave is now become the gate of eternal life and glory to their faithful souls.

3. More confirmed in their prejudices, instead of embracing the glorious privilege to which Christ invited them, they said, *Now we know that thou hast a devil*, and art stark mad to talk at so strange a rate. *Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead?* though so eminently the friend of God; *and the prophets are dead*, who were so highly favoured of him; *whom makest thou thyself?* what insufferable arrogance, to pretend a power of bestowing that immortality upon thy followers, which God himself never vouchsafed to his most eminent saints and servants?

4. Christ answers their cavil, and vindicates what he had asserted. *If I honour myself*, and assume a character which I cannot support with the most powerful evidence, *my honour is nothing*, and you might treat it as an empty boast: *but it is my Father that honoureth me*, bearing witness to my divine mission and authority, and expressing his full approbation of me as his Son, *of whom ye say that he is your God*; glorying as descendants from the patriarchs, in your covenant relation to him. *Yet ye have not known him*, his nature and perfections, his mind and will; *but I know him*, am most intimately acquainted with his person and counsels; *and if I should say I know him not*, and should retract ought that I have advanced concerning the perfect knowledge I have of him from eternity, *I shall be a liar like unto you*: *but I know him, and keep his saying*; always doing the things which please him, and acting in exact conformity with his mind and will. *Your father Abraham rejoiced*, or was very desirous, to see my day, and longed for my coming in the human nature to redeem the world: *and he saw it by faith*, though distant, yet surely approaching. He beheld in Isaac born; in the promise made to his seed; in Melchizedek; in the sacrifice of his son, and the ram provided in his stead; and in the visible appearance of the Lord himself, Gen. xviii. 2, &c. in all these he beheld the incarnate Saviour, *and was glad*, exulted in the glorious hope of my appearing in the fulness of time. (See the Annotations.) *Note*; (1.) The affectation of honour, and court- ing men's admiration, are the sure evidences of not deserv- ing it. (2.) What was Christ's labour, must be ours, to advance not our own, but God's glory. (3.) Many profess to know God, who in works deny him, and against whom their very privileges and opportunities of knowing him well rise up to their greater condemnation. (4.) The surest evidence of a right knowledge of God is our practical improvement of his sayings, and submitting to his blessed word and will. (5.) The appearing of Christ is the desire and delight of the faithful, as it will be the terror of the wicked; and he will come, and will not tarry. The Lord is at hand. (6.) They who by faith now look to Jesus, and perseveringly wait for him, shall soon see him face to face, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

5. With sovereign contempt do the Jews treat this declaration, perverting his words, as if he had asserted, that Abraham

12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

13 ¶ They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

Abraham saw him in the flesh. *Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?* or he thee; when he has been dead above two thousand years? How ridiculous the pretension! They judged of Christ's age probably by his look: incessant labour perhaps had marred his visage, and brought on, before their time, the wrinkles of age.

6. He plainly asserts to them his eternal self-existence, as an answer to their objection. *Verily, verily I say unto you,* as the most certain and undoubted truth, *Before Abraham was born,* or had a being, *I am,* the same unchangeable Jehovah, who by this name made myself known to Moses in the bush, Exod. iii. 14. and therefore must be infinitely superior and prior to Abraham.

7. Enraged beyond all bounds of forbearance at such an assertion, which they regarded as the most impudent blasphemy, the Jews *took up stones to cast at him,* intending to murder him on the spot: *but Jesus hid himself,* by his divine power probably withholding their eyes from perceiving him, *and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by,* escaping their fury, because his hour was not yet come. *Note;* (1.) It is frequently prudent to hide ourselves when we see the approaching danger, unless duty or conscience clearly calls us to put on the crown of martyrdom. (2.) They who drive Christ from them, are but justly treated, when they are abandoned by him to judicial blindness and hardness of heart.

CHAP. IX.

*Ver. 1. And as Jesus passed by, he saw, &c.]* Some would refer this to the last words of the foregoing chapter, and hence infer the unspeakable benignity of Jesus, which no affronts or indignities of the Jews could weary out, or prevent from dispensing blessings. Others, however, seem with better reason to suppose this event not immediately consequent to what is related in the former chapter.

*Ver. 2, 3. His disciples asked him, saying, &c.]* Some have thought that the Jews, having derived from the Egyptians the doctrines of the pre-existence and transmigration of souls, (see Wisd. viii. 19, 20.) supposed that men were punished in this world for the sins that they had committed in their pre-existent state. From the account which Josephus gives of this matter, it appears that the Pharisees believed that the souls of *good men only* went into other bodies, whereas the souls of the wicked, they thought, went immediately into eternal punishment,—an opinion somewhat different from that which the disciples expressed on this occasion. For, if they spake accurately, they must have thought that, in his pre-existent state, this person had been a sinner, and was now punished for his sins then committed, by having his soul thrust into a blind body. Nevertheless, from what they say, we cannot certainly determine whether they thought that, in his pre-existent state, this person had lived on earth as a man, which is the notion that Josephus describes; or, whether they fancied he had pre-existed in some higher order of being, which was the Platonic notion. The disciples might possibly have been acquainted with these principles; and might have put the question in the text, on purpose to know our Lord's de-

cision on so curious a subject; though, for my own part, I am rather inclined to think that the disciples were men of too little erudition to have imbibed notions of this sort. "The apostles," says Theophylact, after Chrysostom, "had not received those trifling notions of the Gentiles, that the soul can sin in a pre-existent state, and so be punished in another body for the faults committed in a former one: for, being plain fishermen, it is not to be supposed that they had heard these things, which were the doctrines of the philosophers." Several kinds of diseases, particularly *blindness*, were esteemed by the Jews to be the punishments of sin; and our Lord's disciples, from the address which he made to the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, ch. v. 14. might be confirmed in this prejudice, and ask him whether, as this man was *born blind*, he must not be supposed to be punished for the sins of his *parents*. Another opinion was imbibed by the Jews during their captivity, that all their sufferings descended upon them for the crimes of their fathers, and were wholly unmerited on their part. It was this opinion which drew from the divinely-inspired pen of Ezekiel that severe remonstrance and animated vindication of the ways of Providence in his 18th chapter. Some remains of this opinion might have possessed the minds of the apostles. They fancied that they saw in the man born blind, a case which could not be accounted for, but by supposing him to suffer for a parent's guilt. *Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?* The question they thought admitted but of one reply; the crime must precede the punishment: the punishment in this case commenced before there could be any personal guilt in the sufferer: it must therefore descend from the parent's sin. But our Lord shewed them that the case admitted of a very different solution; *Jesus answered, neither hath this man, &c.* "Suffering is not in this case the effect of sin. This private calamity is permitted for a public good, to give me an opportunity of displaying to the world that divine power by which I act." See ch. xi. 4.

*Ver. 4. I must work the works, &c.]* called in the preceding verse *the works of God,—while it is day;* that is, "while I have an opportunity;" *the night cometh, &c.* "death is approaching, which as it puts a period in general to human labours, so will it close the scene of such miracles as these, and remove me, as man, from the converse and society of men." It was now the sabbath-day, and Jesus was about to perform a miracle, in which a small degree of servile work was to be done. Clay was to be made of earth and spittle, and the blind man's eyes were to be anointed with it; wherefore, before he began, he told his disciples, that they need not be surprised when they saw him perform miracles of that kind on the sabbath; for though they might imagine that he could easily defer them till the holy rest was expired, he had so little time to remain on earth, that he judged it expedient to embrace every opportunity of working miracles which offered. Besides, Jesus might choose to work this miracle on the sabbath, knowing that the time when it was performed, would occasion it to be more strictly inquired into by the Pharisees



14 And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 5. 9, 16. Luke, 6. 7, 9. & 13. 10—16. & 14. 1—5.

15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said

<sup>m</sup> Ch. 5. 9. Mark, 1. 21, 25, 26. Luke, 6. 7. & 13. 14. & 14. 3. 4. Ver. 16.

Pharisees; and of consequence would tend to make it more generally known, as we find was really the case.

*Ver. 5. As long as I am in the world, &c.]* Because our Lord was going to confer sight on a man who was *born blind*, he thence took occasion to speak of himself, as one appointed to give light likewise to the darkened minds of men. Hence we learn that our Lord's miracles were designed, not only as proofs of his mission, but to be specimens of the power which he possessed as Messiah. For example, by feeding the multitude with meat that perished, he signified that he was come to quicken and nourish mankind with the *bread of life*, that sovereign cordial and salutary nutriment of the soul. His giving sight to the blind was a lively emblem of the efficacy of his doctrines, to illuminate the blinded understandings of men. His healing their bodies, represented his power to heal their souls; and was a specimen of his authority to *forgive sins*, as it was a real, though but a partial removal of the punishment of sin. His casting out devils, was an earnest of his final victory over Satan and all his associates. His raising particular persons from the dead, was the beginning of his triumphs over death, and a demonstration of his ability to accomplish a general resurrection; and, to give no more examples, his curing all promiscuously who applied to him, shewed that he was come not to condemn the world, but to save even the chief of sinners. Accordingly, at performing these miracles, or soon after, while the memory of them was fresh in the minds of his hearers, we often find him turning his discourse to the spiritual things which were signified by them, as in the case before us. See the *Inferences* on Matth. ix.

*Ver. 6. He spat on the ground, &c.]* We are not to imagine that he did this, because it any way contributed towards the cure. Like the other external actions which accompanied his miracles, it was designed to signify to the blind man, that his sight was coming to him, not by accident, but by the gift of the Person who spake to him. The general reason which Cyril has assigned for Christ's touching the lepers, his taking hold of the dead, his breathing on the apostles, when he communicated to them the Holy Ghost, and such like bodily actions wherewith he accompanied his miracles, may be mentioned here: He thinks that our Lord's body was, by the inhabitation of the Divinity, endued with a vivifying quality, to shew men in a visible manner, that his human nature was by no means to be excluded from the business of their salvation. See the note on Mark, vii. 32, 33. and the *Inferences* at the end of this chapter.

*Ver. 7. Go, wash in the pool of Siloam,]* Concerning these waters, the evangelist observes, that their name *Siloam*, or according to the Hebrew orthography, *Shiloah*, signifies a *thing that is sent*. This remark, Grotius, Dr. Clarke, and others, think was designed to insinuate that Christ's command to the blind man was symbolical, teaching him, that he owed his cure to the Messiah, one of whose names was *Shiloh*, the *sent of God*.—The waters here mentioned, came from a spring that was in the rocks of mount Zion, and

were gathered into two great basins: the lower called the *pool of fountains*, and the upper *Shiloah*, Neh. iii. 15. because the waters which filled it were *sent to them by the goodness of God*, from the bowels of the earth; for in Judea, springs of water, being very rare, were esteemed peculiar blessings. Hence the waters of Shiloah were made by the prophet a type of David's descendants, and, among the rest, of Messiah; If. viii. 6. Christ's benefits are fitly represented by the image of *water*; for his blood purifies the soul from the foulest stains of sin, just as water cleanses the body from its defilements. Moreover, his doctrine imparts wisdom, and affords refreshment to the spirit, like that which cool draughts of water impart to one who is ready to faint away with thirst and heat. But, beside the emblematical reason mentioned by the evangelist, Jesus might order the blind man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam, because there were generally great numbers of people there, who, seeing the man led thither blind, having his eyes bedaubed with clay, must have gathered round him to inquire into the cause of so strange an appearance. These having examined the man, and found that he was stone-blind, they could not but be prodigiously struck by his relation, when, after washing in the pool, they saw the new faculty instantly imparted to him: especially if his relation was confirmed by the person who led him, as in all probability it would be. For it is reasonable to suppose, that his conductor was one of those who stood by when Jesus anointed his eyes, and ordered him to wash them in Siloam. Accordingly, when *he went away, and washed, and came seeing*, that is, walked by the assistance of his own eyes, without being led, the miracle was earnestly and accurately inquired into by all his acquaintance, and so universally known, that it became the general topic of conversation at Jerusalem, as the evangelist informs us, *ver. 8, 9*. Nay, it was accurately examined by the *literati* or *doctors* there; for the man was brought before them; they looked at his eyes; they inquired what had been done to them; they sent for his parents, to know from them whether he had been really born blind; and they excommunicated the man, because he would not join them in saying that Jesus, who had cured him, was an impostor. The expression at the end of this verse, *He came seeing*, with eyes so remarkably strengthened that they could immediately bear the light, is a great heightening of the miracle. Perhaps this man had been taught by the example of Naaman, not to despise the most improbable means, when prescribed in the view of a miracle: but the miracle implied a divine energy and interference in every respect.

*Ver. 8. Which before had seen him, &c.]* Who had seen him before, when he was blind.

*Ver. 9. Others said, He is like him:]* The circumstance of having received his sight, would give him an air of spirit and cheerfulness, which would render him something unlike what he was before, and might occasion a little doubt to those who were not well acquainted with him. See the *Inferences* at the end of the chapter.

unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a finner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents

of him that had received his sight.

19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

20 His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

22 These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 3. 2. Ver. 33. <sup>o</sup> Ch. 5. 9, 16. Luke, 6, 7, 9. & 13. 10-16. & 14. 1-5. with Exod. 31. 12. & 35. 2, 3. Numb. 15. 32-36. Exod. 10. 10. <sup>p</sup> Ch. 7. 12, 47. & 10. 19. <sup>q</sup> Ch. 1. 21. & 4. 19. & 6. 14. Deut. 18. 15-18. Acts, 3. 22. & 10. 36, 38. <sup>r</sup> Gen. 19. 14. <sup>s</sup> Luke, 24. 25. <sup>t</sup> Ch. 7. 13. & 19. 38. & 20. 19. \* Members of the sanhedrim.

Ver. 11. *A man that is called Jesus, &c.*] It appears from this verse, that the beggar knew that it was Jesus who spake to him. Probably he distinguished him by his voice, having formerly heard him preach; or he might know him by the information of the disciples. Hence he cheerfully submitted to the operation, though in itself a very unlikely means of obtaining sight.

Ver. 14. *And opened his eyes.*] This phrase shews that the man's blindness proceeded not from any fault or defect in the organs of vision, but from his entire want of those organs: his eyelids were grown together, or contracted, as is the case of those who are born without eyes. Hence Jesus is said to have *opened the man's eyes*, to intimate, that in this miracle he *made*, rather than *recovered*, his organs of vision. Dr. Lightfoot has shewn, that anointing the eyes on the sabbath-day with any kind of medicine, was forbidden to the Jews by the tradition of the elders. It was certainly a malicious intention to expose Jesus to the rage of the sanhedrim (who are meant by the Pharisees), ver. 13. 15, &c., which occasioned them to bring the blind man before them.

Ver. 16. *Therefore said some of the Pharisees,*] On hearing the man's account of the miracle, the Pharisees declared that the author of it must certainly be an impostor, because he had violated the sabbath in performing it. Nevertheless, others of them, more just and candid in their way of thinking, gave it as their opinion that no impostor could possibly do a miracle of that kind, because it was too great and beneficial, for any evil being to have either the inclination or the power to perform it. If Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, both members of the sanhedrim, were now present, they would of course distinguish themselves on this occasion. Indeed, the observation seems perfectly in their manner. Gamaliel too must have been on their side, on the principles which he afterwards avowed. See Acts, v. 38, 39.

Ver. 17. *They say unto the blind man*] He is so named after having received his sight, agreeable to the scripture phraseology. Thus Matth. x. 3. *Matthew* is called *the apostle*, after he had left off that employment; and Matth. vi. 6. *Simon* is called *the leper*, after he was cured.

The next clause should be rendered, *What sayest thou of him, since he hath opened, or for having opened thine eyes?* This question was proposed to the man, not so much to know his opinion, as to divert the members of the sanhedrim from carrying on their altercation any further. The man's answer, that Christ was a *prophet*, contained not only a testimony of his being endued with a power of working miracles, but likewise that he had a right to dispense with the strict observation of the sabbath; because a prophet, according to their own traditions, was supposed to be invested with such a power.

Ver. 18. *But the Jews did not believe, &c.*] Nothing is more remarkable than the power and goodness of Providence, throughout this transaction, which turned the malice of the Jews to the praise of HIM, whom they wanted to prove an impostor, and whom they longed to destroy. The neighbours of the man who had known him to have been blind for many years,—his parents,—the blind man himself, though intimidated by the sanhedrim, before whom they were solemnly examined, all unanimously persist in asserting the identity of the man and his former blindness: and some of the sanhedrim likewise, as appears from ver. 17. were convinced of the reality of the miracle. By suspending their belief, the Jews brought forth all the proofs which could be brought to establish the truth of the man's evidence, and to clear both him and Jesus from any suspicion or shadow of collusion. Their motive was malice, their intent was destruction; but the result was the establishment of truth, and a glorious vindication of the character of Christ. See the next note.

Ver. 22. *These words spake his parents because, &c.*] As the man who had been born blind, knew who had opened his eyes; without doubt he had given his parents an account both of the name of his benefactor, and of the manner in which he had conferred the great blessing upon him. Besides, having repeated these particulars frequently to his neighbours and acquaintance, ver. 11. we can conceive no reason why he should conceal them from his parents. The truth is, they were ungrateful enough to the Lord Jesus, to conceal what they knew, through a pusillanimous fear of the Jews, because by an act of the court

already, that ' if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age ; ask him.

24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, " Give God the praise : we know that this man is \* a sinner.

25 He answered and said, Whether he be a

sinner or no, I know not : one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

26 ' Then said they to him again, What did he to thee ? how opened he thine eyes ?

27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear : wherefore would ye hear it again ? will ye also be his disciples ?

28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple ; but we are ' Moses' disciples.

29 We know that <sup>b</sup> God spake unto Moses :

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 12. 42. & 16. 2. & 7. 13. & 19. 7. 1f. 65. 5. Rev. 13. 17. Acts, 4. 18. & 5. 40. <sup>b</sup> Joshua, 7. 19. 1 Sam. 6. 5. Rom. 16. 18. <sup>c</sup> Ver. 16. Gen. 13. 13. Luke, 7. 39 & 15. 2. <sup>d</sup> Jer. 20. 10. & 18. 18. <sup>e</sup> Zech. 7. 11, 12. Mat. 7. 6. Prov. 26. 4, 5. <sup>f</sup> Ch. 5. 45. & 7. 19. Acts, 6. 11, 14. Rom. 2. 17. <sup>g</sup> Exod. ii. Deut. xxxiv. Mal. 4. 4.

court it was resolved, that whosoever acknowledged Jesus to be the Christ, should be excommunicated. The Jews had two sorts of excommunication ; one was what they called *Niddai*, which separated the person under it four cubits from the society of others ; so that it hindered him from conversing familiarly with them, but left him free at that distance, either to expound, or hear the law expounded in the synagogue. There was another kind of excommunication called *Shematta*, from *shem*, which signifies a name in general ; but by way of eminence was appropriated to God, whose awful name denotes all possible perfection. *Shematta* therefore answers to the Syriac *Maranatta*,—*The Lord cometh*, a form of execration used by the apostle, (1 Cor. xvi. 22.) and supposed to be derived from Enoch, because St. Jude quotes a saying of his, which begins with the word *Maranatta*, ver. 14. *Behold, the Lord cometh, with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, &c.* This kind of excommunication is said to have excluded the person under it from the synagogue for ever. We have the form of it, Ezra, x. 7, &c. Neh. xiii. 25. being that which was inflicted on the Jews who refused to repudiate their *strange wives*. It seems to have been the censure also which the council threatened against those who should acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, and which they actually inflicted on the beggar ; for the words *ἐξέβαλον αὐτον*, ver. 34, 35. apply better to this kind than to the other. Probably also it was the *shematta* which our Lord speaks of, John, xvi. 2. when he says to his disciples, *ἀποσυναγωγῆς ποιήσουσιν ὑμᾶς* ;—*They shall put you out of the synagogues*. According to Selden, the *synagogue* from which persons under this censure were excluded, was every assembly whatever, whether religious or civil ; the excommunicated person not being allowed to converse familiarly with his brethren, although he was not excluded either from public prayers or sacrifices. But in this latter opinion, the learned writer has not many followers. The excommunications of the primitive Christians seem to have resembled those of the Jews in several particulars ; for they excluded excommunicated persons from their religious assemblies, and from all communion in sacred things ; and when they restored them to the privileges of the faithful, it was with much difficulty.

Ver. 24. *Give God the praise :*] " Give glory to God, in whose presence you now are, by making a full confes-

sion of your fraud and collusion with *this man* ; for we know that he is an impostor, and have all the reason in the world to believe that you are his accomplice." There could not be a greater insult on the character of our Redeemer, than to be pronounced a known, scandalous sinner by this high court of judicature ; an infamy which has seldom, in any civilized country, fallen on any person not legally convicted. But how does this infamy fall upon their own heads when we recollect that they asserted without proof ; that they admitted their own blind malice, instead of evidence.

Ver. 25. *Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not :*] In this answer of the beggar there is a strong and beautiful irony, founded on good sense ; and therefore it must have been felt by the doctors, though they dissembled their resentment for a little while, hoping that by gentle means they might prevail with the man to confess the supposed fraud of this miracle. See the next note.

Ver. 27. *He answered them, I have told you already,*] The resistance of the rulers to the truth, appeared so criminal to the man, that, laying aside all fear, he spoke to them with great freedom : " I have told you already, and you did not hear, that is, believe ; or, as others would read it, did you not hear ?—wherefore would you hear it again ?" &c. In this answer the irony was more plain and pointed : " Are you so affected with the miracle, and do you entertain so high an opinion of the author of it, that you take pleasure in hearing the account of it repeated, from an inclination of professing yourselves his disciples, who glory in being masters and teachers ?"

Ver. 28, 29. *But we are Moses' disciples, &c.*] Hereby they craftily but most maliciously and falsely insinuated, that there was such an opposition between Moses and Jesus, that it was impossible for the same person to be the disciple of both. *We know that God spake unto Moses*, say they ; but how did they know this ?—Was it from the tradition which they had received concerning him ?—Was it from the intrinsic proofs that might be drawn from his writings ? Or was it from the miracles that he wrought in confirmation of his mission ? Consider all these proofs with respect to Jesus : they all looked upon John as a person of integrity, and some indeed honoured him with the title of a prophet ; but John testified that Jesus was the Lamb of God, the beloved Son of the Father, and that he had heard God himself declare as much, when Christ

this fellow, <sup>d</sup> we know not from whence  
 The man answered and said unto them,  
<sup>e</sup> herein is a marvellous thing, that ye  
 not from whence he is, and yet he hath  
 mine eyes.  
 Now we know that God heareth not  
 s: but if any man be a worshipper of  
 and doeth his will, him <sup>e</sup> he heareth.  
 Since the world began was it not heard

<sup>a</sup> that any man opened the eyes of one that  
 was born blind.  
 33 If this man were not of God he could  
 do nothing.  
 34 ¶ They answered and said unto him,  
<sup>i</sup> Thou wast altogether born in sins, and <sup>k</sup> dost  
 thou teach us? And they <sup>l</sup> cast him out.  
 35 ¶ Jesus heard that they had cast him out;  
<sup>m</sup> and when he had found him, he said unto  
 him, <sup>n</sup> Dost thou believe on the <sup>o</sup> Son of God?

<sup>d</sup> 15. 2. & 23. 2. Ver. 16. 24. <sup>e</sup> Ch. 8. 14. <sup>f</sup> Ch. 3. 12. Mat. 11. 5. If 35. 4, 5. 2 Cor. 4. 3. 4. 1 Cor. 2. 14. <sup>g</sup> Job,  
 35. 12. Pf. 18. 41. & 66. 18. Prov. 1. 28. & 15. 8, 29. & 28. 9. If. 1. 15. Jer. 11. 11. Ezek. 8. 18. Micah. 3. 4. Zech. 7. 13. Jer.  
 14. 12. <sup>h</sup> Pf. 34. 6, 15. & 91. 15. James, 5. 16-18. Pf. 18. 6. & 50. 15. & 65. 2. <sup>i</sup> If. 35. 5. & 42. 7. Mat. 11. 5. with  
 Ver. 2. Acts, 28. 4. Luke, 13. 1-5. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 7. 48, 49. & 11. 49. <sup>l</sup> Or excommunicated him. Ver. 22. Ch. 12. 42. & 16. 2.  
<sup>m</sup> Ch. 5. 14. If. 65. 1. Pf. 27. 10. & 46. 1. Gen. 22. 14. <sup>n</sup> Ch. 3. 15-18, 36. & 11. 25, 26, 40. & 16. 31. & 1. 50. Acts,  
 Luke, 8. 25. <sup>o</sup> Pf. 2. 7, 12. Mat. 3. 17, 14, 33. & 16. 16. & 26. 63. Ch. 10. 30.

aptized by him. The doctrines of Jesus were equally  
 y of a divine messenger with those of Moses; they  
 more spiritual, and consequently more highly suitable  
 e nature of God, who is a Spirit. They were in-  
 d not for one particular nation, and therefore par-  
 rly suitable to the character of God, considered as the  
 r of mankind. The religion that he established was  
 eal or temporal, like that of the Jews, nor, on that  
 ant, confined to a particular spot, or to be practised  
 r particular circumstances; but to be professed every-  
 e, and to be extended throughout the habitable world.  
 at still more confirms our Saviour's divine mission is,  
 he was predicted in every link of the great chain of  
 hefies which runs through the Old Testament; and  
 Moses himself speaks of him as a lawgiver, who  
 ld supersede his constitution, and ought to be heard  
 he latter Jews, as he himself had been by their fa-  
 s; yet notwithstanding they say, they knew that God spake  
 Moses, but had received no credentials to convince them  
 he divine mission of Jesus. Again, if they believed the  
 ion of Moses on the evidence of miracles, credibly at-  
 ed indeed, but performed two thousand years before  
 y were born, it was much more reasonable, on their  
 n principles, to believe the mission of Jesus, on at least  
 ual miracles, wrought daily among them, when they  
 ght, in many instances, have been eye-witnesses to the  
 ts; and one of which, notwithstanding all their malice,  
 ey were here compelled to own, or, at least, found them-  
 ves utterly unable to disprove. Their partiality herein  
 as inexcusable; nor was the inconsistency of this per-  
 rse people less glaring: for, at one time, they make their  
 owing whence Jesus was, an objection to his being the  
 Messiah; and here they object to his being the Messiah,  
 om their not knowing whence he was. But it is the  
 ature of malice and of error always to confute and contra-  
 ct themselves. See ch. vii. 27, 28.  
 Ver. 30, 31. The man answered] Utterly illiterate as he  
 as!—and with what strength and clearness of reason!  
 hus God had opened the eyes of his understanding, as  
 ell as his bodily eyes. "Why, herein is a marvellous thing,  
 that ye,—the teachers and guides of the people, should  
 not know that a man, who hath wrought a miracle, the

" like of which was never heard of before, must be from  
 heaven, sent by God; for we, even we of the populace,  
 know that God heareth not sinners, so as to answer their  
 prayers in this manner." This indeed was a truth uni-  
 versally allowed: now they all knew that God had heard  
 Jesus by the work that he had wrought, which had been  
 confirmed beyond any possibility of doubt: therefore it  
 followed by plain consequence, that Jesus was not a sinner,  
 but of God, since otherwise he could do nothing. This argu-  
 ment was irrefragable.  
 Ver. 32, 33. Since the world began was it not heard] Phi-  
 losophers are unanimously agreed, that it is impossible to  
 give sight by any natural means to one who is born blind.  
 And indeed the Jewish rabbies themselves reckon it among  
 the characteristics of the Messiah, that he should open the eyes  
 of the blind. The honest courage of this man, in adhering  
 to the truth, though he knew the consequence, ver. 22,  
 gives him a claim to the title of confessor; and it is unne-  
 cessary to point out to any reader of this portion of scrip-  
 ture the closeness, strength, and clearness of his reasoning.  
 We may however learn from it, that a plain man, void of  
 the advantages of learning and education, but who has  
 honest dispositions, is in a fairer way to understand truth,  
 than a whole council of learned doctors, who are under  
 the strong influence of prejudice.  
 Ver. 35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out;] Many  
 harmonists suppose, that our Lord conferred the faculty of  
 sight on the blind man at the feast of Tabernacles, when  
 he left Jerusalem; and that, returning thither at the feast  
 of Dedication, he was then told that the council had ex-  
 communicated the man; at which time he resolved to make  
 him full amends for the injury that he had suffered. Accord-  
 ingly, having found him, he discovered himself to him as  
 the Messiah, and invited him to believe on him. We have  
 heretofore observed the caution used by our Lord in dis-  
 covering himself to be the Messiah: here he makes use of  
 a very unusual degree of freedom, ver. 37. which may well  
 be accounted for, by considering the extraordinary circum-  
 stances of the case, this being the first instance in which  
 any one had incurred the great inconvenience attending a  
 sentence of excommunication out of zeal for the honour of  
 Christ. No doubt this passed privately between our Lord  
 and

36 He answered and said, <sup>p</sup> Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

37 And Jesus said unto him, <sup>q</sup> Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

38 And he said, <sup>r</sup> Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

39 ¶ And Jesus said, <sup>s</sup> For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.

40 And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, <sup>t</sup> Are we blind also?

<sup>p</sup> Prov. 30. 3, 4. Song, 5. 9. & 6. 1. <sup>q</sup> Ch. 4. 26. & 8. 25, 58. <sup>r</sup> Mark. 9. 24. Ch. 11. 27. & 20. 28. Pl. 2. 12. & 45. 11. <sup>s</sup> Ch. 5. 22, 27. & 12. 47. & 3. 17. Luke, 2. 34. 2 Cor. 2. 16. & 4. 3, 4, 6. & 3. 14. Ver. 25, 36, 38. Mat. 11. 25. & 13. 13. <sup>t</sup> Ver. 24, 34. Ch. 7. 48, 49. Rom. 2. 19, 28.

and the blind man, though presently afterwards others joined the conversation. See ver. 39, 40.

*Ver. 37, 38. Jesus said, &c.]* This passage of the gospel well deserves serious attention, as it is of great force to prove the Divinity of our Saviour, who here declares himself in express terms *τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, the true, eternal, only-begotten Son of God*, so of necessity equal with God, even upon the concession of the Pharisees; as he abundantly proved himself by this mighty work, opening the eyes of a man born blind, by his own, and not any delegated power, a work the like to which was never even supposed to have been wrought by any man since the world began. See on ver. 32. Jesus here, too, requires of the blind man to believe in him, the Son of God; but he who believes and puts his confidence in any creature, however great, however exalted, is *accursed* by the declaration of God himself. See Jer. xxvii. 15. Jesus therefore was God: moreover, he admitted the worship and adoration of this man, which is due, and must be paid only to the one true God; *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* The God-man corporeally present to the eyes of this person, not only required his faith, but admitted his worship; he must therefore either have been a notorious impostor, or the very and true God; God and man in one person.

*Ver. 39. And Jesus said, For judgment, &c.]* In these words directed to the people who happened to be present, or to come up while Jesus was talking with the blind man, our Lord alluded to the cure lately performed; but his meaning was spiritual, representing not the design of his coming, but the effect which it would have on the minds of men. It would shew what character and disposition every man was of. The teachable and honest, though they were as much in the dark with respect to religion, and the knowledge of the scriptures, as the blind man had been with respect to the light of the sun, should be spiritually enlightened by his coming: whereas those who in their own opinion were wise, and learned, and clear-sighted, should appear to be, what they really were, *blind*, that is, quite ignorant and foolish.

*Ver. 40, 41. Some of the Pharisees—heard these words.]* The Pharisees present, hearing him speak thus, knew that he meant them in particular, especially from the word *see*, in the former verse, *seers* being a common appellation by which the wise and learned among them were distinguished. As their sect was held in great veneration by the common people, because of their extraordinary skill in the law, they reply to our Lord with the greatest disdain, “Do you imagine that we are blind, like the rude

“vulgar? We, who are their teachers, and have taken such pains to acquire the knowledge of the scriptures?” See Acts, xxii. 3. Jesus told them, ver. 41. that they would not have been to blame for rejecting him, if they had not had faculties and opportunities to discern the proofs of his mission. In that respect they were not blind. Nay, he acknowledged that they were superior to the populace in point of learning; but, at the same time, he assured them, that, because their hearts were averse from receiving and acknowledging the truth, they were altogether *blind*; and that an enlightened understanding greatly aggravates the guilt of a blind heart. What Jesus said to them, may be said to every one; no error can excuse from guilt, but what is invincible: that is to say, nothing will excuse us, but what argues a thorough, unperverted, honest, and good disposition—nothing, in short, that we might and ought to have prevented, and which is owing to our voluntary neglect. All voluntary error must on that very account be criminal error; and if error be criminal, only because it is voluntary, it hence directly follows, that the malignity of it must increase according to the degree in which it is voluntary; or, which is the same, it must always increase in proportion as it was in our power to have avoided it in our several stations, and with our respective abilities and advantages. From the argument here pursued, we may easily see that it was not, it could not be, the intention of Christ in the words, *if ye were blind, ye should have no sin*, to represent all ignorance as innocent; but that he only speaks of such instances of it as are involuntary and insuperable. The latter part of the passage suggests an observation of a different kind, namely, that sins committed against knowledge are most highly aggravated; and that a corruption of manners, and increasing wickedness in an enlightened age, are attended with peculiar circumstances of reproach and infamy. To this the universal consent of mankind in every age has been given, yea even of the vicious; which is a further argument why the knowledge, experience, and practice of religion should ever be inseparable; and that if we pretend to an enlightened mind, and right sentiments of holiness and piety, and pursue, at the same time, immoral courses, we are not only more criminal, but much more despicable, if our pretence be just, than the vicious without that knowledge.

*Inferences.—*The man was born blind: this cure requires not art, but power; a power no less than infinite and divine. Such are we, O God, by nature, blind to all spiritual

Jesus said unto them, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

<sup>u</sup> Ch. 15, 22, 24. Heb. 10. 26. Prov. 26. 12, 16. If. 42. 19, 20.

ings: it must be thou alone, who canst bestow on  
ation.

nd man sat begging;—and where should he thus  
ear the temple? Piety and charity ever dwell  
her; the two tables were both of one quarry.  
re best disposed to mercy towards our brethren,  
ave either craved or acknowledged God's mercy  
s. If we go to the temple to beg of God, how  
ny mites, who hope for talents?

id Jesus move a foot, but to some purpose. He  
at his virtue stayed. The blind man could not see  
s the blind man: his goodness prevents us, and  
r supplies to our wants. O Saviour, why should  
tate thee in this merciful improvement of our  
e be to those eyes that care only to gaze upon their  
pomp, or wealth; and cannot abide to glance  
es of a Lazarus, the sorrows of a Joseph, the dun-  
eremy, or the blind beggar at the temple's gate.  
ples see the blind man too, but with different  
er, say they, *who did sin, this man or his parents,*  
*in blind?* (See the Annotations.) How easily,  
may the best miscarry with a common error!  
thankful for our own illumination, if we do not  
arity and pity upon the gross misconceptions  
ren.

ees, yet will he wink at this great error of  
. We hear neither chiding nor conviction.  
uld have enlightened their minds at once, as  
orld, will yet do it by due leisure, and only  
nself here with a mild solution: *Neither this*  
*parents.* O Saviour, we learn nothing of thee,  
not meekness. It is the spirit of lenity that  
and confirm the lapse.

er is positive: neither the sin of the man, nor  
s, bereaved him of his eyes: there was a higher  
glory which God meant to win unto himself  
All God's afflictive acts are not punish-  
are for the benefit of the creature, whe-  
ation, or prevention, or reformation: all are  
either of his own divine power, justice, or

at so great a work should be ushered in with  
the way being made, our Lord addresses  
miracle; a miracle not more in the thing  
the manner of performance.

r used was *clay*, ver. 6. What could be  
more unfit, to all human apprehension? O  
often didst thou cure blindness by thy word  
ft by thy touch. Even thus, easily couldst  
ed here; for most assuredly the virtue must  
thee, none in the means: the utter, the evi-  
tion of the help to the cure, adds glory and  
Divine Operator; and had not the Jews been  
an the poor beggar whom thou curedst, more  
than this attempered clay, they had in this  
and acknowledged thy Divinity.

What must the blind man think, when he felt the cold  
clay upon the hollow sockets of his eyes? Or, since he  
could not conceive what an eye was, what must the be-  
holders think to see that hollowness thus filled up?—Is  
this the way to give eyes, to convey sight? Why did not  
the earth itself see with this clay, as well as the man?  
What is there to *binder sight*, if this can *produce it*?—

Yet with these contrarieties must the faith be exercised,  
where God intends the blessings of a cure.

All things receive their virtue from divine institution:  
*Go, wash in the pool of SILOAM* is the injunction of this  
blessed Saviour; and had not the man repaired thither, no  
wonder if he had still been blind.—Thou, O God, hast set  
apart the ordinances of thy gospel; thy blessing is annexed  
to them; hence is the ground of all our use, and of their  
efficacy. Hadst thou so instituted, *Jordan* would as well  
have healed blindness, and *Siloam* leprosy.

That the man might be capable of such a miracle, his  
faith is set at work. He is led to the pool; he washes;  
he sees. Oh what must this man think, when his eyes  
were now first given him? What a new world around  
him! How must heaven and earth, and all the creatures,  
have caught his wondering sight, and not more pleased  
than astonished him! Lo! thus shall we, if faithful, be  
affected, and more, when the scales of our mortality being  
done away, we shall see as we are seen; when we shall  
behold the blessedness of that other world, the glory of  
saints and angels, the infinite majesty of the Son of God,  
and the incomprehensible brightness of the all-glorious  
Deity.

It could not be but that many eyes had been witnesses  
of this man's want of eyes. He sat begging at one of the  
temple gates. His very blindness made him noted; de-  
formities and infirmities of body more easily both drawing  
and fixing the eye, than an ordinary symmetry of parts.

Purposely, without doubt, did our Saviour make choice  
of such a subject for his miracle: a man so poor, so pub-  
lic! The glory of the work could not have reached so far,  
had it been done to the wealthiest citizen of Jerusalem:  
neither was it without its use, that the act and the manner  
are doubted of, and inquired into by the beholders. *Is*  
*not this he who sat begging?* *Some said, It is he; others said,*  
*It is like him.*

No truths have received such full proofs as those which  
have been questioned. I marvel not that some of the  
neighbours, who were accustomed to see this dark visage  
of the beggar led by a guide, and directed by a staff, and  
now saw him walking confidently alone, and looking them  
cheerfully in the face, should doubt whether this were he.  
The miraculous cures of God work a sensible alteration  
in men, not more in their own apprehension, than in the  
judgment of others. Thus it is in the redress of spiritual  
blindness; the whole habit of the man is changed; in-  
fomuch, that now the neighbours can say, *Some, Is this the*  
*man? Others, It is like him,—It is not he.*

The late blind man soon resolves the doubt, *He said, I*  
*am*

## C H A P. X.

*Christ is the door and the good shepherd: divers opinions of him: he proveth by his works, that he is Christ the Son of God: escapeth the Jews, and goeth again beyond Jordan, where many believe on him.*

[Anno Domini 32.]

**V**ERILY, verily, I say unto you, <sup>a</sup> He that entereth not by the <sup>b</sup> door into the

sheepfold, but climbeth up some <sup>c</sup> other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

<sup>2</sup> But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

<sup>3</sup> To him <sup>d</sup> the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and <sup>e</sup> he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

<sup>4</sup> And when he putteth forth his own

<sup>a</sup> *Lk.* 56. 10—12. *Jer.* 23. 21, 32. *Ezek.* xlii. & 34. 2, 10. *Ver.* 10. *Ch.* 14. 6. <sup>b</sup> *Acts,* 20. 28. *1 Cor.* 12. 28. *Eph.* 4. 11—13. *Heb.* 5. 12. *1 Cor.* 16. 9. <sup>c</sup> *Pf.* 22. 22. & 40. 9, 10. *Ch.* 5. 37, 45. *Rom.* 8. 30.

*Heb.* 5. 4. *Mat.* 7. 15. & 23. 1—28. *Rom.* 10. 15. <sup>d</sup> *Lk.* 11. 2—4. *Heb.* 2. 4. *1 Pet.* 1. 4, 5. *Lf.* 61. 1. & 40. 11. <sup>e</sup> *Exod.* 33. 12, 17. *Phil.* 4. 3. *2 Tim.* 2. 19. *Lf.* 49. 10. *Rev.* 7. 17.

*am he.* He who now saw the light of the sun, would not ungratefully and unjustly hide from others the light of truth. O God, we are not worthy of spiritual sight, if we do not proclaim thy mercies aloud on the house-top, and praise thee in the great congregation.

Man is naturally inquisitive; and if there be any thing that transcends both art and nature, the more high and abstruse it is, the more busy we are to search into it. This thirst after hidden, yea, and forbidden knowledge, did once cost us dear, but where it is good and lawful to know, inquiry is commendable, as here in the Jews: *How were thine eyes opened?*

He that was so ready to profess himself the subject of the cure, is no niggard in proclaiming its author: *A man that is called Jesus, — anointed mine eyes, — sent me to wash, — and now I see.* He had heard Jesus speak; he felt his hand; as yet he could look no further; and hence he calls him *a man*: upon his next meeting, he sees *God* in this man. In matters of knowledge, we must be content to creep ere we can run.

“How did this man know what Jesus did? He was then stone blind; what distinctions could he yet make of persons and actions?” True; but yet the *blind man* wanted not the assistance of others’ eyes; their relation had assured him of the manner of his cure; and besides this, the contribution of his other senses gave him sufficient warrant thus to believe and report. O Saviour, we cannot see with our bodily eyes what thou hast done for the spiritual cure and redemption of our souls: but what are the monuments of thine evangelists and apostles, but the relations of the blind man’s guide, what and how thou hast wrought for us? On these we strongly rely; these we do no less confidently believe, than if our very eyes had been witnesses of what thou didst and sufferedst upon earth. Indeed, faith could have no place, if the ear were not allowed worthy of as much credit as the eye.

How could the neighbours fail to ask where he was who had wrought so strange a cure? Yet may we reasonably doubt that their solicitude intended him no favour; for, prejudiced against Christ, and partial to the Pharisees, they bring the late blind man before those professed enemies of the blessed Jesus.

Our Lord had fixed upon the sabbath for this cure: it is hard to find out any time wherein charity is unseasonable.—And yet this circumstance alone is ground of quarrel enough for these scrupulous, hypocritical, sanctimonious

wranglers; namely, that an act of mercy was done on that day.

I do not see the man, once restored, beg any more: no citizen of Jerusalem was richer than he. I hear him firmly defending the gracious author of his cure, against all the cavils of malicious Pharisees: I see him, as a resolute confessor, suffering excommunication for the name of Christ, and maintaining to the last the innocence and honour of so blessed a benefactor. I hear him read a divinity lecture to those who proudly *sat in Moses’ chair*; yea, and convince them of blindness, who punished him for seeing.

How can we fail almost to envy thee, O thou happy man, who, of a begging patient, provest an intrepid advocate for thy Saviour! whose gain of bodily sight, makes a glorious way for thy spiritual discernment! who hast lost a *synagogue*, and hast found a *heaven*! who, abandoned of sinners, and persecuted on all hands, art received into favour and protection by the Lord of life and glory.

**REFLECTIONS.**—1st, The connection between this chapter and the foregoing seems to speak as if the event here recorded immediately followed the preceding, though others suppose that they came to pass at the distance of three months from each other; the former happening at the feast of Tabernacles, this at the feast of Dedication, Chap. x. 22. We have in this chapter the cure of a poor blind man.

1. Jesus observed him as he passed by, and knew his pitiable case, that he was *blind from his birth*. Such are we by nature; born in sin, and conceived in wickedness; blind to every spiritual object, and utterly unable to find the way to eternal life and peace, till Jesus, the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, passeth by, or bestoweth upon us that light.

2. The disciples hereupon proposed a curious question to their Master. *Who did sin; this man or his parents, that he was born blind?* (See the Annotations.)

3. Christ answers their question, by way of rectifying their mistakes, and checking such censorious conclusions. *Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents*; not that they had never committed actual sin, nor been born in original corruption; but that it was not because of any particular crime which either had committed, that this blindness was inflicted; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him, and the Messiah be exalted in working a miraculous cure upon him. Note; (1.) We are not to judge of men’s sins by their sufferings, it being often the lot of

he goeth before them, and the sheep will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: <sup>k</sup> but

1. 29. & 16. 24. Heb. 13. 12. 1 Peter, 2. 1, 2. <sup>h</sup> Song, 2. 8. & 5. 2. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 7. 15. Prov. 19. 27. Eph. 4. 14. Gal. 1. 8. & 2. 8. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 6. 51. & 7. 36. & 8. 27, 43. 1 Cor. 2. 14. 2 Cor. 4. 3. 4. Eph. 4. 18. If. 29. 11, 12.

dearest children to be severely afflicted. (2.) God poses of his own glory to answer in those afflictive

He gives the reason of his readiness to help this poor I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is He was sent upon earth to do good to the bodies as souls of men; and therefore while his personal y lasted, this was his proper employment. The night when no man can work: when death should put a to his mortal days, his works of healing would then e. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of rld; both corporally giving eyes to the blind, and ng them to see the day; but more peculiarly in a al sense, as the Sun of Righteousness arisen with g in his wings, the only true light that can guide the dted souls of men into the paths of eternal life. Note: Life is our day of usefulness, the moment in which an serve and glorify God; we have need therefore o ligent to redeem the time, and lay ourselves out in lesse service. The night of death is near, when no can be done for Christ and for souls; how precious is every passing hour! (2.) What the sun is to the al world, that Christ is to the spiritual world: without all is darkness; we know nothing of God, or ourselves, true happiness, our proper work, or the great end of being; and he must not only shine upon us, but shine our hearts.

He gives sight to the blind man, and this in a way erent from the miracles that he usually performed, which e done with a word. He spat on the ground, and made of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man h the clay, and said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Si- m (which is by interpretation, Sent, and was) the figure of e Messiah and his kingdom, Isaiah, viii. 6. The blind an obeyed his orders, and instantly felt his eyes opened, d his sight perfectly good. Note; (1.) The word of e gospel is as this clay, unable of itself to communicate iritual light to the soul; but, when applied to the be- ver by the powerful hand of Jesus, becomes effectual o open the eyes of the mind. (2.) Obedient faith never ils of bringing relief. They who at Christ's command rseveringly wait upon him in the way of his ordinances, ill find their darkness enlightened, their doubts removed, heir weakness strengthened, their souls comforted.

2dly, We have, 1. The amazement of the neighbours, who could scarcely ersuade themselves that he was the same man, whom they ad seen, a poor blind beggar, by the way-side during so many years. Some affirmed that it was the same man; others doubted, though they owned the resemblance; till the man himself ended the dispute, by affirming that he was the very person. Note; They who have experienced the power

of the healing grace of Jesus upon their souls, should be ready to own it, to the glory of his great name.

2. In answer to their question, how he came to obtain his sight, after being blind from his birth, he informed them, that a man called Jesus, had made clay, anointed his eyes, sent him to the pool of Siloam to wash; and that instantly thereupon he received his sight. Note; If the opening the eyes of a dark body awakened such concern to inquire how it was done, much more ought the opening the eyes of the darkened minds of sinners to be matter of astonishment, and awaken our notice and inquiries.

3. They hereupon put another question to him, either out of desire to know this wonderful person, or with a malicious design to seize one whom the Pharisees had proscribed. Where is he? He said, I know not; Christ having departed when he had performed the cure. Thus in the work of grace upon the soul, we see and feel the blessed change, though the hand which produces it is unseen.

3dly, Far from being induced by this wondrous miracle to admire the Person who wrought it, we find them incensed, and ready to prosecute Jesus as a criminal.

1. Information is lodged against him before the rulers and Pharisees; and the man who had been lately blind, is brought before the sanhedrim, because it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes, which they regarded as a vile profanation of the day.

2. The Pharisees interrogate the man concerning the matter, very loth to be persuaded of the fact, and determined to find fault where wonder and praise should have filled their hearts and tongues. The man simply gives a narrative of his case and cure, which divided the sentiments of the council. Some said, admitting the fact, this man is not of God, whatever miracles he may pretend to work, because he keepeth not the sabbath day; for they regarded the making clay of the spittle, as a violation of the strict rest enjoined by the tradition of the elders. Others were loth to admit the fact, and would fain overthrow its evidence; fearing lest, if it was allowed to be true, the people would justly conclude that no wicked man could work such miracles, and thereby the authority of Jesus would be established: or rather, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? are the words of some, such as Joseph and Nicodemus, who justly objected, that such miracles of grace were a strong evidence of a divine mission; and of God's approbation of the person who wrought them: and this occasioned some debates in the council. Some of them hereupon demanded of the man what he thought of Jesus, and whether he had really opened his eyes. The man from just experience owns, he could not but conclude that he must be a prophet. Note; (1.) A poor blind beggar often judges more wisely concerning Christ and his character, than those who boast themselves masters in Israel. (2.) Some, even of the great, submit to be saved



they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily,

verily, I say unto you, ' I am the door of the sheep.  
8 All <sup>m</sup> that ever came before me are thiers

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 1, 9. Ch. 14. 6. Eph. 2. 18. Heb. 10. 18—22. Ezech. 34. 31.

<sup>m</sup> Acts. 5. 36, 37. Jer. 50. 6. & 23. 1, 32. Ezech. 34. 2

by grace; and their conduct and testimony leave the rest more inexcusable.

3. They cite the father and mother of the man to appear at their bar, hoping to find some way to invalidate the credit of the miracle; but they only the more confirmed it; so easily can God take the wise in their own craftiness. They question the parents of the man, *Whether this was their son? whether he was born blind? and how he now came to see?* To the two first questions they gave a clear and explicit answer. He was their son, and had been born blind. How he now saw, was a question which they cared not, for certain reasons, to enter into; and therefore rather referred the matter to their son, who was of age, and therefore able to answer for himself. For the truth was, they were timorous, and apprehensive of the consequences of making that open confession, which gratitude and truth demanded; because they were afraid they should be excommunicated according to the law which the sanhedrim had passed, that if any should own Jesus as the Messiah, he should be put out of the synagogue; and therefore they were willing to trim, and leave the question for their son to resolve. *Note;* (1.) The church's censures, when wicked men are in authority, have often been laid on its best friends. (2.) The true religion of Jesus will generally be a suffering cause, even where the public profession of it is made; experimental godliness being possessed by a small number comparatively. (3.) When the profession of Christ exposes us to persecution, many are ready to conceal their religion in order to escape the cross.

4. The council, finding that they got nothing to their satisfaction from the parents, again called the man himself; and, unable to deny that the notable miracle was wrought, endeavoured to rob the Lord Jesus of the honour due to him for it, saying, *Give God the praise, who has done the work; but we know that this man is a sinner;* and therefore, though God may please to use wicked instruments for the accomplishment of his purposes, yet the praise is only due to himself. So confidently do they speak, who, when challenged to bring a single proof of sin against Jesus, could not have the confidence to lodge one accusation. *Note;* Many endeavour thus to supply the want of argument with confident assertions of virulent abuse.

5. The man replied, *Whether he be a sinner, or no, I know not, I will not determine;* though I have all the reason in the world to believe the contrary: but *one thing I know, by happy experience, that whereas I was blind, now I see,* and cannot be persuaded out of my senses. *Note;* Many captious questions may be put to a gracious person, in order to shake the ground of his confidence; but though he may not be able to give a distinct account how that spiritual change is wrought which he experiences, yet he can say, *I know it is wrought: my understanding is enlightened; my heart is changed.*

6. Again they demand an answer to their questions, in hopes that through inadvertence or fear he might fault in his evidence, or vary from what he had advanced; but his reply more exasperated them. *He answered them, I have told you already, distinctly and clearly, and ye did not hear, so as to regard or credit what I said: wheresfore would ye hear it again? to what purpose do ye desire it? will ye also be his disciples? which he suggests ironically, as knowing their aversion to Jesus.*

7. With rage and resentment at the mention of this, they bitterly revile him: *Thou art his disciple, a poor deluded wretch; but we are Moses' disciples, the followers of that great lawgiver of Israel, and who ought to be regarded as the guides in religious matters, and not to be taught by such a fellow as thou. We know that God spake unto Moses, face to face on the Mount, and that Moses delivered the law under a divine commission: but as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is: in truth, they desired not to know, and would not examine the evidence that he had produced of his divine original and authority; for then they might have seen that there was a perfect agreement between Jesus and Moses; and that, instead of the worthless fellow whom they scornfully rejected, this was the great Prophet of whom Moses spake.* *Note;* (1.) Many boast of their external privileges, which only serve to aggravate their guilt. (2.) The servants of Jesus, like their Master, have often been treated with insolence and contempt, as upstart fellows whom nobody knows. (3.) Many are branded as forsaking the good old religion, who are in fact the very espousers of it, by those who, resting upon the form of godliness, are utter strangers to the power of it.

8. Once more the man replies, *Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is,* when he has given such incontestable evidence of his divine mission by this amazing miracle, *and he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know, we who are common people, and much more persons of your learning and sagacity, that God heareth not sinners, nor grants their prayers; much less would he enable them to perform miracles to support an imposture: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth;* and in the present case, the miracle that Jesus has wrought, is an express testimony of God's approbation of him. *Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind; such a thing, not the greatest of the prophets, not even Moses himself, had ever performed. If therefore this man were not of God, sent by him, and owned of him, he could do nothing; since it cannot be imagined that God would enable a bad man to work such extraordinary miracles to carry on a bad cause, and promote a delusion—a conclusion most reasonable and unanswerable, and drawn from premises the most evident and allowed.* *Note;* (1.) An impenitent sinner, who persists in his iniquities, can never expect that God will hear and answer his prayers. (2.) They who in spirit worship God,

and robbers : but the sheep did not hear them. in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out,  
 9 I am the door : by me if any man enter and find pasture.

<sup>a</sup> See ver. 1, 7. Ezek. 34. 14. Pf. 23. 1-6. If. 40. 11. & 45. 17. Zech. 10. 12. If. 49. 9, 10. Rom. 5. 1-5. 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. Col. 3. 12.

and in simplicity obey him, may be assured that he will hear and grant all their petitions in that way which is best for them. (3.) A poor unlettered man, when taught of God, is able to confound the wisest doctors that are, with all their learning, strangers to divine teaching.

9. Unable to answer his reasoning, they make up in violence and abuse what they want in argument. *Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?* Thou, a vile fellow, stigmatized from thy birth, dost thou pretend to direct us, the guides and rulers of the church, famed for wisdom and sanctity, and invested with chief authority? What insolence, what arrogance is thine! *And they cast him out*, excommunicated him immediately, and cut him off from the congregation of Israel. But the anathemas of church rulers, who abuse their authority, shall only light on their own head. *Note*; Proud worldly-wise men despise the poor, and think their own self-sufficiency above all need of others' help and teaching; whereas none who know themselves, will ever think themselves too wise to learn, or too good to mend.

4thly, The unjust act of these oppressive rulers was soon noised abroad, and came to the ears of Jesus. Hereupon we are told,

1. That Christ found him; he went in search of him, probably to encourage and comfort him under the persecution that he suffered for the truth, and said unto him, *Dost thou believe on the Son of God*, the promised Messiah? *Note*; (1.) Though wicked men may abuse their power in casting out the faithful servants of Jesus, he will visit his outcasts with his love, and own them under their sufferings for his sake. (2.) True faith in the Son of God, is the great attainment, from which alone every thing spiritually excellent follows.

2. The poor man replied with earnestness, *Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?* I do expect him, and should be happy to find him; and wish for nothing more than to be directed to him, that I might by faith embrace him.

3. Christ gives him a clear declaration of his own office and character. *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee*; whose power thou hast experienced, and is so much nearer to thee than thou art aware of; as he often is to poor penitents, when they are afflicted and mourning his absence.

4. That moment, by the power of Jesus, he was enabled to exercise divine faith in his heart; and he makes an open profession of it; *Lord, I believe; and he worshipped him*; giving him that divine honour which was due to him, as the eternal Son of God. For they who truly know and believe in him, pay the same worship and honour to the Son, even as to the Father.

5thly, While Jesus so kindly encouraged and comforted the poor sufferer, he pronounces just judgment on his malicious persecutors.

1. He gives a general account of the design of his mis-

sion. *Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world*, to fulfil the will of my heavenly Father; revealing his truth for the illumination of those who will believe, and inflicting judicial blindness on others who reject his truth: *that they which see not, may see*, both corporally and spiritually; not only opening, by miracle, the eyes of men's bodies, but by his grace shining into the benighted souls of men: *and that they which see, conceit themselves wise and knowing in the things of God, may be made blind*, given up for their pride and self-sufficiency to the blindness, hardness, and impenitence of their hearts.

2. The Pharisees, supposing that they were meant, with indignation replied, *Are we blind also?* Dare you insolently suggest, that we the guides of the people, and the light of the land, are in darkness ourselves? *Note*; Nothing more offends the proud and self-righteous, than to call in question their knowledge or goodness: and their passion on such occasions is a fresh proof of the truth of the charge laid against them.

3. Christ answered, *If ye were blind*, really destitute of the means of knowledge, as the Gentile world, or, deeply sensible of your own native blindness, and desirous to be led into the light of life, *ye should have no sin*; none, comparatively speaking: or you would have submitted in faith to me the true Messiah, whereby ye might have been justified from all things, and your sins be pardoned: *but now ye say, We see*, conceited of your knowledge, and puffed up with pride; and *therefore your sin remaineth*, aggravated by the pretensions that you make, and the abuse of the means of grace which you have enjoyed. *Note*; None are so far from divine wisdom, as those who are wise in their own conceits. Publicans and harlots shall enter the kingdom of heaven before such as these.

CHAP. X.

*Ver. 1. Verily, verily, I say unto you,*] Our Lord, having reproved the Pharisees in the foregoing chapter, for shutting their eyes against the evidence of his divine mission, continued the reproof by describing the characters of a true and false teacher; leaving them, who had so unjustly excommunicated the beggar, to judge to which of the classes they belonged. Jesus being now in the outer court of the temple, near the sheep which were there exposed to sale for sacrifice, he uses the language of the ancient prophets, who often compared the teachers of their own times to *shepherds*, and the people to *sheep*: accordingly, in describing the characters of the scribes and Pharisees, he made use of the same metaphor; shewing that there are two kinds of evil shepherds or teachers—One, who instead of entering in by the door, to lead the flock out and feed it, *enter in some other way*, with an intention to steal, kill, and destroy; another, who, though they may have entered in by the door, feed their flocks with the dispositions of *hirelings*. For when they see the wolf coming, or any danger approaching, they desert their flocks, because they

10 ° The thief cometh not but for to steal, they might have life, and that they might and to kill, and to destroy : ° I am come that have it more abundantly.

° Mat. 7. 15. & 23. 14. 2 Pet. 2. 1. ° Mat. 20. 28. & 18. 11. Esck. 34. 16. Ch. 3. 14—18. & 6. 32—58. Rom. 5. 11. 25—27. Heb. 25. 11. 45. 17.

love themselves only. The Pharisees plainly shewed themselves to be of the former character, by excommunicating the man that had been born blind, because he would not act contrary to the dictates of his reason and conscience to please them. But though they cast him out of their church, Christ received him into his; which is the true church, the spiritual inclosure, where the sheep go in and out, and find pasture. Some eminent commentators are of opinion, that the whole of this parabolical discourse was taken from the sheep which were inclosed in little folds within the outward court of the temple, whither they were brought by their shepherds to be sold; because our Lord speaks of such folds as the shepherd himself could not enter, till the porter opened to him the door, namely, of the temple. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door, &c. that is, "I assure you, whosoever in any age of the church assumed the office of a teacher without commission from me, and without a sincere regard to the edification and salvation of souls, was a thief and a robber; and in the present age he is no better, who assumes that office without my commission; particularly without believing on me, and without intending my honour, and the good of my church:"* for, as our Lord calls himself the door, ver. 9. entering by the door must signify acting by his commission; which could not be done without believing on him and regarding his interest. Others, however, object to this interpretation. "I cannot think," says one of them, "whatever occasion Christ might take from the sight of the sheep in the temple, to represent his people under that image, and himself as a shepherd, that he would describe them like sheep shut up in little folds to be sold for sacrifice; nor does the shepherd's leading them out, &c. seem to agree with this circumstance. In countries where there were so many wild beasts, it might be necessary to have the folds better secured than among us; and the chief shepherd might often leave a servant to watch them while thus shut up, and come himself to lead them out to pasture in the morning." The reader must judge what force there is in this objection: it seems to me most reasonable to suppose, that our Lord, according to his usual manner, took his general idea from the sheep which were present in the temple; but by no means confined himself to the particular circumstances of those sheep; carrying on his discourse in a metaphorical manner, relative to the general and well known customs of shepherds in that country.

*Ver. 2—4. But he that entereth, &c.]* "The teacher who believes on me, and acts by my commission, is properly the shepherd; to him the door-keeper openeth, and the sheep hear his voice. The people of God, knowing him to be the true pastor, hearken unto him, and he calleth, &c." Our Lord here alludes to the customs of Judea; where the shepherds gave names to their sheep, which answered to them as dogs and horses do with us; following them to their pasture, and wherever their shep-

herds thought fit to lead them, who commonly went before them, playing on some musical instrument. See Virg. Eclogue ii. ver. 23. The moral or spiritual meaning of these circumstances is, that every faithful minister of Christ attends upon the duties of his ministry, making them his principal business; that he spends his time among his people; that he knows their characters and tempers; while true believers are obedient to his instructions, which the faithful pastor delivers always with great plainness, concealing nothing, however disagreeable to the corrupt inclinations of men.

*Ver. 7. I am the door of the sheep.]* As our Lord's parable was not understood, he graciously proceeds to explain it to his audience; and in the first place he informs them, that by the door he meant himself. *I am the door of the sheep.* Perhaps this is a metonymy for *I am the door of the sheep-fold*; or our Lord's meaning may have been, "I am not only the door, by which the shepherds must enter,—he whose right alone it is to admit men to the office and dignity of shepherds; but I am also the door of the sheep. It is by me that men enter into the spiritual inclosure of the church." It would be very impertinent to run a long parallel here between Christ and a door: the resemblance plainly centres in this one circumstance, that as a man must observe and pass through the door, in order to his making an unsuspected entrance into a sheep-fold: so he must maintain a proper regard to Christ, in order to his being a true teacher in the church; and must pass as it were through him, or by his authority, into that office. It is by a simile very nearly resembling this, that Christ elsewhere calls himself the way, Ch. xiv. 6.

*Ver. 8. All that ever came before me.]* "All those who in former times assumed the characters of teachers of religion, without commission from me, are thieves and robbers." Here, as in many other instances, our Lord's words are very elliptical, and must be filled up from what goes before. The gloss that we have ventured to give, is taken from ver. 1. and seems altogether necessary, because it does not clearly appear from history, that any one among the Jews assumed the title of Messiah before our Lord came. It is true that Theudas and Judas of Galilee are mentioned by Gamaliel as having given themselves out for persons of note; Acts, v. 37. But with respect to Judas, it is evident from Josephus that he did not assume the title of Messiah: he only gave rise to a political faction, whose distinction was, that they would pay no taxes to the Romans, or any foreign power. And from the character which the Jewish doctors give of Theudas, it does not appear that he called himself the Messiah. Like Judas of Galilee, he only pretended to be some extraordinary person, who had eminent skill in the law, and taught opinions contrary to those which were commonly received. Perhaps he called himself a prophet, to give his doctrines the greater weight.

*Ver. 9. By me if any man enter in,] "If any man be-"* "liveth"

11 <sup>a</sup> I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.  
 12 <sup>b</sup> But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.  
 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 <sup>c</sup> I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.  
 15 <sup>d</sup> As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.  
 16 <sup>e</sup> And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

<sup>a</sup> Pf. 23. 1, 2. If. 40. 11. Jer. 23. 5, 6. Ezek. 34. 23, 29. & 37. 24. Mic. 5. 4. Heb. 13. 20. 1 Pet. 5. 4. & 2. 25. Ver. 14, 16. <sup>f</sup> Tit. 2. 14. Mat. 20. 28. Rev. 5. 9. Ch. 18. 11. Mat. xxvi. xxvii. Ver. 15, 17, 18. Eph. 5. 2. <sup>g</sup> Zech. 11. 16, 17. If. 56. 10-12. 2 Tim. 4. 10. 2 Pet. 2. 3. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 7. 15. Acts, 20. 29. Song, 2. 15. 2 Pet. 2. 1. <sup>i</sup> Ver. 11. Heb. 2. 17. Ezek. 34. 11-16. Pf. xliii. <sup>j</sup> Ver. 27. Ch. 13. 18. Pf. 1. 6. Tit. 2. 19. <sup>k</sup> Gal. 1. 16. Eph. 1. 17-19. & 3. 17-19. Phil. 3. 8-10. 1 John, 5. 20. 1 Pet. 2. 7. & 1. 8. 2 Tim. 1. 12. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 11. 27. Ch. 1. 18. & 8. 29, 55. & 15. 9, 10. <sup>m</sup> Ver. 11. Rom. 5. 6-11. & 8. 3, 4, 32, 33. 1 Thess. 5. 10. 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6. 1 Pet. 2. 24. & 3. 18. 1 John, 2. 2. <sup>n</sup> If. 56. 8. & 43. 6. & 11. 10. Ezek. 37. 22. Hof. 1. 11. Zech. 2. 11. & 8. 20, 23. Eph. 2. 14. 1 Pet. 2. 25.

“ lieveth on me, he shall become a true member of God’s church on earth, and, if faithful, shall from time to time receive such instructions as shall nourish his soul unto eternal life.” Our Lord here seems to allude to the common pastures, and to the method of grazing sheep in the East. They were confined in the folds by night, to secure them from wolves and other wild beasts; but were let out to graze in the day time, when the danger from those animals was not so great. See 1 Sam. xviii. 16.  
 Ver. 10. *The thief cometh not but for to steal, &c.*] “ I am no thief or robber, as you may easily know, by considering that the intention of such is only to steal, and kill, and destroy the flock. They assumed the character of teachers divinely commissioned, for no other reason but to promote their own interest, at the expence of their souls: whereas I am not come merely to give you life, but to give it more abundantly than it is given by Moses in the dispensation of the law.” The phrase *more abundantly* may at the same time refer ultimately, to the provision which Christ has made for the future and eternal happiness of his faithful people. “ I am come that they might have life now by their entrance into my church and fold, through me, the door of the sheep; and that, persevering unto death, they might have a *more abundant* life of glory, when they go out and depart from the present life of grace: and for this life of grace they shall find sufficient pasture and support in the appointed means; but for the life of glory, *the Lamb himself, in the midst of the throne, shall feed them.*” See Pf. xxiii.  
 Ver. 11, 12. *I am the good shepherd:*] “ I am not a hireling shepherd, appointed by the owner to take care of the flock; but I am *the good Shepherd*, promised Isaiah, xl. 11. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, &c. and the proprietor of the sheep; as is evident from hence, that I cheerfully endanger my life for the safety of the flock: whereas a hireling, proposing nothing but his own gain, when he sees the wolf coming, deserts the sheep, because, instead of loving them, he loves himself, and will not expose himself to any danger on their account; so that the beast of prey, without any resistance, tears some of the flock to pieces, and disperses the rest.” Hence it plainly appears to be the duty of every minister of the gospel to

spend his whole time in ordinary with his flock or flocks; for if approaching danger is no excuse for his fleeing away, and leaving them, far less will interest, or pleasure, or any less matter, be an excuse for such unfaithfulness.  
 Ver. 13. *The hireling*] It is not barely *receiving of hire* which denominates a man a *hireling*,—(for *the labourer is worthy of his hire*, Jesus Christ himself being the judge; yea, and *the Lord hath ordained, that they who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel*;) but it is the *loving of hire*; the loving of hire more than the work;—working *for the sake of hire*. He is a *hireling*, who would not work were it not for the hire; to whom this is the great, if not the only motive of working. O merciful God! if a man who works *only for hire* be such a wretch, a mere *thief and robber*—what is he who continually takes the hire, and yet does not work at all.  
 Ver. 14, 15. *I—know my sheep, and am known, &c.*] *Know* here, as in many other passages of scripture, implies much more than a mere speculative knowledge;—a knowledge of love and approbation. The force of the passage therefore is this: “ Being the good Shepherd and owner of the sheep, I am so careful and solicitous in attending my flock, that I not only know every particular sheep, but I know every thing relating to my sheep. I know the circumstances wherein they are placed, am well acquainted with their wants, and can judge of what aids they stand in need. Besides, I love them all with an ardent affection, and approve of their obedience to me. And as I know, love, and approve my sheep, so I am known and beloved by them in return: for they have just apprehensions of my dignity and character. In particular, they know that I am their Shepherd; that I am able to feed them with knowledge, to deliver them from the punishment of sin, and to bestow on them everlasting life. And this our knowledge and love of each other is like that which subsists between the Father and me. *I know my sheep, and am known of mine,* (ver. 15. *even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father*;—for so the passage should be read;) and as a proof of the greatness of my love, I will lay down my life for the sheep, which no hireling will ever do.”  
 Ver. 16. *And other sheep I have,*] “ To convince you  
 “ that

17 ° Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

18 ° No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. ° This commandment have I received of my Father.

19 ¶ ° There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

20 And many of them said, ° He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

21 Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. ° Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

22 ¶ And it was at Jerusalem the ° feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

23 And Jesus walked in the temple in ° Solomon's porch.

° Mat. 3. 17. & 17. 5. If. 42. 1, 21. & 53. 10. & 9. 14, 2—12. Acts, 3. 15. Ch. 2. 19. Ver. 11, 15. Heb. 2. 9, 10. 20. 28. & 16. 21. & 17. 27, 23. & 20. 18, 19. ° Pf. 40. 6—8. Ch. 14. 31. Acts, 2. 23, 24. & 4. 27, 28. ° Acts, 3. 15. Mat. 10. 34, 35. ° Ch. 7. 20. & 8. 48, 52. Mat. 9. 34. Mark, 3. 21. ° Exod. 4. 11. Pf. 94. 9. & 146. 8. 16. 35. 5. Ch. 9. 6, 7, 32. ° Which Judas Maccabeus instituted. Acts, 3. 11. & 5. 12. Built where he had built one, and called by his name.

“ that I know my sheep, and am known of them, I tell you that I have other sheep besides the Jews; I have sheep among the Gentiles: for I know those in every country, whose honesty of disposition will induce them, through my grace, to accept of the gospel in the love of it. (See John, vi. 37. 39.) These I will bring into my church, and they shall know me, and shall distinguish my voice from that of a stranger; they will cheerfully submit to my laws, and there shall be one flock, (*ποιμνῆ*) and one Shepherd; there shall be but one visible church, when the Gentiles are converted, consisting of them and the Jews: as there is but one Shepherd to feed and govern them, there shall be no more any middle wall of partition.”

Ver. 17, 18. *Therefore doth my Father love me,*] “ Nothing can shew the great regard I have for the salvation of mankind in a stronger light, than my laying down my life to promote and secure it; and this is so correspondent with the operations of infinite goodness, that my Father cannot but look upon me as an object of infinite love, even on that account.” Instead of *that I might take it again*, we may render the words *so as to take it again*; for had our Lord laid down his life, and remained under the power of death, it could not have been concluded that he had made a sufficient atonement, or that God was reconciled to mankind by his sacrifice of himself: but as he laid down his life so as to resume it again, it was evident that his death had atoned for the sins of mankind, and that he who had conquered death, was able to save and rescue those from the power of death who died in his faith. Further we may observe, it was necessary that the sufferings of Christ should be voluntary, to become either meritorious or just; whence it is that he adds so emphatically, *no man taketh my life from me*, yer. 18. but *I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down*, &c. which gives us a most sublime idea of our Lord's dignity and person. But this idea is heightened, when it is considered, that he had not only power to lay down his life, but likewise could take it again. As a mortal, death was common to him with other men; but what mortal, though he should willingly sacrifice his life, could have it in his power to resume it? That our Lord voluntarily resigned his life, evidently appeared from the strong cry uttered just before his death, with which the centurion was so much affected, Luke, xxiii. 47. That he had full power to do so, will appear, because he had life in

himself, Ch. v. 26. and likewise because he resumed his life after he had quitted it. Our Lord adds, *This commandment, or commission, have I received of my Father.* “ I do not lay down my life, or rise again from the dead, without the appointment of my Father: with respect to both, I act in strict conformity to his will.” Our Lord's receiving this commission is not to be considered as the ground of his power to lay down and resume his life; for this he had in himself, as having an original right to dispose thereof, antecedent to the Father's commission: but this commission was the reason why he thus used his power in laying down his life. The present passage affords us a full answer to the infidel objection, that by allowing so much merit to the death and love of Christ, we greatly detract from the love of God the Father; for as the redemption of the world by the Son may be inferred from this verse, as in strict consistence with the dispensation of the Father, so the benevolence, goodness, and mercy of the Father appear to have conspired together for this great end; and how much soever we acknowledge as owing to the merits of the Son, we owe no less to the Father.

Ver. 19.—21. *There was a division therefore*] What our Lord said, affected the minds of the Jews in different ways; for some of them cried out that he was possessed and mad, and that it was folly to hear him: others, judging more impartially of him and his doctrine, declared that his discourses were not the words of a lunatic, nor his miracles the works of a devil. Moreover, they asked his enemies, if they imagined any devil was able to impart the faculty of sight to a man that was born blind,—alluding to the astonishing cure which Jesus had lately performed: *Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?*

Ver. 22, 23. *It was—the feast of the dedication*] As this feast was in winter, it could not be observed in commemoration of the dedication of the temple by Solomon, which happened in the month *Ethanim*, which answers to our September. 1 Kings, viii. 2. Nor could it be the dedication of the temple by Nehemiah, which was in the spring. Ezra, vi. 15. But it was that which was kept in honour of the purification of the temple by Judas Maccabeus. This restoration of the worship of God was a very joyful event to every religious Israelite; and being considered as a new dedication, a great regard was paid to the festival instituted in commemoration of it. The festival itself went by the name of *lights*, in allusion to the ceremony

Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not sheep, as I said unto you.

27 ° My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me :  
 28 ° And I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.  
 29 My Father, ° which gave them me, is greater than all ; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.  
 30 ° I and my Father are one.

*And us in suspense.* Ch. 16. 29. Mat. 11. 3. ° Ch. 5. 17-43. & 6. 27-64. & 8. 12, 24, 58. ° Ch. 5. 36 & 14. 10, 11. Ver. 32, 33. 11. 5. Acts, 10. 38. ° Ch. 8. 47 & 12. 37-40. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. Rom. 11. 7, 8. Ch. 6. 44, 65. Acts, 13. 48. 1 John, 4. 6. 4. 2 Tim. 2. 19. Ch. 6. 37, 44, 45. Acts, 13. 48. Mat. 16. 24. Heb. 12. 1, 2. ° Ver. 9, 10. Ch. 11. 25. Rom. 6. 21. & 5. 21. 4. Jude, 1. Ch. 6. 37. & 17. 2, 11, 12. & 18. 9. 1 Pet. 1. 5. Mat. 16. 18, 27. Deut. 33. 1. Pl. 125. 1, 2. If. 45. 17. & 26. 1-4. & 4. Ch. 14. 28. & 17. 6. & 6. 37. Mat. 11. 27. ° 1 John, 5. 7. Ch. 14. 9, 10. & 17. 11, 22. Ver. 38. Mat. 28. 19.

any of burning a great number of lights at the doors of their houses. They celebrated this feast for seven days successively, beginning on the 25th of the month of Casfeu. 1 Macc. iv. 56. 59. 2 Macc. x. 5. 8. In the latter half of that month falling in with the first day of our December, it was winter, and commonly bad weather at this feast : wherefore to avoid the inclemencies of the season, Jesus (who scrupled not to attend the feast, though it was of human institution) walked in Solomon's porch, which was a stately fabric, inclosing part of the temple of the Gentiles. When Solomon built the temple, finding the area of mount Sion too small to answer his magnificent plan, he filled up a part of the adjacent valley, and built this portico over it ; which was a noble structure, consisting of three rows of pillars, of exquisite workmanship, and was called "The Royal Portico." It was supported by a wall four hundred cubits high, consisting of stones of a vast bulk, each stone being said to be twenty cubits long and six high. Josephus speaks of it as continuing even to the time of Albinus and Agrippa, which was several years after the death of Christ. See on Mat. 23. 2. Acts, iii. 11. v. 12.

Ver. 24. *Then came the Jews round about him, &c.*] As our Lord was walking in Solomon's porch, the Jews came round about him, and required him to put them out of doubt, whether or no he was the Messiah. He well knew that they came for real information : as it was not lawful for them to put any man to death, all they wanted was sufficient matter to accuse him before the ruling power : for this they watched, of this they were so anxiously desirous, and so earnestly made them for a declaration in express words from his own mouth, that he was the Messiah. It was not that they would have believed in him any more for such a declaration of himself, than they did for his miracles, or other ways of making himself known, which it appears they understood very sufficiently. But they wanted plain direct words, such as might support an accusation, and be of weight before a heathen judge. *If thou be the Messiah, tell us plainly ;* that is, in direct words, such as express the thing without a figure, and without any reserve ; or, that St. John used the word rendered plainly in that sense, we learn from chap. xi. 11-14.

Ver. 25. *Jesus answered them, I told you, &c.*] "I have in effect told you over and over ;"—for what our Lord

had just been saying of himself in the preceding verses, as the good Shepherd, was in sense equivalent to a declaration of his being the Messiah : further, he had already performed those miracles which were to characterize and distinguish the Messiah, such as cleansing the lepers, curing the blind, &c. and if they had but judged by the characteristics of the Messiah given by many of their own rabbies, or by the dictates of unprejudiced reason, they must have acknowledged that he had sufficiently established his claim to the title of the Messiah.

*Ver. 26-28. But ye believe not, &c.*] "The reason why you disbelieve me, is not because the proofs of my mission are insufficient, but because you are not of a humble teachable disposition, free from worldly passions, and willing to receive the doctrine which comes from God : persons of this character easily know by the nature of my doctrine and miracles who I am,—consequently are soon disposed to follow me ; and I, on my part, readily acknowledge and receive them, and bestow upon them, if faithful unto death, eternal life, (ver. 27.) *As I said unto you, my sheep hear my voice,*" &c. for so the passage should be read. See ver. 4. 14. 16. *And they shall never perish,* &c. ver. 28. "Though you maliciously endeavour to hinder men from believing on me, neither you, nor the powers of darkness, by whom you are actuated, shall be able to snatch my faithful people out of my hands : Neither shall any one,—evils,—any enemy or evil one, (referring principally to the grand enemy of souls) pluck or snatch them,—my believing followers,—out of my hand." Our Lord still alludes to the discourse that he had had before this festival ; as if he had said, "My sheep are they who, 1. hear my voice by faith : 2. are known, that is, approved by me, as loving me ; and, 3. follow me, keep my commandments with a believing, loving, faithful heart. And to those who, 1st, truly and perseveringly believe, [observe, three promises are annexed to three conditions,] *I give eternal life.*" "Those whom, 2dly, I know truly to love me, shall never perish, provided they abide in my love. 3dly, Those who follow me, that is, follow me perseveringly, neither men nor devils can pluck out of my hand."

*Ver. 30. I and my Father are one.*] The Arians affirm that the sense of this passage is, "My Father and I are the same, in power and in will ; so that if you oppose

" my



31 ¶ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

32 Jesus answered them, ' Many good works have I shewed you from my Father ; ' for which of those works do ye stone me ?

33 The Jews answered him, saying, ' For a good work we stone thee not ; but for blasphemy ; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

34 Jesus answered them, ' Is it not written

in your law, I said, Ye are gods ?

35 If he called them gods, ' unto whom the word of God came, (and ' the scripture cannot be broken) ;

36 Say ye of him, whom ' the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest ; because I said, ' I am the Son of God ?

37 ' If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 5. 18. & 8. 59. Luke, 4. 29. <sup>2</sup> Mat. 11. 5. Ch. 5. 17, 18, 36. Luke, 24. 19. Acts, 10. 38. <sup>3</sup> Pf. 109. 4. Eccl. 4. 4. <sup>4</sup> Lev. 24. 16. Ch. 5. 18. Ver. 30. <sup>5</sup> Pf. 82. 6. Exod. 2. 28. <sup>6</sup> Deut. 17. 15. Exod. 7. 2. Rom. 13. 1. <sup>7</sup> Num. 23. 19. Mat. 23. 14. Luke, 16. 17. Tit. 1. 2. <sup>8</sup> Ch. 6. 27. & 3. 17. & 6. 57. If. 42. 1. & 49. 1—3, 6, 8. & 48. 16. & 61. 1—3. & 11. 2—5. Gal. 4. 4. <sup>9</sup> Ch. 5. 17, 18. Luke, 1. 35. Pf. 2. 7, 12. Mat. 3. 17. & 17. 5. Ch. 1. 14, 34, 49. & 3. 16—18. Ver. 30. <sup>10</sup> Ch. 15. 24. & 5. 31.

“ my will, you oppose *his* ; and if you take my sheep out of my hand, you must at the same time overcome him, and take them out of his hand likewise.” But if we attend, not only to the obvious *meaning* of these plain and strong words compared with other passages of scripture, but to their *connection* also, and the sense in which the Jews evidently took them, they utterly subvert the whole Arian scheme, and so fully demonstrate the Divinity of our blessed Redeemer, that they may be fairly left to speak for themselves, without any laboured comment. How widely different that sense is in which Christians are said to be *one with God*, Ch. xvii. 21. will sufficiently appear by considering how flagrantly absurd and blasphemous it would be to draw that inference from their union with God, which Christ does from his. St. Augustin has well observed, that this is a very strong text to prove the divinity of Christ. “ Mark in it, says he, both *are*, and *one* ; — “ and you will be safe as well from *Scylla* as *Charybdis*. “ ‘ *One*’ delivers you from *Arius*, who denies the eternal divinity of Christ : ‘ *Are*’ delivers you from *Sabellius*, who denies a *distinction of persons* in the godhead.” See for a proof of this same point, Isaiah, ix. 6. Jer. xxiii. 6. Micah, v. 2.

Ver. 31—33. *Then the Jews took up stones*] As a full proof in what sense our Lord’s hearers understood him, we find that they took up stones, and were going to kill him, in obedience, as they supposed, to the law, Lev. xxiv. 14. which ordered the blasphemer to be stoned. Our Lord remonstrates against this violent proceeding in terms the most striking and pathetic. “ In confirmation of my mission from my Father, I have worked many miracles, all of a beneficent kind, and most becoming the perfection of him who sent me. I have fed the hungry, I have healed the lame, I have cured the sick, I have given sight to the blind, I have cast out devils, I have raised the dead ; for which of all these are ye going to stone me ?” — But they, perverse, and never to be persuaded, reply, “ We are going to punish thee with death for no good work, but for blasphemy ; for though thou art a man, weak and mortal as we ourselves are, thou arrogantly assumest to thyself the power and majesty of God, and by laying claim to the incommunicable attributes of the Deity, makest thyself God.” This

they took to be the plain meaning of his assertion, that He and the Father were one, ver. 30.

Ver. 34. *Is it not written, &c.*] The Jews divided the Old Testament in various manners ; sometimes, as we have before observed, into the writings of Moses, the Psalms, and the prophets ; and at other times only into the law and the prophets ; comprehending by the prophets, only the writings of those who were properly so called ; but under the *law*, not only the five books of Moses, but likewise the Psalms, Proverbs, and historical books. Our Lord alludes to this latter division ; for the words are found in Pf. lxxxii. 6. *I have said, Ye are gods*. The Jewish magistrates were God’s deputies in an especial manner, because the people whom they governed were his peculiar people, and because in many instances they were expressly called by him to undertake the fatigues of government, and had an *afflatus*, or inspiration of the Spirit, for that end. Thus the high-priests derived their dignity from God, and were possessed of the Urim and Thummim, by which they inquired of the Lord ; and for any of the people to rebel against the sentence of the high-priest or judge, pronounced by Urim, was justly reckoned rebellion against God, and punished with death, Deut. xvii. 8—13. When Moses chose the seventy elders to assist him in the distribution of justice, God put his Spirit upon them, and they prophesied, Numb. xi. 17. 25. Joshua, who succeeded Moses by divine appointment, is said to have been a man in whom the Spirit was, Numb. xxvii. 18. Many of the judges were raised up by God, and had his Spirit ; and when Saul was anointed king, the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied, 1 Sam. x. 6. 10. See on Psalm, lxxxii. 6.

Ver. 35, 36. *If he called them gods, &c.*] “ If in the scripture, the authority of which you all acknowledge, they to whom the commandment of ruling God’s people was given, are called *gods*, and the *sons of God*, on account of their high office, and the inspiration of the Spirit which was bestowed on them but sparingly, can you with reason say of him whom God the Father sent into the world on the grand errand of saving the human race, and whom he hath set apart for that work by giving him the Spirit without measure, (Ch. iii. 34.) ‘ Thou blasphemest, because he said I am the Son of God.’”

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.  
 39 ¶ Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,  
 40 And <sup>e</sup> went away again beyond Jordan

into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.  
 41 <sup>h</sup> And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.  
 42 <sup>i</sup> And many believed on him there.

<sup>e</sup> Mat. 2. 11. Ch. 5. 36. & 14. 10, 11. & 15. 24. & 17. 21, 22. Ver. 25, 30, 32. <sup>f</sup> Ver. 31. Ch. 5. 16, 18. & 8. 59. & 7. 30, 44. Luke, 4. 20, 30. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 10. 23. Ch. 1. 28. & 7. 1. & 11. 54. <sup>h</sup> Mark, 1. 45. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 4. 23—25. Luke, 5. 1. Ch. 3. 30. Gen. 49. 10. Pf. 72. 17—19. <sup>j</sup> Ch. 2. 23. & 4. 39, 41. & 8. 30. & 11. 45. & 12. 42.

Some give the argument another turn, thus, if they to whom the word of God, or the revelation of his will came, are called *Gods* in scripture, how dare you say to the Word of God himself, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world; that is, by whom all the various revelations of the divine will have been made to men;—how dare you say to such a Person, on such an occasion, *Thou blasphemest*. Jesus was charged here by the Jews with ascribing Divinity to his human nature; and in reply he shews, that calling himself *the Son of God*, did not imply that; and that his works proved such an union of his human nature with the divine,—with his supreme godhead,—as he had asserted.

Ver. 38. *That ye may know, and believe*] “That ye may know that I neither do, nor say any thing, but by my Father’s authority; for the Father and I are so intimately and entirely united, that every thing I say and do, is in reality said and done by him, and he approves of it accordingly.” See ver. 30.

Ver. 40. *And went—into the place where John, &c.*] *To Beth-abara*, Ch. i. 28. See also the latter part of the note on Luke, iii. 3. Our Lord seems to have remained in the country of Perœa till he came into Judea to raise Lazarus from the dead; that being the next particular mentioned by our evangelist; and if so, the time of Christ’s abode in the country beyond Jordan must have been considerable. There is a peculiar beauty in this supposition; for allowing it to be just, the people dwelling on the other side of Jordan, enjoyed the doctrine and miracles of our blessed Saviour, as well as the inhabitants of Judea, Samaria, the Galilees, the countries on the east side of the lake, and those lying far north, about Tyre and Sidon, and Cæsarea Philippi; whereas, according to the common opinion, Jesus did not exercise his ministry in Perœa for any length of time at all.

Ver. 41, 42. *John did no miracle*:] John was not endued with the power of working miracles, that the authority of Jesus might be more conspicuous and unquestionable. We hence see how strong a confirmation of our Lord’s ministry was to be deduced by the people from that of John. Our Lord’s public life was now drawing towards a conclusion; yet he had a great deal still to do. This was the reason that he did not conceal himself, as in the beginning of his ministry, but preached constantly in the places of greatest resort, and confirmed his doctrine by many miracles, which he suffered to be published every where. Accordingly, the success of his ministry in the country beyond Jordan was answerable to the power wherewith it was accompanied: *many believed on him there*.

*Inferences*.—Christ, the great Redeemer of the world, is and should always be regarded by us, as *the door*, the only door of entrance into his fold, from whom all true teachers derive their authority. It should be the care of pastors that they enter by this door, and that they learn their duty so plainly suggested here, namely, to know their sheep, and to take as particular notice as they can of each person committed to their charge; and that they go before them in all the paths of duty; for what could the greatest enemy of the flock do worse, than to lead them by example into the paths of destruction.

Happy souls, who are entered in by this *door*! They enjoy a holy liberty and plenty; and going in and coming out they find pasture. If we are strangers to that entertainment and refreshment which arises from the divine ordinances, those green pastures which Christ hath provided for his sheep in the wilderness, we have much reason to fear that we belong not to his flock. He came, that his sheep *might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*—that greater provision might be made for their instruction and consolation now, till, if faithful, they are brought to those better pastures which he intends for them above. Oh that his grace may prepare us for them! Christ is the good Shepherd of our souls, which we must humbly commit to his care and guidance, as ever we desire that they should be safe and happy. He has not laid down his life in vain. Even when the *sword* of the *Lord* was *awakened* to smite him, he fell not so as to rise no more; but as in this great and good work he voluntarily laid down, so he has also resumed his life, bearing in his heart the deepest concern for his faithful flock, and using his renewed life and exalted dignity for their security and happiness.

*We*, believers of the Gentiles, are of those *other sheep*, of whom he spake, ver. 16. who by his grace are now brought in to the great Shepherd and Overseer of souls. Sensible of the high privileges that we enjoy, duty and gratitude should continually incline us to pray, that the boundaries of his fold may be still more extended; and that all the flock may at length appear together, and be conducted by him to the regions of immortal life. It is worthy of remark, that we here see our Lord Jesus at a festival appointed by human authority, in commemoration of a national deliverance. He came from Galilee to observe it in the temple, *though it was winter*, and brought with him at all times a heart glowing with the most ardent and amiable zeal for the honour of his heavenly Father, and the salvation of men, even of those who were studying to ensnare and destroy him.

What prudence, mingled with spirit and sweetness, runs through



## C H A P. XI.

*Christ raiseth Lazarus, four days buried. Many Jews believe. The chief priests and Pharisees gather a counsel against Christ. Caiaphas prophesieth. Jesus hideth himself. At the pass-over they inquire after him, and lay wait for him.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**N**OW a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of <sup>a</sup> Bethany, the town of <sup>b</sup> Mary and her sister Martha.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 21. 1. Mark, 11. 1. Ch. 12. 1. <sup>b</sup> Luke, 10. 38—42. <sup>c</sup> Ch. 12. 3. Mat. 26. 6, 7. Mark, 14. 3. Luke, 7. 37. 38. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 12. 3. Pf. 16. 3. Heb. 12. 6. Mark, 10. 21. <sup>e</sup> Mark, 5. 39. Ch. 9. 3. Ver. 15, 40. 2 Cor. 11. 9.

through his answers to them! What inestimable blessings does he propose, to invite them to enter into his fold! May we never forget his gracious words; may we ever be entitled to all the comfort of them. Lord, may we be found in the number of those happy souls, even of those who know thee, who obey thy voice, and follow thee whithersoever thou leadest them by thine example, thy providence, thy Spirit.

Blessed is the situation of thy little flock! O thou faithful, thou compassionate, thou almighty Shepherd, who couldst say in so sublime and so glorious a sense, *I and the Father are one*, suffer us not to forget of what infinite importance it is that we still continue near thee, that we look up to thee for our defence and safety, and confide, not in our own power and wisdom, but in thine.

Who could have imagined that any heart could have been so base as to have intended evil, or any hands so cruel as to have armed themselves with instruments of death against such a Person, while speaking such words as these?—yet behold, these *Jews* do it, and that even in so sacred a place as the temple itself, as the genuine offspring of those who slew the prophet and the priest of the Lord even at his altar. Compare Matth. xxiii. 31—35. and Luke, xi. 48—51. Our Lord's wife and gentle reply disarmed them for a few months; and the divine care and power in an extraordinary manner provided for his escape, and once more rescued him from their murderous hands.

Happy the inhabitants of the country about Jordan, to which he retired, especially in that *they knew the day of their visitation*. The testimony of John the Baptist is now recollected to excellent purposes, though he himself was mouldering in his tomb; nor is there any thing which a faithful minister will more earnestly desire, (eternal God, may it be the happiness of thy unworthy servant!)—than that even while dead, he may yet speak for the honour of the adorable Jesus, and the salvation of souls.

**REFLECTIONS.**—1st, As the Pharisees and priests arrogated to themselves the dominion over the church, and boasted of their authority, wisdom, and sanctity, as the only true pastors; traducing Jesus as an impostor, because he acted without their ordination, Christ, in a parable, warns the people against their faithless pastors.

1. He proposes a parable to them, borrowed from a shepherd and his flock. *Verily, verily I say unto you, with deepest solemnity and most infallible certainty, He that*

2 (<sup>c</sup> It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, <sup>d</sup> he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 When Jesus heard *that*, he said, <sup>e</sup> This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory

*entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber; such a clandestine entry shews the ill design on which he comes. The sheepfold is the church of God, where the faithful are united together in love, and share in the provision of gospel-ordinances provided for them; the door is Christ himself, by whom the faithful enter, and who by his Spirit calls and qualifies his ministers for their work. The thieves are those who intrude into the ministry without a divine call, influenced by the hopes of the honours and profits of the service, instead of being inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit, and animated by love to Jesus, and zeal for immortal souls; but he that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the flock, whom Jesus calls and qualifies for this office; and who with fidelity and diligence attends, and feeds and watches over those souls, whom the Saviour commits to his care. To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice: the Spirit of God makes his ministry successful, and opens the hearts of sinners to receive the gospel that he preaches: and he calleth his own sheep by name, has an exact knowledge and care of them, and leadeth them out into green pastures of ordinances, and beside the waters of comfort. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them as their shepherd, to protect them from danger; and the sheep follow him, close at his footsteps, imitating his example: for they know his voice; they have a discernment of gospel-truth, and approve of and submit to his teachings. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers; they discover the false principles or bad practices of those who set up for pretended guides, and will not put their souls under their tuition, or be influenced by their examples.*

2. The Jews understood not the meaning of his discourse, and therefore Christ more explicitly opens to them his meaning.

[1.] He is *the door*; the only way of access to God and glory is through him, and none can enter into the ministry but by his call, and under his commission. All that went before, who never received a divine call from him, were thieves and robbers, intruders into the office to which God never called them, and robbing him of his glory: but the sheep, who alone know and are obedient to the voice of God, did not bear them, as neither coming with commission from God, nor bringing Divine doctrine with them. But of himself Christ saith, *I am the door of access to, and acceptance with God; by me, through faith in my name,*

of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

5 Now <sup>f</sup> Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

<sup>f</sup> See ver. 3.

*any man enter in, he shall be saved from sin, from the condemning guilt and enslaving power of it; from the curse which the law pronounces; from Satan, and all the powers of evil; from deceivers, and all their wiles; and, if faithful into death, shall be saved with an everlasting salvation; and shall go in and out, and find pasture, during his journey through life; he shall have free access to the ordinances, possess a glorious liberty in his spirit, be safe under the shepherd's constant care, and be fed with the sweetest refreshments which the grace of the gospel ministers can bestow. Blessed and happy are they, who thus walk under the constant guard and guidance of the divine Redeemer.*

[2.] He is *the Shepherd*, the great, the good, the true shepherd.

(1.) The gracious design which he is come upon, is quite different from that of the false teachers. They, by their pernicious heresies, steal away the hearts of the unwary, prejudice them against the truth, and, while they promise them life and salvation, really murder their souls; and frequently they seek by persecutions to destroy the flock of Christ: while he is come, that his faithful people, the sheep of his pasture, may have life, the life of grace here, and the life of glory hereafter: yea, that they might have it more abundantly, fuller assurance and enjoyment of it than they ever had before.

(2.) The way in which he obtains these privileges for his faithful saints, is by his death. *I am the good shepherd, and I lay down my life for the sheep*; and, as the greatest instance of it, *the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep*, as I am ready to do, being in their stead to redeem them from sin, death, and all ill. And herein Christ's love towards them is in the most convincing manner evidenced. *But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, who serves for lucre, not for the love of souls, whose own the sheep are not, regarding them with none of that affectionate concern which the true shepherd feels; such a one seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep; whenever danger approaches, he deserts his flock, and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep, perverting and seducing them. The hireling fleeth, because he is not the shepherd, and careth not for the sheep*: behold the true character of the false and faithless shepherd. (1.) He is one who serves for hire, and makes the ministry his trade.

(2.) He feels no concern about the souls of men; and if he gets a revenue of the church, concerns himself not if the devil runs away with his flock. (3.) He never exposes himself to any danger, nor labours in the ministry, only for the sake of his own safety, and consulting his own ease. The very reverse is the character of a good minister: like the true Master, his bosom glows with desire after the salvation of men's souls; he is ready to spend and be spent in the service of the ministry; he labours willingly, not for hire, but from principle; and no dangers can deter him from his duty or drive him from his post.

(3.) As the good Shepherd, Christ is acquainted intimately with his flock and their concerns, and takes care of them. *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am*

*known of mine*; Christ knows particularly those who believe in him and love him; he regards them with tenderest affection; takes cognizance of all their wants, and kindly relieves and supplies them: and he is known by his believing people as the great object of their faith and hope, the author of their joy and happiness. *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father*; even as the Father owns his affection and regard to me by the sure tokens of his presence and approbation; and I also acknowledge and honour the Father in the delight with which I do his will; so the affection in its degree is reciprocal between me and my sheep, even all my saints: *and I lay down my life for the sheep*, to testify my love, and to accomplish the great and essentially necessary atonement in their behalf. *And other sheep I have which are not of this fold*, are out of the pale of the Jewish church; *them also I must bring*, even all of the Gentile world that will accept of and believe in me from their guilt, misery, and ruin, into a state of favour and acceptance with God; *and they shall hear my voice*, believing in me, and wrought upon by the mighty influences of the divine Spirit; *and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd*; when all true believers, both Jews and Gentiles, shall be united in one glorious church, under their common head Jesus Christ, and share the same blessings and privileges. *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life*; highly well-pleased in my undertaking, whereby such glory will accrue to him, and eternal salvation be obtained for all my faithful saints: *for I lay it down, that I might take it again*, rising for their justification. *No man taketh it from me, neither force nor fraud avail any thing, till my own time comes; but I lay it down of myself*, voluntarily, with my own consent: *I have power to lay it down*, a right and authority to lay it down as a satisfaction to divine justice; *and I have power to take it again*; having made the atonement, by my own almighty power, I will quicken my dead body, and raise it to eternal life and glory. *This commandment have I received of my father, with whom he was most intimately one; and herein he delighted to do the will of God.*

2dly, The discourse of Jesus gave occasion for warm debates among the Jews, whose sentiments were greatly divided concerning him.

1. Many, who were his enemies, cried out, *He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?* Can you be so weak and deluded, as to attend to such absurd and blasphemous nonsense? Thus does the world often scoff at the serious discourses of Christ's faithful ministers, and ridicule and revile those who pay attention to their preaching: but we should be neither threatened nor laughed out of our religion.

2. Others entertained very different sentiments, and said very sensibly, *These are not the words of him that hath a devil*; the nature of his doctrine, and his manner of speaking, favour nothing of insanity; nor can possibly tend to advance, but to destroy Satan's kingdom. Besides, *Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?* Can a madman, or much

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, <sup>a</sup> he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

<sup>a</sup> Hosea, 6. 2. Deut. 32. 36. Gen. 22. 14. If. 30. 18. with ch. 10. 40. 21, 22. Acts, 21. 12.

7 Then after that faith he to *his* disciples, <sup>b</sup> Let us go into Judea again.

8 *His* disciples say unto him, Master, <sup>c</sup> the

<sup>b</sup> Acts, 20. 22—24. & 21. 13.

<sup>c</sup> Ch. 10. 31, 39. Mat. 11.

less a bad man under diabolical influence, perform such a miracle? The supposition is absurd and incredible. It evidently appeared that this was the finger of God.

3dly, We have another discourse between Jesus and the Jews. We have,

1. The time, and place. It was at the feast of dedication, observed in remembrance of the renovation of the temple-service, when Judas Maccabæus dedicated the new altar, and cleansed the temple which Antiochus had profaned, which was in the winter, in the month of December. And therefore Christ walked under cover, in a place called Solomon's porch.

2. Hither the Jews came to him; and surrounding him, in order to find cause of accusation, they urged him to tell them plainly and boldly, and leave them no longer in suspense by his figurative and dark expressions, whether he was the Christ or not.

3. Christ knew their malicious designs, and therefore answered them, *I told you* in terms sufficiently plain, if you chose to understand them, *and ye believed not*; and were determined not to believe: it was vain, therefore, to add farther assertions; and he chose to refer them to the miracles which abundantly proved his mission, *the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, obstinate in your infidelity, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you*; their tempers and dispositions plainly shewed they were not; and Christ, who was acquainted with their hearts, well knew that they were not of those whose character and conduct he describes: *My sheep hear my voice, with attention, discernment, and spiritual delight, and I know them, take cognizance of them, and distinguish them with my peculiar favour and regard; and they follow me in the ways of truth and righteousness, obedient to my word, and imitating my example. And I give unto them eternal life; they have a present title thereto, experience the beginning of it here, and, if faithful to me and themselves, they shall never perish; neither shall any enemy, be he ever so subtle, or ever so outrageous, be able to pluck them out of my hand, or injure them, while they remain in it. Nor indeed is it possible that any of their adversaries should; for my Father which gave them me, (see the Annotations on John, vi. 37. 39.) is greater than all, infinitely superior in wisdom and power to all their enemies that can possibly be against them; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand, no power in hell, no power on earth, none but themselves: that awful power is invested in themselves alone. If they cleave to me, they must inevitably be safe. For I and my Father are one, in nature, essence, and perfections: the union betwixt us, is so strict and intimate, in substance as well as in affection and design, that his almighty power is mine, to be employed for the defence of my faithful flocks; and no adversary can deprive them of eternal life without prevailing against him as well as me.*

4. The Jews, fired with rage, could no longer refrain, but *took up stones again to stone him* as a blasphemer.

5. Jesus mildly expostulated with them on their blindness, saying, *Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; works of such benevolence and wonder, as evidenced his mission divine: for which of these works do ye stone me? how horrid is your ingratitude! how base your returns! Note; (1.) Nothing aggravates our sins against God so much as our vile ingratitude. (2.) If we return with the most ungrateful returns from those on whom we have conferred the greatest obligations, we must not think it strange: Jesus was so treated before us.*

6. The Jews attempt to vindicate their conduct, saying, *For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God*; for in this light they interpreted his claim of unity with the Father, and his assuming the incommunicable attributes of the Deity. Note; Pretended zeal for God's honour has been the pretext which persecutors have often used to cover the most violent outrages against his most faithful servants.

7. Christ proves that he had the fullest right to these divine honours which he claimed. *Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods? Ps. lxxxii. 6. If he called them gods, who, as magistrates, were types of the King Messiah, and unto whom the word of God came; entrusted by him with the government of the Jewish church and nation; and the scripture cannot be broken, but must receive its accomplishment in that Messiah, who really possesses divine honour and authority, and is intitled to that high name which they bore as his representatives; say ye then of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and set apart for the great work of redemption, and in the fulness of time sent into the world, I blaspheme, because I said, I am the Son of God? But believe the scripture testimony, I appeal to my miracles: If I do not the works of my Father, as great as might be expected from him, and by my own power as God; if these do not speak my divine character, and that I am entitled to the honour I claim as Son of God, believe me not; I am content to be rejected by you: but if I do works so great, and in such a manner, as declare my divine power and Godhead, though ye believe not me, on my own word and authority, believe the works, those unexceptionable evidences, which may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father, we being one in nature and essence, having the most intimate union and communion in the same essential Godhead.*

4thly, Far from appeasing their fury, Christ, by maintaining his right to the essential glories of Divinity, asperated them to the highest pitch. Whereupon,

1. They sought again to take him; concluding they now had full evidence against him, to convict him as a blasphemer, and get him legally condemned by the Sanhedrim, and put to death.

2. As the time for Christ's sufferings was not yet come,

Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the

\* Ch. 9. 4. Luke, 13. 32, 33. There is no danger of death till my work be finished.

he escaped out of their hand; either holding their arms by an invisible power from seizing him, or their eyes from seeing him.

3. He retired beyond Jordan, into the place where John first baptized; and there he abode, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and gathering some fruit from the seed which John had sown there about two or three years before.

4. Many resorted to him there, drawn by his preaching and miracles; and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. He appears with that transcendent greatness and glory, in which John spake of him. And many believed on him there, as the true Messiah. Note; (1.) Though persecutors drive the ministers of Christ from one place, God will take care to send them where he has still greater work for them to do. (2.) Jews will be peculiarly welcome with his gospel, to those whose hearts, by the sharp convictions of the law, as by the austere Baptist's ministry, are broken with a humbling sense of sin.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. Now a certain man was sick,] About this time friend of Christ, named Lazarus, was afflicted with a dangerous sickness, *νασθενῶν*, —at Bethany, a village about two miles from Jerusalem, but at a great distance from the place where our Lord now was. See the last chapter, ver. 40. Bethany is supposed to have taken its name from a tract of ground in which it stands; so called from a Greek word, *Αθων*, signifying the fruit of the palm-tree, which grew there in great abundance: though others, with greater propriety, derive it from two Hebrew words signifying the house of obedience, or the house of grace: it was a considerable place in our Saviour's time, situated at the foot of the mount of Olives, near two miles eastward of Jerusalem; but at present it is a very mean village. Modern travellers inform us, that at the entrance into it, there is an old ruin, called "The Castle of Lazarus," supposed to have been the mansion-house where he and his sisters lived. Near it, at the bottom of a small descent, is a sepulchre, said to be that of Lazarus, and held in great veneration by the Turks, who use it for an oratory, or place of prayer. It has been thought that Lazarus was younger than his sisters, and that this villa, or country-seat, was their property: that they were people of some opulence, is manifest as well from this history, as from other parts of the gospel. This remarkable miracle was omitted by the former evangelists, as is supposed, because Lazarus was living when they wrote, and their mentioning it might have endangered his life. Ecclesiastical history informs us, that Lazarus was now thirty years old, and that he lived after Christ's ascension.—But farther, while the fact was recent, it did not require so particular a notice, as there were persons enough then living to attest it; but when John wrote his gospel, Lazarus being dead, as well as most of the witnesses, it was proper to record so remarkable a fact,

which might otherwise have been lost to the world. This miracle is related more at large than any other of Christ's miracles, says Henry, not only because there are many circumstances of it so very instructive, and the miracle itself is so strong a proof of Christ's mission, but because it was an earnest of that which was to be the crowning proof of all—Christ's own resurrection.

Ver. 2. It was that Mary which anointed, &c.] Because the evangelist characterizes Mary, the sister of Lazarus, by her action of anointing the Lord's feet, Grotius imagines, that the three anointings mentioned in the gospels are one and the same: but the answer is obvious. John having mentioned one anointing only, ch. xii. 3, &c. she is sufficiently known by that character to all who have read his history: yet, if any one should say, that the evangelist does not mean to distinguish her from the other Marys, he would perhaps speak the truth, because to have called her the sister of Lazarus was sufficient for that purpose: her anointing is mentioned on this occasion, only to inform the reader how much and tenderly she loved the Lord, who doubly repaid all the kindnesses shewn to him, as in this very instance; notwithstanding he did not go into Judea immediately on receiving the sisters' message.

Ver. 3. His sisters sent unto him,] The modesty of his sisters, and their confidence in Christ's affection for their brother, appear very great. They do not desire the Lord to come to him; they do not desire him to heal their brother at a distance, as he had done other persons who were in a dangerous condition. They only inform him that their brother, who happily enjoyed a place in his affection, was dangerously ill; and they leave it to the dictates of his own wisdom, and the warmth of his own love, to determine what measure to pursue.

Ver. 4. This sickness is not unto death,] Compare Matth. ix. 24. and Mark, v. 39. All that our Lord could mean here was, that this sickness of Lazarus was not designed to end in his death, considered as a final removal from this world; and indeed, our Lord so fully explains afterwards what he meant by this ambiguous speech, that nothing can reasonably be objected to it: but it is a remarkable instance of the candour and fidelity of the evangelists here, and in the places above quoted, so exactly to record the very words of Jesus; though malice might so cavil at them. The verse might be thus paraphrased, "Lazarus is permitted to be sick by the special providence of God; not that he designs to take him out of the world by death, as he does other men, but that the Son of God might be glorified by shewing his almighty power in raising him from the dead; hereby declaring that he has given to the Son to have life in himself, and to quicken whom he will; and therefore that he could fulfil his promise made to those who should perseveringly believe in him, that he would raise them up at the last day." So Christ expounds it himself in the 25th and 26th verses. We may remark from the words, *but for the glory of God, that the Son, &c.* which are parallel to those in ch. ix. 3. that the glory

day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

11 These things said he : and after that he saith unto them, <sup>m</sup> Our friend Lazarus <sup>n</sup> sleepeth ; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 9. 4. & 12. 35. Pf. 104. 22, 23. When my work is finished, I cannot escape death. <sup>m</sup> If. 41. 8. James, 2. 23. Ch. 15. 9, 14, 15. & Ch. 20. 7. <sup>n</sup> Mat. 9. 24. Ver. 13. Acts, 7. 60. & 13. 36. 1 Thess. 4. 14, 15. <sup>o</sup> It is a token that he is past danger. <sup>o</sup> Ch. 10. 24. & 16. 25.

of God the Son, and God the Father, is one and the same ; which plainly proves that Christ is God.

Ver. 5. *Now Jesus loved Martha, &c.*] On account of their unfeigned piety towards God, their friendship and affection towards each other, and their faith in him as the Messiah. See ver. 27. The evangelist mentions the love which Jesus bore to Mary, and her sister, and Lazarus, before he informs us, that, after receiving the message, he stayed two days without stirring from the place where he was. His design in this might be, to insinuate that our Lord's delaying so long after the message came, did not proceed from want of concern for his friends, but had happened according to the counsels of his own wisdom. Had he gone as soon as the messenger from Martha arrived, there would have been nothing more in the recovery of Lazarus, than in that of Simon's mother, or of many sick persons whom he had restored to health. Had he cured him without going to him, no greater effect of power would have been shewn in this miracle, than in the cure of the centurion's servant ; and might not the Jews, who lived at a distance from the scene of this transaction, have either questioned the reality of Lazarus's sickness, or have imputed his cure to a collusion between him and Jesus, especially as there was so strong an intimacy between them? Had Jesus gone immediately after his death, and raised him either in his chamber, or as they were carrying him to the sepulchre, it might have been said that his death was a mere pretence ; or, if it were granted that there was no fraud, it might have been alleged, that he was only in a fit or trance, and recovered luckily from it just as Christ pretended to raise him. Nay, even upon the supposition that the restoring of Lazarus to life before his interment, should have been granted to have been a real and proper resurrection, it would have afforded no stronger proofs than the resurrection of the widow's son : but the length of the time which Lazarus lay in the grave, put his death beyond all possibility of doubt, removed every suspicion of fraud, and so afforded Jesus a fit opportunity of displaying his love to Lazarus, as well as his own almighty power, by his unquestionable resurrection from the dead. Our Lord might also have a further view in thus heightening the circumstances of this miracle. The time of his own death being so near, he might intend hereby to convince his disciples, that, as he had *life in himself*, and could recal those to life who had been dead so long as to putrify and become offensive, it was equally possible for him to raise himself after his own death, according to the intimations with which he always accompanied the predictions of his dying. Our

12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, <sup>\*</sup> he shall do well.

13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death : but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

14 Then said Jesus unto them <sup>o</sup> plainly, Lazarus is dead.

15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was

Lord's delay, it is true, kept Lazarus's sisters in the most painful suspense, and at last pierced them with the affliction of seeing their brother die ; yet they must, in the end, think themselves abundantly recompensed by the evidence accruing to the gospel from this astonishing miracle, as well as by the inexpressible surprise of joy which they felt on receiving their brother again from the dead.

Ver. 9, 10. *Jesus answered, &c.*] In answer to the fears and remonstrances of his disciples, Jesus replies, That as the hours of the day are appointed for the various works necessary to human life, and as he who travels in the daytime need not be afraid of stumbling, because he has the sun, the light of this world, to shew him the way ; even so the man who has a season allotted him for performing God's works, and at the same time the light of the divine call requiring him to engage in them, need not be afraid of any danger to which he is exposed in the performance of them ; God, whom he serves, being always ready to preserve him : but if any man undertakes God's work at an improper season, or without a call, ver. 10. he may justly be afraid of the danger that he exposes himself to thereby. " By these words," says Cocceius, " our Lord reminds his disciples, that he is the Light of the world, and that, as long as he is in the world, he must necessarily shine ; and that there is no danger if they walk with him."

Ver. 11. *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth ;*] Our Lord might choose the expression *Lazarus sleepeth*, partly out of tenderness, as being least shocking, when he spoke of so dear a friend ; and it may also be considered as an instance of that modesty which characterizes all our Lord's actions. He does not immediately say, " *He is dead*, and I go by my almighty power to burst the bonds of the sepulchre, and to command him back to life again ;" but, avoiding all parade and ostentation, he chooses the simplest and humblest expression that can be thought of : it is likewise remarkable, that, after using the expression, *Lazarus sleepeth*, our Lord adds, *I go, that I may awake him* : but afterwards when he says *he is dead*, ver. 14. he there stops, consistently with the same modesty, and mentions nothing of his restoring him to life ; that he might not seem chargeable with the least shadow of ostentation.

Ver. 12. *Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.*] The disciples, understanding our Lord's words in a literal sense, replied, that they took Lazarus's sleeping as a favourable symptom of his speedy recovery ; and, by saying so, they insinuated that there was no need of their going into Judea on this account, to the hazard of their own, as well as of their Master's life.

not there, to the intent <sup>p</sup> ye may believe; nevertheless, let us go unto him.

16 Then said <sup>q</sup> Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, <sup>r</sup> Let us also go, that we may die with him.

17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already.

18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, <sup>s</sup> about fifteen furlongs off.

19 And many of the Jews came to Martha

and Mary, <sup>t</sup> to comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house.

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, <sup>u</sup> if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 But I know, that even now, <sup>v</sup> whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee.

<sup>p</sup> Ver. 4. Ch. 9. 3. & 2. 11. & 4. 48. & 5. 36. & 10. 38. & 14. 10, 11. <sup>q</sup> Mat. 10. 3. Mark, 3. 18. Luke, 6. 15. Ch. 20. 24—29. & 21. 2. <sup>r</sup> Ver. 5. Mat. 26. 35. Let us risk our lives along with our Master, and die as well as Lazarus. <sup>s</sup> That is, near two miles. <sup>t</sup> Gen. 37. 35. Job, 2. 11. Rom. 12. 15. 1 Theff. 5. 14. & 4. 18. Eccl. 7. 2. <sup>u</sup> 2 Kings, 5. 11. Ch. 4. 47, 49. Mat. 9. 18. <sup>v</sup> Ver. 41, 42. Ch. 9. 30, 31. Ver. 43. 44. Mat. 9. 25, 26.

Ver. 15. *And I am glad for your sakes, &c.*] “I am glad for your sakes, that I was not in Judea before he died; for had I been there and recovered him, your faith in me as the Messiah must have wanted that great confirmation, which it will receive by your beholding me raising him again from the dead. *Nevertheless*,—(rather *therefore*, *αλλὰ*, see Acts, x. 20. xxvi. 16.) to confirm your faith, and to manifest the great designs of my Father and myself, let us go unto him.” Thus Jesus, who could have raised up Lazarus without opening his lips, or rising from his seat, leaves the place of his retirement beyond Jordan, and takes a journey into Judea, where the Jews lately attempted to kill him. The reason was, his being present in person, and raising Lazarus to life again before so many witnesses, at Bethany, where he died, and was well known, would be a means, under divine grace, of bringing the men of that and future ages to believe in his doctrine, which is so well fitted to prepare them for a resurrection to life eternal,—an admirable proof and emblem of which, he gave them in this great miracle.

Ver. 16. *Then said Thomas,—Let us also go,*] “When Jesus had declared his resolution to go into Judea, Thomas, who is called Didymus, conceiving nothing but destruction from such a journey, yet unwilling to forsake his blessed Master, said, *Let us also go, that we may die with him.*” For he knew the inveteracy and malice of his countrymen to be so great, that nothing seemed more certain to them than such an event; and therefore he generously proposed that they should not forsake, but go, and lay down their lives with their beloved Master. Some have supposed that Lazarus is the antecedent to him in this passage; “*Let us go, and die with Lazarus, our dear departed friend.*” And others, considering the great credulity of Thomas, have supposed these not the words of faith and affection, but of uneasiness and despair, as if Jesus was leading them on to destruction, and it was best to end so miserable and persecuted a life. The first appears to me the most rational and consistent interpretation. Thomas is always distinguished by the name of *Didymus*, that is, twin, or two-fold.

Ver. 17. *He had lain in the grave four days*] As a day or two at least must have been spent in making preparations for the funeral, and as Lazarus, when Jesus came, had been already buried *four days*, he could not well have been less

than five days dead when our Lord arrived,—an additional circumstance to illustrate the miracle. See on ver. 5.

Ver. 18, 19. *Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem,*] The evangelist mentions the vicinity of Bethany to Jerusalem, and speaks of the company of friends that were with the two sisters, to shew that, by the direction of divine providence, this great miracle had many witnesses, some of whom were persons of note, and inhabitants of Jerusalem. See on ch. xii. 5. Our Saviour might have delayed his coming, amongst other reasons, in order to meet a greater number of persons assembled to condole with the sisters; and as these guests had met for that purpose, it is evident that they could not be any parties with Jesus in raising Lazarus from the dead: for the very end of their coming shewed that they had no apprehension of his being recalled to life; and the place whence they came, makes it probable, that they were rather enemies than friends to Jesus; and the sequel of the narrative shews, that many of them at least were really so. The general time of mourning for deceased relations, both among Jews and Gentiles, was seven days: during these days of mourning, the friends and neighbours of the mourners visited them, to condole with and comfort them. Many therefore, in so populous a part of the country, must have been going to and coming from the sisters, while the days of their mourning for Lazarus lasted. The concourse too would be the greater, as it was the time of the passover; and besides, a great multitude now attended Jesus in his journey.

Ver. 20. *Then Martha, as soon as she heard*] It seems, the news of our Lord's coming reached Bethany before him; for Martha, having heard of it, went out to meet him, being of a more active disposition than her sister, who continued in the house: being absorbed in grief, and perhaps retired to an inner apartment. Mary was not so much in the way to be informed of the arrival of Jesus, as her sister was; who, being busied in the management of the family, must naturally have been the first person to hear the joyful news. Compare Job, ii. 8. Ezek. viii. 14. and Matth. xxvii. 61.

Ver. 21, 22. *Then said Martha unto Jesus,*] Martha's intention, no doubt, was to welcome Jesus; but being in an excess of grief, the first thing she uttered was a complaint, that he had not come sooner. Imagining that he could not cure her brother while at a distance from him, she

23 Jesus saith unto her, <sup>a</sup> Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, <sup>b</sup> I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, <sup>c</sup> I am the resurrection, and the life: <sup>d</sup> he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

26 <sup>e</sup> And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. <sup>f</sup> Believest thou this?

27 She saith unto him, <sup>g</sup> Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, <sup>h</sup> The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

29 <sup>i</sup> As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

31 The Jews then, which were with her in the house, and <sup>j</sup> comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

<sup>a</sup> Luke, 14. 14. Ch. 5. 29. 1 Thess. 4. 14. 1f. 26. 19. Dan. 12. 2. <sup>b</sup> Acts, 23. 8. & 25. 15. <sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. 15. 22, 45. Ch. 6. 39, 44. & 24. 6. & 1. 4. & 5. 21, 25. <sup>d</sup> Job, 19. 26, 27. Rom. 8. 11. 1 Cor. xv. Phil. 3. 11, 21. <sup>e</sup> Rev. 20. 6. Ch. 3. 15—18, 36. & 8. 51, 52. & 12. 28, 29. & 6. 35—38. 1 John, 5. 10—12. <sup>f</sup> Oh. 16. 31. & 9. 35. Luke, 8. 25. Mark, 9. 23. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 16. 16. Ch. 1. 49. & 6. 14, 69. & 4. 42. & 9. 38. Acts, 8. 37. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 23. 8—10. & 26. 18. Ch. 13. 13. & 20. 16. Mark, 5. 35. & 9. 5. & 10. 17. Eccl. 9. 10. <sup>i</sup> 119. 59, 60. Prov. 27. 1. <sup>j</sup> See ver. 19.

she thought that, by delaying to come, he had neglected to save her brother's life: *Lord, if thou hadst been here, &c.* Thus Martha, in one respect, betrayed a mean notion of our Lord's power; though, in another, her faith aimed at something very high; for she immediately added, *But I know, &c.* ver. 22. insinuating, that she believed his prayer might yet restore her brother to life: however, as she thought he could not of himself raise the dead, she founded her hopes not on his own power, but on the power of God, in a general sense, to be exerted at his intercession. It seems, she had not heard of the resurrection either of Jairus's daughter, or of the widow of Nain's son; or, if she had heard of them, she might think her brother's resurrection more difficult than theirs, as he had been so long in a state of death.

Ver. 23—26. *Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.* Our Lord's meaning was, that he should be raised immediately, (see ver. 40.) according to her desire; yet, as the thing was so great, and beyond even her own expectation, she durst not understand him in any sense that favoured her wishes: (see ver. 24. and on Matth. xxviii. 17.) therefore, to cherish her weak faith, and, as it were, to raise her by gradual steps to the belief and acknowledgment of his sovereign power, our Lord said unto her, in the most emphatical words, *"I am the resurrection and the life: by me the general resurrection shall be accomplished, and by me a most glorious and happy life shall be given to all my faithful people, and be maintained even to eternal ages. He, therefore, that perseveringly believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he ere long live again; and his re-animated body shall be again united to that soul, which, in its separate state, continues its dependance on my power and faithfulness; and even at present I can loose the bands of death; and, though thy brother is now holden by it, I can recal him when I please to life. And every one that is now living, and perseveringly believes in me, shall never die; death shall be so disarmed and transformed, that it shall hardly deserve the name; the better part of the believer being immediately con-*

*veyed to immortal life and glory, and the body only keeping awhile in the dust, till I come to awaken it to everlasting vigour and joy."* See ch. v. 24. viii. 51. 2 Tim. i. 10. Heb. ii. 14. xii. 22, 23. Eph. ii. 6.

Ver. 27. *I believe that thou art the Christ,* By replying that she believed him to be the promised and expected Messiah, Martha insinuated, that she confided implicitly in every thing he said; and that there was no instance of power whatsoever which he was pleased to claim, that exceeded her belief. She began, it seems, to entertain some confused expectations of her brother's immediate resurrection: afterwards, when she considered the greatness of the thing more deliberately, many doubts arose; ver. 39. At present however, having some hope, she did not invite Jesus to go home with her; but, leaving him in the place where she had met him, she ran, and called her sister to come out, as it appears from the latter part of ver. 28. he had ordered her; for he designed that Mary and her companions should likewise have the honour, pleasure, and profit of being present at this stupendous miracle.

Ver. 29—31. *As soon as she heard that,* Mary no sooner heard the joyful news of the arrival of Jesus, than she arose, and went to him, without speaking a word to the company of friends, who, because she was of a softer disposition, paid especial attention to her grief; for they remained with her in the house after Martha was gone out: and when she went out, they followed her, fearing that she was going to the grave, to indulge her melancholy there: nay, they even wept with her, when they saw her weep, as she spake to Jesus, ver. 33. It was very customary with the ancients to retire to the sepulchres of their deceased friends, and weep there; and as those sepulchres were out of the town, and frequently near the road, it is probable that the place where Jesus stayed was near the sepulchre of Lazarus. The present circumstance tended also to the illustration of this miracle; for, by means hereof, the Jews who were come from Jerusalem were brought out to the grave, and made witnesses of the resurrection of Lazarus, who, probably, had they known

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Jesus wept. 36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

<sup>h</sup> Luke. 7. 38. & 10. 39. Pf. 45. 11. Mat. 2. 11. Mark. 5. 33. Luke, 5. 8. <sup>i</sup> Ver. 21. Mat. 9. 18. Ch. 4. 47, 49. 2 Kings, 5. 11. <sup>k</sup> Heb. 2. 17. & 4. 15. Mark. 3. 5. \* Gr. *betroubled himself*. <sup>l</sup> Luke, 19. 41. If. 53. 3. Heb. 2. 17, 18. & 4. 15. Rom. 12. 15. On account of the afflicting circumstances, and at the unbelief of the spectators. <sup>m</sup> Ch. 9. 6. <sup>n</sup> Heb. 5. 7. Ver. 41. Rom. 8. 26. Pf. 6. 6. <sup>o</sup> Gen. 23. 19, 20. Mat. 27. 60.

that Mary was only gone out to meet Jesus, would not have accompanied her, through the hatred which they commonly bore to him.

*Ver. 32. She fell down at his feet,*] When Mary came to Jesus, she fell down at his feet, and expressed herself just as Martha had done, only she wept as she spake. Her affliction is described, though in few words, yet in those the most natural and pathetic; and her prostration performed without reserve before the Jews, is a remarkable instance of the high veneration that she had for Christ; and his receiving of divine worship without any correction or reserve, is a proof of his supreme Godhead.

*Ver. 33. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, &c.]* There never was a more striking picture of distress than that before us, the two affectionate sisters absorbed in grief, the numerous sympathetic crowd bathed in tears, and the Son of God himself so affected, that he re-echoed their groans, and voluntarily afflicted himself with their distress. His compassionate heart could not contemplate the affliction of the two sisters and their friends, without having a deep share in it: he groaned deeply, (see Luke, x. 21.) being grieved to find that his friends entertained a suspicion of his loving them less than their great love to him might give them reason to expect, and was troubled. In the Greek it is, *He troubled himself, ἐταράχεν ἑαυτὸν*, opening his mind to a set of melting and painful ideas. His afflictions were wholly in his own power; he voluntarily sustained sorrow now, as he voluntarily embraced death afterwards.

*Ver. 34. Where have ye laid him?]* Our Lord proposed this question, in order to deliver the minds of Martha and her sister from the suspense with which they were now tortured; and he proposed it before the multitude, to convince them that there was no fraud in the intended miracle. We cannot suppose that our Lord, who knew without any information that Lazarus was dead, was ignorant of the place of his sepulchre: but when we admit the two reasons offered above, we must own that the question was kind.

*Ver. 35. Jesus wept.]* It appeared on this occasion, that our blessed Lord was possessed of the most delicate sensibility of human passions; for, when he beheld Martha and Mary and their friends around him all in tears, the tender feelings of love, of pity, and of friendship, so moved

him, that he mingled his sympathetic tears with theirs: *Jesus wept.* In this grief of the Son of God there was a greatness and generosity, not to say an amiableness of disposition, infinitely nobler than that which the Stoic philosophers aimed at in their so much boasted apathy. It would be easy to descant on this striking instance of our Lord's philanthropy; but this is not the place for such discussions: and indeed what Christian heart can be insensible to the force of this striking example? We observe only, that the power which Jesus exerted on this memorable occasion did not more strongly evince him to be the *Son of God*, than the tears which he shed conduced to demonstrate that he was the *Son of man*; a most merciful and compassionate man, touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

*Ver. 36-38. Then said the Jews, Behold, &c.]* Our Lord's tears had also another use; they caused those who saw them to wonder the more at the death of Lazarus, and consequently to doubt of his divine power, who prevented it not; whence the subsequent miracle, as less expected by them, became the more wonderful. *Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!* They perceived that his was no affected grief, but the real testimony of a sincere regard; and they could not but conclude that this regard for Lazarus was great indeed, when no ties of blood, relationship, or necessity, but undissembled friendship only, caused the generous woe: others, however, of a more malevolent and envious turn of mind, interpreted this circumstance to our Lord's disadvantage. For, according to their mean way of judging, they fancied that he had suffered Lazarus to fall under the stroke of death, for no other reason but want of power to rescue him; and thinking the miracle, said to have been wrought on the blind man at the feast of tabernacles, at least as difficult as the curing of an acute distemper, they called the former in question, because the latter had been neglected: "If," say they, "he has really opened the eyes of the blind, might he not have preserved this man from death?" These perverse and obstinate people were not persuaded by all the wonderful works which Jesus had done; neither would they be convinced by the great miracle that he was about to perform. They were to see him raise one to life and health again, who had been four days in the grave; yet so hard were their hearts, that many of them would persist in their infidelity still. Jesus, who knew the discourses which they now held among themselves



39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, faith unto him, Lord, <sup>p</sup> by this time he stinketh; for he hath been *dead* four days.

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, <sup>q</sup> that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, <sup>r</sup> I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42 And I knew <sup>s</sup> that thou hearest me always: but <sup>t</sup> because of the people which stand by I said *it*, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, <sup>u</sup> Lazarus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, <sup>v</sup> bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

<sup>p</sup> Ver. 17. Gen. 22. 14. Deut. 32. 36. <sup>q</sup> Ver. 25, 26, 4. 2 Chron. 20. 20. Mark, 9. 23. Rom. 4. 6, 17—20. with Mat. 13. 58. Luke, 20, 45. <sup>r</sup> Mat. 11. 25. Luke, 10. 21. Phil. 4. 6. <sup>s</sup> Mat. 3. 17. Ch. 8. 29. Heb. 5. 7. & 7. 25. <sup>t</sup> Ver. 31. 45. Ch. 12. 30. & 2. 11. & 20. 31. & 10. 38. & 14. 11. <sup>u</sup> Luke, 7. 14. & 8. 54. Acts, 9. 40. Rom. 4. 17. Pf. 33. 9. <sup>v</sup> With ch. 20. 5. He was to return to earth after some time.

themselves in private concerning him, was likewise fully acquainted with the hardness of their hearts, and, at the same time, foresaw the miseries in which their unbelief would involve them; that *unbelief* which yields not to his power, so soon as *death* itself. The thought of all these things afflicted him, and made him groan deeply within himself as he went to the sepulchre; which, according to the usual manner of burying with the Jews, was hewn out in a cave, and a stone was placed at it; that is, at the door of the cave, as was the case in our Lord's sepulchre. See on Luke, xxiv. 4.

*Ver. 39. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone.*] Our Lord could with infinite ease have commanded the stone to roll away of itself, without employing any to remove it. But he judiciously avoided all unnecessary pomp and parade, and mingled all the majesty of this astonishing miracle with the most amiable modesty and simplicity. Besides, he thus removed every the minutest suspicion of fraud; for they who removed the stone would have, from the putrified state of the body, sufficient evidence that it was there; while all who were present might, and no doubt did, see it lying in the sepulchre, when the stone was removed, before Jesus gave the commanding word, *Come forth*. Martha, yet weak in faith, yet struggling with doubt, in a painful agitation, with a variety of passions, says to Jesus, "Lord, it will be offensive to thee; the putrified body of my dear dead brother cannot be fit for thee to approach; by this time *he* certainly *smelleth*,"—*ὀζει*,—*for he hath been four days in the grave;*" not *four days dead* only, as we render it; for the word *dead* is not in the original, being improperly supplied by the translators—*τετραταῖος*, *quadruduanus*, one who has continued in any state or place four days. Martha's meaning therefore was, that her brother had been in the grave four days, as is plain likewise from ver. 17. The gracious providence of God directed Martha to mention this circumstance before Lazarus was raised, that the greatness of the miracle might be manifest to all who were present: for if her brother had been buried four days, he must have been dead at least five; for we are to remember that in those hot countries, the dead sooner grow offensive, and cannot be kept so long unburied as with us. Dead bodies, says Dr. Hammond, after a revolution of the humours, which is completed in seventy-two hours, naturally

tend to putrefaction; and the Jews say that by the fourth day after death, the body is so altered that one cannot be sure it is such a person.

*Ver. 40. Said I not unto thee, &c.*] Either Jesus had said more to Martha than is recorded, or possibly these words may be collected from the message which Jesus sent, ver. 4. and from what he said, ver. 25, 26; but we are not to suppose that in these histories we have an account of every word that was spoken. See ch. xxi. 25.

*Ver. 41, 42. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said.*] On many occasions Jesus had publicly appealed to his own miracles, as the proofs of his mission; but he did not ordinarily make a formal address to his Father before he worked them. Nevertheless, being about to raise Lazarus from the dead, he, in this instance, deviated from his usual mode, to make the persons present sensible, that, in working his miracles, he acted not by the assistance of devils, as his enemies maliciously affirmed; but with the co-operation of his heavenly Father.

*Ver. 43. And when he thus had spoken, he cried, &c.*] The dead man heard the voice of the Son of God, and came forth immediately; for he did not revive slowly and by degrees, as the dead child did, which was raised by the prophet Elijah. But the effect, thus instantly following the command, plainly shewed whose the power was that revived the breathless clay. If our Lord had not intended this, instead of speaking, he might have raised Lazarus by a secret inward volition. As the people present were not so much as dreaming of a resurrection, they must have been greatly surprised when they heard our Lord cry out, *Lazarus, come forth*. But when they saw him who had been putrefying in the grave four days, come forth alive and in perfect health, they could not but be agitated with many different passions, and overwhelmed with inexpressible amazement.

*Ver. 44. And he that was dead came forth.*] It would have been the least part of the miracle, had Jesus made the rollers, with which Lazarus was bound, to unroll themselves from around his body, before he came forth: but he brought him out just as he was lying, and ordered the spectators to loose him, that they might be the better convinced of the miracle. Accordingly, in taking off the grave-clothes, they had the fullest evidence, both of his death

45 <sup>1</sup> Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

46 <sup>2</sup> But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

47 ¶ <sup>3</sup> Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, <sup>4</sup> What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

48 If we let him thus alone, <sup>5</sup> all men will believe on him: <sup>6</sup> and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 2. 23. & 4. 39, 41. & 8. 30. & 10. 42. & 12. 11, 42. <sup>2</sup> Ch. 5. 15. Acts, 5. 25. 1 Sam. 21. 9, 10. <sup>3</sup> Pl. 2. 1—4. Mat. 26. 3. <sup>4</sup> Mark, 14. 1. Acts, 4. 6, 27. <sup>5</sup> Ch. 12. 19. Acts, 4. 16. <sup>6</sup> Gen. 49. 10. 11. 9, 6, 7. & 11. 10. & 42. 6, 7. & 49. 6. <sup>7</sup> Dan. 9. 26, 27.

death and resurrection; for on the one hand the manner in which it is supposed he was swathed, (see ch. xix. 40.) must of itself have killed him in a little time, had he been alive when buried, and consequently have demonstrated beyond all exception, that Lazarus was several days dead, before Jesus called him forth. Some, however, suppose, that the body was not bound over with bandages, but only wrapped up in a large linen cloth, tied at the hands and feet, [*Κερίαις*, a word which Phavorinus explains by *ἐπιταφιαῖς δισμοῖς*, sepulchral bands,] not altogether, perhaps, unlike what is customary with us; and this is the more probable, as we may reasonably conclude, both from the words of Martha, ver. 39. and from this verse, that Lazarus was not embalmed, when it was usual to make use of such bandages. However, be this as it may, in taking off the grave-clothes, the linen might offer both to their eyes and smell abundant proofs of his putrefaction, and by that means convince them, that he had not been in a *deliquium*, or swoon, but was really departed. On the other hand, by his lively countenance appearing when the napkin was removed, his fresh colour, his active vigour, and his brisk talking, they who came near him and handled him, were made sensible that he was in perfect health, and had an opportunity to try the truth of the miracle by the closest examination. It may be proper just to reply here to a difficulty suggested upon this history of Lazarus's resurrection. It is said that, when Jesus called upon Lazarus to come forth, he came out bound hand and foot; but deists, speaking of this miracle, commonly ask with a sneer, how could he come out of a grave, who was bound in that manner? The answer however, is obvious. The reader first desired to consider the form of the Jewish sepulchres, as described in the note on Luke, xxiv. 4. and then reflect that the evangelist means not that Lazarus was taken out of the sepulchre; but that, lying on his back, he raised himself into a sitting posture, then, putting his feet out of his niche or cell, slid down and stood upright on the floor; all which he might easily do, notwithstanding his arms were bound close to his body, and his legs were tied straight together by means of the shroud and bandages, or whatever they were with which he was confined. Accordingly, when he was come forth, it is said, that Jesus ordered them to loose him, and let him go; a circumstance plainly importing, that the historian knew that Lazarus could not walk till he was unbound. If the Jews buried as the Egyptians did, the napkin did not cover the face of Lazarus, but only went round his forehead, and under his chin; so that he could easily see; not even on supposition that it was wound about his face, VOL. I.

he could easily have raised himself out of his niche without seeing, in the manner above described.

Ver. 45, 46. *Then many of the Jews—believed*] Considering the nature and circumstances of this great miracle, it ought to have silenced the peevishness of cavilling, might have overcome the obstinacy of prejudice, and should have put to shame the impudence of malice; for the deliberate and purposed delay of Christ, his declaration of Lazarus's death, and prediction of his resurrection, the variety and multitude of the persons who were witnesses, the accidental circumstances which led them to be present, the consequent faith of many Jews who were there, (by no means prejudiced in favour of Jesus, or disposed to believe in him,) as well as the acknowledgment made of the reality of this miracle to the Jewish sanhedrim, are such testimonies, as must place this wonderful event beyond the power of cavil or contradiction: wherefore we cannot help being surpris'd to find that the cry, *Lazarus, come forth*, did not produce on all who were present, an effect some way similar to that which it had on Lazarus: it raised him from the natural death, and might, through divine grace, have raised the most stupid of the spectators from the spiritual, by working in them the living principle of faith. It afforded, however, a dreadful confirmation of that weighty truth, *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* Every reader must be sensible that there is something incomparably beautiful in the whole of our Lord's behaviour on this occasion; after having given such an astonishing instance of his power, he did not speak one word in his own praise, either directly or indirectly. He did not rebuke the Jews for having, in former instances, maliciously detracted from the lustre of his miracles, every one of which derived additional credit from this incontestable wonder. He did not say how much they were to blame for persisting in their incredulity, though he well knew what they would do: he did not insinuate, even in the most distant manner, the obligations which Lazarus and his sisters were laid under by this signal favour; he did not upbraid Martha and Mary with the discontent that they had expressed, at his having delayed to come to the relief of their brother. Nay, he did not so much as put them in mind of the mean notion they had entertained of his power; but, always consistent with himself, he was on this, as on every other occasion, a pattern of perfect humility and absolute self-denial. It is beautiful to observe the gradation in the resurrections of the dead performed by our Lord: the first person he raised, Jairus's daughter, had been in the state of death only a few hours; the second, the son of the widow of

49 And one of them, *named* <sup>c</sup> Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, <sup>f</sup> Ye know nothing at all,

50 Nor consider that <sup>g</sup> it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that <sup>h</sup> Jesus should die for that nation;

52 And not for that nation only, but that

also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

53 <sup>i</sup> Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

54 <sup>k</sup> Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called <sup>l</sup> Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

55 <sup>m</sup> And the Jews' passover was nigh

<sup>c</sup> Luke, 3. 2. Ch. 18. 14. Acts, 4. 6. <sup>f</sup> Ch. 7. 48. 49. <sup>g</sup> Ver. 48. Ch. 19. 12. & 18. 14. He meant that they had better murder Christ, than provoke the Romans against them all. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 20. 28. 1 Pet. 2. 24. & 3. 18. Rev. 5. 9. 1 John, 2. 2. Gal. 3. 13, 28. Ch. 10. 15, 16. Est. 2. 13—22. & 3. 6—9. 11. 4. 7. 6. <sup>i</sup> Pf. 2. 1—4. & 12. 12, 16. & 31. 13. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 4. 1—3. & 7. 1, 10. & 10. 40. <sup>l</sup> 2 Chron. 13. 19. <sup>m</sup> Exod. 12. 6. & 23. 14—17. & 34. 23. Deut. 16. 1. Lev. 23. 5.

Nain, was raised as his friends were carrying him out to burial; but when Jesus recalled Lazarus to life, he had been in the grave no less than *four days*; and therefore, according to our apprehensions, his resurrection was the greatest of the three, the whole power of death being accomplished upon him.

*Ver. 47, 48. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council,]* The account which was given of Lazarus's resurrection raised the indignation of the rulers to the highest pitch. They assembled the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation forthwith, and, after consultation, blamed one another for having suffered Jesus to go so long unpunished: but this miracle being too evident to be denied, as indeed all his miracles were, they did not, even in their most private conferences, say or insinuate to one another, that their displeasure and opposition proceeded from his passing false miracles upon the ignorant vulgar; they rather condemned him upon the truth and notoriety of his miracles, pretending that they were designed to establish a new sect in religion, which might endanger, not their church only, but their state, *our place, τον τεπον, our temple* (see Acts, vi. 14. xxi. 28.) and *nation*. Thus, though the Pharisees were his sworn enemies, they could not help giving him an ample testimony, even in full court. *If we let him thus alone, say they, all men will believe on him, &c.* "If we do not bestir ourselves to prevent it, the common people, astonished at his miracles, will certainly set him up for Messiah; and the Romans, on pretence of their rising in rebellion, will take away both our liberty and religion." They entered therefore into a resolution for putting Jesus to death at all hazards. But those politicians were taken in their own craftiness; for, while they proposed, by killing Jesus, to avoid the destruction of their temple and city, the sin which they committed in killing the Prince of Life was so great, that God, in his just indignation, made the very people, whose resentment they proposed to avoid by this wicked measure, the instruments of his vengeance. He brought the Roman armies against them, who *destroyed these murderers, and burnt up their city*; leaving, in that dreadful catastrophe, an awful warning to all statesmen to beware of prosecuting unjust measures, on pretence of consulting the good of the nation whose affairs they direct. Again, the members of the Jewish council were not at all unanimous in their re-

solution of putting Jesus to death. Some of them, who were his disciples, (see ch. xii. 42.) particularly Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea, urged the unlawfulness of what they purposed to do, from the consideration of his miracles and his innocence; but the high-priest Caiaphas treated Christ's friends in the council with contempt, as weak, ignorant people, who were unacquainted with the nature of government, "which," said he, "requires that certain acts of injustice should not be scrupled at, when they are expedient for the safety of the state."

*Ver. 49—52. And—Caiaphas, being the high-priest that same year, said, &c.]* It is well known, that the high-priesthood among the Jews was not annual; but the many revolutions about this period might justify the present manner of speaking, which signifies no more, as some think, than in *these days, or at that time*. See Luke, iii. 2. Others, however, imagine, that the expression is emphatical; *that year, that memorable year, in which Christ was to die*; it was the last and chief of Daniel's *seventy weeks*, the fortieth year before the destruction of Jerusalem, and was celebrated, for various causes, in Jewish history. As God was wont anciently to communicate his oracles to the high-priest clothed with the pontifical garments; so he inspired the words, ver. 50. into Caiaphas, who now bore that office, though he was not sensible himself of the inspiration, and meant what he said in a different sense from what God intended should be signified by it; and thus he gave unawares as clear a testimony to the priests, as Philip did to the kingly office of Christ. By *the children of God*, ver. 52. are meant his true worshippers, not only among the Jews, but likewise among all nations in the world, who were to be gathered, through Christ, into one flock, and glorious and happy society. See ch. x. 16.

*Ver. 53. Then from that day forth they took counsel, &c.]* The evangelist does not tell us what the measure was which they pitched upon for this purpose; only from the last verse of the chapter, it seems probable, that they agreed to issue out a proclamation against Jesus, promising a reward to any one who would shew where he was, that they might take him.

*Ver. 54. Into a city called Ephraim,]* The situation of Ephraim has not yet been determined; all that John tells of it, is, that it stood in a country near the wilderness; perhaps he meant the wilderness which is said to have been

at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

56 ° Then sought they for Jesus, and spake

among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

57 ° Now both the chief priests and the

Gen. 35. 2. Exod. 19. 10. 2 Chron. 30. 15, 18. Numb. 9. 6. Ver. 22. 12, 16.

Ch. 7. 11, 12. Ch. 5. 16, 18. & 8. 59. & 10. 31, 32. Pf 103. 4.

up from Jericho to Bethel, Josh. xvi. 1. For Josephus mentions Ephraim as not far from Bethel. Eusebius, in his *Orientalic*, upon the word *Αγγα*, the ancient *Ai*, tells us, that at Bethel lay in the road from Jerusalem to Sichem in Samaria, at the distance of twelve miles from Jerusalem. The same author says, that Ephraim was a larger city, eight miles from Jerusalem towards the north.

Ver. 55. *To purify themselves.*] As a variety of circumstances might happen to multitudes, which would require purification, so some sort of cleansing required no less than seven days; and the vows of the Nazarites likewise required some time. Compare 2 Chron. xxx. 17. Some would render the last clause of the 56th verse, *What think ye? Will he not come to the feast?*

Inferences on the raising of Lazarus, ver. 14—46. There is a time when we must preach Christ on the house-top, as well as a time when we must speak of him as it were in the ear, and with the lips shut. Doubtless Martha was greatly overjoyed at the presence of Christ; and though she knew how equally welcome it would be to her sister, yet she does not proclaim it aloud in the open hall, but secretly whispers the pleasing tidings in her sister's ear. *The Master come, and calleth for thee.* What a happy word, what a high and honourable favour was this! that the Lord of life, that the divine Ambassador should personally come, and call for Mary; yet are they such, as may not be appropriated to her alone. Thou comest still to us, O Saviour, not in thy bodily presence, yet in thy spiritual. Thouallest us still, if not in thy personal voice, yet in thine ordinances; and it is our fault if we do not, as this good woman did, arise quickly, and come to thee. Her friends were there about her, who came purposely to condole with her; her heart was full of heaviness; her hopes were low, alas! all at as low ebb; and yet, as soon as ever she hears the mention of Christ coming, of Christ calling her, she forgets friends, brother, grief, cares, and hastens to his presence.

Such good women were well worthy of kind friends: these, knowing the value, and hearing of the death of Lazarus, came over to comfort the sad pair. Charity, together with the common practice of their nation, calls them to this amiable duty. How grievous was that complaint, *I looked for some to comfort me, but there was none!* It is some kind of ease in sorrow to have partners: as a burden lightened by many shoulders, or as clouds scattered into many drops easily vent their moisture in the air; so even the very presence of friends is a sweet abatement of grief.

These friendly neighbours, seeing Mary hasten forth, make haste to follow her: it was but a loving suspicion, ver. 31. *She is gone to the grave to weep.* They well knew how apt sensible minds are to take all occasions to renew

their sorrows; every object around affects them. When she saw but the chamber of her dead brother, straight she must think that there her *Lazarus* was wont to lie, and then she wept afresh; when the table was spread, "there *Lazarus* was wont to sit," and then new tears arise; when the garden appeared, "there *Lazarus* had wont to walk," and then again she weeps. How much more do these sympathetic friends suppose the passions would be stirred with the sight of the grave, when she must needs think, "there is *Lazarus*, an inanimate, dissolving lump of clay!" their indulgent love, however, mistook Mary's errand: kind as they were, their thoughts were much too low: while they suppose her going to a dead brother, she is hastening on the wings of affection to a living Saviour, the Lord of life.

Both the sisters met Christ; not both in one posture. Mary is still noted, as for more passion, so for more ardent devotion: she that before sat at the feet of Jesus, now falls prostrate at those feet. Where the heart is affected with an awful acknowledgment of the divine majesty, the body cannot but bow.

Even before all her neighbours of Jerusalem, does Mary thus sink down in humility before her Saviour. It was no less than excommunication for any one to confess him; yet good Mary, fearless of the informations that might be given by these Jewish observers, adores him, and in her silent gesture says as much as her sister had spoken before, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.* Those who would give Christ his right, must not stand upon scrupulous fears. Are we naturally timorous?—Why do we not fear the denial, the exclusion of the Almighty? O let us remember, *Without are the fearful!* Rev. xxi. 8.

Her humble prostration is seconded by a remarkable complaint; *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!* Both she and her sister, as with one voice, betray both strength and infirmity of faith; strength, in ascribing so much power to Christ, that his presence could preserve from death; infirmity, in supposing the necessity of a bodily presence for this purpose. It is a weakness of faith to measure success by means, and means by bodily presence, and to tie effects to the concurrence of both, when we deal with an almighty Agent. O Saviour, while thou now sittest gloriously in heaven, thou dost no less by thy Godhead impart thyself to our souls, than if thou stoodst visibly by us, than if we stood locally by thee. No place can make a difference in thy virtue and thy aid.

This was Mary's moan: her silent, yet not unseen suit, is returned with a silent answer. No notice is taken of the error in her expression; all the reply that we hear from the blessed Redeemer, is a compassionate groan within himself, and an inquiry, *Where have ye laid him?* He who knew in absence that Lazarus was dead, now asks where he is buried: not out of need, but of will; that as in his sor-

Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew *it*, that they might take him.

row, so in his inquiry, he might depress himself in the opinion of the standers-by; unwilling to fix their minds upon the expectation of some marvellous thing, till the grand fiat shall announce it, and raise the sleeping Lazarus from his tomb.

They were not more glad of the question, than ready for the answer—*Come and see*. It was their manner to lay up the dead bodies of their friends, like the Egyptians, with great respect: more cost was bestowed on some of their graves, than on their houses. Here, as neither ashamed nor unwilling to shew the decency of their sepulchre, they say, *Come and see*.

Never was our Saviour more submissively *dejected* than now, immediately before he would approve and *exalt* the majesty of his godhead. To his groans and inward grief, he adds his tears: *JESUS wept!* well indeed might the Jews construe them up to their true source, and cry, *See how he loved him!* and well had it been, could they have rested there, without so unworthily misconstruing, as they did, his motives, ver. 37. *Could not he that opened the eyes of the blind, &c.?*

It is not improbable that Jesus, who before groaned in himself for compassion of their tears, now groaned for their incredulity. Nothing could so much afflict the Saviour of men, as the sins of men; no injury goes so deep as our spiritual provocations of God. Wretched men, why should we grieve the good spirit of God in us? Why should we make *him* groan for us, who died to redeem us?

With these groans, O Saviour, thou comest to the grave of Lazarus; the door of that house of death was strong and impenetrable: thy first word was, *Take away the stone*. O weak beginning of a mighty miracle! If thou meantest to raise the dead, how much easier had it been for thee to remove the grave-stone? One grain of faith, even in thy disciples, were enough to remove mountains; and dost thou say, *Take away the stone?*—But it was ever thy just will that we should do what we may. To remove the stone, or to untie the napkin, was in their power; this therefore they must do: to raise the dead was out of their power; this therefore thou wilt do alone: our hands must do their utmost, ere thou wilt put to thine.

In spite of all the unjust discouragements of nature, Christ's command must be obeyed; Martha may doubt, but Christ *hath spoken, and shall he not make it good?* Whatever the good woman's staggering faith may suggest, the glory of God is concerned, and it must now be displayed: the stone is removed; all impediments give way; all hearts are ready for the result: the Saviour addresses himself to the miracle.

His eyes begin, they are lifted up to heaven: his tongue seconds his eye; yet we hear of no prayer, but of thanks for hearing: *Father, I thank thee, &c.* Thy will, O Saviour, was thy prayer. *Words* express our hearts to men, *thoughts* to God: well didst thou know, out of thy self-sameness with the Father, that the grant must keep pace with the idea of thine intention. *I knew that thou hearest me always; but this I said for their sakes, that they might believe.*

But hark! the word is past, *Lazarus come forth!* Why did the Saviour thus loudly lift up his voice?—Was it that the strength of the call might answer to the measure of the affection; since we faintly require what we care not to obtain, and vehemently utter what we earnestly desire? Or was it to signify that Lazarus's soul was called from far;—since the speech must be loud, that shall be heard in the other world? Or was it in relation to the sleeping state of his body; since those who are in the deadness of deep sleep cannot be awakened without a loud call?—Or was it in representation of that last loud trumpet's summons, which shall sound into all graves, and raise all flesh from their dust for ever?—Even so still, Lord, when thou wouldst raise a soul from the death of sin, and grave of corruption, no *still, small voice* will serve. Thy strongest commands, thy loudest denunciations of judgment, the shrillest and sweetest promulgations of thy mercies, are but enough to arouse the slumbering faculties.

Here was no suit to the Father, no adjuration to the deceased, but a fiat, an absolute injunction, *Come forth!* O Saviour, that is the voice which I shall once hear sounding into the bottom of my grave, and raising me from my dust. That is the voice which shall pierce the rocks, and divide the mountains, and fetch up the dead from the lowest caverns of the deep. Thy word made all; thy word shall repair all for thy faithful faints. Hence, far hence, all ye diffident fears!—he whom I trust is omnipotent.—Behold, *he that was dead came forth!*

Thou didst not only, O Saviour, raise the body of Lazarus, but the faith of many of the by-standers. O clear emblem, irrefragable argument of our resurrection also! If Lazarus did thus start up from death, at the bleating as it were of this *Lamb of God*, who was now daily preparing for the slaughter; how shall the dead be roused hereafter in millions from their graves, at the roaring of that glorious and immortal *Lion*, whose voice shall shake the powers of heaven, and move in trembling horror the very foundations of the earth?

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The miracle contained in this chapter is recorded by this evangelist alone. We have,

1. The persons particularly interested. *Lazarus* is mentioned first, a particular friend of Christ's who was sick at Bethany, a little village near Jerusalem, where he had lived with his sisters Mary and Martha; at whose house Jesus seems to have chiefly resided, when he went up to Jerusalem on the great festivals. Mary, whose brother was a woman of singular piety, which particularly appeared in the respect that she paid our Lord some time after this Chap. xii. 3. when at a public entertainment she anointed his feet with a box of precious ointment, and wiped them with her hair. Note; Christ keeps a faithful account, and will not fail to make honourable mention of all the works of faith and labours of love done for his sake by his faithful people.

2. The sisters, anxious for their brother, who was so dear to them, dispatched a messenger to acquaint them

CHAP. XII.

*Jesus vindicates Mary anointing his feet. The people flock to see Lazarus: the chief priests consult to kill him. Christ rideth into Jerusalem. Certain Greeks desire to see Jesus: he foretelleth his death. The Jews are generally blinded: yet many chief rulers believe, but do not confess him; therefore Jesus calleth earnestly for confession of faith.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

WHEN<sup>a</sup> Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was

<sup>a</sup> Mk. 14. 3-9. Mat. 26. 6-13. Ch. 11. 1-45. <sup>b</sup> Luke, 10. 38-41. Ch. 11. 1, 5, 19-28, 39-44. <sup>c</sup> Ch. 11. 2, 28, 32. Luke, 42. Mat. 26. 7. Mk. 14. 3. with Luke, 7. 37, 38.

which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

2<sup>b</sup> There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

3 Then took<sup>c</sup> Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of

and Master of his imminent danger; knowing it be enough to mention the case to him, since *he who* was a person that *he loved* so tenderly. *Note*; (1.) we ourselves, or our dear relatives, are sick, we must the case before the compassionate Saviour, and com- with humble submission to his care. (2.) They are souls indeed, who are distinguished as the disciples Jesus loves. (3.) The dearest children of God the common afflictions incident to humanity; yea, most severely exercised.

Christ foretold the issue of the sickness, that it should *to death*; at least, that death should not keep La- his prisoner, but that the *glory of God* should be nently displayed in his recovery, for which end *was sent*. *Note*; (1.) It is a great consolatory child of God, that in all his sufferings God *ses of his own glory* to answer. (2.) Though even unto death, we know, if Jesus loves us, *erishing of our outward man* can do no real *will open for our disembodied souls a passage* and blessedness.

Christ foretold his visit to Lazarus two days, though his and the family was well known, and very *and this he did to prove their faith and patience,* *in a more signal manifestation of his power*

the two days were expired, Christ calls upon to attend him to Bethany, designing to carry afflicted family there. But they expostulate the danger to which he must expose him- journey, when so lately the Jews had at- arder him, and still harboured some mali- : but perhaps this concern for his safety at some regard to their own also, who were ed with him; for very apt are we to mix tions, where we seem to mean only our di- honour and interests. In reply to their sug- gers, *Are there not twelve hours in the day,* *eral estimation, allotted for labour? If the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the that sun which gilds his path, and makes fore his face.* Thus while the time of the Father lasts, I fear no danger, and *work; but if a man walk in the night, he here is no light in him.* So when my day- then, and not till then, shall I be suf-

ferred to fall into the hands of my foes. *Note*; (1.) The con- sideration how soon the night of death approaches, should quicken our diligence, while yet the day of life continues, to redeem the time, and finish the work that Christ hath given us to do. (2.) They who walk under the guidance of the word and Spirit of Jesus, go on their way unmoved; while they who follow any other guide, are sure to stumble upon the dark mountains of error, and fall into the pit of destruction.

6. He informs them of the death of their common friend Lazarus, and his design to raise him up again to life, which he represents under the figure of sleep. *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.* The disciples, understanding him literally, thought this a favourable symptom, and that he would do well without their Master's going into the jaws of danger. But as he spake of his death under this figure, and not of common rest, as they apprehended, he rectified their mistake by plainly telling them, *Lazarus is dead; and adds, I am glad, for your sakes, that I was not there before he died, to the intent ye may believe,* when, by his resurrection from the grave, after so long a time, your faith may receive the greater confirmation. *Nevertheless, though he is dead, let us go unto him.* *Note*; Sleep is death's lesser mystery; and every day that we awake from our beds, we experience a kind of resurrection.

7. Thomas, called Didymus, or the twin, on hearing what Jesus had said, and his resolution to go into Judea, said to his fellow-disciples, *let us also go, that we may die with him; either with Lazarus, whom he loved so much as not to wish to survive him; or rather with their Master, who, by going, seemed to expose his life to inevitable danger: and he, zealous to attend him, offers himself, and encourages his brethren to cleave to him wherever he went, though death itself should be the consequence.* *Note*; (1.) To go to join the spirits of just men made perfect, is indeed a consummation devoutly to be wished for. (2.) Faithful disciples will be intimidated by no danger from following their Master, and encouraging each other to stand fast in the day of trial.

2dly, Jesus, having declared his purposes, began his journey with his disciples, and arrived at Bethany, which was distant from Jerusalem about two miles.

1. He found a melancholy scene: the house where with joy he had lately been entertained, is drowned in tears; such awful changes do we often see after the shortest absence. from

the ointment.

4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

5 Why was not this ointment sold for \* three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

\* Mat. 26. 8, 9. Mark, 14. 4, 5. Eccles. 4. 4. Job, 5. 2. 1 Th. 5. 2. Pf. 55. 21. \* Nine pounds six shillings.

from our friends. Lazarus had lain in the grave four days already, and many of the Jews had come from Jerusalem to console the afflicted sisters. *Note*; (1.) It is kind to weep with those that weep; and, by partaking, to alleviate the sorrows of the miserable. (2.) When we lose our dearest relatives, if they fall asleep in Jesus, we have abundant reason to be comforted concerning our brother; his lot is to be envied; our tears should rather flow for ourselves left yet behind, to conflict with the powers of evil. (3.) The house of most distinguished piety is not barred against affliction; but though we sorrow as men, we can rejoice as believers. There is hope in the end.

2. Martha no sooner heard of the Master's approach, than she went to meet him; while Mary, who had not yet heard of his arrival, sat still in the house. We are told what passed at this first interview.

[1.] Martha, with deep respect addressing the Saviour, said, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*; so confident was she of his power and compassion, though her weakness appeared in supposing his bodily presence necessary to the cure. *But I know that even now, desperate as the case is, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee*; she mentioned no particulars, but meekly referred the case to his grace and wisdom. *Note*; In our deepest sorrows, our only relief is to draw near to Jesus, to tell him our sorrows, and cast our care upon him.

[2.] Christ answers her with good and comfortable words. *Thy brother shall rise again*. He expresses it so as to leave it doubtful, whether he meant a present or a future resurrection: in either view it administered matter for her faith, and hope, and consolation. *Note*; It is a most reviving consideration, when death robs us of our brethren in Jesus, that the separation is but short.

[3.] Martha professes her faith in what her Lord had spoken. *I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day*; that there would be a resurrection she was persuaded, and that Lazarus would rise among the just; but though this was some consolation, her loss hung heavy upon her.

[4.] *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life*; not only by his intercession could he obtain life from God for whom he would, but he had the power of life in himself, and at his own pleasure could raise the dead, and call the things that are not, as though they were. *He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live*; though by nature dead in trespasses and sins, his soul shall here live a life of faith; and his very body, as well as soul, if he be faithful, shall live in the eternal world; and *whosoever liveth and believeth in me, quickened to spiritual life, and walking by faith, shall never die*; though his body may return to the dust, whence it came, yet shall it be raised again, and be immortal as his never-dying soul. *Believest thou this?*—a solemn question which we should often put to ourselves? The resurrection of the body is to sense im-

probable; but faith overlooks every difficulty. He who raised us from the dust at first, can again re-assemble the scattered atoms, and bring bone to his bone. *Note*; (1.) Christ is the author of *natural life*; in him we live, and move, and have our being: of *spiritual life*; by his power and his Spirit are we quickened from the death of *sin*; and by him they shall be raised up at the last day. (2.) They who have this faith in them, and perseveringly enjoy it, are truly blessed and happy; they live in comfort, and die in Divine assurance.

[5.] Martha said unto him, *Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world*; the true Messiah, so long promised, so greatly expected. *Note*; They who know the Saviour's almighty efficiency, may comfortably and confidently rest all their hopes upon him.

3. Mary comes to meet the Lord. Martha, in haste to communicate the glad news, and to make her sister partaker of the blessings of his converse, goes and tenderly whispers to her that Jesus the Master was come, and wished to see her. Eager to meet him, she hastily arose, and came to him without the town where he had halted, as nearer to the grave where his business lay. The Jews who came to condole with her, observing her sudden departure, concluded that she was gone to the grave to weep, and followed her. But Mary had now found her Lord, and at his feet poured out with tears her sorrowful complaint, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*. *Note*; (1.) Gracious souls delight to be instrumental in bringing others to Jesus, to partake of his consolations. (2.) Christ is a better comforter than ten thousand friends: at his feet under all our sorrows let us be found, and he will calm our troubled breasts. (3.) It is kind to visit the house of mourning, and seek to divert from inordinate sorrow the afflicted, who often study how to sharpen and aggravate their own griefs. (4.) We are often apt to lament and grieve ourselves unnecessarily with apprehensions that something was neglected or overlooked, which might have been done for our departed friends, instead of committing to the divine will with silent resignation.

3dly, We have,

1. The compassion of Jesus. He felt for the anguish that appeared in the tears so plentifully shed; he grieved in the spirit and was troubled, sympathizing with Mary and her friends in their grief; and, knowing his own dispensation of grace, he asked, *Where have ye laid him?* Not that he could be unacquainted with any event, but that it might appear there was no contrivance between him and the relations of the deceased: *They say unto him, Lord, come and see*; and being come to the place, he, whose tender heart felt deeply for human misery, and as man possessed the tenderest feelings of our nature, gave vent to his grief. *Jesus wept*. *Note*; (1.) Jesus was very man as well as

6<sup>e</sup> This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

7<sup>f</sup> Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my<sup>e</sup> burying hath she kept this.

8 For<sup>h</sup> the poor always ye have with you;

<sup>e</sup> Ps. 12. 2. & 55. 21. Prov. 26. 25. <sup>f</sup> Ps. 109. 31. Zech. 3. 2. Gen. 4. 4. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 26. 12. & 27. 57-60. Mark, 14. 8. & 15. 42-47. Luke, 24. 50-56. Ch. 19. 38-42. If. 53. 9. <sup>h</sup> Deut. 15. 11. Mat. 26. 11. Mark, 14. 7.

very God, the subject of our sinless passions and infirmities. (2.) Tears of tender sympathy become the disciples of Jesus, who are commanded to weep with those that weep.

2. The reflections made by those present on the tears of Jesus. Some said, and the observation was most natural, *Behold, how he loved him!* Others, with malignant insinuations, suggest, *Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?* intimating, that had he really possessed the power he pretended, he would have kept his friend from death; but as he could not do this, it was to be suspected that what had passed for so extraordinary a miracle before, was really a mere deception. *Note;* (1.) If we consider what Jesus hath done, how he has shed not only tears, but drops of blood for us,—with much more reason may we say, *Behold, how he loved us!* (2.) They who determine to cavil, will always find a pretence.

3. Jesus, groaning in the spirit at the malice and wickedness of such a suggestion, *cometh to the grave;* which, according to their usual method of burying the dead, was a cave, with a stone laid on its mouth. This he bids them remove, that all might be convinced of the reality of Lazarus's death, by the putrefaction of the corpse. Martha, concluding, from the time he had lain in the grave, that the body must be very offensive, and thinking it too late to hope for his revival, would have diverted Jesus from his purpose; but he said unto her, *Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God displayed in a more eminent manner than has yet appeared?* And herein probably he refers to something that he had said in the former conversation with her, which is not recorded by the evangelist. *Note;* (1.) Nothing serves more deeply to mortify our pride on any bodily excellencies, than the reflection how awful will be the change, when we have lain but a few days in the grave. (2.) If we have true and constant faith, we shall surely see the great salvation of God, whatever difficulties may seem to be in our way.

4. The grave being opened, and the corpse being discovered, *Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me;* not as imploring assistance for the performing the miracle of Lazarus's resurrection, which by his own power he would accomplish; but as thanking him for the present opportunity afforded him for the display of his divine power and authority. *And I knew that thou hearest me always, because my will and thine are one; but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me,* and be assured of my being the true Messiah by this stupendous miracle, which will add still greater evidence to my mission. *Note;* (1.) In our approaches to God, we should draw near to him as the Father of mercies, with full confidence in his faithfulness, power, and love. (2.) Thanksgivings for past mercies, are an encouragement to the pre-

sented exercise of our faith. (3.) Christ is an all-prevailing advocate; his prayers are always heard; therefore we may boldly draw near to a throne of grace.

5. By a word the miracle is wrought. With the voice of Majesty, as the Lord of life, he speaks aloud, *Lazarus, come forth;* and instantly, obedient to his command, death surrenders his prisoner; by omnipotent power the corpse is raised, Lazarus comes forth alive, enveloped with all the swathings and the napkin round his face, as he was laid in the grave. Jesus bids them *loose him, and let him go;* being perfectly restored to health and strength, he was able as ever to walk to his own house. *Note;* The change in a resurrection-day will be thus instantaneous, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, 1 Cor. xv. 52.

4thly, This miracle produced very different effects upon the spectators.

1. Many of the Jews there present, who had come to console the sorrowful sisters, struck with the evidence of the divine power of Jesus, believed in him as the Messiah. Thus their kindness to the afflicted, was repaid with the best of spiritual blessings upon their own souls.

2. Others, obstinate in infidelity, and exasperated, instead of being convinced, by what they had seen, went with malicious wickedness to the Pharisees, who were members of the sanhedrim, and informed them what was done, that they might take measures to suppress the increasing fame of Jesus.

3. A council was instantly summoned, in order to deliberate on some more vigorous methods to stop *this man.* Being assembled, they said, *What do we? How dilatory are our proceedings? how long shall we see ourselves run down, and our interests in the people usurped? for this man doth many miracles, which could not be denied; and if we let him thus alone to root himself in the people's affections, all men will believe on him as the Messiah, and set him up as king: the consequence of which will be, that the Romans will come to crush such a rebellion, and take away both our place and nation.* This they dreadfully apprehended; and by the very methods they took to prevent it, filled up the measure of their iniquities, and brought that very destruction, which they feared, upon their own heads. *Note;* (1.) The enemies of Christ have often pretended zeal for the public good, as a pretence to persecute the public's best friends. (2.) They who, under the influence of carnal policy, by wicked methods, think to extricate themselves from their difficulties, only pull down the more surely that ruin which they seek to shun.

4. Caiaphas the high priest that year, (this dignity and office under the Roman government having become venal, and the persons being often changed,) a man of a Sadducean spirit, (Acts, v. 17.) unconcerned about the judgment to come, with daring effrontery and haughtiness, said, *Ye know nothing at all, to sit thus debating and deliberating; nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should*



but me ye have not always.

9 ¶ Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not

for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 11. 44, 45. Mark, 1. 45. Acts, 17, 21.

*should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not:* when matters are come to such a crisis, there can be no ground to hesitate about proceeding, nor need we enter into the inquiry whether he be a prophet or no; the case is desperate, and requires a desperate remedy: better is it, though he were innocent, to destroy him, than endanger, by a foolish lenity, the safety of the nation. *Note;* (1.) When secular interest, court favour, bribery and corruption, exalt men to the highest offices in the church, no wonder if the chief rulers are arch-persecutors. (2.) Reason and justice stand in little stead, when power is in the hands of oppressors.

5. The evangelist informs us, that Caiaphas *spoke not this of himself: but being high-priest that year*, whose words would be looked upon as oracular, God so ordered it that he should express his sentiments in such a way, as that, though he designed the most malignant and murderous counsel, he declared the most important and glorious truth—*he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation*, as the Messiah, to redeem them from the Adamic curse, and all the faithful from all their sins: *and not for that nation only*, to save the faithful of the Jewish people, *but that also he should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad*; even those of the Gentiles also, wherever dispersed, as well as Jews, who would believe in his name.

6. Caiaphas's discourse determined the sanhedrim, and from that day forward, with resolute purpose, they took counsel to put Jesus to death, and thought only on the properest means to execute their design.

7. Christ, who knew this combination against him, and the determination of his implacable enemies, withdrew, and walked no more openly among the Jews; retiring to a city called Ephraim, in the least frequented part of the country, where he spent his time in conversation with his disciples. The hour of his departure approaching, this season was most usually employed in teaching them the things which pertained to the kingdom of God.

8. The last passover which our Lord was to celebrate on earth, now drew nigh; and multitudes, according to custom, resorted to Jerusalem to purify themselves from any ceremonial uncleanness which they had contracted, before the feast began, that they might be legally prepared to partake of it. Many inquiries were then made concerning Jesus, by those who met together in the temple; it being a question much agitated among them, whether he would venture to come up to the feast or not? For the chief-priests had issued strict orders, that if any man knew where he was, he should shew it, that they might arrest him, and put him to death. And this made some doubt, whether such an open declaration of their intentions might not intimidate him; whilst others would have been glad to have an opportunity of delivering him up to his implacable enemies. *Note;* When rulers are

wicked, they never want instruments to execute their iniquitous purposes.

## CHAP. XII.

*Ver. 1. Then Jesus—came to Bethany,*] This was in his way to Jerusalem; and he might choose to stop here, in order to renew the idea of the resurrection upon the minds of his disciples, by carrying them once more to the house of one who had been raised from the dead by him; and this was the more necessary, as the time was very near, when he should put their faith to the proof with respect to this article, by his own death.

*Ver. 2. There they made him a supper,*] It was customary for the Jews to entertain their friends in a more noble manner than usual, about six or seven days before the passover; and it was in compliance with this custom, as well as out of a particular respect to Jesus, whom they most highly revered and loved, and who had conferred so great a blessing on them, that Lazarus and his sisters made this entertainment. It was no derogation to Martha that she served at table; for it was not usual with the women to sit at table with the men at entertainments of this kind. Besides, it was incumbent upon her—a peculiar mark of esteem and reverence, on account of the miracle that he had wrought in favour of her family. The sitting of Lazarus at the table, served to shew the reality of the miracle wrought at his tomb; that it was not a spectre or illusion which then presented itself to their sight; and that Lazarus was not only restored to life, but likewise to perfect health.

*Ver. 3. Then took Mary a pound of ointment*] This supper is supposed by many to have been the same with that mentioned Matth. xxvi. 6. and Mark, iv. 3. but upon examination, they will appear to have been different. This happened in the house of Lazarus, *that in* the house of Simon the leper: at this, Mary the sister of Lazarus anointed our Lord's feet, and wiped them with her hair; *at that*, a woman, not named, poured the ointment on his head. Here Judas only found fault with the action: there he was seconded by some of the rest. It seems, of the disciples but Judas suffered this first anointing to pass without censure; but when they saw so expensive a compliment repeated, and that within a few days the one of the other, they joined with him in blaming the woman, and might think themselves warranted to do so, as they knew that their Master was not delighted with such luxuries of any kind. After the anointing mentioned by St. Matthew, Judas went and bargained with the priests to deliver his Master into their hands; yet two days before the passover they consulted among themselves how they might take him by subtlety. This deliberation was absolutely unnecessary, if the anointing mentioned by St. Matthew had been the same with that in St. John; for the anointing being expressly fixed by St. John to the sixth day before the passover.

10<sup>k</sup> But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death ;

11<sup>l</sup> Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

12 ¶<sup>m</sup> On the next day much people that

were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, <sup>n</sup> Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

<sup>k</sup> Ch. 11. 47-53, 57. Prov. 1. 16. & 4. 16. <sup>l</sup> Ch. 15. 18, 20, 24, 25. Acts, 13. 45. Eccl. 4. 4. Mark, 15. 10. & 11. 18. Ch. 2. 23. & 11. 45. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 21. 8-11. Mark, 11. 8-10. Luke, 19. 36-38. <sup>n</sup> Pl. 118. 25, 26. & 72. 17-19. 1 Tim. 1. 17. Rev. 5. 9. Mat. 23. 39. & 21. 1-7. Mark, 11. 1-7. Luke, 19. 29-35.

over, the bargain which Judas struck with the priests to betray his Master, is of course fixed to the same day, having happened immediately after the anointing: if so, the priests, six days before the passover, knew of a method to take Jesus by subtlety, and therefore had no occasion formally to consult about it two days before the passover. In fine, the place in the history which St. Matthew has assigned to his anointing, implies that it happened two days before the passover; whereas the anointing mentioned by St. John is expressly said to have been six days before that feast. Compare Matth. xxvi. 1-4, and 14. Thus it evidently appears, that our Lord was anointed with spikenard three different times during the course of his ministry; once in the house of Simon the Pharisee, once in the house of Lazarus, and once in the house of Simon the leper. That this mark of respect should have been shewn him so often, need not be thought strange; for in those countries it was common, at entertainments, to pour fragrant oils on the heads of such guests as they designed to distinguish with marks of extraordinary respect. The custom is alluded to Psalm xlv. 7. *God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* Where this piece of civility was shewn, it was an expression of the highest complacency, and generally produced great gladness in the person who was the object of it. Hence, besides the emblematical reason of the ceremony, it was fitly made use of at the instalment of persons into high offices: and therefore, because the only-begotten Son of God was to sustain greater dignities, and execute more important offices than ever were sustained or executed among men, and was fitted for them by more extraordinary endowments than men possessed, having the Spirit given him without measure; he had the name of the *Messiah*, or the *anointed one*, appropriated to him by way of eminence; he was *anointed with the oil of gladness*, infinitely above his fellows,—the other kings, and priests, and prophets, whom God from time to time had raised up and honoured with the title of his *anointed ones*.

Ver. 5. *Sold for three hundred pence,*] The Roman penny, which is here spoken of, was equal to seven-pence-halfpenny of our money; three hundred of these pence therefore amounted to about nine pounds, seven shillings, and six-pence sterling. From the value of the ointment it would appear, that Lazarus and his sisters were persons of better station than ordinary, (see on Ch. xi. 1.) otherwise they could not have afforded so costly a present, nor would Jesus probably have accepted it at their hands. Besides, this conjecture is confirmed by the kind of company which came from the city to comfort the two sisters on the

death of their brother. The evangelist calls them *the Jews*, a word which he commonly makes use of to denote the principal inhabitants of Jerusalem. The action of Mary, and the office which Martha sustained at this feast, are by no means inconsistent with their supposed station; for they must think that they could not put sufficient honour on one whom they esteemed so highly, and to whom they were so much indebted. If the station of Lazarus was, as we suppose, better than common, the miracle of his resurrection must for that reason have been the more illustrious.

Ver. 6. *And bare what was put therein.] And carried off what was put into it.* Elfner; who refers to John, xx. 15. Matth. iii. 11. viii. 17. for instances of such an use of the word *ἔλασαν*: but it by no means appears that the word is ever used in a bad sense. The meaning here seems to be, not only that Judas had the keeping of the bag at that time, but that it was his stated office to take care of it, and manage its stock. Dr. Heylin renders the clause very well thus: *And bearing the purse, had in his keeping what was put into it.*

Ver. 7. *Against the day of my burying, &c.]* The Jews first washed the corpse all over with water, after it was laid out, Acts, ix. 37. and then anointed it with liquid spices, or odours, as appears from this apology which our Lord makes for Mary; for the full import whereof, see the note on Matth. xxvi. 10.

Ver. 9-11. *Much people of the Jews therefore]* Bethany being within two miles of Jerusalem, the news of the arrival of Jesus soon reached the city, and drew out great numbers of the citizens; for they had a laudable curiosity to see the man who had been raised from the dead, and the still more wonderful man who had raised him. When they came and saw Lazarus, many of them believed, that is to say, were convinced both of Lazarus's resurrection, and of the divinity of Christ's mission. But the news of their believing, together with the reason of it, being currently reported in Jerusalem, came to the ears of the chief priests, and incensed them to such a degree, that they resolved to kill, not Jesus only, but, if possible, Lazarus also. *They went away*, ver. 11. means, "from Jerusalem to Bethany."

Ver. 12. *Much people that were come to the feast, &c.]* The news of our Lord's approach having reached the city, great numbers of the people who were come from the country to attend the feast, and who had a favourable opinion of his character, went forth with palm-branches in their hands, the usual emblems of victory and triumph, to welcome him as the Messiah to the capital. See the notes on the parallel places.

14 And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

15 Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

18 For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

20 ¶ And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:

21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

\* Zech. 9. 9. If. 62. 21. Mat. 21. 5. with Deut. 17. 16. Luke, 9. 45. & 2. 50. & 18. 34. & 24. 25, 45. Ch. 7. 39. & 17. 5. & 23. 31. Mark, 16. 19. Heb. 1. 3. & 4. 15. & 8. 1. Ch. 14. 26. & 2. 22. Ch. 11. 31, 45, 46. If. 43. 10. Pl. 205. 2. & 145. 6. Ver. 9, 12. Ch. 11. 47. & 3. 26. Eccl. 4. 4. Prov. 27. 4. Job, 5. 2. Mat. 27. 18. & 21. 15. Luke, 19. 47, 48. King, 8. 41. Gen. 9. 27. Acts, 2. 10. & 17. 4. & 8. 27. i. e. Gentile profelytes. Ch. 1. 44, 45. & 6. 5, 8. & 14. 8, 9. Mat. 21. 8. Luke, 23. 1.

*Ver. 14. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon, &c.]* Ἐπιβῆναι δε. Now Jesus having found a young ass, sat, &c. For the evangelist does not mean that Jesus was saluted by the multitude from Jerusalem before he mounted; but his meaning is, that Jesus was riding when they saluted him: or, because Jesus sent for the ass, the word Ἐπιβῆναι may be translated *having procured*; in which sense the verb *ἐπιβῆναι* is sometimes used.

*Ver. 16. These things understood not his disciples]* Though the disciples believed him to be the Messiah, yet there were many occurrences of his life, which they understood not at the time when they happened, to be foretold of the Messiah; but which, after his ascension, they found exactly to quadrate with, and to be accomplishments of those predictions.

*Ver. 17, 18. The people therefore, &c.]* Because the forwardness which the multitude now shewed to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, was altogether extraordinary, the evangelist assigns the cause thereof. The witnesses of the resurrection of Lazarus zealously bestirred themselves on this occasion; they had published the miracle far and near; they were many in number, and persons of reputation. Hence their report gained universal belief, and drew out an innumerable multitude to meet Jesus—a circumstance which gave credit to the miracle, to which they bare record, or gave their testimony, as it proved what sense the people of the age and country where it was performed had of it. Some would render these verses, *Now the multitude that was with him bare record, that (οτι) he called Lazarus from the grave, and raised him from the dead; and upon this account the multitude met him, because they heard that he had done this miracle.*

*Ver. 20. And there were certain Greeks]* After the conquest of Darius by Alexander, all his successors of different nations were called *Greeks*, whence came the name of “the Grecian monarchy,” otherwise called “the Syro-Macedonian.” Thus Antiochus Epiphanes is said to have reigned in the hundred and thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks, 1 Macc. i. 10. St. Paul likewise

often distinguishes all other nations from the Jews by the name of *Greeks*, Rom. i. 16. ii. 9. x. 12. and the greater part of Syria was, in our Saviour's time, called Greece by the Jews. Hence, when he was in the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and a woman besought him to cast the evil spirit out of her daughter, she is called *a Greek, a Syro-phœnician by nation*, Mark, vii. 26. and these *Greeks* who were desirous to see Jesus, were probably of the same nation, and known to Philip, who is here said to have been a native of Bethsaida in Galilee, a neighbouring country, for which reason they might particularly apply themselves to him. As all the Gentiles were thus named by the Jews Ἕλληνες, it denoted their religion, rather than their country; but in the present instance, the persons called *Greeks* were not idolatrous Gentiles; for their business at the feast, which was to worship, shews that they were profelytes to the Jewish religion, and that they cherished expectations of the Messiah. See Acts, ii. 5. viii. 27. xiii. 43.

*Ver. 21. We would see Jesus.]* This transaction appears to have been in the passover-week, when Christ taught daily in the temple, but retired to Bethany in the evening with his disciples. So that by seeing him, they could barely be meant seeing his person, which they might have done with the rest of the multitude while he was teaching them; and consequently there could be no reason for them to apply to Philip on that account, or for him to intercede for Andrew, and for them again to acquaint Jesus with such a request. However, it is not improbable, from the circumstances of the narrative, that this request was made in the temple, upon their meeting with Philip there; and that what they desired, was an admission to Jesus in such a manner, as to hear him perfectly, and be fully informed of his doctrine. It is not indeed expressly said whether this request was granted or not; but it is very reasonable to suppose that it was: for as it was not the effect of mere curiosity, whenever our Saviour met with a disposition in any persons to receive his instructions, he was always ready to encourage it.

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and gain Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.  
 23 ¶ And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man could be glorified.  
 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, <sup>b</sup> Except corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.  
 25 <sup>c</sup> He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 <sup>d</sup> If any man serve me, let him follow me; and <sup>e</sup> where I am, there shall also my servant be: <sup>f</sup> if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.  
 27 <sup>g</sup> Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.  
 28 <sup>h</sup> Father, glorify thy name. <sup>i</sup> Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I <sup>k</sup> have both glorified *it*, and will <sup>l</sup> glorify *it* again.

13. 1, 31, 32. & 17. 1, 5. If. 52. 13. & 53. 10—12. <sup>b</sup> Heb. 2. 10. If. 4. 2. & 52. 14, 15. & 53. 2—12. Mat. 20. 28. 1 John, 2. 1, 8. & 4. 14. Rev. 5. 9. with 1 Cor. 15. 36. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 10. 37—39. & 16. 25. & 19. 29. Mark, 8. 35. Luke, 9. 24. & 17. 33. & 18. 29. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 11. 29, 30. & 16. 24. & 10. 38. Mark, 8. 34. Luke, 9. 23. & 14. 27. Heb. 12. 1, 2. <sup>e</sup> Ch. 14. 3. & 17. 1. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 11. 29, 30. & 16. 24. & 10. 38. Mark, 8. 34. Luke, 9. 23. & 14. 27. Heb. 12. 1, 2. <sup>g</sup> Ch. 14. 3. & 17. 1. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 11. 29, 30. & 16. 24. & 10. 38. Mark, 8. 34. Luke, 9. 23. & 14. 27. Heb. 12. 1, 2. <sup>i</sup> Ch. 14. 3. & 17. 1. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 11. 29, 30. & 16. 24. & 10. 38. Mark, 8. 34. Luke, 9. 23. & 14. 27. Heb. 12. 1, 2. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 11. 29, 30. & 16. 24. & 10. 38. Mark, 8. 34. Luke, 9. 23. & 14. 27. Heb. 12. 1, 2.

22. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew, &c.] From not venturing to introduce the men himself, it is probable that there was some difficulty in the case. They were only "profelytes of the gate," who, to custom, could not be admitted into the comings. See Acts, x. 28.  
 24. And Jesus answered them,] If we suppose our Lord spoke these words as the Greeks were in- to him, the following discourse will discover his true beauty. Our Lord might enlarge perhaps on the hints in this discourse; and if his hearers took notice of them, and made a proper report on their home, it might prepare the way for the apostles, when they came, by their preaching, more fully to illustrate these important doctrines. Our Lord said, that the appointed time was now at hand, and would be honoured by the conversion of the multitude, earnest whereof they now had in the approach of the Greeks: at the same time he told them, that they should suffer death before he arrived at this glory; and the necessity of his dying by the similitude of the seed sown into the earth, ver. 24. "As the only way to produce fruit, is to bury it in the ground; and the primary method of bringing about the redemption and salvation of all that believe is, that I die." Our Lord's resurrection, (to omit that grand miracle on which the truth of his resurrection and very considerable measure depends, and the salvation of the faithful was effected, hap- pened by the consequence of his death. Dr. Heylin renders more clearly thus: *If the grain of wheat that dieth not, it remains there a single grain; and it bringeth forth much fruit.*  
 He that loveth his life, &c.] He told them that their Master, was to suffer before his death; that they, his disciples, expect the like; for they were to expect persecution, firmly re- ceive life itself, after his example, when he should die, and in that case he promised them a share

in his crown and glory—thus tacitly insinuating, that the strangers should be greatly disappointed, if their desire of conversing with him proceeded from a hope of recommend- ing themselves to earthly preferments through his favour. By the indefinite expressions which our Lord here makes use of, "If any one would serve me, would wish to be of my household, let him follow, &c." he strongly intimates, that his kingdom was to be of a very extensive nature; and that not only the profelytes of righteousness, or of the gate, but even the idolatrous Gentiles themselves, might, on their believing the gospel, be admitted to its privileges. See the passages in the Margin, and on Luke, xiv. 26.  
 Ver. 27, 28. Now is my soul troubled:] Having taken a view of his own sufferings, and proposed them as an ex- ample to his disciples, the prospect moved him to a great degree, and he discovered to them the conflict which he felt in his bosom: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? (for so the passage evidently should be read and pointed) "No, I will not say this, since for this very cause I came unto this hour." Our Lord's application to his heavenly Father, on this occasion, shews us what is the best method of easing the mind in deep distress. At the same time that he expressed an entire resignation to the will of his heavenly Father, he has taught us, that although the weak- ness of human nature may shrink at the first thoughts of suffering, his disciples are not to yield, but ought to fortify themselves through divine grace by just reflections on the wis- dom of God, and on the happy end that he proposes by their afflictions. Our Saviour adds, "Father, glorify thy name;" which was a further expression of resignation, importing that he was willing to submit to whatever the Father should judge necessary for the manifestation of his per- fections: "For this cause came I unto this hour; therefore, O Father, do to me as it shall seem good to thy divine wisdom, for the glorification of thy name in the re- demption of mankind." But the words were no sooner spoken, than a voice from heaven was heard, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* "I have glorified it  
 5 U 2 " by

29 The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, <sup>m</sup> but for your sakes.

31 <sup>n</sup> Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

32 And I, if I be <sup>o</sup> lifted up from the earth, <sup>p</sup> will draw <sup>q</sup> all men unto me.

33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.

34 The people answered him, We have heard out of the law <sup>r</sup> that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? <sup>s</sup> Who is this Son of man?

<sup>m</sup> Ch. 11. 42. <sup>n</sup> Ch. 5. 22, 27. & 14. 30. & 16. 11. <sup>o</sup> John, 3. 8. <sup>p</sup> Heb. 2. 14. <sup>q</sup> Col. 1. 14, 15. <sup>r</sup> Acts, 26. 18. <sup>s</sup> Eph. 2. 1, 2. & 6. 12. <sup>t</sup> Mat. 12. 29. <sup>u</sup> Luke, 10. 18. <sup>v</sup> If. 49. 25. <sup>w</sup> Ch. 3. 14. & 8. 28. <sup>x</sup> Mat. 27. 26, 35, 40, 42. <sup>y</sup> Gal. 6. 14. <sup>z</sup> Song, 1. 4. <sup>aa</sup> Jer. 31. 3. <sup>ab</sup> Hof. 11. 4. <sup>ac</sup> Ch. 6. 44. <sup>ad</sup> Rom. 5. 18, 19. <sup>ae</sup> Heb. 2. 9, 10. <sup>af</sup> Gal. 3. 28. <sup>ag</sup> Rev. 5. 9. <sup>ah</sup> If. 11. 10. & 49. 6. <sup>ai</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 13. <sup>aj</sup> Ps. 89. 4. & 110. 4. <sup>ak</sup> 6, 7. <sup>al</sup> Ezek. 37. 25. <sup>am</sup> Dan. 2. 4. & 7. 14, 27. <sup>an</sup> Mic. 4. 7. <sup>ao</sup> Mat. 21. 10, 11. <sup>ap</sup> Ch. 8. 53. & 1. 14. & 3. 16.

“by the miracles which thou hast already performed, and will continue to glorify it by other miracles yet to be performed.” The further glorification of God the Father promised to Jesus by the voice, signified the honour which should accrue to the Father from the new proofs wherewith his mission would be adorned; particularly the great miracles of his resurrection from the dead, of the effusion of the Spirit, and of the conversion of the Gentile world to the Christian religion.

*Ver. 29. The people therefore—said that it thundered: ]* The sound of this voice was evidently supernatural, being strong and loud as thunder; but at the same time so articulate that all who heard Jesus address the Father, heard also the words. The word rendered *voice*, and that rendered *thunder*, are used promiscuously by the inspired writers, according to the Hebrew idiom, wherein the word *koloth*, *voices*, usually signifies *thunder*. *Thunder* frequently attended a voice from heaven: in allusion to which, perhaps, the *voice* itself was called by the ancient Jews *bath-kol*, or “the daughter of the voice,” being ushered in with thunder, and as it were produced from it. This will serve to explain the different sentiments of the people concerning this circumstance. *Some of them said, It thunders; and others, that an angel spake; each of them declaring the truth so far as there was thunder joined with the voice from heaven; though that voice was of one much greater than an angel. See Rev. iv. 5. viii. 5. and Matth. iii. 17. Dr. Lightfoot has well observed, that our Saviour had thrice the testimony of a voice from heaven; first, when he entered on his public ministry, as the high priest of our profession at his baptism; Matth. iii. 17. the second time, when a command was given to hear him, as the great Prophet of the church, at his transfiguration; Matth. xvii. 5. And now again when he had made his public entry into Jerusalem as a king.*

*Ver. 30. This voice came not because of me, &c. ]* Dr. Heylin renders this better, *This voice came not for my sake, but for yours.* It is literally, *This voice came not for me, but for you*—“not to assure me of the love of my Father, but to confirm you in the belief of my mission; that you may not be offended at the treatment I shall meet with, or quit your hope in me, on account of the sufferings which are coming upon me.”

*Ver. 31—33. Now is the judgment of this world: ]* The subject of our Lord’s address to the Father, and the answer which he received, naturally led him to meditate on

the happy effects of his coming into the world; namely, the destruction of Satan’s kingdom, and the exaltation of the faithful with himself into heaven. These grand events afforded a prospect very reviving, amid the melancholy thoughts which now afflicted his soul. Wherefore, that his disciples might share with him in the comfort of them, he foretold them, as the necessary effects of his sufferings, “*Now is the judgment of this world; the time of the destruction of wickedness is come: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. The devil who has so long reigned in the hearts of the children of disobedience, is about to be dethroned: (compare Eph. ii. 2. and 2 Cor. iv. 4.) And I, if I be lifted up, &c. ver. 32.*—Our Lord cannot be supposed in this passage to talk of his own death as a thing uncertain; and therefore the original, *ἐὰν ὑψωθῶ*, should be translated, *when I am lifted up*; a sense which the word *ἐὰν* sometimes bears. See Deut. vii. 1. Judges, vi. 3. LXX. Dr. Heylin gives a somewhat different interpretation of this passage. “It appears from ver. 27. says he, that our blessed Saviour had been in great trouble on account of his approaching sufferings, by which he was to redeem the world.” He was now about to accomplish that great work; therefore he saith, *Now is the crisis of this world; wherein its fate would be decided, the usurper ejected, and the Redeemer established in the acquisition that he makes of it by his death. When I shall be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself.* To be *lifted up from the earth*, is a Hebrewism to signify *dying*; we have met with it twice before in this gospel; and that it was then familiar, and commonly understood, appears from the immediate answer of the Jews who use it in the same sense. “*We are taught by the law, say they, that the Christ is to live for ever.*” Why then do you say, that the Son of man must be lifted up; that is to say, die.” They meant only death in general; for that was all that the phrase imported. But our Lord made use of this, rather than other phrases which were equivalent, because it so well suited the manner of his death on the cross. See the note on Ch. vi. 44.

*Ver. 34—36. The people answered him, ]* The people, on hearing Jesus affirm that he was to be lifted up, told him, that was inconsistent with the character of the Messiah, who, according to the law, (so they named the whole of their sacred writings,) was never to die. *Who then is this Son of man? “What sort of a Messiah must he be, who is to die, in immediate contradiction to the voice of the prophets?”*

35 Then Jesus said unto them, ' Yet a little while is the light with you. " Walk while ye have the light, lest ' darknes come upon you : for ' he that walketh in darknes knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 " While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be ' the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and ' departed, and hid himself from them.

37 ¶ But though he had done so many miracles before them, ' yet they believed not in him :

That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, ' Lord, who believed our report ? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed ?

Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

40 " He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart ; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

41 These things said Esaias, ' when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

42 ¶ Nevertheless ' among the chief rulers also many believed on him ; but ' because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue :

43 ' For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

44 ¶ " Jesus cried and said, " He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

45 ° And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.

33. & 16. 16. Ver. 46. If. 42. 6, 7. Ch. 1. 5, 9. & 8. 12. & 9. 5. u Ver. 36. Pf. 2. 12. 2 Cor. 6. 1, 2. Jer. 13. 16. Zech. 10. 5. Eph. 5. 8, 14. \* Pf. 69. 22-28. & 21. 8-12. y Eph. 4. 18. & 5. 9. 2 Cor. 3. 14, 15. Rom. 11. 7, 8. Ch. 11. 10. Eph. 5. 14. Ch. 3. 16-20, 36. a Eph. 5. 8. 1 Theff. 5. 8. Luke, 16. 8. 1 John, 2. 9, 10. b Mat. 21. 17. Ch. 8. 59. & 10. 23. c Ch. 1. 11. Mat. 11. 20. & 21. 14, 15. & 23. 37. d If. 53. 1. Rom. 10. 16. e 1 Cor. 1. 24. Rom. 1. 16. 1 Theff. 1. 5. & 2. 13. Eph. 2. 17-20. f 2 Theff. 2. 11. Rom. 1. 24, 28. & 11. 7, 8. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. g If. 6. 9, 10. & 29. t. 14. 13-15. Mark, 4. 11, 12. Luke, 8. 10. Acts, 28. 26, 27. Rom. 11. 8. Jer. 5. 21. Ezek. 12. 2. If. 44. 18. & 42. 19, 20. i Ch. 2. 23. & 8. 30. & 10. 42. & 11. 45. k Ch. 3. 2. & 9. 22. & 19. 38. & 7. 13. & 16. 2. l Ch. 5. 44. Mat. 16. 2. 15. with 1 Theff. 2. 4-6. Gal. 1. 10. m Ch. 7. 37. Prov. 1. 20-23. & 8. 1-4. n Mark, 9. 37. 1 Peter, 1. 21. Mat. 10. 10. o Ch. 14. 9, 10. 2 Cor. 4. 9. Col. 1. 15. Heb. 1. 3.

(See Pf. lxxxix. 29. cx. 4. Isaiiah, ix. 7. 4. vii. 14.)—Is he a different person from whom we have been taught to expect, under the name of the Son of man? This was a real and difficult; but it was fit that some obscurity should be left upon it, lest the plainness of the saying of Esaias the prophet, &c.] So the saying of Esaias the prophet, &c. Heylin, Jeffries, &c. Isaiiah, liii. 1. The phrase Hath the arm revealed? is thought by some to allude to the robe worn by the Eastern people, and especially of rank; which was a long robe without sleeves, when the arm was stretched out to perform any labour. In this connection, it implies, that the faith is produced in the mind, it is all by a divine energy. Therefore they could not believe,] That is, by the power of God for their obstinate and wilful unbelief, they were so hardened, that the words of our Lord could make no impression upon them. Isaiiah had foretold, Ch. vi. 9, 10. where he also on Matth. xiii. 14. The meaning

therefore is, not that the prophecy of Isaiiah was the cause of their unbelief, but that their unbelief was the accomplishment of Isaiiah's prophecy. The evangelist, in this quotation, has not confined himself exactly to the words of the prophet, but the sense is plainly the same; and nothing was more usual with the Jewish rabbies, than to quote scripture in this way. Ver. 41. These things said Esaias, when, &c.] He uttered these remarkable words, when in vision he saw the glory of the Son of God, and the manifestations which he was to make of the divine counsels; and described the effect which these manifestations were to have upon his hearers; for which reason they are a prophetic description of the men of the age in which Jesus lived. We have observed, in the note on Isaiiah, vi. 1. that from this passage Christ is evidently proved to be the Jehovah: but the reader who may be desirous to see this argument in its full force, is referred, not only to the authors there quoted, but particularly to the excellent Bishop Pearson on the Creed, p. 125. Ver. 44. Jesus cried, &c.] To strengthen the faith of those who believed on him, and to inspire them with courage to confess him, (see ver. 42.) our Lord cried and said in the temple, " Be it known unto you all, that in these extraordinary steps which I take for the reformation of abuses and the vindication of my Father's house, I act by his immediate authority; and he that cordially believes in me, believeth not in me alone, but in him that sent me, and thereby honours the Father himself. And he that sees me, and regards me with a lively faith, does also

46 <sup>p</sup> I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

47 And <sup>q</sup> if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him <sup>r</sup> not : for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

48 <sup>s</sup> He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not

my words, hath one that judgeth him : <sup>t</sup> the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

49 <sup>u</sup> For I have not spoken of myself ; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

<sup>p</sup> Ch. 2. 5, 9. & 3. 19. & 9. 5, 39. & 8. 12. Ver. 35, 36. <sup>q</sup> Ver. 48. Mat. 7. 26. Luke, 7. 30. If. 53. 1. <sup>r</sup> Not yet. Ch. 5. 45. & 1. 15, 16, 26. & 3. 17. Mark, 16. 16. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Mat. 18. 11. & 20. 28. Luke, 9. 26. & 19. 10. 2 Peter, 3. 9, 15. <sup>s</sup> Deut. 18. 19. <sup>t</sup> 2. 3. & 10. 29, 31. Luke, 10. 16. <sup>u</sup> Mark, 16. 16. Rom. 2. 16. 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9. Rev. 20. 12. <sup>v</sup> Ch. 3. 3, 11, 32. & 5. 20. & 5. 16, 38. & 14. 10. & 15. 15. & 7. 16. Deut. 18. 18.

“ also in effect see him that sent me, as the perfections of the Father are displayed in me ; whereas, he that shuts his eyes against me, excludes the only means of being brought to the true knowledge of him.” See the account given by St. Mark, Ch. xi. 15—17. of which the present discourse of our Lord was the consequence.

Ver. 46—48. *I am come a light, &c.*] “ I am the light of the world, sent down from heaven, to dispel the darkness of ignorance, superstition, and wickedness, and to reveal the will of my Father, and the way to eternal life and happiness, clearly and fully. Whosoever therefore believes on me, shall not want sufficient means to direct him in the knowledge of all divine truths, and in the practice of all holiness and righteousness. Nevertheless, they who reject the instructions and the offers of salvation which I give, shall not pass unpunished ; for the doctrine that I have preached shall bear witness against them at the day of judgment ; and because it has aggravated their sin, it will heighten their punishment.” Dr. Heylin translates the 48th verse thus : *He who despises me, and does not embrace my doctrine, hath one that judgeth him ; or rather, hath that which judgeth him. The doctrine which I have delivered, that shall be his judge at the last day.*

*Inferences.*—We see how happily Mary improved by sitting at the feet of Jesus, and what evidence she gave of her having chosen the better part. Like her, with humble thankfulness, we should bestow our very best on him, who has given us that best, as well as every thing beside. She gladly poured out her choicest ointment on him, whose name is, to every true believer, far more fragrant than ointment poured forth. How does her generous love shame those, who, lavish in every selfish gratification, grudge the least expence in the cause of Christ and their souls !

When we are relieving our necessitous fellow-creatures, we are as it were anointing the feet of Jesus ; we are indeed performing a service more acceptable than any thing of this kind could be, in itself. Let us remember, that we have the poor always with us, and that they are permitted to continue among us, that we may do them good whenever we please. Far be it from us to imagine, that what we so spend is waste. They who would not share in the guilt and punishment of Judas, should ever abhor the vile hypocrisy, of making a pretended concern for the poor a cloke for an opportunity of enriching themselves with their spoils ; than which nothing can be more infamous, or have

a more direct tendency to mingle the curse of a righteous and almighty God with all that a man possesses.

The Pharisees conspired to kill Lazarus ! What a mixture was this of cruelty and folly ! What was his crime, or what could be their hope ? From what death could not Christ have delivered him, or from what tomb could he not have recalled him ? Yet something like this is the madness of all who hate and persecute others, for being the trophies of the Redeemer's victory and grace. But let not his servants fear ; their Redeemer is strong ; the Lord of hosts is his name ; his work is perfect ; and the day and hour is approaching, in which his triumph over all his enemies shall be so complete, that his faithful friends shall be for ever secure, not only from being destroyed, but from being alarmed by them. [For *Inferences* drawn from our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem, see those on Mark. xxi.]

Who can wonder at the desire which the *Greeks* expressed, ver. 20, 21. to see so celebrated a person as Jesus was ? We may reasonably believe, that there was much more than mere curiosity in it, and that at length they saw him with believing eyes, and, according to his prediction, glorified him by a cordial acceptance of his gospel. His disciples, we see, were ready to introduce them ; and surely every faithful minister of Christ will undertake the task with pleasure, when he sees souls awakened by divine grace, and inquiring after Jesus with affectionate concern.

Blessed be God, it has already, in multitudes of instances, been seen, that, by the death of Christ, an immortal seed was sown, which has multiplied in all ages, and is still multiplying. O that it might have a greater increase ! One would think, that words so gracious as those of our Lord, would promote that increase, and operate upon every heart, to produce a love to him sufficient to conquer every danger and opposition which may be met with in his cause. Behold the promise that he has left upon record ; “ If any man, be he ever so mean and unworthy, will but faithfully serve and follow me, whatever his former wanderings and rebellions may have been, where I am, there shall also my servant be ?” Happy state indeed ! not only, like these *Greeks*, to have a transient sight of Christ, but to be for ever with him !

How admirable is the love and steadfastness of our Redeemer, who procured to great a happiness for us at so dear an expence, and, even when his innocent soul was troubled, in the view of his sufferings, instead of declining

50 And I know that his commandment fore, even as the Father said unto me, so I  
& life everlasting: whatsoever I speak there- speak.

Ch. 6. 63. & 17. 3. & 20. 31. John, 2. 25. Pf. 19. 11. If. 3. 10.

m, met them with joy! how should it animate us to  
ew that general comprehensive petition, than which  
e can be more suitable to us, with regard to all the  
ne dispensations, *Father, glorify thy name: "Glorify  
yself, O Lord; and, to that great end, dispose of us  
thou pleasest; for we should abhor ourselves, if we  
uld have any interests separate from thine."*

e may be assured as certainly as by a voice from hea-  
that this great end shall be answered; and in this  
ould rejoice. Behold *the prince of this world is cast  
ehold, Satan is vanquished by Christ, and Jesus is  
on the cross, for a standard to all the nations. Be-  
e attractive magnet, by which all are to be drawn,  
ch all his faithful people shall be brought to him,  
raised up to heaven itself. Let us look unto him  
ne ends of the earth, and labour with our cold  
o kindle that lively and ardent affection which we  
him, who was crucified for us.*

necessary is the operation of divine grace to con-  
prejudices of a sinful heart; and how cautious  
ners be, that they do not stop their ears to the  
nd of the gospel, and shut their eyes against this  
ght, lest God should leave them to their delu-  
in his righteous judgment seal them up under  
ness and impenitence. Then will they never  
ed and healed; but die with that poison in all  
s of their souls, which will make them for ever  
miserable.

ind words sufficient to express the madness of  
ees, who, when they were convinced in their  
that Jesus was the Christ, would not confess  
on, and publicly pay their homage to him,  
*loved the praise of men more than the praise of  
e infatuation of the human mind, that it  
ble of believing there is a God, and yet of  
creatures before him! and should sometimes  
ain breath of popular applause or popular  
siderable, as that God should be offended,  
and all the honours and rewards of his  
ce lost, to secure a little regard from those  
ing in their crimes, and will, ere long,  
he objects of everlasting shame and con-*

nt is that proclamation which our Lord  
ple, and is still making to us in his word.  
we believe in the *Father*; and seeing  
*Father*. Let us be ready therefore to re-  
f regard to his divine authority, as well  
our own happiness; for without him  
access unto the Father, nor can we ever  
nciled God. The sacred *light* which he  
im, is not intended merely to amuse our  
speculations, but to animate our hearts  
ons, and to guide our feet into the way  
desire therefore to escape an abode in  
and to see everlasting light, we must faith-

fully follow it, otherwise we are condemned already; and  
that word which he spake, will become to us a *favour of  
death unto death*, and will judge us in the last solemn and  
dreadful day, when it shall sentence those who would not  
be saved by it. If we are wise, therefore, we shall dili-  
gently make that *word* the rule of our life now, which  
will then be the rule of judgment; we may most com-  
fortably venture our eternal all on the exact veracity of  
it. Christ has perfectly fulfilled the commission he re-  
ceived from his Father, as one that was faithful to him  
who appointed him; and stands so completely approved  
in his sight, that our only hope is, that we also may be  
accepted in him, and find mercy and grace for his sake.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have,

1. The visit of Jesus to Bethany. He came there six  
days before the passover, and took up his lodgings with  
Lazarus, a person now uncommonly distinguished, as  
having been dead, and miraculously restored to life by the  
power of Jesus. Our Lord knew the danger to which he  
exposed himself; but his hour approached, and therefore  
he offered himself a willing sacrifice, as the true paschal  
Lamb who should be sacrificed for us.

2. Lazarus and his sisters gave him a most welcome re-  
ception, and, in honour of their guest, made a great sup-  
per: and Martha, to do honour to her heavenly visitant,  
waited herself upon him, while Lazarus sat at the table  
with him, a living monument of his power and grace.

3. During the entertainment, Mary, to testify her deep  
respect for her divine Lord and Master, came with a pound  
of very costly spikenard, and anointed his feet, wiping them  
with her hair: and the odour of the ointment filled the  
house—expressing hereby her faith, love, and deep hu-  
mility, receiving him as the anointed Messiah, and paying  
her dutiful homage to him. *Note*; No fragrance of the  
sweetest perfume can adequately represent that sweet  
favour of Christ, and the graces of his Spirit, which fill the  
believer's soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

4. Judas, in heart a traitor, but still in profession ranked  
among the apostles, pretending charity for the poor, testi-  
fied indignation at this act of respect shewn to his Master,  
as if it had been an unnecessary piece of waste: not in-  
deed that this divine grace of charity glowed in his false  
bosom, but *because he was a thief*; and, being intrusted with  
the common purse, he had purloined part of the money  
which was put in it, and applied it to his own use; and  
hoped, if this ointment had been sold, and the money  
brought into their joint stock, some part of it might be  
easily secreted. *Note*; (1.) Hypocrites, when they make the  
most zealous profession, really dislike that serious godliness,  
which they discover in others; and their worldly-mindedness  
in trifles shews how ready they will be to apostatize, the  
moment a greater temptation besets them. (2.) Satan  
transforms himself often into an angel of light, and gilds  
with specious names and pretences the vilest purposes.  
Thus *worldly wisdom* is called *rational prudence*; and covetousness

ousness



## C H A P. XIII.

*Jesus washeth the disciples' feet: exhorteth them to humility and love: he foretelleth and discovereth to John by a token, that Judas should betray him: commandeth them to love one another: and forewarneth Peter of his denial.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**N**OW<sup>a</sup> before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that<sup>b</sup> his hour was

come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father,<sup>c</sup> having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And<sup>d</sup> supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas licarriot, Simon's son, to betray him;

3 Jesus knowing that<sup>e</sup> the Father had given

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 26. 2. Mark, 14. 1. Luke, 22. 1. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 7. 30. & 8. 28. & 12. 23. & 17. 1. Luke, 22. 53. <sup>c</sup> 2 Tim. 2. 19. Ch. 17. 10-12. & 14. 19. Rom. 8. 39. Jer. 31. 3. <sup>d</sup> Ver. 4. 26. <sup>e</sup> Ver. 17. Ch. 6. 70. Luke, 22. 3. Acts, 5. 3. Eph. 6. 16. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 11. 27. & 28. 18. Ch. 13. & 5. 22, 27. & 17. 1. Heb. 1. 2. & 2. 8. Acts, 2. 36. Pl. 89. 27. Eph. 2. 22.

*tousness wears the mask of zeal against the extravagance of others. (3.) The love of money is most fatal to the soul. They who are fond of the bag, will not long be faithful to their Lord.*

5. Christ vindicates what Mary did, from the ill construction which Judas had put upon it. *Jesus said, Let her alone; neither blame, nor trouble her; against the day of my burying hath she kept this; so divine Providence ordered it, that, though she knew not his approaching death, she thus should embalm him when alive, because she would have no opportunity to perform that kind office when he was dead. Besides, he adds, the poor always ye have with you; such objects would never be wanting, whereon to exercise their charity: but me ye have not always; and therefore, during the short moment of his stay with them, they could not be too sedulous to shew him every token of respect and honour. Note; Opportunities to serve Christ are precious, and must be embraced without delay.*

6. Multitudes of people from Jerusalem, flocked to Bethany in order to gratify their curiosity with a sight of Jesus, concerning whom they had heard so much; and also to see Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead, the fame of which miracle had been greatly spread.

7. The chief-priests, far from being affected with such an instance of Christ's power, not only persisted in their bloody purpose to murder him, but also consulted to put Lazarus to death, being filled with rage and envy that many of the Jews, struck with the evidence of this miracle, had deserted their party, and joined themselves to Jesus, professing their faith in him as the Messiah. *Note; (1.) They who are most eminently distinguished with God's favour, are the objects against whom wicked men level their most malignant enmity. (2.) The stronger the evidence is, the more exasperated do they grow, who obstinately resolve not to be convinced.*

2dly, The triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, is recorded by all the evangelists.

1. A vast crowd, with loudest acclamations and every expression of joy, attended him. *A great multitude, who were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, from Bethany, went forth to meet him, and welcome his arrival, with palm-branches in their hands, the emblem of that victory which Jesus was shortly to obtain over sin and Satan, the issue of which conflict was already sure; and with loud hosannas they cried, Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord. They acknowledge Jesus as the King Messiah, so long expected*

to sit on David's throne; they wish him all prosperity, success, and happiness; and hail the glad day of his approaching. *Note; With greater joy does the sinner welcome the Saviour to the throne of his heart, and wishes him to set up his throne there for ever and ever.*

2. He made his entry, not with the pomp of earthly majesty, but, as better suited his state of humiliation, on ass's colt; that thus also he might fulfil the scriptures, which had said, *Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, to save thee from all thy spiritual foes, sitting on ass's colt, that humble supplicants may be emboldened to approach him, and present their petitions. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, and from his throne on high had sent his Spirit into their hearts, to open their understandings, that they might understand the scripture, then remembered they that these things were written of him; and that, though at the time they had no thoughts about the fulfilment of these scriptures, they had done these things unto him, which had been foretold. Note; (1.) Christ is Zion's King, and he must reign till he hath put all his enemies and her's under his feet. (2.) The scriptures are often fulfilled by those who at the time have not the least intention so to do. (3.) Many times the scriptures are read without the least knowledge of their true meaning; but, when God opens the understanding of the believer, the Bible then becomes a book perfectly new, and treasures of wisdom are discovered in it which were utterly unknown before.*

3. The reason of so great a multitude coming to witness Jesus into Jerusalem at this time, was, that many of those who beheld the miracle of Lazarus's resurrection had declared what they had seen: and such an astonishing work, attested by so many and credible eye-witnesses, could not but procure general admiration.

4. The Pharisees beheld, with the utmost rage and reprobation, the increasing respect paid to Jesus; and said one to another, *Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? instead of crushing him, all our attempts are baffled, and his rising fame threatens utterly to supplant us in the esteem of the people: behold, the world is gone after him; the generation of our followers have forsaken us, and commenced disciples. It is high time to put some stop to these proceedings, or the grievance will be past redress. Note; (1.) They who oppose Christ, in vain lift up their impetuous arm: against his faithful saints, no powers of earth or hell shall be able finally to prevail. (2.) Obstinate sinners grow more resolute and determinate in sin by the very*

all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside

5 After that he poureth water into a bason,

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 1. 18. & 3. 13, 16. & 8. 14, 21, 42. & 7. 29, 33. & 10. 10, 18. & 14. 2. & 16. 27, 28. & 17. 4, 8, 11, 13. Pp. 110. 1. <sup>2</sup> Luke, 17. 8. & 12. 37. & 22. 27.

...eeks that God gives them, and madly rush on the thick  
...es of his buckler.

...dly, Christ's fame had been spread far and wide. We  
...e,

... The inquiry of some Greeks after him. They seem  
...ave been devout men, proselytes from among the Gen-  
...; who came up to Jerusalem to worship; and, having  
...d so much of Jesus, were greatly desirous to see and  
...re with him: for which purpose they applied to  
... with whom probably they might formerly have  
...ome acquaintance. *Note*; (1.) They who have a  
...re after Christ, will seek him, and beg advice and  
...ce from those who are his ministering servants. It is  
...to know those who know the Saviour. (2.) The  
...ed sinner desires to see Jesus to receive out of his  
...of grace and all-sufficiency to save, to obtain an  
...in his regard, and be admitted to communion with

... Philip first consulted his brother Andrew, whether  
...roper to mention the request of Gentile proselytes  
... Master; and, being agreed on the point, they in-  
...esus of the matter. *Note*; In doubtful cases it  
...to consult a faithful friend.

...st took occasion, from this application to him,  
...e on the glorious issue of his undertaking, when  
...nd Gentiles, by the power of his Spirit, should  
...d unto him. *The hour is come that the Son of man*  
...rified; when, being lifted up on the cross, and  
...he throne of his glory, he should draw all men  
...nd be honoured in the salvation of sinners  
...nation, without distinction. *Verily, verily I say*  
...ept a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die,  
...e: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.  
...ates, must he die, that, having thereby made  
...t, and brought in everlasting righteousness,  
...his resurrection, become the root and author  
...e to innumerable believers, who should be  
...from the death of sin unto the life of  
...and bring forth abundant fruits of grace, the  
...would be ascribed to him alone. And as  
...ld believe in him would, for his sake, be  
...greatest sufferings, he suggests the most  
...ments to engage their fidelity. *He that*  
...d, for fear of losing a temporal being, or  
...f this world, deserts the cause of Jesus;  
...perish everlastingly: and he that hateth his  
...fitting loose to its honours, ease, and in-  
...ey stand in competition with Christ, and  
... to seal his testimony with his blood; he  
...life eternal, and be made for ever happy  
...y. So that, *if any man serve me, let him*  
...ringly, my example, the teachings of my  
... and the directions of my providence;  
...ver difficulties, dangers, or sufferings he

may be exposed to, *where I am, there shall also my servant  
be*, inheriting the same glory to which I shall be advanced:  
*if any man serve me*, in simplicity, godly sincerity and  
fidelity; *him will my Father honour*, seating him at his own  
right hand, and causing him to sit down on my throne, as  
I am set down with my Father on his throne. (Rev. iii. 21.)  
*Note*; (1.) They who would faithfully follow Christ, must  
prepare for sufferings. (2.) When we, by faith, look to  
and realize the glories of the world above, we cannot but fit  
loose to every thing here below. (3.) If Christ be our master,  
and our affections are steadfastly placed upon him, where  
he is, we shall shortly be. (4.) However dishonoured we  
may be by a world which lieth in wickedness, we shall  
find the most abundant recompence in the honour which  
cometh from God only.

4thly, We have,

1. The address of Jesus to his heavenly Father. *Now is  
my soul troubled*, with the prospect of his approaching  
sufferings, from which humanity shrunk back; and *what  
shall I say*, in this distress? *Father, save me from this hour?*  
shall I desire to be excused the pains of death which I  
foresee? No: *but for this cause came I unto this hour*,  
according to thy infinitely wise and holy will, to bear the  
sins and carry the sorrows of sinners; and therefore he  
desired not to be saved from the sufferings to which he had  
consented, but to be supported under them. *Father, glo-  
rify thy name*, and, by my death, display, in the most emi-  
nent manner, the glory of thy justice, faithfulness, mercy,  
and every divine perfection. *Note*; (1.) The remembrance  
of the distress of the Redeemer's soul should be a relief to  
us, when our spirits are troubled. He gave his soul an  
offering for sin, that he might take away the bitterness of  
it from ours. (2.) Though *now* for a little moment we  
feel distress, the time is near, to the faithful, when every  
trouble shall end in everlasting joy. (3.) When we are  
under difficulties, we must fly to God, humbly resign our-  
selves to his will, and beg for strength to glorify him in  
the fires.

2. The Father answers him by a voice from heaven.  
*Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glo-  
rified it*, in the incarnation, obedience, miracles, and doc-  
trine of Jesus; and *will glorify it again*, by his death, re-  
surrection, and ascension.

3. The people who stood by, heard with astonishment  
the voice: (see the Annotations.) But Christ declares to  
them the meaning of what they heard. *This voice came not  
because of me*, for my satisfaction merely; *but for your sakes*,  
that you might be encouraged by this testimony borne to  
my divine mission. *Now is the judgment of this world*:  
the hour is near, when the Jewish nation shall receive  
their doom, and a blessed change be wrought in the heathen  
world, when God shall separate the precious from the  
vile, and gather his faithful saints to himself, the power  
of sin and Satan being broken: *for now shall the prince of*

and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter said unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. 25. 41. 1 Tim. 5. 10. Ver. 14, 15, 16. Mat. 11. 29. with ver. 8, 10. Eph. 5. 26, 27. 1 John, 3. 7. Rev. 2. 5. <sup>2</sup> Luke, 5. 1. Mat. 3. 14.

*this world be cast out*; the devil's usurped dominion over the souls of men shall be destroyed, his oracles in the heaven world be silenced, and, at last, his kingdom shall be finally rooted up; and this by a method which, to human view, may appear the most unlikely. *I, if I be, or when I am, lifted up from the earth*, on the cross as a sacrifice for sin, will draw all men unto me, Gentiles as well as Jews, who should be made partakers of all the inestimable blessings of his blood-shedding. (*This he said, signifying what death he should die, even by crucifixion.*) Note; (1.) Satan is now a vanquished foe; since Christ hath died, the head of this old serpent is bruised. (2.) Christ is the glorious centre of unity, the banner under which his faithful people with delight are gathered, and, cleaving to him in faith and love, are made more than conquerors by him over all their enemies. (3.) The cross, or sacrifice of Christ, is the powerfully attractive object; and therein all the glories of redeeming love are most eminently displayed, which powerfully influence the believer's soul.

4. The people, hearing him speak of himself as about to be lifted up and die, object this as a confutation of the character which he assumed as the Messiah, because the scriptures spoke of his continuing a king and priest for ever. But they overlooked what the same scriptures had said concerning his sufferings, and would not attend to the repeated notices which Christ had given of his rising again, and thus entering into his glory; which made his sufferings not at all inconsistent with his everlasting dominion: therefore they insultingly ask, *Who is this Son of man?* as if he himself could not possibly be the person of whom Daniel prophesied, since he acknowledged that he must be lifted up and die. Note; They cannot but err, who rest a doctrine on one part or text of scripture, without considering its connection and relation with the rest. Thus many pervert the very life-giving truths of God, and make them a favour of death.

5. As Christ saw the ill spirit and temper which raised these cavils, he declines a direct answer to their question, and rather chooses to reply by warning them of their danger, if they neglected the present opportunity granted to them. *Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you*; meaning himself, the Sun of righteousness, now about to set in blood; and also the gospel, which should for a season be continued among them: *walk while ye have the light*, make use of your day of grace, *lest darkness come upon you*, as it certainly will, if you neglect the present salvation; you will then be given up to judicial blindness, the light of the gospel will be removed, and you will be left as a man benighted, to stumble and fall into eternal misery; *for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth*, not apprized of the precipice which is before him, and the ruin which approaches. *While therefore ye have the light of my presence and gospel, believe in the light, receive me as the Messiah, and walk under the in-*

fluence of my word; *that ye may be the children of light*, the children of grace on earth, of glory in heaven, admitted to the inheritance among the saints in light. Note; (1.) Nothing is more conducive to awaken the conscience, than the remembrance of the momentariness of our time, and the infinite importance of that eternity, which depends upon our improvement of it. The day of life is short, the day of grace may be much shorter. To-day therefore, whilst it is called to-day, harden not your hearts. (2.) They who are favoured with the light of the gospel, are under peculiar obligations to know and improve the day of their visitation. (3.) Christ is the light of a benighted world, and out of him there is nothing but blackness of darkness. They who know him not, nor the rich salvation which his great atonement has purchased for us, are walking in the darkness of error and sin, and hastening into that eternal darkness where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. (4.) They only are children of the light, who walk in the light as Christ also walked, habitually looking to him for direction, and desiring to follow his example.

Lastly, Christ, having finished his discourse, withdrew, and did hide himself from them. He knew their wicked designs to apprehend him, and therefore, as his hour was not yet come, he concealed himself, probably at Bethany. Woe to the sinner, from whom Jesus finally departs, and leaves him to his own heart. His ruin is inevitable.

5thly, The miracles and preaching of the Lord Jesus were, we find, ineffectual to the conversion of the Jewish people in general.

1. *Though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.* In general their hearts were obstinately hardened, and they could not bear to think of acknowledging as their Messiah, concerning whom they had formed such high temporal expectations, one who appeared so mean and poor.

2. Herein the prophecy of Isaiah was eminently fulfilled. *Lord, who hath believed our report?* the declaration made by Jesus and his ministers; and *to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?* how few have been effectually wrought upon by the power of the Spirit, and brought to the obedience of faith? *Therefore they could not believe*; they were under, not a fatal necessity, but a moral impotency, from the abuse of that moral liberty which divine grace had in a measure given to them, and would have bestowed upon them in a superabundant measure, if they had been faithful: therefore the prophecy now received its accomplishment, *because that Esaias said again, Isa. vi. 9, 10. He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, giving them up to follow their own devices; that they should not see with their eyes, nor hear with their ears, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them*: they would not, and therefore they shall not. He abandons them to their wickedness, and they awfully fulfil the prophetic word. Note; The scriptures must be fulfilled.

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, 'What do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, 'Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 12. Ch. 14. 26. & 12. 16. <sup>m</sup> Luke, 5. 8. Mat. 16. 22. & 26. 33, 35. Col. 2. 18, 23. <sup>n</sup> Ch. 3. 3, 5. 1 Cor. 6. 11. Eph. 5. 25. Titus, 3. 5. Heb. 10. 22. Mat. 3. 11. Acts, 1. 5. Ezek. 36. 25.

... they cannot but perish, whom God abandons to their heart's lusts, in consequence of their own wilful and obstinate obstinacy against the truth.

The evangelist shews that the prophesy he had quoted, extended farther than the times of Isaiah, even to the days of the Messiah, when the prophet saw his glory, and spake of the place referred to is Is. vi. 1—10. and contains the most glorious visions of the eternal Jehovah in the whole book of scripture, and one of the strongest and most proofs of the proper and essential divinity of Jesus Christ.

Though in general Christ was rejected by the Jewish nation, Nevertheless, among the chief rulers many believed on him, and were convinced in their consciences that he was the Messiah, because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; the sanhedrim, his chief enemies, having thus determined; and, unwilling to take up this reproach of Christ, they were content to own what they felt; for they loved the praise of man more than the praise of God. Note; (1.) Many approve of the truths and practices, which the fear of the reproach of the world deter them from professedly following. (2.) They who are ashamed of Christ, may justly expect to be disowned on the great day of his appearing.

Jesus takes his last farewell of them, and leaves them with his testimony, with earnestness addressing to them, if so be that at last, in this their day, they will do the things which make for their everlasting life, which they should be for ever hidden from their eyes. He shews the excellence of faith. Jesus cried, and said, 'Who believeth on me as the Messiah, the true and living Son of God, and of lost souls, believeth not on me only, but on him who sent me. And he that seeth me by faith in my true character, as well as man, and in my office as commander in the Father, seeth him that sent me, from whom all graces and blessings are manifested in and by me: for I came forth into the world, from heaven, where I shined bright in uncreated glory, that whosoever shall believe on me, the Author of eternal salvation, and bring forth many more to light by the gospel, expecting the same direction and guidance in the way to eternal life, shall abide in darkness, in the ways of error and unbelief, and shall be perished, and shall not see life.

He shews them of the great peril of unbelief. If ye believe not on my words, and believe not, wilfully rejecting the evidence of my divine mission; I judge him who hears my words, and giveth him a sentence upon him, but give him a chance, for I came not to judge the world, to take away sinners; but to save the world, to bring to life as many as will as Jews, the glad tidings of a free salvation, and receiveth not my words,

making light of the gospel, and despising its offers, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day, shall rise up to witness against his obstinate infidelity, and hardened impenitence. Note; (1.) The great end of Christ's coming into the world, was the salvation of lost souls. They who reject him, sin against their own mercies. (2.) In the judgment-day, nothing will rise up to aggravate more fearfully the guilt of those that perish, than all the means of grace which they have abused, and the word of the gospel preached to them, which they have slighted.

3. He declares the authority on which he acted. For I have not spoken of myself, as a private person, on my own authority; but the Father, which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak, under whose commission I act, and from whom I have received my instructions; and I know that his commandment is life everlasting, the doctrines, which from him I declare unto you, are the only means of leading sinners to eternal blessedness: whosoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak; and acting under his authority, and declaring his will, it would be at their peril if they rejected the truths which from God he delivered to them. Note; (1.) They who would obtain everlasting life, must attend to the word of Jesus. (2.) They who reject the gospel, do it at their peril. Their ruin is inevitable.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1. Now before the feast of the passover,] The observation with which John ushers in this part of his history, may be considered as a kind of preface to the five subsequent chapters of his gospel. Before the feast of the passover, means before they began the passover supper. See Luke, xxii. 14, 15. Unto the end, means the end of his life, as eternity has no end. Knowing that his sufferings were at hand, the prospect of them did not make our gracious Master forget his disciples. They rather quickened his friendship; for he indulged the tenderest feelings of love on this occasion, and, after the manner of a departing friend, expressed his kindness in the most affectionate manner.

Ver. 2. And supper being ended, &c.] And being at supper. See ver. 4. and 26. By our version an English reader would be led to apprehend, that the paschal supper was over, before the subsequent act of condescension was performed by our Saviour; and that the clause in the parenthesis is referred to the devil's tempting Judas during its celebration. But the translation above given is perfectly agreeable to the original, and to the context; and as it was the custom with the Jews to wash themselves before they began to eat, it is on every account right to interpret the expression in that sense. And, with regard to the words in the parenthesis, the participle ἔβαλον, rendered having put, is of the perfect tense, and denotes an action done

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, ° not my feet only, but also *my hands and my head.*

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his feet*, but is clean every whit: and ° ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So after he had washed their feet, and

had taken his garments, and was sat down again, he said unto them, ° Know ye what I have done to you?

13 ° Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14 ° If I then, *your Lord and Master*, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

° Pf. 51. 2—7. ° 1 Thess. 5. 21. Ch. 15. 3. & 17. 17. Acts, 15. 9. Numb. 23. 21. Song. 4. 7. Jer. 50. 20. 2 Cor. 5. 17, 21. Phil. 2. 14. Ch. 6. 6, 7, 71. & 17. 12. Ver. 18. 21, 26. Mat. 13. 51. & 16. 9. Mat. 21. 8, 10. Luke. 6. 46. 1 Cor. 8. 6. & 12. 3. Phi. 2. 11. Mat. 11. 29. Rom. 12. 10. Phil. 2. 3, 5. 1 Pet. 5. 5. Luke, 22. 26, 27. 2 Cor. 8. 9. & 10. 1. Eph. 5. 2. 1 Pet. 2. 21. Gal. 6. 1, 1.

done at some past time; and the particle *ἔδη*, rendered *now*, often signifies *already*, or *before*: so that what Christ says here concerning Judas, may refer to what had passed between him and the chief priests, after the reproof given him at the supper in Bethany; and therefore when John says afterwards, ver. 27. that, after the supper, Satan entered into Judas, the meaning must be, that he was then again incited by the devil to execute the treachery which he had before resolved upon, by a like instigation of the same evil spirit: see ver. 27.

Ver. 3. *Jesus, knowing, &c.*] This circumstance is premised, to set the humility of Christ in the most conspicuous light: and what could have contributed more to this purpose, than to consider that Jesus, though of such transcendent dignity as to be invested with the government of all things, as having existed in heaven from all eternity, and as sure of being in heaven to all eternity, to reign there in his glorified humanity; yet descends to the mean office of a slave, and washes the feet of his own disciples; an action, which might justly excite our wonder, if we had not proofs of his much greater humiliation in making himself of no reputation, for the great work of human redemption. We cannot wonder at his *girding himself with the towel*, when we reflect that *he took upon him the form of a servant*. We cannot wonder at his pouring water into the basin to wash his disciples' feet, when we recollect that he shed his own most precious blood, to wash away the sins of mankind.

Ver. 4. *He riseth from supper,*] As it is here asserted that Christ rose from supper, we must allow that, in some sense, supper was begun. Probably, the antepast had been taken, which is mentioned by the Jews as preceding the paschal lamb. They tell us that it was then usual for the master of the family to wash his hands, and, if we are rightly informed, the Jews continue this custom still. By *laying aside his garments*, is meant his upper garments; which the Jewish priests used to pull off, when employed in bringing the victims, frankincense, and other things requisite for sacrifice.

Ver. 6. *Then cometh he to Simon Peter:*] The word rendered *then*, does not imply either that Jesus came first to Peter, or that he had washed any other person before him; but is used in the same sense as the English particle *now*, without any respect to time or order, and only to imply that a minute detail was going to follow. There is great emphasis in the word *Thou* in this verse. *Lord, dost Thou wash My feet?* "Thou, who art the Son of God,

"the Messiah, and consequently the King of the Jews, shalt thou wash *my feet*, who am but a poor fisherman, who am thy disciple, and, what is still more degrading, an unworthy sinner?"

Ver. 7. *Hereafter.*] *Μετα ταῦτα*;—*after these things*; and accordingly our Lord, after he had finished the washing, explains the meaning of this symbolical action.

Ver. 8. *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.*] "If thou dost not submit to all my orders implicitly, thou art not my disciple;" or, as it may be also justly explained, "Unless I cleanse thee from the pollution of sin, emblematically represented by the washing thee with water, Thou art none of mine."

Ver. 9. *Simon Peter saith, &c.*] St. Peter, understanding Christ's words literally, supposed that his being washed was necessary to his partaking with him in the felicity of his reign: he desired therefore that not his feet only, but also his hands and his head, that is, his whole body might be washed. *Jesus said, "He that is washed,* or rather, "he who has been bathed,—*καλυμένῳ*—need not, after that, wash any part of his body, except his feet, which, in coming out of the bath may have been dirtied." This he said in allusion to their custom of bathing themselves before the supper, and with a design to teach us, that converted persons have still need to watch over all their words and actions, and to wash by faith in the atoning Blood, even for every sin of infirmity: for that our Saviour spoke of a spiritual washing is evident from his adding, *and ye are clean, but not all.* "Ye are men of holy and virtuous dispositions; only ye are not all of you so." This was so direct an application to the conscience of Judas, that he could not but be convinced that our Lord knew the inmost recesses of his mind; and if he had not been exceedingly obdurate, was sufficient to have prevented him from putting his infamous sordid project into practice. Some have observed, that Judas did not decline the honour of having his feet washed, as Peter did,—and have considered it as an instance of his pride: but, if the discourse between Christ and Peter happened before he came to Judas, it had been indecent for Judas to renew an objection which had just been over-ruled; and, if Christ came to Judas before Peter, he might be unwilling to be the first to dispute the point, lest Christ should confound him by inquiring, whether he declined it from a consciousness of any peculiar unworthiness. Guilt naturally suggests such suspicions and precautions.

Ver. 14. *If I then—have washed your feet, &c.*] This was

15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.  
 16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither that is sent greater than he that sent him.  
 17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.  
 18 ¶ I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture

may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.  
 19 Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.  
 20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

at. 10. 24. Luke, 6. 40. Ch. 15. 20. \* Mat. 7. 21, 24. Rom. 2. 13. James, 1. 21-25. & 4. 17. Luke, 12. 47, 48. † 2 Tim. Ch. 17. 12. † Psal. 41. 9. Deut. 32. 15. Mat. 26. 23. \* Or, From benefactor. † If. 41. 23. & 46. 10. Ch. 14. 29. & 16. 4. 10. 40. & 25. 40. Luke, 10. 16. Ch. 12. 44. † 1 Pet. 1. 21.

a proverb, one of the lowest offices of menial attendants. See 1 Sam. xxv. 41. Dr. Evans well observes, (an Temper, vol. i. p. 81.) that our Lord chose this office, though not necessary in itself, more strongly to the minds of his disciples, and to shew that they should regard, not only the necessary preservation, but mutual comfort of each other.  
 15. For I have given you an example,] "I have given you a pattern of humility, to recommend that inimitably necessary grace to you:" and it must be acknowledged, that nothing shews us more effectually the value of this grace, than its being recommended to us by an example—a recommendation, which in the circumstances was peculiarly seasonable; for the having heard Jesus say, that the kingdom of God was at hand (Luke, xxii. 18.) their minds were so fired with various passions, that, before they arose from supper, they fell into a hot contention about sharing the principality in the kingdom. It may be proper to observe, that the words have been understood, as ordaining this ceremonial rite among Christians. But though some have received the practice to be thus enjoined, and many churches still retain it; yet, as no such rite is generally prevailed in the Christian world, in any places and circumstances, it would be an error rather than a kindness, to do it for our words of our Lord, so plainly capable of another important sense, are not to be interpreted with strictness. Our Lord designed to teach his great lesson of humble love, as well as to convey a variety upon them; and hereby he teaches every possible way to assist each other in activity: secondly, to wash each other's feet, and all sorts of good offices to each other; even the most lowly kind, when the necessity of any calls for it. The publication entitled *The Religious Ceremony*, p. 417. where may be seen into what manner of ceremony of washing the feet is turned on.  
 18. whom I have chosen:] Christ does not say, that he had chosen some of his apostles, but that he owns that he had chosen Judas, by whom he was betrayed. I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a traitor. The import of these words seems to be, "I know the temper, disposition, and character of those whom I have chosen, and what one

of them particularly will do; for which cause I said, "Ye are not all clean; but God, in his wisdom, has permitted this: and, as Abithophel betrayed David, though he was his familiar friend; so Judas, my familiar at my table, will betray the Son of God; and so the words recorded, Ps. xli. 9. will be fulfilled in him also, of whom king David was the type."  
 Ver. 19. Now I tell you before it come, &c.] "The hint in the preceding verse merits your particular notice; for I have given it you before I am betrayed, to convince you that it was foreknown by me in my prescience; and to prevent your calling my mission in question on that account." See Ps. xli. 9. One way of knowing whether the interpretation of a prophecy be true, is to learn the time when that interpretation was made. For if it particularly and expressly declared the event that was supposed to be imported in the prophecy, before the event happened, or could possibly be foreseen by human sagacity, the truth of the interpretation is justified by the event. One and the same Spirit must be thought to inspire the prophet and the interpreter. His skill, where he applies other prophecies to present circumstances which they suit, may be trusted to;—and this is the very state of many of Christ's interpretations. He pointed out several prophecies to his disciples, and even to the Jews. He told them, "thus the prophet writes, and thus it shall be fulfilled;" and it was fulfilled accordingly; though the fulfilling of most of them depended on the free choice of others, with whom he could not combine, unless he could be the author of sin. His end in all this was, to convince them of the truth of his interpretations; for otherwise he might foretel the same events, without regard or reference to their prophecies. But now, as he said to his disciples on the occasion before us, I tell you before it come to pass, &c. Christ had just told them, Ye are clean, but not all:—I speak not of you all;—but that the scripture may be fulfilled, &c. The text he cites is in Ps. xiv. 9. which he applies to Judas, as a prediction of his treachery. "And this," says he, "I take notice of beforehand, as the sense of that scripture, that, when you see it happen, you may believe that I am the Messiah, against whom the Psalmist prophesied such falseness should be committed." Whether this psalm was spoken of Judas in a literal or typical sense, it matters not; Christ interprets it of Judas; and the event corresponding with his interpretation, is a vindication of it. While as yet no outward token of Judas's villainy

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

22 ' Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, ' whom Jesus loved.

24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

25 He then ' lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it ?

26 Jesus <sup>h</sup> answered, He it is to whom I shall give a <sup>i</sup> sop, when I have dipped it. And

when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon.

27 And after the sop <sup>a</sup> Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, ' That thou doest, do quickly.

28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

29 For some of *them* thought, because <sup>b</sup> Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast ; or, that he should give something to the poor.

30 He then having received the sop <sup>c</sup> went immediately out : and it was night.

31 ¶ Therefore, when he was gone out,

<sup>c</sup> Ch. 11. 33. & 12. 27. Mark, 3. 5. Acts, 17. 16. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 26. 21. Mark, 14. 18. Luke, 22. 21. Acts, 1. 16, 17. 1 John, 2. 19. Ch. 6. 50  
<sup>e</sup> Mat. 26. 22. Mark, 14. 19. Luke, 22. 23. <sup>f</sup> Ch. 19. 26. & 20. 2. & 21. 7, 20, 24. & 11. 3. <sup>g</sup> They sat at meals in a recumbent posture.  
Ver. 23. Ch. 21. 20. <sup>h</sup> So only to John alone. Ver. 28. <sup>i</sup> Or morsel, i. e. of the bitter herbs. Exod. 12. 8. <sup>k</sup> Ver. 2. Luke, 11. 3. Pt  
109. 6. Acts, 5. 3. Mat. 12. 45. <sup>l</sup> Pl. 81. 11, 12. Rom. 1. 24, 26, 28. 2 Thess. 2. 10—12. James, 1. 13—15. Rev. 17. 17. <sup>m</sup> Ch.  
12. 6. <sup>n</sup> Prov. 1. 16. & 4. 16. Il. 59. 7. Rom. 3. 15. Job, 24. 13, 14. Ch. 3. 19, 20.

villany did appear, even then he warned his disciples that the *scripture* would be fulfilled concerning the apostacy of *this son of perdition*.

Ver. 21. *He was troubled in spirit,*] " He shewed a more than ordinary trouble and concern of mind, not merely at his own sufferings, but at the horrid wickedness and ingratitude of Judas, who was thereby bringing the most dreadful destruction upon himself : and, speaking with great earnestness, he said, I, who am Truth itself, assure you that one of your number, who has been all along a witness of my life and miracles, and whom I have chosen to be one of my apostles, and laid under the highest obligations, will nevertheless basely deliver me into the hands of my enemies, who will put me to death." The original will fully as well bear to be rendered *will betray as shall betray*.

Ver. 23. *Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom,*] One of them, whom Jesus peculiarly loved, sat next to him, leaning backward with his head upon his Lord's breast, according to the usual posture at the passover. This disciple was *John*, the memory of whose sweet disposition, and other amiable qualities, is perpetuated in the peculiar love which Jesus bore to him. The word *vévet*, in the next verse rendered *beckoned*, might be more exactly rendered *nodded* : he intimated his desire by a motion of his head.

Ver. 26. *He it is to whom I shall give a sop,*] See the note on Matth. xxvi. 23. The word rendered *sop*, ψωμίον, implies the lower crust, or a piece broken off the lower crust of bread ; it is often used for a morsel, or a few crumbs of bread. From the kind and smallness of the piece which was offered him, as well as from its being dipped in the sauce, described in the note above referred to, it is probable that Jesus put it into the traitor's mouth ; for to cut a morsel, and dip it in sauce, is the action of one who is going either to put it in his own mouth, or into the mouth of another. Perhaps Judas might have some suspicion that Christ's giving him the sop was designed to mark him

out as the person he spoke of ; and was the more furiously enraged against him : however, Satan, seeing this to be a fit opportunity to execute the villanous design, worked more in this son of perdition now than ever before ; and, leading him captive at his will, prevailed upon him to set about it without delay. See the next note.

Ver. 27—30. *And after the sop, &c.*] See the note on ver. 2.—After the account which St. Luke gives us of Christ's delivering the eucharistical bread and wine to his disciples, it is added, *But behold, the band of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.* Ch. xxii. 21. Whence some interpreters have thought that Judas was present likewise at that supper, and partook of it with the rest of the disciples ; whereas St. John expressly says, that, *having received the sop, he went immediately out* ; and this being given him at the paschal supper, he could not be present at the eucharist which followed it. In order therefore to reconcile these accounts, it seems necessary to suppose, that St. Luke has not observed the order of time as to this circumstance ; but chose first to mention together what related to the two suppers, and then to subjoin that circumstance concerning Judas, which only respected the former. This will appear further, by laying together in one view the principal circumstances recorded by the several evangelists with relation to the treachery of Judas, which Christ thought fit to discover to the rest of his disciples at the paschal supper. After they were seated, Jesus saith to them, *One of you shall betray me*, ver. 21. Upon this they say to him, one by one, *Is it I ?* Mark, xiv. 19. and Peter, beckoning to John to ask Jesus of whom he spake, Jesus answered him softly, by saying, *to whom I shall give this sop*, &c. ver. 26. It seems also as if Judas, upon receiving the sop, asked that question with a low voice, *Master, is it I ?* and Jesus answered him in the same manner, *thou hast said.* Matth. xxvi. 25. Then after the sop Satan entered into Judas ; upon which Jesus, who of course knew this, said, *what thou doest, do quickly* : ver. 27. of this chapter.

Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

32 ' If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

33 Little children, 'yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said to the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come;

so now I say to you.

34 ' A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 ' By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

36 ¶ Simon Peter said unto him, ' Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him,

Pl. 40. 8. Ch. 18. 11. Luke, 12. 50. Col. 2. 14, 15. Heb. 2. 10, 14. Ch. 21. 19. & 12. 23, 28. Luke, 2. 14. P Ch. 12. 16, 23, 24, 8. & 17. 1, 5, 6. & 7. 39. Phil. 2. 6—11. If. 53. 10—12. Heb. 1. 3. Rev. 3. 21. Pl. 110. 1. Ch. 16. 16 & 7. 34. & 8. 21. & 14. 19. 19. 18. Ch. 15. 12. Eph. 5. 2. 1 John, 4. 21. & 2. 7, 8. & 3. 11, 16, 23. 1 Pet. 1. 22. & 3. 8, 9. Gal. 6. 2. Mat. 22. 39. James, 2. 8. ff. 4. 9. Rom. 12. 10. & 13. 8—10. Gal. 5. 14, 22. Heb. 13. 1. Acts, 4. 32. & 2. 46. 1 John, 2. 10. & 3. 14. & 4. 20. Ver. 24. 1. 21. & 14. 5, 8, 22. & 16. 17.

probably was spoken with an audible voice; since it immediately follows, Now, &c. ver. 28, 29. Hence it is that what passed before between Jesus and Judas, spoken softly; for, had the other disciples known that Judas had been charged with treachery, they could never have imagined that Jesus would afterwards have employed any affair, in which they were all concerned. As it is said therefore during the supper at the house of the traitor, seems to have induced Judas, by the infligation of the evil, to engage in his treachery; so another occurrence at this paschal supper might, by means of the same argument, excite him to put it into execution.

32. Therefore, when he was gone out,] Our sufferings were now at hand, Judas being gone out of the temple of soldiers to apprehend him. After he was taken, Jesus took occasion to meditate upon the glory which should accrue both to himself and to the Father in his sufferings, and spake of it to his disciples, ver. 31. He told them, that, having already glorified his name by his past actions of his life, and being about to be glorified yet further by his sufferings and death, which would display his perfections, particularly his infinite love and grace, the most striking and amiable light, he was in order to receive glory from the Father; meaning that, in his nature, he was to be most gloriously exalted to the Father, and that his mission from the Father was immediately to be supported by irrefragable testimony. *God is glorified in him,* (for so εὐδοκία ὁ Θεὸς ἐκδοξάζει) *God will also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.*

*A new commandment I give]* Our Lord calls this a new commandment, not because mutual love had never been joined on mankind before, but because it was a peculiar excellence: for the word *new*, in the original language, denotes excellence and truth. See Mark, i. 27. Rev. ii. 17. And the reason why it seems to have been, that novelty often has a great influence upon the mind with excellence, rendering it more valuable, and raising admiration. That the word *new* does not always relate to time, is evident from the example of the Athenians, who calls the laws of Lycurgus *very new laws*, several hundred years after they were made, because, though they had been common to all nations, they had not been practised by the Athenians. It calls this a *new commandment* also, because it was to be exercised under a new relation, accord-

ing to a new measure, and from new motives. They were to love one another in the relation of his disciples, and with that measure and degree of love which he had shewn to them. See 1 John, iii. 16. Withal, they were to love from the great motive of his love to them, and in order to prove themselves his genuine disciples by the warmth of their mutual affection. Some have thought that this expression—a new commandment—signifies no more than merely a renewed commandment: but it certainly contains a strong and lively intimation, that the engagements to mutual love, peculiar to the Christian dispensation, are so singular and so cogent, that all other men, when compared with its members, may seem uninstructed in the school of friendship; and Jesus may appear, as it were, the first professor of that divine science. Dr. Clarke well observes, that our Lord seems to have laid this peculiar stress upon philanthropy, as if it was the principal part and great design of religion, and, as if he had a particular view to that general corruption and destruction of true Christianity, which the want of it would cause among those who should call themselves his church. Perhaps our Lord may here insinuate a reflection, not only on the party-spirit which then prevailed so much among the Jews, but likewise on the emulations and contentions among the apostles themselves, which mutual love would easily have cured. In this sense, it is unhappily still a *new commandment* to too many of us, who generally act as if they had not yet time to learn, or even to read it.

Ver. 35. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples,]* By loving one another sincerely and fervently, you shall prove yourselves my disciples, to the conviction of mankind, who cannot but be sensible that love is a distinguishing feature in my character. This will be the most acceptable, the most ornamental token of your relation to me; and I recommend it to you as the noblest badge of your profession." It is well known, that the founders of new societies always appoint some peculiar ornament, sign, or mode of living, by which their followers may be known from others. Our Lord seems to allude here to that custom, "Let love be the distinguishing badge of your profession." And so highly were the primitive Christians celebrated for this grace, that the inspired writer of the Acts informs us, ch. iv. 32. *They were all of one heart, and one mind.* And the ancient apologists for Christianity inform us, that the persecuting heathens themselves could not help crying out in rapture, on observing the prevalence



Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now ; I follow thee now ? I will lay down my life  
 but thou shalt follow me afterwards. for thy sake.

37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot 38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay

<sup>u</sup> Ver. 33. Ch. 21. 18, 19. 2 Pet. 1. 14. <sup>x</sup> Ver. 37, 36. Mat. 26. 33, 35. Mark, 14. 29, 31. Luke, 22. 33. <sup>v</sup> Mat. 26. 34. Mark, 14. 30. Luke, 22. 34. 1 Cor. 10. 12. Prov. 16. 18. & 29. 23. & 26. 12, 16.

lence of this grace among them, " See how these Christi-  
 " ans love one another !"

*Ver. 30. Thou canst not follow me now :*] We may gather hence, that the declaration, ver. 33. *Whither I go, ye cannot come*, is one of those general propositions, whereof there are many in scripture, which were spoken with a limitation not expressed. Here we are directed to add the limitation thus : *Whither I go, ye cannot come now* ; for they were in general, equally with St. Peter, to follow Jesus afterwards, by suffering a violent death. Our Lord, in the next words, *Thou shalt follow me afterwards*, seems obliquely to hint what he afterwards further signified, in his command to St. Peter after his resurrection, when he ordered him to follow him, ch. xxi. 18, 19. namely, that Peter should die on the cross for his sake, which ancient history assures us he did. For the remainder of the chapter, the reader is referred to the parallel places.

*Inferences on the betraying of Christ, ver. 21—30.* compared with Matth. xxvi. 14—25. Such an eye-sore was Christ who raised Lazarus, and Lazarus when raised, to the envious priests, scribes, and elders of the Jews, that they consult to murder both. While either of them lives, neither can the glory of that miracle die, nor the shame of its malicious cavillers. How happy had it been for that miserable council, had they but spent half those thoughts upon their own salvation, which they misemployed upon the destruction of the innocent ! But mean are the motives, and the result must be base and detestable. Treachery must do that, which power would have attempted in vain.

Who so fit for their purpose among the domestics of Christ, as he who bare the bag, and loved immoderately what he bare ?—The heart which has once enslaved itself to yellow and white earth, may be made any thing bad. Affianced as he was openly to *Christ*, still Judas is *Mammon's* servant. How could he but hate that Master whom he formally professed to serve, who really stooped to serve privily that master whom Christ, on all occasions, professed to hate !

Wretched Judas, whether shall we more abhor thy treachery, or wonder at thy folly ! Had thy wretched chapman been able to fetch down those starry spangles of heaven, and to have put them into thy venal grasp, what had this been, to weigh with a God ? The time was when he that set thee at work could say, *All the kingdoms of the earth and their glory are mine, I will give them to whom I will ;—and all these will I give thee* : had he now made thee that offer, it might have carried some colour of a temptation : but to tender so invaluable a commodity for thirty poor silverlings, was no less mean than wicked.

How unequal is this woeful bargain ! He that would value Mary's ointment, bestowed on the feet of Christ, at 300 pieces, now sells his Master, on whom those precious

odours were spent, at thirty. Worldly hearts, as the old adage expresses it, are indeed penny-wise and pound-foolish. They know how to set high prices upon this world's trash ; but as for heavenly things, or the God who owns them, these they shamefully undervalue.

The bargain is made, the price is paid ; and Judas returns, and looks no less smoothly upon his Master and his fellows, than if he had done them no disservice : he was not now first a hypocrite : the passover is at hand, no man more busy to prepare for, more devoutly forward to receive it, than Judas !—O the foolishness, the obduracy of this son of perdition ! How many proofs had he formerly seen of "his Master's omniscience ?—And yet so blind is this sinful man,—the miscreant dares to plot a secret villainy against his person, and then to face him, calmly, as if all were well. While he, however, thinks fit to conceal his treachery, our Saviour chose not to conceal his prescience of the fact. *Verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*

And did not Judas, think you, blush,—and grow pale,—and cast down his guilty eyes, and turn away his troubled countenance, at so alarming an intimation ? Alas ! custom of sin so steels the brow, it is incapable of any relentings. Could the other disciples have discerned any change in any face there, they had not been so sorrowfully affected with the charge. How intently their eyes are bent upon each other, as if they would pierce through those windows down into the bosom : with what mutual jealousy do they peruse each other's foreheads ! At length, as rather willing to distrust their own innocence, than their Master's assertion, see how each trembles to say, *Lord, is it I ?*—" It is possible there may lurk secret wickedness in some blind corner of the heart. It is possible that time and temptation, working upon our corruption, may draw us into such sin, as we could not beforehand conceive. Whither may we not fall, if left to our own strength ?"—It is wise to fear the worst :—*Lord, is it I ?*

Oh the mad infatuation of sin ! Judas can sit by, and hear his Master say, *Woe be to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed : good were it for that man, had he never been born* : yet is his countenance unshaken, unappalled ! O Judas, didst thou ever hear aught but truth fall from his lips ?—How then durst thou persist in the purpose of so damnable a villainy ? Alas ! resolved sinners run on desperately in their wicked courses, and have so bent their eyes upon the profit or the pleasure of their mischievous projects, that they will not see hell and eternal misery, though they continually lie open before them in the way.

As if that shameless man meant to outbrave all accusations, and outface his own heart, he dares to ask with the rest, *Master, is it I ?* No disciple more zealously detects that perfidy, than he who fosters it in his own breast. His fellows think him honest ; and all is well, while he can be well esteemed. Reputation,—strange as the paradox may appear,—is the only care of false hearts : not truth.

down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, till thou hast denied me thrice.  
I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow,

not consciousness of integrity:—So they may but seem  
air to men, they care not how foul they are to God.

But he, whose piercing eye sees things as they are, can  
remptorily convict the impudence of this hollow ques-  
tionist with a direct affirmation, *Thou hast said*. Foolish  
questioner, couldst thou then think that those eyes of thine  
could endure the beams of the sun? Thou supposedst thy  
eye unknown; to men it was so. Had thy Master been  
more than man it had been so to him. But this  
divine knowledge shall argue him divine; nor canst thou  
deny its observance: for there is not *any creature that*  
*is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked, and*  
*are open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

Yet the charge was private; either not heard, or not  
acknowledged by the other disciples: it shall be whispered to  
Peter, and afterwards known to all. Peter's zeal would  
not let him dwell under the danger of so doubtful an  
opinion. He is anxious to know the man; his signs  
show that his voice dares not; the beloved disciple well  
understands this silent language, and ventures to clothe  
his thought in words, *Lord, who is it that will betray*  
*the Son of Man?* ver. 25.

Which was timorously demanded, is graciously an-  
swered. How loth was our Saviour to name him whom  
he was not unwilling to point out? In the same lan-  
guage wherein Peter asked the question of John, does our  
Saviour give the answer; what a beckoning demanded, is  
graciously answered by a sop. Surely a stander-by would have thought  
it well with his Master, and have construed this  
that the Jews did his tears for Lazarus, *Behold how he*  
*loves him!*—But the outward gifts of God (alarming  
in themselves!) are not always proofs of his love; yea,  
they are bestowed in displeasure. So foolish are  
we in measuring God's affection by temporal benefits,  
in applauding prospering wickedness, and to grudge  
our blessings to those who are incapable of better.

*Satan entered into Judas.* Favours ill used  
make us more guilty, and capable of further evil;  
the spirit frequently takes occasion by God's gifts  
to tempt us more eagerly. Thus Satan took advan-  
tage, of a further possession, who had twice  
made a palpable entry into Judas's false heart; first  
in his confession, and next in his damnable plot of con-  
fession to Christ. As in every gross sin which we  
give harbour to that evil one; so at every  
new confession, new hold is taken by him of the  
house of Satan entered to make the house of  
his own: now he enters it as being his.  
Every confession of sin opens the gates to Satan; consent  
to the entry; full resolution of sin gives up  
his hands, and puts him into absolute pos-  
session, in awakening consideration to every serious  
sinner *that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he*

fall. *Behold the meekness of this Lamb of God! We*  
*are not to hear a check; but what thou doest,*

*do quickly*, is his single testimony of knowledge, correction,  
and reproof against the false disciple. Why do we startle,  
and redden at our petty wrongs, and swell with anger,  
and break into furious resentments upon every occasion,  
when the pattern of our patience, the *Captain of our sal-*  
*vation*, lets not fall one harsh word, even upon so foul an  
apostate?

Judas hears him, and departs. That steely heart re-  
sents not: the confirmed traitor knows his way to the  
high-priest's hall, and to the garden. The watch-word is  
given,—*Hail, Master!* and a kiss: yet more hypocrisy;  
yet more presumption is practised, on the foundation of  
the Saviour's lenity. O the impudence of a hardened  
sinner! that tongue which has agreed to sell its Master,  
dares to say *Hail*; and those lips which have passed the  
vile compact of his death, dare offer to kiss Him whom  
they have covenanted to kill. It was the divine charge  
of old, *Kiss the Son*, lest he be angry: O Saviour, thou  
hadst reason to be angry with this kiss; the scourges, the  
thorns, the nails, the spear of thy murderers, were not so  
piercing, so painful, as this touch of Judas. All these  
were in this alone; the stabs of an enemy cannot be so  
grievous, as the skin-deep wounds of a disciple. See ver.  
18. and Zech. xiii. 6.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, In the transaction of Christ's  
washing his disciples' feet, we have the following partic-  
ulars:

1. Christ in deepest humility condescends to wash his  
disciples' feet, to testify his love towards them, and set  
them an example. *When he knew that his hour was come,*  
*that he should depart out of this world unto the Father,* by his  
death, resurrection, and ascension, *having loved his own*  
*apostles which were in the world, he loved them unto the end;*  
and on the evening of the paschal day, Christ knowing  
how short a time he had to live, and consequently that  
what he had to say, or do, to his apostles before his depar-  
ture, would most fitly be done presently, he expressed the  
constancy of his love and kindness to them as follows:  
*and, as an instance of his love, says the evangelist, supper*  
*being ended, or it being supper time, (the devil having now put*  
*into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,)*  
*Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his*  
*hands, all power in heaven and in earth; and that he was*  
*come from God, and went to God; notwithstanding the tran-*  
*scendant glory which he possessed in consequence thereof,*  
yet, to make his humiliation more illustrious, and his love  
appear more astonishing, *he riseth from supper, and laid aside*  
*his upper garments, and, as a servant, took a towel and*  
*girded himself, tucked it round his waist. After that, he*  
*poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples'*  
*feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was*  
*girded.* Note; (1.) The devil's wiles are fatally prevalent:  
even an apostle becomes his prey. Who need not then  
tremble for himself? (2.) While the amazing humility of  
Jesus raises our highest admiration, we should learn to  
imitate his bright example, and count nothing beneath us

## CHAP. XIV.

*Christ comforteth his disciples with the hope of heaven: professeth himself the way, the truth, and the life; and one with the Father: assureth their prayers in his name to be effectual: requireth love and obedience: promiseth the Holy Ghost the Comforter: and leaveth his peace with them.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**L**ET <sup>a</sup> not your heart be troubled: <sup>b</sup> ye believe in God, believe also in me.

2 <sup>c</sup> In my Father's house are many mansions: <sup>d</sup> if it were not so, I would have told you. <sup>e</sup> I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

4 <sup>f</sup> And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

5 ¶ <sup>g</sup> Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we

<sup>a</sup> If. 41. 10, 14. & 43. 1, 2. Ver. 27, 28. Ch. 16. 22, 6. <sup>b</sup> Pf. 112. 7. If. 26. 3, 4. Acts, 4. 11, 12. & 8. 37. <sup>c</sup> 2 Cor. 5. 1. Rev. 2. 7. & 3. 12, 21. <sup>d</sup> 2 Peter, 1. 11. <sup>e</sup> Ch. 3. 2. Rev. 1. 5. & 3. 14. Tit. 1. 2. <sup>f</sup> Heb. 11. 16. & 6. 20. & 7. 25. & 9. 24. Ch. 17. 11. & 13. 33, 36. <sup>g</sup> Ver. 18. 28. Mat. 28. 20. Acts, 1. 11. Heb. 9. 28. 1 Theis. 4. 16, 17. Phil. 1. 23. Rom. 18. 17. Ch. 12. 26. & 13. 31. & 17. 24. 2 Tim. 2. 12. Rev. 3. 21. <sup>h</sup> Ver. 2. Luke, 24. 26. Acts, 14. 22. 2 Tim. 3. 12. <sup>i</sup> Ch. 20. 25, 27, 28.

which will tend to God's glory, or the good of immortal souls.

2. We have the conversation which pass between Christ and St. Peter on this occasion. When our Lord came to Peter, he, amazed at such condescension, could not bear to see his Master in so servile an office, and saith, *Lord, dost thou, the God of glory, the divine Messiah, wash my feet, a vile sinner as I am?* *Jesus answered and said, What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter, be made acquainted with my purpose and design in this matter.* *Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet: he was shocked at the idea of his Master's degrading himself so low, and thought he never would consent that he should perform so mean a service to so worthless a creature as he felt himself to be.* *Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, if thou art not spiritually washed from thy sins by my blood, and cleansed by my Spirit, which is signified by this washing of water, thou hast no part with me, no communion with me, no interest in me.* *Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head; convinced of his error, and desiring nothing so much as Christ's favour, and communion with him; and sensible how polluted he was, he longs to be thoroughly purged from corruption, and to be washed all over.* (See the Annotations.) *Jesus saith to him, He that is washed, justified and sanctified, needeth not, save to wash his feet by daily application to the same fountain of my blood, to cleanse him from any corruption or guilt contracted in this polluted world; but is clean every whit, accepted of God, and freed at least from the dominion of sin; and ye are clean in this sense, but not all, not every individual of you.* *For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, ye are not all clean, Judas the traitor being in their number.* Note; (1.) The condescensions of Jesus cannot but be the astonishment of the enlightened soul. (2.) Though God's dispensations appear dark and intricate, it becomes us never to object: we know not now, but we shall know hereafter, the reasons of his procedure. (3.) None have a part in Christ, who are not cleansed by his heavenly washing, so as at least to possess dominion over sin. But we cannot partake of his glory, if we are not first made partakers of his grace, washed in his blood, and perfectly cleansed by his Spirit. (4.) It is good not to be peremptory in our resolves, as we may see cause to change our minds. (5.) They who have tasted the grace of God in truth, de-

fire the perfect sanctification of their hearts and lives. (6.) We need not only once come to Jesus for pardon and grace, but every day renew the exercise of repentance and faith. (7.) Christ tries the hearts of his professing people, and knows who are hypocrites, and who are disciples indeed.

3. Christ explains to them the meaning of what he had done. *Ye call me Master, and Lord: and ye say with me, so I am.* *If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet, condescending to every office of kindness towards the meanest disciple.* And to reconcile them to duties of self-denial, he adds, *Verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord: neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him.* With such an example therefore before them, they need not think the lowest offices of charity a disparagement to them. *If ye know these things, and understood my meaning, hope ye if ye do them, and in your spirit and practice conform to my precepts and pattern.* Note; (1.) Jesus our Lord and Master: his teaching we must observe, his commands obey. (2.) A faithful disciple of Jesus studies how to serve his brethren, and is ready to condescend to the lowest in every work of faith and labour of love. (3.) Christ hath set us an example, that we should follow his steps; what he enjoins upon us, he has practised first himself. (4.) Knowledge is good, but practice is the life of religion. They are doubly criminal, who know better and do worse.

2dly, Christ knew who would betray him, and begins to point out the traitor.

1. In general he lets them know there was a false disciple among them, on whom none of the things that he had spoken would have any effect. *I speak not of you all clean and faithful: I know whom I have chosen: I speak not this obedience from you all: I know I have chosen twelve apostles; and the scripture is fulfilled of one of them, which said, He that eateth bread with me, shall lift up his heel against me: though he be so near to me, as to be entertained daily at my table with me, yet he will do me all the mischief he can.* *Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am his, and may be more confirmed in your faith of my divine omniscience and mediatorial character, when you see this prediction awfully verified.* And to encourage you to be faithful, whatever falsehoods you may see in others, or whatever humbling services you may be called to, I

know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

<sup>k</sup> the truth, and <sup>l</sup> the life: <sup>m</sup> no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am <sup>i</sup> the way, and

7 <sup>n</sup> If ye had known me, ye should have

<sup>l</sup> Il. 35. 8. Acts, 4. 12. Eph. 2. 18. Heb. 10. 19—22. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 1. 14, 17. & 8. 32. Acts, 10. 43. Eph. 1. 13. 2 Cor. 1. 20. Col. 2. 9. <sup>m</sup> Acts, 4. 12. Eph. 2. 18. <sup>n</sup> Ch. 1. 4. & 3. 14—18, 36. & 6. 33—38, 63. & 8. 52. & 10. 10, 23. & 11. 25. & 14. 19. Ver. 9, 10, 20. 2 Cor. 4. 6. Col. 1. 15. Heb. 1. 3.

Verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me, and testifies his respect for me, in the honour paid to my ambassador; and he that receiveth me as the Messiah sent of God, receiveth him that sent me. When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, deeply affected with the traitor's guilt, and the ruin hanging over his head, glorified and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Note; (1.) Many eat at Christ's table, who most ungratefully lift up their heel against him, with aggravated guilt prove faithless, and betray him. Every true minister of Jesus is his ambassador, and represents his Prince's person. For his sake therefore is to be honoured.

He points out Judas in particular as the person detected. Shocked at what they heard, doubtful which of them he meant, and anxious to know, each of them looked upon the other, to observe whether any one would betray any of them. Judas, who was sitting next to Jesus, and as it were in his bosom, and Peter, eager to be resolved, privately gave him a sign, that he should softly ask their Master whom he meant: taking an opportunity, John whispered, Lord, who dost thou mean? Jesus answered, so low as not to be heard by the rest, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it in the sauce. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot the son of Simon, intimating to John that he was the person. Note; (1.) It is a bitter grief to a disciple, to hear of the scandals brought upon Jesus by the professors of religion. (2.) Those are happy, who are favoured with his especial regard, and lays in the foundation of his love.

Judas immediately sets himself to accomplish his hellish purpose. After the sop, Satan entered into him, possessed his mind and soul, and drove him to the precipice of destruction. Then said Jesus, That thou dost, do quickly, fulfilling his design, and engaging him to do his worst, or abandoning him to his own devices. None at the table having heard what he said to John, they suspected Christ had given Judas some secret provision against the feast, or to disengage him from the relief to the poor, he being the purse-bearer. Judas, by the power of the wicked one, he went immediately, and was fixed in his base and wicked purpose; and it was the fittest time for such deeds of darkness; and, therefore, when it was reasonable the hour, he bent upon his treacherous chery, that nothing could delay him. Note; (1.) Judas abandons the sinner to Satan's power, he goes on to ruin. (2.) They who withdraw from the communion of the faithful, begin to shew the apostacy of their hearts.

When Judas was gone out, Jesus addressed himself to the faithful apostles, and informs them that the hour of his glorification was at hand. Jesus said, now is the Son of man

glorified: he is ready by his sufferings to obtain the glorious victory over all his own and his faithful people's foes, sin, Satan, death, and hell: and God is glorified in him; all his divine perfections being most eminently displayed in the obedience to death of the Redeemer. If God be glorified in him, his justice, truth, wisdom, mercy, exalted to the highest by his cross; God shall also glorify him in himself, or with himself; bringing him to the mediatorial throne in heaven; and shall straightway glorify him, in the amazing signs and wonders which should accompany the death of Jesus, and especially by his speedy resurrection.

2. He intimates to them, that the time of his stay with them would be very short. Little children, so tenderly and affectionately doth the Lord Jesus regard his dear believing people, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; longing for my bodily presence with you: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you; you must be content for a while under the irksome separation, till the hour of your glory shall also arrive, and ye shall then come to be with me where I am.

3. He charges them to cultivate mutual love. A new commandment I give unto you; not indeed now first enjoined, since it was the old commandment which had been from the beginning; but through the degeneracy of the times it had generally ceased to be practised, but was now more clearly explained, and enforced by new motives; a commandment the most excellent, and the fundamental law of that kingdom which he came to establish; that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another; ready to every act of kindness, and to part with every thing, if need be, even life itself, for the good of your brethren: and this was to be the characteristic mark of their discipleship; for by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another; they shall take knowledge of you, that you have been with me, and learned of me. Note; The distinguishing badge of true Christianity is this spirit of fervent love. Love is the image of Jesus: he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in him. This will make us meek and lowly towards our brethren; ready to pass by their provocations; to forgive their offences; to pity their infirmities; to bear their differences in opinion; to delight in their prosperity; to promote their good, spiritual and temporal; and ever to maintain towards them the kindest sentiments, and be constant in the warmest applications to the throne of grace on their behalf. A spirit of selfishness, narrowness, bitterness, dispute, animosity, is a reproach to the profession of Christianity; and proves, that those who are actuated by it, deceive their own selves, when they call themselves the followers of Jesus.

4. We have a conference between Christ and St. Peter, on what our Lord had said, ver. 33. [1.] Peter, dissatisfied perhaps with what Christ had spoken,

known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

8 ¶ Philip saith unto him, Lord, ° shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

• By some visible representation. Mat. 11. 27. Ch. 1. 18. Exod. 33. 20.

spoken, is solicitous to know where he was going, and therefore earnestly inquires. Probably he thought he was about to quit Judea, and, according to their prejudiced opinions of the Messiah, to erect his kingdom in some other part of the world.

[2.] *Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now: Christ had work yet for Peter to do upon earth, before he should gain the glorious crown of martyrdom: but thou shalt follow me afterwards, partaking both of my sufferings and glory.*

[3.] Peter, with too much self-confidence, unwilling that his Master should doubt his courage or determined purpose to cleave to him wherever he went, replied, *Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? what dangers or difficulties can deter me? I will lay down my life for thy sake, and will die sooner than desert thee.*

[4.] Christ warns him of the weakness of his resolution, and how unable he would find himself for the least part of what he promised. *Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? how little dost thou know of thy own weakness! Verily, verily, I say unto thee, take notice of it as a most certain truth, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice; before another sun shall rise, and the time of cock-crowing is over, thou shalt not only deny me as thy Master, but disown the very knowledge of my person. Note; We know not our weakness till the temptation comes; and every boast of self-confidence is a certain prelude to a fall.*

#### CHAP. XIV.

*Ver. 1. Let not your heart be troubled:]* Jesus not only forewarned his disciples of the great trial that was coming upon them, and commanded them to arm themselves against it, (see Luke, xxii. 35—38.) but he spoke a long discourse, wherein he animated them to sustain that trial manfully, and comforted them under the dismal apprehensions which it might raise in them. They were to see Him crucified whom they had acknowledged as the Messiah; wherefore having been always accustomed to consider temporal dominion as the characteristic of their deliverer, and great worldly prosperity as the privilege of his subjects; the death of their Master, and the persecutions befalling themselves, could not fail to give a violent shock to their faith. But, that the force of these blows might be weakened, our Lord foretold his own sufferings, and thereby made it evident, that he voluntarily submitted to them. Withal, to reconcile their minds to the thoughts of his sufferings, he distinctly explained the end of them in this discourse. *Let not your heart be troubled, &c.* “Be not discomposed with the thoughts of those temptations which are to come upon you. *As you believe in God,* in a general point of view, as the almighty preserver and governor of the world, who is able to deliver you out of all your distresses; believe also in me; who am not only sent by God, and appointed governor and judge of the world, but am myself God over all, blessed for ever; and

“therefore can both protect you from evil, and reward you plentifully, for whatever losses you may sustain on my account.” The Greek of the last clause may be rendered, *Believe in God, and believe also in me;* and it appears most natural to render the word *πιστεύετε*, alike in both places; and it is certain that an exhortation to faith upon God in Christ, would be very seasonable, considering how weak and defective their faith was. See ver. 9.

*Ver. 2. In my Father's house, &c.]* Our Lord here has been thought by some to allude to the various apartments in the temple, and the vast numbers of people lodged there. Perhaps the allusion may be more general to the palaces of kings, and the various apartments there. The word *μοῦσας* signifies *quiet and continued abodes*, and therefore seems happily expressed by our English word *mansions*, the etymology and import of which is just the same. Our Saviour here intends the encouragement and comfort of his disciples, by assuring them, that in the place where he was going before them, there was ample room to receive them, and every thing to accommodate them in the most delightful manner. When the glory of heaven is spoken of as *prepared before the foundation of the world*, (Matth. xxv. 34.) this only refers to the divine purposes; but as that was founded in Christ's mediatorial undertaking, (Ephes. i. 4—6.) it might properly be said, that when Christ went into heaven, as our high-priest, to present, as it were, his own blood before the Father on our account, and as our fore-runner to take possession of it, he did thereby *prepare a place for us:* which the apostle to the Hebrews, ix. 23, 24. expresses by his purifying or consecrating the *heavenly places*, in which the faithful are to dwell; as the tabernacle of Moses, when new made, on which account an *atonement for the altar itself*, which was considered as *most holy*, was the first act performed in it when it was opened. (Exod. xxix. 36, 37.) It may not be improper to observe, that the word *τοπος* is often translated *room*, as in Luke, ii. 7. xiv. 10, 22. 1 Cor. xiv. 16. And thus the signification here may be, that Christ went to heaven to *make room for them*, or to remove those things out of the way which obstructed their entrance. This may at least be included; though the word *ετοιμασας* may express still more. It is the same term which is used of John the Baptist, the fore-runner of our Lord. See Matth. iii. 3, &c.

*Ver. 3. I will come again, and receive you]* The idea of a fore-runner is preserved, who, after he had prepared the entertainment of a guest, used to return, in order to introduce him into the house where the preparations were made for him. This *coming* ultimately refers to Christ's solemn appearance at the last day, to receive all his servants to glory; yet it is a beautiful circumstance, that the death of every particular believer, considering the omnipotence and providence of Christ, may be regarded as Christ's coming to fetch him home. See the note on Luke, 37—40.

*Ver. 5. Lord, we know not whither thou goest]* “The

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but

the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake.

12 ¶ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these

Ch. 10. 30. & 12. 45. & 17. 21-23. Ver. 20. Heb. 1. 3. Col. 1. 15. 2 Cor. 4. 6. Phil. 2. 6. Ver. 9, 11. Ch. 10. 30, 38. & 17. 21  
Ver. 20. 1 John, 5. 7. Ch. 3. 2, 32, 34. & 5. 36. & 7. 16. & 10. 38. & 12. 49. & 17. 8. & 6. 8, 14. Luke, 24. 19. Ch. 5.  
7. Act, 10. 38. Heb. 2. 4. Ch. 5. 36. & 10. 25, 32, 38. & 17. 21, 22. & 15. 24. Mat. 11. 5. Mark, 16. 17, 18. Luke, 10. 17.  
Ch. 2. 4. & 5. 16. & 8. 7. & 10. 46. & 16. 18. & 19. 6, 12. 1 Cor. 12. 10, 28. Mat. 21. 21. Acts, 5. 15. & 19. 12. & 2. 41. & 4. 4. &  
14. & 6. 7. Rom. 15. 19.

know not where thy Father's house stands, and consequently cannot know the way to it." It is probable that Thomas might think that Christ intended to remove some splendid palace on earth, to set up his court there a while, before he received his people to the celestial city: for it is certain that his thoughts, as well as those of the rest of the disciples, principally turned upon a temporal kingdom.

Ver. 6. I am the way, and the truth, and the life:] Our Lord, most probably, had here in view the metaphors which were formerly used, I am the door of the sheep, Ch. x. 7. I am the bread of life, Ch. vi. 35. And therefore, it might well have been expected, that, having so lately delivered the same sentiments, the disciples would have understood him in the same manner. Some have supposed the form of expression before to be a Hebraism, whose meaning is, I am the true and the way; as Dan. iii. 7. all the people, the nations, and the languages, signifies, people of all nations and languages. But whatev'er manner we resolve the sentence, its meaning is the same; namely, "faith in me, and obedience to my commandments, will lead you to my Father's house, where I am going. They are the only true road to the mansions of felicity." See Ch. i. 4, 14, 17. v. 33.

If ye had known me, ye should have known, &c.] If ye had an adequate idea of my character, from the miracles that I have performed, and from the marks of goodness, justice, and wisdom, which manifest themselves in my words and doctrines, you could not have been ignorant of my Father, because his attributes are the same; and he is in his nature invisible, by seeing me, and the manifestation of the divine perfections in me, you have seen the light of him as possible here below."

Lord, shew us the Father,] Philip, hearing our Lord's words, says to him with a pious ardour becoming a disciple, "Lord, do but shew us the Father, and bring us to the sight and enjoyment of him, and it is happiness for us. We desire no more, and resign every thing, in comparison of this." This seems a very natural consequence of this passage. One cannot apprehend that any other of the Apostles, thought the Father should be shewed in any other form. If Philip desired any thing more, he asserted in the paraphrase above given, it was only to see, like Moses, the inaccessible God dwells, the acknowledged symbol of his presence in heaven.

Ver. 10, 11. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, &c.] It is remarkable, that Philo, speaking of the Logos, has this expression—that "He is the Father's house, in which he dwells;" which is not only very similar to the passage before us, but to the Apostle's words, Col. ii. 9. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily. Markland would read the latter part of the 10th verse thus: I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me speaketh: He doth the works: for the doctrine and the miracles, says this learned critic, are two different articles. The words rendered or else, εἰ δὲ μὴ, in ver. 11. would be more properly rendered but if not. Dr. Heylin upon this verse beautifully observes, that the whole Trinity acts in each individual Christian in such measure as he is susceptible of its operations. Thus Christ in the Father, and the Father in him, are the internal ground of faith; the works of Christ are external; both are valued, but the former preferable.

Ver. 12. He that believeth on me, &c.] It is evident in fact, that though this promise be expressed in indefinite language, it must be limited in some such manner as follows: "He that believes in me, that is, many of my disciples in these early ages, and each of you in particular, shall receive such an abundant communication of the Spirit, that the miraculous works which I perform, he shall perform also; yea, works, in some respects, greater than these shall he perform, because I go to my Father, who has thought fit to reserve the most stupendous gifts of the Spirit to honour the entrance of my glorified humanity into the heaven of heavens." How fully Jesus performed this promise, is plain from the history of the Acts throughout, particularly ch. v. 15, 16. where we find that the very shadow of Peter passing by, cured the sick on whom it fell; and who were laid in the streets for that purpose: as also, Ch. xix. 12. which informs us, that handkerchiefs and aprons, which had touched the body of Paul, being applied to the sick and possessed, banished both the diseases and the devils. Nor should we, on this occasion, forget the gift of languages bestowed on the apostles, and which they were enabled to communicate to others. Yet, if these miracles are not thought to shew greater power than Christ exhibited, we may refer the greatness whereof he speaks, to the effects which they were to produce on the minds of men, through divine grace accompanying them. For, in that respect the miracles of the apostles were vastly superior to those of Christ, converting throughly

grace

shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

13 <sup>y</sup> And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

15 <sup>¶</sup> <sup>z</sup> If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 <sup>a</sup> And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 <sup>b</sup> *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he <sup>d</sup> dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

18 <sup>c</sup> I will not leave you <sup>\*</sup> comfortless: I will come to you.

19 <sup>f</sup> Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: <sup>e</sup> because I live, ye shall live also.

20 At that day ye shall know <sup>b</sup> that I am in my Father, and <sup>l</sup> ye in me, and I in you.

<sup>y</sup> Mat. 7. 7. & 21. 22. If. 45. 11. Mark, 11. 24. Ch. 15. 7. & 16. 23, 24. 1 John, 3. 22. & 5. 14. James, 1. 5. & 5. 16. Eph. 3. 21. 1 Pet. 4. 11. Col. 3. 17. Luke, 2. 14. <sup>z</sup> Ver. 21, 23. Ch. 15. 10, 14. 1 John, 2. 3, 5. & 3. 24. & 5. 2, 3. <sup>a</sup> Ver. 26. Ch. 15. 21. & 16. 7, 13. Rom. 8. 34, 26, 27. Mat. 23. 20. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 15. 26. & 16. 13. 1 John, 2. 27. & 4. 6. <sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. 2. 14. Rom. 8. 7. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 14. 14. Rom. 8. 9, 14—16, 26. 1 Cor. 3. 16. Gal. 4. 6. & 5. 18, 25. 2 Tim. 1. 14. Ezek. 36. 27. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 18. 20. & 28. 20. Heb. 13. 5. <sup>f</sup> Ch. 11. 25. 1 Cor. 15. 41, 10, 14. & 43. 1, 2. & 46. 4. Ver. 3. 28. <sup>\*</sup> Or orphans. <sup>g</sup> Ch. 7. 34. & 8. 21. & 13. 33. & 16. 16. <sup>h</sup> Ch. 11. 25. 1 Cor. 15. 13, 20. <sup>i</sup> Ver. 9, 10. Ch. 17. 3, 21—23. <sup>j</sup> Rom. 8. 1. 1 Cor. 1. 30. & 6. 17. 2 Cor. 5. 17, 21. Gal. 2. 20. Eph. 2. 10. & 5. 30. 17. 21, 23.

grace more people in one day, than was done by all the miracles that Jesus performed during the course of his ministry. Under the divine blessing they converted thousands at once, made the gospel to fly like lightning through the world, and beat down every thing that stood in opposition to the faith of their Master.

Ver. 13. *And whatsoever ye shall ask, &c.*] “And whatsoever ye shall ask on the ground of my warrant and promise, with humble dependance on my wisdom and power, faithfulness and grace, and on my merit and advocacy, that ye may honour me; I will certainly perform it in answer to your prayers, that the Father himself may thereby manifest his glorious perfections, in my gracious and almighty operations, and through my obedience to the death of the cross, who am his own Son.”

Ver. 15. *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*] The term of *loving God*, is frequently taken from that expression of love which consists in doing such things as are esteemed grateful or beneficial to the object beloved: but as our endeavours cannot advance either the benefit or happiness of God, and our doing things that are grateful to him consists in performing what he commands; therefore our obedience to the will and commands of God, is frequently styled *loving him*; because the best, if not, the only way of demonstrating our love to God is, to endeavour to please him; and we cannot please him, but by obeying him. Hence the *love of God* is used, in some places, as synonymous to *keeping his commandments*, as will appear from comparing Exod. xx. 6. Deut. v. 10. Our blessed Lord, therefore, perceiving that his disciples' hearts were melted with the prediction of his departure, nobly comforts them, by telling them, that their obedience would be a far more grateful sign of their affection to him, than any sorrow which they could shew.

Ver. 16, 17. *He shall give you another Comforter,*] Or, *another advocate*. The word *παράκλητος*, signifies an *advocate* or a *monitor*, as well as a *comforter*; and it is evident that the blessed Spirit maintained each of these characters; yet as the discourse before us is of the consolatory kind,

the term *comforter* seems to have been made use of with great propriety by our translators. Our Lord promises his apostles, that this *Comforter* shall abide with them, not for a little time, as he had done in his human nature, but for ever; and he calls him *The Spirit of truth*, to which the world is ever averse; and, blinded with sensuality, will neither discern his operations, nor partake of his joys. “*But ye know him*, because he is with you, in some measure sure, already; and he shall be given you much more abundantly hereafter;” alluding particularly to the day of Pentecost; from which time forth the Spirit descended upon them by a much ampler communication of his gifts and graces.

Ver. 18. *I will not leave you comfortless.*] *Ὁρφανὸν*, orphans. He had called them his *dear children*,—*τέκνα*,—ver. 33. at the last chapter. “Encourage yourselves therefore with the pleasing expectation of the promised Comforter, who will be as a Father to you, and fully supply my place; and I myself will be with you in my Godhead, to strengthen and console you, and visit you with the most valuable tokens of my constant care.”

Ver. 19. *Yet a little while,*] A little while indeed, for he was crucified the next day: and he more particularly declares, that he would not appear to the Jewish nation in general after his resurrection, but only to his disciples. He adds, “*Because I live*, by rising from the dead, *ye shall also*,—by rising from the dead; and also now by me, of those divine influences which you shall derive from me, to cherish the workings of grace in your hearts, and to train you up to a growing meetness for that with me in eternal life. Comp. 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11.”

Ver. 20. *At that day ye shall know, &c.*] The words *ordered and I* have a peculiar elegance, which cannot be easily understood without adding the words *in the translation*; accordingly the verse would run thus: *At that day ye shall know, that as I am in the Father, and you in me, also I am in you.* The verse consists of two parts, as to effects of Christ's resurrection. *First*, they shall know that *Christ is in his Father*, that he has eternally dwelt in the Father—that he is one with him by the consubstantiality.

21 <sup>k</sup> He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

22 Judas <sup>m</sup> saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him.

24 <sup>p</sup> He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: <sup>q</sup> and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

25 <sup>r</sup> These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

26 <sup>s</sup> But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and <sup>t</sup> bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

27 ¶ <sup>x</sup> Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give

See ver. 15, 23, 24. & 15. 14. 1 John, 2. 5. & 5. 3. Luke, 6. 16. Acts, 1. 13. Jude, 1. Luke, 1. 34. Ch. 3. 4, 9. & 6. 52, 60. & 7. 16. 1 Cor. 4. 7. Ch. 16. 18. See ver. 21. Rev. 3. Heb. 13. 5. Pl. 91. 1. & 121. 3-8. 1 John, 4. 16. Rev. 3. 12. 21. & 7. 15, 16, & 21. 3, 11. 1 John, 2. 24. See ver. 15, 21, 23. 5. 19, 26, 38. & 3. 32, 34. & 7. 28. & 8. 26, 28, 38, 42. & 12. 44, 50. 1 Ch. 16. 1, 16, 28. Ver. 16, 17. Ch. 15. 26. & 16. 7. 21. 49. Acts, 1. 5. Rom. 8. 26. Joel, 2. 28. Ch. 16. 13, 14. 1 John, 2. 20, 27. Jer. 31. 34. Ch. 2. 22. & 12. 16. Rom. 10. 2 Cor. 5. 20, 21. Eph. 2. 14, 16, 17. Col. 1. 20. & 3. 15. Phil. 4. 7. Ch. 16. 33. 1 Th. 2. 18, 19. If. 54. 7-10. 1 Pet. 3. 14.

of essence and councils. Secondly, they shall know Christ continues in them, communicates his power to and has not forsaken them, as by his death they suspect: they would be convinced to the contrary resurrection, by his abiding and conversing with or forty days after, by his going to heaven to pre- place for them, by his sending his Spirit to them, his in-dwelling presence, to administer every degree fort, light, and power, which would be requisite er their afflictions supportable, their own souls holy py, and their ministry successful. After his re- on and mission of the Holy Spirit, the disciples o longer doubt that Christ came from the Father, ult eternally with him; and of course they must fessed the clearest conviction of that most perfect se which eternally and constantly subsisted be- m and his Father: and when they saw the success ministry, the Spirit himself bearing them witness and wonders, and enabling them to undertake as, the glorious task, by the gift of tongues, they uestion their apostolic-call, nor could they doubt hrist was present to them in his divinity, and g with them by his Spirit and power. Thus perimentally taught to understand somewhat on which is between the Father and the Son, between Him and the church, or society of lievers.

23. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot,] It is hat Judas Iscariot was so finished a hypocrite, find him saying one word of Christ's tem- m, though probably the hope of preferment was the chief consideration which engaged our Lord. The person here spoken of, was of Alpheus, the brother of James the Less, ation of our Lord himself. See on Matth. fo nearly related to Jesus, he might think arly concerned to inquire into the meaning n which seemed inconsistent with the pro- oral kingdom, in which perhaps he might ex-

pect some eminent office; and as, according to the notions which they had conceived of the Messiah, he was to appear to all the Jews, nay, to the whole world, and was to take unto himself universal empire; our Saviour's last words, ver. 21. surpris'd and perplexed them not a little. Our Lord, therefore, in reply to Judas, told him, that he spake chiefly of a spiritual manifestation, such as the Father and he make of themselves to true believers, even on earth, by a revelation of themselves, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit who dwells in the believer's heart as his temple, 1 Cor. iii. 16. for through the influences of the Spirit of God, believers are enlightened with a knowledge of the perfections of God, and with just views of the character and office of his Son. Moreover, by the same influences, they are sanctified for an habitation of God, Ephes. ii. 22. who makes his abode with them, and fills them with all peace and joy in believing, and with the most elevating hopes; and also sheds abroad in their hearts a sense of his love and, by so doing, gives them prelibations of heaven while on earth. The latter clause of this verse is remarkable; for had our Lord been a creature, though of the highest rank, it would have been blasphemy in him to have joined himself in this manner with God: *My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

Ver. 25, 26. These things have I spoken] "I have spoken these things during my personal presence, because my time with you is short; and though you may not just now understand many of the particulars mentioned by me, you shall have perfect knowledge of them afterwards; for my Father will give you the Holy Spirit to supply the place of my bodily presence; and he shall be a *παραδιδόντες*, a monitor or instructor, to you, (see ver. 16.) teaching you doctrinally and experimentally every article of the Christian faith, and bringing to your remembrance all the things that I have ever said to you in the course of my ministry."

Ver. 27. Peace I leave with you:] "Peace be to you" was the common salutation and compliment mutually given by the Jews to each other at meeting and parting. But al- though



I unto you. Let <sup>y</sup> not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, <sup>z</sup> I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, <sup>a</sup> ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father : for my Father is <sup>b</sup> greater than I.

29 <sup>c</sup> And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye

might believe.

30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you : for <sup>d</sup> the prince of this world cometh, and <sup>e</sup> hath nothing in me.

31 <sup>f</sup> But that the world may know that I love the Father ; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

<sup>y</sup> See ver. 1. Rev. 1. 17, 18. If. 35. 3, 4. & 51. 12. & 41. 10. <sup>z</sup> See ver. 3. Acts, 1. 11. <sup>a</sup> Pf. 47. 5, 6. Ch. 16. 7. <sup>b</sup> Ver. 12. 12. Ch. 10. 29. 1 Cor. 11. 3. If. 49. 1—6. & 42. 1—6. Jer. 31. 22. Gal. 4. 4. with Ch. 5. 18. & 10. 30. Phil. 2. 6. 1 John, 5. 7. If. 56. <sup>c</sup> Ch. 13. 19. & 16. 4, 30, 31. & 10. 38. & 11. 15, 42. <sup>d</sup> Eph. 2. 2. & 6. 12. Luke 4. 6. 2 Cor. 4. 3. Ch. 12. 31. & 16. 11. Luke, 11. 11. <sup>e</sup> Heb. 7. 26. Luke, 1. 35. 2 Cor. 5. 21. 1 Pet. 1. 19. & 2. 22. 1 John, 3. 5, 8. <sup>f</sup> Heb. 5. 7, 8. Phil. 2. 8. Ch. 10. 18. & 18. 11. Pf. 8. Mat. 26. 39, 42.

though this compliment implied a wish of every thing that could make one happy, it was often used without any meaning. At best, it was but a wish, however sincere, and had no real efficacy in making him to whom it was given happy. But in the mouth of Jesus, by whose wisdom and power the affairs of the world are governed, a farewell wish was a matter of a very different kind: *His peace*, his parting blessing could draw down all manner of felicity upon those who were the objects of it. Accordingly, he encouraged his disciples from that consideration, under the prospect of his departure; desiring them not to be in the least anxious about what was to befall them after he was gone. See the note on Matth. x. 13.

Ver. 28. *For my Father is greater than I.*] That is, “than I am, considered in my mediatorial capacity.” These words afforded a strong argument for the proper Divinity of our Lord; for had he been a mere man, or even a creature of the highest order, the comparison would have been foolish and impertinent.

Ver. 29. *I have told you before it come to pass,*] “I have foretold my removal hence, my return to the Father, and the descent of the Spirit, in order that when these things happen, your faith, instead of being shaken, may be confirmed.” It is very judiciously observed by Dr. Jenkins, in his excellent Defence of Christianity, that “when miraculous events are also the accomplishment of prophecies, the degree of evidence arising from them is the greatest that can possibly be conceived.”

Ver. 30, 31. *Hereafter I will not talk much with you.*] “I shall not have much opportunity to talk with you after this; because the devil is now exciting his emissaries to take away my life; in which he will succeed. However, be assured, that I shall undergo the punishment of death; not because I deserve it, for *he hath nothing in me*;—no guilt of mine to give him power over me, nor any inward corruption to take part with his temptation: but I undergo this death, for this grand reason among others—to shew the world, how much I love the Father, ver. 31. for in this I act according to his express commandment. *Arise, therefore; let us go hence.* Let us, in conformity to the divine will, go away to the place where I shall be betrayed, that I may enter on my business.” Accordingly, he finished the passover with sing-

ing a hymn, and went out to the mount of Olives. See Matth. xxvii. 30. As our Lord foreknew of course the danger to which he exposed himself by this motion, nothing can give a greater illustration of the voluntary manner in which he encountered death, than the integrity and magnanimity of these few words, *Arise: Let us go hence.* The present passage appears rather more clear in Dr. Heylin’s translation: *For the prince of the world is coming; not that he has any claim in me: ver. 31. But only that the world may know, &c.*

*Inferences.*—How noble a cordial has our Lord provided to relieve all the troubles of our hearts! the strength of which shall continue to the remotest ages; even faith in his Father, and in him. May that divine and operative principle be confirmed by what we have been now reading!

It is striking to observe, with what a holy familiarity our Lord speaks of the regions of glory—not like one dazzled and overwhelmed with the brightness of the idea; but as accustomed and familiarized to it by his high birth. *In my Father’s house are many mansions: delightful, and reviving thought!*—and many inhabitants in them, who, we hope, through grace, will be our companions there, and every one of them increase and multiply the joy.

It was not for the apostles alone, that Christ went to prepare a place: he is entered into heaven as the forerunner of all the faithful; and we, if we are believers indeed, may be said by virtue of our union with him, to sit together in heavenly places in him. It is our duty and our happiness continually to be tending thither in more affectionate desires, and more ardent pursuits. We know the way to hear the truth; may we also feel the *life* by Christ, and the true living way, may we come to the Father: in Christ may we see him, and have our eyes and hearts opened to those beams of the divine glory, which are reflected from the face of his only-begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth.

Has he been thus discovered to us as our Father and our God?—If he have, let it diffuse a sacred and lasting pleasure over our souls, though other desirable objects may be veiled or removed; and engage us to maintain a constant fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

CHAP. XV.

the consolation and mutual love between Christ and his members, under the parable of the vine. A comfort in the hatred and persecution of the world. The office of the Holy Ghost, and of the apostles.

[Anno Domini 33.]

AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

4. 2. & 11. 1. Jer. 23. 5. Zech. 3. 8. & 6. 12. with ch. 1. 9. & 6. 32, 35. b If. 5. 1. Mat. 20. 1. & 21. 33. 1 Cor. 3. 9. If. 60. 21. 15. 13. Luke, 13. 7. & 3. 9. Matt. 13. 41, 42. Ver. 6. Heb. 6. 8. d If. 27. 9. Eph. 5. 26, 9. Gal. 5. 22, 23. 2 Pet. 1. 5-9. e Ch. & 17. 17. 1 Pet. 1. 22. Eph. 5. 26. f Gal. 2. 20. Col. 2. 6, 7. & 1. 23. 1 John, 2. 6. If. 45. 24, 25. g Ch. 6. 68. & 1. 14, 16. Acts, 4. 12. Phil. 4. 13.

are invited to this by every declaration of his ready-hear and answer our prayers; and although those powers are ceased, whereby the apostles were to equal, or even to exceed, the works of their yet as we have so many important errands to the grace, in which the glory of God and the salvation of our souls are concerned, let us come with a holy to it; in dependance on Jesus, that great High-er the house of God, who is passed into the highest and, amidst all the grandeur of that exalted state, s humble followers on earth, and ever appears character of their advocate and friend.

are not entirely strangers to the divine life, we only read such discourses as these before us, with- some warm emotions of love to Christ: and if feel them, we shall seriously consider how they xpressed. Our Lord directs us to do it in the nd most acceptable manner, by a constant care ommandments: and certainly such command- cannot be grievous to a soul that truly loves ore we live in the practice of them, the more ay we expect the abundant communication of animate and strengthen us.

Christians indeed, we cannot in any cir- life look on ourselves as helpless and aban-

Human friends may forsake us, but Christ s: he will manifest himself to the eye gh to the eye of sense he is invisible: and ather will love us, and watch over us for he will come and dwell in the obedient acious tokens of his intimate and inse- e. Do we any of us experience this have surely reason to say that by way of ch the apostles said by way of emi- how, and whence is it that thou wilt to us, and not to the world? What have eferve these gracious and distinguishing Nay, how much have we done to for-

utterable joy should we review that rich g Lord, Peace I leave with you; my peace ord, evermore give us this peace; peace with our own consciences, peace with es: for if thou wilt give quietness, who How serenely then may we pass through scenes of life, when all is quiet and

2 ° Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and ° every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 ° Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 ° Abide in me, and I in you. ° As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it

harmonious within! Thou hast made peace through the blood of thy cross; may we preserve the precious purchase, an inestimable gift, inviolate till it issue in everlasting peace! In this let our hearts be encouraged; in this let them rejoice; and not in our own happiness alone, but also in that of our glorified and exalted Redeemer. As the members of his body we ought certainly to maintain a pleasing sympathy with our Head, and to triumph in his honour and felicity as our own. If we love Christ, we should rejoice, because he is gone to the Father. The same consideration may in its degree comfort us, when our pious friends are removed. If we love them with a rational and generous friendship, and are not too much influenced by selfish affections, under that specious name, our joy for their exaltation will greatly temper the sorrow which our own loss must give us.

Our Lord uttered the words ver. 30. in the near view of a grievous assault from the prince of this world, who is the prince of darkness. But there was no corruption in him to take part with the enemy. Too much alas! does he find in us to abet his temptations. Let us earnestly pray, that the grace of God may be sufficient for us; and that as his love to the Father engaged him to go through this painful conflict with the tempter, his love to us may make us partakers of his victory, even here below. In his name let us set up our banners, and the powers of hell shall flee before us.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, To comfort his disciples against the approaching trials, which would be apt to shake the foundation of all their hopes,

1. Our Lord exhorts them to maintain unshaken confidence in him amidst all their difficulties. Let not your heart be troubled: the thought that one disciple should betray him; another deny him; that he should suffer, die, and leave them; these things deeply affected them: and he, who knows the souls of his people in adversity, endeavours to provide for their comfort. Ye believe in God, in some good measure, according to the revelation that he had made of himself in his word: believe also in me, as the true Messiah, as the almighty Saviour, able to support you in all your exigencies, and to comfort you under every affliction. Or, it may be read, Believe in God; live in the constant exercise of faith in the power and grace of my Father: and believe also in me; have the same confidence in me, who am one with him in the same undivided Godhead.

abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same

<sup>a</sup> Hofes, 14. 8. Phil. 1. 11. Ch. 1. 14, 16. Gal. 5. 22—24. 2 Pet. 1. 2—8. & 3. 13. Col. 2. 9—12, 19. 2 Cor. 3. 5.

2. He assures them that his absence would be to their great advantage. *In my Father's house*, in heaven, the place where the Father makes the brightest manifestations of his glory, there are many mansions, abiding dwelling-places, where there is most perfect peace and joy, and love and happiness. *If it were not so, I would have told you*, and not encouraged you to follow me at the loss of all things, if I had not an eternal recompence to bestow upon you. *I go to prepare a place for you*, as your forerunner, to take possession of the purchased inheritance, to be ready there to receive and welcome you, having previously prepared you for the mansions prepared for you. *And if I go and prepare a place for you, though I leave you soon, I will come again, and that quickly, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also*; admitted to my presence, partaking of my glory, and made for ever blessed and happy in the enjoyment of my love and favour. *Note*; (1.) The believing prospect of the glory which shall be revealed, should comfort us under all our present trials and afflictions. (2.) In heaven there are mansions for all the faithful of every age and nation: *none shall thrust his mate; for there is room enough for all*. (3.) None who steadily trust in Jesus, whatever they may quit or lose for his sake, shall ever have cause to lament their choice: in heaven they will be abundantly repaid. (4.) They who perseveringly look for a better country, that is, a heavenly, shall by blessed experience shortly prove the faithfulness of him who hath promised to bring thither all his faithful people; who also will do it: and well may we comfort one another with these words.

2dly, Having set before them the happiness provided for them, Christ farther encourages them, saying, *Whither I go, ye know*; I have repeatedly told you; and the way ye know, which I have taught you by my word and my example.

1. Thomas replied to this, *Lord, We know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?* Though in general they had some knowledge of the way to heaven, where Christ was going; yet Thomas, mistaking our Lord's discourse, and having his head filled with the conceits of Christ's temporal kingdom, like the rest, supposes that he was going somewhere to erect his throne upon earth, but where was a secret to him; and he wished to know, as Peter had done, that, though with less self-confidence, he might follow his Master.

2. Jesus answers, *I am the way*; through his blood alone there is access to God, and, by his grace alone, can we be enabled to walk in the path which leads to eternal glory: the truth; whom all the ritual services prefigured, in whom they were fulfilled, whose promises are faithful, and who has never failed those that trust him: *and the life*; who has life in himself, and is the author of spiritual and eternal life to his faithful saints: *no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*; in our present fallen state we can neither draw near to the throne of grace with acceptance, but by Jesus Christ as our advocate and surety; nor can we ever hope to appear

before the throne of glory but through the infinite merits and prevalent intercession of the same all-sufficient Saviour. *If ye had known me, in my true character as God, as well as man, ye should have known my Father also*; forasmuch as we are in nature and essence one: *and from henceforth, as by this intimation you may perceive my meaning, ye bear him, and have seen him, in me*. *Note*; (1.) The knowledge of the Godhead of the Redeemer is an essential and fundamental article of our faith. (2.) Christ can discover in his disciples more knowledge of his blessed self than they formerly think themselves possessed of.

3. Philip, not yet entering fully into his Master's meaning, *said unto him, Lord, shew us the Father*, some divine representation of him, and it sufficeth us; this will fully satisfy us, and silence all our further inquiries.

4. Jesus gently rebukes the dulness of his comprehension, and *said unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip?* my divine original, as well as mission? *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father*; the divine perfections which I have displayed, prove my essential Godhead, as partaker of the same nature, attributes, and glory with him: *and how sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* though in person distinct, yet in essence one, inseparably united in the same eternal Godhead? *The words that I speak unto you, deep and mysterious as some of the doctrines are which I declare, I speak not of myself, by any authority purely my own, or as apart from the Father; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works which confirm my divine mission, and set God's seal to the truths which I deliver. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, upon the credit of the testimony which I bear; or else if you think that insufficient, believe me for the very works' sake, which are such convincing proofs of the truths which I preach, and done in such a godlike manner, as shews my Godhead and glory.* *Note*; (1.) They who have been long in Christ's school, should make their profiting appear. They are justly culpable who, blessed with the richest means, do not grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2.) In Christ Jesus we behold a brighter display of God's glory and presence than ever otherwise appeared, seeing in him the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

3dly, The thoughts of the loss of their Master's presence and company dejected his poor disciples. To comfort them, therefore, he promises,

1. To endue them with the most astonishing miraculous powers. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in me, as you do, the works that I do, shall he do also; the lesser miracles ye have seen me perform: yea, and greater works than these, shall he do; more numerous and more wonderful (see Acts, v. 15. xix. 12.) And particularly this may refer to the gift of tongues, and the vastly superior success which should attend the preaching of the apostles, and the more numerous converts that they should make, than any*

bringeth forth much fruit: for \* without me ye can do nothing.

6<sup>1</sup> If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men

\* Or severed from me. <sup>1</sup> Pf. 1. 4. & 21. 9, 10. Mat. 3. 10. & 7. 19. 2 Tim. 3. 13. Jude, 12. Mat. 25. 26, 41. & 13. 41. Heb. 6. 4-8. & 10. 25-31. 2 Pet. 2. 20-22. Rev. 22. 15. & 21. 8.

father had done; and this because I go unto my Father, when, having received all power in heaven and earth, he would, in the most abundant manner, pour out his Spirit upon them from on high, to enable them for the great work whereunto he had ordained them.

2. To grant them all their petitions. *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, pleading my promises, and depending on my intercession; that will I do, by my own divine power, giving you an answer to every prayer according to the various necessities of your souls; that the Father may be glorified in the Son; and his glory should be the end of all our petitions; and, in glorifying them, Christ designs to advance the Father's honour, and manifest his power, grace, and fulness. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it, and grant you every needful supply of grace and strength for support and success in the work of the gospel.*

hly, Our Lord proceeds to encourage and comfort them in the view of the service before them, and in the prospect of his departure from them.

They must give a proof of their love to him by their obedience to his commandments. *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* He speaks not as doubting the truth of their regard, but as quickening them to give increasing evidence of the sincerity of their love, by a conscientious obedience to all his precepts.

He promises to send them another Comforter, who will abundantly supply the loss of his bodily presence. *Pray the Father, and he will send you another Comforter, and he will dwell with you, and will abide with you, and will carry you through all your trials, and death itself, to the eternal inheritance in glory; even the Spirit of truth, whom the Father sends, of the true God, whose inspiration has dictated the oracles, and who leads the minds of benighted men to the knowledge of all truth; whom the world cannot receive, because they hate him, because they do not believe in him, because they do not love him; are wilful strangers to his operations; and therefore count his coming to be foolishness and enthusiasm. But ye know that he has already illuminated your hearts, and sanctified your souls: for he dwelleth with you, and he will be in you, as his living temples, guiding, governing, comforting, and blessing you continually.*

In the one Godhead there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, each possessed of the same divine attributes. (2.) All Christ's true disciples, who are looking to him, will be strengthened, quickened, and comforted in his ways. (3.) Every faithful soul is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and by experience feels the inward presence of his grace.

Christ pursues the same reviving subject. He is absent from them for a while, but his absence will be long.

1. *I will not leave you comfortless, as orphans: I will come to you; either at his resurrection, or by the mission of his Spirit, or by his final appearing to judgment. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; they who rejected him, would no more be favoured with a sight of him after his resurrection, till he should come to judgment; but ye shall see me; I will appear to you; you shall see me now by faith, and shortly shall eternally enjoy the full vision of me in glory. Because I live, ye shall live also; I, as the fountain-head of spiritual life, will communicate the living influences to you my faithful members; and, vitally and perseveringly united to me, you shall live in holy conformity to me here, and in the eternal enjoyment of me hereafter. At that day, of Christ's resurrection as a triumphant conqueror over all his foes; or when, by the effusion of the Holy Ghost, their minds should be more deeply illuminated; and most especially when they should come to meet him in the kingdom of his glory; ye shall know that I am in my Father, one in essential union; and ye in me, and I in you, as living members of my body mystical, joined to me in one spirit. And, in consequence of this, he that hath kept my commandments, and keepeth them, who truly understands, and in simplicity obeys them; he it is that loveth me; he gives hereby an undoubted proof of his unfeigned affection to me: and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father for my sake, who am his Well-beloved and Only-begotten; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him, making the richest discoveries of my grace to his soul. Note: (1.) Every faithful soul is a partaker of a divine nature, and lives in a state of close spiritual union with the Son of God. (2.) Christ gives increasing discoveries of his truth and love to the souls of his faithful people. (3.) The proof of our love to Jesus must appear in our fidelity and obedience. If we say we abide in him, and walk in darkness, we lie. (4.) Though our love to him is not the cause of his love to us, but the effect; yet, if we, through grace, perseveringly cleave to him in faith and love, and more and more manifest the fruits thereof, we shall find brighter manifestations made to our souls of our interest in him; shall experience sweeter foretastes of the eternal bliss which is promised to the faithful; and shall receive increasing supplies of his Spirit, to perfect in us what is yet lacking, and to prepare us for our eternal abode with him.*

2. One of Christ's disciples, not fully apprehending his meaning, desired him to explain it; *Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, but Jude the brother of James the Less, Lord, How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? What is the wondrous method by which thou wilt honour us with thy presence, when thou comest in thy kingdom, and yet not be manifest to the world at large? See the Annotations.*

3. Christ graciously confirms and explains what he had spoken, *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and make the most delightful discoveries to him of his grace and favour; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him;*

gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. In you, <sup>k</sup> ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide 8 <sup>l</sup> Herein is my Father glorified, that ye

<sup>k</sup> Ch. 14. 13, 14. & 16. 23, 24. Ver. 16. 1 John, 3. 22. & 5. 14. James, 5. 16. 1f. 58. 9. & 65. 24. Job, 22. 27. 1 Pt. 92. 13-15. Mc. 5. 16. Eph. 1. 12. Phil. 1. 11. 1 Pet. 2. 12. & 4. 11. 1 Cor. 6. 20.

*bim*; taking up our dwelling in the temple of his heart, manifesting our gracious presence to him, and maintaining the most blessed and abiding communion with him. On the other hand, *He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings*; and thereby proves his aversion to me, shuts the door of his heart against me, and wilfully rejects my gospel, with all its inestimable blessings. *And the word which ye hear, is not mine, but the Father's which sent me*; therefore they who disrelish and reject it, must be necessarily excluded from his favour as well as mine.

6thly, For the further encouragement of his disciples, he proceeds,

1. To assure them of the teachings and consolations of the Holy Ghost. *These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you*; the time being short, I have endeavoured to lay them clearly before you: *but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, the third person in the sacred Trinity, whom the Father will send in my name, at my intercession, to supply my absence, and to advance my kingdom and glory; he shall teach you all things, opening your understandings to clearer discoveries of the truth, enlarging your capacities, and strengthening your memories; for he shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you*; he would not only revive the memory of all the works and discourses of Christ, which they had forgotten, but give them a distinct knowledge of what, at the time Christ spoke, they did not understand.

2. He engages to give them peace under all their troubles. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you*, as my last bequest; *peace with God, as reconciled to you; peace in your own consciences, from the confidence of his love; peace with each other, united in bonds of firmest union; my peace, which none but I your Master could procure or bestow, the purchase of my blood, the fruit of my intercession; I give it freely, fully to you, and all who follow you as my disciples. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you; not as a piece of compliment, but as a real blessing; not as worldly gifts, of little or no price, but as a gift infinitely more valuable than all that earth can bestow. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid, under the apprehension of any sufferings or trials when I am absent from you: my peace, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds.*

3. He assures them that his departure would be for his own glory and their good, and therefore they ought rather to rejoice than be sorry for it. *Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away and come again unto you, to take you to the mansions prepared for you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father, and receive the mediatorial throne; for my Father is greater than I, not in his divine nature, but as in the economy of man's salvation the Son of God humbled himself to take the human nature, and submitted to the form of a servant: and therefore, though equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead, yet*

he was inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood; however, it became them to be joyful in his exaltation, as the man Christ Jesus. *And now I have told you before it cometh to pass, that when it is come to pass, in my death, resurrection, ascension, and the effusion of the Holy Ghost, ye may believe that I am the true Messiah, and will assuredly fulfil all the promises which I have made unto you.*

4. He tells them, that the great enemy of souls would now be finally vanquished. *Hereafter I will not talk much with you; the time of my departure is at hand: for the prince of this world, he who has usurped the dominion over the hearts of fallen men, and once pretended to offer me the kingdoms of the world (Luke, iv. 5-7.), he cometh, with all his fury and rage, to make his last, his desperate attack; and hath nothing in me; all his attempts will be baffled, and his malice recoil upon his own head with greater aggravation of his guilt; and, to his utter confusion and destruction, he will find no guilt in me to accuse my conscience, no legal power over me in consequence of sin, no corruption to work upon, or to afford an opening for his temptation: and as Christ once conquered for his faithful people in his own person, so will he conquer in them, and bruise Satan shortly under their feet.*

5. He informs them, that his departure from them was according to the Father's commandment, and a matter of his most willing obedience. *But, that the world may know that I love the Father, though Satan hath no power over me, I am ready to lay down my life, according to my Father's will: and as the Father gave me commandment, even as I do; readily offering myself to suffer according to his most gracious will. Arise, let us go hence, and meet the approaching danger. Note; When duty calls, and God so ordains, instead of flying from sufferings, we must cheerfully offer ourselves up, willing to glorify God, if he so please, even in the fire.*

#### CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1. *I am the true vine,*] Our Lord, having gone with his disciples to the mount of Olives, (see the last note of the former chapter,) spent the remaining hours of his ministry in preaching to his disciples a long and excellent sermon, recorded in this and the following chapter. He began with the parable of the vine, taken from the trees that were growing around them on the mount of Olives. In this parable he taught them the excellency of his religion, and the nature of the relation which they stood in to him by their profession, and genuine experience thereof. Moreover, he explained to them the advantages which accrued to them from this relation. As the branches of the vine draw nourishment, and are made fruitful by their union to the stock, and by the care of the dresser; so the disciples of Christ, by the cordial belief of his religion, by the divine influences of the Spirit, and by the care of Providence, are made fruitful in holiness.

bear much fruit; <sup>m</sup> so shall ye be my disciples.

9 <sup>n</sup> As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: <sup>o</sup> continue ye in my love.

10 <sup>p</sup> If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

<sup>m</sup> Ch. 8. 31. & 13. 35. Mat. 5. 44, 45. Luke, 6. 35. <sup>n</sup> Mat. 3. 17. & 12. 18. Col. 1. 13. Gal. 2. 20. Rev. 1. 5. <sup>o</sup> 1 John, 4. 16. Gal. 2. 20. Jude, 21. <sup>p</sup> Ver. 14. Ch. 14. 15, 21, 23. 1 John, 2. 5. 1f. 42. 1. Ch. 10. 17.

Ver. 2. Every branch in me, &c.] " Though by the outward profession of my religion you become members of the visible church of God, you must never forget, that this, of itself, is not sufficient to constitute you true members of the spiritual church of God, of the mystical body of Christ: you must be accepted through the Beloved; and you must answer the end of your high dispensation, by bringing forth the fruit of holiness; otherwise my Father will cut you off, depriving you of all the advantages which true disciples reap from the sincere profession, experience, and practice of the Christian religion." Our Lord told them further, that, as the husbandman prunes the bearing branches of his vines; so God, among other methods, suffers the lovers of Christ and holiness, to be spoiled of the conveniences of this life, or to be tried in some other way, for no other reason but that their graces may grow the stronger, and become the more fruitful. Every branch that beareth fruit, he pruneth it, so the word should be rendered,) cuts off from it every thing superfluous, that it may bring forth more fruit. " In the course of his providence, my Father sends a variety of afflictions upon every one who sincerely makes profession of my religion, experiences its power, and diligently endeavours to obey its precepts; spoiling him of those temporal possessions or enjoyments which engage his affections, and render him unfruitful." This passage suggests a very sublime and important thought; namely, that one of the noblest rewards which God can bestow on former acts of obedience, is to make the soul yet more holy, and fit for further and more eminent service; though should be by such painful afflictions as resemble the pruning of a vine. Jesus said these things to reconcile his disciples to the persecutions which were coming on them, and doubtless he had also in his view the other methods which God makes use of, for purifying his people; for, in the following verse, he represents his disciples, as cleansed or pruned, through the word that he had spoken unto them.

Ver. 3. Now ye are clean, &c.] " The doctrine that I have preached to you, by the power of divine grace, has inspired you with holy desires; has invigorated you with good resolutions; and, in a measure, has cleansed you from evil affections; so that, like the pruned branches of the vine, you are fitted to bring forth fruit."

Ver. 4. 5. Abide in me, and I in you.] " Continue steadfast in your love and attachment to me, live in constant communion with me, let your hearts be stayed upon me with habitual and full confidence and faith, and I will abide in you; for this is the method to derive from me all needful supplies, particularly the influences of my Spirit, ch. xiv. 26. the comfort of my presence, xiv. 23. the protection of my providence, xiv. 27. and the direction of my word, xv. 7." As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, &c. no more can ye, &c. " Your continuing in this union with me, this faith and confidence upon

me, this exercise of my divine presence, this habitual communion with me, is as necessary to the production of all the internal and external works of righteousness, as the continuing of the branches in the vine is to their fruitfulness. To make you sensible of this was what I proposed, when I told you that I am the true vine, and you the branches, ver. 5. I must therefore repeat it again, that union and communion with me, sincerity in the belief, steadfastness in the profession, and diligence in the practice of my religion, accompanied as they always are with my blessing and assistance, and the inspiration of my Spirit, are the only means of making a man fruitful in holiness. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me, — χωρις εμου, — separate from me, — (in allusion to the vine and its branches) — you can do nothing. If you apostatize from me, and are deprived of my influences, you can do nothing for your own sanctification and salvation."

Ver. 6. If a man abide not in me,] " To shew you further the necessity of abiding steadfastly in this union and communion with me, and, of course, in the experience of the power of my religion, producing the fruits of holiness internal and external, I would propose to your consideration the dreadful effects and punishment of apostacy. By apostacy you separate yourselves from me, and deprive yourselves of the advantages which flow from the influences of my Spirit, the direction of my word, the protection of my Providence, the pardon of your sins, and the enjoyment of heaven. Nor is this all: you shall be punished as apostates; for you shall be cast out of the presence of God, and gathered into hell, where you shall be burned as withered branches, as perfumes fit only for the flames." The loppings of the vines, in those countries where they are cultivated, are carefully gathered, and make a considerable part of their fuel. See Ezek. xv. 2, 4.

Ver. 7. If ye abide in me, &c.] " If, on the contrary, you steadfastly cleave to me, and I dwell in your hearts by faith, and by means of my word, as a principle that guides and governs, quickens and establishes you; whatsoever you ask, as thus abiding in me, and depending on me, shall ask according to my will, for the glory of God, and your own edification and fruitfulness, you shall receive it, even to the utmost of your desires and wants."

Ver. 8. Herein is my Father glorified,] " By your thus abiding in me, and my abiding in you, and by your petitions being thus granted, the glory of my heavenly Father's wisdom, faithfulness, and grace, is exalted (i.e.,) to the end that you may abound in fruits of righteousness, whereby he may be still further glorified; and so shall you appear with evidence to others, and to your own consciences, and I will esteem and own you to be my true disciples, that have vital union with me, and are an honour

11 \* These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

12 ¶ This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 \* Yea are my friends, if ye do whatso-

ever I command you.

15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends;—for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

16 \* Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and I ordained you, that ye should

<sup>1</sup> See ch. 14. 29. & 16. 24. & 17. 24, 13. 1 John, 1. 4. <sup>2</sup> Ch. 13. 34, 35. Eph. 5. 2. 1 Thess. 4. 9. 1 Pet. 1. 22. & 4. 8. 1 John, 1. 14, 15. & 4. 21. <sup>3</sup> Rom. 5. 6—8. John, 3. 16. Eph. 5. 2. Gal. 2. 20. Ch. 10. 20, 11, 15. 1 John, 4. 10. <sup>4</sup> Ver. 10. Ch. 14. 15, 23. 1 Cor. 20. 7. James, 2. 23. 1f. 4. 8. Mat. 12. 50. <sup>5</sup> Gen. 18. 17. Pf. 25. 14. Ch. 17. 8. 26. Eph. 1. 9. & 3. 5. Col. 1. 26. 2 Tim. 4. 11—17. Mat. 13. 11. <sup>6</sup> 1 John, 4. 10. Ch. 6. 70. & 13. 18, 19. <sup>7</sup> Mat. 28. 19, 20. Mark, 16. 15. Ch. 4. 36. & 20. 21—23. Acts, 18. 25. & 17. 46, 47. Eph. 3. 5—8. Gal. 1. 16. Col. 1. 6, 23, 26. Acts, ii—six.

“honour to me, (ἐμὸν.)” The word *herein*, ἐν τούτοις, seems to refer back to what Christ had been saying concerning himself as the vine, and believers as branches in him: and *wa. that*, being a final particle, naturally leads our thoughts to the sense which I have given in the beginning of this note: but, as all our fruits of righteousness are, by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God, I have likewise preserved the thought of God’s being glorified by them.

*Ver. 9. Continue ye in my love.]* Or, “Keep your place in my affection: continue to deserve my love.” So again in the next verse, *As long as ye keep my commandments, ye shall continue in my love*; that is “I shall continue to love you.”

*Ver. 11. These things have I spoken]* “I have spoken these things, hoping they will influence you to keep my commandments, whereby you will continue the objects of my love; and, in the consciousness thereof, will be filled with the same kind of joy which I feel from obeying my Father’s commandments, and from the consciousness of his love. I have spoken these things likewise, that your eternal joy may be full in heaven, where you shall shine as stars, because you have turned many to righteousness.” Many translate the passage thus: *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy in you may remain*, &c. “I have spoken these things, that, by your diligence in obeying them, I shall always have cause to rejoice, on account of your behaving as my apostles and disciples ought to behave; and you cause to rejoice in my friendship, in the honour I have conferred upon you, and in the eternal possession of heaven.”

*Ver. 12. This is my commandment,]* “As I told you before, ch. xiii. 34.—the chief of all the commandments which I enjoin you, whether as apostles or private Christians, is, that ye love one another.—I do not mean after the hypocritical manner of the world, who often love in word, and in tongue, while nothing is more remote from their heart;—but in the sincere, tender, constant, manner of my love to you.” Our Lord was thus earnest in pressing them to mutual love, not only because the great design of his gospel is to promote mutual love, but because this grace, exercised by the apostles among themselves, and towards all mankind, was one great means of making their preaching successful; just as the immense love of Christ to men will always have a great influence in drawing them to him. “They who are sensible of the

great importance of this precept (says Dr. Heylin) will not think the repetition of it here tautology.”

*Ver. 13, 14. Greater love hath no man than this,]* “My love to you is stronger than death; for I will lay down my life for you: a greater degree of love than this never existed in the world; this is the love that I bear towards you, and which I recommend as the pattern of your love to one another. *Ye are my friends*, ver. 14. for whom I will lay down my life, if ye do what I have commanded you.” Jesus had commanded them, ver. 12. to love one another, as he loved them: in ver. 13. he informs them, that he loved them so, as to lay down his life for them: wherefore, in this 14th verse, he tells them, he would reckon them his friends, if they laid down their lives, or were ready to lay down their lives, for one another. The plain proposition of this precept might have terrified the apostles; but to insinuate it in the beautiful manner that our Lord has done, was altogether necessary for the direction of those who, by preaching the gospel, were to put their lives in jeopardy every hour; and who, at last, were to lose their lives in that cause, for the benefit of the world. A commentator on the 14th verse observes, “Mark the condition upon which you are my friends:—if you do what I command you. This is a thunderbolt for Antinomianism.”

*Ver. 15. Henceforth I call you not servants;]* “Though the distance that is between you and me, and your obligations to obey me, might have warranted me to treat you as servants, and particularly to conceal from you my counsels and designs, I have not acted in this manner towards you; but I have treated you as friends who are to be treated. I have admitted you into all the familiarities of friendship; for I have communicated to you, as far as was convenient, and as much as in your present circumstances you could bear, the most important of those gracious counsels, which my Father has imparted unto me his eternal Son and most intimate counsellor. Now I have commissioned you to reveal them to the world, and have made you not only my friends, but my assistants in the great work of saving the world. From this consideration therefore, as well as out of gratitude to me, you ought to lay down your lives in the cause.” See the next note.

*Ver. 16. Ye have not chosen me,]* “You have not, as principals in this affair, adopted me as your associate.”

go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

18 ¶ If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the

world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord: If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

22 If I had not come and spoken unto

Ch. 14. 13, 14. If. 45. 11. Mat. 7. 7, 11. 2 Cor. 3. 5. Mat. 21. 23. See ver. 7. Eph. 5. 7, 11. 1 John, 4. 5. & 2. 16. Ch. 17. 14, 16. Rom. 12. 2. 1 Pet. 4. 4. James, 4. 4. 1 John, 4. 4. Pf. xxii. lxix. If. liii. Luke, 6. 10. & 2. 18. & 5. 16, 18. & 6. 66. & 7. 52. & 8. 40, 59. & 9. 22. & 10. 31, 39. & 11. 46-57. Acts, 16. 17. Mat. 10. 24, 25. 1 Thess. 2. 14, 15. If. 53. 1-3. Ezek. 3. 7. If. 65. 4. Mat. 5. 11. & 10. 22. & 24. 9. Ch. 16. 3. & 8. 19. 1 Cor. 2. 8. 1 Tim. 1. 13. Mat. 7. 28. Ch. 3. 2. & 7. 46. & 9. 39, 41. Ver. 24. Acts, 17. 30. James, 4. 17. Ezek. 2. 5. Luke, 12. 47, 48. Heb. 6. 4-8. & 10. 26-31. Rom. 1. 20-32.

but I, the great author of the gospel, have adopted you as my associates, to share with me in the honour and happiness of giving a new dispensation of grace to the world. For I have ordained you my apostles, that you should go out into the world, fraught with the doctrines of salvation; by the preaching of which you shall produce a general reformation and renovation, both in the opinions, hearts, and manners of the heathens, greatly to the glory of God, inasmuch as the Christian religion, thus planted by you, shall remain to all ages. Further, I have clothed you with the dignity of my apostles, that whatsoever miracle you shall ask of my Father, or whatsoever petition you shall put up in my name, for the confirmation of your doctrine, or for the success of it, the consideration of your character, and the end for which you ask it, may induce him to grant it." See on ver. 7. What our Lord says, that He ordained them, that they should go and bring forth fruit, was a security to them, that they should be preserved from immediate danger, and that their life should be guarded by his providence, till very important services had been accomplished by their means. When he adds, that your fruit should remain, he may allude, agreeably to the preceding parable, to the custom of keeping rich and generous wines a great many years; so that, in some cases, (which was especially applicable to the sweetest and most precious wines,) they might prove a cordial to those, who were unborn when the grapes were produced. In this view, there is a beautiful propriety in the representation, which we hope will be particularly felt by those who are truly zealous for the salvation of immortal souls, when these revolving chapters are read.

Ver. 17, 18. These things I command you,] Ἐντέλλομαι ὑμῖν, ἵσχυροῦς ἐπιτολῆς. I calculate upon you. "I have explained to you the high nature and vast importance of your office, as my apostles; and I have put you in mind of my loving you so as to die for you, that I may inspire you with ardent love to one another; and you will much need the help of this principle in the execution of your office. It will animate you to be diligent; it will inspire you with fortitude; it will enable you to lay down your life in the cause; for that you will meet with opposition and persecution while you preach the gospel, is certain:

but this cannot surprize you, when you consider how I and your Master have been hated and persecuted by the Jews." Dr. Lardner would render the original of the last clause, ver. 18. it hated me your chief,—ἐμὲ πρῶτον ὑμῶν,—which certainly makes the expression more lively, and exactly parallel to Matth. x. 24, 25. Thus the expression, ὧν πρῶτος εἰμι ἐγώ, is well translated, of whom I am chief, 1 Tim. i. 15.

Ver. 19. If ye were of the world, &c.] "If your dispositions and actions were like those of the bulk of mankind; if you flattered men in their vices, and framed your doctrines into a consistency with their passions and interests, no doubt you would meet with general approbation, and be much caressed: but because your dispositions and actions are very different from those of the world, and because I have separated you from secular affairs, and commissioned you to oppose all false religions, to reprove men's vices, and to press the necessity of a general reformation and renovation of heart, therefore the bulk of mankind every where will hate and persecute you." This verse seems a strong intimation that, even in nations which profess Christianity, if true religion fall, as it possibly may, to a very low ebb, they who exert themselves remarkably for the revival of it, must, on the very principle here laid down, expect hatred and opposition; and that the passages in scripture relating to persecution are not so peculiar to the first ages, and to Christians living in idolatrous countries, as some have supposed. It would be happy if the narrow-minded malignity to be found in some professing Christians against their brethren, did not too plainly illustrate this remark. Men will probably experience the truth of it, in proportion to the degeneracy of those around them, and to the vigour and resolution with which they bear their testimony against prevailing errors and vices.

Ver. 20. If they have kept my saying,] "Had they received the truth in the love of it from me, no doubt but they would do the same from you."

Ver. 21. But all these things will they do, &c.] "None of the evils which you shall suffer on my account, or the gospel's, will flow from any deficiency in the evidences of my divine mission, or from any fault that can be justly



them, they had not had sin: but now they have no \* cloke for their sin.

23 <sup>i</sup> He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

24 <sup>k</sup> If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: <sup>l</sup> but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

25 But *this cometh to pass*, <sup>m</sup> that the word

might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

26 ¶ <sup>n</sup> But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

27 <sup>o</sup> And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

\* Or excuse. <sup>i</sup> Ch. 5. 38. & 8. 19. 47. & 12. 49. & 14. 9—11. <sup>1</sup> John, 2. 22. <sup>2</sup> John, 9. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 11. 5. Luke, 24. 10. Mark, 1. 1. Acts, 2. 22. & 10. 38. Heb. 2. 4. <sup>l</sup> Ch. v—xii. Mat. iv. viii—xxii. Luke, iv—xx. Ch. 3. 2. & 9. 12. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 5. 18. Ch. 19. 22, 23, 24. Pf. 35. 19. & 69. 4. <sup>n</sup> Luke, 24. 49. Ch. 14. 26, 17. & 16. 7, 13, 14. Acts, 2. 33. Rom. 8. 9. Gal. 4. 6. <sup>o</sup> John, 2. 20, 27. & 5. 5, 8. 1. 8, 21, 22. & 2. 32. & 3. 15. & 5. 32. & 4. 20, 33. & 10. 39, 41. & 13. 31. <sup>1</sup> Pet. 5. 1. <sup>2</sup> Pet. 1. 16. <sup>1</sup> John, 1. 1—3. Luke, 1. 2, 3. Mark, 1. 1.

“justly be found with the gospel. They will all flow from your persecutors being wilfully ignorant of the nature and perfections of my heavenly Father who has sent me into the world, of my eternal union with him, and of the doctrines published to them under former dispensations.”

Ver. 22. *If I had not come and spoken, &c.*] “The ignorance of the Jews in particular will not however excuse them, (see the last note,) since they have had more than sufficient means of information. If I had not appeared in person among them, agreeably to their own prophecies, and proved my divine mission by arguments which put it beyond all reasonable doubt, they would not have been so much to blame for rejecting the gospel: *they had not had sin*; that is, their sin would have been comparatively much less than it now is: (see ch. ix. ver. 41.) But now that all the things foretold by Moses and the prophets are fulfilled in me; now that my gospel is every way worthy of God, and that my mission from my Father is sufficiently proved by my miracles, *they have no plea* whatever, [*αποφασιν*], to palliate or excuse their unbelief.”

Ver. 23. *He that hateth me, &c.*] How much is it to be wished, that those who make light of Christ, while they pretend a great veneration for the Father, would seriously attend to this weighty admonition, *lest haply they be found even to fight against God!* Acts, v. 39.

Ver. 24. *If I had not done among them*] “If I had not done among them such extraordinary works as no other person ever did,—not even their prophets, or Moses himself,—they had not had any degree of sin, comparable to that which they now lie under: but now, as they have rejected my superior miracles, which they have seen with their own eyes, at the same time that they acknowledge the evidence of those which Moses wrought, of which they have heard only by distant report, they manifest such an obdurate perverseness of temper, that I may truly say, *they have both seen and hated both me and my Father*; and my Father himself will justly resent and punish it as an indignity which shews their enmity to him.” The words of the blind man, ch. ix. 32. are a fine comment on the first part of this verse: *Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.*

Ver. 25. *That the word might be fulfilled*] “Be not surprised that I, who am the Messiah, have been rejected of the Jews: it has happened according to the predic-

tion of their own prophets, and particularly that of David, Pf. xxxv. 19.” See also Isai. liii. 3—9. Dan. ix. 26. and Zech. xii. 10.

Ver. 26. *But when the Comforter is come,*] “For your encouragement, however, I assure you, that all of them will not continue thus obstinately bent against me and my religion. When he who is to comfort you under all your troubles by his divine inspiration and the aid he will afford you, and who, on that account, is justly styled *the Comforter*; when this divine Person is come, *whom I will send unto you* from the Father, to remain always with you, he shall bear witness to me and to my religion so effectually, that many of the Jews will be converted.” Our Lord says of this *Spirit of truth*, that *he proceedeth,—εκπορευειται,—from the Father*: which denotes *the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit*; whereby the manner of his subsistence is defined, as that of the Son is by the word *generation*, as far perhaps as it can be to us in this mortal state. The Spirit’s coming, and being sent by our Lord, from the Father, to testify of him, are *personal* characters, and plainly distinguish him from the Father and Son: and his title, as the Spirit of truth, together with his proceeding from the Father, can apply to none but a *divine* person: for this title is too high for a creature; and I cannot see any sufficient reason why his proceeding from the Father is mentioned in the present tense, in the middle of a sentence, where Christ’s sending him, and his testifying of Christ, are spoken of as *future*; unless it be to intimate his necessary, unbeginning, and never-ending procession from the Father, in such a sublime manner as is beyond the reach of all our ideas, but is some way answerable to what is called eternal generation with respect to Christ, in correspondence to his character as the Son: and yet that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father, may be fairly, clearly, and fully argued from his being called the *Spirit of Christ*, and the *Spirit of the Son*, as well as of the Father, (1 Pet. i. 11. Gal. iv. 6.) and from his being here said to be sent by Christ from the Father, as well as sent by the Father in his name, ch. xiv. 26. And this, at the same time, shews the equality of the Father and Son, inasmuch as they have equal power of sending the Holy Spirit to bear witness of him, and to have the glory that belongs to him, in the work of salvation: so that the Sacred Three are here represented both in their personal characters, and in their divine and economical glories.

Ver. 27. *And ye also shall bear witness,*] “In proceeding

CHAP. XVI.

Christ comforteth his disciples against tribulation, by the promise of the Holy Ghost, and by his resurrection and ascension; assureth them that their prayers made in his name will be acceptable to his Father. Peace in Christ, and in the world affliction.

[Anno Domini 33.]

THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I

Ch. 14. 25. & 15. 11. Mat. 5. 11. 12. & 11. 6. & 24. 6, 10. & 26. 31. Ver. 4, 6. Ch. 9. 22, 34. & 12. 42. Luke, 6. 22. If. 65. Acts, 26. 9. & 23. 14. & 9. 1. Gal. 1. 13. Mat. 24. 9. Ch. 15. 21. Phil. 3. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 13, 14. Acts, iv—xxvi. 1 Cor. 4. 9—13. 2 Cor. 8—12. & 11. 23. See Ch. 15. 21. & 8. 19. 1 Cor. 2. 8. Acts, 3. 17. Rom. 10. 2. Mat. 24. 9. Mat. 24. 25. & 10. 17. Ch. 13. 19. & 14. 29. If. 46. 10.

time men's eyes shall be opened, to discern the authority of your testimony. They shall give credit to your reports concerning me, because you have been my companions from the very first, consequently eye and ear-witnesses of all that I have done and said; so that after a while, you shall bear witness concerning me, and preach my divine religion far more successfully, than it would be in your power to do at present." See John, 1, &c.

Inferences.—From this discourse every sincere reader may learn to regard Christ at all times as the spiritual Head, from whom life and vigour are to be derived to all believers. By the exercise of an unfeigned faith it behoves all such to abide in him, as the true vine, always sensible that without him we can do nothing; that all things are possible to him who believeth; but that, if we are in him by an external profession only, we are not only in danger of being cut off and taken away, but shall, in the end, be cast to the fire.

May we rather be thoroughly purged and pruned, though were with the most painful dispensations of providence, by this means our fruitfulness may be promoted, to the glory of God, and the benefit of the world! May his word operate upon us, to cleanse us from our remaining pollutions!—And, if we thus desire to be clean, let us take heed to our way, according to the tenor of this parable.

We seek our encouragement to pray; it is Christ who offers it; and, taking it at his hand, we need never be dismayed, nor yield to unbelieving suspicions. As the Father loveth Christ, so doth he also love his faithful people. Let us care then to preserve and cultivate this sacred affection; and, whatever it may cost us, to endeavour for continuance in his love, and to avoid whatever would forfeit the invaluable blessing; making it, above all things, our care to keep his commandments.

Christ, always observing the will of his heavenly Father, cannot but always and invariably continue the object of his love and delight. May our conduct be the transcript of his glorious pattern; such as that he may see reason to rejoice in us, and then we also shall have the surest foundation for a sublime and solid joy!

The Son of God condescends to speak under the character of a friend! O with what humble gratitude should a sinful man attend to his gracious words! Behold, he lays

aside the majesty of a sovereign, to assume this more tender and endearing relation: surely then our overflowing hearts must inquire, "Blessed Jesus, what shall we do, to express the friendship incumbent on our side?"—Let us but observe what he has here declared, and trust his fidelity for its acceptance; Ye are my friends indeed, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Lord, we will gladly run the way of thy commandments, when, on this noblest principle, thou shalt have enlarged our hearts.

Jesus, the friend of sinners, hath loved us with an affection so unexampled, as hath approved itself stronger than death; and, in return, he requires us to love one another after the pattern of his blessed example. How gracious a command! how divine a stipulation! how merciful, not to our fellow-creatures only, but to ourselves also; who surely must feel the benefit of such a practice, in the delight inseparable both from the interchange of benevolent affections, and the circulation of kind and friendly offices.

Who would not imagine that the whole admiring world must feel and obey the charm, thus mercifully applied by the Son of God? Yet, instead of this, behold they even hate Christ, and persecute his servants for his sake, though without a cause, and against the strongest engagements to mutual charity and tenderness.—Miserable creatures! who, by a necessary consequence, whatever they may fondly imagine, hate, by so doing, the Father also, and stand continually exposed to all the terrors of an almighty Enemy!

Where is the wonder if the world hate us, or what believer need regard its harshest injuries? If we are of that blessed company who are not of the world, let us remember that neither is the servant greater than his Lord. But surely the opposition which the gospel brings with it is nothing, when compared with those blessings which it entails by an everlasting covenant upon all who faithfully and perseveringly embrace it. Were the sufferings and difficulties attending it, a thousand times greater than they are, we ought at any rate to esteem the pearl of great price as the most happy purchase of the soul; and daily to be returning our most thankful acknowledgments that Christ was pleased to send forth his apostles, qualified with such a knowledge of himself, assisted by such power from his Holy Spirit, and appointed to go, and to bring forth such fruit, as should remain to the remotest ages.

Through his guardian care it still remains, and we trust shall for ever remain abundantly in the world! Oh may it flourish

said not unto you at the beginning, ' because I was with you.

sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

5 ¶ <sup>5</sup> But now I go my way to him that

6 But because I have said these things unto

<sup>5</sup> Mat. 9. 15. Mark, 2. 19. Luke, 5. 34.

<sup>6</sup> Ch. 7. 33. & 8. 14, 21. & 14. 3, 28. Ver. 10, 16, 28. Ch. 17. 4, 5. Heb. 1. 3. Pl. 110. 1.

flourish more and more amongst us! may its efficacy in our hearts and lives be more universally apparent! and may divine grace convince those who now reject and oppose the kingdom of Christ within them, that amid such various evidences of his *having come, and done, and spoken unto them, as none other man ever did*,—they have *no cloak for their sin*: for alas! with whatever fond excuses such may venture to amuse themselves and others, it will but too quickly appear, as the prophet emphatically expresses it, that *the bed is too short to stretch themselves upon, and the covering too narrow to wrap themselves in it*. See ver. 22. and Isaiah, xxviii. 20.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have a continuation of Christ's farewell discourse to his disconsolate disciples.

1. He represents himself under the figure of a vine. *I am the true vine; as a vine*, mean and weak in his outward appearance, yet spreading on every side; sending his salvation to the ends of the earth, and bringing forth the most reviving fruits, pleasing to God, and cheering to man: *the true vine*, the life-giving source of spiritual influences, conveyed from him to all the branches of his body mystical: *and my Father is the husbandman*, who planted it in the earth, and with watchfulness and care every moment preserves and waters it; supporting Christ in the exercise of his divine offices, with complacence delighting in him, and guarding him and every faithful member of his church, who are grafted upon him, and persevere in their union to him, from every evil.

2. His people are the branches, on whom the great husbandman employs his care. *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away*. Some bear not the true fruits of grace and holiness; these the Lord taketh away. In time of persecution they fall off; or they turn aside into errors in principle, or immoralities in conduct; or, if they be spared to the last, by death they are cut off, and perish. *And every branch in me that beareth fruit*, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God; *he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit*: by his word, his Spirit, his afflictive providences, he purifies, sanctifies, and guards the soul, removing out of the heart all the obstructions which might prevent a constant intercourse and communion between the believer and himself; and bearing away or removing those external objects, which he foresees would alienate the soul from God: and he also encourages, cultivates, and increases the gracious dispositions which he hath implanted, that they may shoot forth more vigorously, and bring forth more abundantly in all good conversation and godliness.

3. As he had now purged out Judas from among them, he exhorts them to approve their fidelity. *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you*, your hearts being purified by faith, which is the way whereby the word becomes effectual to all Christ's faithful disciples

in every age, purging out the dross of in-dwelling evil, and sanctifying the soul. *Abide in me*, as the root and stock whence all spiritual supplies of grace are drawn; placing all your dependance on my infinite merit and intercession, my Spirit and power; and I will then abide in you, as the living principle of all goodness. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine*, and maintain a constant communication with the root, *no more can ye, except ye abide in me*. The best of men must maintain habitual communion with Jesus, if they would continue to bring forth fruit unto God. *I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me*, in the constant exercise of faith, *and I in him*, by the powerful operations of my Spirit, *shall bringeth forth much fruit: for without me*, separate from me, and for a moment destitute of my quickening influence, *ye can do nothing truly good and acceptable to God*, but must wither, droop, and die, as a branch deprived of communication with the living root. Without Christ we can do nothing towards our justification, sanctification, or glorification; he must be to us *all and in all*.

4. He warns them of the fatal consequences of departure from him. *If a man abide not in me*; basely desert my cause, and make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience; *he is cast forth as a branch*; excommunicated from the company of the pious here below, if his iniquities be brought to light; or, at farthest, cut off at death from the society of the blessed, *and is withered*; his gifts wither; his zeal grows cold; his devotion dies; his reputation decays; his hopes perish; *and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned*; and thus shall the angels of God at the last gather out of Christ's kingdom all that offend and do iniquity, when apostates will have their portion with the unbelievers and impenitent, and the whole be cast together into everlasting burnings. Let us tremble and tremble.

5. He assures them that the prayers of all his faithful people should be heard and answered. *If ye abide in me*, steadily cleaving to me under all discouragements; *and my words abide in you*, and habitually influence your conduct; *ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you*, whatever is for his glory and our good shall be granted. *And herein is my Father glorified, by your abiding in me*, and asking and receiving out of my fulness; *that ye may bring forth much fruit of grace, which will redound to his praise*. *And ye shall be my disciples, evidently prove to be such*, by your good conversation and approved fidelity; and shall be acknowledged by me in the day of my appearing and glory.

2dly, We have,  
1. The love of Christ towards his faithful people: *the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you*; and this is the love of his appeared most eminent:

[1.] In his laying down his life for them. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends: but greater even than this has God*

you, <sup>h</sup> sorrow hath filled your heart.

7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; <sup>i</sup> It is expedient for you that I go away: <sup>k</sup> for if I

go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will \* reprove

<sup>h</sup> Ch. 14. 1, 27, 28. Ver. 20, 22. <sup>i</sup> Ch. 11. 50. Rom. 8. 28. <sup>2</sup> Cor. 4. 17. Eccl. 3. 1. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 7. 39. & 14. 16, 26. & 15. 26. Luke, 24. 49. Acts, 1. 4, 5, 8. & 2. 4, 33. Eph. 4. 8-13. Pf. 68. 18. \* Or convince.

the love of Jesus: when we were enemies, Christ died for us.

[2.] In his kindness towards them, admitting them into his favour and friendship. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*, and herein shew yourselves faithful to me. *Henceforth I call you not servants*; though to be employed by such a Master, and that he condescends to accept our services, is abundant honour; *for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth*, nor is admitted to any such intimacy and familiarity as you have been indulged with: *but I have called you by the honourable name of friends*, and have treated you with the most cordial affection and confidence; *for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you*; all things that as Mediator he came to preach and teach, respecting the salvation of sinners, and the counsels of grace; he had kept back nothing from them, and his Spirit would shortly give them a clearer knowledge of what he had revealed to them.

[3.] In his ordaining them to the high dignity of apostleship. *Ye have not chosen me*, and by your choice laid any obligations on me to return the kindness: *but I have chosen you first*, from the rest of the Jews, to bear witness of me, ver. 27. and to be my apostles: *and ordained you*, that is to say, *appointed you*, to your apostleship, *that ye should go abroad into the world, and bring forth much fruit*, in the purity of your conversation, and the abundant success of your ministry; *and that your fruit should remain in a succession of genuine Christians*; so that the blessed effects of your labours, preaching, and writings, should continue to the latest ages.

[4.] In his granting them all their petitions. *That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you*; and the assurance of being heard is the great inducement and encouragement to us to pray. How can we but be happy to draw near to God, when we are thus assured of receiving an answer of peace?

2. He exhorts them, from the consideration of his love to them, to make a due and grateful return to him, by loving and serving him and one another. *Continue ye in my love* — steadfastly and perseveringly cleave to me, and then, believe me, my regard to you will be invariable. *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love*; if you approve your fidelity, you shall have increasing supplies of grace ministered to you, yet farther to establish, strengthen, and settle you: *even as I have kept my Father's commandments*, with unabating ardour and constancy; *and abide in his love*, am now, and shall for ever be, the object of his highest delight and complacency, as you in such case shall be of mine. And next to your love of me, *this is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you*; and again, ver. 17. this being among the best proofs of real love to Jesus, and the great commandment which he especially enjoins, as the distinguishing badge of true discipleship. *Note*; (1.) The love of Christ known

and believed, can alone engage our hearts to a return of love. (2.) The firm purpose of universal obedience to Christ's commands, is the sure evidence of love without dissimulation. (3.) No duty is more frequently and earnestly urged upon us, than Christian love; because in nothing do we more resemble him, whose nature and name is Love; and nothing is more ornamental to our profession.

3. They who will be faithful to the Saviour, must expect the enmity of a sinful world; where wicked men, many and mighty, will unite in hatred, opposition, and persecution against them.

[1.] The followers of Jesus may expect to be hated, persecuted, despised. Since the original enmity put between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, never was there, I believe, one truly godly man, but more or less experienced the like treatment.

[2.] So dealt they with our great Lord and Master, whose example should reconcile us to suffer with him. *If the world hate you*, wonder not; *ye know that it hated me before it hated you*: never was character so spotless as his, never one suffered so much from the enmity of the world.

[3.] The reason of the world's hatred of us is evident. *If ye were of the world, conformed to it in your tempers, manners and practice, the world would love his own*, would care for and esteem you; *but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*; because you are members of my mystical body, and my faithful ministers, and your heavenly minds and conversation cannot but witness against and reprove their vain and wicked ways, therefore their anger rises. *Note*; The men of the world have not only a hatred to Christians in general, but an especial enmity against gospel ministers, whose preaching and rebukes exasperate those who reject the counsel of God against their own souls.

4. He reminds them, that this was no more than he had all along taught them to expect. *Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord*, nor may expect more respectful treatment. *If they have persecuted me, with all manner of rancour, reviling, and injuries, they will also persecute you*, my ambassadors, who bear the same message, and go forth into the same world that lieth in wickedness: *if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also*: but in general they have not kept my word, and therefore the gospel that you preach will be despised and rejected, and your words be misrepresented, cavilled at, and ridiculed, as mine in general have been. *But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake*, because you have an interest in my love, vindicate my honour, and preach my gospel, whatever other pretences they may feign as the ground of their opposition; *because they know not him that sent me*, their minds are blinded by pride and prejudice, ignorant of the true God and his Messiah. *Note*; (1.) The faithful ministers of the gospel must not be surprised,

<sup>1</sup> the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment :

<sup>9</sup> <sup>m</sup> Of sin, because they believe not on me ;  
<sup>10</sup> <sup>n</sup> Of righteousness, because I go to my

<sup>1</sup> Mark, 16. 15. Rom. 10. 18. 1 Pet. 1. 12. 1 Thess. 1. 5. Acts, ii—xix.  
18—20. & 7. 54. <sup>2</sup> 11. 53. 10—12. & 42. 21. & 45. 24, 25. Luke, 24. 26.

<sup>m</sup> Rom. 3. 19, 20. & 7. 9. Acts, 2. 37, 38. & 3. 14—19. & 16.  
Dan. 9. 24. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Rom. 4. 25. & 10. 4. & 3. 24—26.

prised, if their preaching is treated with contempt or ridicule; their Lord was so insulted. (2.) Persecutors often pretend other causes to cover their enmity against God's people; but whatever be their pretext, the true reason is his image in them which they cannot bear, and his gospel which they abhor.

5. Christ suggests the inexcusable guilt of those who reject him and his gospel. *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin*, comparatively speaking; but now they have no cloak for their sin, their infidelity is most wilful, their impenitence obstinate. *He that hateth me, hateth my Father also*; the hatred shewn to his person, ministers, and gospel, ultimately centres in God himself. *If I had not done among them the works which none other man did*, such stupendous miracles as incontestably proved my divine mission, they had not had sin; they might have had some cloak for their unbelief; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father; rejecting the testimony that he thus hath borne to me, and fixed in a rooted aversion to me and him. *But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law*, (Pl. lxix. 4.) *They hated me without a cause*. Note; (1.) They are left most inexcusable, and their guilt is most aggravated, who obstinately persist in unbelief, and go to hell with bibles in their hands. (2.) They who hate the gospel, and Christ, the author of it, whatever they may pretend, truly hate God. Enemies to the Christian religion, are enemies to all religion; and Deist is really but another name for Atheist. (3.) Enmity against Christ and his gospel is most absurd and unreasonable; it is quarrelling with our own mercies, and being, in fact, the worst enemies to ourselves.

3dly, Though the enemies of the true disciples of Jesus are many and mighty, he has provided such supports for his faithful people, as shall enable them to triumph over all opposition.

1. His Spirit shall be their comfort and strength. *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me*. On the day of Pentecost, the most abundant influences of the Holy Ghost were to be poured forth upon them, he being the third Person in the sacred Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son, whose peculiar office in the œconomy of man's salvation is to testify of Christ, as the Spirit of truth speaking in the apostles, and bearing witness to the divine glory and grace of the Redeemer, and making the preaching of the gospel effectual to the consciences of men. He is the advocate, convincing men of sin, righteousness, and judgment; the Comforter, filling the souls of Christ's faithful people with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

2. They shall themselves hereby be enabled to bear a noble testimony for Christ. *Ye shall bear witness*, preaching my gospel in the face of all opposers, and confirming it by the miraculous powers with which you shall be invested: and your evidence cannot be justly excepted against,

*because ye have been with me from the beginning*, and speak the things of which you yourselves have the most undoubted assurance. Note; Ministers can then powerfully preach Christ, when they have themselves experimentally known him, have been with him in faith and love, and for a season have walked in a state of communion with him.

## CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. *These things have I spoken, &c.*] “The things which I have now told you, concerning the hatred of the world, the reason of that hatred, the dishonour done by it to God, the punishment wherewith it shall be followed, and the supernatural assistance which you shall receive,—I have spoken to keep you from taking offence at the further discoveries that I am going to make of the evils to which you will be exposed, and to prevent your being overcome by those evils when they befall you.” See the next note.

Ver. 2. *They shall put you out of the synagogues* :] That is, “They shall excommunicate you.” See Ch. ix. 22. and 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Instead of, *He doth God service*, we may render the original, *offereth a sacrifice to God*. The word *λατρεία*, signifies all the different parts of divine worship, and so must be determined to particulars by the circumstances. Here it signifies *sacrifice*, because it is joined with *προσφέρειν*, a word which constantly denotes the offering up of sacrifice. See Rom. xii. 1. This gives a beautiful turn to our Lord's sentiment. “The time shall come, when the killing of you shall be thought a part of the worship of God, and equally acceptable with the offering of sacrifices.” This passage intimates, as Archbishop Leighton observes on the text, that the servants of Christ should be considered, not only as sheep for the slaughter, but as sheep for the altar too. See Acts, viii. 1. ix. 1. xxiii. 14, &c.

Ver. 3. *And these things will they do, &c.*] “And these immoral and pernicious principles and practices will they embrace and execute against you as my disciples, because through the wilful blindness and hardness of their hearts, they do not know, so as to believe and love, either my Father or me.”

Ver. 4. *These things I said not, &c.*] The original signifies, “I did not inculcate these things upon you from the beginning;—I did not insist upon them, because the lesson would come time enough before my departure.” *These things* may be understood of the Jews' ignorance of God's designs, and their wilful ignorance of Jesus as the Messiah; particulars, which he had just now mentioned as the causes why the Jews would persecute his apostles, and which, no doubt, were more afflicting to the latter than the persecutions themselves; because these persecutions they supposed would end in the enjoyment of the kingdom; whereas the rejection of their Master cut off their hopes all at once.

Father, and ye see me no more ;

11 ° Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

12 P I have yet many things to say unto you,

but ye cannot bear them now.

13 q Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth,

° If. 49. 24-26. Mark, 12. 27. Pf. 68. 18. Ch. 12. 31. & 14. 30. & 5. 22. Col. 2. 14, 15. Heb. 2. 14. Luke, 10. 18. 1 John, 3. 5, 8. Rev. 1. 7, 8. Eph. 2. 1, 2. Tit. 3. 3-7. Acts, 10. 42. & 17. 31. P Ch. 15. 15. with ver. 6. 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2. & 10. 23. Heb. 5. 11. Mark, 4. 31. Ver. 14. Ch. 14. 17, 26, & 15. 26. 1 John, 2. 27. Eth. 4. 11-13.

Ver. 5. But now I go my way] "But now that my ministry is drawing towards a conclusion, and I am going to him that sent me, I could no longer defer speaking of these things to you. In the mean time I cannot but take notice, that though I mentioned to you my departure once before, (Ch. xiii. 33.) none of you has inquired of me the reasons of my departure, nor the effects of it." That this is the true meaning of the passage, may be gathered from Ch. xiii. 36. where we find Peter expressly asking our Lord whither he was going. It seems neither Peter nor the rest had thought more of the matter; for which Jesus here justly blames them, his departure was an event of so great importance to the apostles.

Ver. 7. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth ;] Though you have not asked the reasons of my going away, I will declare them to you. It is necessary even on your account that I depart; because, if I do not ascend into heaven, and take possession of my mediatorial kingdom, the Comforter, whose assistance, as I told you before, Ch. xv. 26. you need to convert the world, and who will in a most eminent degree comfort and sanctify your souls, will not be given you: whereas, if I depart, and take possession of my kingdom, I will send him unto you, as the first fruits of the exercise of my kingly power. The word παρακλητος, (see Ch. xiv. 16.) signifies not only a Comforter, but an Advocate. Among the Romans, it was usual for those who had any great law-suit, to call their relations and friends to their assistance, who in this office were named advocates. These attended the parties in the court; some assisting them with counsel, others pleading for them, and others relying by their presence giving weight to their cause. Hence the word came not only to signify an advocate, who pleads the cause of another, but a counsellor, a friend, a patron. In this passage the Holy Ghost is called παρακλητος, or advocatus, in the largest sense; because he was to espouse the disciples' cause, to accompany them wherever they went, to defend them from the attacks of their enemies, and to aid for them by their apologies, which he inspired them to deliver in their own behalf; and by the miracles which he enabled them to work in confirmation of their mission; that he was in the properest sense their friend, counsellor, advocate, patron, and protector. See 1 John, ii. 1.

Ver. 8. And when he is come, he will reprove] He will reprove, &c. "And he, coming from on high, by virtue of his death, and in consequence of my resurrection and ascension, shall carry on my cause in this lower world demonstratively convincing both Jews and Gentiles, wherever my gospel comes, of their guilt, depravity, and wickedness to the wrath of God; of the righteousness which I bring in by my obedience and sufferings to the death of the cross, for the justification of such as are conscious that they have no righteousness of their

own to recommend them to the divine favour and acceptance; and of my holy and judicial power, in setting to rights the disorders of human nature by sanctifying grace, in overthrowing Satan's dominion, and in passing judgment against him and the finally unbelieving and unrighteous at the great day of account." See the following notes.

Ver. 9. Of sin, because, &c.] "When the Comforter comes, he will, by the miraculous effusion of his gifts, accompanied with divine grace, convince the world of the sin that they commit in disbelieving me; who, though absent in respect to my bodily presence, am able to confer such extraordinary powers on my ministers." Accordingly we find that multitudes of the Jews were thus convinced, Acts, ii. 37, &c.

Ver. 10. Of righteousness, because, &c.] "He shall likewise convince them of the righteousness of my person and cause, and of the necessity, suitability, and perfection of that atonement which I am come to accomplish by my obedience unto death; because I am going to be exalted at my Father's right hand, and you shall no more see me again in this humble state of sufferings and abasement, as if I had not fully satisfied his justice for the faithful, and finished the work which he gave me to do upon earth."

Ver. 11. Of judgment, because, &c.] "In the last place, when the Holy Ghost thus cometh, he will convert men from idolatry and from vicious tempers and vicious practices, to the knowledge, experience, and practice of true religion; and by thus victoriously depriving Satan of that dominion which he has hitherto exercised over the minds of men, he will convince the world of judgment. He will demonstrate, not only that the world is governed by God, (so the word judgment is often used,) but that all power in heaven and earth is given to me particularly as the mediatorial king, who by my Spirit have dethroned the devil. Moreover, this present punishment of the prince of this world, will be an earnest and proof of that judgment, which at the last day I will execute upon him and all his adherents." See Ch. xii. 31.

Ver. 12. I have yet many things to say unto you,] These other things to which our Lord refers, might probably relate to the abrogation of the ceremonial law, to the doctrine of justification by faith, the rejection of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, and the like, which the disciples could not fully receive till their remaining prejudices were removed.

Ver. 13. When he, the Spirit of truth, is come,] The personality of the Holy Ghost is strongly and incontestably marked by the mention of his coming, being sent, guiding, &c. as well as by the particularity in the original; wherein the word rendered he, εμενός, is of the masculine gender, though

is come, he will guide you into all truth : for he shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak : and he will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me : for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

15 All things that the Father hath are mine : therefore said I, that he shall take of mine and shall shew *it* unto you.

16 ¶ A little while, and ye shall not see me : and again <sup>a</sup> a little while, and ye shall see me, because <sup>b</sup> I go to the Father.

17 <sup>c</sup> Then said *some* of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me : and

again a little while, and ye shall see me : and, Because I go to the Father ?

18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while ? <sup>d</sup> we cannot tell what he saith.

19 Now Jesus <sup>e</sup> knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me : and again a little while, and ye shall see me ?

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That <sup>f</sup> ye shall weep and lament, <sup>g</sup> but the world shall rejoice : and ye shall be sorrowful, <sup>h</sup> but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A woman when she is in travail hath

<sup>a</sup> Joel, 2. 28. Acts, 11. 28. & 13. 11. & 21. 11. & 20. 29. 1 Tim. 4. 1. <sup>b</sup> Tim. 3. 1—6. <sup>c</sup> Pet. 1. 14. &c. Rev. iv—xxii. <sup>d</sup> Ver. 9—11. Phil. 2. 8—11. Heb. 2. 9. Ch. 2. 11. with Acts, 20. 35. 1 John, 2. 27. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 11. 27. Ch. 3. 35. & 13. 3. & 17. 2, 10. Col. 1. 19. & 1. 20. <sup>f</sup> Ver. 5, 17—19. Ch. 7. 33. & 13. 3, 13 & 14. 19. <sup>g</sup> Acts, 2. 4. 2 Cor. 3. 18. Rev. 1. 7. Heb. 9. 28. & 10. 17. <sup>h</sup> Ver. 5, 18. Ch. 2. 3, & 14. 2, 28. Mark, 16. 19. Luke, 24. 51. <sup>i</sup> Luke, 9. 45. & 18. 34. & 24. 25. Ch. 12. 16. & 14. 5, 8, 22. <sup>j</sup> Mat. 16. 9, 11. & 23. 5. 11. Prov. 30. 3. Pl. 73. 22. & 94. 8. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 2. 24, 25. & 21. 17. Mat. 9. 4. Acts, 1. 24. Heb. 4. 13. Rev. 2. 23. Pl. 139. 1—4. <sup>l</sup> Ver. 17. 10. Ver. 30. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 27. 27—50. Mark, 15. 15—37. Luke, 23. 27. & 24. 17. <sup>n</sup> Rev. 11. 10. & 18. 7. Mat. 21. 38. Mat. 2. 17. <sup>o</sup> Pl. 126. 5, 6. Acts, 2. 46, 47. & 5. 41. & 13. 52. Jude, 24. 1 Thess. 4. 17, 18. 2 Thess. 2. 16, 17. <sup>p</sup> 1st. 26. 17. Gen. 3. 16.

though the word rendered *spirit*, το πνεῦμα, is neuter. Instead of *shall not speak*, &c. the original may with much greater propriety be rendered *will not*, &c. and so in the two next verses. In this chapter, as Dr. Heylin intimates, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are considered as three gracious Masters in the breasts of believers. The internal agency of the *Holy Ghost* is continually admitted ; and that of the *Father* and the *Son*, as represented in this gospel, greatly deserves to be attended to.

Ver. 15. *He shall take of mine*] *He will receive of mine*, λαμβανει, the same word as in ver. 14. and consequently the translation should be the same in both places. “ Be not surprized that I said unto you, *He will receive of mine*, &c. for the whole treasure of the Father’s wisdom “ belongs to me.” See Col. ii. 3. Those who oppose the divinity of Christ, seem to be at a loss for an explication of this passage. Le Clerc tells us, that it is highly figurative ;—that the subject treated of is such as cannot be understood by reason ;—that the manner of it is not revealed ;—and therefore it is not possible to mark precisely the proper sense of every expression. Such are the slights to which the espousers of a false hypothesis are reduced !

Ver. 16. *A little while, and ye shall not see me* :] Our Lord hinted to them, that it was their interest, as well as their duty, to rivet all these things in their memory, because they were his dying words. A few hours would put an end to his life ; and though he was to rise again from the dead, he was to remain but a very little while with them upon the earth ; for he was soon to ascend into heaven, and be seated at the right hand of God.

Ver. 17, 18. *What is this that he saith*,] There are so many passages in the preceding discourse relating to Christ’s going to the Father, that it is a strange instance of the dullness of the apostles at that time, that they did not understand him. Perhaps it is recorded on purpose to shew us

what an alteration the teaching of the Spirit made in them afterward. It is indeed difficult to imagine what could perplex them, unless it were that they suspected the words in ver. 16. might intimate, that after Jesus had gone to the Father, and made a short stay there, he would come again, and settle an *earthly* kingdom ;—and they might desire an explication in this view. Accordingly, after having told them, that though they were sorrowful, he would come and see them again after his resurrection, ver. 20—22. and would introduce them to a state of comfortable converse with the Father by prayer and holy communion with him, and a joy of which none could deprive them, ver. 22—27. He adds, ver. 28. that he was quickly leaving the world to go and reside with the Father from whom he came ; thereby gently intimating, that no *temporal* reign, the constant object of their hopes, was to be expected ; and if we suppose him thus to have glanced obliquely at the most secret sentiments of their hearts, it will account for that confession of his omniscience which immediately follows the 28th verse, (ver. 29, 30.) the reason of which would not appear merely from his discovery that they doubted about something, as their countenances and answers might shew this. Some one, considering our Lord’s words as referring to the life of glory, a sense which is evidently implied in them, beautifully observes, that believers may sometimes think this *little while* of a tedious length ; they are almost apprehensive that it will not end ; but let them animate their hopes, by reflecting that the Master calls it a *little while*. It will be found a short time indeed, compared with the happy eternity, to which it is the passage.

Ver. 21, 22. *A woman when she is in travail*] “ The state of mind you will be in, when the events happen of which I am speaking, cannot be described better than by comparing it to the condition of a woman in

orrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

25 These things have I spoken unto you in \* proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:

27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

29 ¶ His disciples said unto him, Lo, now

Gen. 21. 6. 2 Cor. 4. 17. Heb. 12. 11. Ver. 6, 20. Luke, 24. 41, 52. Ch. 17. 13. & 20. 19, 20, 23. & 21. 1-14. Acts, 5. 41. & 52. & 20. 24. 1 Pet. 1. 8. Mat. 25. 23. H. 61. 7. As Ch. 14. 5, 8, 22. Ver. 17. Mat. 7. 7, 11. & 21. 22. Luke, 11. 9. Ch. 14. 14. H. 58. 9. & 65. 24. Job, 22. 27. Mat. 7. 7, 11. Jam. 1. 5. & 5. 16. H. 45. 11. Ch. 15. 11. 1 John, 1. 1-4. & 5. 13-15. Or parables. Or parables. Ver. 12, 16-18. Acts, 2. 34, 36. & 4. 20, 26, 27. Mat. 6. 7, 8. Ver. 27. Ch. 14. 21, 23. 17. 6, 8, 23. with 1 John, 4. 10, 19. Ver. 28. Ch. 1. 9. & 3. 19. & 6. 14. & 7. 29. & 8. 42. & 17. 18. & 9. 39. & 11. 27. & 12. 46. Rom. 3. Gal. 4. 4. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Ch. 7. 33. & 8. 14, 21. & 13. 1, 3. & 14. 28. & 17. 11, 13. Ver. 5, 16.

travail. During her labour she has exquisite pain, because the birth approaches; but as soon as she is delivered, she forgets her anguish, being filled with joy that she has brought one of the human species and a child of her own into the world. Just so, you my disciples will be in the greatest distress during the time of my departure; but as I am to rise again from the dead, and to ascend into heaven, you will forget your sorrow, and rejoice exceedingly; and from that time forth it shall not be in the power of your enemies to rob you of your joy." As this promise will be for ever accomplished to all Christ's faithful servants, so it is pleasing to observe how St. Paul, in his more abundant afflictions, attests his experience of its truth, when he says, *sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*, 2 Cor. vi. 10.

Ver. 23. *In that day ye shall ask me nothing.*] "You shall not inquire any thing of me, *ἐκ ἐρωτησέτε*:—One great source of your joy, in the period I am speaking of, will be, that your understanding shall be enlarged and enlightened; so that you shall have no need of my personal presence with you, nor any occasion to ask questions concerning intricate points, as you find yourselves obliged to do now: and whenever you stand in need of instruction, or assistance, or any other blessing, whether for the propagation of the gospel, or your own salvation, the Father will immediately supply you with it, upon your asking it in my name."

Ver. 25. *I shall shew you plainly of the Father.*] I will shew you a free, open, and full discovery of my Father; of his gracious counsels concerning the church; of the design of my sufferings and death; of the remedy going to him; of the business which I go to with him; of the confidence which on these accounts you may have towards him; and of the way in which you are to address him, through me, for obtaining the blessings that you need.

Ver. 26. *At that day ye shall ask in my name.*] This is the fifth time our Lord enjoined his apostles to offer up their petitions in his name. See ver. 23, 24. Ch. xiv. 13, and xv. 16. The frequency of the injunction shews the importance of the matter enjoined; for whether we understand Jesus as speaking of the things requisite to the conversion of the world, or of such things as are necessary to the salvation of individuals, it is evident that the great end of the mediation of Christ is, to atone for the sins of the world, and to impress mankind with a deep sense of their own sinfulness which makes them unfit to approach the divine presence directly; of the merit and efficacy of Christ's death, whereby alone they have access to God; of the necessity of receiving his spirit for every good thought, word and work, and to send this divine Comforter into the hearts of believers. When our Lord says, *And I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father*, his meaning is, "Do not think that I shall solicit the Father on your behalf, as if he was unwilling to bestow upon you the blessings you want: no; the Father himself bears a warm love towards you, for my sake, and on account of your love to me, and your faith in me."

Ver. 28. *I came forth from the Father, &c.*] "To conclude. The true and proper meaning of my discourse to you at this time, and particularly of the expression which appeared so obscure to you, is, that as I came forth from the Father, and was commissioned by the Father, and came into the world to reveal his will to mankind; so, having finished all that work, I now leave the world, and return to the Father, from whom I came."

Ver. 29, 30. *His disciples said*] "We acknowledge that now thou speakest in such a manner as we can understand; for what thou sayest is by no means dark, like the things before delivered. Moreover, by what thou hast now spoken, we clearly perceive that thou knowest " the



speakest thou <sup>1</sup> plainly, and speakest <sup>2</sup> no proverb.

30 <sup>3</sup> Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: <sup>4</sup> by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

31 Jesus answered them, <sup>5</sup> Do ye now believe?

32 <sup>6</sup> Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to <sup>7</sup> his own, and shall leave me alone: and <sup>8</sup> yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 <sup>9</sup> These things I have spoken unto you, that <sup>10</sup> in me ye might have peace. <sup>11</sup> In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; <sup>12</sup> I have overcome the world.

<sup>1</sup> Acts, 1. 7. Mat. 13. 11. <sup>2</sup> Or parable. Ver. 25. Mat. xiii. Luke, xv. xvi., &c. <sup>3</sup> Ver. 19. Ch. 21. 17. Heb. 4. 13. Col. 2. 3. Rev. 1. 24. <sup>4</sup> Ver. 27. Ch. 17. 8, 14. & 2. 11. & 1. 14. <sup>5</sup> Luke, 8. 25. Ch. 13. 26. & 13. 38. Ver. 32. <sup>6</sup> Zech. 13. 7. Mat. 26. 31. 35. <sup>7</sup> Mark, 14. 27, 50. Ch. 20. 10. <sup>8</sup> Or his own home. <sup>9</sup> Ch. 8. 16. & 14. 10, 29. If. 42. 1, 6. & 50. 7, 9. & 49. 3, 8. <sup>10</sup> Ch. 15. 11. & 14. 30. Ver. 4. <sup>11</sup> See Ch. 14. 27. Mic. 5. 5. If. 9. 6, 7. Rom. 5. 1, 10. Eph. 2. 14. Col. 1. 20. <sup>12</sup> Acts, 14. 22. 2 Tim. 3. 12. Heb. 12. 6. Col. 1. 24. Rev. 3. 19. <sup>13</sup> If. 49. 24, 25. 1 Cor. 15. 57. 1 John, 4. 4. & 5. 4. Gal. 6. 14.

“ the hearts of men; and that in conversing with men, thou hast no need that they should tell thee their thoughts by any question. In short, thy knowledge of our hearts fully convinceth us that thou camest forth from God.” It seems, through the whole of this discourse, Jesus had obviated the objections, and answered the questions which his disciples were going to propose, or would gladly have proposed to him. See ver. 19. and on ver. 17.

Ver. 32. *Every man to his own,*] *Εἰς τὰ ἴδια:* To his own habitation and employment. Dr. Heylin renders it, *Every man to take care of himself.*

Ver. 33. *These things I have spoken*] “ I have told you these things, that you may have consolation in the prospect of the benefits that you are to receive, a lasting peace, and serenity of soul, by the exercise of your faith in me; and thus, free from all anxiety and perturbation, may not be terrified when the afflictions draw nigh which are to overtake you. The truth is, you will have great tribulation in this present life, because the malice of men will every where pursue you; nevertheless, be not discouraged; rather take heart by reflecting how, through constancy and patience, I have overcome the malice of the world, and that I am able to make you overcome it in like manner also.”

*Inferences.*—How great is the ignorance and folly of those, who persecute their brethren in the name of the Lord, and kill his children under the pretence of offering him an acceptable sacrifice! Thus were the apostles treated by those Jews, who knew not the God for whom they professed all this flaming zeal. Let us bless God that we are providentially sheltered from those effects of it, which might otherwise bear so hard upon us; while we diligently watch over our hearts, that no irregular affections, no uncharitable sentiments, may work or harbour there.

Whenever, like the apostles, our hearts are filled with sorrow, may we be very cautious not to be so stupified and absorbed by it, as that any call of duty should pass unheard, or any opportunity of religious advancement escape us unimproved; nor let us be indolent in our inquiries into the meaning of those dispensations which we do not understand; but rather seriously consider, whether we are not sorrowful for that which is indeed designed for our advantage, and in the issue will be matter of rejoicing to our souls.

We have seen to what purpose the Comforter was sent. His coming was designed in the first instance for the benefit of the apostles, and was of greater service to them, as Christ had assured them he should be, than the continuance of his own presence with them in the body would have been; not only to support and comfort them under all their trials, but to acquaint them with all necessary truth, and fully to instruct them in the mysteries of godliness. He came moreover for the conviction of an apostate world: the important errand on which he was sent was, to awaken men's minds, to convince them of their own guilt, of Christ's righteousness, and of that awful judgment which should be executed on the most inveterate of his enemies.

May these considerations often lead us to think of the force of the Spirit's testimony to the truth of Christianity, and to endeavour to understand it in all its extent; blessing the Almighty Father of mercies, that the gospel and the character of his Son were thus gloriously vindicated. May we rejoice in the views of that complete conquest to which Satan is already adjudged; and, in the mean time, let us earnestly pray, that the influences of the Holy Spirit may be communicated to us in such a manner, that Christ may be glorified in us, and we in him; and that the things of Christ may be taken, and shown to us by that Spirit; for it can only be done by means of his influence and operations.

We are perhaps often regretting the absence of Christ's bodily presence, and looking back with a kind of envy on the happier lot of those who conversed with him upon earth in the days of his flesh: but if we prove true persevering believers in an unseen Jesus, it is but a little while, and we shall also see him; for he is gone to the Father, and will successfully negotiate the affairs of his faithful saints in the realms of bliss, that whatever their present difficulties and sorrows may be, they shall end happily, and bring peace and joy at the last. And, in the mean time, surely we have no reason to envy the world its joys and triumphs. Alas! its season of weeping will quickly come! but the lamentations of the faithful are soon to be turned into songs of praise, and their hearts filled with that solid, sacred, and peculiar joy which shall never be taken away.

While we are in this state of distance, it is certainly matter of rejoicing that we have access to the throne of God through the prevailing name of Christ. Let us advance thither with holy courage and confidence, and so ask as that we may receive, and that our joy may be full.—With what pleasure

CHAP. XVII.

Christ prayeth to his Father to glorify him: to preserve his apostles in unity and truth: to glorify them and all his other faithful disciples with him in heaven.

[Anno Domini 33.]

THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father,

the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Ch. xiv-xvi. Pf. 121. 1. & 123. 1. & 25. 1. Ch. 7. 30. & 8. 20. & 12. 23, 27, 28. & 13. 1, 31. & 16. 4, 32. with Mark, 14. Luke, 22. 53. Mat. 26. 45, 46, 51-53. Dan. 7. 13, 14. Mat. 11. 27. & 28. 18. Ch. 3. 31, 35. & 5. 22, 27. Heb. 1. 2. & 2. 8, 9. Phil. 1. 20-23. Phil. 2. 9-11. 1 Cor. 15. 25. Pf. 110. 1. Ch. 10. 27, 28. & 1. 14, 16. 1 Cor. 3. 22. Acts, 5. 31. If. 53. 10-12. Col. 3. 1. If. 53. 11. Jer. 9. 24. 1 John, 5. 20. 1 Cor. 2. 2. Phil. 3. 7-11. Deut. 6. 4. Ch. 10. 30. & 14. 9, 10. 1 Cor. 8. 6. 1 Tim. 2. 6. 1 Theff. 1. 9. If. 48. 16. & 61. 1. Mark, 9. 37. Luke, 4. 18, 43. & 9. 48. Ch. 3. 16, 34. & 5. 36. & 6. 27, 29, 57. & 7. 29. & 8. 42. Ver. 8. 18. Rom. 8. 3. Gal. 4. 4. 1 John, 4. 10.

pleasure may we daily renew our visits to that throne, before which Jesus, the friend of sinners, stands as an intercessor; to that throne which is possessed by the Father, who himself loveth us, and answers with readiness and delight those petitions which are thus recommended! May our faith in Christ, and our love to him, still more and more increase; and thus shall our supplications be more and more acceptable to him, whose loving-kindness is better than life itself.

Whoever seriously reviews these gracious discourses, must consider them as an invaluable legacy bequeathed to us by Christ, the dying Saviour. O may they dwell with us in all our retirements, and be applied to our comfort in every distress!

Can we have any reason to wonder, if human friendship is sometimes false, and always precarious! Alas!—the disciples of Christ were scattered in the day of his utter ex- emity, and left him alone, even when they were under the highest obligations to have adhered to him with the most violable fidelity. It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put thy confidence in man. May we but be able, like our Master, to rely in every trial, that our Father is with us; and then that delightful converse with God, which we may enjoy in our most solitary moments, will be a thousand times more than equivalent for whatsoever we lose in the creatures. In the world we must indeed have tribulation; and he that has depended it for us, knows that it is fit we should: but since Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, who was made perfect through sufferings, has overcome the world, and disarmed it, let us hence be taught to seek that peace which he hath established, and press on with a cheerful assurance, that his faithful followers shall share in the honours and benefits of his victory.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, To be forewarned, is to be forearmed. Christ lets his disciples know what they had to expect. He tells them what they must look for, and warns them to be prepared for it. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye may not be offended, that you may not be discouraged by the trials, faint under the cross, and desert the path of duty. They shall put you out of the synagogues, excommunicate you from their society and from their assemblies for divine worship: yea, the time cometh, when, so infatuated and bloody will their persecution be, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service. Note; (1.) The best way to avoid persecution is to be diligent in the service of God.

friends of the church of Christ have often been branded by those who pretend to be church-rulers, as her worst enemies. (2.) Blind bigotry raises the bitterest persecution; the blood of martyrs has never flowed more liberally than by the hands of those who murdered them as excommunicated heretics in the name of the Lord.

2. He suggests the real cause of this treatment. These things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me; though they may pretend the highest attainments of wisdom and piety, and persecute you as a set of poor, illiterate, deluded enthusiasts; yet they are sunk in wilful spiritual ignorance, which, though no excuse for their wickedness, is an argument for you to bear patiently with them, and to pity and pray for them.

3. He lets them know that he gave them these warnings for the confirmation of their faith in him, and to encourage them to bear up when the day of temptation came upon them. These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them, and have a fresh proof of my omniscience and faithfulness to you. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you, to bear the chief burden myself, and to comfort and support you. Note; Christ graciously proportions our trials to our strength.

4. He assures them, though he was going, and they were dejected, his departure would be abundantly for their good. But now I go my way to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? Though they had asked him with a temporal view, they had no apprehension that he was going to heaven, to prepare an abode for them in glory, and therefore did not pursue their inquiries. But because I have said these things unto you, of my departure, and your approaching troubles, sorrow hath filled your heart, when you ought rather to rejoice. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, greatly as you dread my going from you, it is expedient for you that I go away, and a kind father will give his children not what they foolishly wish, but what he knows will be best for them; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; such being a part of the great plan of redemption; but if I depart according to the will of my heavenly Father, finishing my work, and entering into my glory, I will send him unto you, as the fruit of my death, and the effect of my intercession: and this will more than supply the loss of my bodily presence. Note; Many of us are often melancholy, when they ought to rejoice; much

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

<sup>i</sup> Mat. 9. 8. & 17. 31. Mark, 2. 12. Luke, 5. 26. & 18. 43. Ch. 4. 34. & 13. 32. & 19. 30. & 5. 36. & 9. 3. & 11. 4. 10. & 12. 18. & 14. 11. & 8. 29. & 15. 10. 11. 42. 21. Mat. 3. 15. <sup>k</sup> Ver. 24. Phil. 2. 9—11. Pl. 110. 1. Ch. 13. 32. Eph. 1. 20—23. 1 Pet. 3. 22. Rev. 3. 21. & 5. 9, 12. Prov. 6. 31. <sup>l</sup> Ch. 1. 1, 2. 1 Pet. 1. 20. Rev. 13. 8. Mat. 25. 34.

readier to pore over their inbred corruption, and terrify themselves with the fear of their enemies, than to exult in the promises, to press after full sanctification, and to look up with confidence to Christ Jesus; and this is as dishonourable to him, as uncomfortable to ourselves.

5. He describes the blessed work of the Spirit, whom he promises to send: *When he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*

[1.] *Of sin*, awakening the consciences of sinners, both Jews and Gentiles, to a discovery of their native corruption, actual transgressions, exceeding sinfulness, and liability to the wrath of an offended God; especially the great sin of unbelief, this being the great damning iniquity, and the grand cause of sinners' destruction, *because they believe not on me for pardon, grace, life, and salvation*; and, under this view of themselves, he lays them in the dust of deepest abasement.

[2.] *Of righteousness*; of the righteous obedience of Christ unto the death of the cross,—the sole meritorious cause of every blessing that we can receive either in time or in eternity,—the sole meritorious cause of the acceptance of the persons and works of believers before God: to which the Spirit directs the self-despairing soul to look, as the grand foundation of hope towards God; *because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more*; his exaltation to the right-hand of God being the fullest token of his Father's approbation of him, and that he is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; and, therefore, he was no more to appear in his present state of humiliation, because he had, to his Father's entire satisfaction, finished the work that he had given him to do upon earth.

[3.] *Of judgment*; that all power is given to Christ, in heaven and in earth, to sanctify and renew the hearts of his faithful people, and execute judgment upon all their enemies and his, the finally impenitent and obstinate sinners; *because the prince of this world, the devil, is judged*; his power is broken, his kingdom destroyed; and, while the triumphs of the Redeemer's grace are now continually spreading through the earth in multitudes rescued from the hands of this enemy, he and all his adherents shall shortly be brought to receive their final sentence at the bar of this eternal Judge; and wicked devils and wicked men together be cast into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

6. The Spirit will wonderfully enlarge their understandings, and give them a clear insight into many glorious truths, which, as yet, they did not fully apprehend. *I have yet many things to say unto you*, respecting the abolition of the Mosaical œconomy, the calling of the Gentiles, the rejection of the Jews, &c. *but ye cannot bear them now*, through the deep-rooted prejudices which still held possession of their hearts; bigotted to the ritual institutions, and expecting a temporal kingdom. *Howbeit when he, the*

*Spirit of truth, is come*, then they shall be enabled to receive all discoveries which they now could not bear; for he will *guide you into all truth*; opening their understandings to comprehend the Scripture, as an unerring Guide leading them into the most explicit views of the gospel-truths, and enabling them to speak and act under his direction with infallible wisdom: *for he shall not speak of himself*, as a private person, or serving any interest merely his own; but, in exact correspondence with Christ and the Father, *whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak*, according to the sacred will of them both, with which he is fully acquainted, searching the deep things of God; and he will *show you things to come*, as a Spirit of prophecy, enabling them to look into futurity, and make known to the church the things which, in succeeding ages, should come to pass, even to the end of time.

7. In all this work of the divine Spirit, his intention eminently is to glorify the Redeemer. *He shall glorify me*: all the gifts and graces that he bestowed, and the miracles he enabled the apostles to perform, were designed to exalt Jesus as the great Redeemer of men, and to bear witness of his divine mission; *for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you*. Christ hath obtained all blessings for the faithful; the office of the Spirit is to apply them to their hearts, and put them in possession of that pardon, adoption, comfort, grace, and glory, which he hath purchased by his obedience unto death. *All things that the Father hath are mine*; not only as we are one in nature, perfections, and unity of interests; but as all the blessings that he designed for his faithful people are lodged in my hands as Mediator; *therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you*. Spirit of truth and grace, apply these innumerable blessings to my soul!

2dly, To comfort his sorrowful disciples, the gracious Saviour suggests farther grounds of encouragement to them.

1. He promises to visit them again shortly. *A little while and ye shall not see me*, he should be hid in the grave; and again, *a little while, and ye shall see me*, after my resurrection, *because I go to the Father*; to enter upon his glory, to appear in the presence of God, as Intercessor, to the possession of the purchased inheritance for the faithful; and at last to bring them to be with him where he is.

2. Some of the disciples, blinded with their national prejudices, and stupid with sorrow, were at a loss to comprehend his meaning; and, repeating his words, inquired of one and another what they understood by them; and all confessed they knew not what he meant by *a little while*.

3. Christ, who knew the secrets of their hearts, and what was the subject of their whispers, prevented their inquiries by explaining the meaning of *the little while* he spoke of. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament*

6 ¶ I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and ° they have kept thy word.

<sup>m</sup> Ver. 7, 14, 26. Ch. 1. 18. Heb. 2. 12. If. 61. 7. <sup>n</sup> Ver. 9—12, 14, 16, 24. Ch. 10. 27, 29. & 15. 19. & 18. 9. & 6. 37. 2 Tim. 2. 19. Rom. 11. 2. Acts, 13. 48. <sup>o</sup> Pf. 119. 11. Prov. 23. 23. 2 Tim. 1. 13. Jude, 3. Rev. 2. 13. & 3. 3, 8, 10.

at his sufferings and death, with all the circumstances of ignominy wherewith it would be attended; but the world shall rejoice, the wicked world: the scribes and rulers would triumph, as if they had obtained a complete victory over him; and ye shall be sorrowful; sunk in deep dejection, their hopes swallowed up in despair; but your sorrow shall be turned into joy; when, seeing him arisen from the dead, they would triumph, fully assured of his being the Messiah: and with joy still more unspeakable and full of glory would they be filled, when, after beholding his ascension into heaven, the Holy Ghost should from on high be shed broad in their hearts. Then all their pangs, like those of a woman in travail, when her son is born, would be swallowed up and forgotten in the comfort which should succeed; Ye now therefore have sorrow, because I am leaving you; but I will see you again, certainly and shortly, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you; it will ever again be interrupted by any more distress and fears. Note: (1.) Though the faithful saints of God may sometimes be in heaviness through manifold temptations, it is their comfort that they know their sorrow will be momentary; but their joys, which shall succeed, eternal. (2.) The triumphing of the wicked is but for a moment, and must end in eternal disappointment and misery. (3.) Though children are certain cares, uncertain comforts, we naturally rejoice at their birth; but when we see what a world of sin they are come into, and what snares are before them, we need tremble for them, and pray, lest it should be better for them they had never been born. (4.) In heaven all the sorrows of the righteous will be forgotten, and every tear wiped away from their eyes. Then shall they never lament the absence of Jesus, but, without interruption, behold the majestic vision.

3dly, An answer to all their inquiries and prayers is promised them in that day, when, under the Spirit's mighty influences, they should in all things be taught and directed.

1. In that day ye shall ask me nothing, shall not need to make any farther inquiries about these things, concerning which you are now at a loss, and which I have spoken unto you in proverbs, under similitudes, in parables, and short sentences; and, though sufficiently plain, you, through your present prejudices and sorrow, have not understood: The time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall speak plainly of the Father; make such clear discoveries of the divine perfections and personality of the Father, of his gracious designs towards his faithful and the nature and end of all my sufferings; and the glory thence accruing to God; as will be perfectly satisfactory. Note: All the great and glorious truths of God's word are dark and unintelligible, till he is pleased, by his Spirit, to shine into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory, and make us acquainted with the great mysteries of godliness.

2. All their prayers shall be answered. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, as your exalted Saviour and great High-Priest, entered for you into heaven itself, and ever living to make intercession for you, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name, nothing so great as they were now invited to do; or rather had not, in their addresses to the Father, made use of his mediation, or pleaded his infinite merit as the ground of their hope: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full; all that you can wish or desire shall be granted, till the abundant joys of present grace and divine consolations shall reach their utmost consummation in eternal glory. At that day, when the Spirit shall be poured out upon you, ye shall ask in my name, with entire dependence on my atonement and prevalent intercession; and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; not that he would ever cease to intercede for them, but that the Father would be ready of himself to grant all their petitions: for the Father himself loveth you, is your friend and Father, and reconciled God, because ye have loved me; this blessed effect produced on their hearts might assure them of the Father's love; and have believed that I came out from God, as the true Messiah, executing the divine commission received from him. Note: (1.) What an encouragement have we to pray, when the promise is so full? All the blessings which, in humble dependence on our Jesus, we can ask, believing, we are sure to receive. (2.) Nothing so directly tends to increase our spiritual comforts, as the abiding prayer of faith. (3.) True faith always works by fervent love; they who know Jesus as their Saviour, cannot but feel their hearts drawn out towards him with enlarged affection; and shortly they shall be made perfect in love.

3. He sums up plainly for their comfort all that he had been saying to them. I came forth from the Father, where, from everlasting, I am; and voluntarily submitted to my present state of humiliation: again, having finished the work which was given me to do, I leave the world, and go to the Father, to that eternal glory which I had with him before the worlds were. This therefore should be matter of their joy, not sorrow.

4. The disciples, now enlightened to understand his discourse, with delight express their satisfaction in what he had said, and their entire faith in him as the Messiah. Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb: the meaning is no longer dark and doubtful. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee; we perceive thou art acquainted with our inmost thoughts, and canst answer us, even before we propose our questions: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. Note: Many truths, though plain, affect us not, till Christ speaks to the soul; and then we wonder how we could have overlooked before, what we now see so clearly.

5. Jesus, who saw that their faith was less established than they apprehended, warns them how soon it would be shaken,

7 <sup>P</sup> Now they have known that all things  
whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

8 For <sup>1</sup> I have given unto them the words  
which thou gavest me; and they have received

<sup>P</sup> Ch. 15. 15. & 16. 27, 28. & 8. 28. & 12. 49. & 14. 10. See ch. 16. 27, 30. <sup>9</sup> See ver. 6, 7, 13, 15.

shaken, *Do ye now believe?* Behold, as a farther proof of my omniscience, *the hour cometh, yea, is now come*, the moment is at hand, *that I shall be betrayed* into the hands of sinners, and *ye shall be scattered, every man to his own*, flying for safety to any place or friend's house that will conceal you, *and shall leave me alone*, in the power of my enemies; *and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me*; not only as one in nature, and in the inseparable union of the Godhead; but his gracious presence would be with him, as Mediator, supporting him under all his sufferings. *Note*; (1.) In trying times many are apt to desert the profession they have made, unwilling to suffer for Christ and his cause. (2.) They who have reason to be persuaded that they do believe, must not be self-confident: he that thinketh he standeth, must take heed lest he fall. (3.) God does not forsake his afflicted believing people; when all the world, yea, their nearest and dearest friends desert them, a sense of his love, the light of his countenance, and his supporting presence, will make them an abundant recompence for the loss of all besides.

6. For their comfort, he assures them, that the issue of all their trials and his would be peace. *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace*; whatever might happen to them, what he had spoken would afford them a sufficient ground for their support and comfort. *In him*, by faith in his person, and all-sufficient sacrifice and intercession, they would find such a peace as the world never knew; beholding their sins pardoned, and God reconciled to them; enjoying delightful communion with him; and, amidst all their trials, their souls kept serene and calm in the confidence of his power and grace to carry them through, and in the prospect of the glory which should be revealed in them. *In the world ye shall have tribulation*, you must expect and prepare for it; *but be of good cheer*, be confident of my power and grace, and courageously stand in the evil day; *I have overcome the world*; I have vanquished the god of this world with all his wicked instruments; and you may be comfortably assured, through my grace and love, that you shall be made more than conquerors. *Note*; (1.) Every real Christian must expect his cross, and prepare for tribulation; it is inseparable from his profession. (2.) No outward or inward troubles should deject or dishearten us; our Redeemer is mighty, yea, almighty to save. (3.) Peace in our consciences is our privilege and portion, if we do indeed belong to Christ; and usually as our tribulations for Christ abound, our consolations which are by him abound also. (4.) The world, and the things of it, are great enemies to our souls, and the means which the devil employs to ensnare and destroy us; but Christ hath overcome for us, and if we perseveringly cleave to him in faith, he will, by his grace, overcome us, till all our foes shall be made our footstool.

#### C H A P. XVII.

*Ver. 1, 2. These words spake Jesus,*] Our Lord, having thus finished his ministry, and given his disciples all the in-

structions that he judged necessary, closed the whole with a solemn prayer to God; wherein, *first*, he prays for himself, ver. 1—5. *secondly*, for the apostles, ver. 6—10, and again, ver. 24—26. *thirdly*, for all believers, ver. 20, 21, 22, 23. and, *fourthly*, for the world, ver. 21—23. In this prayer he comprizes all that he had said from ch. xiii. 31, and seals, as it were, all he had hitherto done, beholding things past, present, and to come. The present chapter contains the easiest words and the deepest sense of any, perhaps in all the scripture; yet here is no incoherent rhapsody, but the whole is closely and exactly connected. This has been called our Lord's *intercessory prayer*, because it is considered as a pattern of the intercession which he is now making for his believing people in heaven. He addresses God the Father with a simplicity of appellation, *Father*, highly becoming the only and eternally begotten Son of God; to which a believer then makes the nearest approach, when he is fullest of love and humble confidence. *The hour is come, &c.* "The time of my sufferings is at hand; and therefore I pray, that thou wouldst glorify me, thy Son, in those signal appearances for my honour and glory in death, in my recovery from the grave, and my ascent into heaven, which thou hast promised to me, and which I know that thou wilt punctually fulfil; that thy Son also, in the whole series of his conduct, both in this world, in the heaven of heavens, and through the universe, may successfully glorify thee. For thou hast sent thy Son into the world, and given him power over all men, that he may bestow eternal life upon as many as thou hast given him, that is to say, on all who have yielded to thy sacred drawings, and who, through thy grace, having heard thy word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience; a consideration, upon which he ever reflects with the highest joy." See John, vi. 37, and the parallel passages.

*Ver. 3. And this is life eternal;*] *But, or now, thou hast eternal life, &c.* "Now, the way to this eternal life, the beginnings and earnest of it, the evidences of right and truth to it, lie, not only in their approving and fiducial knowledge of thee, under the character of the only true and living God, in opposition to all other gods; but also in their knowledge of me, the anointed Saviour, whom thou hast sent into the world under the character of the only true Mediator, in opposition to all other mediators, or ways of approaching thee, and finding acceptance with thee." That our blessed Lord here speaks of the only true God, in distinction from idols, and not to the exclusion of himself, appears from his speaking of himself as the object of the same fiducial knowledge with the Father, and from his distinguishing himself from the Father, not by an essential title, but merely by his office-character, *Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*. And the same apostle who recorded this prayer, expressly says of Christ, *I am the true God and eternal Life*, in opposition to idols. 1 John, v. 20, 21.

*Ver. 4, 5. I have glorified thee on the earth, &c.]* "I have

them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given

me; for they are thine.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to

Ver. 11-24. Heb. 7. 25, 26. & 9. 24. Rom. 8. 30, 33, 34. Acts, 1. 9.

Ch. 16. 15. & 10. 10, 11. Acts, 13. 48. Rom. 8. 30.

See ch. 16. 28.

all along invariably intended and displayed thy glory, in the whole of my doctrine, miracles, and life, and am ready to honour upon earth all thy perfections by my death, which I am so fully resolved upon, and which will be so certainly and so soon accomplished, that I may speak of it as if it were already over; and I have thereby perfected the great work of atonement, answerably to the utmost demands of thy justice, and to the trust which thou didst repose in me, as the Head and Surety of all thy faithful saints. And now, O my heavenly Father, I plead, that, according to thy engagements to me, thou wouldst advance my incarnate nature to the highest glory at thy right hand, where I may appear in my human nature, and in my mediatorial office, like myself, and may shine in all that divine Majesty, which has been obscured in my state of humiliation on earth, and which I was possessed of, together with thyself, from all eternity."

Ver. 6. I have manifested thy name] In the Hebrew language the name of any thing signifies the thing itself, Acts, ii. 16. Our Lord's meaning is, "I have explained thy nature and perfections; I have declared thy merciful designs towards the world; and I have fully taught thy will and worship unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world, the persons who were chosen by thee out of all mankind to be my apostles. See ch. vi. 44. Thine they were, &c. My apostles belonged to thee, and thou gavest them to me; and they, under my powerful influence upon their hearts, have embraced, and have adhered to the testimony which thou hast given to me, and to the doctrine which I have delivered from thee."

By the apostles belonging to God, our Lord means, "they were originally God's, the creatures of his hand, the happy objects of his choice; his by creation, as well as by being sincere disciples of the former dispensation which God had given by Moses."

Ver. 7, 8. Now they have known, &c.] "These men are fully persuaded, that the commission whereby I act, the doctrine of salvation which I teach, the miracles which I perform, and the authority with which I am clothed, as Mediator, are all derived from thee. In this indeed they have acted upon the surest evidence; for I have revealed to them those mysteries of the kingdom, relating to my person, offices, and benefits, which thou hast authorized me to make known for their instruction and edification; and they, under my grace, have cordially entertained them with faith and love, and accordingly have been well assured in their own minds and consciences, that I, as a divine Person, came into the world from thee; (ch. xvi. 30.) and they have faithfully believed in me as the true Messiah whom thou hast sent."

Ver. 9, 10. I pray for them, &c.] The persons here prayed for, are not regenerate men in general, in opposition to the unregenerate, who are often called the world, but those good men in particular who were given to Jesus by the Father to be his apostles, and who, by that office, were distinguished from the rest of his disciples. This appears from ver. 12. where he says, he had kept all the persons he was praying for, in the faith and practice of his true religion, except the son of perdition; and from ver. 18. where he says, he had commissioned them to go forth into the world, for the same purpose that the Father had sent him into the world; and from ver. 20. where he expressly distinguishes the persons whom he was praying for from all other believers whatever. The reason assigned for making the apostles the immediate subject of his special prayers at this time, is remarkable;—for they are thine; "I employ the last moments of my life in praying particularly for my apostles, because they are more especially thy servants, destined for that work which is the great object of my attention;—the instruction and salvation of the world. Indeed, all my servants are thy servants, (ver. 10.) that is, whoever assists me in my work, serves thee in thy great designs of love and mercy to men. For the same reason thy servants are my servants; every one who really serves thee, must join issue with me, and assist me in my work; and by the zeal, faithfulness, and success of my servants in converting the world, I am greatly honoured." The words in the 10th verse are very high and strong expressions, too grand for any creature to use, as implying that not only servants and ministers, but all things whatsoever—*τὰ πάντα*,—are the common property of the Father and the Son; and this is the original ground of that peculiar property, which both the Father and the Son have in the persons who were given to Christ the Mediator; according to what is said in the close of the verse, of him, I am glorified in them,—namely, by their yielding to the drawings of the Father, and, in an honest and good heart, hearing the word, and keeping it, and cordially believing in the true Messiah, the God-man. See John, vi. 37. and the parallel passages.

Ver. 11. And now I am no more in the world,] "Having finished the work thou gavest me to do, I am no longer to continue in the world:—But these are in the world. My apostles are to continue in the world, to carry on the gracious design of redemption, and I am coming to thee." It is very plain that this clause could not be intended as an additional argument to introduce the following petition; for Christ's coming to the Father was the great security of his faithful people; but seems rather to be a short reflection on that pleasing subject, so familiar to his mind, with which he refreshed himself for a moment in the course of his humble and pathetic address: immediately

thee. Holy Father, \* keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, ' that they may be one, as we *are*.

12 While I was with them in the world, ' I kept them in thy name : those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but ' the son of perdition ; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 <sup>b</sup> And now come I to thee ; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 <sup>c</sup> I have given them thy word ; and <sup>d</sup> the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 ¶ I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst <sup>e</sup> keep them from the evil.

16 <sup>f</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 ¶ <sup>g</sup> Sanctify them through thy truth : thy word is truth.

18 <sup>h</sup> As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 <sup>i</sup> And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be <sup>k</sup> sanctified through the truth.

20 ¶ Neither pray I for <sup>k</sup> these alone, but for <sup>l</sup> them also which shall believe on me through their word ;

\* Pl. 16. 1. & 121. 3—8. If. 27. 1. & 49. 16. 1 Pet. 1. 5. Jude. <sup>y</sup> Ver. 21—23. Eph. 4. 4, 5, 13. Rom. 12. 16. & 15. 5. 6. 1 Cor. 1. 2. 2 Cor. 13. 11. Phil. 2. 2. <sup>z</sup> Heb. 2. 13. Ch. 10. 28. & 18. 9. & 6. 39, 70, 71. & 13. 18. Jude, 7. <sup>2</sup> Ch. 6. 70 & 17. 18. 1 John, 2. 19. 2 Thess. 2. 3. Pl. 109. 8. Acts, 1. 20. <sup>b</sup> Ver. 6—8, 11, 12. Ch. 15. 11. & 16. 4, 33. & xiv—xvi. 1 John, 1. 4. Phil. 4. 4. M. 1. 24. 2. <sup>c</sup> See ver. 8, 12. <sup>d</sup> Ver. 16. Ch. 15. 18—21. 1 John, 3. 13. Ch. 8. 23. Mat. 10. 24, 25. Gen. 3. 15. Prov. 29. 27. Feb. 11. 13. 1 Pet. 4. 4. 1 Cor. 15. 49. <sup>e</sup> See ver. 11. Mat. 6. 13. 1 John, 2. 16. & 5. 18, 19. 2 Thess. 3. 2. Gal. 1. 4. 2 Tim. 3. 1—5, 12, 13. <sup>f</sup> See ver. 11. Ch. 15. 3. Acts, 15. 9. Eph. 5. 26. 1 Pet. 1. 22. Ver. 19. 2 Cor. 3. 18. Ch. 8. 31, 32, 51. Pl. 119. 5, 6, 9, 11, 104, 151. <sup>g</sup> Heb. 13. 12. & 9. 14. & 10. 7, 9, 10. Eph. 5. 25, 26. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19 & 13. & 3. 18. 1 Cor. 1. 2, 30. 1 Thess. 4. 7. <sup>h</sup> Or truly sanctified. <sup>k</sup> Ver. 6—11. Acts, 1. 13. & 11—xix. Eph. 4. 11. 1 Cor. 12. 28. <sup>l</sup> 2 Cor. 2. 41. & 4. 4, &c.

immediately after which, he goes on to intercede for his apostles, *Holy Father, preserve.* &c. “O thou, who art the Source of all truth and righteousness, let those men, whom thou hast given me for assistance, be for ever preserved by thy power, in the firm faith of the doctrines that I have taught them, and in the uninterrupted practice of the precepts which I have delivered unto them; that, when they go abroad into the world, they may teach the same things, and be ever united in the same blessed design, after the pattern of that most perfect union of counsels and designs which subsists between me and thee.”

*Ver. 12. While I was with them.]* “During my personal abode with them, I kept them in the firm faith, and in the steadfast practice of the precepts of my holy religion, so far as I revealed those unto them. I say the twelve men whom thou gavest me for apostles I have thus kept, infomuch that none of them have apostatized, but Judas Iscariot, that wicked person, who deserves perdition; and therefore it was long ago predicted in the scriptures, particularly in Pl. cix. 8.” See on ch. xiii. 19. As the phrase, *son of death*, 1 Sam. xxvi. 16. [Margin,] signifies one who deserves death; and a *child of hell*, Matth. xxiii. 15. signifies one who deserves hell; so here *son of perdition*, signifies a person who deserves perdition.

*Ver. 13. And now come I to thee;]* “I am now about to return to thee, having finished my work; yet, before I leave the world, I offer this prayer in behalf of my apostles, with this intention, that, being heard for them, they may receive all the endowments necessary to qualify them for converting the world, and be filled with my joy; the great joy that I have in saving mankind.” See on ch. xv. 11.

*Ver. 15. I pray not, &c.]* “My meaning is not that, on account of these difficulties, ver. 14. thou shouldst

remove them out of the world by death; I know that the purposes of thy glory, and their own improvement and usefulness, will require their longer continuance. I only pray, that thou wouldst grant them the direction of thy Spirit, and protection of thy providence, whereby they will be preserved both from the evil of sin and temptation, and from the subtlety and malice of the evil ones,—*τῶ πονηρῶ.*” See 1 John, v. 18, 19.

*Ver. 16—19. They are not of the world,]* “It is with great pleasure that I reflect on their being separated from the world, both in principles and practice, and that in this respect they so nearly resemble me. Hence I am the more solicitous that they be preserved untainted and blameless after my departure; wherefore I pray, that through the influence of thy truth upon their minds, thou wouldst give them such a strong inclination to the work of the ministry, that they may wholly devote themselves to it, to whatever difficulties it may expose them. Do this, I beseech thee, for the effectual spreading of thy word, which I have commissioned them to preach as the truth itself. I beseech thee, sanctify them by thy truth, ver. 17, 18. because I have sent them into the world, to prosecute that great and glorious design upon which thou sentest me into the world.” Dr. Whiston would translate the original of ver. 17. *sanctify them by thy truth*, that is, for the propagation of it. To *sanctify* imports not only to *make holy* in the moral sense, but to “dedicate and set apart for religious uses.” Thus the word is used often in the Old Testament, and this sense the connection directs us to put upon it here; though, at the same time, it must be acknowledged, that, when we consider the passage separately, the common sense is extremely just, the word of God, which itself is truth, being the great means of the sanctification of men. Our Lord goes

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they

may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

Ver. 11, 22, 23. Acts, 2. 46. & 4. 32. Rom. 12. 5. Eph. 4. 3-6. 1 Cor. 1. 10. Ch. 1. 18. & 5. 19, 21. & 10. 30, 38. & 14. 9, 10, 22. Ver. 11, 12. Phil. 2. 6. 1 John, 5. 7. Ch. 13. 35. & 14. 10. Mat. 5. 16. Acts, 4. 13. 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. Ch. 1. 16. & 16. 14. & 4. 10, 12. & 20. 21-23. Mark, 6. 7. & 16. 17, 18. Rom. 6. 4, 6. Ch. 14. 23. 1 John, 4. 12-16. Gal. 2. 20. Rom. 8. 11. Col. 2. 10. Ch. 14. 10, 20. & 6. 57. If. 42. 1. Ver. 21. Heb. 11. 40. & 12. 23. Col. 2. 2. Phil. 3. 15. Eph. 4. 12, 13, 16. 1 John, 1. 1. & 4. 19. Jer. 31. 3. Eph. 1. 6. with ver. 24. Col. 1. 13. Mat. 3. 17. Ch. 12. 26. & 14. 3. Phil. 1. 23. Rev. 3. 21. 1 Thess. 4. 17. 1 John, 3. 2. 2 Cor. 3. 18. 1 Cor. 13. 12.

in, ver. 19. And for their sakes, &c. "One grand point which I had in view when I entered on my ministry was, that my apostles might be prepared for the work of the ministry, by the truths I was to teach, and by the miracles I was to perform before them in the course of my ministry. It is likewise one of the ends for which I now devote myself to death, as a victim to be sacrificed, (though the making of an atonement for the sins of the world is infinitely the chief,) inasmuch as the doctrines I have taught them, and which they are to teach, being thus sealed with my blood, will be offered to the world with the strongest evidence; not to mention that my resurrection from the dead will be a most strong proof, first of my divine mission from thee, and next of theirs who act by authority from me." Our Lord's words, in this verse, may perhaps be more fully and strongly expressed thus: "I devote myself as a victim, to be sacrificed for their sakes, for this end among others still more glorious, that they also, taught by my example, and animated by my dying love, may be confirmed in their faith, rendered more holy in their conduct, and be found ready to sacrifice their lives also for the truth."

Ver. 20, 21. Neither pray I for these alone,] "I do not make my apostles the only subjects of this my last prayer; but I pray also for all those who shall be converted by my apostles; intreating for them the gracious influences of thy Spirit, that they may maintain the unity of the faith, and all agree in one doctrine; that, as in this great design of instructing, converting, and saving the world, a most perfect union subsists between thee and me, they also may be taken into the union, and agree as perfectly with us, and among themselves, as thou with me, and I with thee; the effect whereof will be, that the world, discerning their agreement among themselves and with us, will believe that I their Master have been sent into the world by thee, and am one with thee in essence, and in all thy perfections, and unity of counsels." The importance of this quest will appear to all who consider, that many of those who were converted by the apostles, applied themselves to preach and propagate the gospel; and the expression, that the world may believe, &c. plainly intimates, that dissensions among Christian professors would not only be most uncomfortable to themselves, and a hindrance to their own salvation, but would be a means of bringing the truth and excellency of our most holy religion into ques-

tion. And he must be a stranger to what has passed, and is daily passing in the world, who does not see what fatal advantages those divisions have given to infidels to represent it as a calamity, rather than to regard it as a blessing to mankind.

Ver. 22, 23. And the glory which thou gavest me, &c.] "Moreover, the glory of inspiration, of a divine mission, and of the power of miracles to confirm that mission, which thou gavest unto me, I have bestowed on my apostles; and on those who should be converted by them, and employed to preach the gospel to the world; in order that, being commissioned by the same authority, and illuminated with one Spirit, they may fully agree in their doctrine, and their labours may lead to one end: so may they become worthy messengers of thee and thy only-begotten Son, and cause the world fully to know both that thou hast sent me their Master, and that thou approvest of them and their undertaking, even as thou hast approved of me." How fully this prayer for the unity of the first preachers was answered, we learn from the history of the Acts; and their unity must appear very remarkable, when it is considered what vast numbers were employed in preaching the gospel throughout the various countries of the world. Nevertheless, our wonder will cease, when we call to mind that all who possessed the power of miracles, and preached with any authority, were inspired by the Spirit of God; so could not but all agree in the same glorious and divine scheme of religion. We may just observe here the sum of our Lord's whole prayer, first, "Receive me into thy own, and my glory: secondly, let my apostles share therein: thirdly, and all other believers; and, fourthly, let all the world believe."

Ver. 24. Father, I will, &c.] See ver. 5. "Not only with respect to those apostles whom thou hast particularly given me, but also to those in every age and country, who shall sincerely and perseveringly believe in and obey me, my will is, that, after their work here is over, they may be with me in heaven, whither I am going, (ver. 11.) That they may behold the full splendor of my glory, and be made happy with seeing me so, and enjoying me for ever. (1 John, iii. 2.) For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. As thou lovedst me before I came into the world, nay, even before the world was, that is to say, from all eternity, I shall not be less the object of thy love now that I have accom- plished



25 O righteous Father, the world \* hath not known thee: † but I have known thee, and † these have known that thou hast sent me. 26 † And I have declared unto them thy

\* Ch. 8. 19, 55, & 15. 21. & 16. 3. Mat. 11. 25, 26. † Ch. 1. 18. & 7. 29. & 8. 55. & 10. 15. & 5. 19, 20. Mat. 11. 27. 16. 27. Ver. 8, 21. Ch. 6. 69. Mat. 16. 10. † Ch. 15. 15. Ver. 6, 8, 14. Pl. 22. 23. Heb. 2. 12.

“plished the work which thou gavest me to perform. “My disciples, therefore, in beholding the glory which I “shall enjoy with thee in my glorified humanity, will be “completely happy, both as it will shew them how much “thou approvest my design, and how infinitely happy I “am made thereby, and by the fruition and communication of thy glory.” See ver. 26.

Ver. 25, 26. *O righteous Father, &c.*] “O Father, who “art the Author of all righteous designs, and the lover of “righteous men; nay, and from whose very righteousness “flows the admission of believers to thee; though the world, “wilfully ignorant of thy nature and perfections, and of “thy gracious counsels for man’s salvation, has rejected “me, I have notwithstanding every where demonstrated “that I am fully acquainted with thy counsels; and my “apostles knowing that thou hast sent me, and that I am “one with thee, have believed in me as the Messiah; “which is the reason I am so solicitous, that they should “behold the glory thou hast given me: and for this reason “I have, with the greatest care, taught them thy nature, “perfections, and counsels, ver. 26. Nevertheless, being “now incapable, by reason of their prejudices, of receiving full information in these points, I will instruct them “afterwards by the illumination of my Spirit, that the “love which thou hast borne to me, as thy most divine messenger, may be shewn to them, as thy messengers “likewise; and that, being inspired by my Spirit, and enjoying, in their hearts, a revelation of my divine nature, “they may have me dwelling within them, so as always “to act by my authority, and always to be happy in my “love.”

*Inferences.* With what pleasure should we behold our gracious Redeemer in this posture of humble adoration,—lifting up his eyes to his heavenly Father with a solemn devotion, and pouring forth his pious and benevolent spirit in those divine breathings which are here recorded. From his example we may learn to pray, and, from his intercession, to hope. We know that the Father loved him always (ch. xi. 42.) and singularly did he manifest that he heard him now, by all that bright assemblage of glories, which shone around him in the concluding scenes of his abode upon earth, and in those which attended his removal from it: and in all these did the blessed Jesus manifest his zeal for the glory of the Father. May we emulate the same holy temper! And, when we pray, even for our own consummate happiness in the heavenly world, may we consider that happiness as ultimately centering in the honour and service of God!

And well may we be encouraged to hope for this happiness, when we reflect that Christ has an universal power over all flesh, and over spirits superior to those who dwell in flesh; with which he is invested on purpose that he may accomplish the salvation of all his faithful people. We see the certain way to life eternal, even the knowledge of God

in Christ. Let us bless God, that we have so many opportunities of obtaining it; and earnestly pray, that he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, would, by his divine rays, shine also forth on our benighted souls; and so animate us in his service, from the noblest principles of gratitude and love, that we may be able to say, even in our dying moments, with somewhat of that spirit which our Lord expressed, *Father, we have glorified thee on earth, and finished the work which thou gavest us to do; and now, being no more in the world, we come unto thee.* Then may we hope, in our humble degree, to partake of that glory to which he is returned, and to sit down with him on his victorious throne.

In the mean time may our faith see, and our zeal confess Christ! May we acknowledge his divine authority, as having come out from the Father, and as being in his Godhead with him from everlasting! May we be united in love to him and to each other, and be kept by that divine Word to eternal life! Let the fearful instance of the *son of perdition*, who perished even from among the apostles, the chosen of God, teach us a humble jealousy over our own hearts, whatever external privileges we may enjoy; and engage us to maintain a continual regard to him, as unable to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy! Jude, ver. 24.

What perpetual reason of thankfulness have we, that our gracious Master delivered these words in the world, and recalled them thus exactly to the memory of his beloved disciple so many years after, that we, in the most distant ages of his church, might, by reviewing them, have joy fulfilled in us! Let us also with pleasure recollect, that Christ not only prayed for his apostles, but for all that should believe on him through their word; and therefore for us, if we are real, and not merely nominal believers. For us doth he still pray, *not that God would immediately take us out of the world, though for his sake we may be continually hated and injured in it; but that he would keep us from the evil to which we are daily exposed. For our sakes also he sanctify himself, as a propitiation for our sins, that seeing he might be sanctified through the truth: for He gave himself up unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* I. ii. 14.

O may these wise and gracious purposes of his love be fulfilled in us!—May we be one with each other, and with him! May that piety and love appear in the whole of our temper and behaviour, which will evidently show the force of our religion, and reflect a conspicuous honour upon its great Founder!

It is the declared will of Christ,—and let us never forget it, that his faithful saints should be with him where he is, that they may behold his glory which the Father has given him. There is an evident congruity, as well as mercy, in the appointment, that where he is there also should his faithful servants be. The blessed angels do undoubtedly behold the

name, and will declare it: that the love where- and I<sup>c</sup> in them.  
with thou hast loved me<sup>b</sup> may be in them,

<sup>b</sup> 1 John, 4. 16. Rom. 5. 5. Eph. 1. 6. Ch. 15. 9. <sup>c</sup> Col. 1. 27. Eph. 2. 17. Gal. 2. 20. Col. 3. 3. See ver. 25.

glory of Christ with perpetual congratulation and delight: but how much more reason shall we, if faithful, have to rejoice and triumph in it, when we consider it as the glory of one in our own nature,—the glory of our Redeemer and our Friend! O let us often be lifting up the eyes of our faith towards this glory, breathing after heaven in this view; and in the mean time, with all due zeal, and love, and duty, acknowledging the Father and the Son; that so the joys of heaven may be anticipated in our souls, while the love of God is shed abroad there by his Spirit, which is given into us, even something of that love, wherewith he hath loved Jesus, our incarnate Head!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Our Lord having finished his discourse, closes it with a prayer: for those to whom we reach we should also pray. In this chapter Christ recommends his faithful faints to the care and keeping of the Father of mercies; and the blessed effects of it they continue to reap to this hour, and shall to the end of time.

1. He addresses his prayer to the Father, whom, as Mediator and Head of his church, he regarded as his superior, and in whose love he herein expresses his confidence. He approaches him as a Son with reverence and godly fear, lifting up his eyes to heaven, the place where he peculiarly manifests his transcendent glory. Note; (1.) The object of prayer is God only. (2.) Christ lifted up his eyes to heaven to sanctify this gesture to us, and to justify it against the ridicule of scoffers. (3.) None can possibly belong to Christ, who do not shew, in a course of habitual and constant prayer, their dependence upon the Father of Mercies.

2. He prays for himself; that he may be glorified, and enabled, in the completion of the work that he had undertaken most eminently to exalt his Father's glory. Father, thy Hour is come—for his death according to the will of God; and though it approached with horrors unspeakable, he welcomed its arrival, because he saw that the salvation of his faithful people would be the happy fruit thereof: glorify thy Son; as man and Mediator, he looked for support under his sufferings, that some beams of glory might lighten that gloomy scene; that, triumphant over death and all, he might rise the third day, ascend into heaven, and sit on the throne prepared for him; where angels, principalities, and powers, should be made subject unto him; and thence he should send down his Spirit, effectually to establish his kingdom in the earth; and should execute his judgments on the Jewish people, destroying their city and temple; that thy Son also may glorify thee, by suffering in the stead of sinners, and thereby bringing the highest glory to the divine perfections; as also by the discharge of his mediatorial office, when, exalted to the throne of glory, he should send down his Spirit, and the ministry of his servants, that his gospel should be spread abroad, and God's name made great among the Heathen. Note; God's glory should always be the great end we propose in all our prayers and services.

3. He pleads the power, with which, in consequence thereof, he was invested, as an argument to enforce his request: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him: all the concerns of fallen man were put into the Redeemer's hand, that he might be glorified in the salvation of all the faithful. (See the Annotations.) Note; (1.) Man in his mere fallen state, is become flesh and not spirit, brutish in his appetites, passions, and pursuits. (2.) Christ has all human affairs under his mediatorial government, and as such is not only King of faints, but King of kings, and Lord of lords. He manages all the temporal affairs of men as is most subservient to the salvation of his faithful faints, and shall at last be the judge of quick and dead. (3.) Eternal life is the gift of Jesus Christ; he hath purchased the title to it; and has, in virtue of his obedience unto death, a right to bestow this inestimable privilege on all his faithful followers. May I be of that blessed number!

4. He explains wherein this eternal life consists, and what is the way to it. This is life eternal, the earnest and foretaste of it, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent; not a speculative knowledge merely, but such as engages fiducial confidence in God, as the only worthy object of our trust and worship, in opposition to all idols; and such a full persuasion of the divine mission of Jesus, as leads us to him as the only Mediator between God and Man, and satisfies the soul in the clear views of his fulness and all-sufficiency to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him.

5. He pleads what he had done to glorify God upon earth, as the reason and ground of his prayer and confidence that the Father would glorify him with himself in heaven. I have glorified thee on the earth, in my doctrines, miracles, and life; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; of most perfect sinless obedience to death, even the death of the cross, for the redemption of sinners. He was now on the very point of concluding this most grand undertaking; and, being fully purposed to go through with it, he speaks of it as already accomplished. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. Having finished his great atoning work, he became entitled to the promised reward, and confidently expects to be exalted to the mediatorial throne; and to return to heaven again, there to make a display of his own eternal and uncreated glory, which, during his humiliation, he suffered to be obscured by the veil of flesh. Note; They who by grace, through faith, are experimentally interested in this glorious redemption, having the same mind which was in Christ Jesus, desire to live only to glorify God upon earth.

2dly, Having offered up his prayer for himself, he proceeds to enlarge on the behalf of his apostles. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; have particularly revealed to them thy glorious perfections, and designs of grace displayed in my gospel;

## C H A P. XVIII.

*Judas betrayeth Jesus. The officers fall to the ground. Peter smiteth off Malchus's ear. Jesus is taken and led unto Annas and Caiaphas. Peter's denial. Jesus examined before Caiaphas: his arraignment before Pilate: his kingdom. The Jews ask Barabbas to be let loose.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**W**HEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over

<sup>b</sup> the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for <sup>c</sup> Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.

3 <sup>d</sup> Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 26. 36. Mark, 14. 32. Luke, 22. 39. <sup>b</sup> 2 Sam. 15. 23. <sup>c</sup> Chr. 15. 16. <sup>d</sup> 2 Kings, 23. 12. <sup>e</sup> Luke, 22. 37. & 22. 39. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 26. 47. Mark, 14. 43. Luke, 22. 47. Acts, 1. 16. Pf. 3. 1, 2. & 22. 12, 16.

*thine they were, not only by creation, but by faith in thee under an inferior dispensation; and thou gavest them me, by causing them, in a way consistent with thy moral government of the world, to believe in me; (see the Annotations) and they have kept thy word, embracing faithfully the doctrines which I have delivered unto them, publicly professing, and zealously propagating the gospel of the kingdom. Now, of late their minds have been more clearly enlightened, and they have known that all things, whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee; that what I have taught them has the seal of heaven upon it, and that I have acted in all things in perfect conformity, as Mediator, to the commission I have received. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; all the doctrines of gospel-grace relative to man's everlasting peace; how pardon, peace, righteousness, and salvation may be attained through me; and they have received them, in the light and love of thee, and have known surely that I came out from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me, as the promised and true Messiah, invested with divine authority to seek and save lost souls, and to accomplish the full salvation of all his faithful saints. I pray for them, that they may be preserved and kept, and that the work begun may be perfected in them; I pray not [just now] for the world in general, but for them which thou hast [already] given me [out of it] for they are thine, having thee for their Father, by their own voluntary choice and surrender, through thy divine grace and Spirit. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; our interests are inseparably the same, as we are one in nature, essence, and operation; and the faithful saints are alike indebted to both for all the blessings of the covenant of grace; and I am glorified in them, by the miracles done by them in my name, and by the converts they make to the true faith in me. Whence we learn, (1.) Those who are here called the world, are they whose joys, desires, pursuits, and aims, centre in worldly things. They live after the fashion of the world, and, if they continue impenitent, will be condemned with the world. (2.) Keeping Christ's word, holding fast his doctrine, and adorning it by a good conversation, is the substantial evidence of our belonging to him. (3.) The study and delight of all genuine believers is to exalt the name of Jesus, and to ascribe entirely to him the glory of that rich and free salvation, of which he has made them partakers.*

3dly. Our Lord proceeds in his prayer for his dear disciples, whom he was going to leave; and therefore, as

man and mediator, commends them to his Father's care and keeping. *And now I am no more in the world, ready to depart, and return to my radiant throne in glory; in these are in the world, left to conflict awhile with temptations, afflictions, and persecutions; and I am going from them, so that they will be deprived of the comfort of my bodily presence, when I come to thee. Holy Father, essentially holy in thyself, and the Author and Source of all holiness to thy creatures; keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me; by thy almighty power, and for thy own glory, preserve them from sinking under their trials; strengthen them against their spiritual foes, Satan, the world, and sin; keep them by thy grace, till thou shalt bring them to thy glory; that they may be one as we are, united in affection and labours, and having the same interests and designs. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name, according to the commission with which I was invested, and by the influence of thy grace: those that thou gavest me to be my apostles, I have kept in the faith and hope of the gospel; and none of them is left, and left to perish, but the son of perdition, that traitor Judas, that the scripture might be fulfilled (Psal. xli. 9. cix. 8.) And now come I to thee, having finished my work, and returning to my glorious rest: and these things I speak in the world, and offer these requests on their behalf, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves, happy in the present experience of my love; in the quickening, guiding, and comforting influences of my Spirit; and in the hope inspired by the great and precious promises that are in me; so that their joys on earth may increase, and be growing up into consummate glory in heaven. I have given thee thy word, have put them in trust with thy gospel, and furnish them with gifts to publish it through the world. And, because they have embraced the truth, and boldly confessed it, the world hath hated them, unable to bear the reproaches of their preaching and practice; because they are not of the world, in their principles, tempers, and conduct, opposite to the carnal minds and conversation of natural sensual men, who mind earthly things; even as I am not of the world; and my example and doctrine have been faithfully observed. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, deliver them at once from all the power of their enemies, and put an immediate period to all their trials and troubles; but that thou shouldst keep them from evil, supporting them under all their sufferings, preserving them from falling into sin, and bruising the wicked.*

4 Jesus therefore, <sup>e</sup> knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

5 They answered him, <sup>f</sup> Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, <sup>g</sup> stood with them.

<sup>e</sup> Mat. 16. 21. & 17. 22, 23. & 20. 18, 19. & 26. 2, 21-24, 31, 32. Jer. 8. 12.

<sup>f</sup> Luke, 18. 37. & 1. 26. & 2. 4, 59, 51. Mat. 2. 23. <sup>g</sup> If. 3. 9.

Satan, under their feet; thus causing them to triumph over all opposition. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world*; therefore they will be sorely thrust at, as I have been: and, as thou hast supported me, let them experience the like protection, and share thy care and love. *Note*; (1.) The prospect of going to be with God in glory, cannot but make it pleasing to quit a world of wretchedness: the hour of dismissal will be to the faithful the beginning of their endless felicity. (2.) The world is the Christian's grand enemy; and the victory that overcometh it, is *our faith*; and this is the gift of God to the soul that yields to his drawings. (3.) Christ's believing people have work to do for him in the world; and however desirable it is to be with him, they must not be in haste to go before his time; but patiently take up their crosses, fight the good fight of faith, and hope to the end. (4.) No man's profession, privileges, gifts, or apparent attainments, where *the heart is not right with God*, will stand him in any stead; when the hour of trial comes, he will be proved, like Judas, *a son of perdition*. (5.) The Lord will have his faithful disciples walk joyfully, not mournfully, before him; and he has for this end left them the exceeding great and precious promises, and ever lives to make intercession for them. (6.) The faithful servants of Jesus, who keep his word, and refuse to be conformed to the ways and manners of this wicked world, may expect to be hated by those, against whom their words and works cannot but testify that their deeds are evil.

4thly, Our Lord, having prayed for his disciples' preferment, prays in the next place for their sanctification. *Sanctify them through thy truth*; consecrate them for their sacred office, and let them be under the powerful influences of thy word and Spirit, that in their own souls they may experience increasing purity, and be enabled for the propagation of the truth of the gospel through the world: *thy word is truth, infallibly certain* in itself, and the great means of purifying the heart. *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world*, with the same gospel, and on the same errand, to advance thy glory, and promote the salvation of immortal souls. *And for their sakes I sanctify myself*, am now ready to offer up myself a sacrifice, and to enter on my mediatorial office in glory, as their great High Priest, to be the eternal advocate for all my faithful saints: *that they also*, in virtue of my intercession for them, and by the mission of the Holy Ghost to their hearts, *might be sanctified through the truth*, for the practice of all true godliness, and strengthened and made successful in propagating the glad tidings unto the ends of the earth. *Note*; (1.) All Christ's people shall be made partakers of true holiness: he saves none whom he does not sanctify. (2.) What was his prayer for his apostles must be ours daily for ourselves, that God would carry on the blessed work of his grace in our hearts, and perfect that which he hath begun. (3.) The word of

God is the great means of our sanctification; and by it, through the quickening influences of the Holy Ghost, are we enabled to grow up into him in all things, who is our Head, even Christ. (4.) The real ministers of Jesus are his peculiar concern; and they who are truly his, prove it by the practical influence his word has on their own hearts, and the zeal with which they preach the truth to others. (5.) They who go into the ministry under a divine mission and call, may confidently expect the divine assistance and blessing.

5thly, Christ's prayer is not limited merely to requests for his apostles, but, in the next place, includes all his faithful people to the latest ages.

*Neither pray I for these alone, my first ministers or apostles, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word*, in all succeeding generations; *that they all may be one in faith and love, by the preaching of the gospel collected together, and united in one body under the same living Head; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, animated by the same Spirit; one in judgment, disposition, designs, desires, and admitted into the nearest fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me, beholding the powerful effects of my grace upon them: and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that is to say, the gospel, with all its inestimable blessings; and, to many of them the power of working miracles by my Spirit; that they may be one, even as we are one, in strictest union with us and with each other through the same Spirit; I in them, as the head of vital influences to them; and thou in me, by thy Spirit given without measure unto me; that they may be made perfect in one, be united in the most cordial love, without any jarring affection, or the least mixture of sorrow and complaint: and that the world may know that thou hast sent me*, convinced by the present power of thy grace, displayed in their concord, unity, and mutual love. *And it shall then appear that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me*, by the mission of thy Holy Spirit, and by all the gracious, miraculous, and glorious fruits issuing therefrom. *Note*; (1.) The ministry of the word is the great instrument that Christ is pleased to make use of, in order to beget faith in the souls of men. (2.) All true Christians are one in Christ Jesus: he is their living Head: they are by faith and love united to him, and joined in one Spirit to each other. (3.) They who despise, insult, and ridicule the followers of Jesus, will shortly be convinced, to their confusion, how highly these are the objects of his love.

6thly, Our Lord concludes his prayer with a holy but humble demand, as the eternal Son of the everlasting Father, for the eternal salvation of his eleven apostles.

*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am*. It is my demand, and I claim it as my right, *that they be brought to my eternal kingdom,*

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they<sup>b</sup> went backward, and fell to the ground.

7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek

ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

<sup>b</sup> Pf. 129. 4. & 40. 14. Eccl. 3. 4. This shewed that he could easily have killed them.

<sup>i</sup> Mat. 26. 56. & 29. 28. 1 Pet. 5. 7.

and may behold my glory which thou hast given me, transformed into the same image, adoring and rejoicing; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world, and therefore wilt grant all my requests. O righteous Father, whose will is most just, and whose promises are all faithful and true; the world hath not known thee, thy perfections, councils, or designs; but I have known thee most intimately and perfectly; and these my present disciples and apostles have known that thou hast sent me, the promised Messiah. And I have declared unto them thy name, thy nature, attributes, and designs of grace; and will declare it, by farther discoveries to them of thy mind and will, after my resurrection, and by the mission of the Spirit; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them; and they, knowing it, may, by experience of the same love, be made unutterably blessed and happy; and I in them, taking up my residence in their hearts, and thus preparing them for the fruition of eternal felicity with me in glory. Note: The world lieth in ignorance and wickedness: happy are they who are enlightened by Jesus, and through his grace are come out of the world.

#### CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1, 2. He went forth with his disciples] When the intercessory prayer was ended, Jesus and his disciples came down from the mount of Olives into a field below, called Gethsemane. Through this field the brook Cedron ran, and in it, on the other side of the brook, was a garden, commonly called by the name of the Garden of Gethsemane; concerning which see the note on Matth. xxvi. 36. It was the brook Cedron, which David, a type of Christ, went over with the people, weeping, in his flight from Abalom. Jesus we are told resorted to the garden of Gethsemane, which probably belonged to one of Christ's friends, and to which he had a liberty of retiring whenever he pleased: here accordingly he often used to spend some considerable time in prayer and pious converse, in the evenings or nights, after his indefatigable labours in the city and temple by day. It is indeed amazing how flesh and blood could go through such incessant fatigues: but it is very probable that Christ might exert some miraculous power over his own animal nature, to strengthen it for such difficult services, and to preserve it in health and vigour; otherwise the copious dews, which fall by night in those parts, must have been very dangerous, especially when the body was heated by preaching in the day, and often by travelling several miles on foot.

Ver. 3. A band of men] This band consisted of Roman soldiers; for both its name, *σώματα*, a cohort, and the title of its commander, *χιλιάρχος*, (ver. 12.) *Chiliarch*, answering to our colonel, are Roman military terms. The word rendered officers, *ὑπηρέτας*, properly signifies servants. They carried lanterns and torches with them, because, though it

was always full-moon at the passover, the sky might be darkened by the clouds, and the place where they were going was shaded with trees.

Ver. 4. Jesus knowing all things that should come, &c.] That were coming. Our Lord not only knew in general, that he should suffer death, but of course, as the God-man, was acquainted with all the particular circumstances of ignominy and horror that should attend his sufferings; which accordingly he largely foretold; (See Matth. xx. 18, 19. and the parallel places;) though many of these circumstances were as contingent as can well be imagined. It is impossible to enter aright into the heroic behaviour of our Lord Jesus, without carrying this circumstance along with us. The critics are in raptures at the gallantry of Achilles, in going to the Trojan war, when he knew, according to Homer, that he should fall there. But he must have a very low way of thinking, who does not see infinitely more fortitude in our Lord's conduct on this great occasion, when the present circumstance, so judiciously, though so modestly suggested by St. John, is duly attended to.

Ver. 6. They went backward, and fell to the ground.] As there were scribes and priests among them, they must have read of the destruction of those companies, which came to seize the prophet Elijah, 2 Kings, i. 10, 12.—a fact, which bore so great a resemblance to the present, that it is an amazing instance of the most obdurate wickedness, that they should venture to renew the assault on Christ after so sensible an experience both of his power and mercy. Nothing seems more probable, than that these men might endeavour to persuade themselves and their attendants, that this strange repulse was effected by some dæmon, in confederacy with Jesus, who opposed the execution of justice upon him; and they might perhaps ascribe it to the special providence of God, rather than to the indulgence of Jesus, that they had received no further damage. The most corrupt heart has commonly its reasonings to support it in its absurdest notions and most criminal actions. However, to all unprejudiced minds, the exertion and suspension of his divine power were sufficient proofs that our Lord could not have been apprehended without his own consent, and that his death was a voluntary sacrifice.

Ver. 8. If therefore ye seek me,] This was not a request, which would have been but little attended to by an inveterate multitude, but a command; for the same divine power which struck them to the ground, ver. 6. withheld their hands from seizing the disciples, even after Peter had assaulted Malchus. Who can fail remarking the extreme tenderness of our Lord towards those who had so lately neglected him, sleeping while he was in such an agonizing state, that yet he would not suffer them to be terrified by so much as a short imprisonment. His disciples perhaps

9 That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, <sup>k</sup> Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

10 ¶ <sup>l</sup> Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: <sup>m</sup> the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

12 ¶ <sup>n</sup> Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and <sup>o</sup> bound him,

13 And led him away to <sup>p</sup> Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year <sup>q</sup>.

14 <sup>r</sup> Now Caiaphas was he which gave coun-

sel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

15 ¶ <sup>s</sup> And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

16 <sup>t</sup> But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

18 <sup>u</sup> And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

<sup>k</sup> Ch. 17. 12. & 10. 28. Jude, 7. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 26. 33, 35, 51. Mark, 14. 47. Luke, 22. 50. Ver. 18, 26. <sup>m</sup> Pf. 75. 8. Mat. 20. 22, 23. 26. 39, 42, 51. Mark, 10. 38. & 14. 36, 47. Luke, 12. 50. & 22. 42, 50. <sup>n</sup> Mat. 26. 57. Mark, 14. 53. Luke, 22. 54. Acts, 2. 23-24. <sup>o</sup> Gen. 22. 9. Pf. 105. 18. & 118. 27. Judg. 16. 21. <sup>p</sup> Luke, 3. 2. Ver. 24. Acts, 4. 6. <sup>q</sup> And Annas sent Christ bound unto Caiaphas the high priest. Ver. 24. <sup>r</sup> Ch. 11. 49. 50. <sup>s</sup> Mat. 26. 58. Mark, 14. 54. Luke, 22. 54. <sup>t</sup> Mat. 26. 69, 70. Mark, 14. 54-55. <sup>u</sup> Mark, 14. 54. Luke, 22. 55, 56. Pf. 1. 1. Prov. 9. 6. & 13. 20.

might consider this speech as an excuse for their forsaking him: but had they viewed it in a just light, it would rather have appeared a strong engagement upon them to have waited for that fair dismissal, which our Lord seemed about to give them. See the parallel places.

Ver. 10. *Then Simon Peter, &c.*] See the introductory note to this gospel.

Ver. 12. *Then the band, &c. took Jesus*] See on ver. 3. There was a Roman guard and commanding officer, who attended near the temple during the great festivals, to prevent any sedition of the Jews; and these appear to be the band and captain here mentioned. See Acts, xxi. 32. and Luke xxii. 52. They bound our Lord; but they did not reflect, that it was not the cord which held him: his immense charity was by far a stronger band. He could have struck them all dead with as much ease as he had before thrown them on the ground. Nevertheless, he patiently submitted to this and to every other indignity which they put upon him; so meek was he under the greatest injuries, so ready to suffer for human salvation!

Ver. 13. *And led him away to Annas first,*] See the note on Matth. xxvi. 57. Caiaphas seems to have enjoyed the sacerdotal dignity during the whole course of Pilate's government in Judea; for he was advanced to it by Valerianus, Pilate's predecessor, and was divested of it by Gallus, governor of Syria, after he deposed Pilate as procuratorship.

15. *And so did another disciple:*] This, as we have observed, is supposed to have been St. John himself. See on Matth. xxvi. 69. and Luke, xxii. 54. Grotius is of opinion, that this disciple was not one of the twelve, but rather an inhabitant of Jerusalem; possibly

the person at whose house our Lord ate the paschal supper. Whitby likewise thinks it was not John. These authors found their opinion on this circumstance, that the twelve being Galileans, and men of mean stations, could not any of them be so well acquainted in the high-priest's family, as to procure admission for a friend at a time of so much business. However, when we consider that St. John was to write a history of Christ's life, it will appear very proper, but by no means necessary, that in the course of Providence he should have an opportunity afforded him of being an eye-witness of this most solemn scene before the council.

Ver. 17. *Art not thou also one, &c.*] It seems the damsel, after having admitted Peter, followed him to the fire, and spake to him there in an angry tone, having been informed that it was he who had cut off her fellow-servant's ear. See ver. 26. and the parallel places.

Ver. 18. *A fire of coals; for it was cold*] See the note on Jer. xxxvi. 22. Fires in winter are used but for a little while at Aleppo, which is considerably further to the north than Jerusalem; and some there make use of none at all. The fires they then use in their lodging-rooms are of charcoal, in pans; which sort of fire also is used by the Egyptians. They had no chimneys. But what seems most to have required the use of wood, and consequently chimneys, among the Jews, was the dressing the paschal lamb; for charcoal might without doubt be sufficient for their common cookery. If, however, they roasted the lambs of the passover, as Thevenot tells us the Persians do *whole sheep*, as well as lambs, which are not designed for sacred purposes, the use of smoky wood might be avoided; for they do it, he says, in ovens, which have the mouth open at the top; into which, after

19 ¶ The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus\* with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken

evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

25 ¶ And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

26 One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith did not I see thee in the garden with him?

27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

28 ¶ Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas

\* Luke, 11. 53, 54. & 22. 20.    † Luke, 2. 46. & 4. 15, 16.    Ch. 5. 14—47. & 7. 14, 26. & 8. 8. & 10. 23.    Luke, 21. 37.    Pl. 21. 22. & 40. 9, 10.    ‡ Ch. 7. 46.    § 1c. 45. 19. & 48. 16.    Ch. 3. 21.    ¶ Jer. 20. 2.    \*\* Acts, 23. 3.    †† Mic. 5. 1.    ††† 1c. 50. 6.    †††† Mat. 11. 29.    ††††† 1 Pet. 2. 22, 23.    †††††† Mat. 26. 57.    ††††††† Ver. 13.    Luke, 3. 2.    †††††††† Mat. 26. 71, 72.    Mark, 14. 69, 70.    Luke, 22. 58.    ††††††††† Luke 22. 59, 60.    Mark, 14. 70, 71.    Mat. 26. 73, 74.    †††††††††† Mat. 26. 74, 75.    Mark, 14. 71, 72.    Luke, 22. 60, 61.    Ch. 13. 38.    Mark, 14. 30. & 15. 1.    Luke, 23. 1.    ††††††††††† Mat. 27. 2.

after they are well heated, they put the meat, with an earthen pan underneath, to receive the fat: they roast alike on all sides, and he acknowledges that they dress them well. He subjoins another way of roasting a whole sheep, practised by the Armenians, by which also the use of smoky wood is avoided: for having flayed it, they cover it again with the skin, and put it into an oven upon the quick coals, covering it also with a good many of the same coals, that it may have fire under and over, to roast it well on all sides; and the skin keeps it from being burned. But however these things may be, it is certain that this account is in no wise contradicted, but rather confirmed, by what St. John says of a fire kindled in a palace at Jerusalem, to warm persons who had been out in a cold night, which it seems was a fire of charcoal, not of wood, and gives a propriety to the mentioning of this circumstance which I never observed to be remarked in any author. In like manner paschal ovens are also mentioned by Jewish writers. See the *Observations on Sacred Scriptures*, p. 117.

Ver. 19—21. *The high priest then asked Jesus*] The court being duly constituted, and the prisoner placed at the bar, the trial began about break of day. See Luke, xxii. 66. The high priest asked our Lord, what his disciples were? for what end he had gathered them? whether it was to make himself a king? and what the doctrine was which he taught them? In these questions there was a great deal of art; for as the crime laid to our Lord's charge was, that he had set himself up for the Messiah, and deluded the people, they expected he would claim that dignity in their presence, and so, without further trouble, they would have immediately condemned him on his own confession. But to oblige a prisoner to confess what might take away his life, being an unjust method of procedure, Jesus complained of it with reason, and bade them prove what they laid to his charge by witnesses. "I spake openly, as to the manner; ever, or continually, as to the time; in the synagogue and temple, as to place; in secret have I said nothing;—no point of doctrine which I have not taught

"in public." It was greatly to the honour of our Lord's character, that all his actions were done in public, under the eye even of his enemies; because, had he been carrying on any imposture, the lovers of truth and goodness had thus abundant opportunities to have detected him. In his defence, therefore, he appealed, with beautiful propriety, to that part of his character.

Ver. 22, 23. *One of the officers—struck Jesus*] As the word *ἔκρουσε* is supposed by many etymologists to be derived from *παλῶς*, a staff, or stick, Beza would therefore render the passage, *he smote Jesus with a staff*. But the word is apparently used for any blow, and would most literally be rendered, *gave Jesus a blow*; though from Matth. v. 39. one would be apt to interpret it in the sense which our translators have given it. Suidas also explains it in the same sense. The meaning of ver. 23. considered as our Lord's immediate reply to the officer who struck him, is sufficiently manifest. Mr. Bonnell, however, and some other expositors, suppose that the original conveys the following more extensive sense: "If thou hast been one of my hearers, and canst say that I at any time have spoken evil, either of God or man, in the course of my preaching, thou wilt do well to bear thy testimony concerning that evil, and give it in evidence to the court; but if I have spoken well, can reason be answered by blows? or can such a sober appeal to deserve them?" Thus our Lord became an example of his own precept, Matth. v. 44. bearing the greatest injuries with a patience which could not be provoked.

Ver. 24. *Now Annas had sent him bound, &c.*] This verse is to be read in a parenthesis, as referring to ver. 13.

Ver. 27. *And immediately the cock crew.*] See the note on Matth. xxvi. 73, 74. and the *Inferences* on this chapter.

Ver. 28. *Then led they Jesus—unto the hall of judgment.*] When the evangelist says *it was early*, he points out to us the great hurry and eagerness of the Jews to have this mystery of iniquity accomplished; for it was not customary with them to judge any man before the ninth hour. See

unto the \* hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the \* passover.

29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man.

30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

\* Or Pilate's house. h Prov. 1. 16. & 4. 16. Mic. 2. 1. Pf. 149. 2. i Acts, 10. 28. & 11. 3. Mat. 23. 23, 24. \* Feast offering. Deut. 16. 2. 2 Chr. 30. 17. & 35. 8, 9, 13. l Acts, 25. 27. Ch. 7. 51. m With Gen. 49. 10. Ezek. 21. 26, 27. Ch. 19. 15.

See on Luke, xxii. 66. By the law, Numb. xix. 22. Whosoever touched any unclean person, was unclean; for this reason the chief priests and elders, when they came to the pretorium, would not go in, lest the pollutions that they might have contracted in the house of a heathen, should render them unfit for eating the passover, for which they had now purified themselves. See Acts, x. 28. The same reason likewise hindered them from going into the pretorium at the other festivals, which the governor attended for the sake of administering justice. But to make the matter easy, a kind of structure was erected, adjoining to the palace, which served instead of a tribunal, or judgment-seat. This structure, from its Hebrew name Gabbatha, seems to have been pretty high, and was called in the Greek λιθόστρωτον, being paved with little pieces of marble of divers colours, because it was generally exposed to the weather. Perhaps it was something like a stage, but larger, open on all sides, but covered above, at least when the governor was to hear causes, having a throne placed on it for him to sit on; and as it was joined to the palace wall, there was a door in the wall, by which he came out upon it from within. The people therefore standing around, in the open air, could hear and see the governor when he spoke to them from the pavement, without danger of being defiled, either by him, or any of his retinue.

Ver. 29. What accusation bring ye against this man? This was the most natural question imaginable for a judge to ask on such an occasion; nevertheless the priests thought themselves affronted by it. It seems they knew the governor's sentiments concerning the prisoner, and understood his question as carrying an insinuation along with it, of their having brought one to be condemned, against whom they could find no accusation. Besides, Pilate may have spoken to them with a stern air, so as to signify his displeasure. The word malefactor, κακῶποιος, in the next verse, implies a notorious offender. As the Jews had still the power of inflicting slighter punishments, their bringing Christ to Pilate was a proof that they judged him to be such an offender, as to have incurred a capital sentence.

Ver. 31. Take ye him, and judge him] By making this offer to them, the governor told them plainly, that, in his opinion, the crime which they laid to the prisoner's charge, was not of a capital nature; and that such punishments as they were permitted by Caesar to inflict, might be adequate to any misdemeanour with which Jesus was chargeable. One cannot suppose that Pilate could be ignorant of the case before him; for he began his government at Jerusalem

before Jesus entered on his public ministry; and besides many other extraordinary things which he must formerly have heard concerning him, he had, no doubt, received a full account of his public entrance into Jerusalem the beginning of the week; and also of his apprehension, in which the Jewish rulers were assisted by a Roman cohort, which could hardly be engaged in that service without the Governor's express permission. It seems Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea, (who seems to have been personally acquainted with Pilate,—see Chap. xix. 38.) or some other friend, had told him fully of the affair, for he entertained a just notion of it. He knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. It plainly appears, however, by his whole conduct, that he was very unwilling to engage in this cause. He seems cautious, therefore, not to enter into the full sense of what the Jewish rulers intended, when they called him a malefactor; but answers them in ambiguous language, which they might have interpreted as a warrant to execute Christ, if they found it necessary, and yet which would have left them liable to be questioned for doing it, and might have given him such an advantage against them, as a man of his character might have wished. Their reply shews that they were more aware of this artifice than has been generally imagined. It is not lawful for us to put any man to death. See the note on Mark, xv. 1. To what has been observed there, we add, that it appears both from this acknowledgment of the Jews, and from the writings of more modern rabbies (which assert, that forty years before the destruction of the temple, the power of judicature, in capital crimes, was taken away from them,) that Jewish magistrates under the Romans had not the power of inflicting capital punishments. This is manifest also from the nature and constitution of a Roman province; for, during the free state of the Romans, no freeman could be put to death at Rome, but by the suffrages of the body of the people, or by the senate, or by some superior magistrate appointed for that purpose. In the provinces, the power of capital punishments was granted to the governors by the especial commission called imperium. Upon the change of the government, this power came into the hands of the emperors, and was by them intrusted with the praefectus urbis, the praefect of the city, at Rome; and in the provinces, with the respective governors, as before. This power could not be delegated by the governors to any other person, while they themselves were in the provinces; nor is there any instance whereby it appears, that any other court had this power at the same time with the Roman governor, and in such places where he could exercise



32. ° That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

33. ° Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the king of the Jews?

34. Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

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

36. Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

° Mat. 20. 19. & 26. 2. Ch. 12. 32, 33. For the Jews did not crucify any.

° Mat. 27. 11. Mark, 15. 2. Luke, 23. 3.

° Pl. 17. 1.

20. Rom. 3. 1, 2. with Neh. 4. 2. Ezra, 4. 12.

° Ver. 25. Mat. 27. 2.

Mark, 15. 1. Luke, 23. 1.

° Rev. 1. 5. & 3. 14. 1 Tim. 6. 13.

° If. 9. 6, 7. Dan. 7. 13, 14. & 2. 44. Ch. 6. 15. & 8. 15. 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.

Luke, 12. 14. & 17. 20, 21.

exercise it. There were indeed some free cities in the provinces dependent on the Romans, which had this power within themselves; but then the Roman governors had it not at the same time in those places; though if the inhabitants attempted any thing in a hostile manner against the Romans, the governors had it in their commission to check them, as well as any other enemies. The Roman provinces were not all settled upon the same footing; that is, the grants and privileges were not made alike to all. Civil causes and lesser crimes must necessarily either be left to the inhabitants or some inferior officers; for it was impossible that the governor himself should perform all this in person; and therefore each governor had usually several *legates* with him, besides his *questor*, who were capable of administering justice in different parts of the country, and seem to have had a larger power than the municipal magistrates, for they represented the governor himself: but no sufficient evidence is offered to prove, that any other court than his own had cognizance of capital crimes; nor does such a power appear at all agreeable to the scheme and maxims of the Roman government, which in this point seems to have continued uniform and consistent with itself, under the great alterations that it underwent in other respects; and, therefore, whatever other indulgences they might grant to the Jews, or other provincials, it does not thence follow that they allowed them this, or suffered their governors to sit still as idle spectators, while any other court assumed a judicial power to take away the lives of any persons within their district, who were all equally under their protection. The case of Stephen has indeed been thought by some an instance in favour of the contrary opinion; but that this fact rather ought to be esteemed as the result of a hasty and intemperate zeal, and done in a tumultuous manner, than as the effect of a legal sentence consequent upon a judicial process, has been justly observed by Dr. Lardner, in his *Credibil.* Part i. p. 112.

*Ver. 32. Signifying what death he should die.]* According to the Jewish law, Lev. xxiv. 16. he would have been *stoned*, as his servant Stephen afterwards was, having been impiously adjudged by them to have deserved death as a blasphemer. *Crucifixion* was a Roman punishment.

*Ver. 33. Then Pilate entered, &c.]* The expression used by the Jews in their accusation of our Lord, Luke, xxiii. 2. *Saying, that he himself is Christ a King,* may no doubt

refer to the acknowledgment which Jesus made before the council of his being the Messiah. Nevertheless, to account for Pilate's asking our Lord whether he assumed the title of the king of the Jews, we must suppose, that the priests explained their accusation by telling him, that Jesus had travelled incessantly through the country, and every where gave himself out for the Messiah; and that even during his trial before them, he had been so presumptuous as to assume that dignity in open court. Without some information of this kind, the governor would hardly have put the question to Jesus, no prisoner being obliged to accuse himself. See on ver. 37. We are not to expect the sacred historian to enter into every minute particular of the trial.

*Ver. 34—36. Sayest thou this thing of thyself.]* "Dost thou ask this question of thine own accord, because thou thinkest I have affected regal power; or dost thou ask it according to the information of the priests, who affirm that I have acknowledged myself to be a king?" Of course the omniscient God-man knew what had happened; but he spake to the governor after this manner, because, being in the palace when the priests accused him without, he had not, as man, heard what they said. *Pilate answered, Am I a Jew?* "Dost thou think that I am acquainted, or that I concern myself with your religious opinions, expectations, and disputes? Your own rulers have delivered you up as a seditious person; one who assumes the title of king: what have you done to merit this charge of sedition?" *Jesus answered,*—"Though I have acknowledged that I am a king, yet I am no man of sedition; for my kingdom is not of this world: had it been so, my servants would have fought. I should have endeavoured to establish myself on the throne by force of arms, and would have fought against the Jews when they came to apprehend me: but as I have done neither, it is evident that the kingdom which I claim is not of this world." It may be objected, that the number of Christ's disciples, had they all been assembled in arms, could have been no match for the Jewish and Roman power at Jerusalem: but it is to be remembered, that the populace appeared zealously on his side but a few days before; and the reason of their turning against him was, his not assuming a temporal kingdom, as they certainly expected he would have done. And we may further add, that a very small body of forces, under a leader endowed with such miraculous powers as Jesus had, is

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, 'Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that

is <sup>x</sup> of the truth heareth my voice.

38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, <sup>y</sup> I find in him no fault at all.

<sup>z</sup> (i. e.) Yes. Mat. 26. 64. with Mark, 14. 62. & 8. 32, 47. & 7. 17. 1 John, 4. 6. & 3. 19.

<sup>u</sup> 1 Tim. 6. 13. Rev. 1. 5. & 3. 14. If. 55. 4. <sup>v</sup> Mat. 27. 24. Luke, 23. 4, 14, 15. Ch. 19. 4, 6.

<sup>x</sup> 1 Pet. 1. 23. Gal. 4. 28. Ch. 17. 17.

exercised, or rather under Omnipotence itself, might have been sufficient to vanquish all the Roman legions. See John, vi. 15.

Ver. 37. *Thou sayest that I am a king.*] Some would read this, *Thou sayest [the truth]: For I am a king.* "I came into the world for this end; that by explaining and proving the truth in general, and this great and fundamental branch of it in particular, I might impress it upon men's consciences, and make them obedient to its laws. In this consisteth my kingdom; and all the lovers of truth obey me, and are my subjects." What our Lord here says incidentally, is to be regarded as an universal maxim. All sincere lovers of truth will hear him: and accordingly, St. John, with all simplicity, depending on the evidences which he and his brethren had given of their mission from Christ, lays down the same testimony, *They are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us;* 1 John, iv.

In this conference between our Saviour and Pilate we may observe, first, that our Lord being asked whether he were King of the Jews, answers so, that he denies it not, but avoids giving the least umbrage, as if he had any design upon the government. For though he allows himself to be a King, yet, to obviate any suspense, he tells Pilate *My kingdom is not of this world;* and evidences it by this, that if he had pretended to any title to that country, his followers would have fought for him, had he been inclined to have set up his kingdom by force, or were his kingdom to be erected in that manner; *But my kingdom, says he, is from hence,*—is not of that kind or nature: *Secondly,* that Pilate, by the words and circumstances of Christ, being satisfied that He laid no claim to his province, nor wanted any disturbance of the government, was yet a little surpris'd to hear a man in that poor garb, without retinue, so much as a servant or a friend, own himself to be a King; and therefore asked him, with some kind of wonder, *Art thou a King? Βασιλεὺς εἶ σύ:*—*Thirdly,* we may observe, our Saviour declares that his great business of coming into the world, was to testify and make good this important and fundamental truth,—that he was a king; or in other words, that he was the Messiah: *Fourthly,* that whoever were followers of truth, and got into the way of truth and happiness, would receive this doctrine concerning him, that was the Messiah. This is what St. Paul calls the *good confession,* which he tells Timothy, *Jesus witnessed before Pontius Pilate.* 1 Tim. vi. 13. And justly does he so testify; for our Lord did not deny the truth to save his own life, but gave all his followers an example most worthy of their imitation. A careful attention to, and imitation of, his *good confession,* will be the best proof we can give, that we love the truth, and the best method we can

take to make ourselves acquainted with it: And of such infinite importance is *the truth* to all our best and dearest interests, that it surely deserves the attentive inquiry and zealous patronage of the *greatest* and the *busiest* of mankind.

Ver. 38. *Pilate saith,—What is truth?*] "What is this truth which you refer to, and which you so solemnly speak of, as your business to attest?" And when he had said this, as Jesus made a pause and did not immediately make him any answer, his hurry would not allow him to wait for it: so he went out again to the Jews, and said to the chief priests, and the people assembled with them abroad, I have examined in private the prisoner you brought me; and I must freely declare that I find no fault at all in this man, nor can I perceive that he is any enemy either to the rights of Cæsar, or the tranquillity and happiness of the Jews; and therefore do not see how I can with any justice condemn him to die. But his inveterate accusers, refusing to acquiesce in this, advanced a more circumstantial charge against him, which gave occasion to that examination before Herod, which St. Luke records, Ch. xxiii. 7—12.

*Inferences drawn from Peter's denial of our Lord.* Ver. 17—27.—The fall of St. Peter would be a very melancholy instance of human infirmity, did it not likewise set before us a signal example of the divine mercy, and of the power of grace, triumphing over the weakness of human nature: St. Peter, from various striking circumstances in the gospel history, seems to have had, during our Lord's sacred ministry, the greatest share of natural courage and resolution of any of the apostles, and the fullest persuasions of faith; (Matth. xvi. 16—19. ch. xiii. 37. ver. 10. of this chapter, Matth. xxvi. 33—35.) and yet, in the last trying instances of his Master's temporal service, we find him fail;—an evident sign that natural courage is not the true source of confidence in spiritual trials, in which *they* only can conquer, whose strength is not of man, but of God.

This example of St. Peter affords many useful reflections, and many excellent instructions for our own conduct: the following seem to be those of the most importance.

And first; we learn hence, that presumption is a very unpromising sign of steadfastness and perseverance in religion. Trust in God is one thing, trust in ourselves is another; and there is reason to think they will differ as much in the success that attends them, as in the powers upon which they are founded.

There is a boldness and intrepidity natural to the temper of some men, which make them easily undertake, and often achieve great things; which give them such assurance and reliance upon themselves, that they overlook the dangers

39 <sup>2</sup> But ye have a custom, that I should therefore that I release unto you the king of  
release unto you one at the passover: will ye the Jews?

<sup>2</sup> Mat. 27. 15—17. Mark, 15. 6. Luke, 23. 17.

and difficulties at which others stand nerveless and amazed. But then great spirits are generally attended with great passions, which by turns usurp the dominion, and leave little room for thought or reflection; so that a cool head and a warm heart seem to be among the rarest compositions in nature, considered abstractedly from grace.

Were such spirited men once entered into the ways of holiness, it may be thought that the same warmth which presses them on to great attempts, would soon make them eminently virtuous and holy, since courage and resolution are the likeliest means to carry us to the greatest heights in religion; such indeed are *Christian courage* and *resolution*, which arise from a sure trust in God, a fear of him, and a perfect submission to his will: but when men set out upon their own bottom, they will soon be offended, and turn back: glory and success are the proper incitements of *human* courage; reproach and afflictions are the necessary exercises of *Christian* fortitude.

When Peter was surrounded with swords and staves, he was nothing dismayed; Peter had a sword too: but yet he who could *fight* for his religion, could not *suffer* for it. This shews that the courage of the *Christian* is very different from that of the *natural man*; that it arises from other considerations, and is supported by other hopes and expectations. In vain may you promise yourselves a superiority under trials and temptations, unless you lay the right foundation, by imploring the aid of God's holy Spirit, whose province alone is to confirm the faithful to the end.

*Secondly*, from this example of St. Peter, we learn what little reason there is to promise ourselves success against temptations which are of our own seeking. St. Peter had warning given him; he was told by One, whose word he might have taken, that he was not able to undergo the trial, which he seemed so much to despise. But try he would,—and learned to know his own weakness in his miscarriage.

Whenever we court those dangers and temptations which the Spirit of God in his word hath warned us to avoid, we fight without commission: we are no longer the soldiers of Christ; we have no pretence to expect support from him in our undertakings. The promise of the Spirit was given to comfort us in doing the work of God, and his assistance is granted to enable us to perform it. But when we step aside out of the road of duty, and form to ourselves designs not authorized by the word of God, what ground have we to look for the aid of God's Spirit?—that *aid* which is no where promised to enable us to effect whatever our own hearts prompt us to undertake, but only to encourage, stimulate, and produce obedience to the laws of the gospel?

In short, when we endeavour to avoid what God has commanded to be avoided, we act under the assurance and protection of his grace; but if we face about, and dare the temptation, our courage becomes contumacy and disobedience, and we have no title to the promises of the gospel.

An imagination that we are above all temptations, and may safely venture into their company, is always a dangerous symptom, and shews that spiritual pride and presumption have got the upper hand of Christian courage and humility. Consider the argument urged by St. Paul, who admonishes all Christians to *work out their own salvation with fear and trembling*; for, that it is God who works in them both to will and to do. The consideration that our whole ability depends upon the aid of God's Spirit, is, in the apostle's esteem, an argument for *fear and trembling*. And surely, O Christian, if even this be a reason,—if this, which is your *strength*, is likewise your admonition to be cautious and wary, whence can presumption grow? If the sense of your strength in Christ Jesus must teach you to be modest and humble, and always upon your guard, what else is there that can encourage you to be bold and confident? Let no man, therefore, think that his trial is over, or that he is got beyond the power of temptation. The enemy will watch all your unguarded moments; and, like Peter's, your security will be his encouragement to attempt your ruin.

But to conclude; very great as is the instruction of the example before us to all *private* Christians; yet there seems to be something more general intended in the transmitting this history to all ages in the sacred writings.

The gospel was the work of God; and, though we were to receive it by the hands of men, yet was our faith to be founded, not in the strength or policy of men, but in the power and wisdom of God. For this reason God chose the *weak things of the world to confound the strong*. The disciples were men of no distinguished characters; their simplicity and honesty were their best commendation. These our Lord elected, well knowing that the weaker the instruments were, the more evidently would the finger of God appear in the mighty things performed by them. Among these St. Peter plainly had the greatest spirit, and the strongest resolution; his readiness and vivacity distinguished him in every step: he was the mouth of the apostles, and always ready to undertake and to execute the commands of his Lord. If there was any one of their number that might be thought capable of managing so great a design as the propagation of a new religion in the world, it was Peter.

St. Peter therefore is called to the trial:—and how able he was, of himself, to encounter the difficulties that were to attend the Gospel in every step, we have already seen.—And yet, behold, this same man, this timid apostle, many weeks after, appears before the tribunal of the magistrates, preaches to his judges, and boldly testifies that of a truth *Jesus was the Christ*, and that *Him whom they slew and hanged on a tree, God had raised from the dead to be a prince and a Saviour*, and exalted him to the right hand of his glory. Acts, v. 29—32.

Whence this mighty difference? or to what can it be ascribed,—but to that great Spirit, for whose coming to *Jerusalem*, and not to enter upon their office, till they had

40 Then cried they all again, saying, **bas was a robber.**  
 Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barab-

\* Acts, 3. 14. Luke, 23. 18, 19. Mark, 15. 7-11.

receive power from on high. If the gospel was an im- posture, and if Christ died to rise no more; if Christ rose not from the dead, and there were no power in his resurrection, what gave this fresh courage to Peter? Had he more confidence in a dead man, than in his Master whilst on earth?—What then could move him to expose himself even unto death for the sake of Christ; for whose sake, whilst alive, and while the hopes and assurance of his being the Son of God were so strong, he dared not expose himself?—This plainly shews that the hand of God was with him, and is an undeniable evidence to us, that our faith is the work of God, and not of man. And thus, whether we consider St. Peter's case as an *instruction to ourselves*, it affords many useful lessons, many encouragements to direct support us in our spiritual warfare; or whether we consider it in a more general view, and as affecting his character as a minister of the everlasting gospel, it yields us a great assurance and confidence in our faith; while, through the weakness and insufficiency of man, we evidently distinguish the power of God, which wrought so effectually with him: so that, knowing in whom we have trusted, we need not be ashamed in every circumstance, and under every trial, to confess Christ, and him crucified. See the *Reflections* for her spiritual remarks on this part of sacred history.

**REFLECTIONS.**—1st, His hour being come, the Son of man surrenders himself into the hands of his enemies, having first given them a demonstration both of his power and his grace.

1. Having finished his discourse, he retired over the brook Cedron, to the garden whither he was wont to resort with his disciples, a place that the traitor Judas well knew, and which he judged the most convenient to betray him. The garden was the scene of the first man's rebellion and apostacy; and, in a garden, the grand sufferings of the second man, the Lord from heaven, the great atoning Sacrifice, began.

2. Judas, having laid the plot with the chief priests and scribes, now got a band of soldiers, together with the servants and officers of these inveterate enemies of Jesus, with whom also some of their masters went themselves, to make sure of their prey; and, as it was night, they took lanterns and torches, as well as weapons, that they might search him out; and, if any resistance was made, overcome his few disciples. Jews and Gentiles concur in bringing him to the accursed tree, who was ordained to atone for the sins of the world by the blood of his cross.

Jesus, far from declining the interview, or seeking to avoid the danger, goes forth to meet them. He knew that he was coming upon him: he had undertaken to suffer; therefore, having asked their business, and being informed by them that they sought Jesus of Nazareth, not being affected of that reproachful name, he saith, *I am he*, readily offering himself to them, Judas the traitor being at their head.

**Note;** (1.) When duty calls, no danger must deter us from appearing boldly and openly for Christ. (2.) We

must not be ashamed of any reproachful name which for the sake of Jesus we are called to bear. His reproach is our real honour. (3.) It is a dreadful change, to see a man, who was once numbered among the disciples, herding with enemies and persecutors.

4. Wonderfully powerful was the word of Jesus. No sooner had he uttered it, than, struck by an unseen hand, they went backward and fell to the ground. He that laid them thus low, could in an instant have laid them lower in the belly of hell; but this was the day of his patience; and therefore, though he would give them an evidence of his power, he will yet give them space to repent.

5. Once more he asks them whom they sought, if they dared persist in their atrocious designs; and they, with hardened obstinacy, answered, *Jesus of Nazareth*. He mildly replied, *I have told you that I am he*, ready to yield up himself, but desirous to secure his disciples from danger; *if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way*, do them no harm: and this he said with reference to a late declaration that he had made, *of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none*; and, by his present protection of them, gave them an earnest of the fulfilment of all the promises which he had made to them. **Note;** (1.) Hearts hardened in sin, will be restrained by no warnings, nor checked by any providences, but rush madly on to ruin. (2.) He gave himself to bear our sins, and by his bonds hath obtained our discharge. O for more faith, that all the blessings he has purchased may be realized to our souls.

6. Peter, fired at what he saw, immediately drew his sword, and, in the heat of inconsiderate rashness, smote a domestic of the high priest, whose name was Malchus, and cut off his right ear. But Jesus, displeased at the unseasonable zeal, bids him sheath the sword, and urges as a reason, *the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* His resolution was fixed, his sufferings necessary; and whatever power he was possessed of to rescue himself from his enemies, he notwithstanding freely resigned himself into their hands. **Note;** (1.) They who are most hasty in their zeal, are not always most steady in their service. Of this, Peter's desertion and conduct afford a sufficient proof. (2.) Christ's cause is not to be maintained by the sword. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual; and, by our meekness, we should seek to disarm the madness of our foes.

7. The soldiers, with the officers of the Jews, now seized and bound the voluntary prisoner, and, as a criminal, shamefully dragged him through the streets to the palace of Annas the father-in-law of Caiaphas the high-priest that year: such sad and frequent changes were now made in that high office. This Caiaphas it was, who, in a former debate, had shewed his inveterate enmity against Christ, and determined, right or wrong, that it was better to put him to death than provoke the Romans to destroy the nation, as he apprehended would be the consequence, if Jesus was suffered to set up himself as the Messiah. **Note;** (1.) The bonds of Christ are significant. He was bound

## C H A P. XIX.

*Christ is scourged, crowned with thorns, and beaten. Pilate is desirous to release him, but being overcome with the outrage of the Jews, he delivereth him to be crucified. The soldiers cast lots for his garments: he commendeth his mother to John: he dieth: his side is pierced: he is buried by Joseph and Nicodemus.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**T**HEN <sup>a</sup> Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

<sup>a</sup> If. 50. 6. Mat. 20. 19. & 27. 26. Mark, 10. 34. & 15. 15. Luke, 18. 33. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 27. 29, 30. Mark, 15. 16—19. If. 50. 6. Pf. 22. 6.  
<sup>c</sup> See ch. 18. 38. 2 Cor. 5. 21. 1 Pet. 2. 22. & 3. 18. 1 John, 3. 5. Heb. 7. 26. 1 Pet. 1. 19.

bound with cords, that we might be loosed from the chains of our sins, and that henceforth his love might bind our hearts to him in cords of gratitude. (2.) If we be in bonds for Christ, it will reconcile us to suffer joyfully, when we reflect that he was first bound for us. (3.) If one man, Christ Jesus, had not died for the sins of the world, we must all have perished everlastingly.

2dly, Annas highly approving the deed, and confirming them in their purpose, soon dispatched the innocent prisoner to Caiaphas to be condemned. Perhaps his age prevented him from attending in the council; but he wished them to proceed, and would give his sanction to their persecution. We have an account of what passed in the high priest's palace.

1. Peter denies his Master the first time.

[1.] He followed at a distance to the door of the palace, his courage having somewhat revived, and his curiosity being strong to see what would be the issue of the matter.

[2.] The first and feeblest attack quite disconcerted the self-confident disciple. Being admitted into the palace through the influence of a friend, a servant girl, that kept the door, observing probably his dejected looks, and, perhaps, recollecting his countenance among the followers of Jesus, charged him as *this man's disciple*, which he instantly denied; and, as if he would avoid every suspicion of belonging to Christ, he joined the servants and officers, who, it being cold, and at night, had kindled a fire in the hall, and warmed themselves. *Note*; (1.) We know not how weak we are, till we are tried. (2.) They who mix with worldly company, to avoid the imputation of being over-righteous, will usually, if there be any sensibility remaining in their consciences, pierce themselves through with many sorrows.

2. While Peter, instead of appearing in behalf of his Master, was basely denying him, the high-priest began to interrogate Jesus concerning his disciples and his doctrine, hoping to find some charge of sedition or blasphemy, whereon to ground an accusation against him.

3. Christ appeals to all who had heard him preach, for an answer to his interrogatories. If he had done or taught any thing criminal, there could be no want of witnesses, when many then present had often heard him, and knew the doctrines which he taught. He ever spake freely, boldly, and openly, preaching in the synagogue, and in the temple, the places of chief resort; and he advanced no-

2 And the soldiers platted <sup>b</sup> a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

3 And said, Hail, king of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

4 ¶ Pilate therefore went forth again, and faith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown

thing in private different from what he avowed publicly, nor wished to conceal his sentiments from the world, but to make all men know the truth. *Note*; Truth neither needs nor seeks the covert; and God's ministers must boldly, openly, and uniformly declare their message to the world, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear.

4. Just and mild as Christ's answer was to a question so malicious and captious, an insolent officer, who stood by, struck the innocent prisoner with his hand, and haughtily suggests, as if his answer to the high priest was unbecoming. He knew, however infamous such behaviour was, that his master would countenance it, and that his insolence would recommend him. When rulers are wicked, their servants will in general readily imitate their ill examples; and the insults of such are peculiarly bitter. But to this, for our sakes, the Son of God submitted, and thus fulfilled the Scriptures, If. i. 6. Mic. v. 1.

5. Christ, with astonishing patience, instead of striking him dead, meekly replied, *If I have spoken evil, now, or at any other time, bear witness of the evil before the court; but if well, and I have spoken nothing justly blameable, why smitest thou me?* *Note*; (1.) When we are suffering, however unjustly, we must in our patience possess our souls, and neither entertain undue resentment nor fly into a rage. (2.) Mild remonstrances, not railing accusations, become the children of God.

6. A second time Peter is beset, and falls. As he stood at the fire, some who stood by challenged him again as a follower of Jesus: and now, sunk under temptation, he repeats the shameful lie, *I am not.* *Note*; (1.) They who are fallen under one temptation, feel themselves less able to resist the next. (2.) Many who make confident profession when the cause of Christ flourishes, soon disown and renounce it when called to suffer shame for his sake.

7. One of the by-standers, a relation of him whose ear Peter had cut off, hearing him so stoutly deny all connection with Jesus, on observing him attentively recollecting his face, and urged the question stronger upon him, *Did not I see thee in the garden with him?* So close an attack more disconcerted the unhappy disciple, and urged him more solemnly to repeat his denial: and immediately the ear crew. *Note*; (1.) Every sin hardens the heart, and naturally paves the way for a greater. (2.) The slightest incidents of Providence, which others disregard, God can make to us a most alarming call.

of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Cru-

\* Ver. 15. Acts. 3. 13, 14. & 2. 22, 23. & 13. 27, 28. 1 Thess. 2. 15, 38. Mat. 20. 63.

cify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.

7 The Jews answered him, We have a

\* Lev. 24. 16. Deut. 18. 20. with ch. 1. 50. & 5. 18. & 10. 30,

king in opposition to Cæsar. *Wha thast thou done? It is to be supposed that persons of so respectable a character would not, without cause, lodge such an accusation.* Note; Many think there must be something wrong, when those who are esteemed the most learned and pious condemn and persecute: but we must not take our opinions from the judgment of men, but from the word of God: otherwise, like Pilate, we shall be in danger of condemning the innocent.

1. The hypocritical scrupulosity of these pretended priests. They would not enter the judgment-hall lest they should be defiled by the touch and company of heathens, and thereby be rendered unclean, and be disabled from undertaking of the passover feast, and the sacrifices which they offered the day after the passover. Thus strictly demanded would they appear, with innocent blood upon their hands. Well was it said of them, *Ye strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.*

2. Pilate, at whose bar Jesus was placed as a criminal, came forth to them in great complaisance, desiring to know their accusation against the prisoner. In answer to a reasonable question, they haughtily reply, *If he were not malefactor, a person notoriously infamous, we would not have delivered him up unto thee;* as if from persons of their eminent sanctity a general charge was a sufficient proof of the prisoner's crimes. Pilate, justly offended at so insolent a reply, and so unreasonable a procedure, bade them take him and judge him according to their law, desirous to rid himself of so disagreeable a cause. They replied, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death,* as they had been deprived, by the Romans, of the power of capital punishments: but there was a farther view, which they undoubtedly answered thereby, even the fulfilling of the prophecy of Jesus, who had signified by *what death he should die* (Mat. xx. 19.): and crucifixion being not a Jewish but a Roman punishment, it was necessary that he should be delivered to the Romans, and executed by them. Note; (1.) Many of the best of men, like Jesus, have been branded as the vilest malefactors, without one real crime proved against them. (2.) God can over-ruie the wickedness of the most envenomed persecutors to his own glory, and make them, when they mean only to gratify their own malice, the means of fulfilling the prophecies of his word.

3. Pilate, having heard the treasonable accusations lodged against Jesus by his accusers, ordered the prisoner to be brought, and examined him respecting the things laid to charge; the chief of which was, setting up himself in opposition to Cæsar; and therefore he demands, if it were that he assumed the character of King of the Jews? he answered, *Sayest thou this thing of thyself, under the suspicion of the truth of the fact? or did others tell it to me, by whose falsehood and malice thou art influenced?* Pilate, in a kind of derision at the expectation of the Jewish people formed of their Messiah, answered *a Jew, no: I concern myself about none of these matters, thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee to me as a traitor and seditious person, setting up for a*

king in opposition to Cæsar. *Wha thast thou done? It is to be supposed that persons of so respectable a character would not, without cause, lodge such an accusation.* Note; Many think there must be something wrong, when those who are esteemed the most learned and pious condemn and persecute: but we must not take our opinions from the judgment of men, but from the word of God: otherwise, like Pilate, we shall be in danger of condemning the innocent.

4. Christ informs Pilate of the nature of that kingdom which he came to erect. *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world,* promising no earthly honours nor emoluments, nor interfering with any secular affair; but is purely spiritual, consisting in a dominion over the souls of men. *If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews;* but there never had been the least attempt to rescue him, nor any sedition or tumult excited by him, which must have been the case had he affected temporal authority: *but now is my kingdom not from hence,* it takes not its rise from earth, is not supported by the arm of flesh, nor governed by worldly maxims of human policy.

5. Pilate, beholding his mean, wretched, and low estate, could not help exclaiming at the pretensions which Jesus seemed here to advance, *Art thou a king then?* Yes, says Jesus, *thou sayest that I am a king, and so it is; for to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth of the gospel-word in general, and to this truth in particular, that I am that King Messiah who should come into the world. Every'one that is of the truth,* truly wrought upon by the Spirit of truth, *heareth my voice, receives my word, acknowledges my mission, and bows to that sceptre of grace which I stretch forth to the miserable and the desperate.* Pilate saith unto him, *What is truth?* either he spoke it contemptuously, deriding his pretensions, who set himself up as the voice of truth itself; or, if he put the question curiously, seriously, or judicially, he seems not to have waited for an answer; or Jesus vouchsafed not to return one. Note; (1.) Is Christ a King? then should we yield our hearts willing subjects to his blessed government. (2.) They only know that truth which makes wise unto salvation, who hear and spiritually understand the voice of Jesus speaking in his gospel.

6. Pilate, now satisfied in his conscience with the innocence of Jesus, led him forth, and declared, that *he found in him no fault at all.* Willing therefore to obtain his discharge, he proposed to them, as it was an established custom at that feast to release some prisoner to them, whether it should not be this miserable object, whom, in derision of his pretensions, he calls *the king of the Jews?* But the multitude, instigated by their malicious priests, rejected the proposition, and demanded Barabbas, a noted murderer and robber, preferring him before the Lord of life and glory. Note; (1.) He who suffered for sins not his own; was acknowledged to be innocent even by his judges. (2.) They

law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

8 ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid ;

9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou ? But Jesus gave him no answer.

10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest

† Ch. 18. 38. Ver. 4. Luke, 22. 67. II. 53. 7. Acts, 8. 32.

(2.) They who, under the dictates of worldly wisdom, seek to please men, and maintain a good conscience withal, will soon find the impracticability of the attempt. (3.) The cry is ever against the cause of truth ; but, though it be oppressed for a while, it shall finally prevail.

#### C H A P. XIX.

*Ver. 2. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns,]* See the note on Matth. xxvii. 29. To what has been said there concerning the *crown of thorns*, the following observations may be added. The form of the sentence for execution passed upon criminals, as recited by Cicero, was this : *I, licitor, colliga manus, caput obnubito, arbori infelici suspendito* : “ Go, licitor, bind his hands, cover or veil his head, suspend him on the unhappy tree :” where the words *colliga manus* may signify no more than *tie his hands together*, though it was the custom to fasten them afterwards to the cross either with cords or nails, as in the case of our Saviour. That they covered the faces of the criminals, appears also from this passage of Cicero : the reason hereof might perhaps be the same as with us, to prevent the shocking sight of the horror and distortion of the countenance during their agonies. It seems highly probable, therefore, that the two malefactors who were crucified with our Saviour, were so treated, according to the usual custom ; but the *crown of thorns* which was put upon his head prevented any such covering, so that his countenance was open and visible to the spectators : and this appears from what our evangelist mentions of his *seeing* and *speaking* both to his mother and beloved disciple, ver. 26, 27. Now this might be so ordered by a particular direction of Providence ; that the divine composure and serenity of his countenance, together with his whole deportment, might be rendered the more conspicuous to so vast a crowd of spectators as was then present during the last scene of his sufferings ; and therefore Mr. Wright, in his Travels, has very justly censured the Italian painters, as generally guilty of an impropriety in representing our Saviour on the cross with his face distorted, as if under great uneasiness and discomposure : in which wrong notion they have also been usually followed by others. It can occasion no difficulty here to suppose, that the faces of the two malefactors were covered, because they are both said to have spoken to our Saviour while they hung upon the cross ; for we are often told of things said by criminals amongst us in the like circumstances. But it has been remarked, that “ nothing was set down by the evangelists touching the complexion, stature, or features of Christ, that no man might presume to set his hand to the framing of that astonishing work wrought once for all by the Holy Ghost.”

*Ver. 5. Behold the man !]* While the soldiers were acting their impious buffooneries, Pilate entered, and, seeing the humiliating condition of the suffering Jesus, he thought

that now at least the rage of his enemies would be satiated, and that the most envenomed heart would relent at the appearance of so sad a spectacle ; he therefore brought Jesus forth, and, shewing him to them, said, *Behold the man*. He added no more, concluding that the deplorable condition to which Jesus was reduced would plead sufficiently on his behalf, and extort compassion from the most obdurate. And indeed no sight could be more moving :—his sacred body torn with scourges, his head pierced with thorns, and the blood flowing from so many wounds down his face and hair, rendered him an object of the greatest pity.

*Ver. 6, 7. When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him,]* The priests, whose rage and malice had extinguished not only the sentiments of justice, and all the feelings of pity, but that love which countrymen bear to one another,—no sooner saw Jesus, than they began to fear that the fickle populace might relent ; and therefore, laying decency aside, they led the way to the mob, crying out with all their might, *Crucify him ! crucify him !* The governor, vexed to find the rulers thus obstinately bent on the destruction of a person who appeared to him perfectly innocent, told them plainly, with great indignation, that, if they would have him crucified, they must do it themselves, because he would not suffer his people to murder a man who was guilty of no crime. But they refused this also, thinking it dishonourable to receive permission to punish one, who had been more than once publicly declared innocent by his judge. Besides, they considered with themselves, that the governor afterwards might have called it sedition, as the permission had been extorted from him. Wherefore they told him, that, though none of the things alleged against the prisoner were true, he had committed such a crime, in the presence of the council itself, as by their law, Lev. xxiv. 16. deserved the most ignominious death : he had spoken blasphemy, calling himself *the Son of God* ; a title which no mortal could assume without the highest degree of guilt ; “ therefore, (say they,) since by our law blasphemy merits death, you ought by all means to crucify this blasphemer ; for, though Cæsar is our master, he governs us by our own laws.”

*Ver. 8, 9. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid,]* When Pilate heard that Jesus called himself the Son of God, he was more perplexed than ever. Knowing the obstinacy of the Jews in all matters of religion, he was afraid they would make a tumult in earnest ; and he might be the more reasonably alarmed on this head, as, since the beginning of his government, he had met with two remarkable instances of opposition to his authority ; one, in an attempt which he made to bring the image of Cæsar into Jerusalem ; the other, in a design which he had formed of supplying the city with water at the expence of the sacred treasury of the temple. Or rather, the meaning

thou not unto me? <sup>a</sup> knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

11 Jesus answered, <sup>b</sup> Thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore <sup>c</sup> he that delivered me unto thee hath the <sup>d</sup> greater sin.

12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, <sup>e</sup> If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king

speaketh against Cæsar.

13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, <sup>f</sup> Gabbatha.

14 And it was <sup>g</sup> the preparation of the pass-over, and about the <sup>h</sup> sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your king!

15 <sup>i</sup> But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 18. 39. <sup>b</sup> Acts, 2. 23. & 4. 27, 28. Rom. 8. 31. Luke, 22. 53. <sup>c</sup> Luke, 23. 2, 5. Acts, 17. 7. with ch. 18. 36. & 6. 15. Luke, 20. 25. <sup>d</sup> Luke, 23. 54. <sup>e</sup> Noon tide. <sup>f</sup> Luke, 23. 21—26. Acts, 3. 13, 14. & 13. 28. Ver. 6.

<sup>g</sup> Mat. 26. 24. & 27. 1, 2. <sup>h</sup> Luke, 12. 47, 48. Ch. 15. <sup>i</sup> Lev. 23. 5—8. Numb. 28.

<sup>j</sup> i. e. raised pavement. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 27. 22—25. Mark, 15. 11—15.

ing of his uneasiness may be, that, when he heard this account of Jesus, he became more afraid than ever to take away his life, because he suspected it might be true. Perhaps the miracles of Christ which he had heard of, occurred to his reflection, and caused him to have some strong ideas that he was really *the Son of God*. Pilate therefore, resolving to act cautiously, went again into the judgment-hall, and said to Jesus, *Whence art thou?* Πῶθεν εἶ σὺ? that is, "Of what father art thou sprung? or, from what country art thou come?—Art thou from Olympus, the mansion of the gods, according to the Pagan notions?" But our blessed Lord, knowing that Pilate was no competent judge of this matter, and had forfeited his right to information about it, by so cruelly using him, while he believed him to be innocent, thought proper to make no reply to this unreasonable question.

Ver. 10, 11. *Knowest thou not that I have power, &c.*] See the note on ch. xviii. 31. To what Pilate urged, our Lord replies, "Thou couldest have no power against me, unless it were given thee from above;—from the permission of the God of heaven, whose providence should be acknowledged in all events. Therefore he who has delivered me to thee, even the Jewish high-priest, with his council, having far greater opportunities of knowing him and his law, hath the greater and more aggravated sin; yet thou thyself canst not but know, that, on the principles of natural equity, an innocent person ought not to be given up to popular fury." This gentle rebuke made such an impression upon Pilate, that he went out to the people, and once more declared his resolution of releasing Jesus. See the next verse, and ch. xviii. 39.

Ver. 12. *And from thenceforth*] An inattentive reader may perhaps understand these words, as if this was Pilate's first attempt to release Jesus; nevertheless they cannot justly be thus interpreted, as St. John himself tells us expressly, that Pilate once before endeavoured to release him: ch. xviii. 39. To which the answer of the priests corresponds, *If thou let this man go, &c.* Finding, by what the governor said unto them, that he was determined to release Jesus, they told him, with a haughty menacing air, that if he released his prisoner, who had set himself up for a king, he was not faithful to the emperor; by which they insinuated, that they would accuse him to his master, if he

did not do his duty. This argument was weighty, and shook Pilate's resolution to the foundation; he was frightened at the very thought of being accused to Tiberius, who, in matters of government, as Tacitus and Suetonius testify, was apt to suspect the worst, and always punished the least crimes relative thereto with death. Wherefore we find, that, when the Jews told Pilate, that he could not be a friend to Cæsar if he let Jesus go, he asks them no more if they would take Barabbas, and spare Jesus; but, though against the dictates of his conscience, gives him up to death, to secure his own safety.

Ver. 14. *And it was the preparation*] The governor being frightened into compliance, contrary to his inclination, was angry with the priests for stirring up the people to such a pitch of madness, and resolved to affront them. He therefore brought Jesus out a second time on the pavement, wearing the purple robe and crown of thorns, with his hands manacled; and, pointing to him, said, *Behold your king*; either in ridicule of the national expectation, or, which is more probable, to soften the Jews, and shew them how vain the fears were which they pretended to entertain about the emperor's authority in Judea; the person who was the occasion of them, shewing, in the whole of his deportment, a temper of mind no way consonant to the ambition wherewith they branded him. Augustus's rescript to the governors of provinces preserved by Josephus, Antiq. xvi. 10. shews in what manner the Jews computed their preparation for the sabbath; for, among other things, it is therein ordered, that the Jews should not be compelled to appear in courts of judicature, either on the sabbaths, or on the day before the sabbaths, after the ninth hour of the preparation. The preparation therefore began at the ninth hour, or at three o'clock in the afternoon, which is the reason that the Jews were then freed from attendance in law-suits. Nevertheless, the manner in which the rescript is worded shews, that the whole of the day was called the preparation, consequently the evangelist wrote accurately, when he tells us, *it was the preparation, and about the sixth hour*. The Roman sixth hour is here meant, or our six o'clock in the morning, answering to the first Jewish hour, when Pilate brought Jesus out on the pavement.

Ver. 15. *Shall I crucify your king?*] According to most



chief priests answered, ' We have no king but Cæsar.

16 ' Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led *him* away.

17 ¶ And he bearing his cross went ' forth into a place called *the place* of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha :

18 ' Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

19 ¶ ' And Pilate wrote a title, and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was, \* JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This title then read many of the Jews : for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city : and it was written ' in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews ; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.

22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

23 ¶ ' Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part ; and also *his* coat : now the coat was without seam, \* woven from the top throughout.

24 They said therefore among themselves,

<sup>p</sup> Ch. 18. 31. Gen. 49. 10. Ezek. 21. 26, 27. <sup>q</sup> Mat. 27. 26, 31, 33. Mark, 15. 15, 20, 22. Luke, 23. 24—26. <sup>r</sup> Lev. 24. 14. Numb. 15. 35. 1 Kings, 21. 13. Acts, 7. 58. Heb. 13. 11, 12. <sup>s</sup> Gal. 3. 13. <sup>t</sup> If. 53. 12. Mat. 27. 35, 38, 44. Mark, 15. 25—28, 32. Luke, 23. 32, 33, 39. <sup>u</sup> Mat. 27. 37. Mark, 15. 26. Luke, 23. 38. <sup>v</sup> A public notification of his Messiahship, instead of a charge against him. <sup>w</sup> 1 John, 4. 14. Mark, 16. 15. Rev. 5. 9. This presaged his being preached through all the world in the different languages of mankind. <sup>x</sup> Mat. 27. 35. Mark, 15. 24. Luke, 23. 34. Pf. 22. 18. <sup>y</sup> Or wrought.

commentators, Pilate said this mocking them ; but it is more agreeable to his general behaviour in this affair to suppose, that he spoke it with a view to move the populace, who, he knew, had once held Jesus in great esteem as the Messiah : for we are told, in the 12th verse, that he sought to release him. The chief priests replied to him, *We have no king but Cæsar* ; in which reply they publicly renounced their hope of the Messiah, which the whole œconomy of their religion had been calculated to cherish. Likewise, they acknowledged publicly their subjection to the Romans, and, by so doing, condemned themselves when they afterwards rebelled.

The unwillingness which the governor shewed all along to pass the sentence of death upon Jesus, has something very remarkable in it ; for, by the character which he bears in the Roman history, he seems to have been far from possessing any true principle of virtue. To what then could it be owing, that so wicked a man thus steadily adhered to the cause of innocence, which he defended with an uncommon bravery, till the threatenings of the grandees vanquished him ? And when he did yield, taking from our Lord his life, how came he to leave him his innocence ? Certainly this can be attributed to no other cause than the secret powerful direction of the providence of God, who intended, that, at the same time, his Son was condemned and executed as a malefactor, his innocence should be made to appear in the most public manner, and by the most authentic evidence ; even by the testimony of his judges, Herod and Pilate ; the latter of whom frequently declared him innocent in the course of his trial.

[Ver. 19—22. *And Pilate wrote a title.*] The governor, as usual, put up a title or writing on the cross, signifying the crime for which Jesus was condemned : this writing was in black characters, on a whitened board, and in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages, that foreigners, as well as natives, might be able to read it. All the evange-

lists have given an account of the title, but the words of it are different in each : the difference however may easily have arisen from the languages in which the title was written ; for one evangelist may have inscribed the words of the Greek inscription, a second might translate the Hebrew, a third the Latin, and a fourth may have given a different translation to the Hebrew or Latin. Thus the inscription of the title may be exactly given by each of the evangelists, though the words that they have mentioned be different, especially as they all agree in the meaning of it. It has been observed, that this title was written in *Latin*, on account of the dignity of the Roman empire ; in *Hebrew*, on account of the place in which the punishment was inflicted ; and in *Greek*, on account of the great confluence of the Hellenistic Jews which was at that time in Jerusalem ; and because Greek was then a very universal language. The inscription set up in the temple to prohibit strangers from coming within those sacred limits, was written in all these three languages. It is indeed remarkable, that, by the influence of divine Providence, the cross of Christ bore an inscription in the languages of those nations which were soon to be subdued to his faith ; for not only the Jewish religion was to give place to him, but likewise the Grecian learning, and the Roman strength. The superscription, however, highly displeased the chief priests, because as it represented the crime for which Jesus was condemned, so it insinuated that he had been acknowledged for the Messiah. Besides, being placed over the head of one who was suffering the most infamous punishment, it implied that all who attempted to deliver the Jews should come to the same end. Wherefore, the faith and hope of the nation being thus publicly ridiculed, the priests thought themselves highly affronted, and came to Pilate in great concern, desiring that the writing might be altered : but Pilate having plainly intended the affront, because the Jews had constrained him to crucify Jesus, con-

Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be : that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, <sup>7</sup> They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

25 ¶ <sup>2</sup> Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of <sup>a</sup> Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the <sup>b</sup> disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple, <sup>c</sup> Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.

28 ¶ After this, Jesus knowing <sup>d</sup> that all things were now accomplished, <sup>e</sup> that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

29 <sup>f</sup> Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, <sup>g</sup> It is finished: and <sup>h</sup> he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

31 ¶ The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, <sup>i</sup> that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day, (for that sabbath-day was <sup>k</sup> an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

<sup>1</sup> Pf. 22. 18. <sup>2</sup> Mat. 27. 55, 56. Mark, 15. 40, 41. Luke, 2. 35. & 23. 49. <sup>a</sup> Or *Alpheus*. Luke, 24. 18. & 6. 15. Mark, 3. 18. Mat. 10. 3. <sup>b</sup> i. e. John. Ch. 13. 23. & 21. 7, 20, 24. with 2. 4. <sup>c</sup> Pf. 68. 5. & 146. 9. <sup>d</sup> 1 Tim. c. 3. Gen. 47. 12. <sup>e</sup> Luke, 24. 27, 44. Gen. 3. 15. Pf. 2. 1-3. & 22. 1-21. & 69. 1-21. <sup>f</sup> 11. 50. 6. & 52. 13. & 111. <sup>g</sup> Pf. 69. 21. <sup>h</sup> 11. 69. 21. Mat. 27. 48. Mark. 15. 30. <sup>i</sup> Ch. 17. 4. Mat. 3. 15. Dan. 9. 24. <sup>j</sup> 11. 42. 21. Rom. 10. 4. Heb. 9. 11, 12. & 10. 1-14. <sup>k</sup> 1. e. 12. 7. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 27. 50. Mark, 15. 37. Luke, 23. 46. Ch. 10. 11, 15, 17, 18. <sup>m</sup> 1 Thess. 5. 10. <sup>n</sup> Deut. 21. 22, 23. <sup>o</sup> The sabbath and first day of unleavened bread meeting together. Exod. 20. 8. & 12. 18. Numb. 28. 17, 18. <sup>p</sup> 11. 1. 13.

trary to his judgment and inclination; rejected their application with some warmth, and with that inflexibility which historians represent as part of his character.

Ver. 23, 24. *And made four parts,*] Because four soldiers are mentioned in the division of the clothes, it does not follow that there were but four present at the crucifixion. Since soldiers were necessary at all, a great number must have been present to keep off the crowds which usually press to see such spectacles. From Matthew xxvii. 54. it appears, that the soldiers who assisted at the crucifixion were commanded by a centurion; wherefore it is more than probable that the *whole band*, which St. Matthew tells us expressly was gathered together to scourge Jesus, (ch. xxvii. 27.) was present at his crucifixion; especially as two others were crucified with him. The four soldiers who parted his garments, and cast lots for his vesture, were the four who nailed him to the cross; each of them fixing a limb, and having, it seems, for this service, had a right to the crucified person's clothes. See Pf. xxii. 18.

Ver. 25. *There stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, &c.]* Neither her own danger, nor the sadness of the spectacle, nor the reproaches and insults of the people, could restrain our Lord's mother from performing the last sad office of duty and tenderness to her divine Son on the cross. Grotius justly observes, that it was a noble instance of fortitude and zeal. Now a sword, according to Simeon's prophecy, *pierced through her very soul*; and perhaps the extremity of her sorrows might so overwhelm her spirits, as to render her incapable of attending the sepulchre, which we do not find that she did. After this we do not meet with any thing concerning her in the sacred history, or in early antiquity, except that she continued among the disciples after our Lord's ascension, Acts, i. 14. The popish writers, indeed, have given us a variety of ridiculous tales concerning her. Instead of *the wife*, some com-

mentators read *the daughter of Cleophas*. There is no word in the original either for *wife* or *daughter*.

Ver. 26, 27. *Woman, behold thy son!*] We have elsewhere observed, that Joseph was probably dead some time before. See on ch. ii. i. vi. 42. And as Jesus now shewed the tender concern he had for his mother, in committing her to the care of St. John; so this concern which he expressed for her support, must have affected her no less than if he had called her *mother*; which some have thought he might not choose to do, to avoid exposing her to the abuses of the populace by a discovery of her near relation to him. But *woman* was a title that he had before used in speaking to his mother, where no such caution was necessary; and it was frequently applied in ancient times, even to persons who were the most respected, as we have observed on ch. ii. 4. Some, however, have remarked, that the word *ἡ μήτηρ* may very well be interpreted *mother*; which certainly renders the opposition to *ὁ υἱὸς σου, thy son* more sensibly affecting. See Antonin. Medit. l. ix. c. 3. Our Lord, besides expressing great filial affection towards his mother, gave the *beloved disciple* also a token of his high esteem. He singled him out for the important trust of his beloved mother; and as he desired *her* to consider him as a *son*, so he desired *him* expressly to reverence and love her, as if he had been his own parent,—a duty, which he gladly undertook, and no doubt most faithfully performed. Thus, in the midst of the heaviest sufferings ever sustained by human nature, Jesus demonstrated a divine strength of benevolence: even when his own distress was at the highest pitch, his friends had such a share of his concern, that their happiness for a little time engrossed his tenderest thoughts.

Ver. 30. *It is finished:*] See on Matth. xxvii. 50.

Ver. 31. (*For that sabbath-day was an high day,*)] It was not only a sabbath, but the second day of the feast of unleavened bread, from whence they reckoned the weeks to

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs :

34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

35 <sup>m</sup> And he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true : and he knoweth that he saith true, <sup>n</sup> that ye might believe.

36 For these things were done, <sup>o</sup> that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him

shall not be broken.

37 And again another scripture saith, ' They shall look on him whom they pierced.

38 ¶ And after this Joseph of Arimathea, (being a disciple of Jesus, but ' secretly for fear of the Jews,) besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus : and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore and took the body of Jesus.

39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus ' by night, and brought ' a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*.

<sup>1</sup> 1 John, 5. 6, 8. 1 Cor. 1. 30. 1f. 45. 24. 20. 31. Rom. 15. 4. <sup>o</sup> Exod. 12. 46. Numb. 9. 12. Pf. 34. 20. 57—60. Mark, 15. 42—46. Luke, 23. 50—54. 16. 14. Luke, 24. 56.

<sup>m</sup> Ch. 21. 24. 1 John, 1. 1—3. John, 12. 14. Acts, 10. 35—41. <sup>n</sup> Ch. 17. 23, 23. & 20. 31. Rom. 15. 4. <sup>o</sup> Exod. 12. 46. Numb. 9. 12. Pf. 34. 20. <sup>p</sup> Zech. 12. 10. Pf. 22. 16. Acts, 2. 36. Rev. 1. 7. <sup>q</sup> Mat. 27. 57—60. Mark, 15. 42—46. Luke, 23. 50—54. <sup>r</sup> Ch. 3. 2. & 12. 42. & 9. 22. Prov. 29. 25. <sup>s</sup> Ch. 3. 1, 2. & 7. 50. <sup>t</sup> 2 Chron.

Pentecost, and also the day for presenting and offering the sheaf of new corn; so that it was indeed a treble solemnity. The Jews style a feast, or the day of solemn assembly in any feast, a *high*, or *great day*. It was customary among the Romans to let the bodies of persons who had been executed, continue on the crosses or stakes till they were devoured by beasts of prey; but as this was forbidden to the Jews, Deut. xxi. 22, 23. the Roman governors probably used to oblige them, by permitting such bodies as belonged to them to be buried.

*Ver. 34—37. And forthwith, &c.]* Whether this was, as Dr. Drake and several others suppose, the small quantity of water inclosed in the *pericardium*, in which the heart swims, or whether the *cruor* was now almost coagulated, and separated from the *serum*; either way it was an indisputable proof of Christ's death. For the issuing of blood and water, not only shews that Jesus had been some time dead; but had he not been dead, this wound was of such a kind, as he could not have survived. And therefore, as it was of the greatest importance to mankind, to be ascertained of the truth of Christ's death, when St. John relates the circumstance which demonstrates it, he insists upon it particularly; and mentions it, not only as a thing which himself saw, but as the completion of a remarkable prophecy. See on Zech. xii. 10. Our Lord's legs too were not broken, that the scripture might be fulfilled, Exod. xii. 46. where the words were primarily spoken of the *pascal lamb*, whose bones were not to be broken, that it might be a fit representation of the Messiah, typified by this sacrifice; and who, though he was to suffer a violent death, was to have none of his bones broken. Wherefore, as the scripture which speaks of the type, has necessarily a reference to the antitype, St. John had good reason to interpret what is there said of the pascal lamb, as prophetic of this circumstance of our Lord's death; and the rather, as by so doing he makes his readers sensible, that it was not by accident that the soldiers treated Christ's body otherwise than they treated the bodies of those who were crucified with him: it happened by the direction of God, who had always determined that Christ's divine mission

should be fully demonstrated by the evidence of miracles and prophecies united.

*Ver. 38. And after this Joseph of Arimathea,]* We have observed on ch. xviii. 31. that Joseph of Arimathea seems to have been personally acquainted with Pilate, as he went to him, and begged leave to bury the body of Jesus. We can have no doubt of their being acquainted, if Joseph was one of the council who assisted Pilate in managing the affairs of his province, and particularly in judging causes. All governors of provinces had a council of this kind; accordingly we find it mentioned Acts, xxv. 12. It is, however, objected to Joseph's being a member of Pilate's council, that it was composed of Romans only; yet even on this supposition he might be a member of it, since he might enjoy the privilege of a citizen, as well as St. Paul. What other reason can be assigned for his being called a *counsellor*, Luke, xxiii. 50. and Mark, xv. 43?—a name not commonly given to the members of the *sanhedrim*, whose proper title was *ἀρχοντες*, *rulers*. Further, St. Luke tells, (ch. xxiii. 51.) that Joseph did *not consent to the counsel* (*βουλή*) *and deed of them*: he did not agree to the advice which the governor's council gave, when they desired him to gratify the Jews. See the note on Matth. xxvii. 57.

*Ver. 39. About an hundred pound weight.]* The author of the *Observations* has the following remark: "What Joseph and Nicodemus did with the mixture of myrrh and aloes, doth not appear: Dr. Lardner supposes, that they might possibly form a bed of spices. But with respect to the quantity, which he tells us, from Bishop Kidder, a modern Jew has made an objection against the history of the New Testament, affirming that it was enough for two hundred dead bodies, (which is saying in other words, that half a pound of these drugs is sufficient to embalm a single body) I would observe, that our English surgeons require a much larger quantity of drugs for embalming; and in a recipe which I have seen of a very eminent one, the weight of the drugs employed, is above one third of the weight brought by Nicodemus. Much less indeed would be wanted where

40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in <sup>u</sup> linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

<sup>u</sup> Acts, 5. 6. Ch. 20. 6.

<sup>x</sup> Ch. 18. 1. Gen. 3. 1—23.

41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a <sup>x</sup> garden; and in the garden <sup>a</sup> new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

<sup>y</sup> If. 53. 9. Luke, 23. 53. Mat. 27. 60. Mark, 15. 46.

“the body is not embowelled; but even the *cerate*, or “drugs used externally in our embalmings, is, I find, one “seventh of the weight of the myrrh and aloes bought “for embalming our Lord. However, be this as it may, “as it appears from what Josephus says of the funeral of “Aristobulus, the last of the high priests of the fam- “ily of the Maccabees, that “the larger the quantity “of spices used in their interments, the greater honour “was thought to be done to the dead;” we may easily “account for the quantity which Nicodemus brought, “in general, though we may not be able to tell, with “the precision that could be wished, how it was disposed “of. Dr. Lardner does not appear to have mentioned this “passage, but it entirely answers the objection of this “Jew.”

*Ver. 40. Then took they the body]* These who have writ- ten upon the manners and customs of the Jews, tell us, that they sometimes embalmed their dead with an aromatic mixture of myrrh, aloes, and other gums or spices; which they rubbed on the body more or less profusely, ac- cording to their circumstances, and their regard to the dead. After anointing the body, they covered it with a *shroud* or winding-sheet, then wrapped a napkin round its head and face; others say round the forehead only, be- cause the Egyptian mummies are observed to have it so. Last of all, they swathed the shroud round the body, as tightly as possible, with proper bandages made of linen; which are the *linen clothes* mentioned in this verse, differ- ent from the *clean linen cloth* mentioned by the other evangelists. See Matth. xxvii. 59. At other times they covered the whole body in a heap of spices: thus it is said of *Aša*, 2 Chron. xvi. 14. *They laid him in the bed, which was filled with sweet odours, and divers kinds of spices, prepared by the apothecary's art.* From the quantity of myrrh and aloes made use of by Joseph and Nicodemus, namely, *an hundred pound weight*, it would appear that the office performed to their Master was of this latter kind; for they had not time to embalm him properly: they seem, how- ever, to have done all that was usual in such circumstances to persons of wealth and distinction, which, as well as the sepulchre itself, accorded with Isaiah's prophecy, ch. liii. 9. As none of the other evangelists had mentioned the spices with which the body was embalmed, John might choose to observe that circumstance, the better to obviate the false report which then prevailed among the Jews, that the body of our Lord had been stolen away in the night by his disciples: for, could they have been supposed so weak, as to lose time in attempting to take off the linen, both from the body and head, it must have clung so fast by means of the viscous nature of the spices, as to have put it out of their power to do it in such a manner as it was found in the sepulchre; *the napkin*, which was bound about his head, lying not with the linen clothes, but wrapped in a place by itself, ch. xx. 7. as if the body had miraculously slipped out of it, which was the real fact. The other

evangelists indeed take notice, that the women afterwards carried spices to the sepulchre: for as Joseph and Nicodemus doubtless embalmed the body privately, after it was carried from the cross, the women, as they were not present, might know nothing of it; and, considering the shortness of the time, they might imagine nothing of that kind had been done, and therefore were willing to do what they could themselves. And this was very proper to be mentioned by the other evangelists, as it was a proof that the women had no expectation that Christ would rise again, any more than Joseph and Nicodemus; but St. John might omit it, as unnecessary to be repeated. See the note on ch. xi. 39.

*Ver. 41. And in the garden a new sepulchre,]* In the de- scription of the sepulchre given by the evangelists, it is particularly remarked, that it was nigh to the place where Jesus was crucified, consequently nigh to Jerusalem. By this circumstance all the cavils are prevented, which might otherwise have been occasioned, in case the body had been removed further off. Moreover, it is observed, that the sepulchre was a *new* one, wherein never any man had been laid. This plainly proves, that it could be no other than Jesus who arose, and cuts off all suspicion that he was raised by touching the bones of some prophet or other, who had been buried there, as happened to the corpse which touched the bones of Elisha, 2 Kings, xiii. 21. The evangelist further observes, that it was a sepulchre *hewn out of a rock*, to shew that there was no passage by which the dis- ciples could get into it, but the one at which the guards were placed, Matth. xxvii. 62, &c. and, consequently, that it was not in their power to steal away the body while the guards remained there performing their duty.

As we are now just arrived at the end of the evangelical history, and the conclusion of the two subsequent chapters will be taken up with the great subject of them,—our Lord's resurrection, we shall here endeavour to give the reader a brief sketch of the character of our Lord Jesus Christ, which itself affords the most incontestable proof of the truth and divine authority of the scriptures.

FOR, THE CHARACTER OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, even considered only as it relates to his humanity, and as it may be collected from the plain narrations of the gos- pels, is manifestly superior to all other characters, fictitious or real; whether drawn by historians, orators, or poets. It is entirely different from that of all other men; for whereas they have the selfish passions deeply rooted in their breasts, and in their natural state are influenced by them in almost every thing they do, Jesus was so entirely free from them, that the narrowest scrutiny cannot furnish one single action in the whole course of his life, wherein he consulted his own interest only. The happiness of others was what he had chiefly at heart; and while his cotem- poraries followed some one kind of occupation, some another, Jesus had no other business but that of promoting

42 <sup>2</sup> There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

<sup>2</sup> Acts, 13. 29. 1 Cor. 15. 4. Mat. 12. 40. Pf. 22. 15.

the welfare of men. *He went about doing good.* He did not wait till he was solicited; but sought opportunities of conferring benefits on such as stood in need of them, and always reckoned *it more blessed to give than to receive.*

In the next place, whereas it is common for persons, even of the most exalted faculties, on the one hand, to be elated with success and applause, and on the other, to be dejected with great disappointments, it was not so with Jesus. He was never more courageous than when he met with the greatest opposition, and the worst treatment; nor more humble than when men fell down and worshipped him. He came into the world inspired with infinitely the greatest purpose that ever was formed, even that of saving, not a single nation, but the whole world; that is to say, all that would yield to be saved by his grace: and in the execution of it, went through the largest and heaviest train of labours that ever was sustained; and that with a constancy of resolution, on which no disadvantageous impression could be made by any incident whatever. In short, calumny, threatening, opposition, bad success, with the other evils befalling him, served only to quicken his endeavours in this glorious enterprise, which he pursued unweariedly, till he finished it by his glorious, though infamous death.

But again; whereas most men are prone to retaliate the injuries that are done them, and all seem to take a satisfaction in complaining of the cruelties of those who oppress them; the whole of Christ's behaviour breathed nothing but meekness, patience, and forgiveness, even to his bitterest enemies, and in the most extreme sufferings. The words, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!* uttered by him when his enemies were nailing him to the cross, or when he hung thereupon, fitly expressed the temper which he maintained through the course of his life, even when assaulted with the heaviest provocations. The truth is, on no occasion did he ever signify the least resentment, by speech or by action, nor indeed any emotion of mind whatever, except such as flowed from pity and charity; consequently such only as expressed the deepest concern for the welfare of mankind.

The greatest and best men have had failings, which darken the lustre of their virtues, and shew them to have been but men. This was the case with Noah, Abraham, Moses, Job, David, Solomon, Paul, Peter, and the other heroes celebrated in sacred history. The same may be said of all the greatest geniuses in the Heathen world, who undertook to instruct and inform mankind: for, omitting the narrowness of their knowledge, and the obscurity with which they spake upon the most important subjects, there was not one of them who did not fall into some gross error or other, which dishonoured his character as a teacher. The accounts that we have in history of the most renowned sages of antiquity, and the writings of the philosophers still remaining, are proofs of this.

It was otherwise with Jesus in every respect; for he was superior to all the men that ever lived, as well in the

simplicity of his doctrine, and the purity of his manners, as in the perfection of his virtues. *He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners: he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.*

His whole life was perfectly free from spot or weakness, at the same time that it was remarkable for the greatest and most extensive exercises of virtue: but never to have committed the least sin, in word or in deed; never to have uttered any sentiment that could be found fault with, upon the various topics of religion and morality which were the daily subjects of his discourses; and that through the course of a life filled with action, and led under the observation of many enemies, who had always access to converse with him, and who often came to find fault;—this is such a pitch of perfection, as is plainly above the reach of humanity; and therefore he who possessed it, must certainly have been Divine. Accordingly, the evidence of this proof being undeniable, both as argument and as a matter of fact, Jesus himself publicly appealed to it before all the people in the temple, Ch. viii. 46. *Which of you convinceth, or rather, convicteth me of sin? And if, in affirming that I am perfectly free from sin, I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?*

Upon this character of our Lord, we may make the following observations: *first*, that admitting the present disorders of the moral world, and the necessity of the love of God and our neighbour, and of self-annihilation, in order to the pure and ultimate happiness of man; which all must admit, who know any thing of themselves or of the nature of true religion;—there must be a necessity also for a suffering and atoning Saviour. Besides this, we may affirm, that the condescension of Christ, in leaving the glory which he had with the Father, before the foundation of the world, and in shewing himself a perfect pattern of obedience to the divine will, both in doing and suffering, has a most peculiar tendency, under divine grace, to rectify the present moral depravity of our natures, and to exalt us thereby to pure spiritual happiness. Now it is remarkable, that the evangelists and apostles have thus given to the world a character which all the great men among the antient *heathens* missed, and which, however clear it does, and ought now to appear to us, was a great stumbling-block to them, as well as to the *Jews*: the first, *seeking after wisdom*, that is to say, human philosophy and eloquence; and the last, requiring a *sign*, or a glorious temporal Saviour. Nor can this be accounted for, but by admitting the reality of the character, that is to say, the divine mission of Christ, and the consequent divine inspiration of those who drew it up; that is to say, the truth and divine authority of the scriptures.

*Secondly*, It will be wonderfully difficult to reconcile so great a character, claiming divine authority, either with the moral attributes of God, or indeed with itself, upon the supposition of the falsehood of that claim. One can scarce suppose that God would permit a person apparently so innocent and excellent, so-qualified to impose upon mankind

## C H A P. XX.

*Mary cometh to the sepulchre: so do Peter and John, ignorant of the resurrection: Jesus appeareth to Mary Magdalene, and to his disciples. The incredulity and confession of Thomas. The scripture is, under divine grace, sufficient to salvation.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**T**HE <sup>a</sup>first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark,

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 28. 1, 2. Mark, 16. 1, 2—4. Luke, 24. 1, 10.  
<sup>d</sup> Luke, 24. 12. Ver. 6. 10, 11.

<sup>b</sup> Ch. 13. 23. & 19. 26. & 21. 7, 20, 24.

<sup>c</sup> Ver. 9, 13, 15. Luke, 24. 10.

mankind, to make so impious and audacious a claim, without having some evident mark of imposture set upon him: nor can it be conceived how a person could be apparently so innocent and excellent, and yet really otherwise.

*Thirdly*, The manner in which the evangelists speak of Christ, shews that they drew after a real pattern, and demonstrates the genuineness and truth of the gospel history. There are no direct encomiums upon him, no laboured defenses, or recommendations: his character arises from a careful and impartial examination of all that he did and said; and the evangelists appear to have drawn this greatest of all characters without any direct design to do it.

But it is evident that their view was to shew their Master to the persons to whom they preached, as the promised Messiah of the Jews, and the Saviour of mankind; and as they had been convinced of this themselves from his discourses, actions, sufferings, and resurrection, accompanied by the inspiration of his own divine Spirit, they knew nothing more was wanting to convince such others as were serious and impartial, but a simple narrative of what Jesus said and did, accompanied with the sacred influences of the same divine Spirit.

And indeed, if we compare the transcendent greatness of this character with the indirect manner in which it is delivered, and the illiterateness and low condition of the evangelists, it will appear impossible that they should have forged it; that they should not have had a real original before them; so that nothing was wanting for its authenticity, but to record it simply and faithfully under the infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God.

How could mean and illiterate persons excel the greatest geniuses, ancient and modern, in drawing a character?—How came they to draw it in an indirect manner?—This is indeed a strong evidence of genuineness and truth: but then it is of so recluse and subtle a nature, and agreeable to this, has been so little taken notice of by the defenders of the Christian religion, that one cannot conceive that the evangelists themselves were at all aware that it was an evidence. The character of Christ, as drawn by them, is therefore genuine and true, and consequently proves his Divine mission, both by its transcendent excellence, and by his laying claim to such a divine mission.

And here it ought to be particularly remarked, that our Saviour's entire devotion to his heavenly Father, and sufferings for the sake of men in compliance with his will, is a pitch of perfection which was never proposed before

unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the <sup>b</sup> other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, <sup>c</sup> They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 <sup>d</sup> Peter therefore went forth, and that

his coming, unless as far as this is virtually included in the precepts for loving God above all, and our neighbours as ourselves, and other equivalent passages in the Old Testament.

To conclude, we may observe, that Jesus has, by his death, set open the gates of immortality to men; and by his great atonement, Spirit, word, and example, graciously offers to make them meet for, and to conduct them into the inheritance of the saints in light. Wherefore, being born under the dispensation of his gospel, we have through his grace enjoyed the best means of acquiring wisdom, holiness, virtue, and happiness, the lineaments of the image of God.

We have been called to aspire after an exaltation to the nature and felicity of God, set before our mortal eyes in the humanity of Jesus Christ, to fire us with the noblest ambition. His gospel teaches us, that we are made for eternity; and that our present life is to our after-existence, what childhood is to man's estate: but as in childhood many things are to be learned, many hardships to be endured, many habits to be acquired, and that by a tedious course of exercises, which in themselves though painful, and, it may be, useless to the child, yet are necessary to fit him for the business and enjoyments of manhood: just so, while we remain in this infancy of human life, things are to be learned, hardships to be endured, and habits to be acquired through the grace of God, and by the influences of his Holy Spirit, and by a laborious course of discipline, which, however painful, must be cheerfully undergone, because necessary to fit us for the employment and pleasures of our riper existence above.

Our heavenly Father, in his infinite pity and love, has sent down his own eternal Son, the express image and character of his person, to initiate us by his grace and Spirit, and carry us through this course of education for eternity by the same Spirit. Inflamed therefore with the love of immortality and its joys, let us submit ourselves to our heavenly Teacher, and learn of him those graces which alone can make life pleasant, death desirable, and fill eternity with extatic joys.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Pilate having failed in his first attempt to release the innocent prisoner, bethought himself of another to move the people's compassion.

1. He delivered him up to the officers to be publicly scourged, hoping probably, that after this ignominy and punishment their fury might be appeased. The soldiers

other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together : and the other

disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

to whose custody Jesus had been committed, added the most cruel mockery to his sufferings, and in derision of the dignity to which he pretended, *platted a crown of thorns, and, put it on his head*, arrayed him in robes of mock majesty, and bowing the knee, saluted him king of the Jews; while with their hands they smote him, and offered the vilest indignities. *Note*; (1.) By these stripes he fulfilled the prophetic word, and in part procured the healing of our guilty souls. (2.) Many now make a jest of things sacred, who will shortly prove them to their cost serious realities. (3.) He who endured such pain and shame for us, has left us his example of patient suffering: how dare we then at any time complain, when we consider what he endured?

2. Thus arrayed, Pilate once more ordered him to be led forth, hoping that this would satisfy his persecutors, and that they might be prevailed upon to let him go; when he adds withal his solemn testimony, that he found *no fault in him*, and that he therefore regarded him as an object rather to be pitied than feared; and pointing to him as he stood, wearing the crown of thorns and purple robe, his face black with buffeting, and smeared with blood, he said, *Behold the man!* and let such an object of misery plead with you for mercy. *Note*; (1.) That man, once treated with such insult and contempt, should be for ever in our eyes the object of our admiration, love, and praise; for, as he humbled himself thus low, the more we see of his abasement, the more the riches of his grace should rise in our esteem. (2.) If we be hooted at, and made gazing-stocks by wicked men, we are only called to a fellowship in Christ's sufferings, and should therein rejoice.

3. Far from being softened and melted by the misery of the innocent sufferer, the chief priests and their officers, more exasperated through the fear of losing their prey, instigated the people, and in a most tumultuous manner headed the mob, and led the cry, *Crucify him, Crucify him.* Pilate, shocked at their cruelty and injustice, or ironically reproaching them, who pretended to so much sanctity, with so wicked a deed, replies, *Take ye him, and crucify him, if ye are so madly set upon it; I choose to have nothing to do with so base an action, for I find no fault in him.* Fearing that Jesus should yet escape them, they produce a new accusation of a capital nature. At first they charged him as a traitor against the government, now as a blasphemer against God; pretending, that according to their law he ought to die, *because he made himself the Son of God*, and pretended to the incommunicable honours of the Godhead.

4. Pilate, more terrified at that saying, lest he should bring the divine vengeance more fearfully on his head, determined to examine farther into the matter; and therefore, taking Jesus into the judgment-hall, demanded whence he came, whether of human or divine extraction. But Jesus, knowing it was useless to reply, gave him no answer. Pilate, repenting his silence as a contempt of his authority, with haughtiness adds, *Speakest thou not unto me? art thou mute, though a prisoner at my bar? knowest thou*

*not, that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?* He boasts of his authority as absolute, as able to save or to destroy: so apt are proud worms in office to magnify themselves, and to affect a display of their power.

5. Christ nobly checks his arrogance, and exposes the vanity of his boasts. *Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above*; as a magistrate, it was from heaven he received his authority, and should rule with justice; and in this particular case, had it not been permitted in the councils of God, not all the Roman powers combined could have prevailed in the minutest particular against him. *Therefore he that delivered me unto thee, Caiaphas the high priest, hath the greater sin.* *Note*; (1.) There is a difference in sins; some transgress with more aggravated guilt than others, as they act against greater light, and offend with greater malice.

6. Pilate, now more deeply stung in his conscience, sought earnestly to obtain the release of Jesus, but in vain. Had he acted as an upright magistrate, and according to the convictions of his conscience, he would have feared no popular resentment; but his corruptions overcame his convictions; and the fear of offending the people, and of endangering himself, at last prevailed. The Jews, perceiving how he was disposed, in order to compel him to consent, clamoured loud, and urged, that if he *let this man go*, he could not be *Cæsar's friend*; since whoever made himself a king, spoke against Cæsar, and was a rebel against his government; though the fact was so notoriously false, Christ having never assumed the least temporal authority; he commanded, on the contrary, the tribute to be paid to Cæsar; and when the people would have made him a king by force, he left them, and disappointed their designs. But this they craftily urge, as what must most powerfully influence Pilate, who might now be liable to an accusation before the emperor for betraying his trust, if he should let him go, whom they accused as a traitor. Thus they, who in heart abhorred the Roman government, now would appear the most zealous subjects of Cæsar. Wicked men, to effect their purposes, can transform themselves into every shape.

7. Pilate, terrified into compliance with their request by this suggestion, and well apprized of the cruel and suspicious temper of Tiberius the Roman emperor, sat down on the judgment seat, in a place called *Gabbatha*, or *the pavement*, in order to pronounce sentence upon the prisoner. *And it was the preparation day of the passover tabbath*, a solemn season when very different subjects should have engaged their time and thoughts, *and about the sixth hour.* Once more to try if any thing would work upon them, Pilate bids them *behold their king*, and think a moment if such a miserable object could afford any real cause to fear his pretensions, even if he had affected royalty. But they, impatient for his condemnation, shouted *Away with him, away with him, crucify him*; they will hear nothing in his favour, and are determined in their purpose. Pilate remonstrates with them hereupon, *Shall*

*I cru-*

5 And he stooping down, *and looking in*,  
 saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not  
 in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following  
 him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth  
 the linen clothes lie,

\* Luke, 24. 12. Ver. 6, 7. Ch. 19. 40. & 21. 44.  
 clothes as he never more would need them. Ch. 11. 44.

† Ch. 18. 15—17. & 21. 7. Mat. 16. 15, 16. John, 6. 67—69.

‡ He left his grave

*I crucify your king?* either meaning to excite their compassions, or ridiculing their hopes of a Messiah. They, who at other times ever testified their abhorrence of the Roman yoke, now eagerly embrace it, and with deep professions of loyalty cry, *We have no king but Caesar*. Pilate then, seeing it in vain to contend, pronounced sentence, and delivered up the innocent prisoner to them to be crucified. Thus was he arraigned and condemned for us, for a pretended crime, that the condemnation due to us for our real rebellions against God might be removed.

8. The sentence is immediately put in execution by his blood-thirsty persecutors, with every circumstance of ignominy. They drag him to the place where malefactors were executed without the city, bearing his own cross; and there nail him to the accursed tree, between two criminals, who were executed with him, to make him appear the vilest of the vile; thus fulfilling the scriptures, which foretold that he should be *numbered with the transgressors*, Isaiah, liii. 12. We cannot too frequently in our meditations come and see this great sight: calvary offers the noblest object to our view, God incarnate dying for our iniquities: with what anguish for our guilt, which brought the Saviour to the cross; with what love to him, who so freely consented to bear our sins in his own body on the tree, should we then look up to a crucified Jesus!

2dly, The circumstances of Christ's death are here somewhat more fully related than by the other evangelists.

1. On a tablet at the top of his cross, Pilate wrote a superscription in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, containing the accusation laid against him, *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*. Multitudes of the Jews then, who came from the city to the place of execution, read the superscription; and the chief priests, offended at the title given him, regarded it as a mark of infamy upon their nation, and therefore requested Pilate to alter the writing into another form, and not to call him absolutely *King of the Jews*, but that he said, *I am King of the Jews*; desiring to fix upon his memory this infamy of an impostor. But Pilate, indignant at the injustice they had driven him to commit, with displeasure rejects their request, saying, *What I have written, I have written*, and will not alter. Note; (1.) The very superscription proved the innocence of Jesus. No crime was charged upon him, but his asserting his real character as the King Messiah. (2.) God holds the hands and lips of wicked men, and can, when he pleases, make them write and speak in such a way, as shall bear testimony to his truth.

2. The soldiers who crucified him, as he hung on the tree, sat down to part his garments among them; and, unwilling to rend his seamless coat, determined rather to cast lots which of them should have it, fulfilling literally the scriptures, which had said, *They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots*. (Pl. xxii.

18.) *These things therefore the soldiers did*, with the utmost freedom as to themselves, and yet in a remarkable correspondence to the divine oracle and prescience.

3. In the midst of his agonies Jesus shewed the tenderest concern for his afflicted mother, who stood by his cross with the disciple whom he loved; and kindly addressing her, he recommends her to the care of his beloved John, desiring her to regard him henceforth as her son, and directing him to pay her the duty and affection due to a mother; and from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home, glad to obey the commands of his dying Master, and well pleased to have an opportunity of testifying his unfeigned love towards him. Note; (1.) Christ on the cross hath taught all children an eminent instance of filial duty towards their parents, whose wants to the utmost they are bound to provide for. (2.) When one friend fails, the Lord can raise us up another: if we trust him, we shall not be destitute. (3.) They who love the adored Jesus, will be happy to embrace every opportunity of testifying their regard for him.

4. *Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished*, and his work of atonement nearly complete, that the scripture might be fulfilled (Pl. xxii. 15. lxix. 21.), saith, *I thirst*; and a vessel of vinegar being near, which was probably mixed with water, as drink for the Roman soldiers, they dipped a sponge in the liquor, and on a stalk of hyssop lifted it to his lips. Jesus felt that wrath of God, and thirsted, which had he not endured, we must for ever have lain down in everlasting burnings, without one drop of water to cool our tongues.

5. Jesus having received the vinegar, saith, *It is finished*, the victory is obtained over death and hell; the full atonement is made; all the types and prophecies fulfilled; the law magnified by a perfect obedience unto death, and the justice of God satisfied; and therefore now his sufferings end. *He bowed his head and gave up the ghost*; freely resigning his soul into his Father's hands, and surrendering that life which otherwise none could have taken from him, as the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John, ii. 2.)

3dly, The indignity intended to be shewn to Jesus in the breaking of his bones, and that also shewn to him by the soldier in the piercing of his side, are recorded only by this evangelist.

1. The Jews, superstitiously observant of the sabbath, and hypocritically pretending reverence for that sacred institution, while their hands were red with the blood of him who was Lord of the sabbath—that the bodies might not hang on the trees till evening, when the sabbath began, which was a high day, and kept with great solemnity, they besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away; to kill them outright, if they were not dead before, and to bury them immediately. Note; Hypocrites often appear very scrupulous about the ceremonies



7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped

together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which

monies of religion, while they are living in open violation of its most essential precepts.

2. Pilate granted their request; and the two malefactors, not being yet dead, had the dreadful operation performed on them: but when the soldiers came to Jesus, perceiving him already dead, they broke not his legs; but one of the soldiers, to put the matter past dispute, with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water; either the pericardium being pierced, and thus the water it contained rushing out with the blood, or this separate discharge was miraculous, but typical at all events of the great blessings of justification and sanctification, obtained by Christ's blood-shedding for us. And John, who was standing by, adds his attestation, as an eye-witness to this fact, as most indubitably true, that we might believe the certainty of Christ's death, and receive the ineffable blessings which this blood and water signified. Note; (1.) We are by nature polluted with guilt, and defiled with corruption; but this is the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Jesus came by blood to make the atonement, by water to purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God: whoever therefore cometh to him, shall find the mighty efficacy of his blood to pardon the most guilty, and of his grace to purify the most polluted soul. (2.) We have not followed cunningly devised fables in the gospel of our salvation, but believe on the evidences of facts, supported by the most unshaken authority, and attested by the most competent witnesses.

3. In this transaction particular notice is taken of the fulfilment of two scriptures: (1.) A bone of him shall not be broken (Exod. xii. 46.); which, though spoken of the paschal lamb, yet especially regarded him, who in the fullness of time, as our passover, should be sacrificed for us (1 Cor. v. 7.). (2.) Another scripture said (Zech. xii. 10.) They shall look on him whom they pierced. Thus were the prophecies accomplished by those, who thought of nothing less in what they did, than the confirmation of our faith in Jesus as the true Messiah.

4thly, Though now Jesus seemed deserted of all, and his corpse ready to be laid with malefactors in a common grave, God raises up one who is appointed to give it a more honourable interment.

1. Joseph of Arimathea, who through fear of the Jews had concealed his sentiments, and, though secretly a disciple of Jesus, was afraid to profess it, now boldly appears, and begs of the governor the body of Jesus, which was granted. Note; (1.) The higher men are in the world, the greater temptation they are under to shun the reproach of the cross; and, though persuaded of the truth of the gospel, not to make bold and open profession of it. (2.) When some of the most courageous disciples are foiled, God can say to the fearful hearts, Be strong, and can enable them to appear boldly in the cause of truth.

2. Nicodemus, who at the first appearing of Jesus came to him by night, now joined Joseph in this pious work, and provided a large quantity of myrrh and aloes, in order to embalm the body of Jesus, as was often done

to men of eminent reputation and dignity. No expence to serve him, will be grudged by those who truly love the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. They took down the body, and wrapped it in linen clothes, with the spices, as was the manner of the Jews to bury their great men: and as Joseph had a garden near the place where Jesus was crucified, in which he had prepared himself a new tomb, hewn out of a rock, where never man had lain before, there laid they the body of Jesus, it being very convenient, as they were straitened for time, the preparation-day being far advanced, and the sabbath approaching. Thus was our great Surety laid under the arrests of death, and consigned to the silent grave, that he might make the clods of the valley sweet to us, prepare our bed of dust perfumed with his own glorious body, and comfort us in the reviving hope of following him through the grave, the gate of death, unto a joyful immortality.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 2. Then she runneth—to Simon Peter,] See the note on Luke, xxiv. 5. The reader of the following annotations on this and the next chapter, will be pleased to refer to the notes on the parallel places.

Ver. 3. Peter therefore went forth,] Peter and John only are mentioned in this relation; but the circumstances taken notice of by the other evangelists shew, that the apostles lodged all together in one house, as they used to do while their Master was alive: if so, it is reasonable to believe, that they all heard Mary Magdalene's report, and were anxious to know the truth of it. But in their present situation, they would judge it imprudent to go out in a body to examine the matter, and would rather depute two of their number for that purpose. Accordingly we suppose that Peter and John went to the sepulchre by the advice and appointment of the rest. Instead of came to the sepulchre, the Greek should rather be rendered went. The fact mentioned by St. Luke (Ch. xxiv. 12.) has been commonly taken to be the same with this related by St. John; from which, however, Mr. West observes, it differs, among other things, in this material circumstance, viz. that whereas St. John expressly says, that Peter went into the sepulchre, while he [John], who got thither first, contented himself with barely stooping down and looking into it, St. Luke tells us, that Peter stooping down and looking in, beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed. The original word *καταψαυας*, stooping down and looking, is used by both evangelists, and in the latter applied to St. Peter, in the former only to St. John, is in St. John's gospel plainly distinguished from the word *εισεδθεν*, entered in, and set in direct opposition to it; and that not by force of etymology and construction only, but by particulars resulting from the actions signified by those two words, which prove them to be distinct and different from each other. He who went into the sepulchre, saw more than he who, standing without, only stooped down and looked in. Thus Peter and John, when they entered into the sepulchre,

of the lin... not... in a p... had... from... Now the... signified... where th... and in... been let... success... of... from St... to th... and... reasonable... when he can... mer in, b... compared; e... acted by... rendered, ... only... related o... St. John... and the fan... different... occasions... has been... sepulchre... afflicte... of Mary... women... of Jesus... to... in puri... that he m... In... import... zealous... Lord... What... women o... at the... can...

came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

9<sup>b</sup> For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

<sup>a</sup> Luke, 9. 44. & 24. 25, 26. Ch. 12. 16. Pl. 16. 10. Acts, 2. 25, 31. & 17. 35. Mat. 16. 21.

chre, saw *not only* the linen clothes lie, *but* the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself: but when they only *stooped down and looked in*, they could see only the linen clothes, as is evident from the words of St. John, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Now these two actions being by these marks as clearly distinguished from each other in St. John, as the different places where they were performed can be by the terms *entrance* and *inside* of the sepulchre, and, as so distinguished, having been separately performed by that apostle, they must also necessarily be taken for separate and distinct actions, when related of St. Peter. And if it be reasonable to conclude from St. John's account, that Peter, when he came *with* him to the sepulchre, did not stop at the entrance, *stoop down and look in*, but that he *entered* into it; it is no less reasonable to conclude from St. Luke's narration, that when he came at the time mentioned by him, he did not *enter in*, but *stooping down*, beheld the linen clothes and departed; especially if the force of the Greek word *ἵκετο* (rendered by *themselves*) be considered, and the whole passage rendered, as it ought to have been, "Beheld the linen clothes only lying." From all which it appears, that the fact related of St. Peter by St. Luke, and that here related by St. John, are separate and distinct facts, and not one and the same, as has been imagined. And as the facts were different, so did they take their rise from two different occasions; or in other words, as it is evident from all that has been just now said, that Peter went *twice* to the sepulchre, so there are two distinct reasons for his so doing, assigned in the gospels of Luke and John, viz. the report of Mary Magdalene, and that of Joanna and the other women. By the former having been told that the body of Jesus was taken out of the sepulchre, he ran in great haste to examine into the truth of that account; and in pursuance of this intent entered into the sepulchre, that he might receive a thorough satisfaction upon that point. In the latter were two additional circumstances of importance, sufficient to awaken the curiosity of a less zealous disciple than St. Peter, whose affection for his Lord was like his natural temper, fervent and impetuous. When he heard therefore from Joanna and the other women of a vision of angels, who had appeared to them at the sepulchre, and informed them that Christ was risen, can we wonder at his running thither a *second time*, in hopes of receiving some confirmation of the truth of that report, which, though, treated by the rest as an idle tale, he certainly then gave credit to, as the whole tenor of this passage implies? We say a *second time*, because had he gone for the first time upon the report of Joanna, he could have had no inducement to have gone to the sepulchre a *second time* from any thing he could learn from the first report made by Mary Magdalene, whose account contained nothing but what was implied in that given by Joanna and the other women. His behaviour also upon this occasion, when he only *stooped down and looked into* the sepulchre, so different from the former,

when he entered into it, is very consonant with the purpose of this second visit, which was, to see if the angels who had appeared to the women at the sepulchre, were still there: this could as well be discovered by *looking*, as by *going* into the sepulchre, as is plain from the account given by Mary Magdalene, who, *stooping down and looking in*, saw two angels sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Having now proved that the visit of St. Peter to the sepulchre, mentioned by St. Luke, must have been his second visit, this passage is cleared from two objections which lay against it; one, that it did not agree with the relation given by St. John; and the other, that it disturbed and confounded the whole order of St. Luke's narration. This point being settled, the reader will permit a few inferences in order to explain some passages in the preceding part of that chapter of St. Luke's gospel. *First* then, it is plain from ver. 9. that St. Peter, after he had been with St. John and Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, was now got among the other apostles and disciples, whom, in all probability, he and John had assembled upon the occasion of Mary Magdalene's report. Peter, we say, and John had, in all probability, assembled the other apostles and disciples, to inform them of what they had heard from Mary Magdalene, and of their having been themselves at the sepulchre to examine into the truth of her report. For it is not to be imagined, that these apostles would not have immediately communicated to the rest an event of so much consequence to them all, as that of the Lord's body being missing from the sepulchre. And as we now find them gathered together, and Peter with them, it is no unnatural supposition, that they had been summoned thither by Peter and John; at least their meeting together so early in the morning, is this way accounted for. Here then we see the reason of St. Luke's naming Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, among those who told these things to the apostles, ver. 10. For although these two women were with Joanna and her party, and, consequently, could not have joined them in relating to the apostles the vision of the two angels, &c. yet, as the account of their having found the stone rolled away, and the body of Jesus missing, had been reported from them by Peter and John to the other apostles before the return of Joanna from the sepulchre, St. Luke thought fit to set them down as evidences of some of the facts related by him; and indeed it was proper to produce the testimony of the two Mary's concerning these facts, because they first went to the sepulchre, and first gave an account of those two particulars to the apostles. *Secondly*, It may hence be inferred, that the reports of the women were made separately and at different times. For if St. Peter went *twice* to the sepulchre, there must have been two distinct reasons for his so doing, the distinct reports of Mary Magdalene and of Joanna: and as there was a considerable interval between his first and second visit, a proportionable space must have intervened between the two reports. After Mary Magdalene's report, he had been at

10 <sup>1</sup> Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

11 ¶ But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

12 And seeth <sup>k</sup> two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet,

where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw <sup>1</sup> Jesus standing, and

<sup>1</sup> Mark, 16. 13. Luke, 24. 9.

<sup>k</sup> Luke, 24. 4. Mat. 28. 3, 5. Mark, 16. 5, 6. This seems to have been a second appearance of angels distinct from that in Mark and Luke.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 15, 16. Mark, 16. 9. Mat. 28. 9. Song, 3. 3, 4. with Ch. 21. 4. Mark, 16. 12. Luke, 24. 16, 31.

the sepulchre, had returned thence to his own home, and was now got with the other apostles and disciples, whom, as we have said, he and St. John had in all probability called together, before Joanna, and the women with her, came to make theirs. *Thirdly*, as the reports were made at different times, and by different women; as the facts reported were different, and said to have happened all in the same place, viz. at the sepulchre, and as these facts must of consequence have happened at different times; it follows, that the women who reported those facts as happening in their presence, must have been at the sepulchre at different times. For had they been all present at each of these events, no reason can be assigned for their differing so widely in their relations; and pretty difficult will it be to account for their varying so much as to the time of their making their reports. Here then is a strong argument in favour of the women's coming at different times to the sepulchre. Their different motives for going, some intending only to view the sepulchre, and others to embalm the body, is still another argument; and as this gave occasion to two appearances of Christ, and as many of the angels, it frequently multiplied the proofs and witnesses of the resurrection, and established this important truth upon stronger evidence.

*Ver. 6, 7. Simon Peter—went into the sepulchre, and seeth, &c.*] These circumstances were very awakening, and very proper to prepare the minds of the disciples for something extraordinary, since nothing but the resurrection of Jesus could in right reason be concluded from them. The body they saw was gone; but by whom could it be taken away, and for what purpose? Not by friends; for then, in all probability, they would have known something about it. Not by the Jews; for they had nothing to do with it. Pilate, to whom alone the disposal of it belonged, as the body of a supposed malefactor executed by his orders, had given it to Joseph of Arimathea, a friend and secret disciple of Christ, who laid it in the sepulchre but two days before. And wherefore should they remove it again so soon?—Not to bury it; for in that case they would not have left the winding-sheet, and the napkin folded up, behind them. Whoever therefore had removed the body, they could not have done it with a design to bury it; and yet no other purpose for the removal of it can be imagined. Besides, it must have been removed in the night by stealth, and consequently in a hurry. How then came the winding-sheet and napkin to be folded up and disposed in so orderly a manner, in the sepulchre? Add to this that the stone was very large, and therefore many people must have been concerned in this transaction; not one of

whom was there to give an answer to any such questions. These and such like reflections could not but rise in their minds, and these difficulties could not but dispose them to expect some extraordinary event. They knew the life of Jesus was a life of miracles, and his death was attended with prodigies and wonders; all which could not but come crowding into their memories; and yet none of them at that time believed that he was risen from the dead; (See on ver. 8.) for, *as yet*, the evangelist assures us, ver. 9. *They knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead*; that is, they did not understand from the prophets, that the Messiah was to rise again from the dead; being on the contrary persuaded, that these very prophets had foretold, that the Messiah should *not die, but abide for ever*. And, as they did not know from the scripture, nor yet from our Lord's own predictions, that he was to rise again; so neither could they collect it from any thing which Mary Magdalene had told them; for she herself had not the least notion of it, even when Jesus appeared to her; as is plain from what she says in the 13th and 15th verses. See the note on Matth. xxviii. 11, &c.

*Ver. 8. And believed.*] The plain interpretation of this passage seems to be, that John entering into the sepulchre, saw every thing as above related, and consequently *believed*, not that Christ was risen, but that the body was taken away, as Mary Magdalene had informed them: for the apology which he immediately subjoins, evidently proves that a belief in the *resurrection* could not be meant; because St. John declares that *they knew not*, they had not the least *idea* of those scriptures which foretold his resurrection from the dead. See the note on Luke, xxiv. 11.

*Ver. 10. Then the disciples went away*] *The disciples*; that is, Peter and John: *to their own home*, is in the original, *προς ἑαυτούς*, which seems evidently to signify “to their companions.” Accordingly, soon after this, the women found the eleven and the rest together. Luke, xxiv. 9. It probably appeared prudent to Peter and John to retire immediately, lest they should have been questioned by the rulers, if found near the sepulchre; and it was certainly necessary for them to acquaint the rest of the disciples with this important circumstance as soon as possible, and to collect their sentiments upon it. Mary Magdalene, however, who it seems had followed Peter and John to the sepulchre, did not return home with them, being anxious to find the body. See the next verse.

*Ver. 11—14. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping:*] The vision mentioned in Matthew and Mark was of one angel; that seen by Mary was of two; as was likewise that by Joanna and those with her. And whereas the

knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why

weepst thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him,

the first angel was found by the women upon their entering the sepulchre, sitting on the right side, the two last-mentioned appearances were abrupt and sudden. For the angels which Mary Magdalene discovered sitting, one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid, were not seen by Peter and John, who just before had entered the sepulchre, and viewed every part of it with attention; and Joanna, and those with her, had been some time in the sepulchre before they saw any angels; which angels seem also to have appeared to them in a different attitude from those seen by Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. As the number of angels, and the manner of their appearance, was different, so likewise were the words spoken to them by the women, and their behaviour upon those several occasions. Mary and Salome were seized with fear and fled from the sepulchre; Joanna, and those with her, were struck with awe and reverence; but Mary Magdalene seems to have been so immersed in grief, at not being able to find the body of the Lord, as to have taken little or no notice of so extraordinary an appearance; she sees, hears, and answers the angels without any emotion, and without quitting the object upon which her mind was wholly fixed, till she was awakened out of her trance by the well-known voice of her Master calling her by her name.—But here let us stop a little, and inquire—Could this appearance be an illusion? Could a mind so occupied, so lost in one idea, attend at the same time to the production of so many others of a different kind? Or could Mary's imagination be strong enough to see and converse with angels, and yet too weak to make any impression on her, or call off her attention from a less affecting, less surprising subject? Real angels she may indeed be supposed to have seen and heard, and not to have regarded them; but apparitions raised by her own fancy, could not have failed engaging her notice. For although when we are awake, we cannot avoid perceiving the ideas excited in us by the organs of sensation, yet is it, in most instances, in our power to give them what degree of attention we think fit; and hence it comes, that when we are earnestly employed in any action, intent upon any thought, or transported by any passion, we see, and hear, and feel a thousand things, of which we take no more notice than if we were utterly insensible of them: but to the ideas not proceeding from sensation, but formed within us from the internal operation of our minds, we cannot but attend; because, in their own nature, they can exist no longer than while we attend to them. It is evident, that the mind cannot apply itself to the contemplation of more than one object at a time; which, as long as it keeps possession, excludes or obscures all others. Mary Magdalene therefore, having persuaded herself, upon seeing the stone rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre, that some persons had removed the body of her Lord; in which notion she was still more confirmed, after her return to the sepulchre with Peter and John; and grieving at being thus disappointed of paying her last duty to her de-

ceased Master, whose body (as Peter, his most zealous, and John, his most beloved disciple, knew nothing of its removal) she might imagine had fallen into the hands of his enemies, to be exposed perhaps to fresh insults and indignities, or at least to be deprived of the pious offices which the duty and affection of his followers and disciples were preparing to perform—Mary Magdalene, falling into a passion of grief at this unexpected distress, and abandoning herself to all the melancholy reflections that must naturally arise from it, with her eyes suffused with tears, and thence discerning more imperfectly, looking as it were by accident, and while she was thinking on other matters, into the sepulchre, and seeing the angels, might, according to the reasoning above laid down, give but little heed to them, as not perceiving on a sudden, and under so great a cloud of sorrow, the tokens of any thing extraordinary in that appearance. She might take them for two young men, which was the form assumed by those who appeared to the other women, without reflecting that it was impossible such young men should have been in the sepulchre without being seen by John and Peter, and improbable that they should have entered into it after their departure, without having been observed by her. Intent upon what passed in her own bosom, she did not give herself time to consider and examine external objects; and, therefore, knew not even Christ himself, who appeared to her in the same miraculous manner; but, *supposing him to be a gardener*, begged him to tell her, if he had removed the body, where he had laid it, that she might take it away. By which question, and the answer she made to the angels immediately before, we may perceive upon what her thoughts were so earnestly employed, and thence conclude still farther, that the angels were not the creatures of her imagination, since they were plainly not the objects of her attention. The appearances therefore of the angels were real.

*Ver. 15. She, supposing him to be the gardener, &c.]* It is very probable that Jesus might speak low, or in a different way from what he usually did; and Mary's taking him for the gardener, seems to intimate, that there was nothing very splendid in his dress. Accordingly, when he appeared to the two disciples in their way to Emmaus, they seem to have taken him for a person of a rank not much superior to their own. Her eyes might also be withheld at first from knowing Jesus, as theirs were, Luke, xxiv. 16. It is observable, that Mary accosts this stranger in respectful language, even when she took him for a servant; for the word *κηπουρός* cannot with propriety signify the owner of the garden. She prudently reflected that an error on that hand would be more excusable than on the other; supposing he should have proved one of superior rank in a plain dress. It is also observable, that she does not name Jesus, but speaks in indefinite terms, *If thou hast borne him hence*; intimating, that he was the one person of whom her own thoughts and heart were so full, that she took it for granted every one must know whom she meant.

Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. <sup>m</sup> She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is

to say, <sup>n</sup> Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, <sup>o</sup> Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to <sup>p</sup> my brethren, and say unto them, <sup>q</sup> I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my

<sup>m</sup> Ch. 10. 4. Song. 2. 8.

<sup>n</sup> Mat. 23. 8, 10. Ch. 11. 28. & 13. 13.

<sup>o</sup> Luke, 10. 4. 2 Cor. 5. 16. with Mat. 28. 9.

<sup>p</sup> Pf. 22. 23.

Rom. 8. 29. Heb. 2. 11, 12. Mat. 28. 10. <sup>q</sup> Ch. 13. 3. & 14. 3. & 16. 5, 7, 16, 28. & 17. 5, 11, 13. 1 Pet. 1. 3. Eph. 1. 3, 17. Pf. 89. 26.

Such language in such circumstances was perfectly natural.

*Ver. 16. Jesus saith unto her, &c.]* Christ had stood by her some time, had spoken to her, and she answered him before she knew him to be Christ; on the contrary, she took him for the gardener; by all which it is manifest, that it was not a spectre of her creating. Her mind, as we have observed in a preceding note, was otherwise engaged; and had it been either at leisure or disposed to raise apparitions, it is most likely she would have called up some person with whom she had more acquaintance and concern than a keeper of a garden, whom probably she had never seen or known before. Besides, Jesus called her by her name, by which she discovered him; for turning immediately about, she accosted him with the respectful title, Rabboni, my Master; and, as may be inferred from the ensuing words of Christ, offered to embrace him. His voice and his countenance convinced her that it was Christ himself.

*Ver. 17. Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended, &c.]* The objectors to the resurrection of Jesus, have inferred from this circumstance, that Christ's body was not a real tangible body: but this could never be inferred from the words *Touch me not*; for thousands make use of that expression every day, without giving the least suspicion that their bodies are not tangible, or capable of being touched: nor could this conclusion be built upon the words, *I am not yet ascended to my Father*; for though there is a difficulty in those words, there is no difficulty in seeing that they have no relation to Christ's body; for as to his body nothing is said. The natural sense of the phrase, as collected from comparing it with Matth. xxviii. 9. is this, "Mary Magdalene, upon seeing Jesus, fell at his feet, and laid hold on them, and held them as if she meant never to let them go. See 2 Kings, iv. 27. Luke, vii. 38. Christ said to her, 'Touch me not, or embrace me not now, you will have other opportunities of seeing me, for I go not yet to my Father; lose no time then, but go quickly with my message to my brethren.'" In the Jewish language, *to touch*, often signifies *to embrace*, with affection and regard. Thus Mark, x. 13. *They brought young children, that he should touch them*; that is, express his affection to them by the imposition of hands, accompanied with blessings; accordingly it is added, *He took them up in his arms, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them*. So also, Luke, vii. 39. Simon the Pharisee observing a woman, who was a sinner, washing the feet of Christ with her tears, and kissing them, expressed her action by the word *απιοθαυ*. *This man, if he were a prophet, would, &c. who touched him*. In this sense the word *απυ*, *touch*, was used by our Lord on the present occasion.—In the words of this verse is

contained a most clear proof that it was Christ himself who uttered them. To understand this, it must be remembered, that they allude to the long discourse which our Saviour held with his disciples, the very night in which he was betrayed, Ch. xiv. xv. xvi. wherein he told them, that he should leave them for a short time. *A little while, and ye shall not see me*; and that he should come to them again, though but for a short time, *And again a little while, and ye shall see me, because*, added he, *I go to my Father*. By the phrase, *I go to my Father*; Christ meant his final quitting this world; as he himself explained it to his disciples, who did not then understand either of the above expressions, *I came forth, &c.* Ch. xvi. 28. But, lest they should fall into despair at being thus forsaken by him, for whom they had forsaken all the world, he at the same time promised to send them a comforter, even the Holy Spirit, *who should teach them all things*, and enable them to work miracles; and that finally, though they should for a season be sorrowful, *yet their sorrow should soon be turned into joy, &c.* Ch. xiv. 16. 26. xvi. 13. 20, 21. These were magnificent promises, which, as the disciples could not but remember Christ had made to them, so they might be assured, that no one but Christ was able to make them good; and therefore, when they came to reflect seriously on the import of these words, *Touch me not, &c.* it was impossible for them to conclude otherwise than that it was Christ himself who appeared to Mary Magdalene. For as the latter expression, *I ascend to my Father, &c.* implied a remembrance, and consequently a renewal of those promises which were to take place after the ascension to the Father, so did the former, *I am not ascended to my Father*, give them encouragement to expect the performance of that other promise of his coming to them again before his ascension, by his giving them to understand that he had not yet quitted this world. And Christ's forbidding Mary Magdalene to *touch or embrace him*, might have been meant as a signification of his intending to see her and his disciples again, just as in ordinary life, when one friend says to another, "Don't take leave, for I am not going yet," he means to let him know, that he purposes to see him again before he sets out upon his journey. That this is the true import of the words, *Touch me not*, is evident, not only from the reason subjoined in the words immediately following, *For I am not yet ascended, &c.* (by which expression, as we have shewn above, Christ meant he had not finally quitted the world) but from these farther considerations:

Christ, by shewing himself first to Mary Magdalene, intended, doubtless, to give her a distinguishing mark of his favour, and therefore cannot be supposed to have designed at the same time to have put a slight upon her, by refusing her an honour which he granted not long after to the

other

God, and your God.

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the

disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

\* Mark, 16. 10, 14.

other Mary and Salome: and yet this must be supposed, if *touch me not* be understood to imply a prohibition to Mary Magdalene to embrace him, for any reason consistent with the regard shewn to the other women, and different from that now contended for, namely, that he intended to see her again and his disciples. On the contrary, if these words be taken to signify only that this honour was denied to Mary till some fitter opportunity, they will be so far from importing any unkindness or reprehension to her, that they may be rather looked upon as a gracious assurance, a kind of friendly engagement to come to her again. In this sense they correspond exactly with Christ's purpose in sending this message by her to his disciples; which, as we observed before, was to let them know that he remembered his promise of coming to them again, and was determined to perform it, not having finally quitted this world: and of his intention to perform it, this, his refusing to admit the affectionate or reverential embraces of Mary Magdalene, was an earnest; as his coming to them would be a pledge of his resolution to acquit himself in due time of those promises, which were not to take effect till after his final departure out of the world. And thus this whole discourse of our Saviour with Mary Magdalene will be, in all its parts, intelligible, rational, and coherent; whereas, if it be supposed that Mary Magdalene was forbidden to touch Christ for some mystical reason, contained in the words, *I am not yet ascended, &c.* it will be very difficult to understand the meaning or intent of that message, which she was commanded to carry to the disciples; and still more difficult to account for his suffering, not long after, the embraces of the other Mary and Salome.

To the same, or even greater difficulties, will that interpretation of this passage be liable, which supposes that the prohibition to Mary Magdalene was grounded upon the spiritual nature of Christ's body, which, it is presumed, was not sensible to the touch or feeling. And indeed both these reasons for the behaviour of Christ to Mary Magdalene are overturned by his contrary behaviour to the other Mary and Salome. But besides the assurance given by Christ to his disciples, in the words here spoken, of his intention of performing his promises, &c. he might have a farther view, which is equally deducible from those words. That remarkable expression, *I ascend to my Father*, Christ undoubtedly made use of upon this occasion, to recal to their minds the discourse that he held with them three nights before, in which he explained clearly what he meant by *going to his Father*, Ch. xvi. 29. But this was not the only expression that puzzled them; they were as much in the dark as to the meaning of, *A little while, and ye shall see me*, &c. ver. 16, 17, 18. which they likewise confessed they did not understand. But Christ left those words to be explained by the events to which they severally related, and which were then drawing on apace. For that very night he was betrayed, and seized, and deserted by his disciples, as he himself had foretold: the next day he was crucified, expired upon the cross, and was buried. Upon

this melancholy catastrophe, the disciples could be no longer at a loss to understand what Christ meant, when he said to them, *A little while, and ye shall see me*: he was gone from them, and, as their fears suggested, gone for ever, notwithstanding he had expressly told them he would come to them again, in the words, *Again, a little while, and ye shall see me*. This latter expression was full as intelligible as the former; and as the one now expounded by the event, was plainly a prophecy of his death, so must the other be understood as a prophecy of his resurrection. But if they understood it in that sense, they were very far from having a right notion of the resurrection from the dead; as is evident from their imagining when Christ first shewed himself to them after his passion, that they saw a spirit; even though they had just before declared their belief that he *was risen indeed*. The resurrection of the body, it should seem, made no part of their notion of the resurrection from the dead: to lead them therefore into a right understanding of this important article of faith, Christ, in speaking to Mary Magdalene, &c. makes use of terms which strongly imply his being really, that is, bodily risen from the dead: *I am not yet ascended - but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, &c.* The words, *I go to my Father*, Christ, as has already been observed, explained by the well understood phrase of leaving the world; and to this explanation the words immediately foregoing give so great a light, that it is impossible to mistake their meaning. The whole passage runs thus: *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father*, Chap. xvi. 28. By the expression, *and am come into the world*, Christ certainly meant to signify his being and conversing visibly and bodily upon earth; and therefore by the other expression, *I leave the world*, he must have intended to denote the contrary, viz: his ceasing to converse visibly and bodily upon earth. But as they very well knew that the usual road by which all men quitted this world, lay through the gates of death, and were assured that their Master had trodden the irremediable path, they might naturally conclude, that what he had said to them about *leaving the world, &c.* was accomplished in his death; and consistently with that notion might imagine, that by his coming again, no more was intended, than his appearing to them in the same manner as many persons have appeared after their decease. To guard against this double error, Christ plainly intimates to his disciples, in the words, *I am not yet, &c.* that his dying, and his final leaving of the world, were distinct things; the latter of which was still to come, though the former was past: he had indeed died and quitted the world like others; but he was now risen from the dead, returned into the world, and should not leave it finally till he ascended to his Father. Of his being returned into the world, his appearing to Mary Magdalene was intended for a proof; and yet of this it could be no proof at all, if what she saw was no more than what is commonly called a spirit; since the spirits of many people have appeared after

19 ¶ Then the same day at evening being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, 'Peace be unto you.'

20 And when he had so said, "he shewed

unto them *his* hands and his side. \* Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: 'as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed

\* Mark, 16. 14. Luke, 24. 36—48. 1 Cor. 15. 5. † Ch. 14. 27. & 16. 33. ‡ Ver. 27. § John, 1. 1. Luke, 24. 37—40. ¶ Ch. 16. 22. Luke, 24. 41—43. † John, 1. 1, 2. ‡ Ch. 10. 36. & 17. 18. †† 67. 1—3. & 11. 2—4. with Mark, 16. 15—18. ††† Mat. 28. 18—20. Luke, 24. 49. †††† 2 Tim. 2. 2.

after their decease, who, notwithstanding, are supposed to have as effectually left this world by their death, as those who have never appeared at all. If therefore Christ was risen from the dead, as the angels affirmed he was; if he had not finally left the world, as the words, *I am not yet ascended*, &c. plainly import; and if his appearing to Mary Magdalene was intended as a proof of these two points, as undoubtedly it was; it will follow, that he was really, that is bodily, risen from the dead; that he was still in the world, in the same manner as when *he came forth from the Father*, &c. and that it was he himself, and not a spirit without bodily parts, that appeared to Mary Magdalene.

The term *ascend* is twice used by our Saviour in the compass of these few words. In the discourse alluded to, he told his disciples he should go to his Father, and he now bids Mary Magdalene tell them that he should *ascend* to his Father; a variation which had its particular meaning. For as by the former expression he intended to signify in general his final departure, so by the latter is the particular manner of that departure intimated; and, doubtless, with a view of letting his disciples know the precise time, after which they should no longer enjoy his converse, or expect to see him upon earth. When the disciples therefore beheld their Master *taken up into heaven*, they could not but know assuredly, that this was the event foretold about forty days before to Mary Magdalene; and, knowing that, could no longer doubt whether it was Christ himself who appeared and spoke those prophetic words to her. For if it was not Christ who appeared to her, it must either have been some spirit, good or bad; or some man, who, to impose upon her, counterfeited the person and voice of Christ; or lastly, the whole must have been forged and invented by her. The first of these suppositions is blasphemous, the second absurd, and the third improbable. For, allowing her to have been capable of making a lie for the sake of carrying on an imposture from which she could reap no benefit, and to have been informed of what our Saviour had spoken to his disciples the night in which he was betrayed, which does not appear, it must have been either extreme madness or folly in her, to put the credit of her story upon events, such as the appearing of Christ to his disciples, and his ascending into heaven, which were so far from being in the number of *contingences*, that they were not even in the number of natural causes.

Thus Jesus, having finished the great work of atonement, contemplated the effects of it with singular pleasure. The blessed relation between God and man, which had been long cancelled by sin was now happily renewed. The dis-

ciples had now a fresh assurance given them that God was reconciled to them; that he was become their God and Father; that they were exalted to the honourable relation of Christ's brethren, and God's children; and that their Father loved them with an affection greatly superior to that of the most tender-hearted parent. The kindness of this message will appear above all praise, if we call to mind the late behaviour of the persons to whom it was sent. They had every one of them forsaken Jesus in his greatest extremity; but he graciously forgave them; and, to assure them of their pardon in the strongest manner, without so much as hinting at their fault, he called them by the endearing name of his brethren.

Ver. 19. *Then the same day—when the doors were shut, &c.]* "After this, in the evening of the very same day on which he arose and appeared to Mary Magdalene, that is to say the first day of the week; when the disciples were gathered together in a private room, and were comparing their informations concerning his resurrection (Luke, xxiv. 33—36.) after the doors were fastened (*θυρὰν κλειστὰς μὲν*) for fear of being discovered and broke in upon by the Jews, Jesus himself, whose divine power could easily make his way, came in his usual form, before they were aware, to confirm his love to them, and their faith in him; and, standing in the midst of them, he, instead of upbraiding them for, or taking any notice of their having so shamefully deserted him in his late distress, saluted them in a friendly, affectionate, and authoritative manner, saying, All safety, comfort, and quietness, and the best of prosperity, be to you, as consisting of peace with God, with each other, and in your own souls."

Ver. 20. *He shewed unto them his hands and his side.]* Probably the marks made by the nails and the spear were retained, on purpose to give the greater satisfaction to the disciples of the truth of his resurrection, and perhaps for many other reasons; though indeed, without that additional circumstance, the evidence might have been very satisfactory.

Ver. 21. *As my Father hath sent me, &c.]* "As my heavenly Father sent me into the world, to discharge the office of the Messiah; even so I, by my plenary authority, and in proof of my mediatorial commission, send you to discharge the office of apostles and ministers in preaching the gospel to every creature, and to confirm it with miraculous signs wherever you may go." See Mark. xvi. 15, 17, 18.

Ver. 22, 23. *When he had said this, he breathed on them.]* St. Luke, ch. xxiv. 35. informs us, that the disciples from

on them, and faith unto them, \* Receive ye the Holy Ghost :

23 † Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

24 ¶ † But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, † We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, † Except I shall see in his hands

the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 ¶ And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them : then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, † Peace be unto you.

27 Then faith he to Thomas, † Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side : and be not faithless, but believing.

\* Acts, 1. 4. & 4. 8. † Mat. 18. 18. & 16. 19. Luke, 24. 47. Acts, 2. 38. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5. 2 Cor. 2. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 20. † Ch. 11. 16. & 14. 5. & 21. 2. Mat. 10. 3. † Ch. 1. 41, 45. Ver. 2. 13, 18. Ch. 21. 7. † Pf. 78. 8—41. Luke, 24. 39. Ver. 20. Job, 9. 16. Luke, 24. 25. † Ver. 19. Mic. 5. 5. If. 9. 7. Col. 1. 20. Ch. 14. 27. & 16. 33. † Pf. 103. 13, 14. 1 John, 1. 1, 2. Ver. 25.

from Emmaus told their brethren on this occasion, what things were done in the way. Among the rest, no doubt, they repeated the interpretations which Jesus gave of the prophecies concerning his own sufferings and death ; but such a sense of the scriptures being diametrically opposite to the notions which the Jews in general entertained, a peculiar illumination of the Spirit was necessary to enable the apostles to discern it. This illustration they now received from Jesus, who, in token that he bestowed it, *breathed upon them*, and bade them receive it. See on Matth. xviii. 2. The effect of this illumination was, that by perceiving the agreement of the thing which had befallen him with the ancient prophecies concerning the Messiah, their minds were quieted, and they were fitted to judge of the present appearance, and of the other appearances which Jesus was to make before his ascension. Further, the expression *receive ye the Holy Ghost*, may have a relation, not only to the illumination of the Spirit which they now received, but to that which they were to receive afterwards in greater measure. Accordingly, it is added, ver. 23. *Whose soever sins ye remit, &c.* that is to say, “ You are soon to receive the Holy Ghost in the fulness of his communications, whereby you will understand the will of God for men’s salvation in the most comprehensive manner, and so be qualified to declare the only terms on which men’s sins are to be pardoned.” Some indeed carry the matter higher, supposing that this is the power of what they call “ authoritative absolution ;” yet the only foundation on which the apostles themselves could claim such a power, must either have been the gift of discerning spirits, which they enjoyed after the effusion of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. 10. and by which they knew the secret thoughts of men’s hearts, consequently the reality of their repentance ; or it must have been some infallible communication of the will of God concerning men’s future state, which was made to them : For, properly speaking, they neither forgave nor retained sins ; they only declared a matter of fact infallibly made known to them by God. In the mean time, to render this interpretation feasible, the general expressions, *whose soever sins ye remit, &c.* must be very much limited, since it was but a single individual here and there, whose whole condition in the life to come can be supposed to have been made known to the apostles by re-

velation. But there cannot be a doubt that they were at the same time blessed with a greater measure of divine love than they had ever before experienced.

Ver. 24. *Thomas, one of the twelve.*] It is said, Luke, xxiv. 33. that the disciples from Emmaus gave the eleven, and those who were with them, an account of their meeting with Christ, and of the other circumstances accompanying that event. *The eleven* was the name by which the apostles went after the death of Judas, whether they were precisely that number, or fewer ; as we have observed in the note on the abovementioned passage in St. Luke : wherefore we are under no necessity, from this expression, of supposing that Thomas was present when the disciples came in. We are sure that he was not present at this meeting, when Jesus shewed himself ; yet, if St. Luke’s expression is thought to imply that Thomas was with his brethren at the arrival of the disciples, we may suppose that he was one of those who would not believe, and that he went away before they had finished their relation. See Mark, xvi. 13.

Ver. 25. *Except I shall see in his hands the print, &c.*] The repetition of the word *print* seems to be a very great beauty, as it admirably represents the language of a *positive man*, declaring again and again what he insisted upon. The word *as*, rendered *into*, in the next clause, signifies *upon*, in Ch. viii. 6. and Luke, xv. 22. ; and if that sense be retained here, the words will be, *And put my hand upon his side.*

Ver. 27. *Reach hither thy finger, &c.*] It is observable, that our Lord here repeats the very words which Thomas had made use of ; and thus demonstrated, not only that he was risen, but also that he was possessed of divine knowledge, from his being conscious of the words and actions of men, though spoken or done in secret. It is observable also, that Spinoza himself could find out no more plausible objections against this evidence of the resurrection of Christ, than to say that the disciples were deceived in what they imagined they saw, heard, and felt ; which if granted, would be in effect to allow, that no men could be competent judges of any fact whatsoever relating to their own sensations ; and, consequently, would overthrow all human testimony.

Ver.



28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, <sup>s</sup> My Lord and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: <sup>h</sup> blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

30 ¶ <sup>i</sup> And many other signs truly did Jesus

in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 <sup>k</sup> But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that <sup>m</sup> believing ye might have life through his name.

<sup>s</sup> Pl. 118. 28. & 91. 2. & 73. 25, 26. & 18. 1—3. Phil. 3. 8. 1 Tim. 1. 17. Luke, 1. 46, 47. <sup>h</sup> 2 Cor. 5. 7. Heb. 11. 1, 27. 1 Pet. 1. 8. <sup>i</sup> Ch. 21. 25. <sup>k</sup> Rom. 15. 4. Luke, 1. 4. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 16. 16. John, 6. 69. & 9. 35, 38. Acts, 8. 47. <sup>n</sup> Ch. 3. 15, 16, 18, 26. & 5. 24. 1 Pet. 1. 9. 1 John, 5. 10—13.

*Ver. 28. Thomas answered and said, &c.]* Though the nominative often occurs for the vocative, it is the former case which is used here, the words *ou ei, thou art*, being understood. To this the context agrees; for we are told that these words were addressed to Jesus; wherefore they cannot be taken merely as an exclamation of surprise, which is the Socinian gloss; but their meaning is, "*Thou art really he whom I lately followed as my Lord; and I confess thee to be possessed of infinite knowledge, and worship thee as my God.*" It is not said that Thomas actually touched our Lord's wounds; and Christ himself says afterwards, ver. 29. that his belief was built on sight; which, though it does not exclude any evidence that might have been afforded the other senses, yet seems to intimate, that this condescension of our Lord, together with the additional evidence arising from the knowledge that he plainly had of that unreasonable demand which Thomas had made in his absence, with divine grace accompanying the whole, quite overcame him.

*Ver. 29. Because thou hast seen me, &c.]* The word *seen*, according to the Hebrew idiom, is often applied to the other senses; and therefore may here signify that Thomas had the united testimony of all his senses, that Christ had a real, that is to say, a material body. See 1 John, i. 1. and Acts, x. 41. The words, *blessed are they, &c.* may in their original application be understood as a commendation of those then present, who had believed that Christ was risen before they had seen him, or without requiring such proof as Thomas sought for. But as they are indefinite, and imply no certain time, they may be extended even to the case of those to whom the gospel was to be proposed, by the apostles then, and by their successors after them. Accordingly, as in these words our Saviour tacitly reproves Thomas for his incredulity, in not believing a matter of fact so well attested, unless he himself saw it; so he lays down an universal proposition for the encouragement of all mankind in future ages, to believe in him, though they had not seen him.

*Ver. 30, 31. And many other signs, &c.]* He appeared on several other occasions to his disciples after his resurrection; and by many infallible proofs, which are not written in this book, convinced them that he was alive after his passion. The appearances mentioned by the evangelists are nine in number; St. Paul speaks of one to James, and one to himself, which they have omitted; and this passage leads us to think that Jesus shewed himself much oftener than there is any account of upon record; performing many mighty works before his disciples, in order to con-

firm them in the belief of his resurrection and personal identity. But though there were several other appearances and miracles, of which no account is given here, yet what is recorded is sufficient for the evangelist's purpose; which was, to evince that Jesus was the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

*Inferences containing a general view of our Lord's resurrection.—*The transactions of the day on which our Lord arose from the dead, ended in the manner set forth in this chapter to ver. 26. and, in the parallel passages of the preceding sacred writers; a day much to be remembered by men throughout all generations; because it brought fully into act the conceptions which had lodged in the breast of infinite Wisdom from eternity, even those thoughts of love and mercy, on which the salvation of the world depended. Christians, therefore, have the highest reason to solemnize this day with gladness each returning week, by ceasing from labour, and giving themselves up to meditations, and other exercises of devotion. The redemption of the world, which they commemorate thereon, as then receiving its crowning evidence, affords matter for eternal thought, being such a subject as no other, how great soever, can equal; and whose lustre, neither length of time, nor frequent reviewing, can ever diminish: for, as by beholding the sun, we do not find it less glorious or luminous than before, so this benefit which we celebrate, after so many ages, is as fresh and beautiful as ever, and will continue to be so, flourishing in the memories of all the faithful saints of God through the endless revolutions of eternity.

But, that the reader may form a more distinct notion of the history which the evangelists have given of Christ's resurrection, it will not be improper here to join the several circumstances of that important affair together, briefly, and in their order.—The Jewish sabbath being at hand when Jesus expired, his friends had not time to embalm him in the best manner, or even to carry him to the place where they intended he should remain; but they laid him in a new sepulchre hard by, with an intention to remove him after the sabbath was over. The women therefore who were present, observing that the funeral rites were performed in a hurry, made an agreement to come and embalm him more at leisure. Accordingly, as soon as they returned to the city, they bought spices, and prepared them; but the sabbath coming on, they rested from working according to the commandment. When the sabbath was ended, (that is, on our Saturday evening about sun-

CHAP. XXI.

*Christ appearing again to his disciples, is known to them by the great draught of fishes: he dineth with them; earnestly commandeth Peter to feed his lambs and sheep; foretelleth him of his death; rebuketh his curiosity touching John. The conclusion.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**A**FTER these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of

\* Mat. 26. 32. & 28. 7. Ch. 6. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Ch. 1. 41, 45. & 11. 16. Mat. 4. 21. & 10. 2, 3.

Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he *himself*.

2<sup>b</sup> There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a

setting,) the two Marys, by appointment of the rest, set out to see if the stone was still at the door of the sepulchre, because thus they would be certain that the body was within: or, if the sepulchre was open, and the body taken away, they were to inquire of the gardener where it was hid, that the spices might be carried directly to the place. While the women were going on this errand, a great storm and earthquake happened, occasioned by the descent of an angel, who came to wait on Jesus at his resurrection. This storm and earthquake terrifying the women, they turned back and joined their companions, who were going to buy some more spices to complete the preparation. In the mean time, the angel rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, then sat down upon it, and, assuming a very terrible form, affrighted the guards. Soon after this, Jesus arose, and the guards fled in a panic, probably to the first house they could find, where they waited till the morning.

As the morning approached, the storm abated. At length, every thing being got ready, all the women went out together, and arrived at the sepulchre before the rising of the sun. The door was open; they entered, and searched for the body, but it was gone. They were exceedingly perplexed. After consultation, they agreed that, while they searched the garden, Mary Magdalene should go and inform the apostles of what had happened. Coming out of the sepulchre, therefore, she departed, and the rest began to search: but having traversed the garden a while to no purpose, they resolved to examine the sepulchre a second time; and were entering for that end, when, lo! an angel appeared in the farthest right corner, where the feet of Jesus had lain. He spake to them, desiring them to *come and see the place where the Lord lay*. Upon this they descended, and saw another angel in the hithermost corner of the sepulchre. The angels desired them to carry the news of their Lord's resurrection to the disciples, and particularly to Peter. They departed, therefore, and made all the haste they could into the city. In the mean time, Mary Magdalene having told the apostles that the sepulchre was open, and the body taken away, they sent Peter and John to see what was the matter. The two apostles, together with Mary Magdalene, set out for the sepulchre about the time that the women, who had seen the vision, were running into the city; but, taking a different road in the fields, or a different street in the city, they did not meet them. When the company of women came, they related their account to the apostles, and then inquired for Peter, having a message to him; but being told that he

was gone away with John to the sepulchre, they set out a second time along with some of the brethren who were dispatched to examine the truth of this information; expecting to find Peter either at the sepulchre or on the road. But as they were going out, he and John, having left Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, came into the city, it seems, by a different street, for the women missed them; nor did these apostles meet the disciples who were going out to examine the truth of the women's report. The disciples, making all the haste they could, soon left the women with whom they had set out, and arrived at the garden about the time that Mary Magdalene was coming away: for, after Peter and John were gone, she stood beside the sepulchre weeping, and happening to look in, she saw first the angels, then Jesus himself, and was departing to tell the news, just as the disciples arrived at the garden. But she did not meet them, happening to be in a different walk from that by which they were coming up. The disciples went straightway to the sepulchre, and saw the angels, and then departed; and being now but a little way behind Mary Magdalene, who was tired with the fatigue she had undergone, they travelled by a nearer road through the fields, or by a different street of the city, with such expedition, that they had related their account in the hearing of the two disciples who went to Emmaus, before she arrived.

While these things were doing, Jesus met the company of women in their way to the sepulchre, and ordered them to go and inform his disciples that they had seen him. Upon this they left off pursuing Peter, and returned to the apostles' lodging, where they found Mary Magdalene relating her new account, which they confirmed by reporting whatever had happened to themselves. Or, we may suppose that Mary Magdalene fell in with them immediately after Jesus had left them, and that they all came to the apostles in a body.

Peter, hearing the women affirm that they had seen, not only a vision of angels, but Jesus himself, went to the sepulchre a second time, but did not enter. He only looked in, and saw the clothes lying as before. In his way home, however, he seems to have had the happiness of meeting with Jesus. The coming of the watch into the city, and their appearing before the council, is fixed by St. Matthew to the women's interview with our Lord. They had fled from the garden when Jesus arose; and, being in a panic, had taken shelter in the first house they could find. But, in the morning, they began to take courage, and, at the time mentioned, went and told what they had seen to the chief

ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

4 But when the morning was now come,

<sup>c</sup> Luke, 5. 5. <sup>1</sup> Cor. 15. 10. <sup>2</sup> Cor. 3. 5.

Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

5 Then Jesus saith unto them, \* Children,

<sup>d</sup> Luke, 24. 16. Ch. 20. 14.

<sup>e</sup> Or Sirs.

priests, who were called together by the high-priest, in order to receive their report. Soon after this, the disciples who travelled to Emmaus were overtaken by Jesus on the road. After he was gone, they returned to Jerusalem, and told their brethren what had happened. While they were speaking, behold, Jesus came in; and, to convince all present of the truth of his resurrection, shewed them his hands and his feet, and called for meat, which he ate in their presence.

This is the method whereby some eminent commentators harmonize this important part of scripture, and which we have in general followed. However, as others have differed a little in their method from the above, we also subjoin their account; and the ingenious reader, after an accurate comparison of the evangelists, must judge for himself.

The women who accompanied our Lord from Galilee, made an appointment to come and embalm him after the sabbath was ended. Very early, therefore, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, in pursuance of their purpose, went out to meet the apostles at the sepulchre. About the time that they were setting out, the earthquake happened; the angel descended, and rolled away the stone; and Jesus arose. The two Marys either met with, or called upon Salome in their way; so the three went on, till they came within sight of the sepulchre, and observed the door open. This circumstance leading them to conclude that the body was removed, Mary Magdalene ran immediately back to tell Peter and John what had happened. In the mean time, the other Mary and Salome, going forward, entered the sepulchre, and had the vision of one angel mentioned by Matthew and Mark; who informed them that Jesus was risen, and bade them carry the news to the disciples.

After they were departed, Peter and John, with Mary Magdalene, came to the sepulchre: an account of this journey we have in ch. xx. 1—10. The two apostles, having examined every thing, went away; but Mary Magdalene stayed behind them at the sepulchre, and saw first the vision of angels, then Jesus himself. Her joy gave her speed. She ran the second time into the city, that she might impart the news to the rest.

After Jesus had shewed himself to Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, he went and met her companions; viz. Mary the mother of James, and Salome, as they were going into the town to give an account of the vision they had seen. The apostles and Mary Magdalene had not been long away from the sepulchre, when Joanna and some Galilean women, her companions, arrived with the spices to embalm the body. This company of women had the vision of two angels described by St. Luke, and then departed. But, by some incident or other, Mary—the mother of James, and Salome, who had been at the sepulchre, and seen the one angel before Joanna came, and who, as they returned, had seen Jesus himself, lingered so long on the

road, that Joanna and the women with her, who came to the sepulchre after them, got to the apostles' lodging before them, and had related their account in such good time, that the two disciples of whom St. Luke speaks, ch. xxiv. 13. were set out for Emmaus, and Peter was gone to the sepulchre a second time before they came up. See the *Inferences* on the next chapter.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, In my Annotations on the four evangelists I have pointed out the harmony which is to be found in their several accounts. The fact itself is proved by a great cloud of witnesses.

1. The first day of the week Mary Magdalene very early, while it was yet dark, set out for the sepulchre, where she arrived about sun-rising, and to her surprise found the stone removed from the door. Hereupon looking in, and missing the body of Jesus, she, with the other women, ran to Peter and John, and, with great concern, informed them of the removal of the body of Jesus they knew not whither. *Note*; (1.) They who truly love Christ, will delight to meet him early. (2.) It is a bitter grief to a soul which has any sincerity remaining, to feel the absence of Jesus, and not to know where he may be found. (3.) We often make those things causes of our mourning, which should afford us real cause for joy. (4.) The communication of our sorrows is often the nearest way to recover our lost comforts.

2. Peter and John immediately went forth, desirous to inform themselves how matters stood; and running together, John outran Peter, and came first to the sepulchre; where stooping down, and looking in, he saw the linen clothes lying, yet went not in. Peter, more courageous, no sooner reached the place, than he went in to gain the fullest satisfaction possible, and observed the grave-clothes, not carelessly thrown down, but each part separately folded up, and laid by itself; a certain proof, that whoever removed the body, did it deliberately, and not in haste. Hereupon John also now ventured in after Peter, and he saw, and believed, that the body was removed or gone; for hitherto none of the disciples had entertained any perfectly right notions of the Messiah, nor, after all the scripture prophecies, and their Master's predictions, seem at all to have expected his resurrection from the dead.

3. Hereupon the disciples return to their companions, to communicate to them the state of the matter as it happened to them, and to wait the event.

2dly, Christ's first appearance was to Mary Magdalene. Much had been forgiven her, and she had loved much. Her past conduct was all forgotten, and her unfeigned present attachment to Jesus made her now justly dear to him, and she is favoured with this distinguished token of his regard.

1. She stood without at the sepulchre weeping, being returned the second time to seek farther after her dear Lord: and they who wait constantly upon him shall certainly

'have ye any meat? They answered him, No.  
6 And he said unto them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.

They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7 Therefore <sup>e</sup> that disciple whom Jesus

<sup>c</sup> Luke, 24. 41.

<sup>f</sup> Luke. 5. 6, 7. Pf. 37. 3. & 128. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Ch. 13. 23. & 20. 2. & 19. 26. Ver. 20, 24.

tainly find him; and what they sow in tears, they shall reap in joy.

2. As she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and saw two angels in human forms. They were clothed in white, the emblem of their spotless purity, and sat one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain, to pay him honour, and to be the messengers of his resurrection.

3. They kindly addressed her, *Woman, why weepest thou?* She, whose heart overflowed with sorrow, as her eyes with tears, replied, *Because they have taken away my Lord, and I knew not where they have laid him:* and this she thought a sufficient reason for her grief; but our vexations, like hers, are often imaginary, and of our own making: had we but faith, the clouds would immediately disappear.

4. Christ manifests himself to her; for they who can rest in nothing short of Christ and his love, shall not be disappointed. As she turned herself, *she saw Jesus standing,* and, because either her eyes were holden, or they were so filled with tears, she *knew not that it was Jesus:* so much nearer is he to mourners than they oftentimes are aware. He kindly addresses her in the words of his angelic ministers, *Woman, why weepest thou?* and she not attending to him closely, and supposing him probably the gardener, begged to be informed if he had borne the body away, or could give her any intelligence concerning it, that she might give him an honourable interment elsewhere, if it might not lie there. *Jesus saith unto her, Mary:* his altered tone of voice, and calling her by her name, assured her instantly who spoke; and, turning to him, she casts herself at his feet with reverence and rapturous joy, crying *Rabboni, my Master!* how welcome, unutterably welcome to her longing heart!

5. He sends her with the kindest message to his disciples. *Touch me not;* stay not to express your affectionate regard; the moment is precious; *for I am not yet ascended to my Father;* you will therefore have other opportunities of seeing and conversing with me. *But go to my brethren,* without delay; in such affectionate terms does he address those who had so lately shamefully fled and left him; and *say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.* Christ owns them in the endeared relation of brethren; assures them he was now entering into his glory, as the Head of his church; returning to him who is his Father by eternal generation, and theirs by adoption and grace; to his God, whom, as the man Christ Jesus, the head of his church, he obeyed and worshipped; and their God, to *blest them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ.* Blessed and happy are they, who can say, The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is my Father and my God.

6. Mary hastens to carry the glad news to the disconsolate disciples, and, with a transport of joy, declares that she has seen him, and reports the kind message which he had delivered to her. They who have seen Christ by faith,

and tasted of his consolations, cannot but delight to tell of him, and to spread the knowledge of his grace.

3dly, The reports of Mary and the women produced little conviction in the minds of the disciples; so slow of heart were they to believe: Jesus therefore appears to them himself, to put the matter out of doubt.

1. The apostles were all assembled, Thomas excepted, on the evening of the day on which Christ rose from the dead, which was the first day of the week. For fear of the Jews they had shut and barred the doors, when, on a sudden, probably while they were considering over the strange reports which they had heard, and examining into their credibility, or praying for farther light and direction, Jesus appears in the midst of them, and, with the kindest salutation, addresses them, *Peace be unto you.* He upbraids them not with any thing that had passed; it was forgiven and forgotten; and now he is come to put them in possession of that peace which, before his death, he had so solemnly bequeathed to them. *Note;* (1.) Where the disciples of Jesus assemble in his name, there will he be in the midst of them. (2.) The peace which our Redeemer bestows, lifts us superior to all our fears.

2. To give them undoubted assurance of the identity of his person, and the certainty of his resurrection, he shewed them his hands and his side, which still bore the glorious scars gotten in that conflict he which had endured for their sakes, when all their foes were vanquished; and, fully satisfied that it was indeed their adored Master himself, joy and gladness were diffused through every heart, and sat on every countenance. *Note;* These love-prints in the Saviour's flesh, should still be gazed upon by us with faith, delight, and wonder.

3. He solemnly invests them anew with their commission from him. *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you:* he would remove every remaining fear, and recover them from their astonishment, that they might hear and receive the commission which he delivered to them. *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you;* giving you full authority to go and preach the gospel, engaging to qualify you for the work, and to give you to see the most abundant success of your labours. *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost;* by this emblem signifying to them, that the Spirit which proceeded from him, as the breath from the body, should rest upon them as a quickening Spirit, and should enable them, with the abundance of his gifts and graces, to discharge that high office to which they were ordained. And, as one branch of their divinely-delegated authority, he saith, *Whose soever sins ye remit,* according to the gospel which they preached, and as possessed of that discernment of spirits whereby they were enabled to distinguish the truly faithful, *they are remitted unto them;* the absolution which they pronounce on earth, he engages to ratify in heaven; and *whose soever sins ye retain,* because of their impenitence and unbelief, *they are retained:* and, if they die

loved faith unto Peter, It is <sup>h</sup> the Lord. Now he girt *his* fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and <sup>i</sup> did cast himself into the sea.

<sup>h</sup> Acts, 2. 36. & 10. 36. Ch. 20, 2, 13, 20, 25, 28. & 11. 21, 27, 28.

<sup>i</sup> Song, 8. 7. 2 Cor. 5. 14. Pf. 42. 1. & 84. 2. Mat. 14. 28, 29.

in their sins, the wrath of God, according to their denunciations, must for ever abide upon them. *Note*; (1.) Though men may give an outward mission, it is the office of the Holy Ghost to call and qualify every true minister of Christ; and, without his inspiration, they who run unsest, will be accounted as thieves and robbers. (2.) Though ministers have no power of their own to pardon sins, or bind them upon the soul, yet, where they speak according to Christ's word, he will confirm their sentence.

4. Thomas, called Didymus, one of the twelve apostles who were first ordained, though now reduced to eleven by the apostacy of Judas, happened not to be present when Jesus shewed himself to the rest. By what he was detained, is not said; perhaps the fear which made them lock the doors, kept him away: and, if so, for his cowardice and neglect he is justly punished with the loss of that blessed sight which his brethren enjoyed. But whether he was before in fault or not, his incredulity was justly blameable, when his brethren, in a transport of joy, assured him that they had *seen the Lord*. Resolute in unbelief, he declares that nothing shall convince him but the evidence of his own senses: *Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe*: a very criminal incredulity; yet was it so over-ruled by divine Providence, as to add additional evidence to the certainty of Jesus's resurrection. So far were his own apostles from easily satisfying themselves about the fact, that nothing but the most infallible evidence could have convinced them: and indeed when they looked forward to what they must expect to meet with on account of their testimony, they needed the fullest conviction of the truth in their own souls, to bear them out in their sufferings.

4thly, Our Lord, by his resurrection, consecrated the first day of the week; then his disciples assembled, and he appeared to them. A week after this he repeated his visit, to put a farther honour on the day, which was henceforward to be observed as the Christian sabbath.

1. Christ appears to them, where they were met together, and Thomas with them, having shut the doors for fear of the Jews. Seven days Thomas was left to his unbelieving doubts, and in a miserable state of suspense; while the other disciples rejoiced in their risen Redeemer. But now being punished for his former neglect and absence, he, being joined again in communion with his fellow-apostles, is favoured with the sight of Jesus, who graciously condescends to give him all that satisfaction which he perversely required. He *stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you*, according to his former gracious salutation: then, particularly addressing himself to Thomas, to rebuke his infidelity, and satisfy his doubts, he bids him, since nothing else would convince him, put his finger upon the scars in his hands, and examine with his hand the wound in his side, and feel and see the certainty of that resurrection which he would not credit; *and be not faithless, or incredulous, but believing*. (See the Annotations.) *Note*;

Unbelief is the injurious bar which robs us of our comfort, and God of his glory; most justly therefore does it deserve the severest rebuke from Christ, and call for deep humiliation, and must be removed before the soul can enjoy the favour of God.

2. Thomas, quite overcome with the evidence, and confounded and ashamed at his own incredulity, cries out, *My Lord and my God*, in the fullest assurance of faith, and with the deepest reverence and adoration of his glorious Master. He acknowledges his Divinity, and worships him as the object of highest honour, as very God. *Note*; (1.) True faith regards Jesus not only as God and Lord, but as *my* God and *my* Lord, in whose favour and love we ourselves have an interest. (2.) We are then disciples indeed, when Jesus is exalted in our hearts, and in our lips and life we confess him our Lord and Master.

3. For a reproof to Thomas, and an encouragement to those who shall come after, he replies, *Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed*; refusing every proof but the evidence of his own senses; and, though convinced at last, yet was he culpable in rejecting the testimony which his brethren had borne, in which way the rest of the world must be converted to the faith. And therefore Christ adds, *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*, as the Old Testament saints had done, and as must be the case with those who afterwards believe the gospel on the testimony of the inspired witnesses; their faith is more noble, spiritual, and honourable to God.

4. The evangelist observes, that many other signs were given of the resurrection of Jesus, during the forty days he was seen of them, than those recorded in the sacred writings; but the evidence contained in the book of God, is fully satisfactory to those who humbly desire information, and who search the scriptures to be made wise unto salvation through them: they will be convinced from the sacred records, *that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah, the Son of God*, possessed of the same divine nature and perfections with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and declared to be so *by his resurrection from the dead* (Rom. i. 4.); and they who believe on him may be assured of *life through his name*: the life of grace with all its comforts here, and, if faithful unto death, the life of glory with all its unutterable blessedness hereafter; both being purchased by the death and resurrection of Jesus, who hath *opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers*, and will bestow it in all its eternal fulness on every persevering saint.

#### C H A P. XXI.

*Ver. 1. After these things Jesus, &c.]* As all the males among the Jews were, by the law of Moses, to repair thrice every year to Jerusalem, on the passover or feast of unleavened bread, the pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles; so the *apostles and disciples* who had come up to Jerusalem from Galilee, chiefly to attend upon their Master, continued, in obedience to the law, as they were obliged to do, at Jerusalem, till the end of the festival.

*There*

8 And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

There Jesus appeared to them a second time, eight days after his former appearance, St. Thomas being with them, ch. xx. 26. The next appearance was at *the sea of Tiberias*, called also the sea of Galilee; and this is expressly said, ver. 14. to be the *third* time that Jesus shewed himself; whence it is evident, that the appearance on a mountain in Galilee, mentioned by St. Matthew, xxviii. 16, &c. was subsequent to this spoken of by St. John; and was also in a different place, *on a mountain*; whereas the latter was by the sea of Tiberias. Three reasons may be assigned for our Saviour's meeting his disciples in Galilee. Galilee was the country in which he had resided above thirty years, where he first began to preach the kingdom of God, and to declare and evidence his divine mission by miracles; so that he must necessarily be more known, and have had more followers in that country than in any other region of Judea. And therefore one reason for his shewing himself in Galilee after he was risen from the dead, seems to have been, that where he was personally known to so many people, he might have the greater number of competent witnesses to his resurrection. Secondly, Galilee was also the native country of the greatest part, if not all, of his apostles, &c. There they supported themselves and their families, some of them at least, by mean and laborious occupations. So strait and so necessitous a condition of life must have rendered a long absence from thence highly inconvenient at the time of barley harvest, which always fell about the time of the passover. As soon as the paschal solemnity was over, which detained them at Jerusalem a whole week, it is natural to suppose they would return into Galilee; upon which supposition our Saviour promised that he would go before them into Galilee, which remarkable expression was again made use of by the angel, Matth. xxviii. 7. and by Jesus himself, ver. 10. The command in the latter passage ought to be taken as a confirmation of his promise of meeting them in Galilee, Mark, xvi. 7. and a strong encouragement to them to depend on the performance of it. To prepare them therefore by degrees for that affliction and mortification which would attend their preaching the gospel, and to give them an opportunity of seeing and providing for their families, to whom, in general, perhaps they were soon to bid adieu for ever; their gracious Lord not only permitted them to return into Galilee, but promised to meet them there, and did in fact meet them there, not only once, but several times; since the reasons that required the apostles' return thither, were as strong for their continuing there, till the approach of the feast of weeks, or pentecost, should call them thence. Another reason for meeting his disciples in Galilee may be deduced from what St. Luke tells us of the subjects which our Lord dwelt upon on these occasions, viz. "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." It was necessary that they should be fully instructed in the doctrines they were to preach; have some view of the hopes and encouragements that were to support them under those dangers which they were to expect; have many inveterate prejudices rooted out; and be fortified with courage and constancy, and a disregard and contempt of hardships,

perils, pains, and death. To these purposes nothing could more conduce than frequent visits from their Lord; and it will evidently appear, that no place could be more proper for these meetings than Galilee, if we consider that the apostles, having their habitations in that country, might reside there without suspicion, and assemble without any fear of the persecutors of their Master; for Galilee was under the jurisdiction of Herod. Whereas, had they remained at Jerusalem, and continued frequently to assemble together, the chief priests and elders, whose hatred or apprehensions of Jesus were not extinguished by his death, would undoubtedly have given such interruptions to those meetings, and thrown such obstacles in the way, as must have necessitated our Lord to interpose his miraculous power to prevent or remove them. Now as all these inconveniences might be avoided by our Saviour's meeting his disciples in Galilee, it is more agreeable to the wisdom of God to suppose these frequent meetings to have been in Galilee, and more analogous to the proceedings of our Lord himself, who, being in danger from the scribes and Pharisees, would not walk in Jewry, ch. vii. 1. See the notes on ver. 14. and 24.

*Ver. 2. Nathanael of Cana*] There seems to be no doubt that this Nathanael is the person mentioned ch. i. 45. It is uncertain who the *other two disciples* were: Dr. Lightfoot conjectures that they were Andrew and Philip; which is not improbable, as they were both inhabitants of Bethsaida, near the sea of Tiberias. See ch. i. 44.

*Ver. 3, 4. Simon Peter saith—I go a fishing.*] *I am going a fishing.* Heylin. Our Lord having, first by the angels, and then in person, ordered his disciples to go home to Galilee, with a promise that they should see him there, it is reasonable to think that they would depart as soon as possible; (see the second reason assigned in the note on ver. 1.) wherefore, when they were come to their respective homes, they followed their occupations as usual, and particularly the apostles, who pursued their old trade of fishing on the lake. Here, as they were plying their nets, one morning early, Jesus shewed himself to them.

*Ver. 6. Cast the net on the right side of the ship.*] The disciples, not knowing Jesus, but imagining that he might be a person acquainted with the places proper for fishing, did as he directed, and caught a multitude of fishes. This was not merely a demonstration of the power of our Lord, but a kind of providential supply for his disciples and their families, which might be of service to them when they waited afterwards in Jerusalem, according to his order. See Luke, xxiv. 49. And it was likewise a sort of emblematical representation of the great success which should attend their endeavours to catch men in the net of the gospel. See Luke, v. 9, 10. and the *Inferences* on that chapter.

*Ver. 7. (For he was naked.)*] That is, had only his under-garment on. See the note on 1 Sam. xix. 24. Dr. Heylin reads, *He put on his upper coat, for he was stripped.*

*Ver. 8. Two hundred cubits.*] About one hundred yards.

*Ver.*

9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw <sup>k</sup> a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, <sup>\*</sup> an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

12 ¶ Jesus saith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 <sup>l</sup> Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14 This is now the <sup>m</sup> third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

15 ¶ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, <sup>n</sup> Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me <sup>o</sup> more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; <sup>p</sup> thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, <sup>q</sup> Feed my lambs.

16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

17 He saith unto him <sup>r</sup> the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou *me*? Peter was <sup>s</sup> grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, <sup>t</sup> thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, <sup>u</sup> Feed my sheep.

<sup>k</sup> 1 Kings, 19. 6.    <sup>\*</sup> This prefiged their being instrumental in converting multitudes to Christ.    <sup>l</sup> Acts, 1. 4. & 10. 41. Luke, 24. 35, 42, 43.  
<sup>m</sup> Ch. 20. 19, 26.    <sup>n</sup> Mat. 16. 17. Ch. 1. 42.    <sup>o</sup> With Mat. 26. 33. Ver. 7.    <sup>p</sup> Pf. 139. 1-4. & 17. 1.    <sup>q</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 20.    <sup>r</sup> 2 Kings, 20. 3.  
<sup>s</sup> If. 40. 11. Heb. 13. 20. Ch. 10. 11, 14.    <sup>t</sup> 1 Tim. 4. 16.    <sup>u</sup> 1 Pet. 2. 25. & 5. 2-4. Acts, 20. 28. Eph. 4. 11-13.    <sup>v</sup> 2 Tim. 4. 2.    <sup>w</sup> With ch.  
13. 38. & 18. 17, 25, 27. Peter having thrice denied his Master, Christ puts his love to him thrice to the trial, and thrice repeats his commission to be a faithful and diligent apostle.    <sup>x</sup> Mat. 26. 75. Mark, 14. 72. Luke, 22. 61, 62.    <sup>y</sup> Ch. 2. 24, 25. & 16. 30. & 18. 4. Mat. 9. 4. Heb. 4. 13. Rev.  
2. 23. Jer. 17. 10.    <sup>z</sup> Ver. 15, 16. If. 40. 11. Heb. 13. 20. Ch. 10. 11, 14.    <sup>aa</sup> 1 Pet. 2. 25. & 5. 2-4. Acts, 20. 28. Mat. 28. 20. Mark.  
26. 15.

*Ver. 9-12. As soon—as they were come to land,*] When the disciples came ashore, they found a fire burning, which Jesus had miraculously prepared, and fish laid thereon, and bread. But neither being sufficient for the company, or perhaps to shew them the reality of the miracle, by making them attend to the number and size of the fishes they had caught, and to the net's not being broken, Jesus ordered them to bring some of their own. It will not be judged, I hope, too minute to observe, after some writers of the first credit, that it appears from the best natural historians, that 153 (ver. 11.) is the exact number of the different species of fishes; and it is inferred from this passage, that persons of all nations and conditions should enter into the Christian church.

*Ver. 13. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread,*] It is not said that Jesus now ate with them; but his invitation to them, ver. 12. implies it; besides St. Peter testifies, Acts, x. 41. that his apostles did eat and drink with him after he arose from the dead; meaning to tell Cornelius, that that was one of the many infallible proofs by which he shewed himself alive after his passion. It is reasonable, therefore, to think that he did eat with his apostles on this occasion, thus proving anew to his disciples the reality of his resurrection, as well as by working a miracle like that which, at the beginning of his ministry, had made such an impression upon them, as disposed them to be his constant followers.

*Ver. 14. This is now the third time*] The evangelist does not say that this was the third time that Jesus appeared, but the third time that he appeared to his disciples; that is, to his apostles in a body; for, in reality, it was his seventh appearance. Besides, St. John himself has taken notice of three appearances before this. Grotius explains

it of the third day of his appearance; for he had first appeared to several on the day of his resurrection; then on a second day,—*after eight days*, he came to his disciples, when Thomas was present; and now again, for the third day, he shewed himself at the sea of Tiberias.

*Ver. 15. Lovest thou me more than these?*] The original words, *πλείον τῶν* are ambiguous, and may either signify, “Dost thou love me more than any of thy brethren, as thou didst once profess?” (See Matth. xxvi. 33.) Or, “Dost thou love me more than thou lovest these nets, and other instruments of thy trade, so as to prefer my service to any worldly advantages?” Whitby explains them in this latter sense. Peter only answers, Yea, Lord, or, assuredly, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee; but does not add, more than these: and this beautiful circumstance in the answer shews, how much he was humbled and improved by the remembrance of his fall; and possibly our Lord's question might be intended to remind him of that fall, and of the cause of it. Upon Peter's reply, Jesus said to him, *feed my lambs*: “As I shall favour thee so far as still to employ thee as one of my apostles, remember, that the most acceptable way of expressing thy love to me, will be by taking care even of the feeblest of my flock.”

*Ver. 16, 17. He saith to him again*] From our Lord's asking Peter if he loved him, before he renewed his commission to feed his lambs and his sheep, it is justly inferred, that, to render men duly qualified for the ministerial function, they must prefer the interest and honour of Christ to every other consideration. This is the great qualification by which alone a minister can be animated to go through the labours and difficulties of his office, and be fortified against the dangers which may attend it. Moreover, Christ's exhortation

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

20 Then Peter, turning about, saith the

disciple whom Jesus loved following, which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die:

<sup>a</sup> Acts, 12. 3, 4. 2 Pet. 1. 14. Ch. 13. 37. Acts, 21. 13. <sup>b</sup> 1 Pet. 4. 11. 2 Pet. 1. 14. Phil. 1. 20. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 10. 38. & 16. 24. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 13. 27. & 19. 26. & 20. 2. Ver. 7. 24. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 24. 3. Ch. 14. 22. Acts, 1. 6. Deut. 29. 29. Job, 33. 13. Dan. 4. 35. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 16. 28. & 26. 64. & 25. 31. 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8. <sup>g</sup> Dan. 12. 9, 13. Deut. 29. 29. Luke, 10. 41, 42. Ver. 19. Mat. 16. 24.

exhortation to St. Peter, to feed his lambs and sheep, being the reply which he made to Peter's declaration that he loved him, shews us that ministers best shew their love to Christ by their singular care and diligence in feeding his flock. Our Lord's threefold repetition of his commission to Peter, most probably was in allusion to Peter's three denials; and as it contains an oblique intimation that his repentance should bear some proportion to his crime, so it seems to have been intended by our Lord, to convince the rest of the disciples of the sincerity of St. Peter's conversion, and to prevent any slight which he might be exposed to from their suspecting the contrary. However, we are told that Peter was grieved at this repeated application to him; for it seemed to him an intimation that Christ perhaps did not consider his repentance to be sincere; and to a person of his sanguine temper, nothing could have afforded a more sensible anguish than such a suggestion. It recalled his crime, with all its aggravated circumstances, into his mind, and renewed his grief for having offended. One would wonder that, from circumstances so evidently humiliating to the mind of St. Peter, the Papists could have inferred a grant of his supreme dominion over the church. The passage has evidently a quite different meaning; for Peter, by his late cowardice and perfidy, having, as it were, abdicated the apostleship, was hereby no more than formally restored to his office through the indulgence of his kind and merciful Master, and not raised to any new dignity above his brethren.

Ver. 18, 19. *When thou wast young, &c.*] St. Peter being thus restored to his apostolic office and dignity, Jesus proceeded to forewarn him of the persecutions, to which he, in particular, would be exposed in the execution of his office, intending thereby to inspire him with courage and constancy; but we do not read a word of that spiritual dignity and authority which his pretended successors have arrogated. *When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, &c.* alluding perhaps to the strength and activity which he had now shown in swimming to shore after he had girded his fisher's coat upon him; but, *when thou shalt be old, &c.* "Instead of that liberty which in youth thou enjoyedst, thou shalt in thine old age be a prisoner; for thou shalt be bound and carried whither thou wouldest not naturally incline to go, even to those sufferings to which flesh and blood have the strongest aversion." Some have thought,

that the words *thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, &c.* allude to the manner of his death on the cross, and which indeed seems probable from the next words, which the historian delivers as explanatory of those of our Lord, *This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.* However, the next words of our Lord must plainly be understood to signify, that Peter was to follow him in the kind of his death: "Follow me, and shew that thou art willing to conform to my example, and to follow me even to the death of the cross." Agreeably hereto, the unanimous voice of antiquity assures us, that St. Peter was crucified, and, as some say, about forty years after this; but the exact time is not known.

Ver. 20. *Then Peter, turning about,]* "There is a spirit and tenderness in this plain passage, which I can never read (says Dr. Doddridge,) without the most sensible emotion. Christ orders Peter to follow him, in token of his readiness to be crucified in his cause. John stays not for the call; he rises and follows too; but he says not one word of his love and his zeal; he chose that the action should speak that; and, when he records this circumstance, he tells us not what that action meant, but with great simplicity relates the fact only. If here and there a generous heart, glowing, like his own, with love to Christ, sees and emulates it, be it so; but he is not solicitous that men should admire it: it was addressed to his Master, and it was enough that he understood it. And can any man be base or absurd enough to imagine, that such a man could spend his life in promoting a notorious falsehood, and, at last, in his old age, when his relish for every thing but goodness and immortality was gone, would so solemnly attest it as he does in the conclusion of his gospel?—May God deliver every one that reads this from a head so fatally beclouded by the corruptions of the heart!"

Ver. 21. *And what shall this man do?]* *And what shall become of him?*

Ver. 22, 23. *If I will that he tarry, &c.*] "If it is my pleasure that he should live till my coming [in judgment upon Jerusalem], what is that to thee?" So the word μένειν signifies, being elliptical for the words μένειν εν τη σαρκι, to abide in the flesh. We have both the elliptical and complete phrase, Philip. i. 24, 25. The brethren, it seems, understood, by Christ's coming, his coming to future



yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee?

24 ¶ This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

\* Ch. 19. 35. 1 John, 1. 1—3. 3 John, 12.

† Ch. 20. 30, 31. Acts, 10. 38. Mat. 11. 5.

\* Or peruse and digest.

ture judgment; and upon this foundation they grounded their notion that John should not die: and that there was such a notion and tradition among the ancients, learned writers have particularly shewn; and among the rest, Fabricius, in his *Codex Apocal. Nov. Test.* vol. ii. p. 533. This prophetic suggestion of the longevity of St. John was verified by the event; for he lived till Trajan's time, or thereabouts, which was near one hundred years after Christ's birth, and thirty years after the destruction of Jerusalem; so that he did *abide in the flesh* till his Lord came to take signal vengeance on that devoted city. Our Lord's reply to St. Peter seems very strongly to discourage a curiosity of inquiring into other men's affairs, and into doctrines which are of no importance in religion.

Ver. 24. *This is the disciple which testifieth, &c.*] Though the inspired writer of this gospel is here spoken of in the third person, it is agreeable to St. John's manner. See ch. xix. 35. 1 John, i. 1—5. and ch. v. 18—20.

Ver. 25. *I suppose that even the world, &c.*] According to most commentators, this is an hyperbole; a figure in which the Asiatics are known to have dealt greatly, and which they carried far higher than is allowable in the European languages; and the word *I suppose* naturally leads to this exposition: thus understood, the clause means that Jesus performed a prodigious number of miracles. Dr. Doddridge understands the passage differently, as if the evangelist had said, "I am persuaded, Οἰμαι,—that if all the things which Jesus did, were written, the work would amount to so vast a bulk, that the world itself would not be able to receive the books that should be written; but the very size of the volumes would necessarily prevent the generality of mankind from procuring or reading them." Perhaps it may be a most delightful part of the entertainment of the heavenly world, to learn from our blessed Lord himself, or from those who conversed with him upon earth, a multitude of such particulars of his life, as will be well worthy our everlasting admiration. In the mean time, the pious and attentive study of what is recorded by the evangelists, may most happily prepare us for such discoveries, and add an unutterable relish to them: for they were written that we might believe that Jesus was the Christ; and that, believing, we may have life through his name. Amen! blessed Lord.

*Inferences* on our Lord's resurrection, drawn from ch. xix. 38. to ch. xx. 29. Grace does not always make much show, where it is; though it always burns for doing good. There is much secret riches, both in the earth and sea, which no eye ever saw. We never heard any news till now of Joseph of Arimathea; yet was he eminently rich, and wise, and good. True faith may be sometimes reserved,

8

25 † And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not \* contain the books that should be written. Amen.

but will not be cowardly. Now he puts forth himself, and dares to beg the body of Jesus.

Death is wont to quell all quarrels. Pilate's heart tells him that he has done too much already, in sentencing an innocent person to death: the request is granted; the body is yielded, and taken down; and now, that which hung naked, is wrapped in fine linen; that which was soiled with sweat and blood, is curiously washed and embalmed. Now even Nicodemus comes in for his share: he fears not the envy of a good profession, but boldly flies forth, and will now be as liberal in his orders, as he was before nigardly in his mighty confession.

All this while the devout Marys retire, and silently spend their sabbath in a mixture of grief and hope; but now they gladly agree, in the dawn of the Sunday morning, to visit the sacred sepulchre; nor will they go empty-handed. She that had bestowed that costly alabaster-box of ointment upon her Saviour alive, has prepared no less precious odours for him dead.

Of all the women, Mary Magdalene is first named: she is noted above her fellows. None of them were so much obliged,—none so zealously thankful. Seven devils were cast out of her by the command of Christ. The heart thus powerfully dispossessed, was now filled with gratitude to her great Deliverer. Where there is a true sense of favour, there cannot but be a fervent desire of retribution. O blessed Lord! could we feel the danger of sin, like her, and the malignity of those spiritual possessions from which thou hast freed us, how should we pour out our souls in thankfulness for thy bounty!

Every thing here had horror; the place both solitary, and a sepulchre; nature abhors, as the visage, so the region of death and corruption:—the time, night; only the moon perhaps gave them some faint glimmering:—their business, the visitation of a dead corpse: and yet their zealous love has easily overcome all these. They had followed him in his sufferings, when the timid disciples had left him. They attended him to his cross, weeping; they followed him to his grave; nay, and even there they leave him not; but, ere it be day-light, they return to pay him the sad tribute of their duty.—How much stronger is love than death or fear.

How well it succeeds when we go faithfully and conscientiously about our work, and leave the issue to God! Lo, God has removed the cares of these holy women, together with the grave-stone. The obstacle is removed; the seal broken; the watch fled. What a scorn does the Almighty God make of the impotent designs of men! He sends an angel from above;—the earth quakes beneath;—the stone rolls away;—the soldiers stand like carcases, and when they have got heart enough to run away, think

think themselves valiant. The tomb is opened, Christ rises, and they are confounded. O the vain project of silly mortals! as if, with such a shovelful of mire, they could dam up the sea; or keep the sun from shining, by holding up their hands. Indeed, what creature is so base, that the Omnipotent cannot arm against us to our confusion? Lice and frogs shall be too strong for Pharaoh, and worms for Herod! There is no wisdom nor counsel against the Lord.

But O the marvellous pomp and magnificence of our Lord's resurrection! (See Matth. xxviii. 1—4.) The earth quakes, the *angel* appears, that it may be plainly seen that this divine Person, now rising, has the command both of heaven and earth. Good cause had the earth to quake, when the God who made her, powerfully calls for his own flesh from the usurpation of her bowels. Good cause had she to open her graves, and eject her dead, in attendance to the Lord of life, whom she had thus detained in that cell of darkness. What seeming impotence was here! but now what a demonstration of omnipotence bursts forth in this glorious resurrection! The rocks rend; the graves open; the dead rise and appear; the soldiers flee and tremble: saints and angels attend thy rising, O Saviour! Thou liedst down in weakness, thou risest in power and glory: thou liedst down as a man, thou risest like a God.

What a lively image hast thou herein given me of the dreadful majesty of that general resurrection on thy second appearance! Then not the earth only, but the powers of heaven also shall be shaken; not some few graves shall be open, and some saints appear, but all the bars of death shall be broken, and all that sleep in the dust shall awake, and stand up from the dead before thee. Not some one angel shall descend; but Thou, the great *angel of the covenant*, attended with thousand thousands of those mighty spirits: and if these stout soldiers were so filled with terror at the feeling of an earthquake, and the sight of an angel, where shall thine enemies appear, O Lord, in the day of thy terrible vengeance, when the earth shall reel and vanish, when the elements shall be on a flame around them, and the heavens shall be parched up as a scroll, in that awful, that inexorable day!

Where, where for shelter shall the *guilty* fly,  
When conternation turns the *good man* pale?

Thou didst raise thyself, O blessed Jesus! thy angels removed the stone. They, who could have no hand in thy resurrection, shall yet have their part in removing outward impediments; not because thou neededst, but because thou wouldest: just so thyself alone didst raise Lazarus; thou badeest others to loose him, and let him go. Works of omnipotency thou reservest to thine own immediate performance; ordinary actions thou consignest to means subordinate.

How great must have been the joy of angels on this stupendous event! But how transcendent their joy whom thou raisedst with thee from the dead! O death, where is now thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

But how am I conformable to thee, O Saviour, if, when thou art risest, I am still lying in the grave of my corruption? How am I a member of thy body, if, while thou hast that perfect dominion over death, death has dominion over me?—How am I thine, if I be not risen?—and if I be risen with thee, why do I not seek the things above, where

thou, O Christ, sittest at the right-hand of God?—For where the treasure is, there must the heart be also.

I marvel not at your speed, blessed disciples, if, upon the report of these good women, ye ran, yea, flew upon the wings of zeal, to see what was become of your Master. Your desire was noble, was equal; but John is the younger, his limbs are more nimble, and breath more free. He looks first into the sepulchre; but Peter more boldly goes down the first. Happy competition, where the only strife is, who shall be most zealous in the inquiry after Christ!

They saw enough to amaze their senses; not enough, however, to settle their faith. O blessed Jesus, how dost thou pardon our errors! and how should we pardon and pity the errors of each other on lesser occasions, when as yet thy chief and dearest disciples, after so much divine instruction from thine own lips, knew not the scriptures, that thou must rise again from the dead. They went away more astonished than confident; more full of wonder than of belief.

There is more tenderness, where it takes in the weaker sex; those holy women, as they came first, so they stayed last. Especially devout Mary Magdalene stands still by the cave weeping. Well might those tears have been spared, if her knowledge had been answerable to her affection, or her faith to her fervour.

As our eye will ever be where our love is, she stops, and looks down into that dear sepulchre. The angels appear in glorious apparel; their splendor shewed them to be no mortal creatures; not to mention that Peter and John had but just come out of the sepulchre, and both found and left it empty in her sight. Yet do we not find the good woman aught appalled with the unexpected glory. So deeply was her heart absorbed with the thoughts of her Saviour, that she seems insensible of every other object. The tears which she let drop into the sepulchre, sent up back to her the voice of the angels; *Woman, why weepest thou?*

The sudden wonder has not dried her eye, nor charmed her tongue. She freely confesses the cause of her grief to be the missing of her Saviour, and simply complains, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.* Alas, good Mary, of whom dost thou complain? Who can have removed thy Lord but himself? Neither is he now laid any more; he stands by thee, whose removal thou now lamentest.—Thus many a tender soul afflicts itself with the want of that Saviour, who is near, yea, present to blefs.

Turn back thine eyes, O mourning soul, and see Jesus standing by thee, though thou knowest not that it is he. His habit was one that he had then assumed.—And thus sometimes it pleases our Saviour to appear to his disciples in some sense unlike himself. Sometimes he offers himself to us in the shape of a poor man, and sometimes of a distressed captive. (See Matth. xxv. 34, &c.) Happy he or she who can discern the Saviour in all his forms! Mary now took him for the gardener. O blessed Lord! be thou to me such as thou appearedst to this holy woman: break up the fallows of my nature; implant in me thy grace; prune me with meet corrections; bedew me with the former and latter rain of thy counsels;—do what thou wilt with me, so thou but make me fruitful!

Joseph could no longer contain himself in the house of Pharaoh from the notice of his brethren; and thus thy compassion, O Saviour, causes thee to break forth into clear discovery:

discovery: the very sound of his name bringeth Mary to herself. Thou spakest to her before, but in the tone of a stranger: now it is the compellation of a friend. O speak to every reader's heart in the same affectionate and powerful manner!

No sooner had Mary heard this familiar sound, than *she turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni!* which is to say, Master. Before, her face was toward the angels; the call of her Saviour instantly averts all inferior regards; nor do we rightly apprehend the Son of God, if any creature in heaven or earth can withhold our eyes or estrange our hearts from him. Let Mary be our example: the moment she hears his voice, her whole attention is riveted on her Lord. She salutes him with a *Rabboni*, in acknowledgment of his authority over her; she falls down before him, in a desire humbly to embrace those sacred feet, which she now rejoices to behold, past the use of odours and unguents.

Jesus however is pleased to wave the acceptance of her zealous intentions, (*touch me not, &c.*) possibly by way of gentle reproof, for a joy which perhaps betrayed worldly exultation. Even our well-meant zeal in seeking and enjoying the Saviour, may be faulty. May we, blessed Lord, be taught with Mary, from thy remonstrance, *if we have known thee heretofore after the flesh, yet henceforth to know thee so no more.* Should we so fasten our thoughts on the corporeal or terrestrial circumstances attending thee, as not to look higher, even to the spiritual part of thine achievements,—the *power* and the *issues* of the resurrection;—what could it profit our immortal souls?

But to whom then dost thou send her?—*Go, and tell my brethren.* Blessed Jesus, who are those? Were not they thy followers,—rather, were not they thy forsakers?—Yet still thou stylest them *thy brethren.* O admirable humility! infinite mercy! abundant grace! How dost thou raise their titles with thyself? At first they were thy *servants*; then *disciples*: a little before thy death thou vouchsafedst to call them *thy friends*; now, after thy resurrection, thou dignifiest them with the endearing appellation of *brethren.* O why do we stand so proudly upon the terms of our poor distinctions and inequality, when the incarnate Son of the most high God stoops so low as to call us his *brethren*;—his *Father our Father*; and his *God our God!*

With what joy must Mary have received this errand! With what joy must the disciples have welcomed both it and the bearer! Here were *good tidings* indeed from a far country, even as far as the utmost regions of the shadow of death.

While their thoughts and conversation are employed on so grateful a subject; the Saviour makes his miraculous and sudden appearance among them, bids their senses be witnesses of his revival, and of their happiness, *stands in the midst of them, and saith, Peace be unto you.* Instantly all the mists of doubting are dispelled; the sun breaks forth clear. *They were glad when they saw the Lord.* His approved Deity gave them confidence; his gracious presence inspired their hearts with joy.

But where wert thou, O Thomas, when the rest of this sacred family were met together? Alas! we cannot but be losers by our absence from holy assemblies; for *God standeth in the congregation of his saints.* Now, for this time, thou missest that divine breath, which so powerfully inspired the rest; and fallest into that weak and rash distrust,

which thy presence there would probably have prevented. Suspicious man, who is the worse for thy scepticism? Whose the loss, if thou wilt not believe? Is there no certainty but in thine own senses? Is any thing beyond the sphere of divine Omnipotence? Go then, O simple and unwise, and please thyself in thy bold incredulity, while thy fellows are happy in believing.

For a whole week Thomas rests in his infidelity. Notwithstanding the conduct and the testimony of others; notwithstanding the report of the two travellers to *Emmaus*, whose hearts burning within them, had set their tongues on fire to relate the happy occurrence of their walk;—still he struggles with his own distrust; still he combats that truth, wherof he can hardly deny himself to be unanswerably convinced.

O condescending Lord, how shall we enough admire thy tenderness and forbearance! Justly mightest thou have left this man to his own pertinacious heart; and of whom could he have complained, had he perished in his unbelief? But thou art infinite in compassion, and willest not the death of a sinner. This straggler shall be indulged with the desired evidences of thy resurrection; he shall once more see thee to his shame, and to his joy; and he will hear thy voice, and taste thy love.

Behold, the mercy no less than the power of the Son of God hath melted the stony heart of this unbelieving disciple: *Then Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God.* I do not read that, when it came to the issue, Thomas fulfilled his resolution, and employed his hands in trial of the fact. His eyes are perhaps now a sufficient assurance; the sense of his Master's Omniscience supercedes all further hesitation.

It was well for us, Thomas, that thou didst thus disbelieve; else the world had not received this striking evidence of that resurrection whereon all our salvation depends. Blessed be thou, O God, whose great prerogative it is to bring good out of evil, and to make a glorious advantage of every incident, for the promotion of the salvation of thy faithful people, the confirmation of thy church, and the glory of thy name! Amen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The disciples being appointed to meet their Lord in Galilee, returned thither, and, till the time came, employed themselves in their former occupations. Christ's servants must not be idlers.

1. Christ appears to them at the sea of Tiberias, where Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples, were fishing. They were unsuccessful all night, and toiled in vain: in the morning Jesus stood on the shore, and at the distance they were off, the disciples knew him not. *Note;* (1.) God's ministers sometimes labour long, and see little fruit; but they must not be weary, nor faint in their minds: patient perseverance shall at last be crowned with success. (2.) They who are diligent in their honest calling, are in Christ's way, and may expect his blessing.

2. Christ addresses them in his familiar manner, *Children, have ye any meat?* *They answered him, No. He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.* Rather than return empty, they resolved to make the trial, and, to their astonishment, found the net so full, that *they were not able to draw it up into the boat for the multitude of fishes.* *Note;* (1.) Christ takes cognizance of his

his

his disciples' wants; he will see that they have meat to eat. (2.) They who go to minister under a divine call, shall find at last that their labour is not in vain in the Lord.

3. John hereupon suggests, that this must needs be the Lord. Peter instantly caught the hint, and, fired with zeal and love, girt up his coat, and plunged into the sea, impatient to be at his dear Master's feet; while the other disciples, who were but a little way from shore, about a hundred yards, halted to land, dragging the net with them. Simon joined them, and assisted them in their labour; and, to their astonishment, they counted one hundred and fifty-three large fishes, and yet the net remained unbroken, which still increased the miracle. *Note*; Different disciples excel in different gifts and graces: some are more quick to discern, others more intrepid to execute; some move slowly, but steadily; others blaze with zeal, though not equally uniform; and each especially serviceable in his place.

4. Their Master, who had given them this miraculous draught of fishes, had provided also for their refreshment on shore. They found a fire, and fish laid thereon, and bread, to which he bids them add some of those they had caught, and then kindly and familiarly, as formerly, invites them to come and refresh themselves; while they, in sacred awe at his presence and miracle, kept at a respectful distance, nor durst ask him, *Who art thou?* which would have implied unbelief, when indeed they were fully satisfied that it was the Lord. *Note*; (1.) They who act under the command of Jesus, and go forth in his name, shall not want a provision: *Verily they shall be fed.* (2.) In the ordinances a rich repast is provided for believers, and the Master in them will break the bread of life to our souls. (3.) The gospel word is, COME; Christ's arms are open to believers; they will be welcome to all the rich provision of his grace.

5. Christ, as the master of the feast, distributes the bread and fish to them, and did eat and drink with them, to shew himself truly alive, and to confirm them in the certainty of his resurrection. (Acts, x. 41.) And still he is the same gracious Lord: they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, shall be filled, and all the wants of their souls relieved by the abundance of his grace.

6. The evangelist remarks, that this was the third public appearance of Jesus to any considerable number of his disciples together, whose faith would hereby be more confirmed: or this was the third time he appeared to them: the first day of his resurrection he appeared five several times, one the week after, and now again for the third time; and every repeated visit brought new tokens of his love.

2dly, When dinner was ended, Christ addressed himself to Peter. He knew that Peter's conscious heart upbraided him bitterly for his past conduct; and now, to silence his fears, while he tacitly reproves his unfaithfulness, he confirms him in his office, as fully restored to his favour and love.

We have,

1. The question thrice put to Peter, *Lovest thou me?* and the first time Christ adds, *more than these?* more than he loved his dearest relatives or friends who were present; or more than the ship, and nets, and fish, and all comforts and gain; or more than these love me; because he had once so boldly and forwardly intimated his superior

attachment to him, that *though all men should be offended, yet will not I*; and then it implied a tacit rebuke for this vain-glorious boast? But now that he was restored to favour again, this new obligation conferred upon him required an especial return of love. *Note*; (1.) When we do amiss, we must not be displeased to have our sincerity questioned. (2.) True love to Christ will make us count every thing trivial in comparison with him.

2. Three times Peter makes the same reply: *Thou knowest that I love thee*: he will not pretend any more to a superiority over his brethren, though conscious of the sincerity of his love. The third time, grieved at the repeated question, which seemed to intimate a suspicion of his sincerity, and reminded him of his threefold denial, he adds, *Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee*; and for this he can appeal to him as the Searcher of hearts. *Note*; They who are sincere in their attachment to Christ, can appeal for their simplicity to the Searcher of their hearts.

3. Thrice Jesus bids him prove the sincerity of his love by his diligence and labour in the ministry. *Feed my lambs; feed my sheep*. Since his iniquity is pardoned, his commission is renewed, and with more abundant diligence he is called upon to discharge his awful trust. He must feed *the lambs*, the young disciples, and those who are most weak and feeble; considering their weakness, and having compassion on their infirmities, as remembering his own. He must feed *the sheep*, the strong of the flock, willing to expose himself to any danger for their sake, and faithfully ministering to them the rich food of the gospel word for their nourishment and growth in grace.

4. Christ foretels the sufferings which awaited St. Peter in the discharge of his ministry. He must seal the truth that he preached, by enduring martyrdom. *Verily, verily I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, full of vigour, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, after a long life of labour, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not, even to prison and the cross; and this he spake, signifying by what death he should glorify God; and the concurring testimony of antiquity reports, that he suffered crucifixion.* *Note*; (1.) Nature starts from death, as reluctant to go; but grace can enable us to meet it calmly in its most tremendous forms. (2.) Every saint of God desires to die, as he lives, to God's glory; patiently resigned to his will; commending with his dying breath the good ways of the Lord; and rejoicing in hope of the glory ready to be revealed in him.

5. He gives Peter a significant sign of what he required of him. Rising from table, he saith unto him, *Follow me*; copy my example; follow my instructions; and if he was called to the cross, he must remember, it would be no more than his Master for his sake had endured before. Whatever we suffer, we should never forget how much more our Master endured; and that this is the way to come to be with him in his glory. We must bear the cross before we wear the crown.

3dly, Peter rising up to follow his Master, on looking back, beheld John the beloved disciple just behind him. Hereupon,

1. He begs Jesus to say, what should be John's lot and labour. Either he was curious to know, or tenderly concerned lest the same sufferings awaited his dear fellow-labourer.

labourer. True Christian love will make us feel for our brethren as for ourselves.

2. Christ checks his curiosity, while he answers his question. *If I will that he tarry till I come*, in some peculiar glorious display of his power, such as the destruction of the Jewish nation would be, *what is that to thee? Follow thou me.* Note; It is the will of Jesus, that we should follow steadily the path of duty, without curiously desiring to pry into futurity, content to leave all our concerns in his hands.

3. From a mistake of Christ's meaning, a report spread among the brethren, as if *that disciple should not die*; whereas Christ said no such thing, *but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* meaning that he should live to see the destruction of the Jewish state and polity. Whence we may observe the uncertainty of all *human traditions*, and the great danger of submitting implicitly to human expositions of scripture, however supported by numbers, authority, or antiquity. We have the book of God before us; we have the Spirit of God promised to each of us; let us therefore, after all that others say, read, hear, and judge for ourselves.

4. The evangelist, now drawing to a conclusion, solemnly attests the truth of all that he had recorded, being an eye and ear witness of what he writes; and as he was himself absolutely certain of what he said, so were all his brethren; and the truths of the gospel are attended with such evidence as must convince every impartial inquirer. They who reject the scripture testimony, wilfully shut their eyes against the light, and, whatever they may pretend, have no cloak for their obstinate infidelity.

5. He closes with a declaration, that innumerable other miracles were performed by Jesus, besides those he had re-

corded; which, if they were all related with the circumstances severally attending them, not all the scribes in the world could have written them, nor the most retentive memory have contained them. Nor would the unbelieving world, who reject the present evidence, have received the truth, though innumerable volumes of Christ's had been written for their conviction. Hereto the evangelist sets his *Amen!* What he wrote was infallibly certain: let us add our *Amen* to his; perfectly satisfied in his testimony; by faith embracing the glorious truths which he records; and fervently praying for the accomplishment of all the inestimable blessings that are promised. Amen! Amen!

See Ælian, Bishop Burnet, Bengelius, Blackwall, Beausobre, Bell, Brown, Bos, Beza, Calmet, Conybeare, Bishop Chandler, Dr. Chandler, Chapman, Chrysologus, Clarke, Chemnitz, Doddridge, Dodd, Elfner, Eusebius, Sir Rich. Ellis, Erasmus, Fleming, Foster, Bishop Fleetwood, Faber, Grotius, Guyse, Gerard, Hammond, Heinsius, Heylin, Henry, Hottinger, Jortin, Josephus, Jackson, Jerome, Kennicott, Knatchbull, Le Clerc, Locke, Lightfoot, L'Enfant, Lardner, Leland, Lowman, Ludovicus, Lamy, Merrick, Mede, Maldonat, Macknight, Maundrell, Mills, Maimonides, Mintert, Bishop Newton, Philo, Bishop Pocock, Phavorinus, Pearson, Plotinus, Bishop Pearce, Piscator, Quesnelle, Reland, Rutherford, Ridley, Rotherham, Scott, Selden, Saurin, Simon, Stockius, Sandy, Bishop Smallbrooke, Bishop Sherlock, Sykes, Stillingsfleet, Dr. A. Taylor, Archbishop Tillotson, Tremellius, Theophylact, Vitringa, Waterland, Watts, Wetstein, Whitby, Ward, Wells, Wolfius, Bishop Warburton, Worthington, and Wall, Zeger.