

# THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

## S A I N T M A R K.

*SAINT MARK is generally supposed to have conversed familiarly with Saint Peter, who mentions him as his son, that is, his disciple, 1 Peter, v. 13. Possibly this was the same Mark whom Saint Paul took as a companion in his travels. See Acts, xii. 25. As Saint Matthew wrote his Gospel for the Jews more particularly, so Saint Mark seems to have written his for the use of the Gentiles. He wrote after Saint Matthew. The date of his Gospel is uncertain. It was probably written at Rome about the year 63.*

### CHAP. I.

*The office of John the Baptist. Jesus is baptized: tempted: he preacheth: calleth Peter, Andrew, James, and John: healeth one that had a devil, Peter's mother-in-law, and many diseased persons; and cleanseth the leper.*

[Anno Domini 26.]

**T**HE <sup>b</sup> beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, <sup>c</sup> the Son of God;

2 As it is written in the prophets, <sup>d</sup> Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

3 <sup>e</sup> The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 <sup>f</sup> John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance \* for the remission of sins.

5 <sup>g</sup> And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 And John was <sup>h</sup> clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;

7 And preached, saying, <sup>i</sup> There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

<sup>a</sup> Acts, 12. 12, 25. & 15. 37, 39. & 13. 5. Col. 4. 10. 2 Tim. 4. 11. Philem. 24. 1 Peter, 5. 13. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 11. 12. Luke, 2. 10, 11. If. 40. 1-11. Mat. 3. 2. & 17. 11. <sup>c</sup> Pf. 2. 7. Mat. 3. 17. & 16. 16. & 17. 5. & 26. 63, 64. John, 2. 49. & 6. 69. & 10. 30, 35. & 3. 16. & 1. 14. Rom. 8. 3. <sup>d</sup> Mal. 3. 1. Mat. 11. 10. Luke, 7. 27. <sup>e</sup> If. 40. 3. Luke, 3. 4. & 1. 76. John, 1. 15, 23. Mat. 3. 3. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 3. 1, 2. & 11. 10. Luke, 3. 3. John, 1. 31. Mal. 4. 5. Acts, 19. 4. & 2. 38. <sup>g</sup> Or unto. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 3. 5. Luke, 1. 17, 76. John, 3. 22. & 5. 35. Acts, 2. 8. & 19. 18. Jer. 3. 13. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 3. 4. 2 Kings, 1. 8. Zech. 13. 4. Lev. 11. 22. <sup>\*</sup> Mat. 3. 11. Luke, 3. 16.

### CHAP. I.

*Ver. 1. Of Jesus Christ the Son of God] This exordium is singular; for while the other Evangelists describe our Saviour as the Son of man, St. Mark, in express words, styles him the Son of God. A title the most likely, as being the most august, to engage the attention and obedience of the Romans, those Lords of the earth, to the religion which was promulgated by him. In describing this re-*

ligion, St. Mark has brought together so many of our Saviour's discourses and miracles, as might serve to exhibit a general view of his character, and shew the world at the same time what kind of principles they were concerned to embrace, and what course of life they were bound to lead, who professed themselves his followers and disciples. This fully answered the end of his design. The present verse may be connected with the following; and

8 \* I indeed have baptized you with water : but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

9 ¶ And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens \* opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him :

11 And <sup>1</sup> there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

12 ¶ <sup>2</sup> And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan ; and was <sup>3</sup> with the wild beasts ; and the angels <sup>4</sup> ministered unto him.

14 ¶ Now, after that <sup>5</sup> John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching <sup>6</sup> the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, <sup>7</sup> The time is fulfilled, <sup>8</sup> and

the kingdom of God is at hand : <sup>9</sup> repent ye, and believe the gospel.

16 ¶ <sup>10</sup> Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea : for they were fishers.

17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become <sup>11</sup> fishers of men.

18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

19 And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.

20 And straightway he called them : and they <sup>12</sup> left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

21 <sup>13</sup> And they went into Capernaum ; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

Mat. 3. 11. Luke, 3. 16. with If. 44. 3, 4. Joel, 2. 28. Acts, 1. 5. & 2. 4, 17 & 10. 45. & 11. 15, 16. & 19. 4. 1 Cor. 12. 13. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 3. 17. & 17. 5. Ch. 9. Col. 2. 13. John, 10. 17. 2 Peter, 1. 17. <sup>2</sup> Mat. 4. 1—11. Luke, 4. 1—13. Heb. 2. 17, 18. & 4. 15. with Deut. 9. 18, 25. 1 Kings, 19. 8. <sup>3</sup> Pf. 22. 6. & 102. 6. Job, 30. 29. Mat. 8. 20. <sup>4</sup> 1 Kings, 19. 7. Mat. 26. 53. 1 Tim. 3. 16. <sup>5</sup> Mat. 4. 12. & 11. 2. & 14. 3. Luke, 3. 19. John, 3. 30. <sup>6</sup> Mat. 4. 17, 23. Heb. 2. 3. Luke, 4. 14—22, 45, 46. Acts, 10. 36—38. If. 61. 1—3. Eph. 2. 17. Luke, 2. 10, 11. & 8. 1. <sup>7</sup> Gal. 4. 4. Pf. 110. 3. Dan. 2. 44. Eph. 1. 10. <sup>8</sup> See Mat. 4. 17. & xiii. & 3. 2. & 10. 7. <sup>9</sup> If. 55. 1—7. Acts, 1. 38, 39. & 20. 21. <sup>10</sup> Mat. 4. 18—22. Luke, 5. 1—11. John, 1. 35—44. <sup>11</sup> Mat. 4. 19. Luke, 5. 10. Heb. 2. 3. Eph. 2. 20. Acts, 2. 4—42. & 4. 4, &c. <sup>12</sup> Mat. 10. 37. Ch. 10. 28. <sup>13</sup> Mat. 4. 13, 23. Luke, 4. 16, 31. & 13. 10. Acts, 13. 14, 27, 44. & 15. 22. & 17. 2. & 18. 4.

and the sense will be, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ began, according to the prediction of the prophets, with the preaching and baptism of John the Baptist. I shall not take up the reader's and my own time by insisting upon those passages in this or the following Evangelists, which have been already explained in the notes on St. Matthew, and which explanations will be found by the copious marginal references.

Ver. 12. *Driveth*] *Conveyeth*.

Ver. 13. *And was with the wild beasts*] St. Mark is often very circumstantial in his narrations, and adds many things for the sake of the Romans or Gentiles in general, to enable them the better to understand him. Thus, as a Roman might not know how wild and uninhabited the deserts of Arabia were, in which Christ was tempted, he adds here, *and was with the wild beasts*. See Owen on the Gospel, and Grotius.

Ver. 14. *Now, after that John was put in prison, &c.*] We have here a remarkable particular in the conduct of our Saviour: no sooner was he informed that Herod had thrown John in prison, than he quitted Judea, and went into Galilee. (Comp. Matth. iv. 12—to the end.) And traversing it all over,—as well that part of it which was under Herod's jurisdiction, as that under Philip's; see ver. 39. and Matth. iv. 23.—he there began first to preach continually to the people, elected several of his disciples

to accompany him wherever he went, performed most astonishing works, and drew the attention of the whole country upon him. Now, had Jesus and the Baptist been associate impostors, as some infidels have supposed, nothing seems more improbable than that Jesus should single out this particular time, and the dominions of that particular prince, who had but just then imprisoned his partner in the same wicked imposture, in order *there first* to make trial of all his devices, procure more associates, and attended by them to draw the multitude about with him from all parts of the country. In an impostor, this would have been voluntarily seeking the same fate that his forerunner had but just experienced, and in reality provoking Herod to put an end at once to all joint-machinations: but this is what no impostor whatever can be supposed desirous to have done. See Bell's Inquiry into the Divine Missions, &c. p. 388.

Ver. 19, 20. *Ship*] *Boat*.

Ver. 21. *On the sabbath day*] In the Greek it is plural, *τοῖς σαββάσι*, and, when compared with the parallel place in St. Luke, shews that it was the custom of Jesus to frequent these places of worship on the sabbath days. The addition of this circumstance seems therefore intended to intimate, that Christ was free from the imputation of profaning the sabbath, which was objected to him by the Jews. See Matth. xii. 1, 2. and Grotius. Dr. Heylin renders

22 <sup>b</sup> And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

23 ¶ <sup>c</sup> And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

24 Saying, <sup>d</sup> Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, <sup>e</sup> the Holy One of God.

25 And Jesus <sup>f</sup> rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

26 <sup>g</sup> And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

27 <sup>h</sup> And they were all amazed, inasmuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

28 <sup>i</sup> And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

29 ¶ <sup>k</sup> And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her.

31 And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; <sup>l</sup> and immediately the fever left her, and she <sup>m</sup> ministered unto them.

32 ¶ And <sup>n</sup> at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

33 And all the city was gathered together at the door.

34 And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; <sup>o</sup> and suffered not the devils <sup>p</sup> to speak, because they knew him.

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 7. 28, 29. & 13. 54. & 21. 23. Ch. 11. 28. Luke, 4. 32. & 7. 16. & 20. 2. <sup>c</sup> Luke, 4. 33—37. <sup>d</sup> John, 5. 19. <sup>e</sup> Luke, 4. 41. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 8. 29. Ver. 34. Ch. 5. 7. <sup>g</sup> Pf. 16. 10. Acts, 2. 31. & 4. 27. Dan. 9. 24. Luke, 1. 35. <sup>h</sup> Ver. 34. Luke, 4. 41. Ch. 3. 11, 12. Pf. 50. 16. <sup>i</sup> Ch. 9. 20, 26. Luke, 9. 39, 42. & 11. 22. <sup>j</sup> Mat. 12. 23. & 9. 33. Ch. 7. 37. & 9. 25. <sup>k</sup> Mic. 5. 4. <sup>l</sup> If. 52. 13. Song, 1. 3. Mat. 4. 23. & 9. 31. Luke, 4. 15, 37. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 8. 14, 15. Luke, 4. 38, 39. <sup>n</sup> Exod. 15. 26. Rev. 16. 9. Pf. 103. 3. & 147. 3. <sup>o</sup> Pf. 103. 1, 2. & 116. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 14. Luke, 8. 3. <sup>p</sup> Ver. 21. Ch. 3. 2. & 14. 1. Mat. 8. 16, 17. Luke, 4. 40, 41. Gen. 49. 30. If. 53. 4, 5. <sup>q</sup> Ch. 3. 12. Ver. 25. Pf. 50. 16. Acts, 16. 17, 18. <sup>r</sup> Or to say that they knew him.

ders the latter part of this verse, *where he immediately began to instruct publicly in the synagogues, to which he went on the sabbath days.*

Ver. 23, 24. *And there was in their synagogue, &c.]* It seems plain from what is said afterwards, ver. 27. that the other persons then present did not know Jesus to be the Son of God; how then should the demoniac know this, if he had been only mad, as some would vainly suppose, and not really possessed by an evil spirit? This case was so remarkable, that, as the Evangelist adds, immediately our Lord's fame spread abroad, throughout all the region round about Galilee. However, though madmen might not know Christ, yet the devils could not be ignorant of him, from the time of his baptism, when the voice from heaven said, *This is my beloved Son, &c.* and therefore Satan soon after, in one of his temptations, says, *If thou be the Son of God; Matth. iv. 6.* See Ward's Dissertations, p. 79. and on Matth. viii. 29.

Ver. 26. *Had torn him] Had thrown him into convulsions.* That this is a proper translation, though circuitous, appears from St. Luke, who informs us, that the spirit did not hurt him. It is remarkable, that in all the cures of this sort which our Lord performed, the person to be cured was agitated by the demon who possessed him in the most violent manner, at the time of the cure, and raised to perfect health by the expulsion of the demon in an instant. The reason was, that thus the reality and greatness, both of the possession and the cure, were fully

proved, to the conviction of every beholder; and therefore the demon was probably in some sense compelled to exert himself.

Ver. 29. *They entered into the house of Simon] Peter was a native of Bethsaida; and when first admitted to Christ's acquaintance, seems to have had his residence there: but happening to marry a woman of Capernaum, as is generally supposed, he removed thither with his brother Andrew; and there they prosecuted their common business of fishing, in company with James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who lived with them in one house. On the cure of St. Peter's wife's mother we shall speak, when we come to Luke, iv. 38, 39.*

Ver. 30. *Ansn] Fortwith.*

Ver. 32, 33. *And at even, &c.]* The news of the miracle above related being spread through the town, those who had sick relations or friends resolved to apply to Jesus for a cure: only, because it was the sabbath, they did not immediately come to him; they waited till the holy rest was ended, which, according to the Jewish form of the day, was at sun-setting; and then they brought their sick in great numbers to him, fully persuaded that he would heal them. The persons who attended the sick, or who brought them to be cured, together with the towns' people, whose curiosity and admiration were excited by the reports of the two miracles performed that day, made such a crowd at St. Peter's house, that it looked as if all the city had been gathered together. See the notes on Matth. viii.

35 ¶ And ' in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him.

37 And when they had found him, they

said unto him, ' All men seek for thee.

38 And he said unto them, ' Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.

39 And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and ' cast out devils.

<sup>p</sup> Luke, 4. 42-45. Eccl. 9. 10. John, 4. 34. Heb. 5. 7. Pf. 107. 4.  
<sup>r</sup> Luke, 4. 43. John, 16. 28. If. 61. 1-3. & 42. 1-7. & 49. 1-6. & 50. 4.

<sup>q</sup> Ver. 5. John, 3. 25. & 12. 19. Mat. 4. 25. Zech. 11. 17.  
<sup>s</sup> 1 John, 3. 8. Gen. 3. 15. Ver. 20. Ch. 5. 9. & 7. 30.

viii. 4. xii. 16. for some reasons why our Saviour suffered not his miracles to be publicly spoken of.

Ver. 35. *A great while before day*] *Ἐνωχεν λίαν, when the night was very far advanced, and consequently just before the dawn of day.*

Ver. 38. *The next towns*] *The neighbouring towns.*

*Inferences.*—Respecting John the Baptist and our Saviour's baptism, see the Inferences on Matth. iii.; and on our Saviour's choice of his disciples, &c. we shall enlarge in the Inferences on Luke, v. Let us at present contemplate the great Redeemer of our souls, giving us a proof of his divine power to heal our spiritual defilements, by curing the leper who applied to him.

Our souls are overspread with the leprosy of sin, and where should we apply for help, but to the healing power and recovering grace of the adorable Saviour? Be the lady ever so deep, inveterate, or spreading, we may surely adopt the words of the leper before us, and say, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* There is nothing better than frequently to make this prayer, and to be always disposed in heart to do so.

If we are so happy as to have received the favour of a cure, we are under the obligation of no command to conceal it. It is, on the contrary, our duty most gratefully to *publish it abroad*, for the honour of our benefactor, and the advantage of those who may be encouraged to make the same application, in humble hope of the same success. But when will the happy time come, that men shall be as solicitous about their spiritual welfare, as about the health of this mortal body? Almighty Physician! exert thine energy in this instance, as a token of further favours; convince men of their pollution and danger, and bow their stubborn knee, that it may bend in submissive and importunate supplication.

We may learn from the instance before us, that the cure of our souls is the pure effect of the goodness and free mercy of God; and that Jesus Christ performs it by his own divine authority; (he *put forth his hand*, ver. 41.)

The compassionate air with which the cure of this leper was wrought, ought to be considered by all spiritual physicians as a lesson of condescension and tenderness; and the modesty with which it was conducted, should engage them to avoid every appearance of ostentation and vain-glory.

Once more, let us be taught, from our Saviour's example, (ver. 35.) how good it is for a man to withdraw himself from business and labour, in order to converse with God alone. Christ himself found it proper to depart into a solitary place to pray, when crowds of admirers

were flocking in upon him: and, like him, those who are engaged in the scenes of public business, and fill them up with the greatest applause, should yet resolutely command seasons for retirement; remembering, that the more various and important our public labours are, the more evidently do we need to draw down succour by ardent prayer, that we may be strengthened and prospered in them. Prayer is so necessary to him particularly who preaches and labours in the church, that, far from dispening with himself on this account, he ought to take a time for it out of that which belongs to rest, and the other necessities of life, rather than be deficient therein.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, St. Mark commences his history with the account of John's baptism, the messenger sent before the Messiah, according to the ancient prophecies, to prepare his way. Isaiah and Malachi had both spoken of him, Isaiah, xl. 3. Mal. iii. 1. and agreeable thereunto John commenced his ministry in the wilderness, calling the people to repentance, and faith in the promised Messiah, in order that they might obtain remission of their sins.

1. John's preaching was in some sense *the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.* Not that the gospel then first began to be published; for it had been the subject of the ministry of all the prophets, and, in the promise of the seed of the woman, had been preached to the first man immediately after his fall: but the gospel dispensation, in opposition to the law, was more immediately proclaimed from the baptism of John, whose office it was, particularly, to point the people to the Lamb of God, now made manifest in the flesh to take away the sin of the world; though that dispensation was not properly opened before the day of Pentecost. This was the glad news that John declared, *the Gospel of Jesus Christ* who is both the *author* and *subject* of it; and, as *the Son of God*, endued with all-sufficiency for the great work of man's salvation, which he came to accomplish. To him the Baptist bore witness, acknowledging his surpassing dignity, and confessed his own unworthiness to be employed in the meanest offices by his Lord; and whilst, in consequence of his preaching, and the people's profession of repentance, he admitted them to baptism in token of repentance for the remission of sins, he bade them expect a more efficacious baptism than this of water, even of the Holy Ghost, which the Messiah, to whom he directed them, should shed on them abundantly, to cleanse them from all their iniquities.

2. His appearance was singular, as that of the ancient prophets, and his dress and diet bespoke his mortified spirit and deadness to the world. A rough camel's hair garment,

40 ¶ And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, " If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41 And Jesus, \* moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and

faith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

42 And, as soon as he had spoken, ' immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;

\* Mat. 8. 1—4. Luke, 5. 12—15. Mat. 11. 5. & 7. 7. Luke, 18. 1—13. † Gen. 18. 14. Jer. 32. 17. If. 63. 1. Lev. 13. 46. \* Mat. 9. 36. Heb. 4. 15. & 2. 17. Hof. 11. 8. Jer. 31. 18—20. † Ver. 31. Ch. 5. 29. Mat. 15. 28. John, 4. 50, 53. Luke, 17. 12—14.

garment, tied with a leathern girdle, defended him from the cold; and locusts and wild honey, such as the wilderness afforded, satisfied his hunger. *Note*; They who preach the Gospel, must learn to endure hardness, and be ready, whenever duty calls, to forego any of the delights of sense, for the sake of the service in which they are engaged.

3. Multitudes attended him, and appeared deeply affected with John's discourses, confessing their sins, and desiring to be admitted to his baptism. The word of the Gospel is powerful. The doctrines of repentance and faith, when urged upon the heart, awaken the conscience: and all who truly preach Jesus Christ, will assuredly see the success of their ministrations. They who have never known themselves instrumental to the convincing and converting one sinner, have reason indeed to believe that they were never called to the ministry of the Gospel.

2dly, The account of Christ's baptism and temptations St. Matthew has recorded more at large, Ch. iii. iv.

1. He was baptized of John in Jordan. Not that he had any sins to confess, though in *the likeness of sinful flesh*; but he would comply with every instituted ordinance of God; and now also he was eminently to be pointed out as the Messiah, and to enter upon his mission. Accordingly the heavens were opened, the Holy Ghost visibly descended upon him, and God the Father, by an audible voice, bore testimony to him as his Son, and declared his perfect satisfaction in the undertaking in which he was engaged. *Note*; (1.) If God is ever well-pleased with us, it can only be in and through his dear Son. (2.) Whenever we are truly baptized into Christ, the Spirit of God will as really be communicated to us as it visibly descended upon him.

2. He immediately entered upon his temptation, led by the Holy Spirit from the brink of Jordan into the howling wilderness, to make his abode with beasts, while Satan sharpened every poisoned arrow in his quiver against him; but, to his bitterest disappointment, though in this lonely desert, he found all his arts foiled by this second Adam, which even in Eden he had practised with such success upon the first. Thus Christ bore with all the tempter's malice, and baffled all his wiles; till Satan, despairing, at last quitted the field, unable to make the least impression: and then the angelic hosts, who had with admiration beheld the dreadful conflict, appeared to congratulate the Saviour's victory, and to minister to his hunger. *Note*; (1.) Every converted soul must prepare for temptation. (2.) Christ knows what fore temptations mean. He tenderly compassionates his suffering people, and is near to succour and defend them.

3dly, When John's ministry was finished by his imprisonment, Christ came into Galilee, and there,

1. He preached *the Gospel of the kingdom of God*, inviting all his countrymen to come and partake of the inestimable blessings of that dispensation of grace which he came to publish, *the time being fulfilled* which had been marked out for the appearing of the Messiah by the prophets; and therefore, as his kingdom was immediately to be erected, he exhorted all his hearers to *repent, and believe the Gospel*; to discover, acknowledge, and bewail their offences against God's holy law; to renounce their vain confidences in themselves; to change their mistaken sentiments concerning the nature of the Messiah's kingdom; and, instantly turning to him, to receive the glad tidings that he brought of the salvation which he came to procure for them, even pardon, peace, righteousness, and eternal life, the gift of God through the sacrifice and intercession of his Son. *Note*; (1.) The Gospel will be glad tidings to none who do not see and feel their misery and guilt; and, instead of flattering themselves in their own eyes, now change their minds, and stand convinced of their lost estate. (2.) Faith in the Gospel word entitles us to claim the fulfilment of all the promises: nor is it any presumption, rejecting all confidence in ourselves, to be confident of the Saviour's love and faithfulness.

2. He called four of his disciples to a more constant attendance upon him, that they might be better qualified for the work in which he designed to employ them. (1.) They were *fishers*; for the kingdom of Jesus was not to be erected by the wisdom of men, but by the power of God. (2.) He found them at *their vocation*. Honest industry in his sight is highly commendable. (3.) They were two pair of *brethren*; and that is an additional happiness, when they, who are so near to each other in blood, are united together in one Lord. (4.) They *left all* to follow Christ. When he calls, we must count nothing too dear to part with for his sake.

3. With these disciples, his attendants, he entered into Capernaum, and on the sabbath preached in the synagogue to the astonishment of the auditory; such a divine power and authority attended his teaching, as the people had never found under their scribes and rabbis. *Note*; the Gospel word is mighty and powerful. No wonder then if the preachers of it are distinguished from the insipid doctors of moral virtue, philosophical disquisitions, or empty formality.

4thly, Christ confirmed his mission by his miracles. And, to give the greater weight to his discourse, we find him,

1. Casting out a devil from one possessed. He is called

44 And faith unto him, <sup>2</sup> See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45 <sup>2</sup> But he went out, and began to pub-

<sup>2</sup> Mat. 8. 4. Lev. xiii. xiv. with Ch. 5. 43. Mat. 17. 9. Luke, 17. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Luke, 5. 15. Mat. 4. 24. & 9. 26. & 14. 35. & 17. 14.

lish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, infomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

*an unclean spirit*; for he is such in his own nature; by his suggestions he defiles the consciences of men, and, by the temptations that he presents before them, seduces them into all impurity of body and soul. Dreading the presence and power of Jesus, *he cried out*, using the man's organs of speech, *saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee?* They knew themselves unable to contend, and therefore tremble at the thought of being dispossessed of their prey: but, to do him all the mischief in their power, this fiend seems in reproach to call him *Jesus of Nazareth*: and though he adds, *I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God*, there was probably the most malicious design couched under that fair confession, even to raise a suspicion of confederacy between Jesus and Satan. Christ therefore silences him, disdainingly to receive a testimony from him, and disappointing his malicious designs: with a sharp rebuke he bids him instantly quit his prey, and leave the body which he had possessed; and, though furious at being dispossessed, with a fearful outcry, as if he would have rent the man in pieces, or designing to terrify the spectators, he departs; compelled, though with reluctance, to yield to the commanding voice of Jesus. *Note*: (1.) Though such possessions may not now be frequently found, how many, under the influence of *an unclean spirit*, are still led captive by the devil at his will! (2.) The grace of Jesus is still the same, and he can and does subdue the strongest power of Satan in the believer's heart. (3.) Many a poor sinner, when Christ first approaches him with the Gospel word, is grievously harassed, and cries out, as if his misery was now greater than ever before; but these terrors are the forerunners of peace and joy in believing.

2. The people were all amazed at what they heard and saw, and could not help saying one to another, *What thing is this?* Never was such astonishing power before exerted! *What new doctrine is this?* delivered with such majesty, and confirmed by such miracles. He acts not as exorcists, by charms and incantations; but *with authority commandeth* he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him, unable to make the least resistance. Hereupon the fame of his preaching and miracles began to be exceedingly spread through all the region round about Galilee. *Note*: Christ's doctrine was not new, but the old doctrine which had been from the beginning; but had for a long time been so forgotten and neglected, that it appeared now quite uncommon—As in these days, the doctrines of the Gospel are by many called new doctrines, because, alas! we have for a long season in general so grievously departed from them.

5thly, Wherever Jesus went, he left the glorious marks of his power and grace.

1. Soon after he had retired from the Synagogue to Simon's house to take some refreshment, some of the company informed him of the illness of Peter's mother, confined to her bed with a fever. Immediately he arose, went to her bed-side, lifted her up, and instantly the fever left her. The cure was perfect; not so much as any weakness remained; but she immediately arose, and waited on Jesus and the guests. *Note*: When we have experienced the Redeemer's healing grace, it becomes us to shew our gratitude by immediately employing the strength that he has given us in his service.

2. A multitude of other cures were wrought by him the same day. For no sooner was the sabbath ended (before which they might scruple to carry the sick to him) than the door was crowded with patients, and not one went away without a cure; and many devils were ejected by his word, whom he permitted not *to say that they knew him*, (as the words may best be rendered,) not chooling to have them speak ought concerning him, lest it should give occasion to suggest that there was a confederacy between him and them.

3. After some needful repose, very early in the morning, he retired to a solitary place, that he might, uninterrupted, enjoy sweet communion with his Father in secret, and pour out his soul in prayer before him. *Note*: (1.) Early rising is as profitable to the soul as the body; while sloth is alike hurtful to both. (2.) When our spirits are most fresh and vigorous, it is then the properest time to retire for prayer and communion with God.

4. Peter and his companions no sooner missed him in the morning, than they sought him out, and desired him to return to Capernaum, there being such great inquiries made after him. But Christ could not confine himself there; the rest of the country must share his ministrations, being partly sent for this purpose to go about preaching and working miracles through the whole land: and accordingly he did so, his disciples attending him in his travels, hearing his divine teaching, and beholding the wonders of his power and love.

6thly, The miracle recorded ver. 40—45. was before related, Matt. viii. 2., &c. We are taught by it,

1. What we naturally are—poor, defiled, loathsome sinners, under the incurable disease of a corrupted nature; and desperate, unless the great physician of souls exert his healing power on our behalf.

2. Whither we must go—to Jesus; bowed down under the sense of our vileness, and unworthiness to approach him; yet casting ourselves at his feet as alone able to relieve us from our misery, and with a humble persuasion that he will not spurn us from him, but that he is willing as well as able to help and heal us.

## C H A P. II.

*Christ healeth one sick of the palsy; calleth Matthew from the receipt of custom; eateth with publicans and sinners; excuseth his disciples for not fasting; and for plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day.*

[Anno Domini 31.]

**A**ND <sup>a</sup> again he entered into Capernaum after *some* days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>b</sup> And straightway many were gathered

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 9. 1-8. Luke, 5. 18-26. Deut. 9. 11. & 15. 1. Acts, 24. 17. 8. 1. Eph. 2. 17. Heb. 2. 3. Mat. 11. 5. If. 61. 1-5. John, 8. 12. & 12. 35. James, 5. 15. John, 9. 2, 3.

<sup>b</sup> Gen. 49. 10. If. 45. 23. Ch. 1. 33, 45. <sup>c</sup> Ch. 1. 14. Luke, 4. 28. 15, 22. Ver. 10. John, 5. 14. 1 Cor. 11. 30. Jer. 19. 13. Mat. 10. 27. Acts, 10. 9. Luke, 5. 19.

3. Christ never rejects the souls of the miserable that fly to him: his bowels of compassion yearn over them; the hand of his grace is sure to be stretched out towards them. And though we often come trembling, between fear and hope whether he will receive, pardon, help, and save us, he is pleased to remove our doubts, and says to our souls, *I will*, and power instantly accompanies his promise.

4. To those whom Christ cures, he gives a strict charge; and they must carefully obey his injunctions, and especially beware not to return unto folly, lest a worse thing happen unto them; but daily they are called to present themselves, body, soul, and spirit, before the great high-priest of their profession, that he, who has made them clean, may keep them clean.

5. They who have tasted the love of Jesus, delight to spread the favour of his name, and to testify their gratitude towards him both with their lips and in their lives.

## C H A P. II.

*Ver. 1, 2. And again he entered into Capernaum, &c.]* See Luke, v. 17, &c. *In the house*, means "In St. Peter's house."

*Ver. 3. Which was borne of four.]* *Who was carried by four.*

*Ver. 4. And when they could not come nigh, &c.]* The better to understand the particulars in this verse, it will be proper to consider the manner of building in the East, which we find largely described in Dr. Shaw's excellent *Travels*, where he has given us a full explanation of the passage before us. "The general method of building," says he, "seems to be continued from the earliest ages down to this time, without the least alteration or improvement. Large doors, spacious chambers, marble pavements, cloistered courts, with fountains sometimes playing in the midst, are conveniences well adapted to the circumstances of these hotter climates. The jealousy of these people is less apt to be alarmed, whilst, if we except a small latticed window or balcony, which sometimes looks into the streets, all the other windows open into their respective courts or quadrangles. It is during the celebration only of some *zeenab* (as they call a public festival) that these latticed windows or balconies are

together, infomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door: and <sup>c</sup> he preached the word unto them.

<sup>3</sup> ¶ And they came unto him, bringing one <sup>d</sup> sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

<sup>4</sup> And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the <sup>e</sup> roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

"left open. For this being a time of great liberty, reveling, and extravagance, each family is ambitious of adorning both the inside and outside of their houses with their richest furniture; while crowds of spectators, dressed out in their best apparel, and laying aside all modesty and restraint, go in and out where they please.—The account we have 2 Kings, ix. 30. of Jezebel's painting her face and tiring her head, and looking out at a window, upon Jehu's public entrance into Jezreel, gives us a lively idea of an Eastern lady at one of these *zeenabs* or festivals.

"The streets of these cities, the better to shade them from the sun, are usually narrow, with sometimes a range of shops on each side. If from these we enter into one of the principal houses, we shall first pass through a porch or gateway, with benches on each side; few persons, not even the nearest relations, having further admission, except upon extraordinary occasions. Hence we are received into the *court* or *quadrangle*, which, lying open to the weather, is, according to the ability of the owner, paved with marble, or such materials as will carry off the water into the common sewers. When much people are to be admitted, as upon the celebration of a marriage, the circumcising of a child, or occasions of the like nature, the company is rarely or never received into one of the chambers. The court is the usual place of their reception, which is strewn accordingly with mats and carpets for their more commodious entertainment: and as this is called *el wozf*, or the middle of the house, (literally answering to the *το μεσον* of St. Luke, v. 19.) it is probable that the place where our Saviour and the apostles were frequently accustomed to give their instructions, might have been in the like situation, or in the *arca* or *quadrangle* of one of these houses. In the summer season, and upon all occasions when a large company is to be received, this court is commonly sheltered from the inclemency of the weather by a *velum*, *umbrella*, or *veil*, which being expanded upon ropes from one side of the parapet wall to the other, may be folded or unfolded at pleasure. The Psalmist seems to allude either to the tents of the *Bedouens*, or to some covering of this kind, in that beautiful expression of *spreading out the heavens, like a veil or curtain*.

"The court is for the most part surrounded by a cloister, over

5 When Jesus ' saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, ' Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

7 ' Why doth this man thus speak blas-

' Gen. 22. 12. John. 2. 25. & 21. 17. Heb. 4. 13. Rev. 2. 23. Jer. 17. 10. II. 44. 22. & 38. 17.

h Mat. 9. 3. & 26. 65. John, 5. 18. & 10. 33, 36.

\* Mat. 9. 2. Acts, 5. 31. II. 53. 11. John, 5. 14. Pf. 103. 3.

“ over which, when the house has one or more stories, “ (and they sometimes have two or three) there is a gallery “ erected, of the same dimensions with the cloister; having “ a ballustrade, or else a piece of carved or latticed work “ going round about it, to prevent people from falling “ into the court. From the *cloisters* and *galleries* we are “ conducted into large spacious chambers, one of them “ frequently serving a whole family; whence it is, that “ the cities of these countries, which are generally much “ inferior in bigness to those of Europe, yet are so ex- “ ceeding populous, that great numbers of the inhabit- “ ants are swept away by the plague, or any other con- “ tagious distemper. These chambers in houses of better “ fashion, from the middle of the wall downwards, are “ covered and adorned with velvet, or damask hangings, “ of *white, blue, red, green,* or other colours, (Esth. i. 6.) “ suspended upon hooks, or taken down at pleasure; but “ the upper part is embellished with more permanent orna- “ ments, being adorned with the most ingenious wreath- “ ings and devices in *stucco* or *fret-work*. The ceiling is “ generally of wainscot, either very artfully painted, or “ else thrown into a variety of pannels, with gilded mould- “ ings and scrolls of their *Koran* intermixed. The prophet “ (Jer. xxii. 14.) exclaims against the Eastern houses that “ were *ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion*. The “ floors are laid with painted tiles or plaister of terrace; “ but as these people make little or no use of chairs, (either “ sitting cross-legged, or lying at length) they always cover “ or spread them over with carpets, which, for the most “ part, are of the richest materials. Along the sides of the “ wall or floor, a range of narrow beds or mattrasses is “ often placed upon these carpets; and for their further “ ease and convenience, several velvet or damask bolsters “ are placed upon these carpets or mattrasses, indulgences “ that seem to be alluded to by the *stretching themselves upon “ couches, and by sewing of pillows to arm-chairs*, as we have “ it expressed, Amos, vi. 4. Ezek. xiii. 18 and 20.

“ At one end of each chamber there is a little gallery, “ raised three, four, or five feet above the floor, with a “ ballustrade in the front of it, with a few steps likewise “ leading up to it. Here they place their beds; a situa- “ tion frequently alluded to in the Holy Scriptures; which “ may likewise illustrate the circumstance of *Hezekiah's “ turning his face, when he prayed, towards the wall*, (that “ is to say, from his attendants) 2 Kings, xx. 2. that the “ fervency of his devotion might be the less taken notice “ of and observed. The like is related of Ahab, 1 Kings, “ xi. iv. though probably not upon a religious account, “ but in order to conceal from his attendants the anguish “ he was in for his late disappointment. The stairs “ are sometimes placed in the porch, sometimes at “ the entrance into the court; but never upon the out- “ side of the house. The top of the house, which is always “ flat, is covered with a stony plaister of *terrace*; whence,

“ in foreign languages, it has attained the name of *terrace*. “ This is usually surrounded by two walls, the outermost “ whereof is partly built over the street, and partly makes “ the partition with the contiguous houses; being fre- “ quently so low, that one may easily climb over it. The “ other, which I shall call the *parapet wall*, hangs imme- “ diately over the court, being always breast high, and “ answers to the *מעקה*, or *lorica*, Deut. xxii. 8. which “ we render *the battlements*. Instead of this *parapet wall*, “ some *terraces* are guarded, like the galleries, with bal- “ lustrades only, or *latticed work*; in which fashion pro- “ bably, as the name seems to import, was the *שככה*, “ or *net*, or *lattice*, as we render it, that *Abaziah*, (2 Kings, “ i. 2.) might be carelessly leaning over, when he fell from “ thence into the court. For upon these terraces, several “ offices of the family are performed; such as the drying “ of linen or flax, (Joh. ii. 6.) and the preparing of figs and “ raisins; where likewise they enjoy the cool refreshing “ breezes of the evening, converse with one another, and “ offer up their devotions. In the feast of tabernacles, booths “ were erected upon them, Neh. viii. 16. As these *terraces* “ are thus frequently used, and trampled upon, not to “ mention the solidity of the materials wherewith they “ are made, they will not easily permit any vegetable sub- “ stances to take root or thrive upon them; which, per- “ haps, may illustrate the comparison, Isa. xxxvii. 27. of “ the Assyrians, and Pf. cxxix. 6. of the wicked, *to the “ grass that grows upon the house-tops, which withereth before “ it is grown up*.

“ When any of these cities are built upon level ground, “ one may pass along the tops of the houses from one end “ to the other. Such in general is the method and con- “ trivance of these houses. If then it may be presumed, “ that our Saviour was preaching in one of these houses, “ one may, by attending to the structure of it, give no “ small light to one circumstance of that history, which “ has given great offence to some unbelievers, supposing “ unformountable difficulties would attend such an action. “ Which mistake they might perhaps fall into by not at- “ tending to the original, which will bear this construc- “ tion; *When they could not come at Jesus for the press, they “ got upon the roof of the house, and drew back the veil where “ he was*; or, they laid open and uncovered that part of “ it, especially, which was spread over the place, *οπου ην, “ where he was sitting, and having removed and plucked “ away* (according to St. Jerome) whatever might incom- “ mode them in their intended good office, or *having tied “ (according to the Persian version) the four corners of “ the bed or bedstead with cords, where the sick of the palsy “ lay, they let it down before Jesus*.

“ For that there was not the least force or violence “ offered to the roof, and consequently that *εσπορευθησιν “ (breaking up) no less than απεστεγνσαν, (they uncovered) “ will admit of some other interpretations than what have*

phemies? <sup>1</sup> who can forgive sins but God only?

8 And immediately when Jesus <sup>k</sup> perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk*?

10 But that ye may know that <sup>l</sup> the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy),

11 <sup>m</sup> I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; <sup>n</sup> inso-much that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

13 ¶ And he went forth again by the sea-side; and all <sup>o</sup> the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

14 <sup>p</sup> And as he passed by he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus, sitting <sup>q</sup> at the receipt of cus-

tom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

15 ¶ And it came to pass that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, <sup>r</sup> many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, <sup>s</sup> How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

17 When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, <sup>t</sup> They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

18 ¶ And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, <sup>u</sup> Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the <sup>v</sup> bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have

<sup>1</sup> Job, 14. 4. If. 43. 25. & 44. 22. Pf. 130. 4. Rom. 8. 33. \* Ver. 5. 1 Sam. 16. 7. 1 Chron. 29. 17. Pf. 7. 9. & 139. 1-4. Jer. 17. 10. John, 2. 24, 25. & 21. 17. Heb. 4. 13. Rev. 2. 23. John, 6. 64. <sup>2</sup> Dan. 7. 13. Pf. 8. 17. Zech. 13. 7. Mat. 16. 13. Rev. 1. 13. 1 Tim. 2. 5. & 3. 16. John, 17. 2. & 5. 22, 23. If. 53. 11. 1 Tim. 1. 13, 16. <sup>3</sup> Gen. 1. 3. Ch. 1. 41. Pf. 33. 9. John, 6. 53. & 5. 8. <sup>4</sup> Mat. 9, 8, 13. & 12. 23. Ch. 1. 27. Pf. 8. 1-3. Luke, 5. 26. & 7. 16. <sup>5</sup> John, 7. 48. 1 Cor. 1. 26. Prov. 1. 20-22. Mat. 22. 9. Zech. 11. 7, 11. <sup>6</sup> Luke, 5. 27-32. Mat. 9. 9-13. \* Or at the place where the custom was received. <sup>7</sup> Luke, 7. 29, 30. & 15. Mat. 21. 31, 32. & 8. 11. 2. <sup>8</sup> Mat. 18. 17. Luke, 5. 29. & 15. 1, 2. & 19. 7. & 18. 9-14. If. 65. 5. Acts, 10. 28. <sup>9</sup> Mat. 9. 12, 13. Luke, 5. 31, 32. If. 55. 7. & 1. 13. Hosea, 13. 9. Mat. 1. 21. & 18. 11. 1 Tim. 1. 15, 16. Rom. 5. 6, 8. <sup>10</sup> Mat. 9. 14-17. Luke, 5. 3, 39. <sup>11</sup> Rom. 10. 3. Luke 18. 12. Mat. 6. 16. <sup>12</sup> Song, 1. 4, 17. If. 26. 20. Mat. 25. 10. <sup>13</sup> Messiah. Mat. 25. 1-10. John, 3. 29. Rev. 19. 7, 9. Song, 1. 4. & 2. 3-5. & 3. 4, 11. & 7. 5. & 8. 5, 6.

“ been given to them in our version, appears from the parallel place in St. Luke; where *διὰ τῶν κίραμων καθύπευθεν αὐτῶν*, per tegulas demiserunt illum, (which we translate they let him through the tiling, as if that had actually been broken up already) should be rendered, they let him down over, along the side, or by the way of the roof. We have a passage in Aulus Gellius exactly of the same purport, where it is said, that ‘ if any pers'n in chains should make his escape into the house of the Flamen Dialis, he should be forthwith loosed: and that his fetters should be drawn up through the impluvium, upon the roof, or terrace, and from thence be let down into the highway, or the street.’

“ When the use of these phrases and the fashion of these houses are rightly considered, there will be no reason to suppose that any breach was actually made in the tegula, or κεραμοί: since all that was to be done in the case of the paralytic was to carry him up to the top of the house, (either by forcing their way through the crowd up the staircase, or else by conveying him over some of the neighbouring terraces) and there, after they had drawn away the *στέγη* or veil, to let him down, along the side of the roof through the opening (or impluvium), into the midst (of the court) before Jesus.” See Shaw's

Trav. 4to, p. 207. Bishop Pearce's Vindication of the Miracles, part iv. p. 26. and the notes on Matth. ix. 1, &c. Instead of, for the press, we may read because of the throng.

Ver. 7. Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? The word blasphemy, in prophane writings, signifies slander, calumny, or any kind of opprobrious language; but in Scripture it commonly denotes opprobrious speeches against God's being, attributes, or operations; such as when we ascribe to God the infirmities of men, or to men the perfections and operations of God: it signifies also irreverent speeches addressed immediately to God.

Ver. 9. Whether is it easier to say, &c.] To say, and to perform, were the same to Christ. What he here said he did; remitting sin, and curing diseases by his word. To forgive sins is comparatively a more difficult, though invisible miracle, and therefore he added the outward cure to confirm it. See the Inferences on Matth. ix.

Ver. 12. We never saw, &c.] We never saw any thing like this. Heylin. By the sea-side, in the next verse, is meant By the lake of Gennesareth.

Ver. 15. For there were many, and they followed him.] For many of them had followed him. Heylin.

Ver. 17. They that are whole] Or, That are well.

the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

21 No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.

22 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

23 ¶ And it came to pass that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath-day;

and his disciples began as they went to pluck the ears of corn.

24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

25 And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him?

26 How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shew-bread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

27 And he said unto them, The sabbath

<sup>a</sup> Zech. 1. 7. Jhn. 7. 33, 34. & 12. 8, 32. & 13. 37. & 14. 2, 12. & 16. 7. & 17. 11, 13. Act. 1. 9. & 3. 21. <sup>b</sup> Acts, 1. 14. & 13. 3. & 24. 27. <sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. 7. 5. <sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. 11. 27. Zech. 12. 0-11. <sup>e</sup> Deut. 33. 25. <sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. 10. 14. Pf. 101. 9-13. <sup>g</sup> Or *parva* or *microgibi*. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 12. —. Luke, 6. 1-5. Deut. 23. 25. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 25. 23, 24. & 25. <sup>j</sup> with Exod. 20. 10. & 31. 15. & 15. 1. Num. 15. 32-37. <sup>k</sup> 1 Sam. 21. 1-6. <sup>l</sup> 1 Sam. 21. 1. & 22. 20. <sup>m</sup> 2 Sam. 20. 25. <sup>n</sup> 1 Kings, 1. 7. & 2. 26, 27. <sup>o</sup> Exod. 25. 30. & 29. 33, 33. Lev. 8. 12. & 24. 5-9. <sup>p</sup> 1 Cor. 3. 22. Exod. 23. 12. Deut. 5. 14. Ver. 23.

Ver. 21, 22. *No man, &c.*] *Nobody seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment; otherwise the new patch teareth the old cloth, and maketh a worse rent.*—Ver. 22. *Nobody putteth new wine into old leathern bottles, &c.* Campbell.

Ver. 26. *In the days of Abiathar*] In the history, the priest from whom David received the shew-bread is called *Ahimelech*; and it is generally agreed that he was the high-priest, because Doeg accused him of inquiring of the Lord for David, (1 Sam. xxii. 10.) a thing which none but the priest, having on him the ephod, could do. If that be true, Ahimelech must have been the high-priest, because he himself confessed that he had often inquired of the Lord formerly without blame, ver. 15. accordingly Josephus calls him the high-priest several times. But to make this matter easy, Hammond supposes that *ἐν ἡμέραις* the phrase here used, should be translated, *before the days of Abiathar*, as *ἐπὶ τῆς μετομιεσίας*, Matth. i. 11. seems to signify *before the captivity*. Lightfoot thinks it should be translated, *In the days of Abiathar, the son of the high-priest*, as *τὸς Ἡλὶ* signifies *the son of Eli*, Luke, iii. 23. Whitby is of opinion, that *ἀρχιερεὺς*, in this passage, signifies *a chief-priest*, an eminent man of the order; which sense, it must be acknowledged, the word has often in Scripture. Grotius supposes that Abiathar, being a more celebrated person than his father, is mentioned rather than him. Possibly Abiathar was present when David came, whose request he might advise his father to grant: if so, it was abundantly proper to mention him in this affair. He is called *Abiathar the high-priest*, although when David applied to him he did not possess that dignity, it being common to denominate people in every part of their life, by such eminent offices as they have held in any part thereof. Perhaps it may illustrate the matter to observe, that Ahimelech, the father of Abiathar, was not slain with the priests of Nob: for though Saul threatened him and all his father's house with

death, (1 Sam. xxii. 16.) it is not said that he was killed. We are only told that Doeg fell upon the priests, and slew fourscore and five of them. Besides, had Ahimelech been slain, the high-priesthood would have been taken from his family, which it was not; for Solomon's deposition of Abiathar, Ahimelech's son, is declared to have been an accomplishment of the word of the Lord concerning the house of Eli. Till this period, therefore, Eli's descendants enjoyed the high-priesthood. But, what puts the matter beyond doubt, Ahimelech is said to have been high-priest in David's reign; 1 Chron. xviii. 16. where he is called the son of *Abiathar*, who was *high-priest*, being alive when David received the shew-bread. So our Lord says expressly. Probably, being old, he was incapable of officiating, which was the reason that his eldest son Ahimelech supplied his place, and inquired of the Lord for David. It is true, in the history of this affair, Ahimelech is called the son of Ahitub, (1 Sam. xxii. 20.) but everywhere else he is called *the son of Abiathar*. Most probably, Ahimelech's father had two names, which was no uncommon thing in those days. Respecting the shew-bread, &c. See the notes on Exod. xxv. 23-30.

Ver. 27, 28. *And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man*] The sabbath was contrived for the benefit and relief of man, being instituted in commemoration of the creation of the world finished in six days, and to perpetuate to latest ages the knowledge of this grand truth,—that the world was made by God,—in opposition both to atheism and idolatry. It was instituted also, in order that men, abstaining from all sorts of labour, but such as are necessary to the exercises of piety and charity, might have leisure for meditating on the works of creation, and that by these meditations they might acquire not only the knowledge of God, but a relish of spiritual and divine pleasures, flowing from the contemplation of God's attributes, from the exercise of the love of God, and from obedience to his commands.

was made for man, and not man for the sabbath :

28<sup>1</sup> Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

<sup>1</sup> Christ may permit it to be used for their good. Ch. 3. 4. Luke, 13. 16. John, 5. 9. & 9. 14.

mands. It is thus that men are prepared for entering into that *heavenly rest*, of which the earthly sabbath is an emblem: further, among the Israelites the sabbath was appointed to keep up the remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt, and for the comfort of their slaves and beasts; humanity to both being especially incumbent upon a people who had once groaned under the heaviest bondage. From all which it is evident, that to burden men, much more to hurt them, through the observation of the sabbath, is to act quite contrary to the design of God in appointing it. *Therefore*, says Christ, *the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath*; "Since the sabbath was instituted for the benefit of man, the observation of it in cases of *necessity*, may be dispensed with by any man whatever; but especially by ME, who am the Lawgiver of the Jewish commonwealth, and can make what alterations in its institutions I think fit." Our Lord insisted largely on this argument, drawn from the considerations of his own dignity, when he was persecuted for a pretended profanation of the sabbath, by the cure which he performed at Bethesda. See John, v. 16—30. and the note on Matth. xii. 8. Dr. Clarke explains the 27th verse thus: "Duties of a ritual nature were appointed only for the present use of man, to be subservient to the more convenient practice of the great duties of religion." Sermon iii. vol. 10. Instead of *Lord also of the sabbath*, we may read, *Lord even of the sabbath*.

*Inferences.*—The number of the apostles was not yet full; one place is left void for a future possessor; who can fail to expect that it is reserved for some eminent person?—and behold! *Matthew the publican* is the man! Wonderful choice of Christ! Those other disciples, whose calling is recorded, were from the fisher-boat; this from the receipt of custom: they were unlettered, this infamous. The condition was not itself sinful; but as the taxes which the Romans imposed on the Jews were odious, so the collectors, the farmers of them, were abominable; besides, it was hard to hold that feat, without oppression, without exaction: one who knew it thoroughly, branded it with those odious titles; (see Luke, xix. 8.) and yet, behold one of these publicans called to the family, to the apostleship of God! Who can despair, from the consciousness of his unworthiness, when he sees this instance of infinitely condescending grace?

The just man is the first accuser of himself. Whom have we here to blazon the shame of Matthew, but his own mouth? Matthew the *Evangelist* tells us of Matthew the *publican*. (See Matth. ix. 9.) His fellows call him *Levi*, as willing to cover with their finger the spot of his unpleasing profession, which himself will not smother, but publishes it to all the world, in a thankful recognition of the mercy that called him; liking well that his unworthiness should serve for a foil, to set off the glorious lustre of His grace by whom he was called.

It was not a more busy than profitable trade, that Mat-

thew abandoned, to follow Christ into poverty. He now contemned his heaps of cash, in comparison of that better treasure which he foresaw lay open in this happy attendance. If any commodity be valued of us as too dear to be parted with for Christ, we are more fit to be publicans than disciples. Our Saviour invites Matthew to a discipleship, Matthew invites him to a feast; the joy of his call makes him begin his abdication of the world in a banquet.

Here was not a more cheerful thankfulness in the inviter, than a gracious humility in the guest. The new servant invites his master, the publican his Saviour; and is honoured with so blessed a presence. I do not find where Jesus was ever invited to any table, and refused; if a Pharisee, if a publican invited him, he made no scruple to go; not for the pleasure of the dishes,—for what was that to *Him*, who began his work in a whole lent of days?—but (as it was his meat and drink to do the will of his Father) for the benefit which might arise from his improving conversation. If he sat with sinners, it was to convert them; if with converts, to confirm and instruct them; if with the poor, to feed them; if with the rich in substance, to make them richer in grace: at whose board did he ever sit, and left not his host a gainer? The poor bridegroom entertains him, and has his water-pots filled with wine; Simon the Pharisee entertains him, and has his table honoured with the public remission of a penitent sinner; Zaccheus entertains him, and salvation comes that day to his house, with the Author of it; Matthew is recompensed for his feast with an apostleship: and Martha and Mary, for theirs, besides divine instruction, receive their brother from the dead. O Saviour! whether thou entertainest us, or we entertain thee, in both of them is blessedness!

Where a publican is the feast-master, it is no wonder if the guests be publicans and sinners. Whether they came only out of the hope of that mercy which they saw their fellow had found, or whether Matthew invited them to be partakers of that plentiful grace whereof he had tasted, I inquire not; publicans and sinners will flock together; the one hateful for their trade, the other for their vicious life. Common contempt has wrought them to an unanimity, and sends them to seek mutual comfort in that society, which all others esteem abominable and contagious. Moderate correction humbles and shames the offender; whereas a cruel severity makes men desperate, and drives them to those courses whereby they are more dangerously infected. How many have gone into the prison faulty, and returned flagitious! If publicans were not sinners, they were not at all beholden to their neighbours.

What a table-full is here! the Son of God surrounded with publicans and sinners! O happy publicans and sinners, who have found out their Saviour! O merciful Saviour, who disdained not publicans and sinners! What sinner can fear to kneel before thee, when he sees publicans and sinners sit with thee! Who can fear to be despised of thy meekness and mercy, which did not abhor

to

CHAP. III.

*Christ healeth the withered hand, and many other infirmities: rebuketh the unclean spirits: chooseth his twelve Apostles: convinceth those of blasphemy who charged him with casting out devils by Beelzebub; and sheweth who are his brother, sister, and mother.*

[Anno Domini 31.]

**A**ND <sup>a</sup> he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 12. 9—14. Luke, 6. 6—11. <sup>b</sup> Pf. 37. 32. & 32. 12. Luke, 13. 14. John, 9. 16. Luke, 11. 53, 54. & 20. 20. & 14. 1. <sup>c</sup> Dan. 6. 10. Phil. 1. 14. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 2. 27, 28. Luke, 13. 14—17. & 14. 3—6.

which had a withered hand.

2 <sup>b</sup> And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, <sup>c</sup> Stand forth.

4 And he saith unto them, <sup>d</sup> Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil?

to converse with the outcasts of men? Thou didst not despise the thief confessing upon the cross; nor the sinner washing thy feet with her tears; nor the Canaanite crying unto thee in the way, nor the blushing adulterers, nor the odious publican, nor the forswearing disciple; nor the persecutor of disciples, nor thine own executioners! how can we then be unwelcome to thee, if we come with tears in our eyes, faith in our hearts, restitution in our hands? O Saviour! our breasts are too often shut against thee; thy bosom is ever open to us. We are as great sinners as the consorts of these publicans;—Why should we despair of room at thy table?

The jaundice-eyed Pharisees behold evil in all the actions of Christ: where they should have admired his mercy, they cavil at his holiness. *They said to his disciples, (ver. 16.) How is it that your Master eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?* They durst not speak thus to the Master; whose answer they knew would soon have convinced them: this wind, they hoped, might shake the weak faith of the disciples. They speak where they may be most likely to do hurt. All the crew of satanical instruments have learned this craft of their old tutor in paradise. We cannot reverence that man whom we think unholy; Christ would have lost the hearts of his followers, if he had entertained the least suspicion of his impurity; which the murmur of these envious Pharisees would fain insinuate. “He cannot be worthy to be followed, who is unclean; he cannot be clean, who eateth with publicans and sinners.” Proud and foolish Pharisees! ye fast, while Christ eateth; ye fast in your houses, while Christ eateth in other men’s; ye fast with your own sect, while Christ feasts with sinners:—but if ye fast in pride, while Christ eats in humility; if ye fast at home, for merit or popularity, while Christ feeds with sinners, for compassion, for edification, for conversion; your fast is unclean, his feast is holy; ye shall have your portion with hypocrites, when those publicans and sinners shall be glorious.

When these censurers thought the disciples had offended, they speak not to them, but to their Master; *Why do thy disciples that which is not lawful?* Now, when they thought Christ had offended, they speak not to Him, but to the disciples. Thus, like true mischief-makers, they endeavour to make a breach in the family of Christ, by separating the one from the other. The quick eye of our Saviour, from whose piercing glance nothing can be hid, instantly discerns their fraud; and therefore he takes the words out of

the mouths of his disciples into his own. They had spoken of Christ to the disciples; Christ answers for the disciples concerning himself. *The whole need not a physician, but the sick.* According to the two qualities of pride, scorn, and self-sufficiency, these insolent Pharisees over-rated their own holiness, and contemned the noted unholiness of others; as if themselves were not tainted with secret sins, as if others could not be cleansed by the blood of a Saviour. The Searcher of hearts meets their arrogance, and finds those *self-righteous* sinful, those *sinners* just. The spiritual Physician finds the sickness of those sinners wholesome, the health of those Pharisees desperate; that wholesome, because it calls for the help of the physician; this desperate, because it thinks it needs it not. Every soul is sick, those most that feel it not; those that feel it complain; those that complain find a cure; those that feel it not, will find themselves dying ere they can wish to recover. O blessed Physician! by whose stripes we are healed; by whose death we live; happy they who are under thy hands, sick, as of sin, so of sorrow for sin. Sin has made us sick unto death; make thou us but as sick of our sins, and we shall assuredly find thee our successful Physician!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, No sooner had our Lord returned to Capernaum, from his journey through the villages of Galilee, than the rumour of it quickly spread through the place; and, eager to improve the precious opportunity of his presence, such multitudes assembled at the house, that there was no coming even to the door, so thick was the crowd. And a blessed sight it is to behold such numbers flocking to the Saviour.

1. He preached to them. Some might have thought the time, and the place, improper for a sermon. There were synagogues; what need of preaching in a house, or at the window?—Perhaps to teach us, that no time or place is improper to speak a word for God and for immortal souls.

2. During Christ’s preaching, or in some interval of his discourses, the friends of a poor paralytic man, solicitous to present his pitiable case before him, would fain have pressed through the crowd; but finding the attempt impracticable, they carried him up to the top of the house where Jesus was, and let down the sick man on his bed before him. (See the annotations.) *Note*; They who truly seek the Lord, will not be discouraged by any difficulties from coming to him.

3. Struck with such an instance of their faith, the compassionate

to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the

† Pf. Cg. 9. Eph. 4. 25. Deut. 32. 21. Judges, 10. 10.

passionate Jesus kindly accosts the afflicted patient, and seals the pardon of his sins, as the introduction to his cure. This being the cause of every sickness and disease, the bitterness of them is past, when the sin that occasioned them is forgiven.

4. The scribes and Pharisees, who were present, regarded it as arrant blasphemy in a mere man, as they regarded Jesus, to assume the incommunicable prerogative of God, in thus by his own authority presuming to forgive sin. He knew their secret reasonings, and in his answer gave them a proof of his Divinity, as the searcher of hearts. To shew them, therefore, that he possessed the power which he assumed, he bids the man arise and walk, and appeals to themselves for the conclusion, whether he who could thus sovereignly, in an instant, remove the effects of sin, could not as easily remit the guilt of it. *Note; The man Christ Jesus is also very God, able to forgive and to save to the uttermost every poor sinner that comes to him.*

5. The paralytic man received his cure the moment Jesus commanded him to arise; and, to the astonishment of all, he was so perfectly restored to health and strength, as to carry home the bed on which he had been brought. Such unprecedented cures extorted acknowledgments from the beholders in general, that the like was never seen before in Israel.

2dly, Having departed from the house to the sea-side, thither the multitude followed him, and he preached to them the Gospel. After which

1. He called Levi, or Matthew, a publican, who was sitting in his office receiving the customs, and such power accompanied his word, that instantly he left his gainful profession, and followed Jesus as his disciple. *Note; (1.) Nothing is too difficult for Almighty grace: if we follow its first sacred drawings, and improve the power which it imparts from time to time, we shall assuredly experience all the heights and depths of Christian experience. (2.) If Christ did not first seek us, we should never have sought him.*

2. Levi, in tender regard for his brother publicans, longed to make them acquainted with Jesus, whose grace he himself had so richly tasted, and therefore invited them to his house, where Jesus disdained not to sit among them; infamous in general as their characters were, he joined them not as an associate, but, as the great Physician of souls, visited them as diseased patients. *Note; They who have tasted the grace of the Redeemer themselves, cannot but be solicitous that their friends and neighbours should partake with them.*

3. Christ vindicates his conduct from the censorious cavils of the Pharisees. He despised not the poor sinners' souls; and as this was the very end of his coming, to call such to repentance, he was unaffected by the reviling of those who conceited themselves righteous, and yet were much farther from the kingdom of heaven than the very sinners whom they despised. *Note; (1.) The best deeds are often most basely misrepresented by the envenomed tongue of malice. (2.) None have ought to do with Christ*

but sin-sick souls, who feel themselves lost without him; the proud and self-righteous are left to perish in the delusions that they have chosen.

3dly, Christ, having justified his own conduct from the censure of Pharisaical pride, justifies also his disciples for not observing unnecessary austerities: and vindicates them for plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day to satisfy their hunger.

1. The disciples of John, who, after their master's example, fasted often; and the Pharisees, who placed great dependance on this bodily exercise, express their wonder that Jesus enjoined no such rigid rules on his disciples as they practised. So ready are those who fancy their own strictness meritorious, to censure all who come short of their standard of excellence. Christ answers their question, and vindicates his disciples; they were but beginners, and it was improper to put them on the more difficult exercises of self-denial, lest they should be discouraged thereby, and contract a disgust to the service. Besides, during his presence with them, like that of a newly-married bride, it became them to rejoice: it would be time enough to mourn and fast when he should be taken from them. Thus should we learn not to exact too much from young converts, and the lambs of the flock; and especially in fasting we should consider the great end and use of it, and that of itself it is no farther good, than these are obtained.

2. The Pharisees soon seized another occasion of offence, from the disciples plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day, as they passed through the fields.—Rigidly scrupulous, as many others like them still are, about the form of godliness, and severe in judging all who do not coincide with them; yet blind to the deep-rooted evil and abominations of their hearts. Christ vindicates his disciples by a precedent which the Pharisees will not dispute, and reasons with them by arguments that they cannot disprove. David had done what seemed a much more exceptionable thing, in eating the shew-bread; and Abiathar, who succeeded his father soon after as high-priest, had consented to it, because ceremonial observances must give way to the great law of charity and self-preservation. Besides, the very institution of the sabbath was designed for man's benefit, to give rest to his body, and time to spend in the immediate service of God, and in the care of his soul; and therefore does not require him to abstain from what is more immediately necessary for the support and preservation of his life; the provision for which was a law of nature, and subsisted previous to the express institution of the sabbath. The Messiah, therefore, who can best interpret his own laws, and is Lord of the sabbath, has an undoubted right to permit this liberty to his disciples, as such refreshment of their bodies will enable them more effectually to discharge the duties of the holy day. *Note; (1.) Our sabbaths should be our delight; and therefore must not, by unreasonable strictness, be made a burden. (2.) Though we are allowed to eat and drink, as shall best enable us for the service of the sabbath, it is a gross viola-*

'hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, <sup>2</sup> Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

6 ¶ <sup>1</sup> And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

7 But <sup>1</sup> Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from <sup>1</sup> Galilee followed him, and from <sup>1</sup> Judea,

8 And from Jerusalem, and from <sup>m</sup> Idumea,

and <sup>2</sup> from beyond Jordan; and they about <sup>o</sup> Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him <sup>2</sup> because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

10 For he had healed many; insomuch that they <sup>\*</sup> pressed upon him for <sup>3</sup> to touch him, as many as had <sup>1</sup> plagues.

11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, <sup>1</sup> fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

<sup>1</sup> Or blindness. If. 6. 9, 10. & 48. 18—20. & 48. 4. Zech. 7. 11, 12. <sup>2</sup> Cor. 4. 3, 4. <sup>3</sup> 1 Kings, 13. 6. Pf. 33. 9. <sup>4</sup> Mat. 12. 13, 14. & 22. 16. Eccl. 4. 4. Prov. 27. 4. Pf. 109. 4. John, 10. 32. <sup>5</sup> Mat. 10. 23. & 12. 15. & 4. 25. Gen. 49. 10. Exod. 7. 12. <sup>6</sup> Mat. 4. 12—16. Josh. 13. 29—31. & 19. 16—39. <sup>7</sup> Josh. xv. & 18. 28. <sup>8</sup> Gen. 36. 8, 31. Num. 34. 3. Ezek. xxxv. <sup>9</sup> Num. 32. 33—38. Josh. 13. 8—27. <sup>10</sup> Josh. 19. 28, 29. If. xxiii. Ezek. xxvi—xxviii. Pf. 45. 12. & 87. 4. <sup>11</sup> If. 42. 2. John, 6. 15. <sup>12</sup> Or raised. <sup>13</sup> Mat. 8. 15. & 9. 21. Acts, 5. 15. & 19. 12. <sup>14</sup> Or scourges. Heb. 12. 6. <sup>15</sup> Ch. 1. 24. & 5. 7. Luke, 4. 41. Acts, 16. 17.

tion of the day, by indulging our appetite to stupify our faculties, and render body and soul utterly unfit for the exercises of devotion.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 3. *And he said unto the man—Stand forth.*] Our Lord ordered the man to shew himself to the whole congregation, that the sight of his distress might move them to pity him, and that they might be the more sensibly struck with the miracle, when they saw the withered hand restored to its former dimensions and activity in an instant.

Ver. 5. *And when he had looked, &c.*] Our Saviour looked about upon all, in such a manner, as to shew both his indignation at their wickedness, and his grief for their impenitence. He knew that his arguments did not prevail with his enemies present, because they were resisting the conviction of their own minds; and he was both angry at their obstinacy, and grieved on account of the consequences of it; shewing these just affections of his righteous spirit by his looks, that if possible an impression might be made either on them, or on the spectators. He might in this likewise propose to teach us the just regulation of the passions and affections of our nature, which are not sinful in themselves; otherwise, he who was without sin could not have been subject to them. The evil of them lies in their being excited by wrong objects, or by right objects in an improper degree. "I am resolved," says Bishop Beveridge, "by the grace of God, so to be angry, as not to sin, and therefore to be angry at no thing but sin." See his Private Thoughts, 8vo. vol. i. p. 211. At the same time that Jesus testified his displeasure at the Pharisees, he comforted the infirm man; for he commanded him to stretch out his contracted hand, and with the command communicated power to obey. In an instant his hand was made sound as the other; so that he stretched it out immediately, in the sight of all present, <sup>1</sup> thus were eye-witnesses of the miracle. The Evan-

gelists say no more; they leave their readers to imagine the wonder and astonishment of the numerous spectators, and the joy of the man, who had recovered the use of so necessary a member.

Ver. 7, 8. *Jesus withdrew himself*] The immense multitude which followed our Lord, did not all come together purely out of curiosity; it was principle, no doubt, which moved many; but others came merely to be healed of their diseases and infirmities; and as our Lord's fame had spread, not only through the whole land of Israel, but into the neighbouring heathen countries, Idumea, Tyre, Sidon, Syria, and the rest, we may be sure that the diseased who came at this time to be cured by him were not a few; and that they with their attendants made a considerable part of the crowd; which was now so great, that, to avoid being trodden down by those who came to touch him, in order to be healed, Jesus was obliged to go into one of his disciples' boats; out of which, as on other occasions of a like nature, he no doubt taught them the doctrines of salvation; for it was his constant custom to join preaching with the working of miracles, the latter giving efficacy to the former. *Idumea*, ver. 8. comprehended not only the ancient possession of the Edomites, but the southern parts of Judea. After our Lord's time, the whole of Judea was sometimes called *Idumea* by the Greeks and Romans, who named even the Jews themselves *Idumæans*, from the country which they possessed. See Grotius.

Ver. 10. *They pressed upon him, &c.*] The phrase ἐπιπίπτειν αὐτῷ, strongly expresses this; they were ready to drive each other upon him! so that those nearest him could hardly stand, being pressed forward by those behind. The Syriac version joins the last clause of this verse to what follows; *as many as had—torments (or scourges) and unclean spirits, fell down, &c.* The word rendered *plagues*, is μώστιγας, literally, *scourges*. Instead of *thou art the Son of God*, at the end of the next verse, the famous Leicester manuscript reads, *Thou art God, the Son of God*;—Σὺ εἶ Ὁ Θεός, υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ. See Doddridge.

12 And <sup>1</sup> he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.

13 ¶ <sup>2</sup> And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto *him* whom he would: and they came unto him.

14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:

16 And <sup>3</sup> Simon he surnamed Peter;

17 And <sup>4</sup> James the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, "The sons of thunder:

18 And <sup>5</sup> Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and <sup>6</sup> Matthew, and <sup>7</sup> Thomas, and <sup>8</sup> James the *son* of Alphaeus, and <sup>9</sup> Thaddeus, and <sup>10</sup> Simon the Canaanite,

19 And <sup>11</sup> Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went <sup>12</sup> into an house.

20 ¶ And the multitude cometh together again, so that <sup>13</sup> they could not so much as eat bread.

21 And, when his <sup>14</sup> friends heard of *it*, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, <sup>15</sup> He is beside himself.

22 ¶ And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, <sup>16</sup> He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

23 And he called them unto *him*, and said unto them in <sup>17</sup> parables, <sup>18</sup> How can Satan cast out Satan?

24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

<sup>1</sup> Pf. 50. 16. Acts, 16. 18. Ch. 1. 25, 34. Luke, 4. 41. Mat. 12. 16. <sup>2</sup> Mat. 10. 1—4. Ch. 6. 7. Luke, 6. 12—16. & 9. 1. John, 15. 16. Acts, 1. 24. & 14. 23. Gal. 1. 1. This calling was prior to their mission mentioned Mat. x. <sup>3</sup> Mat. 16. 18. John, 1. 42. <sup>4</sup> Ch. 1. 19, 20. & 5. 37. & 9. 2. & 10. 35. & 14. 33. <sup>5</sup> If. 58. 1. Hof. 8. 1. <sup>6</sup> John, 1. 40, 43, 45. & 6. 5, 3. & 14. 8. <sup>7</sup> Mat. 9. 9. Ch. 2. 14. Luke, 5. 27. <sup>8</sup> John, 11. 16. & 20. 26—29. & 21. 2. Acts, 13. 1. <sup>9</sup> Ch. 6. 3. Acts, 15. 13. & 21. 18. Gal. 1. 29. & 2. 9. James, 1. 1. <sup>10</sup> Mat. 10. 3. Luke, 6. 15. John, 14. 22. Acts, 1. 13. Jude, 1. <sup>11</sup> Mat. 10. 4. Luke, 6. 15. Acts, 1. 13. <sup>12</sup> Luke, 6. 16. Ch. 14. 10, 11, 42—45. Mat. 26. 14—16, 46—50. & 27. 3—5. John, 6. 70, 71. & 12. 4—6. & 13. 18—30. & 18. 1—12. Acts, 1. 16—20. <sup>13</sup> Or *home*. <sup>14</sup> Ch. 6. 31. John, 4. 34. <sup>15</sup> Or *kinsmen*. John, 7. 3—10. <sup>16</sup> John, 10. 20. Acts, 26. 24. 2 Cor. 5. 13. 2 Kings, 9. 11. <sup>17</sup> Mat. 9. 34. & 10. 25. & 12. 24. Luke, 11. 15. John, 7. 20. & 8. 48, 52. & 10. 20. Pf. 22. 6. & 69. 20. <sup>18</sup> Pf. 49. 4. Mat. 13. 3; 10—53, &c. <sup>19</sup> Mat. 12. 25—30. Luke, 11. 17—23. What tends to ruin Satan's kingdom, can never be from him as the author.

*Ver. 12. He straitly charged them] He strictly, &c. πολλὰ ἐπετίμα αὐτοῖς; which seems to imply a strictness of charge, with some appearance of severity.*

*Ver. 14. And he ordained twelve,] See Luke, vi. 12, &c. Our Saviour ordained the twelve to be always with him, that they might learn from his mouth the doctrine which they were in due time to preach to the world;—that they might see his glory, John, i. 14. the transcendent glory of the virtues which adorned his human life, and might be witnesses to all the wonderful works which he should perform, (Acts, x. 39—41.) and by which his mission from God was to be clearly demonstrated. The twelve were thus to be qualified for supplying the people with that spiritual food which their teachers neglected to give them;—and that before and after their Master's death. Accordingly, when they had continued with Jesus as long as was necessary for this end, he sent them out by two and two into Judea on the important work of preparing the people for his reception, who was the true Shepherd. Hence he named them *Apostles*, that is, "Persons sent out." But their name was more particularly applicable to them, and their office was raised to its perfection, after Christ's ascension, when he sent them out into all the world with the doctrine of the Gospel, which he enabled them to preach by inspiration; giving them power at the same time to confirm it by the most astonishing miracles. That this was the nature of the new dignity which Jesus now*

conferred on the twelve disciples, is evident from John, xx. 21. where we find him confirming them in the apostolical office; *as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.* "I send you upon the same errand, and with the same authority: "I send you to reveal the will of God for the salvation of men; and I bestow on you both the gift of tongues, and the power of working miracles, that you may be able to preach the doctrine of salvation in every country, and to confirm it as divine, in opposition to all gain-sayers." After their election, the twelve accompanied Jesus constantly, lived with him on one common stock as his family, and never departed from him, unless by his express appointment.

*Ver. 21. For they said, He is beside himself.] For they said, He fainted away.* So the version of 1729. Dr. Macknight observes, that most translators render this verse as we do; but the meaning which they give is false, and such as suggests a very unbecoming idea of our Lord, who on no other occasion behaved so as to give his friends room to suspect that he was mad. The original runs thus; *καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ παρ' αὐτῶν, ἐξέλιθον κρατῆσαι αὐτόν.* "Ἐλεγον γὰρ. "Οτι ἐξέστη. *They that were with him, namely, in the house, (ver. 19.) ἀκούσαντες, bearing, viz. the noise which the mob made at the door, they went out, κρατῆσαι αὐτόν, to restrain, or quell,—not Jesus, for he was in the house, (ver. 19.) But the multitude, or mob, [αὐτοῦ, ἢ, viz. οὗτος,] the multitude, either by dispersing them, or keeping them*

26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

27 No man can ° enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house.

28 <sup>p</sup> Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

° If. 49. 24—26. Mat. 12. 29. Luke, 11. 21. Eph. 6. 12. John, 16. 11. 1 John, 3. 8. Gen. 3. 15. <sup>p</sup> Mat. 12. 31, 32. Luke, 12. 10. 1 Sam. 2. 25. Mat. 11. 19. & 13. 55. John, 7. 12, 15. Heb. 6. 4—8. & 10. 26—31. 1 John, 5. 16. 2 Thes. 1. 9. <sup>q</sup> Ver. 22. Mat. 9. 34. & 10. 25. & 12. 24. Luke, 11. 15. John, 7. 20. & 8. 48, 52. & 10. 20. <sup>r</sup> Mat. 12. 46—50. Luke, 8. 19—21. <sup>s</sup> Mat. 13. 55. Ch. 6. 3. John, 7. 3, 5. with Deut. 33. 9.

29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

30 <sup>q</sup> Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

31 ¶ <sup>r</sup> There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

32 And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, <sup>s</sup> thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

them out; for they said *εξερν*, (viz. *οχλος*) the multitude or mob is mad. This sense the verb *κρατω* has without dispute, Rev. vii. 1. where we read, *κρατηντας τις τεσσαρας ανεμους*,—holding, detaining, restraining the four winds of the earth. Dr. Doddridge renders the words, *he is transported too far*. One can hardly think, says he, that Christ's friends would speak of him so contemptibly and impiously as our version represents; and if *that sense* must necessarily be retained, it would be much more decent to render the clause, "It (that is, the multitude, mentioned in the verse) is mad, thus unreasonably to break in upon him." But 2 Cor. v. 13. is the only passage in the New Testament where the word has this signification: it generally signifies to be greatly transported; or as we express it, in a word derived from this, to be thrown into an *exstasy*. See Ch. ii. 12. v. 42. vi. 51. Luke, viii. 56. Acts, ii. 7, 12. xii. 16. And though the LXX sometimes use it for fainting away, as in Gen. xlv. 26. Josh. ii. 11. Isai. vii. 2. I do not find that it ever signifies *that faintness* which arises from excess of labour, or want of food: but our Lord's attendants here seem to have feared, lest his zeal and the present fervency of his spirit should have been injurious to his health.

Ver. 27. The strong man] The strong one; Satan rightly so called, from his power in the hearts of men. Heylin.

Ver. 28. Blasphemies—blaspheme] Or revilings—revile.

Ver. 29. Is in danger of] Is liable to.

Inferences.—There is something peculiarly beautiful in the account which St. Mark gives us of our Lord's indignation in ver. 5. Even his anger was compassionate; he was angry, and yet grieved; angry at the sin, grieved for the sinner. Even when we, through our fatal obstinacy and hardness of heart, give him the justest cause for anger, yet at the same time is he afflicted for us; more pitiful and compassionate towards us, more anxious and earnest for our welfare and recovery, than the shepherd for his lost and wandering sheep; than the father for his prodigal and abandoned son. Our hardness of heart very justly excites his anger; our condemnation and destruction consequent upon this perverseness, raise in his heart the tenderest concern.

How much should this caution us, not to abuse his compassion and mercy, lest he be at length angry indeed, and utterly turn away his face in wrathful indignation from us! how much, on the contrary, should it prevent despair, and incline us to hasten to his feet, when we know that we have given him just cause of anger!—To our comfort recollecting, that though he be angry, yet he is also grieved at our offences, and willing to receive us, when, humbled in heart, we return unto him.

Our Lord's example also in this respect shews us, how our zeal in his cause should be moderated; teaching us to be angry at, and express our resentment solely against the sin, while we grieve for the sinner; truly sorry for that hardness of heart, which must involve those in destruction who resist all the motions of grace, all the offers of Christ; and who, like the Pharisees, when fully convinced, will yet contradict the evidence of their senses; will yet deny the Lord that bought them, and through base and malevolent principles oppose the Gospel of light and love. Therefore, worthy of all our observance is that resolution of Bishop Beveridge quoted in the note on the verse now under our notice: "For oh, what a sedate and contented spirit, says the good man, will this resolution breathe in me! how easy and quiet shall I be under all circumstances! Whilst others are peevish and fretful, and torment themselves with every petty trifle which doth but cross their inclinations, or seem to be injurious to them, or fall into the other extreme of a Stoical insensibility, I shall, by this resolution, maintain a medium betwixt both; and possess my soul in peace and patience."

When we consider how much the church in all ages has been indebted to the labours of the Apostles, and how much we ourselves owe to them, we shall see great reason for thankfulness to our wise and gracious Master, who was pleased to assign this work to his servants, and so eminently to qualify them for it. It is observable, that before he sent them forth, he chose them to be with him, in a more constant attendance on his person and ministry. May all who succeed them as preachers of the Gospel, be such as have intimately known Christ themselves, and have been accustomed to spiritual converse with him! that so they may with the greater ability recommend him to others.

33 And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?

34 And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my

mother and my brethren!

35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

<sup>1</sup> Luke, 8. 21. Mat. 12. 49, 50. Song, 3. 11. & 4. 8—10. & 5. 2. Pf. 22. 22. Heb. 2. 11, 12. Rom. 8. 29. Mat. 25. 40, 45. Joh. 15. 14.

All ecclesiastical functions are denoted by *preaching*, because this is a principal function of bishops and pastors; and because it is by means of the word, and of instruction, that the kingdom of God is spread and established. How then shall they presume to call themselves ministers of Christ, who either wholly omit, or perform in the most neglectful manner, this important duty!

How terrible, yet adorable is the judgment of God, who sometimes calls to the ministry one, who, he foreknows, will make it an occasion of his damnation! ver. 19. One of the advantages which God draws from the perfidiousness of one of the twelve Apostles is, to prevent the scandal of wicked ministers in the church, at which the weak are apt to be troubled.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We see Christ dispensing his miraculous cures.

1. In the synagogue, on the sabbath-day, he healed a man who had a withered hand. He knew the malignity of his enemies, and that from such a deed of mercy they would seek to raise an accusation against him as a sabbath-breaker. He therefore first put a question to them for their determination, whether it was lawful on the sabbath day to do an act of mercy, or to do evil by neglecting it? to contribute to man's health and ease, or to let him languish, perhaps die, for want of assistance? The question answered itself; but they resolved not to admit the conviction, and in sullen silence held their peace. With indignation looking round upon them, grieved and displeased at their wilful obstinacy and hardness of heart, Jesus will not suffer their malevolence to prevent his works of grace; therefore in the face of the congregation he bids the lame man stretch out his hand, and instantly it was restored to perfect strength and soundness. *Note*; (1.) Deeds of mercy and charity are ever pleasing to God, and no day unseasonable for them. (2.) They who are obstinate in error and unbelief, will be convinced by no arguments. (3.) Jesus looks still with indignation upon the hard-hearted sinner; and if he do not now tremble under his frowns, he must quickly be consumed under his wrath. (4.) It is a grief to the Saviour, and all who are his people, when they behold men wilfully sinning against their own mercies. (5.) If people will be offended at our well-doing, we must not be concerned about their censures.

2. By the sea-side, whither he withdrew to shelter himself from the malice of his exasperated foes, who were now consulting about his destruction, he liberally dispensed his cures to the multitudes who resorted to him for healing from all the regions round about; till at last he was constrained to go into a boat, and put off a little from the shore, such crowds of diseased persons thronging upon him, in the confidence that could they but touch him, it would be sufficient to heal them of the most inveterate

plagues. Even the devils, who dwelt in many whose bodies they had possessed, no sooner saw him, than they were forced to prostrate themselves before him, confess his divine power and Godhead, and own him as the Messiah. But to avoid the least appearance of receiving a testimony from them of his mission and character, lest his enemies should suggest that there was a confederacy between him and them, he sealed up their lips in silence, and left his own works to speak his glory, enjoining the same silence on all whom he had healed. *Note*; (1.) It is grievous to think, that men should ever deny that Divinity of our Lord, which even devils confessed. (2.) We never should seek the applause of men; it is enough that our works testify for us.

2dly, We have,

1. The ordination of the twelve Apostles. Going up into a mountain, he called to him whom he would from among his professed disciples, and they immediately came to him. Twelve of them he selected to be his constant attendants, to be witnesses of his doctrine, life, and miracles, and to preach his Gospel. Their names we have had before; but St. Mark particularly mentions the title given to the sons of Zebedee: they were called *Boanerges*, sons of thunder; either from the loudness of their voice, the vehemence of their address, or the powerful energy which should accompany their preaching. St. John, whose epistles breathe nothing but love, was one of them; and it would seem thereby to be intimated, that nothing acts so powerfully and forcibly upon the sinner's heart, as the doctrines of the rich love and free grace of God in Jesus Christ. These twelve the Lord was pleased to invest with miraculous powers to heal sicknesses, and cast out devils, in confirmation of the doctrines that they were to teach. And having thus appointed them their office, Christ retired with them into a house for refreshment; and they henceforward attended him as his peculiar family, and continued in the greatest intimacy with him during his abode upon earth.

2. No sooner was he known to be in the house at Capernaum, than the multitude assembled, eager to hear him; and though he and his disciples had scarcely time for necessary refreshment, yet he is ready to instruct them. Such incessant labours, without respite, excited the concern of some of his friends, who could not help thinking his zeal carried him too far, and that he would *faint* with fatigue and want of repose. They came therefore to persuade him to desist for a while, lest he should impair his health by such uninterrupted toils. Perhaps some might think his intellects disturbed, and would fain constrain him to come in and rest himself. *Note*; (1.) Faithful ministers will sometimes find as great trials from the mistaken affection of their friends, as from the avowed opposition of their enemies. (2.) Fervent zeal

CHAP. IV.

*The parable of the sower, and the meaning thereof. We must communicate the light of our knowledge to others. The parable of the seed growing secretly, and of the mustard-seed. Christ filleth the temple on the sea.*

[Anno Domini 30.]

AND he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

2 And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,

3 Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.

9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 ¶ And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.

\* Mat. 13. 11—23. Luke 8. 4—15. Luke, 5. 3. Mat. 13. 2. Mat. xiii. & 12. 43—45. & 18. 23—31. & 20. 1—15. & 21. 28—44. & 22. 1—14. & 24. 43—51. & 25. 1—10. Luke, xiii—xix. Christ is the sower; his gospel truths the seed; careless hearers the way side; Satan and his agents the fowls; professors affected, but not changed in heart, the stony ground; trouble and persecution the scorching sun; carnal cares the thorns; renewed hearts the good ground; their different degrees of grace and good work, their fruit. Mat. 11. 15. & 13. 9. Luke, 8. 8. & 9. 44. If. 55. 3. El. 50. 7. Rev. 2. 7, 11, 17, 29. & 3. 6, 13, 22. Mat. 13. 1—10. Luke, 9. 18. Prov. 4. 7. & 2. 1—7. & 13. 20.

zeal is often branded with madness by those who never felt the love of immortal souls; but if we be beside ourselves, it is to God, 2 Cor. v. 13.

3dly, That he did cast out devils from them that were possessed, was evident. To evade the force of the miracles therefore, we have,

1. The cavil raised by the scribes and Pharisees who came down from Jerusalem. They pretended that he was in compact with Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, and derived this power from him.

2. Christ confutes their suggestion. It was as absurd and self-contradictory to suppose, that Satan would cast out Satan, to confirm doctrines directly tending to destroy his power over the souls of men, as to suppose that a kingdom, or a house, divided against itself, can stand, or be established by intestine factions and civil wars. The power which Jesus exerted over the fiends of darkness was like that, which the conqueror exercises over the vanquished, when he enters the fortress, binds the prisoner, and spoils his substance: Satan never would quit his hold, unless compelled. Evident therefore it was, that Christ came not as his associate, but as his destroyer. See this subject fully considered in the critical notes on this chapter, and on Matth. xii. 31, 32.

4thly, While he was thus employed in instructing the simple-hearted in the ways of salvation, and in reproving the self-righteous Pharisees, those greatest enemies of Christ and vital religion,—his mother and kinsmen drew near to the congregation: and though the crowd sat so thick around him that they could have no immediate access to him, they conveyed to him, by some of the multitude, their desire to speak with him: but he was too well

employed to be diverted from his sacred function; and therefore, instead of paying any regard to his mother or brethren in this case, he turned to those around him, professing for them a regard like that due to a mother or brethren, and declaring those to be his nearest and dearest relations who truly believed, and heartily obeyed the revealed will of God. Note; (1.) How great is the folly, as well as idolatry of the Romish church in worshipping the virgin, as if she could command her Son now that he is in heaven, when even in the days of his flesh she was judged so unfit to advise him, though he certainly omitted no acts of filial duty towards her! (2.) When we are engaged in the work of Jesus, and in the way of duty, nothing must divert us from the service.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 4. Fowls] Or, Birds. The words τὰ οὐρανόθεν of the air, are not in most manuscripts.

Ver. 5. Stony ground,] Or, Rocky ground.

Ver. 10. And when he was alone,] Many writers of harmonies, thinking this inconsistent with the acknowledged circumstances of the history, have supposed, that the interpretation of the parable was not given now, but on some other occasion, though, for the sake of perspicuity, it is related together with the parable; yet the nature of the thing, as well as the testimony of St. Matthew, ch. xiii. 10. prove sufficiently, that the question which occasioned this interpretation was put immediately after the parable was delivered; for the question took its rise from the concluding words of the parable, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear; which were no sooner pronounced, than the disciples came from their several stations in the vessel, and asked.

11 And he said unto them, ' Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them <sup>s</sup> that are without, all *these* things are done in parables:

12 <sup>h</sup> That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them.

13 And he said unto them, <sup>i</sup> Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

14 ¶ <sup>k</sup> The sower soweth the word.

15 And these are <sup>l</sup> they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, <sup>m</sup> Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

<sup>f</sup> Mat. 13. 11. & 11. 25. & 16. 17. 2 Cor. 4. 6. 1 Cor. 1. 18—31. & 2. 10—16. <sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. 5. 12. Col. 4. 5. 1 Thess. 4. 12. 1 Tim. 3. 7.  
<sup>h</sup> Mat. 13. 14, 15. Luke, 8. 10. John, 12. 37—41. Acts, 28. 25—27. Rom. 11. 8. with 11. 6. 9, 10. Jer. 5. 21. 11. 44. 18. <sup>i</sup> 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2.  
 Heb. 5. 12, 13. Mat. 15. 16. & 16. 8, 9. 2 Cor. 13. 5. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 13. 37. Ch. 1. 14. Luke, 8. 1. Eph. 3. 8. 1 Peter, 1. 23, 25. <sup>l</sup> 11. 6, 9, 10.  
 & 53. 1. Luke, 8. 12. Mat. 20. 16. & 22. 14. <sup>m</sup> Job, 1. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 8. 2 Cor. 2. 11. & 4. 3, 4.

asked the reason why he spake in parables, since he desired his hearers to understand what he said? To remove this difficulty, therefore, we may suppose, that in addressing Jesus the disciples spake with such a tone of voice as they used in conversation, and that Jesus answered in the same key; so that the people on the shore not hearing distinctly what passed, Jesus and his disciples were to all intents and purposes *alone*; or after finishing the parable he might, as on former occasions of this kind, (see Luke, v. 1—3.) order his disciples, to thrust out a little further from the land, that the people might have time to consider what they had heard; and the disciples, embracing this opportunity, might speak to him in private concerning the manner of his preaching. Either of these suppositions seems fully to come up to the import of St. Mark's phrase; which, however, some would render, *and when he was in private, they that were about him, or his disciples, with the twelve, &c.* See Luke, ix. 18.

Ver. 11, 12. Unto them that were without] Τῶς ἔξω, the people out of the vessel,—the multitude on the shore. See ἔξω, used in a similar sense in the history of Peter's denial of his Master, Matth. xxvi. 69. The following words at first sight seem to import, that Jesus spoke to the people obscurely, in parables, on purpose that they might not understand what he said, for fear they should have been converted and pardoned. Nevertheless it is evident from St. Mark himself, that this was not our Lord's meaning; for at the conclusion of the whole he says expressly, *with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to bear it*; but if Jesus spake to the people in parables *as they were able to bear*, his answer to the disciples, here recorded by St. Mark, who makes this observation on his preaching, cannot reasonably be understood in any sense inconsistent therewith. The true interpretation of the passage depends on a just view of St. Mark's scope, which our translators seem to have missed; for, remembering that in the parallel passage, Matth. xiii. 14. the words of Isaiah, vi. 9, 10. are quoted, and finding some of the phrases of that prophecy in St. Mark, they never doubted but Isaiah was cited there likewise, and interpreted the passage accordingly; for they gave the Greek *μῆποτε* the signification of the Hebrew *יֵד פֶּן*, in the prophecy, supposing it to be the corresponding word; and by that means made St. Mark contradict what he himself has told us in ver. 33. Nevertheless, if it shall be found that there is no citation

here, properly speaking, but only an allusion to a citation which our Lord made in the beginning of his discourse, and which a preceding historian had recorded, we may allow, that though *יֵד פֶּן* in the prophecy signifies *lest*, yet *μῆποτε*, in our Lord's answer recorded by St. Mark, may have a different, but equally natural, signification; viz. *If it be so,—if peradventure*, agreeably to its use in other passages. (See Luke, iii. 15. 2 Tim. ii. 25.) That Isaiah is not cited in the branch of Christ's answer recorded by St. Mark, is evident, because there is not the least hint of any citation. Besides, the slightest comparison of the passages themselves will shew them to be different. In the prophecy, God orders Isaiah to declare concerning the Jews in after-times, that they would hear the Messiah preach, but not understand him; and see his miracles, but not conceive a just idea of the power whereby they were performed; and to prophecy of them, that they would harden their hearts, and deafen their ears, and close their eyes, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and be converted and healed. In St. Matthew, our Lord assigns the completion of that prophecy as the reason why he spake to the people in parables. They were become so stupid and wicked, that they could not endure to hear the doctrines of the Gospel plainly preached to them. In St. Mark he added, that because this was the state of their minds, he wrapped up his doctrine in parables, with an intention that they might see as much of it as they were able to receive, but not perceive the offensive particulars, which would have made them reject both him and his doctrines; and that they might hear as much as they were able to hear, but not understand any thing to irritate them against him; and all with a design to promote their conversion and salvation. From our Lord's using two or three of the prophet's phrases in these verses, we cannot conclude that he cited him, or even that he used those phrases in the prophet's sense of them. He had cited him in the beginning of his discourse, and therefore, though he affixed a different sense to his words, he might use them by way of allusion, to insinuate that it was the wickedness of the Jews, predicted by Isaiah, which had rendered this kind of teaching the only probable method of converting them. Upon the whole, the expressions ascribed to Jesus in St. Mark's Gospel are by no means the same with those found in St. Matthew; but they contain an additional sentiment on the

16 And these are <sup>a</sup> they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

17 And <sup>b</sup> have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

18 And <sup>c</sup> these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word;

19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

20 And <sup>d</sup> these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirty fold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

21 ¶ And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?

22 <sup>e</sup> For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret but that it should come abroad.

23 <sup>f</sup> If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

24 And he said unto them, <sup>g</sup> Take heed what ye hear. <sup>h</sup> With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.

25 <sup>i</sup> For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

26 And he said, So is the <sup>j</sup> kingdom of God, as if a man should cast <sup>k</sup> seed into the ground;

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 13. 20, 21. Luke, 8. 13. If. 58. 2. Ezek. 33. 31, 32. Ch. 6. 20. John, 5. 33. Acts, 8. 13. <sup>b</sup> Ver. 5. John, 15. 2—5. Job, 27. 10. 1 Tim. 1. 15. & 4. 10. Gal. 6. 12. Mat. 11. 6. Soag, 1. 5, 6. with Job, 19. 28. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 13. 22. Luke, 8. 14. Mar. 19. 23. Luk. 21. 34. Prov. 23. 5. 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. 17. Jer. 4. 3. <sup>d</sup> Luke, 8. 15. John, 15. 4, 5. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Rom. 7. 4. Gal. 5. 22, 23. 2 Peter, 1. 4—9. Col. 1. 6—11. & 2. 2. with Gen. 26. 12. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 5. 15. Luke, 8. 16. & 11. 33. & 19. 13. 1 Cor. 12. 7. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 10. 26, 27. Luke, 12. 2, 3. Acts, 4. 20. 1 John, 1. 1—3. Job, 12. 22. & 6. 10. 1st. 40. 9, 10. <sup>g</sup> Deut. 29. 4. See ver. 9. <sup>h</sup> Acts, 17. 11. 1 John, 4. 1. Luke, 9. 44. Prov. 10. 27. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 7. 2. Luke, 6. 38. 2 Cor. 9. 6. <sup>j</sup> Mat. 13. 12. & 25. 29. Luke, 8. 18. & 19. 26. John, 15. 2. Rev. 22. 12. Ezek. 40. 16, 17. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 3. 2. & 4. 17. & 13. 24—52. <sup>l</sup> Ch. 1. 14. Luke, 8. 1. 1 Pet. 1. 23, 25. Ver. 14. or 1 John, 3. 9. & 5. 18.

the same subject, by way of further illustration. It is true, Christ's teaching the Gospel by parables, placed in this light, appears to have been a favour, rather than a judicial stroke; notwithstanding it appears from our Lord's own words, that it was of the latter kind; but the answer is, that this manner of teaching, without doubt, implied the highest blame in the Jews, whose wickedness had rendered it necessary, and conveyed an idea of punishment on the part of Christ, who for their wickedness deprived them of better means of instruction; so that it was really a punishment: at the same time it was a favour likewise, as it was a less punishment than they deserved, and a punishment in order to reclaim them. I acknowledge, that if our Lord had not spoken in answer to the disciples, who desired to know the reason of his conduct, what he said on this occasion might have been compared with other texts; in which, according to the genius of the Hebrew language, the words lead us to think of the intention of the agent, while in the mean time nothing but the effect of his action is described. See Matth. x. 34, 35. Nevertheless, the circumstances of the passage under consideration forbid this method of interpretation. To conclude, this sense appears to me for another reason much the most probable, because when our Lord taught men, he never did it but with a view to instruct them, and to promote their salvation; so far was he from forming his discourses darkly, on purpose to keep them in ignorance, and hinder their conversion. For it is beyond the power of the most captious disputant to deny, that the great end of all Christ's labours was the illumination, conversion, and salvation of

mankind. Instead of *done in parables*, we may read, *delivered in parables*.

Ver. 21, 22. *Is a candle brought, &c. candlestick?*] *Is a lamp, &c.—stand.* Campbell. When Jesus had ended his interpretation of the parable of the sower, he did not direct his discourse to the people, but continued speaking to the apostles, shewing them, by the similitude of a lighted lamp, the use that they were to make of this, and of all the instructions which he should give them. As lamps are kindled to give light unto those who are in a house; so the understandings of the apostles were illuminated, that they might fill the world with the light of truth. He told them further, that though some of the doctrines of the Gospel were then concealed from the people, on account of their prejudices, he had revealed them to his apostles, that they might all in due time be preached openly and plainly through the world; for which reason it became his apostles, to whom God had given both a capacity and an opportunity of hearing these doctrines, to listen to them with attention.

Ver. 24. *With what measure, &c.*] The sense is, "God will proportion his lights to the measure of our docility:" a momentous truth! to which we can never sufficiently attend.

Ver. 26—29. *So is the kingdom of God;*] In this parable we are informed, that as the husbandman does not, by any efficacy of his own, cause the seed to grow, but leaves it to be nourished by the soil and sun; so Jesus and his apostles, having taught men the doctrines of true religion, were not by any miraculous force to constrain their wills; far

27 And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should <sup>b</sup> spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

29 But <sup>c</sup> when the fruit is <sup>\*</sup> brought forth, immediately <sup>d</sup> he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

30 ¶ And he said, <sup>e</sup> Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

31 *It is* like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that are in the earth:

32 But when it is sown, it <sup>f</sup> groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

33 <sup>g</sup> And with many such parables spake

he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.

34 But <sup>h</sup> without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

35 ¶ <sup>i</sup> And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him <sup>\*</sup> even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

37 <sup>k</sup> And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, <sup>l</sup> asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, <sup>m</sup> Master, carest thou not that we perish?

39 And he arose, and <sup>n</sup> rebuked the wind,

<sup>b</sup> Pf. 1. 3. & 92. 13, 14. Prov. 4. 18. Job, 17. 9. 2 Pet. 3. 18. 2 Cor. 3. 18. & 4. 16. <sup>c</sup> Eph. 4. 13. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. <sup>\*</sup> Or ripe. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 13. 30, 39. If. 5. 1, 2. & 51. 11. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 13. 31, 32. If. 2. 2, 3. Nicaia, 4. 1, 2. Luke, 13. 18, 19. Pf. 72. 16—19 & 22. 27—31. & lxvii. lxxvii. xlv. xlvii. <sup>f</sup> Gen. 22. 17, 18. If. xxxv. xlix. liv. lv. lx. xi. Zech. 2. 11. & 8. 20—23. & xiv. Mal. 1. 11. Mat. 8. 11. & 28. 19, 20. Ch. 16. 15. Acts, ii.—xix. Rom. xi. Rev. 11. 15. Pf. 80. 8—11. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 13. 34, 35. 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2. Heb. 5. 11, 12. John, 16. 12. <sup>h</sup> See ver. 11. Luke, 24. 27, 45. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 8. 18, 23. Luke, 8. 22. Ch. 3. 9. If. 42. 4. <sup>k</sup> In the ship from which he had taught. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 8. 24—27. Luke, 8. 23—25. <sup>m</sup> John, 11. 14, 15. Pf. 44. 22, 23. & 10. 1. & 22. 2. If. 45. 15. <sup>n</sup> Mat. 23. 8—10. John, 20. 17. 2 Chr. 24. 11. & 20. 12. Pf. 6. 3, 4. & 69. 1, 2. & 130. 1, 2. If. 63. 15. <sup>\*</sup> Pf. 29. 10. & 93. 4. & 104. 7. & 107. 28, 29. & 102. 13. Exod. 14. 21.

far less were they by the terrors of fire and sword to interpose visibly for the furthering thereof; but would suffer it to spread by the secret influences of the Spirit, till at length it should obtain its full effect in faithful souls. Moreover, as the husbandman cannot, by the most diligent observation, perceive the corn in his field extending its dimensions as it grows, so the ministers of Christ cannot see the operations of the Gospel upon the minds of men. The effects, however, of its operation, when these are produced, they can discern just as the husbandman can discern when the corn is fully grown, and fit for reaping. In the mean time, the design of the parable is not to lead the ministers of Christ to imagine that religion will flourish without due pains taken about it. It was formed to teach the Jews in particular, that neither the Messiah nor his servants would subdue men by the force of arms, as they supposed he would have done; and also to prevent the apostles from being dispirited, when they did not see immediate success following their labours. See Dr. Watts's *Philosophical Essays*, numb. ix. sect. 2. Instead of *when the fruit is brought forth*, ver. 29. we may read, *as soon as the grain is ripe*. See Campbell.

Ver. 32. *Greater than all herbs,*] The original means, *Larger than other plants of the pulse kind*.

Ver. 38. *In the hinder part of the ship,*] Or, *At the stern*.

Ver. 39. *He arose, and rebuked the wind,*] Nothing can be more grand and striking than the present miracle. "Amidst all the distress and confusion of the storm, the

"divine Master appears (according to Mr. Hervey's description) sedately rising from a gentle slumber; he sees the perplexity and horror of his companions without the least emotion or alarm. What composure in his mien! what dignity in his attitude! what majesty, sweetened with compassion, in his aspect! such as could arise from no other cause, than a conscious and undoubted certainty that not a soul of the crew should be lost, not a hair of their heads should perish, and that all this mighty uproar of nature should end in a demonstration of his mightier power, and a confirmation of his disciples' faith. He looks abroad into the mutinous sky, and the turbulent deep: he waves, with an authoritative air, his sacred hand, and adds the great commanding words, *Peace! be still!*

"Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar  
"stood rul'd.—

"The consternation of his disciples is turned into wonder, and their pangs of fear into ecstasies of joy. They acknowledge the omnipotence, and adore the goodness of Jesus. No one can help observing what majesty there is in our Lord's command, *Σιώπα, πεφίμωσο*. 'Tis admirable! 'tis inimitable! 'tis worthy of God! I think we may observe a peculiarly proper word addressed and adapted to each element; the first enjoining a cessation of the winds, the second a quiescence of the waves; silence in all that roared, composure in all that raged;

and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 And he said unto them, \* Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

\* If. 41. 10, 14. & 43. 1, 2. Phil. 4. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 7.

“as though (to give a short paraphrase on the grand injunction) it had been said, “Winds, be hushed! waves, be calm!” The effect on the disciples is described with all the force of imagination, and all the energy of diction. To represent in colours what the evangelical historian has left upon record, would be a subject fit for the immortal Raphael, and perhaps not to be equalled by his masterly pencil.” Compare the parallel passages, particularly ch. vi. 51.

*Inferences from the parable of the sower.*—When we consider that the seed in this parable signifies the word of God, according to our Saviour’s explanation, (ver. 14.) it may seem strange that any particle of such divine seed should prove fruitless. The word of God is the seed of universal nature; the seed whence all things sprung into existence: it made the world, and it supports it; and when this divine word, in itself so efficacious, is addressed to rational beings, it is so much their interest, as well as their duty, to comply with it, that it is at first sight astonishing how they can refuse obedience.

But here was the great misfortune; that freedom of will, which originally constituted our dignity above other parts of the creation, became, by our fall, our disgrace and our bane. That generous, voluntary obedience to which we were ordained, implying necessarily a possibility of disobedience, that fatal possibility proved our ruin: but though by mere nature we are now dead in trespasses and sins, God has in infinite love given his Son to die for us, and his Spirit to restore us to that divine image in which we were at first created, if we will yield to be saved by grace.

God now speaks to men by various ways; a principal one is that of preaching. God has given power and commandment to his ministers to declare his will, to publish his laws: they are intrusted with the divine seed of his word; and woe be to them, if they use it deceitfully; woe be to them if they mingle it with the tares of human traditions, or prostitute it to any worldly purposes! Such profanation of it may indeed sometimes be committed by ignorant or designing men; but the sacred Scriptures are happily in the hands of the laity, and it should be their care to search those Scriptures, and try if the doctrine that they hear be agreeable thereto; whether it be of God, or whether men speak of themselves.

While ministers faithfully do their duty, God speaks by their mouths. They are the sowers sent into the field, to scatter the good seed of his word: this is their part; that of the people is, to receive it through his grace, which is offered to all, with the proper dispositions, which can be judged of only by the fruit that it brings forth. The people will all find themselves described in this parable, which represents four sorts of hearers; and each man is concerned to judge himself to what class he belongs.

The first sort are compared to the *way-side*, the common road, upon which when the seed fell, the birds came, and

devoured it. Our Lord interprets this of those, who, hearing the word, understand it not; see Matth. xiii. 10. by which he means not that they are ignorant of the sense, but that they do not exercise their understanding about it. They do not mind; they do not consider it as the rule of their conduct. Their heads are like a highway, or common thoroughfare, in which nothing rests, but all passes out as it entered; they persevere in a wilful, stubborn ignorance, and all the tremendous truths of religion make no impression on them; like Gallio they care for none of these things, as if they had no part or concern in them.

Why then do they come to the places of divine worship? To what purpose do they enter those schools of wisdom?—Merely to comply with the custom, to follow the multitude, to pass away an hour or two, which would be burdensome at home; or perhaps to criticize on what they hear, and remark the preacher’s faults, instead of their own.

If I should add, that many come to places of worship to shew themselves, to make a wanton ostentation of their person and dress, to take out new lessons of vanity, to learn fashions and practise them; if I should say this, is it not true? and if it be true, is it not abominable? But fools make a mock at sin, and turn just rebukes into a jest. The preacher must be very cautious upon these subjects, who does not incur their ridicule. But this is a very serious matter, and we must renounce the name of Christians if we do not lay it to heart. Our Master, Christ, who was mildness itself, most dove-like mildness, changed his wonted indulgence into severity and indignation against those who profaned his temple. Though his general demeanor to transgressors was so meek and gentle, so condescending and familiar, that his adversaries reproached him as the friend of publicans and sinners; yet, when he found sinners polluting the holy place, his just zeal so far transported him, that he made a scourge of small cords, and drove them all out of the temple.

This uncommon indignation of Christ argues, that it is no small crime to abuse the house of God to any purposes different from, and, as they often prove, opposite to, those of its institution. It is *the house of prayer*; wherein we are to humble ourselves before God, to implore his mercy, and acknowledge his goodness; to learn his will, and celebrate his sacraments: and if any come thither for other ends, let them be warned by this admonition, and not presume for the future to approach God in his places of public worship but with such modesty, sobriety, and devout recollection of mind, as become the holy offices performed there.

The second sort of hearers are compared to *stony places*, (ver. 5.) of whom our Lord says, *These are they who hear the word, and immediately receive it with gladness; but have no root in themselves, &c.* (ver. 17.) Such are the second sort: they receive, they relish the word; they delight in it; they partly apply it to themselves, and partly reduce it to practice: but all proves superficial, and consequently vain;

41 And they<sup>p</sup> feared exceedingly, and said that even the wind and the sea obey him? one to another, What manner of man is this,

<sup>p</sup> Ch. 5. 33. Luke, 8. 25. Mat. 8. 27. Pf. 89. 9. & 65. 7. & 107. 29.

for they are as stony ground, in which the seed cannot take root. By this metaphor of *stones*, we may here understand bosom-sins, habitual vices, in which they indulge themselves; such as covetousness, or uncleanness, or sloth, or rank ill-nature, or some other reigning vice, which they will not do themselves the violence to surmount. Of this we find a remarkable instance in Herod; of whom it is said, that, "he revered John, knowing him to be a just and holy man; having reformed many things upon his re-monstrances, which he used to receive very graciously." This seemed a hopeful circumstance; for a prince, bred in the pride and luxury of courts, to become attentive to the austere Baptist, to hear gladly his mortifying lessons of penitence; and not only to hear, but begin to put them in practice,—for it is said that *he did many things*,—this was very promising, and one might expect from it some extraordinary reformation. But he had still a stony place in his heart: Herodias was there; and the good seed could not take root in it.—You know the sad event. So fallacious is that gladness which is often felt upon hearing the word; many are pleased with it, who never profit by it!

For as the soul of man was made for truth, it naturally takes delight in it; and while the truth does not directly oppose our favourite errors, we receive it with joy; we let it sprout and put forth leaves, and make a shew of reformation; but when it reaches the bosom-sin, the darling vice, which we will not part with, then it meets a *rock*; then it can make no farther progress; we shut our eyes against the light; we choose darkness and falsehood, because our deeds are evil. And therefore they deceive themselves, who, when they are touched and affected by a sermon, think that all is done, and that they have discharged their duty. Quite the contrary; nothing is done, if they stop here.

The *thorns* are the third obstacle mentioned, to the fertility of the good seed. This is explained at ver. 18, 19. When we speak of the *cares* of this world as sinful, there presently occur many objections to what is offered: "No man," it is said, "can live without care; and if any should, he would be justly blamed for his negligence: Six days shalt thou labour, saith God; and labour there relates to the mind, as well as the body; and the most general labour of the mind is *carefulness*. Wherein then does its sinfulness consist? or how can any man discharge the office of his calling without it?" To this we answer, that care to please God, and work out our salvation in the state to which he hath called us,—that is, *to do the business which God hath appointed us*,—is an indispensable duty; and it is not *care* in the general, but the *care of this world*, that is criminal; that is, care merely for the sake of this world, and exclusive of our regard to God; care, whereof worldly goods are the sole motive and end: such care, as we should not engage in, but for the temporal profit which we expect from it.

Morality consists not in the mere outward action, but in

the *motive* to it; that is, the reason why we do it; the end for which we perform it. The servant of God, and the servant of Mammon, may appear both alike careful and industrious; but from very different principles: the one fulfils the desires of his covetousness, while the other obeys the commands of God. As our motives, or principles of action, are of a secret nature, and commonly lie hid in the intricacies of the human heart, men very frequently deceive themselves in this matter, and mistake their worldly-mindedness for Christian industry. The frequency of this self-deceit is, as I suppose, the reason why our Lord adds to the *cares of this world*,—the *deceitfulness of riches*; and in other places warns us so earnestly, with a double caution, that we should take heed and beware of covetousness, because the temptation to it commonly solicits men under the disguise of duty, of frugality, of providing for their families, and fulfilling their vocation.

That we may not be deceived by *worldly care*, in this disguise of a virtuous diligence, our Lord has given us this character whereby to know it; that it *chokes the good seed of the word*, stops its influence, and hinders the due effect which it would have upon our lives. For instance, the word *faith, Love your neighbour as yourself*, and deal by him as you yourself would be dealt by: if this through divine grace take root in our hearts, it will produce a most amiable integrity, disinterestedness, and generosity in our dealings; but worldly cares come, and stifle this good seed, making men selfish, griping, disingenuous, and over-reaching. The *word* again commands, that we seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness in the first place, and depend securely upon divine Providence for our support. Hence the Christian industry is full of faith in God; sedulous to please him, and only him.—So intent upon duty, that it is indifferent to all beside; so confiding in the divine protection, that it is void of all care for itself; and rests in a perpetual inward peace, by reason of its habitual resignation to all the orders of Providence. A care of this world, on the contrary, is disquieting and vexatious; it seeks the world in the first place, as its principal affair; and where it predominates, true religion must be excluded; for true religion can never be an inferior or secondary pursuit: it must be the first, or none: it must root out the thorns, or be choked by them.

The *best* kind of soil on which the seed is said to have fallen, is *good ground*; which is interpreted to represent those, *who with an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience*. See Luke, viii. 15. To these happy auditors are assigned three properties, worthy of our notice and imitation: they *receive the word with an honest heart*;—they *keep the word* which they have heard; and—they *bring forth fruit with patience*: they are *sincere* in hearing, *faithful* in retaining, and *patient* in practising their duty inwardly and outwardly.

The first part of this character, namely, *sincerity in receiving the word*, is well exemplified and expressed by Cornelius, who was directed by a heavenly vision to send for

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Christ delivering the possessed of the legion of devils, they enter into the swine: he healeth the woman who had the bloody issue, and raiseth from death Jairus's daughter.

[Anno Domini 31.]

AND they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

Mat. 8. 28-34. Luke, 8. 26-40. John, 5. 8. Rom. 16. 20. Ch. 3. 27. 2 Peter, 2. 4. Jude, 6. Rev. 20. 1, 2. Luke, 8. 29. Ch. 9. 18, 20, 22.

St. Peter; and after having got together a small congregation of his friends and relations, he at their head thus addressed himself to the apostle for instruction: Now are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. So spoke that honest heart, which was rightly prepared to receive the word;—we are here present before God. A devout sense of the divine presence dispels all secular cares, recollects the attention, stills every faculty of the mind, and composes it into a religious silence. Such should be our disposition when we read the word of God in the Scriptures, or hear it faithfully dispensed by his ministers. We shall then feel its efficacy; for it will make a great impression on us; it will sink deep into our hearts; and taking root there, and being warmly cherished through divine grace by successive meditations, it will spring forth in holy purposes, with incessant desires to accomplish them; and, above all, in ardent longings to have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.

This is what we are to understand by the second property before mentioned of an honest heart, or good ground, namely, that it keeps the word. It suffers not itself to be dissipated in pleasures, distracted with cares, or engrossed by any sensual affection; but, attentive to the truth received, retains it as a sacred deposit, cultivates it (as was said) with assiduous meditation, and puts forth all its force to co-operate with it through grace in the production of holiness and virtue. Those who have their hearts thus disposed, are Christ's favourite auditors, and he has pronounced upon them a memorable benediction. See Luke, xi. 28.

The third and most essential quality of an honest heart, is, that it brings forth fruit with patience. This is the completion of its character, the perfection of its goodness and felicity. If, says our Lord, ye continue in my word,—then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free: then through the blood of the covenant you become the children of God, and endeared to Christ by every kind of relation. So he himself assures us, in those ever memorable words wherewith the third chapter of this Evangelist is closed: Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. Blessed therefore, eternally blessed, are all they that hear the word of God, and keep it, and perseveringly bring forth fruit with patience.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, For the convenience of being heard by the vast multitudes who attended him, our Lord again

2 And, when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had

returned to the sea-shore; and, entering into a boat, sat down and taught a great and attentive congregation, preaching to them the doctrines of truth under parables drawn from familiar objects. We have,

1. The parable of the sower, which represents the different effects of the gospel-word upon the hearts of men. Mat. xiii. 3., &c. He demands attention; for all who would understand must give diligence, and well consider what they hear. The parable itself was plain, but even the twelve were dull of apprehension, and understood it not; but when they were retired with the rest of the disciples, they desired of Jesus the explanation of it: to which he graciously condescends, yet as it were wondering withal at their wanting an explanation of what was so plain. Note; (1.) The human understanding is strangely dark in spiritual concerns: the plainest truths of God's word to the natural man are utterly unintelligible. (2.) The more we are acquainted with our own stupid ignorance in the things of God, till illuminated, the more thankful shall we be for divine teaching.

2. The explication that Christ gives is this: The seed is the word of God: himself, and all his faithful labourers, are the sowers. The hearers are the soil: many of them the word preached does not profit, not being mixed with faith. Some are careless and inattentive; the seed sown does not at all abide upon their hearts; Satan, by some vanity, amusement, or avocation, instantly snatches it away. Others for a moment hear it with joy, their passions are affected, but their hearts are unchanged; therefore, no sooner is the impression worn off, than they are like blasted corn which withers away. Some are so engrossed with the riches and cares of the world, the eager pursuits of its honours, pleasures, or esteem, that these, by degrees, eat out the life of their profession, carnalize their souls, and make them earthly, sensual. Thus, for the perishing trifles of time, they lose all the glories of eternity. But there are those, who, amid the general apostacy, with patient perseverance endure, and bring forth in their measure the gracious fruits of faith and holiness.

2dly, Our Lord proceeds to teach them under other parabolic representations.

1. By the use that we make of a candle when lighted up, Christ informs them what he justly expected of them, even to shine as lights in the world; communicating to others the truths which they in secret learned of him, and keeping back nothing of the whole counsel of God. Whatever gifts of nature or grace we enjoy, they are to be employed for God's glory and the good of mankind; and

been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces : neither could any *man* tame him.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Kings, 18. 28. 1 Peter, 5. 8. John, 8. 44.

not, through love of ease, or false shame, concealed or neglected. It is not enough that we walk in the light ourselves, we must let our light also shine before men.

2. He warns them of the danger of negligence in improving the means and mercies which they enjoyed. They are called upon to hear, and to take heed what they hear ; that the word may not be ineffective, nor they be deluded ; but by a careful use of their measure of the gift of grace to increase their store, God being ready to communicate more abundant knowledge to such attentive hearers, and to give farther assistances of spiritual light and strength to those who employ aright in the service of Christ and immortal souls the portion which they have received ; while he punishes the negligent and inattentive, by withdrawing from them the privileges wherewith he had favoured them.

3. He describes the progress of his Gospel in the world, and of the seed of divine grace in the heart, by the growth of corn, which, though unseen for a while, and covered with earth, shoots up, increases insensibly till the harvest, and then produces the ripe ear. Thus the ministry of Jesus at first was scarcely perceived, but the seed ; that he sowed afterwards sprang up, continues through his word and spirit still to grow, and shall shortly fill the face of the whole world with fruit. And so also in many a heart, where the seed of eternal life is sown by any minister of God, it grows without his care, when perhaps he is removed far away, or sleeps in death ; it is watered with the dew of heavenly influences ; and though the manner of the spirit's operation in the divine change that is wrought, is mysterious as the manner in which the corn vegetates, yet the effects are visible ; the soul is renewed day by day ; the seed of grace, in souls which perseveringly cleave to Jesus, from small beginnings, shoots upwards till the time of harvest, when the ripe corn is gathered in, and the faithful saints of God, matured for glory, enter their eternal rest. Lord, quicken the seed sown in our souls day by day !

4. Much to the same purpose as the former, is the parable of the grain of mustard-seed, and represents, (1.) The progress of the Gospel ; which, from the smallest beginnings of the ministry of a few poor fishermen, has spread through the earth, and shall in due time reach from pole to pole, when all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and his Christ. (2.) The work of grace upon the hearts of persevering believers. At first, like a grain of mustard-seed, it is scarcely perceptible ; but, increasing with the increase of God, the herb grows into a tree meet to be transplanted among the cedars of glorified saints in the paradise of God.

5. He added many other like parables, that by line upon line, in this familiar manner, he might communicate spiritual truths under material objects ; and without a parable spake he not unto them. They who desired to understand, might easily do it ; and where difficulties arose,

he was always ready, when in private, to explain them to the disciples ; while those who superficially heard, neglected and forgot the word preached, were justly left in their native blindness and ignorance.

3dly, No sooner had Christ finished his discourse, and dismissed the people, than he bids the disciples cross the lake, having work that calls him to the other side. Jesus was never weary of well-doing, neither should we.

1. The disciples, without hesitation, obey ; ready to follow their Master wherever he led them ; and accordingly they set sail in the same vessel which had been his pulpit, and a number of other boats accompanied them. For though the multitude departed, those whose hearts were affected by what they had heard, chose to cleave to the Lord, and follow him whithersoever he went, by land or by water. *Note* ; (1.) They who continue Christ's disciples indeed, will not leave or forsake him, whatever dangers may threaten. (2.) If Christ be with us, we may boldly launch forth ; his presence and blessing will be our support and comfort.

2. A dreadful and sudden storm brought them into the most imminent danger ; and, covered with waves, and full almost of water, the boat was ready to founder. *Note* ; The church, and every faithful saint in it, have at times been brought into perilous circumstances : nothing has kept either from sinking but this, that Christ was there.

3. He slept securely in the stern on a pillow, tired with the labours of the day : the storm, which drove the disciples to almost utter despair, seemed but to rock him faster to repose. *Note* ; When we are in our deepest distresses, Christ sometimes appears to disregard our danger, as if he slept, inattentive to our cries ; but he sees, he hears, and will be found to his faithful people a very present help in the time of trouble.

4. The disciples in a fright awake him with their cries ; *Master, carest thou not that we perish ?* art thou indifferent about our danger ; and wilt thou suffer us to be drowned ? Their application to him bespoke their faith ; but their address breathed the language of impatience and dishonourable fear.

5. The Lord, whom winds and waves obey, arose ; and at his commanding word, *Peace, be still*, the billows in a moment ceased to roar, the swelling sea subsided, the winds were hushed, not a breath of air dimpled the ocean, not a whisper broke the solemn silence. When the unruly passions are like *the troubled sea which cannot rest*, the voice of Jesus, heard by faith, subdues their violence, and calms their rage.—Under deep afflictions and temptations, when we are ready to abandon ourselves to despair, he silences our fears, and stills our griefs ; speaking that inward peace to the conscience, which in the midst of sorrows can make us rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

6. He rebukes their unbelieving fears. *Why are ye so fearful ?* so unnecessarily, so inordinately fearful ? How is it

6 But, when he saw Jesus afar off, ° he ran and worshipped him,

7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, 'What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of the most high God? ° I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not.

8 For he said unto him, <sup>h</sup> Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit.

9 And he asked him, What *is* thy name? And he answered, saying, My name *is* \* Legion: for we are many.

10 And † he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of <sup>i</sup> swine feeding.

12 \* And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13 And forthwith Jesus <sup>l</sup> gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd <sup>m</sup> ran violently down a steep place into the sea (they were about two thousand); and were choked in the sea.

14 ° And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And

they went out to see what it was that was done.

15 And they come to Jesus, and see him ° that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

16 And they that saw *it* told them how it befel to him that was possessed with the devil, and *also* concerning the swine.

17 <sup>p</sup> And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

18 And, when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil <sup>q</sup> prayed him that he might be with him.

19 Howbeit, Jesus suffered him not, but faith unto him, ' Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

20 And he departed, and began to publish in ‡ Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all *men* did marvel.

21 ¶ And, when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, ° much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea.

22 <sup>r</sup> And, behold, there cometh one of the

° Phil. 2. 10, 11. Pf. 72. 9. Acts, 16. 17. † Mat. 8. 29. Luke, 8. 28. Ch. 1. 24. ° 1 Kings, 22. 16. Mat. 26. 65. Acts, 19. 13.  
 † Ch. 1. 25. & 9. 25. \* About 6000 or 7000. † The chief devil. † Luke, 8. 32. Mat. 8. 30. Lev. 11. 7. Deut. 14. 8. If. 65. 4.  
 & 65. 3. † Rev. 12. 12. & 20. 1, 2. Job, 1. 11. & 2. 5. † Mat. 8. 32. Luke, 8. 32, 33. 1 Kings, 22. 22. Job, 1. 12. & 2. 6. Rev.  
 20. 7. † John, 8. 44. † Peter, 5. 3. † Mat. 8. 33. Luke, 8. 34—36. John, 10. 12, 13. ° If. 49. 24—26. † John, 3. 8. Rom. 16.  
 20. Luke, 8. 35, 36. Mat. 8. 34. † Deut. 5. 25. Luke, 8. 37. Mat. 8. 32. 1 Kings, 17. 18. Luke, 5. 8. Gen. 25. 34. Acts, 16. 39.  
 Job, 21. 14, 15. 1 Cor. 2. 14, 15. with Ver. 7. Ch. 1. 24. † Luke, 8. 38, 39. & 23. 42. Pf. 116. 12. & 10. 1. & 22. 19—22. † Pl. 50. 14.  
 John, 4. 29. Pf. ciii—cviii. xviii. cxvi. cxlv. If. 63. 7—13. & 38. 9—20. Jon. 2. 1—10. † A country on the east of the sea of Galilee.  
 † Mat. 9. 1. Luke, 8. 40. Ch. 1. 45. Gen. 49. 10. † Mat. 9. 18—25. Luke, 8. 41—56. & 13. 14. Acts, 13. 15.

that ye have no faith? not in exercise at least; though they had faith in him in general, in this particular their fears prevailed. How often do too many of us under our trials deserve the same rebuke?

7. The miracle filled the mariners with most reverential fear of the majesty in which Jesus now appeared; and with amazement they observed to each other, that he must be surely more than man whom stormy winds and raging waves so instantaneously obey.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 4. *Because, &c.*] For he had often been bound with fetters and chains, and had avenged his chains, and broken his fetters, and nobody could tame him. Respecting this miracle, see the notes on Matth. viii. 28, &c. and Luke, viii. 26, &c.

Ver. 5. *Crying—stones*] *Howling—flints.*  
 Ver. 7. *What have I, &c.*] *What hast thou to do with me?* Campbell.

Ver. 9, 10. *What is thy name?*] See Luke, viii. 32, 31.

Ver. 13. *Choked*] *Stifled.*

Ver. 15. *Was possessed*] *Had been possessed.*

Ver. 16. *How it befel, &c.*] *How it had befallen the demoniac.*

Ver. 18. *He that had been possessed, &c.*] *The late demoniac prayed, &c.*

Ver. 22. *There cometh one of the rulers—fairus*] The rulers of the synagogue were three persons chosen out of ten, who were obliged constantly to attend the public worship, over which they presided, and determined such disputes as happened in the synagogue. The synagogue over which this ruler presided was perhaps at Capernaum. Generally speaking, the rulers were Christ's bitterest enemies; yet there were some of them of a different character, John, xii. 42. In particular this ruler must have had a very favourable opinion of Jesus, and a high notion of his power, or he would not have applied to him for help.

rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him he fell at his feet,

23 And besought him greatly, saying, " My little daughter lieth at the point of death: <sup>x</sup> I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

24 And Jesus went with him; <sup>y</sup> and much people followed him, and thronged him.

25 ¶ And a certain woman, which had an <sup>z</sup> issue of blood twelve years,

26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was <sup>a</sup> nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and <sup>b</sup> touched his garment.

28 For she said, If I may touch but his

clothes, I shall be whole.

29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague.

30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that <sup>c</sup> virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seeest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

33 But the woman, <sup>d</sup> fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

34 And he said unto her, <sup>e</sup> Daughter, thy

<sup>u</sup> Ezek. 18. 4. Job, 30. 23. Heb. 9. 27. <sup>x</sup> Mat. 8. 15. John, 4. 47, 49, 50. Ch. 6. 5, 6. <sup>y</sup> With John, 4. 50. & 11. 6, 7. Mat. 8. 13. & 15. 28. Mat. 4. 23—25. & 8. 1. & 12. 13. & 15. 30. <sup>z</sup> Lev. 15. 25. John, 5. 5. Luke, 8. 43—48. <sup>a</sup> Jon. 1. 13. Pf. 108. 12. <sup>b</sup> Exod. 15. 26. Pf. 147. 3. Mal. 4. 2. 2 Kings, 13. 21. Ch. 6. 56. Acts, 5. 15. & 19. 12. with John, 14. 12. <sup>c</sup> Luke, 6. 19. & 5. 15. John, 1. 15. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 4. 41. Luke, 8. 47. Pf. 89. 7. Josh. 7. 19. Pf. 116. 12. & 66. 16. & 103. 2—5. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 15. 28. & 9. 22. Luke, 7. 47—50. & 17. 19. & 18. 42. & 8. 48. Mark, 9. 23. & 10. 52.

in the present extremity; and by publicly acknowledging his power, have done him so much honour. His faith may have been built on the miracles which he knew Jesus had performed; for our Lord had by this time resided at Capernaum several months.

Ver. 23. *Lieth at the point of death*] St. Luke agrees with St. Mark in this circumstance; but St. Matthew seems to add another. According to the latter, Jairus saith (ch. ix. 18.), *my daughter is even now dead*, ἀπὸ ἐπιπέθανον; but he might utter both the expressions: for as his daughter lay expiring when he came away, he might think she could not live many minutes; and therefore, having told Jesus that she was lying at the point of death, he added, that in all probability she was dead. Nevertheless, if this solution seem inconsistent with the ruler's petition, *Come, and lay thine hands on her, that she may be healed*, and with the dejection that appeared in his countenance, when his servants told him that his daughter had actually expired, we may fully remove the difficulty, by translating the clause in St. Matthew, *My daughter is almost dead*, a sense which, according to the analogy of the Greek language, it will easily bear. See a similar expression, Luke, v. 7. We may just observe further, that ἀπὸ does not only signify what is now come to pass, but what is just at hand; and so it may imply no more than that she was considered as just dead, and that there was no hope of her recovery, but by a miracle. See Gerhard, and Doddridge.

Ver. 25. *Which had an issue of blood*] *Who had had a bloody flux*. The circumstances in the next verse are mentioned by the Evangelist, to shew that the woman's disease was incurable, and that she herself knew it to be so—circumstances, which at one and the same time demonstrate the

greatness of the miracle. See Dr. Friend's History of Physic, page 37.

Ver. 27, 28. *The press—and touched his garment*] *The throng*, &c. and to ver. 30. Her disease being reckoned unclean, she was ashamed to mention it before the multitude; and having formed the highest idea of Christ's power, she resolved to try this method of cure, believing that no more was necessary to effect it: however, because her distemper was of such a nature as to render them whom she touched unclean, she durst not handle the person of so great a prophet, nor any part of his garment, but its border or hem (see Matth. xxiii. 5.), shewing at the same time both the strength of her faith, and the greatness of her humility. *I shall be whole*, is in the original σωθῆσμαι, *I shall be saved*; and there are many other places in which the word is used in the same sense; as certainly it may also with great propriety be applied to a rescue from any imminent danger, or pressing calamity, especially in an extraordinary way. Compare ver. 23. Ch. vi. 56. Luke, viii. 36. xvii. 19. xviii. 42. John, xi. 12. and Acts, iv. 9.

Ver. 29. *And—she was healed of that plague*] Μάστιγος;—of that wasting and dangerous *dilemper*, with which she had been *chastised* for so long a time. It was necessary that the ministry of the Son of God should be rendered illustrious by all kinds of miracles, and that all the people of the country where he lived should have both the highest idea, and the firmest persuasion of his power; it was for advancing these great ends, as well as for the sake of the immediate object of his mercy, that the success of this woman's attempt equalled the faith and humility by which she was guided.

Ver. 30—34. *And Jesus, immediately knowing, &c.*] It

faith hath made thee whole : go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

35 ¶ While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

37 And he suffered no man to follow him,

save <sup>a</sup> Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and <sup>i</sup> them that wept and wailed greatly.

39 And, when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? <sup>k</sup> the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

40 And they <sup>l</sup> laughed him to scorn. But, when he had <sup>m</sup> put them all out, he taketh the

<sup>f</sup> Luke, 8. 49—56. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 9. 27—26. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 17. 20. <sup>i</sup> Ver. 23. 34. <sup>j</sup> Ch. 9. 23. <sup>k</sup> Chr. 20. 20. <sup>l</sup> If. 50. 10. <sup>m</sup> Rom. 4. 17—20. <sup>n</sup> John, 11. 25. <sup>o</sup> Ch. 3. 16, 17. & 9. 2. & 14. 33. <sup>p</sup> 2 Chr. 35. 35. <sup>q</sup> Jer. 9. 17. <sup>r</sup> Acts, 9. 33. <sup>s</sup> John, 11. 4, 11, 13. <sup>t</sup> Acts, 20. 10. <sup>u</sup> Acts, 17. 32. <sup>v</sup> Gen. 19. 14. <sup>w</sup> Mat. 7. 6. <sup>x</sup> 1 Kings, 17. 19. <sup>y</sup> 2 Kings, 4. 33. <sup>z</sup> Acts, 9. 40.

was for the reasons alleged in the last note, that Jesus would by no means allow the opinion which this woman entertained of his power and goodness to pass silent and unapplauded: therefore he immediately turned about in the crowd, and asked who it was that had touched his clothes. He knew the person, for he knew all things; and no virtue or miraculous cure could be derived from him, unless by his own consent; but he spake in this manner, that the woman might, of her own accord, make a confession of the whole matter, by which the strength of her faith and the greatness of her cure would appear, to the glory of God; and that he might have an opportunity to instruct and comfort her. Accordingly, when the persons nearest to him cleared themselves, and Jesus insisted upon knowing who it was that had done the thing, the woman, finding it impossible to conceal herself any longer, came to him, trembling, and told him all. Perhaps the uncleanness of her distemper was the reason of her fear, thinking that he would be offended with her for touching him: but the divine Physician, far from being angry, spake kindly to her, commending the honesty of her disposition, and the strength of her faith; and telling her that it was on account of her faith he had consented to make her whole. This incidental miracle appears very grand, when the relation which it bears to the principal one is considered. Jesus is going to give a specimen of that Almighty Power, by which the resurrection of all men to immortality shall be effected at the last day; and behold, virtue little inferior to that which is capable of raising the dead to life, issues from him through his garment, and heals a very obdurate disease, which, having baffled the power of medicine for twelve years, had remained absolutely incurable, till the presence of Jesus, who is the resurrection and the life, chased it away! The cure, though complete, was performed in an instant, and the woman knew it by the immediate ease which she felt, by the return of her strength, by the cheerfulness of her spirits, and by all the other agreeable sensations which accompany sudden changes from painful diseases to perfect health. St. Mark expresses this shortly and elegantly; *εγρω τῷ σώματι, she felt in her body.* See the learned and excellent Ader's 12th Enarration, in his Treatise on Scripture Diseases. We may render the last words of ver. 34. *They*

*faith hath made thee well, or hath cured thee; go in peace, and be healed of thy trouble.*

*Ver. 37. And he suffered no man to follow him, &c.]* When Jesus came to the house, though a great many friends and others accompanied him, he suffered none of them to go in with him, except his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, with the father and mother of the maid; and even these perhaps he admitted for no other reason, than that the miracle might have proper witnesses, who should publish it in due time for the benefit of the world. See the note on Matth. xvii. 1.

*Ver. 38. And he cometh to the house, &c.]* Namely, from the street, for that was the proper time to hinder the crowd from accompanying him. See Luke, viii. 51. It seems, the mother of the damsel, on seeing that Jesus was nigh, had gone out to the street to conduct him in, or waited for him in the porch of her house to receive him. See on Ch. ii. 4. With the attendance above mentioned, Jesus went up stairs where the damsel was lying, for they used to lay their dead in upper rooms. See Acts, ix. 37. Here he found a number of people in an outer apartment making lamentation for her, according to the custom of the Jews, with music, see Matth. ix. 23. The company at the ruler's house, when Jesus came in, being employed in making such lamentation for the damsel, as they used to make for the dead, it is evident that they all believed she was actually departed: wherefore, when Jesus told them that she was not dead, ver. 39. he did not mean that her soul was not separated from her body, but that it was not to continue so, which was the idea the mourners affixed to the word *death*. Her state he expressed by saying that *she slept*; using the word in a sense somewhat ambiguous to that which the Jews put upon it, when in speaking of a person's death they called it *sleep*, to intimate their belief of his existence and happiness in the other world, together with their hope of a future resurrection to a new life. On this occasion the phrase was made use of with singular propriety, to insinuate, that notwithstanding the maid was already dead, she should not long continue so. Jesus was going to raise her from the dead, and would do it with as much ease as they awaked one that was asleep. See John, xi. 11—13.

*Ver. 40. And they laughed him to scorn]* The mourner, not

father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, <sup>n</sup> Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

<sup>n</sup> John, 6. 63. Rom. 4. 17.

<sup>o</sup> Mal. 4. 2. Rom. 4. 17. John, 5. 21. & 6. 63. Pl. 33. 9.

<sup>q</sup> Ch. 1. 41. & 7. 36. H. 41. 4.

John, 5. 41. See Mat. 8. 4. & 9. 30. Luke, 5. 14.

<sup>p</sup> Ch. 1. 27. & 4. 41. R. 6. 51. & 7. 37.

not understanding Jesus, laughed him to scorn when they heard him say, *the damsel is not dead*; for having seen all the marks and proofs of death about her, they were absolutely certain that she was dead; and yet, if they had given themselves time to consider, they might have understood that he spake in this manner, to intimate that he was going to raise her from the dead; and the rather, as he had been sent for by her parents to heal her miraculously. But his words were ambiguous; and the mourners naturally enough took them in the wrong sense: thus, while Jesus predicted the miracle, to shew that it did not happen by accident, he delivered himself in such terms, as modestly to avoid the reputation which might have accrued to him from so stupendous a work. The dispositions expressed by the mourners rendered them not worthy to behold the miracle. Jesus therefore put them even out of the antechamber; or he might have done this to be freed from the noise of their lamentation. After clearing the antechamber, he entered where the corpse was lying, accompanied by none but the disciples above-mentioned, and the father and mother of the damsel; they being, of all persons, the most proper witnesses of the miracle, which in reality suffered nothing by the absence of the rest; for as they were all sensible that the child was dead, they could not but be certain of the miracle, when they saw her alive again, though possibly they might not know to whom the honour of her resurrection was due. It seems Jesus was not solicitous of appropriating it to himself; probably also, they went in thus slenderly attended, that the witnesses might have an opportunity to examine the whole transaction narrowly, and so be able to report it afterwards, upon the fullest assurance, and with every circumstance of credibility. It deserves particular attention, with what perfect decorum our Lord conducted himself on this occasion, and how superior he appeared to any views of human applause. See Lardner's answer to Woolston, p. 89.

*Ver. 42, 43. And straightway the damsel arose, &c.]* The damsel was raised, not in the languishing condition of those who come to life after having fainted away; but she was in a state of confirmed good health, being hungry: this circumstance effectually shewing the greatness and perfection of the miracle, Jesus brought it to pass on purpose in her resurrection. To make the witnesses sensible of it likewise, he ordered some meat to be given her, which she took, probably, in the presence of the company. Her parents seeing her flesh and colour and strength and appetite returned thus suddenly, with her life, were un-

42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were <sup>p</sup> astonished with a great astonishment.

43 And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

measurably astonished at the miracle; nevertheless, Jesus ordered them to speak nothing of it: but it was known to all the people in the house: that the maid was dead; the women who were hired to make lamentation for her, according to the custom of the country, knew it: even the multitude had reason to believe it, after the ruler's servant came and told him publicly in the street that his daughter was dead: moreover, that she was restored to life again, could not be hid from the domestics, nor from the relations of the family, nor from any having communication with them: wherefore, our Lord's injunction to tell no man what was done, could not, I think, mean that the parents were to keep the miracle a secret; that was impossible to be done; but they were not officiously to blaze it abroad, nor even to indulge the inclination which they might feel to speak of a matter so astonishing. The reason was, the miracle spake sufficiently for itself: accordingly St. Matthew tells us, that it made a great noise, Ch. ix. 26. *The fame hereof went abroad into all that land*: For, as Jesus's miracles were generally done in public, they could not fail to be much spoken of; wherefore, when the fame of any of them in particular is mentioned, it implies, that the reports concerning it spread far abroad, that the truth of it was inquired into by many; and that, upon inquiry, the reality of the miracle was universally acknowledged. This being the proper meaning of the observation, the Evangelists, by thus openly and frequently appealing to the notoriety of the facts, have given us all the assurance possible of the reality of the miracles which they have recorded.

*Inferences drawn from the miracle of raising Jairus's daughter.* How troublesome did the people's importunities seem to Jairus! He came to sue to Jesus for his dying daughter; the thronging multitude intercepted him; every man is most sensible of his own necessity; there is no straining courtesy, in the challenge of our interest in Christ; there is no incivility in our strife for the greatest share in his presence and benediction.

The only child of this ruler lay dying when he came to solicit Christ's aid, and died while he solicited. There was hope in her sickness; in her extremity there was fear; in her death, despair and impossibility (as they thought) of help: *Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master*: when we have to do with a mere finite power, this word would be but just. But since thou hast to do with an omnipotent Agent, know, O thou faithless messenger, that death can be no bar to his power: how well would it have be-

## C H A P. VI.

*Christ is contemned of his countrymen: he giveth the twelve power over unclean spirits. Divers opinions of Christ. John the Baptist is beheaded, and buried. The apostles return from preaching. The miracle of five loaves and two fishes. Christ walketh on the sea: and healeth all that touch him.*

[Anno Domini 31.]

**A**ND <sup>a</sup> he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 13. 54—58. Luke, 4. 16—30.

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 7. 28. Ch. 1. 22. Luke, 4. 32. John, 6. 30, 42, 52. & 7. 15.

come thee rather to have said, "*Thy daughter is dead; but who can tell whether thy God and Saviour will not be gracious to thee, that the child may revive? Cannot he, in whose hands are the issues of death, bring her back again?*"

Here was more complaisance than faith; *trouble not the Master*; infidelity is all for ease, and thinks every good work tedious: that which nature accounts troublesome, is pleasing and delightful to grace. Is it any pain for a hungry man to eat? O Saviour, it was thy meat and drink to do thy Father's will; and his will was, that thou shouldst bear our griefs, and take away our sorrows: that cannot be thy trouble, which is our happiness, that we may still sue to thee.

The messenger could not so whisper his ill news, but Jesus heard it; Jairus hears what he feared, and was now dejected with such sad tidings: he that resolved not to trouble the Master, meant to take so much more trouble to himself, and would now yield to a hopeless sorrow: he, whose work it is to comfort the afflicted, rouseth up the dejected heart of the pensive father; *fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole*. The word was not more cheerful than difficult. *Fear not?*—Who can be insensible of so great an evil? Where death has once seized, who can doubt but he will keep his hold? no less hard was it not to grieve for the loss of an only child, than not to fear the continuance of the cause of that grief.

In a perfect faith there is no fear; by how much more we fear, by so much less we believe: *what are these two then united, fear not; believe only*. O Saviour, if thou didst not command us somewhat beyond nature, it were no thanks to us to obey thee: while the child was alive, to believe that she might recover was no hard task; but now that she was fully dead, to believe that she should live again, was a work not easy for Jairus to apprehend, though easy for thee to effect; yet must *that* be believed, else there is no capacity for so great a mercy. *As love, so faith is stronger than death*. How much natural impossibility is there in the return of these bodies of ours from the dust of the earth, into which, through many degrees of corruption, they are at the last mouldered. *Fear not, O my soul, believe only; it must, it shall be done*.

The sum of Jairus's first suit was for the health, not for the resurrection of his daughter; now that she was dead, he would, if he durst, have been glad to have asked her life:—And now, behold, our Saviour bids him expect both her life and her health: *Thy daughter shall be made whole; alive from her death, whole from her disease*.

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disciples follow him.

2 And, <sup>b</sup> when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing *him* were astonished, saying, From whence hath this *man* these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

Thou didst not, O Jairus, thou daredst not ask, so much as thou receivedst. How glad wouldst thou have been, since this last news, to have had thy daughter alive, though weak and sickly: now thou shalt receive her, not living only, but sound and vigorous. Thou dost not, O Saviour, measure thy gifts by our petitions, but by our wants, and thine own mercies.

This work might have been as easily done by an absent command; the power of Christ was there, while himself was away; but he will go personally to the place, that he may be confessed the author of so great a miracle. O Saviour, thou lovest to go to the house of mourning; thy chief pleasure is the comfort of the afflicted; what a confusion there is in worldly sorrow? The mother shrieks; the servants cry out; the people make lamentation; the minstrels howl, and strike dolefully; so that the ear might question whether the ditty or the instrument were more heavy: if ever expressions of sorrow sound well, it is when death leads the choir. Soon does our Saviour charm this noise, and dismiss these unseasonable mourners, whether formal or serious. He had life in his eye, and would have them know, that he considered these formal ceremonies as too early, and long before their time. *Give place; for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth*. Had she been dead, she had but slept: now she was not dead, but asleep, because he meant that this nap of death should be so short, and her awakening so speedy. Death and sleep are alike to him, who can cast whom he will into the sleep of death, and awaken when and whom he pleaseth out of that deadly sleep.

Before, the people and domestics of Jairus held Jesus for a prophet; now they took him for a dreamer;—not *dead but asleep?*—They that came to mourn, cannot now forbear to laugh: "Have we piped at so many funerals, and seen and lamented so many corpses, and cannot we distinguish between sleep and death?—The eyes are set,—the breath is gone,—the limbs are stiff and cold;—who ever died, if she do but sleep?"—How easily may our reason or sense delude us in divine matters! Those who are competent judges in natural things, are ready to laugh God to scorn, when he speaks beyond their comprehension, and are by him justly laughed to scorn for their unbelief. Vain and faithless men! as if that unlimited power of the Almighty could not make good his own word, and turn either sleep into death, or death into sleep, at pleasure. Ere many minutes,—they shall be ashamed of their error and incredulity.

There were witnesses enough of her death; there shall

3 G

not

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary<sup>c</sup>, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda, us? And they were offended at him.

<sup>c</sup> 1f. 53. 2. 3. & 49. 7. Pf. 22. 6. Mat. 11. 6. & 13. 55, 56. & 12. 46. Luke, 2. 34. & 4. 22. John, 6. 42, 60. Gal. 1. 19. 1 Co. 1. 23.

not be many of her restoration, ver. 37.—The eyes of those incredulous scoffers were not worthy of this honour; our infidelity makes us incapable of the secret favours and the highest counsels of the Almighty.

But art thou, O Saviour, ever discouraged by the derision and censure of these scorners? Because fools ridicule thee, dost thou forbear thy work? It is enough for thee that thine act shall soon honour thee and convince them.—*He took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise; and her spirit came again, and she arose straightway.*

How could that touch, that call, be otherwise than effectual? He who made that hand, touched it; and he who shall one day say *Arise, ye dead, laid now, Maid, arise.* Death cannot but obey him, who is the Lord of life: the soul is ever equally in his hand, who is the God of spirits; it cannot but go and come at his command. When he says, *Maid, arise,* the now unloosened spirit knows its office, its place, and instantly resumes that room which by his appointment or permission it had left.

O Saviour! if thou do but bid my soul to arise from the death of sin, it cannot lie still: if thou bid my body to arise from the grave, my soul cannot but glance down from her heaven, and animate it.

The maid revives;—not now to languish for a time upon her sick bed, and by some faint degrees to gather an insensible strength; but at once she arises from her death and from her couch; at once she puts off her fever with her dissolution; she finds her life and her feet at once; at once she finds her feet and stomach: *He commanded to give her meat.* Omnipotence, when it steps forth in an extraordinary way, does not use to go the pace of nature: all God's immediate works are like himself, perfect. He that raised the damsel supernaturally, could have so fed her; but it was never the purpose of his power to set aside the use of proper and ordinary means.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, What a miserable creature is man, when left to the power of the devil! What a mercy that Jesus is come to destroy the works of the devil, and to take the prey from the mighty. An eminent instance of this we have in the present chapter:

1. The wretched case of a poor demoniac, driven by an unclean spirit to dwell among the tombs; a terror to himself, and to all who approached him; so raging, that none could soothe him; so strong, that no fetters could bind him. Though it had been often attempted, he broke the bands in sunder, and fled; living in the mountains and in the tombs; uttering horrid yellings, and cutting himself with sharp stones, till the blood gushed out. *Note;* We have here a lively emblem of the natural man; his mind and conscience are defiled; his passions drive him furiously on, and will be restrained by no fetters of God's law: under the power of Satan he is hurried to the excess of riot, madly wounding his own soul by sin, and dangerous to all around him; insensible to every fearful consequence, and wilful in disobedience.

2. No sooner was Jesus disembarked, than the man in whom the devil was, ran and worshipped him; the wicked spirit being awed by his presence, or his power being now suspended. St. Matthew says that there were two; perhaps St. Mark mentions one only, as being the more fierce; and to him the Lord directed his discourse.

3. On beholding so pitiable an object, Jesus bid the unclean spirit depart; but his expostulation or intreaty did not prevail: though in the greatest dread and horror the devil addressed him, acknowledging his divine power and glory; importunately begging, since he could have no interest in him, that he might have nothing to do with him; and that he would not send him into the place of torment, and compel him to retire from the world to the prison of hell before the day of final judgment. *Note;* (1.) The confession of the devil was orthodox; but it is not a form of sound words, but the work of the Holy Ghost upon the heart, which can avail to our salvation. (2.) When Christ visits our souls, he casts out the unclean spirit, gives a new heart, and puts a right spirit within us.

4. To shew his own power over the fiends of darkness, Christ demanded the name of this evil spirit, and was answered, *My name is Legion, for we are many.* A legion of Roman soldiers did at this time consist of at least six thousand: this intimates the immense numbers of those fallen spirits which war against the souls of men; their vast power, regular order, and unanimity: what need then have we, who wrestle with these principalities and powers, to put on the whole armour of God, and to be continually looking up for the strength of our God, that we may be able to stand in the evil day!

5. Since they must quit their present hold, the devils earnestly besought him not to expel them from that heathen country, if he dispossessed them from Judæa. And there being a herd of swine feeding near the place, they desired permission to enter those unclean animals; hoping, by destroying them, to prejudice the people against Jesus, and to gratify their own delight in mischief: and for wise and just reasons Christ permitted their request; when instantly the devils seized the whole herd, about two thousand; and, filling them with madness, hurried them down a precipice into the lake, where they perished in the waters.

6. The keepers, who fled affrighted, spread through all the country the amazing account of the cure of the demoniac, and the destruction of the swine. On which a vast concourse of people assembled to see this strange sight; and, to their great surprise, found the man who had been possessed, and a terror to the country, now peaceably sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in the perfect exercise of his reason; and they who had been eye-witnesses of the cure, reported all the circumstances concerning the recovery of the man, and the destruction of the swine. Hereupon afraid lest Jesus should punish them yet more condignly if he continued there, and concerned more for their temporal than eternal interests, they intreated him to depart

4 But Jesus said unto them, ' A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

5 ° And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*.

<sup>d</sup> John, 4. 44. Luke, 4. 24. Mat. 13. 57. J. r. 11. 21. & 12. 6.

<sup>e</sup> Mat. 13. 58. & 17. 17, 20. Ch. 9. 23. Gen. 19. 22. If. 59. 1, 2. Heb.

depart out of the country. And since they thus sinned against their own mercies, Jesus abandons them to the delusions which they had chosen.

7. Though his countrymen rejected Christ, the poor man who was cured, would fain have followed him; but Jesus bid him rather return, and bear testimony to the miracle of grace that he had experienced, and awaken thereby the concern of his friends to seek after the Lord who had done so great things for him. Accordingly the man obeyed his command; and, transported with gratitude, published every where in that country what Jesus had done for him, to the great astonishment of all who heard him. *Note*; (1.) They who know the blessing of Christ's presence, long to be ever near him, and cannot but lament if their lot be cast among the tents of Kedar, where his gospel has no place. (2.) They who are restored by Jesus to their right mind, from that moment begin to live to his glory, and to speak his praises. (3.) What the Lord does for the sinful soul are great things indeed, for which we can never enough adore and thank him.

2dly, Since the Gadarenes rejected him, Christ crosses the lake to Capernaum, where he expected a more welcome reception. Hereupon,

1. A ruler of the synagogue, with deepest respect, made his application to him, in behalf of his little daughter, who lay dying when he came out from his house, and was even then dead when he addressed our Lord. *Note*; The state of the sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, may be to human view irrecoverably desperate; but nothing is impossible with God.

2. As Jesus went with the ruler, a poor diseased woman stole a cure. Her malady discouraged her from making an open application to Jesus, and her faith persuaded her that it was needless; the very touch of his garments being, in her apprehension, sufficient for her recovery; even though her disorder had baffled the physicians' skill, and under their hands her little pittance had been wholly expended, and her complaints aggravated. Nor was she mistaken; for no sooner had she through the crowd got near enough to touch his garment, than immediately on so doing her disease was removed, she felt her health perfectly restored, and was retiring with wonder and thankfulness. But Jesus, who perceived the virtue which had gone out of him, for the manifestation of his own glory, and the confirmation of the poor patient's faith, turning himself, demanded who touched him? which the disciples answered with a kind of surprise and rudeness, as if, considering the crowd, such a question was very strange. But Jesus, overlooking their forwardness, and casting his eyes round to discover the person he meant, the poor woman, conscious of what had passed, and trembling lest the Lord should be displeased at the manner in which she had surreptitiously obtained her cure, came and fell at his feet, declaring the whole. Whereupon, far

from being angry, Jesus encouraged and comforted her, making honourable mention of her faith; and dismissed her not only with a cure, but with his peace and benediction, which was infinitely better. *Note*; (1.) All our spiritual diseases can only be removed by the touch of faith; till virtue come out of Christ, we can have no health in ourselves. (2.) Where he works, an universal blessed change appears in all the tempers of the mind, and in the whole outward conduct and conversation. (3.) When we are discouraged with fear, we should lay our burdens at the feet of Jesus, and he will speak peace to our troubled souls.

3dly, A discouraging message met the afflicted Jairus as Jesus was on the way with him. Tidings were brought that his daughter was dead, and his friends concluded that it was in vain to trouble Christ any farther; supposing that, though he cured the sick, to raise the dead was beyond his power. But,

1. Our Lord encourages the distressed parent, bids him not to give way to despondence, but *only believe*, and he should still see that death, as well as disease, was under his controul. *Note*; Faith is the great preservative from all our fears: when those who are nearest and dearest to us in Christ are removed, we have a ground of abiding consolation, that we shall meet them at the resurrection of the just.

2. When he came to the house, he suffered none to enter with him but Peter, James, and John, enough to be witnesses of the miracle, with the father and mother of the child: and rebuking the excessive lamentations of those who were within, he assured them that there was no real cause for them, as the damsel was not irrecoverable, as they apprehended; but though in the arms of death he would awake her. But they, fully assured of her death, treated with derision this suggestion. Unworthy, therefore, to be witnesses of his wondrous power and grace, he put them all out, and permitting only his three disciples, and the parents of the damsel, to be with him; he went in where the child lay, took her by the hand, and bid her *rise*; when instantly her spirit returned, she arose, being about twelve years old, and, to the exceeding amazement of her parents, walked about in perfect health; and to shew that she still retained her former animal life, and that her appetite was restored with her health, he bade them give her something to eat. *Note*; When Christ gives spiritual life, it must be daily fed in the use of those means of grace, whereby he continues to minister strength and nourishment to the soul.

3. He gives them all a strict charge not to divulge this miracle. He knew how his growing fame would exasperate his enemies; and as his hour was not yet come, he used every prudent means to preserve his life, till he had finished the work which was given him to do.

6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. <sup>2</sup> And he went round about the villages, teaching.

7 ¶ <sup>h</sup> And he called unto *him* the twelve, and began to send them forth by <sup>1</sup> two and two, and gave them power over unclean spirits;

8 And commanded them that they <sup>k</sup> should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no <sup>\*</sup> money in *their* purse:

9 But *be* shod with <sup>1</sup> sandals; and not put on two coats.

10 And he said unto them, <sup>m</sup> In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

11 <sup>n</sup> And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. <sup>o</sup> Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the

day of judgment, than for that city.

12 And they went out, and preached <sup>p</sup> that men should repent.

13 <sup>q</sup> And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed *them*.

14 ¶ <sup>r</sup> And king Herod heard *of him*; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

15 <sup>s</sup> Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

16 ¶ <sup>t</sup> But, when Herod heard *thereof*, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.

17 <sup>u</sup> For Herod himself had sent forth, and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison

<sup>f</sup> If. 59. 16. Ch. 3. 5. Heb. 3. 18, 19. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 4. 23. & 9. 35. Luke, 4. 37, 41. & 13. 22. John, 4. 43. If. 61. 1—3. & 48. 17. Eph. 2. 17. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 10. 1—13. Ch. 3. 13—19. Luke, 6. 13—16. & 9. 1—6. <sup>i</sup> Exod. 4. 14. Rev. 11. 3. Mat. 18. 16. 2 Cor. 13. 1. Eccl. 4. 9, 10. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 10. 9, 10. Luke, 9. 3. & 10. 4. & 22. 35. 2 Tim. 2. 4. <sup>l</sup> Gr. *brass* money. <sup>m</sup> Soles buckled on the feet. Acts, 12. 8. <sup>n</sup> Mat. 10. 11—13. Luke, 9. 4. <sup>o</sup> Mat. 10. 14, 15. Luke 9. 5. & 10. 10—12. Acts, 13. 51. & 18. 16. Neh. 5. 13. <sup>p</sup> Ezek. 16. 48, 51. Luke, 10. 12—15. Mat. 11. 20—24. John, 15. 22—24. Hab. 6. 4—8. & 10. 26—31. <sup>q</sup> Ch. 1. 4, 15. Acts, 2. 3<sup>o</sup>. & 3. 19. & 20. 21. Mat. 10. 7, 27. Luke, 9. 2, 6. Ver. 30. <sup>r</sup> Ver. 7. James, 5. 14. <sup>s</sup> Mat. 14. 1—12. Luke, 9. 7—9. 1 Thess. 1. 8. <sup>t</sup> Mat. 16. 14. & 17. 10. Ch. 8. 28. John, 1. 21. Luke, 9. 19. <sup>u</sup> Luke, 3. 19. & 9. 7. Mat. 14. 2. Pl. 14. 5. <sup>v</sup> Mat. 14. 3—12. & 4. 12. & 11. 2. Luke, 3. 19, 20.

## CHAP. VI.

*Ver. 6. He marvelled, because of their unbelief*] He wondered at their perverseness, in rejecting him upon such unreasonable grounds as the meanness of his parentage. The Jews in general mistook their own prophecies, by expecting that the Messiah would exalt their nation to the highest pitch of wealth and power: this was an end unworthy of so grand an interposition of Providence. When the eternal Son of God came down from heaven, he had something infinitely more noble in view; namely, that by suffering and dying, he might destroy him who hath the power of death, that by innumerable benefits he might overcome his enemies, that by the bonds of truth he might restrain the rebellious motions of men's wills, that by the sword of the Spirit he might destroy their predominant lusts, and that, by giving them the spiritual armour, he might put them into a condition to fight for the incorruptible inheritance, and might exalt them to the joyful possession of the riches and honour of immortality: wherefore, as these characters of the Messiah were in a great measure unknown to the Jews, he who possessed them was not the object of their expectation; and though he laid claim to their submission by the most stupendous miracles,—instead of convincing them, these miracles made him who performed them obnoxious to the hottest resentment of that proud, covetous, sensual people. It seems they could not bear to see one so low in life as Jesus was, doing things which they fancied were peculiar to that idol of their vanity, a glorious tri-

umphant secular Messiah. Our Lord, therefore, having made this second trial, with a view to see whether the Nazarenes would endure his ministry, and to shew to the world that his not residing in part among them was owing to their stubbornness and wickedness, he left them; and in this example the evil and punishment of misimproving spiritual advantages is clearly set forth before all who hear the Gospel.

*Ver. 7. By two and two,*] Jesus ordered his apostles to go in this manner, that they might encourage each other in their work, and confirm each other's testimony. See Matth. x. 2, &c.

*Ver. 13. And anointed with oil many that were sick,*] This probably was in conformity with the custom of the Jews, who made use of the imposition of hands, and the ceremony of anointing the sick with oil, when they offered up their prayers to heaven in their behalf. See James, v. 14. and Grotius.

*Ver. 15. Others said, That it is Elias,*] There is little difficulty in accounting for the opinion of those, who, upon Christ's appearing in this part of the country, began to take notice of his miracles; and, being struck with them, imagined that he was Elijah, or one of the prophets; for as they expected that *Elijah* would actually descend from heaven, and usher in the Messiah, (Matth. xvi. 14.) and that *one of the prophets* was to be raised from the dead for the same end, they might fancy Elijah was come, or that one of the old prophets appeared anew upon earth. See the notes on Matth. xiv.

*Ver.*

for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife : for he had married her.

18 For John had said unto Herod, <sup>2</sup> It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

19 Therefore <sup>3</sup> Herodias had <sup>\*</sup> a quarrel against him, and would have killed him ; but she could not :

20 For Herod <sup>2</sup> feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and <sup>†</sup> observed him ; and when he heard him he did many

things, and heard him gladly.

21 And when <sup>a</sup> a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birth-day made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief *estates* of Galilee ;

22 And when <sup>b</sup> the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee.

<sup>1</sup> Lev. 18. 6, 16. & 20. 21. Heb. 13. 4. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. <sup>2</sup> Gen. 49. 23. & 39. 12—20. <sup>\*</sup> Or an inward grudge. <sup>3</sup> Ch. 11. 18. Mat. 14. 3. & 21. 26. & 13. 20. Luke, 20. 6. 2 Chron. 24. 2. & 25. 5. John, 5. 35. Ezek. 33. 32. <sup>†</sup> Or kept him, or served him. <sup>a</sup> Gen. 27. 41. & 30. 20. Rev. 12. 10. Mat. 14. 16. Eph. 1. 3. & 2. 18. Acts, 12. 21. <sup>b</sup> Gen. xxxiv. Numb. xxv. Judges, xix. Eccl. 7. 26. Prov. ii. v.

Ver. 20. For Herod feared John, &c.] For Herod, knowing John to be a just and holy man, stood in awe of him, and protected him : he even did many things by his advice, and heard him with pleasure. Heylin. For Herod revered John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man ; and he heard him with attention and pleasure, and did many things. Doddridge. No stronger proof can be desired of that great veneration which Herod had conceived of John, than his being pleased with, and listening to, the advice of one, in a station of life so very far below him. And how universal this authority of the Baptist was with the people, is evident from the conduct of the priests, who, some time after his death, were afraid the people would have stoned them, should they have ventured to say he was an impostor, Luke, xx. 6. Josephus likewise makes honourable mention of him, Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 5. as one who taught the people the necessity of virtue and true holiness ; and adds, that his influence over them was so great, that Herod himself was fearful of him lest he should excite a revolt, and therefore confined him. Possessed of such credit, both with the prince and the people, what conduct would the secret associate of a pretended Messiah at this time have pursued ? Jesus, who assumed the character of Messiah himself, had not appeared so long on the public stage ; his credit remained yet to be established ; and upon his success, at least, must the event of their joint undertaking unavoidably depend. The crafty forerunner, therefore, would now, more than ever, have employed all his art to keep up that influence which he had already acquired ; at once cunningly instilling into the people such notions as were best calculated to serve his secret designs, and practising every artifice upon Herod, to preserve his protection and kindness uninterrupted. The more popular he was, the more cautious he would certainly have been of incurring Herod's jealousy or displeasure, for fear of blasting at once all their preconcerted designs, when they were at length in so fair a way for success. But how opposite to all this was the conduct of John the Baptist ! At this critical point of time, in his own peculiar station, when both his own and his confederate's interest absolutely required him to act in the manner just described ; he even proceeded to reprove Herod himself for the wickedness of his life, and charged him with the unlawfulness of his most dar-

ling pleasures in so particular an instance,—his marriage with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife,—that he could expect nothing less in return, from Herod's violence of temper, and Herodias's influence, than imprisonment and death. And accordingly we find, that Herod immediately imprisoned John on account of Herodias ; and Herodias, as it was natural to expect she would, soon after accomplished his death. An impostor, in John's particular situation, could not but have reflected at the first thought of so dangerous a step as that which occasioned the Baptist's death, that it was not his own immediate assistance only of which his associate would be deprived by his destruction, though this alone would have been sufficient to prevent him from adopting it ; but he would besides have considered, that his own imprisonment and death would probably strike such a panic into the people, however zealous they had before been in his favour, as would restrain them from listening afterwards to Jesus, or paying the same regard which they might have done to his pretensions. Nay, nothing was more probable than that John's public ministry being put to so ignominious an end, would even destroy that good opinion of John himself, which they had hitherto entertained, and induce them to believe, that, notwithstanding his fair outside, he could be no better than an impostor ; for by what arguments could John think it was possible that the Jews could persuade themselves, that he was really sent to be the divine forerunner of this triumphant Messiah, when they should have seen him seized by Herod's order, imprisoned, and put to death ? Beside therefore John's regard to his own success, his liberty, and even his life itself, which no impostor can be thought desirous of exposing to certain destruction for no reason ; his connection with Jesus, if they were deceivers, and the necessary dependence of both upon the mutual success and assistance of each other, must unquestionably have restrained John from provoking, at this time, the inveterate hatred of Herodias, and drawing on himself Herod's violent suspicion and displeasure. So that the remarkable behaviour of John in this important particular, and at so critical a conjuncture, affords us one of the strongest presumptive proofs imaginable, that neither he nor Jesus could possibly be deceivers. See Bell's "Inquiry into the Divine Missions," &c. p. 283.

Ver. 21. A convenient day] See Matth. xiv. 6.

Ver.

23 And he sware unto her, <sup>c</sup> Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

24 And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, <sup>d</sup> The head of John the Baptist.

25 And she came in straightway <sup>e</sup> with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

26 And the king <sup>f</sup> was exceeding sorry; <sup>g</sup> yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

27 And <sup>h</sup> immediately the king sent <sup>\*</sup> an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison,

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29 And, when his disciples heard *of it*, <sup>i</sup> they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

30 ¶ <sup>k</sup> And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.

31 And he said unto them, <sup>l</sup> Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and

they had no leisure so much as to eat.

32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

33 And the people saw them departing; <sup>m</sup> and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

34 ¶ <sup>n</sup> And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and <sup>o</sup> he began to teach them many things.

35 <sup>p</sup> And when the day was now far spent his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time *is* far passed:

36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

37 He answered and said unto them, <sup>q</sup> Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred <sup>r</sup> pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And, when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

39 And he commanded them to make all sit down <sup>†</sup> by companies upon the green grass.

40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

<sup>c</sup> Esth. 5. 3, 6. & 7. 3. Mat. 4. 9. Prov. 6. 2. Eccl. 5. 6. <sup>d</sup> Prov. 1. 16. & 4. 16. & 22. 10. & 27. 4. <sup>e</sup> Rom. 3. 15. Prov. 1. 16. & 4. 16. <sup>f</sup> 1 Sam. 15. 20. & 26. 21. Mat. 27. 4. 2 Cor. 7. 10. <sup>g</sup> Luke 7. 30. & 10. 16. John. 12. 48. Prov. 29. 12. <sup>h</sup> Rom. 3. 15. Prov. 1. 16. & 4. 16. Mat. 14. 10. <sup>i</sup> Or one of his guard. <sup>j</sup> 1 Kings, 13. 29. Act. 8. 2. Mat. 27. 58-61. & 14. 12. If. 57. 2. <sup>k</sup> Luke, 9. 10. & 10. 17. <sup>l</sup> Ch. 1. 45. & 3. 7, 20. Mat. 14. 13-21. John. 6. 16. If. 42. 2. Luke, 9. 10-17. <sup>m</sup> James, 1. 19. John, 6. 2. Ch. 1. 45. & 2. 2. & 3. 7, 20. & 4. 1. & 5. 24. Ver. 54, 55. Mat. 4. 25. & 14. 13-21. Luke, 9. 10-17. <sup>n</sup> Mat. 9. 36. & 14. 14. & 15. 32. Hebr. 4. 15. & 5. 2. & 2. 17. Numb. 27. 17. 1 Kings, 22. 17. Jer. 23. 1. & 50. 6. Ezek. 34. 2. Zech. 10. 2. <sup>o</sup> If. 48. 17. & 54. 13. & 61. 1-3. <sup>p</sup> Mat. 14. 15-21. Luke, 9. 12-16. John, 6. 5-21. <sup>q</sup> 2 Kings, 4. 42, 43. Luke, 9. 13. John, 6. 6-10. Mat. 6. 33. <sup>r</sup> Numb. 11. 12. <sup>s</sup> 1 Kings, 7. 2. & 4. 13. Mat. 15. 33. John, 6. 7. <sup>t</sup> The Roman penny is seven-pence halfpenny: as Mat. 18. 28. <sup>†</sup> Gr. *banquett, banquet*.

*Ver. 26. Rejeſt] Refuſe.*

*Ver. 33. And ran afoot thither out of all cities, &c.]* The word *ἵεσθαι* here may signify *by land*, as Blackwall has shewn; for it appears from Matth. xiv. 14. that there were many with our Lord in the desert, who cannot be supposed to have walked thither; and as to their travelling with such speed as to arrive at the place before Jesus, it may easily be accounted for, if in sailing he met with a contrary wind. Some think, that when he received the news of the Baptist's death, he was in Peræa, whither he had gone after leaving Nazareth; see ver. 6. wherefore, as this country lay at the bottom of the lake westward, in going thence to the desert of Bethsaida, Jesus had to sail the whole length of the lake northwards. If so, the people on the shore might easily run afoot to the place before him:

and they might do the same upon the supposition that Jesus now sailed from Capernaum, because either a contrary wind or a calm would retard the motion of his vessel, so as to give the multitude time to arrive at the place before him. The truth is, John (vi. 1.) represents our Lord as sailing across the lake on this occasion; a circumstance which agrees better with his loosing from Capernaum on the west than on the south coast. It is therefore probable, that after sending the disciples away, Jesus left the country of Nazareth, and returned to Capernaum, where he waited the return from their mission; and that from Capernaum he sailed with them to the desert of Bethsaida. See Blackwall's Sacred Classics, vol. 2.

*Ver. 39, 40. He commanded them, &c.]* When the loaves and the fishes were brought, our Lord commanded his apostles

41 And, when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, " he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

42 " And they did all eat, and were filled.

43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

45 ¶ And ' straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before \* unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

46 And, when he had sent them away, he

departed " into a mountain to pray.

47 " And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and <sup>b</sup> about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and <sup>c</sup> would have passed by them.

49 But, when they saw him walking upon the sea, they <sup>d</sup> supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

50 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and faith unto them, <sup>e</sup> Be of good cheer: it is I:

\* Mat. 14. 19. & 15. 36. & 26. 26. 1 Sam. 9. 15. Deut. 8. 10. 1 Tim. 4. 4, 5. Luke, 9. 16. John, 6. 11. Rom. 14. 6. with Mat. 24. 45. <sup>†</sup> Pl. 37. 16. & 23. 1. & 145. 18. Prov. 13. 25. & 6. 6. Mat. 16. 9. & 14. 20, 21. Luke, 9. 17. John, 6. 12-14. <sup>‡</sup> Ver. 31. John, 6. 15-21. <sup>§</sup> Mat. 14. 22-33. Jc. 42. 2. <sup>¶</sup> Or over against Bethsaida. <sup>||</sup> John, 6. 15. Mat. 14. 23. Luke, 6. 12. Ch 3. 7, 13. Acts, 1. 12. & 10. 9. <sup>\*\*</sup> Mat. 14. 23. John, 6. 15, 17. Jc. 54. 11. <sup>††</sup> Gen. 22. 14. Job, 9. 8. Pl. 46. 1. & 93. 4. & 29. 10. <sup>‡‡</sup> Luke, 24. 28. Gen. 32. 26. <sup>§§</sup> Job, 4. 14, 15. Pl. 88. 15. <sup>¶¶</sup> Jc. 41. 10. & 43. 1, 2. Pl. 46. 1-5. Rom. 8. 31. Gen. 22. 11-14. Mat. 14. 27.

to make the whole multitude sit down by companies, each consisting of two rows, with their faces opposite, and their backs turned to the backs of the next companies. This disposition appears from the words before us. St. Luke, ch. ix. 14. represents it thus: *Make them sit down by fifties in a company.* Συμπισίον, the word used by St. Mark, signifies "a company of guests at a table;" but κλισία, the word in St. Luke, denotes properly "as many of them as lie on one bed," according to the Eastern manner of eating. By Christ's order, therefore, the people were to sit down to this meal in companies, consisting some of fifty persons, some of a hundred, according as the ground would admit. The members of each company were to be placed in two rows, the one row with their faces towards those of the other, as if a long table had been between them. The first company being thus set down, the second was to be placed beside the first in a like form, and the third by the second, till all were set down; the direction of the ranks being up the hill, and the two ranks of every division formed into one company, by being placed with their faces towards each other; so that they were distinguished from the neighbouring companies by lying with their backs turned to their backs: and the whole body of the multitude thus ranged would resemble a garden-plot, divided into *seed-beds*, which is the proper signification of *κλισίον*, the name given by St. Mark to the several companies, after they were formed. The difference of numbers found in the companies arose probably from the situation of the ground; they were ranged on the declivity of a hill, where it happened that on one side ranks of twenty-five persons only could be admitted, and consequently the companies there consisted of no more than *fifties* each, and the ranks of twenty-five. St. Luke describes their disposition from that which was most prevalent, the greatest part of the people lying together by *fifties* in a company. By this regulation the number was more easily ascertained, and

the people better and more regularly fed. We may observe further, that as the people were fed on a mountain, and lay as we have remarked, with their heads pointing up the hill, reclining on their elbows, they were almost in a sitting posture, and had their eyes fixed on Jesus, who stood below them in a place which was more plain, at a little distance from the ends of the ranks. Without doubt, therefore, they all heard his thanksgiving and prayer for the miracle, saw him give the disciples the food, and were astonished above measure, when they perceived, that instead of diminishing, it increased under his creating hands. Moreover, being set down in companies, consisting some of fifty, some of a hundred persons, according as the ground would admit, and every company being divided into two ranks, which lay fronting each other, the ranks of all the companies were parallel, and pointed towards Jesus; and so were situated in such a manner, that the disciples could readily bring the bread and fish to them who sat at the extremities of the ranks. By this disposition too, there must have been such a space between the two ranks of each company, that every individual in it could easily survey the whole of his own company, as well those above as those below him; and therefore when the viands were brought from one to another, they would all follow them with their eyes, and see them swelling not only in their own hands, but in the hands of their companions likewise, to the amazement and joy of every person present. The evangelists indeed give very short accounts of our Lord's miracles; nevertheless, the nature of those miracles, and the few circumstances which they have mentioned, often suggest many astonishing ideas, which inattentive readers altogether overlook. See Pierce's 5th Dissertation on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Ver. 48. *And would have passed by them,*] ἔθελεν παρελθεῖν, *seemed inclined to pass.* This appears the proper translation of the passage.

Ver.

be not afraid.

51 <sup>f</sup> And he went up unto them into the ship, and the wind ceased: and they were <sup>g</sup> sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

52 <sup>h</sup> For they considered not *the miracle* of

<sup>f</sup> Pt. 29. 10. & 93. 4. & 107. 28—30. Mat. 14. 32. & 8. 26. <sup>g</sup> Ch. 1. 27. & 2. 12. & 4. 41. & 5. 42. & 7. 37. If. 8. 18. <sup>h</sup> Ch. 8. 17. Mat. 16. 9, 10. John, 6. 26. Luke, 24. 14. Ch. 3. 5. & 8. 17. & 16. 14. Heb. 3. 8, 13. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 14. 34—36. <sup>k</sup> A city on the west of the sea of Galilee. John, 6. 24.

*Ver. 51. Sore amazed.] Greatly amazed.* See on ch. iv. 39.

*Ver. 52. For they considered not, &c.]* <sup>o</sup>ου γὰρ συνήσαν: they had not a proper idea of his miraculous power, demonstrated in that wonderful miracle; because if they had, his walking on the sea, and making the storm to cease, would not have affected them with so great a surprise; as the former was a more certain and glorious miracle, demonstrating even a *creating* power, which is plainly hinted by the evangelist in this place. Besides, they ought to have been so convinced of Christ's omnipotence by the miracle of the loaves, which had been wrought but a few hours before, that no new instance should have so surprised them. Dr. Heylin in this view renders the verse, *for they had not been sufficiently affected by the miracle of the loaves through the insensibility of their hearts.*

*Ver. 54. They knew him,]* That is, the inhabitants of the country among whom he had before conversed. See *Matth. xiv. 35.*

*Inferences from Herod's murder of the Baptist.* We have observed in the Inferences on *Matth. xiv.* with a particular reference to the case of Herod, how certainly conscience will do its duty upon any eminent breach of ours, and make every flagrant act of wickedness, even in this life, a punishment to itself.—That guilt and anguish are inseparable, and that the punishment of a man's sins begins always from himself, and from his own reflections, is a truth every where supposed, appealed to, and inculcated, in Scripture. See *Rom. ii. 15. Jer. ii. 19. Prov. xviii. 14. Isai. xxxiii. 14. Psalm xxxviii.* There is nothing in the representations here referred to, particular to the times and persons on which they point; nothing but what happens alike to all men, in all cases, as the genuine and necessary result of offending against the light of our consciences; nor is it possible indeed, in the nature of the thing, that matters should be otherwise: it is the way in which guilt does and must always operate; for moral evil can no more be committed, than natural evil can be suffered, without anguish or disquiet consequent thereupon sooner or later. Good and evil, whether natural or moral, are but other words for pleasure and pain; at least, though they may be distinguished in the notion, yet are they not to be separated in the reality; but the one of them, wherever it is, will constantly and uniformly excite and produce the other. Pain and pleasure are the springs of all human actions, the great engines by which the wise Author of our nature governs and steers them. By these, annexed to the perception of good and evil, he inclines us powerfully to pursue the one,

the loaves; for their heart was hardened.

53 <sup>¶</sup> And, when they had passed over, they came into the land of <sup>k</sup> Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

54 And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him.

and to avoid the other; to pursue natural good, and to avoid natural evil, by delightful or uneasy sensations, which immediately affect the body; to pursue moral good, and to avoid moral evil, by pleasing or painful impressions made on the mind: only with this difference, that moral good cannot in any degree be produced in man but through the operations of the Spirit of God.

Hence then the satisfactions or stings of conscience severally arise; they are the sanctions, as it were, and through the Spirit of Grace the enforcements of that eternal law of good and evil, to which we are subjected; the temporal rewards and punishments originally annexed to the observance or breach of that law by the great Promulger of it; and which being thus joined and twisted together by God, can scarcely by any arts, endeavours, or practices of men, be put asunder.

There is no need of arguments to evince this truth: the universal experience and feeling of mankind bear witness to it; for, did ever any man, through the aid of almighty grace, break the power of a darling lust, resist a pressing temptation, or perform any act of a conspicuous, distinguishing and useful nature, but that he soon found it turn to account, *health to his navel, and marrow to his bones?* On the contrary, did any man ever indulge a criminal appetite, or allow himself sedately in any practice which he knew to be unlawful, but he felt, unless he was a thorough-paced villain, an inward struggle, and strong reluctance of mind before the attempt,—and bitter pangs of remorse attending it? What though no human eye was privy to the action,—was not conscience instead of a thousand witnesses? If not, it must have been so seared as with a hot iron, as to have banished every measure and every degree of influence of preventing grace.

Men who set up for freedom of thought, and for disengaging themselves from the prejudices of education, jolly and voluptuous livers, may pretend to dispute this truth; and perhaps in the gaiety of their hearts may venture even to deride it. Herod perhaps did so; but, notwithstanding all his efforts, conscience still operated, and he could not avoid its stinging remonstrances.

Look upon one of these men, who would have been thought to have made his ill practices and ill principles perfectly consistent, and you will find a thousand things, in his actions and discourses, testifying against him, that he *deceiveth himself*, and that *the truth is not in him*. If he be indeed, as he pretends, at ease in his enjoyments,—whence come those disorders and unevennesses in his life and conduct; those vicissitudes of good and bad humour, mirth and thoughtfulness; that perpetual pursuit of little,

55 And <sup>1</sup> ran through that whole region those that were sick, where they heard he round about, and began to carry about in beds was.

<sup>1</sup> John, 4. 28. Mat. 4. 24, 25. Ch. 3. 7—10. Gen. 49. 10. Zech. 8. 20—23. If. 52. 13.

mean, insipid amusements; that restless desire of changing the scene, and the objects of his pleasures; those sudden eruptions of passion and rage upon the least disappointments? Certainly, all is not right within, or else there would be a greater calm and serenity without. If his mind were not in an unhappy situation, and under contrary influences, it would not be thus tossed and disquieted. For what reason does he contrive for himself such a chain and succession of entertainments, and take such care to be delivered from one folly, one diversion to another, without intermission? Why,—but because he dreads to leave any void space of life unfilled, lest *conscience* should find work for his mind at those intervals? He has no way to fence against guilty reflections, but by stopping up all the avenues at which they might enter. Hence his strong addiction to company, his aversion to darkness and solitude, which recollects his thoughts, and turns the mind inward upon itself by shutting out external objects and impressions. It is not because the pleasures of society are always new and grateful to him, that he always pursues them thus keenly; for they soon lose their relish, and grow flat and insipid by repetition. They are not his choice, but his refuge: for the truth is, he dares not long converse with himself and with his own thoughts; and the worst company in the world is better to him, than that of a *reproving conscience*.

We have a strong proof of this in Tiberius, that complete pattern of wickedness and tyranny. He had taken as much pains to conquer the fears of conscience as any man, and had as many helps and advantages towards it; and yet as great a master of the art of dissimulation as he was, he could not dissemble the inward sense of his guilt no more than Herod, nor prevent the open eruptions of it upon very improper occasions; witness that letter which he wrote to the senate from his impure retirement at Capræ. There cannot be a livelier image of a mind filled with wild distraction and despair than the beginning of it affords us: "What or how, at this time, I shall write to you, Fathers of the Senate, or what indeed I shall not write to you, may all the powers of heaven confound me, yet worse than they have already done, if I know, or can imagine!"—The observation of Tacitus upon this passage is very apposite to the present purpose. "Thus," says he, "was this emperor punished by a reflection on his own infamous life and guilt;" nor was it in vain that the greatest master of wisdom, *Plato*, affirmed, that were the breasts of Tyrants once laid open to our view, we should see there nothing but ghastly wounds and bruises: the consciousness of their own cruelty, lewdness, and ill-conduct leaving as deep and bloody prints on their minds, as the strokes of the scourge do on the back of a slave.—"Tiberius," adds he, "confessed as much, when he uttered these words; nor could his high station, or even privacy and retirement itself, hinder him from discovering to all the world the inward agonies and torments under which he laboured." Thus that excellent histo-

rian, *Annal. lib. 6.* See also the *Book of Wisdom, chap. xvii. 1—11.*

Since therefore the wise Author of our nature has so contrived it, that guilt is naturally and almost necessarily attended with trouble and uneasiness, let us, even hence, be persuaded to go to God through Christ for that pardon and purity, which alone can preserve the peace and tranquillity of our minds. For *pleasure's* sake, let us abstain from all *criminal* pleasures and pollutions: because the racking pains of guilt, duly awakened, are really an overbalance to the greatest sensual gratifications. The charms of vice (how tempting soever they may seem to be) are by no means equivalent to the inward remorse and trouble, and the tormenting reflections which attend it; which keep pace with our guilt, and are proportioned to the greatness and daringness of our crimes: for *mighty sinners*, sooner or later, even here in general, (how much more hereafter!) *shall be mightily tormented*. Let no temptation, therefore, no interest, no influence whatever sway us to do any thing contrary to the suggestions of conscience or the word of God. Let us no more dare to do in private, what that tells us ought not to be done, than if we were upon an open theatre, and the eyes of the whole creation were upon us. What signifies it that we escape the view and observation of men, when the watchful witness within sees and records all our faults, and will certainly one day reprove us, and set our misdeeds in order before us? and ever remember, that the adorable Saviour of the world and the holy Spirit of God are offered to you, that you may be saved from your sins, and be thus enabled to answer the great end of your creation.

It has been reckoned a good rule for a happy conduct of life, to be sure of keeping our *domestic* concerns right, and of being easy under our *own roof*, where we may find an agreeable retreat and shelter from any disappointments that we meet with in the great scene of vexation, the world. And the same rule will, with greater reason, hold, in relation to the peace of our consciences. Let our first care be, through the power of almighty grace, to keep all quiet and serene there: when this point is once gained at home, external accidents will not be able deeply to affect us: and unless it be gained, all the pleasures, the abundance and pomp of life, will be insipid and tasteless to us.

Wherefore, let us resolve, all of us, to stick to that principle which will keep us easy when we are alone, and will stick to us in an hour when all outward comforts fail us. Let those listen to *this* reprove,—conscience,—who are otherwise, alas! in a great measure *above* reproof: the more destitute they are of the advice and correction of others, the more careful should they be to attend to the suggestions and whispers of this inward monitor and friend. Though they value not the censures passed on their actions by those whom they consider as beneath them, yet surely they ought not to slight their own: nor do they stoop beneath themselves, when they stoop to themselves,

56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they

might <sup>m</sup> touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched <sup>\*</sup> him were made whole.

<sup>m</sup> Ch. 1. 31. & 3. 10. & 5. 27—29. Luke, 6. 19. Acts, 5. 15. & 19. 12. <sup>\*</sup> Or *it*.

themselves, and to the inward dictates and persuasions of their own minds. The marks of distinction which they bear, though they may enable them sometimes to sin with impunity, as to *men*, yet will they not secure them from the lashes of an avenging *conscience*; which will find them out in their most secret retirements, cannot be forbidden access, nor be dismissed without being heard; will make their way to them, as they did to Herod and Tiberius, through business or pleasure; nay, even through guards and crowds, and all the vain forms and ceremonies with which they may be surrounded: and yet all will be insufficient, if they do not come to Jesus Christ in all the simplicity of little children, and with the most entire dependence on his sole merits and almighty grace, for pardon and salvation.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, From Capernaum our Lord visited the place of his education, Nazareth, accompanied by his disciples. And,

1. On the sabbath day, according to his custom, he entered into the synagogue; and from the law and the prophets preached the things concerning himself with such dignity and elocution, as quite amazed his countrymen. He had been bred among them, a carpenter probably by trade, without any education; his family and relations were all persons of mean and low circumstances: how he should be able to discourse with such readiness, and perform such miraculous works, they could not conceive; and yet their prejudices against him, on account of his low birth and education, prevailed over their admiration, and, notwithstanding all the wonders they beheld, they disdained to be followers of a person so mean and despicable in their account. *Note*; (1.) The humiliation of Jesus, at which they were offended, should make him the dearer to us. (2.) If the Lord, in our nature, submitted to earn with the labour of his hands the bread that he ate, let it teach us how commendable is industry, and never to despise any man because he is poor.

2. To rebuke their folly, and punish their unbelief, he reminds them how they verified that proverbial saying, *A prophet is not without honour but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house*; people ordinarily paying more respect to strangers and persons unknown, than to those with whom they have been indulged in familiarity, and whom they are ready to treat with contempt. Therefore, except healing a few sick people, he refused to exercise his power and grace among them. Their unbelief bound up, as it were, the hands of his omnipotence; and marvelling at it, he left them, in just judgment, to the perverseness and impenitence of their hearts, carrying the glad tidings of salvation from them to the other villages of Galilee, where greater respect would be paid to his person and ministry.

2dly, The twelve, having now for a while attended their Master, are,

1. Sent forth to preach what they had learned of him

and endued with power to work miracles, and cast out devils, in confirmation of the doctrine they taught. For their mutual comfort and support, they were joined in pairs, and forbidden to encumber themselves with clothes or provisions; but must set off just as they were, with only their stick in their hand, the clothes which they then wore, and the sandals on their feet, relying upon divine Providence for a supply of their wants during their travels. Their message would deserve and procure them a welcome. Wherever they came therefore, and were received into a house, there they must continue till they removed to another city or village. But if in any place they were refused a hospitable entertainment, and no attention was paid to their preaching, they are commanded immediately to depart, shaking off the dust from their feet in testimony of the wickedness and infidelity of that people; and not Sodom or Gomorrah in the day of judgment will meet so severe a doom as that city. *Note*; (1.) They who reject the calls of the Gospel, perish under the most accumulated guilt. (2.) The ministers of Christ are worthy of their maintenance; and since they have renounced the world for the service of men's souls, it becomes those to whom they minister, liberally to supply their wants, that they may be wholly without care, and give themselves up to the word of God and to prayer.

2. The apostles went, in obedience to their Master's orders, preaching the doctrine of repentance, and calling men to turn unto God, and receive his Messiah, whose kingdom was ready to appear. And in confirmation of their divine authority, they cast out devils, and miraculously healed the sick, by anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord, in token of their being restored to health. *Note*; The great end of the ministry is the conversion of men's souls. They who have not this in view, and do not see any fruit of their labours, may justly suspect that they have run without being sent.

3dly, The fame of Jesus had by this time reached the ears of Herod. His guilty conscience suggested to him that John, whom he had murdered, was now risen from the dead, and invested with greater powers than before, perhaps to avenge his blood upon the head of his murderer. Others thought him to be Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah; others one of the ancient prophets revived: others a new prophet sent of God, like those of old; but all mistook his true character, and knew him not as the Saviour of the world. Herod, haunted as it were with the ghosts of his injustice and cruelty, persisted in the conviction, that this was surely John the Baptist, whom he had beheaded; the narrative of which bloody transaction is related in nearly the same words as before, *Matth. xiv.* To what was there said, we may farther observe,

1. How far a man may go in his convictions, without being ever truly converted. Herod was in his conscience persuaded that John was a *just man, and a holy*; his whole demeanor shewed the Baptist to be such, and commanded veneration.

CHAP. VII.

*The Pharisees find fault with the disciples, for eating with unwashen hands. They break the commandment of God by the tradition of men. Meat defileth not the man. He healeth the Syrophenician woman's daughter of an unclean spirit, and one that was deaf and stammered in his speech.*

[Anno Domini 31.]

**T**HEN <sup>a</sup> came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 15. 1-9. Luke, 5. 17. & 11. 53, 54. & 14. 1. & 15. 2. <sup>b</sup> Or common. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 23. 23, 24. & 7. 3-5. Gal. 1. 14. <sup>d</sup> Or diligently, or with the fist, or up to the elbow. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 20. 25. Luke, 11. 39. Job, 9. 30, 31.

2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with <sup>\*</sup> defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands, <sup>b</sup> they found fault.

3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their hands* <sup>†</sup> oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

4 And *when they come* from the market, except they <sup>c</sup> wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received

eneration. And so far many go, as to be convinced of the integrity of God's ministers, and to reverence their character; to *observe* them, to attend their ministry with seriousness and constancy, to do many things which are right through their preaching; yea, to take delight in their discourses, and to feel a transient joy while sitting under them; and yet, like Herod, may never be divorced from their darling sins, nor their hearts at all effectually changed.

2. How commendable is fidelity! All the respect and kindness of Herod did not make John in the least indulgent to his sins; he told him plainly, though a king, the guilt and danger of his state, and charged upon his conscience his lewdness, adultery, and incest in marrying his brother's wife: and such should we be, imitating this holy plainness and simplicity, neither moved by caresses, nor deterred by fear; but approving ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

3. They who will be thus faithful, may expect to be often severely treated. The hearts of sinners will be exasperated, and malice will drive them, like Herodias, to contrive some mischief against their reprovers, and thus to revenge the honest rebukes, which they regard as premeditated affronts.

4thly, The Apostles, having executed the commission with which their Master had intrusted them, return to give him an account of their ministry and success. And blessed and happy are they who can give up this account with joy! Satisfied in their report, and well pleased with their service, our Lord,

1. Testifies his tenderness and regard for them, by calling them into a retirement, where they might repose themselves awhile after their labours. For where they were, such crowds were perpetually coming and going, desirous to hear, or wanting to be healed; that they had not leisure even to eat their necessary food. *Note*; (1.) In these frail bodies at present, the most ardent spirits must yield to some repose and relaxation. (2.) Our rest must be but *for a while*, just enough to strengthen us to return with fresh vigour to the work of the Lord.

2. He shews his compassions to the multitude who followed them. For though they withdrew privately, and coasted the lake in a boat, to a desert place near the city of Bethsaida, yet many watched the course that they steered, and were so eager after the company and teaching of Jesus,

that they ran faster than the boat went, and were on the spot when he arrived, ready to receive him. Jesus, on disembarking, beheld them with compassion, knowing how destitute they were of faithful guides, and neglected as sheep without a shepherd; and therefore, well pleased to be interrupted, and deprived of his retirement, he instantly set himself to instruct them in the things pertaining to his kingdom, and their own everlasting peace; in which delightful work, and in healing their sick, he continued till evening drew on. *Note*; (1.) They who have a true relish for the Gospel of Jesus, will take many a weary step for the sake of attending that ministry by which it is dispensed with power. (2.) It is a peculiar pleasure to preach to those, who appear athirst for the word of truth.

3. He not only fed their souls with the heavenly manna of his doctrine, but their bodies by miraculous food. The disciples, as the day drew to a close, reminded him how far the people were from any inhabited place, and that the night would soon come on; it would be necessary therefore, they suggest, to dismiss the multitude, that they might get some refreshment after fasting so long. But he, to prove their faith, bade them provide for them the necessary repast. In a surprise, they look not at his power, but to their own inability: where should they get bread, or money to buy it, when two hundred pennyworth would not be sufficient to give a morsel to each? Perceiving that they had no notion whence the supply should come, he inquired what store of provision they had with them? they told him only five barley loaves, and two fishes, a quantity utterly insufficient to satisfy such a multitude. Commanding them to be brought, Jesus took the loaves; and having disposed the people in ranks, (see the Annotations,) he brake, and gave to his disciples, who waited on the guests; and, far from want, there appeared enough and to spare: they not only made a hearty meal, but left fragments sufficient to fill twelve baskets, which Christ commanded to be collected with care, not only to supply their future wants, but to make the miracle appear more illustrious. *Note*; (1.) They who love the word, will for the sake of it sometimes forego their necessary food. (2.) Barley loaves, with Christ's blessing, afford a sweeter feast than the richest delicacies without it. (3.) Christ's disciples must be content with, and thankful for, coarse fare. (4.) Waste, even of crumbs of barley bread,

to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and \* pots, brazen vessels, and of † tables.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, ' Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands ?

6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Elias prophesied of you <sup>c</sup> hypocrites, as it is written, ' This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.

7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me,

teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups : and many other such like things ye do.

9 And he said unto them, <sup>e</sup> Full well ye † reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

10 For Moses said, <sup>b</sup> Honour thy father and thy mother ; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death :

\* Sextarius, containing 33 solid inches. † Or *bds.* <sup>d</sup> Mat. 9. 11, 14. & 12. 21. & 23. 23, 24. Col. 2. 8, 18. Luke, 11. 42. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 23. 13—29. <sup>f</sup> If. 29. 13. & 1. 11—15. Mat. 15. 8, 9. Ezek. 13. 21. Col. 2. 18—22. Tit. 1. 14, 16. 2 Tim. 3. 5. 1 Tim. 1. 6, 7. <sup>g</sup> If. 24. 5. Jer. 7. 22. & 4. 16, 17. 2 Theil. 2. 4. Dan. 7. 2. Prov. 1. 25. † Or *frustrate.* <sup>h</sup> Exod. 20. 12. & 21. 17. Lev. 19. 3. & 20. 9. Deut. 5. 16. & 21. 18. & 27. 16, 17. Prov. 20. 20. & 23. 22. & 30. 17.

bread, is sinful : no fragments are to be lost, when there are so many who want them.

5thly, The entertainment being finished, Christ bids his disciples first embark, and cross the lake, which they did with reluctance, thinking this a good opportunity for him to declare himself, and set up, as they expected, his temporal kingdom. But he, dismissing the multitude, retired into a mountain, as he was accustomed, to spend some time in prayer ; to teach us the necessity of keeping up private communion with God, as the best means of enabling us to go comfortably through our public ministrations. Meantime we are told,

1. The distress of the disciples. The wind was tempestuous, and directly a-head ; so that though they pulled hard, they got no way, and had advanced in many hours not above a league. We may expect in Christ's service to meet with difficulties ; but if we patiently persevere, all will be well.

2. After exercising their faith and patience till the morning watch, at last Christ came to them, walking upon the waters ; and seemed as if he would have passed them ; but they all discovered something walking on the water, and supposing, it an apparition, shrieked out, exceedingly affrighted ; till his well-known voice stilled their fears, saying, *Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid* ; and he entering the boat, instantly the winds and waves subsided, to the exceeding astonishment of the Apostles, who, forgetting the miracle of the loaves which they had just seen, were so dull and stupid in their hearts, as to be surprised at this new manifestation of their Master's divine power, though they were daily eye-witnesses of his stupendous miracles. *Note* ; (1.) If Christ's faithful people toil hard through a night of temptations, the morning will come ; a little faith and patience shall bring them to the light of peace and joy. (2.) Our fancies raise a thousand unnecessary fears ; and in our distress we often suspect that Christ is passing from us, when he is really coming to us. (3.) It is then comfortable with the troubled soul ; when Jesus reveals himself, and says with the voice of love, *It is I, be of good cheer.* Lord, speak thou to my soul, and it shall rest from all its fears.

3. No sooner had they reached the shore, near Capernaum, than immediately the rumour of his arrival spread on every side, and vast multitudes crowded around him, bringing the sick and diseased. In every city, town, or village which he passed, they were laid on beds in the streets, and besought him, that they might touch, if but the border of his garment ; and as many as touched him were perfectly cured, whatever was their malady. O Jesus, enable me to touch thee with my trembling hand of faith, and heal thou my sin-sick soul.

#### CHAP. VII.

*Ver. 3. Except they wash their hands oft,*] Some render it, *up to the wrist.* Ἐὰν μὴ πύγμα ὑψώσῃται. Theophylact translates it, *up to their elbows* ; affirming that the word πύγμα denotes the *whole of the arm*, from the bending to the ends of the fingers : but this sense of the word is altogether unusual : for the word πύγμα properly is, "the hand with the fingers contracted into the palm and made round,—*the fist.*" Theophylact's translation, however, exhibits the Evangelist's meaning ; for the Jews, when they washed, held up their hands, and contracting their fingers, received the water that was poured on them by their servants, (see 2 Kings, iii. 11.) till it ran down their arms, which they washed up to their elbows. To *wash with the fist*, therefore, is to wash with great care. See Mintert on the word ΠΥΓΜΗ, and Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*.

*Ver. 7. Teaching for doctrines, &c.] Teaching doctrines which are human injunctions.* The words seem to allude to Isaiah, xxix. 13. The word Διοκασία, in general, signifies any lesson ; and the purpose to which our Lord here applies it, plainly shews that it must refer to ritual injunctions. See Doddridge.

*Ver. 8. Ye hold*] κρατῦτε ; *ye retain—ye adhere to.* See Heylin.

*Ver. 9. Full well ye reject*] Full well ye make of no effect. The word Καλῶς, rendered *full well*, might be rendered *fairly, entirely.* Dr. Heylin renders the clause, *Ye do mighty well indeed to reject, &c.* The words *your own*, at the end of the verse, are emphatical, distinguishing the commandments

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is Corban*, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free.*

12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

14 ¶ And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Harken unto me every one of you, and understand:

15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

16 If any man have ears to ear, let him hear.

17 And, when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;

19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

24 ¶ And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid.

25 For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:

26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation, and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.

28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29 And he said unto her, For this saying, go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30 And when she was come to her house,

1 Mat. 15. 5. Lev. xxvii. All that I could spare is dedicated to God, with 1 Tim. 5. 8. 2 Prov. 1. 25. Hof. 8. 12. If. 24. 5. Jer. 44. 16, 17. Gal. 1. 14. 1 Tim. 1. 6, 7. Tit. 1. 14. 3 Mat. 15. 10-20. & 11. 15. & 16. 9-11. & 22. 29. Pf. 94. 8. Ch. 4. 9, 23. 4 Acts 10. 14, 15. Rom. 14. 17. 1 Cor. 8. 8. & 10. 25. 1 Tim. 4. 4. Tit. 1. 15. Jam. 3. 6. 5 See Ver. 14. Ch. 4. 9. 6 Mat. 13. 36. & 15. 15. 7 Ad. 8. 30, 31. 8 Mat. 15. 16, 17. & 16. 9-11. Heb. 5. 11. 1 Cor. 3. 2. Deut. 29. 29. If. 23. 9, 10. See Ver. 14. 9 1 Cor. 6. 13. Col. 2. 21, 22. 10 James, 3. 6. Mat. 12. 34-37. Pf. 39. 1. 11 Gen. 6. 5. & 8. 21. Mat. 15. 19. & 20. 15. Prov. 6. 14-19. Jer. 17. 9. & 4. 14. & 6. 7. Gal. 5. 19-21. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Rom. 13. 13. Acts, 8. 22. Tit. 3. 2, 3. Jam. 4. 11. 12 Mat. 15. 21-28. See Ch. 3. 8. 13 If. 42. 2. Ch. 1. 45. & 2. 1. & 3. 7. & 6. 31-33. John. 5. 41. & 7. 18. 14 Gen. 49. 10. Pf. 45. 12. & 87. 4. 15 Or Gentiles. If. 11. 10. & 49. 12. & 60. 3, 5, 11. 16 Ch. 10. 14. Jer. 49. 11. 1 John, 3. 8. Mat. 15. 22. & 4. 23-25. & 8. 16. Ch. 1. 32. 17 Mat. 7. 6. & 10. 5, 6. Rom. 15. 8. & 9. 4. with Eph. 2. 12. 18 Mat. 5. 45. If. 49. 6. & 42. 6, 7. & 45. 22. & 11. 10. & 55. 6, 7. Acts, 13. 46. Rom. 1. 16. 19 If. 57. 16. Mat. 15. 23. & 8. 10, 13. John, 4. 50-52. 20 Ch. 9. 23. 1 Cor. 10. 13. Eph. 3. 20. 1 John, 3. 8. Pf. 12. 6. 21 Cor. 1. 20.

ments of men, the corrupt traditions of the Pharisees, from the commandments of God. See 1 Cor. xi. 2 Theff. ii. 15. and Mangey.

Ver. 11. *It is Corban,*] "You assert, that any one may say to his father or mother,—Let that be Corban; that is to say, let it be reckoned as a devoted thing, or be considered as a gift, dedicated to the altar,—by which thou mightest otherwise receive advantage from me; and he shall then be free from the command, and not be under any obligation to honour and relieve his father or his mother." The word Κορβαν is a Hebrew word, of which the Evangelist here gives the meaning. See Doddridge, and the note on Matth. xv. 3-6. xxvii. 6-8.

Ver. 14. *Harken unto me, &c.*] That is, "Let every one of you hearken to what I say, and attentively consider it, that ye may understand." See ver. 16.

Ver. 22. *Thefts, &c.*] *Thefts, avarice, malice, fraud, lasciviousness, envy, slander, pride, vanity:* ver. 23. *All these vices, &c.* The word φροσων, which our bible translation renders foolishness, stands directly opposed to σωφροσυνη, or sobriety of thought and discourse; and therefore particularly signifies the wild sallies of the imagination, and extravagant passions and appetites; and consequently must include a great many immoralities, not touched on in the preceding enumeration.

Ver. 27. *But Jesus said unto her, &c.*] But Jesus, for the

he found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

31 ¶<sup>c</sup> And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of \* Decapolis.

32 And<sup>f</sup> they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech: and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

33 And he took him<sup>g</sup> aside from the mul-

titude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;

34 And<sup>h</sup> looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

35 And<sup>i</sup> straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And<sup>k</sup> he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it;

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 15. 29—31.    <sup>e</sup> A country of ten cities in east Galilee.    <sup>f</sup> Mat. 9. 32. Luke, 11. 14.    <sup>g</sup> Mat. 19. 15. Ch. 8. 22.    <sup>h</sup> Ch. 8. 23. & 5. 40. Il. 42. 2. Mat. 7. 6. 1 Kings, 17. 19. 2 Kings, 4. 33. Acts, 9. 40. John, 9. 6.    <sup>i</sup> John, 11. 33, 38, 41. & 17.    <sup>j</sup> Heb. 4. 11.    <sup>k</sup> Ch. 1. 45. & 3. 12. & 5. 43. & 8. 26. & 10. 48. Il. 42. 2. John, 5. 41. & 7. 18.

the trial of her faith, seemed to reject and disdain her, saying, Pray stay, let the children of God's family (his visible church,) be first satisfied with the blessings that I am come to bestow: for as it would be thought very improper and unnatural, that a parent should take away his children's food before they have had enough, and give it to the dogs: so it is not fit that I should deal out these mercies to you, till the Jews, who are the visible household of God, are first served: especially since, for your Gentile abominations, you deserve to be treated as a dog.

*Ver. 32, 33. And had an impediment in his speech:]* *Μολυβδον.* He was not absolutely dumb, but stammered to such a degree, that few understood his speech, ver. 35. However, the circumstance of his being able to speak in any manner, shews that his deafness was not natural, but accidental. He had heard formerly, and had learned to speak; but was now deprived of hearing, perhaps, through some fault of his own, which might be the reason that Jesus *sighed* for grief when he cured him. The friends of this man brought him to Jesus, and interceded for him, because he was not able to intercede for himself: his desire, however, of a cure, may have prompted him to do his utmost in speaking, whereby all present were made sensible of the greatness of the infirmity under which he laboured. Our Lord's exuberant goodness easily led him to give this person the relief that his friends begged for him; yet he would not do it publicly, lest the admiration of the spectators should have been raised so high, as to produce bad effects; for the whole country was now following him in expectation that he would soon set up his kingdom: or, as Gadara, where his miracle upon the demoniacs had been so ill received, was part of this region, (see Luke, viii. 26) he might shun performing the miracle publicly, because it would have no effect upon so stupid a people. Whatever was the reason, he took the man with his relations aside from the crowd; and because the deaf are supposed to have their ears shut, and the dumb their tongues so tied or fastened to the under part of their mouth, as not to be able to move it, (see ver. 35.) he put his fingers into the man's ears, and then touched or moistened his tongue with his spittle, to make him understand that he intended to open his ears, and

loosen his tongue. This, perhaps, was the only reason for these symbolical actions. Spiritual writers have given different interpretations of them. "If any one should ask," says Dr. Doddridge, "why our Lord used these actions, when a word alone would have been sufficient, and when such *means*, if they may be called *means*, could in themselves do nothing at all to answer the end? I frankly confess *I cannot tell*;—nor am I at all concerned to *know*; yet I am ready to imagine it might be intended to intimate, in a very lively manner, that we are not to pretend to enter into the *reasons* of all his actions; and that where we are sure that any observance whatever is appointed by him, we are humbly to submit to it, though we cannot see why it was preferred to others, which our imagination might suggest. Had *Christ's patients*, like *Naaman*, (2 Kings, v. 11, 12.) been too nice in their *exceptions* on these occasions, I fear they would have lost *their cure*: and the indulgence of a curious or a petulant mind would have been but a poor equivalent for such a loss."

*Ver. 34. And looking up to heaven,]* Our Lord did this, that the deaf man, whom he could not instruct by language, might consider whence all benefits proceed. After this, *he sighed*. Perhaps the circumstances mentioned in the former note, or some others unknown to us, made this man a peculiar object of pity: or by the example of bodily deafness and dumbness, our Lord might be led to reflect on the spiritual deafness and dumbness of men; but whatever was the cause, Christ's sighing on this occasion evidently displayed the tender love that he bore to mankind; for certainly it could be nothing else which moved him to condole our miseries, whether general or particular, in so affectionate a manner. See more instances of his compassion, Luke, xix. 41. John, xi. 33. After this he said, *Ephphatha*, "Be opened:" which Grotius applies by observing, that the internal impediments of the mind are removed by the Spirit of Christ; as those bodily impediments were by the word of his power. *He opens the heart*, as he did Lydia's, and thereby opens the ear to receive the word of God, and opens the mouth in prayer and praise. See Critic. Sacra in Loc.

*Ver. 36. And he charged them, &c.]* See on Matth. viii. 4. Dr.

37 <sup>1</sup> And were beyond measure astonished, maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb saying, He <sup>m</sup> hath done all things well: he to speak.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. i. 27. & 2. 12. & 4. 41. & 5. 42. & 6. 51.

<sup>m</sup> Gen. i. 31. Ik 35. 5, 6. Mat. xi. 5.

Dr. Stanhope, in the 3d vol. of his Comment. on the Epistles and Gospels, p. 397. assigns the following reasons for our Saviour's forbidding the publication of his miracles. 1. To avoid, as much as was possible, the envy and opposition of the Pharisees. 2. To secure his life from their malice, till the appointed time. 3. To prevent any sedition or tumults among the people. And, 4. To set us an example of humility, of doing good for God's sake or for God's sake; which forbids ostentation, and seeking the esteem and admiration of men; because this would be, in effect, to make new masters to ourselves, and, by a base degeneracy of spirit, to become slaves to our fellow-creatures.

Ver. 37. *He hath done all things well*] *καλῶς*,—in a most amiable and graceful manner, as well as to the utmost perfection. They were struck with his sympathetic tenderness for the afflicted, and admired his modesty in concealing the cure, and hiding it under the veil of second causes. Happy would it be, if all his followers, and especially his ministers, would learn of him, who was thus meek and lowly; neither acting as in their own strength, when they attempt a spiritual cure, nor proclaiming their own praise, when they have effected it. Then would they likewise *do all things well*; and there would be that beauty in the manner, which no wise man would entirely neglect, —even in those actions which are in themselves most excellent and great. It is a high commendation of a minister to say, that in his measure he has done all things well; that is, both with exterior gravity, modesty, and decency, and with interior application, piety, and religion. It is the way, under divine grace, to make the deaf hearken to the truth, and to draw from sinners the acknowledgment and confession of their miseries.

*Inferences drawn from the cure of the deaf and dumb man.* Our Saviour's entrance into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon was not without a miracle; neither was his departure; as the sun neither rises nor sets without light. At his entrance he delivers the daughter of the faithful *Syrophœnician*; in his egress he cures the deaf and dumb. He can no more want work, than that work can want success. Whether the patient were naturally deaf and perfectly dumb, or imperfectly dumb and accidentally deaf, I labour not to prove. Good neighbours, however, supply his ears, his tongue; they *bring him to Christ*. Behold a miracle, led in by charity, acted by power, led out by modesty.

It was a true office of love to speak thus in the cause of the dumb; to lend senses to him who wanted them. This spiritual service we owe to each other. Every soul is naturally deaf and dumb. But some have yielded to be saved by grace: the infinite mercy of God has bored their ears; he has untied their tongues by the power of regeneration: these misuse their holy faculties, if they do not improve them in bringing the deaf and dumb to

Christ, in their respective spheres of action whether small or great.

These people do not only lend their hand to this man, but their tongue also; and say that for him, which he could not but wish to say for himself: almost every man has a tongue ready to speak for himself; happy is he that keeps a tongue for other men. We are charged not with supplications only, but with intercessions. Herein is both the largest improvement of our love, and the most effectual: no distance can hinder the fruit of our devotion:—What was their suit to Christ, (ver. 32.) but that he would put his hand upon the patient? Not that they would prescribe the means, or imply the necessity of the touch, but because they saw this was the ordinary course both of Christ and his disciples, to heal by touching. Our prayers must be directed to the usual proceedings of God; his actions must be the rule of our prayers; our prayers must not prescribe his actions.

That gracious Saviour, who is accustomed to exceed our desires, does more than they sue for; not only does he touch the patient, but takes him by the hand, and leads him from the multitude. He that would be healed of his *spiritual* infirmities, must be sequestered from the throng of the world. There is a good use in solitude, at proper seasons; and that soul can never enjoy God, which is not sometimes retired.

Perhaps this retirement was for an example to us of a careful avoidance of vain glory in our actions; whence also it is, that our Saviour gives an after-charge of secrecy. He that could say, *he that doeth evil hateth the light*, now avoideth the light even in doing good. To seek our own glory, is not glory. Here was also a due regard paid to opportunity by our Lord in his conduct: the envy of the scribes and Pharisees might oppose his divine ministry; their exasperation is wisely avoided by his retiring. He, in whose hands time is, knows how to make the best choice of seasons. Wisdom has no better improvement than in distinguishing times, and discreetly marshalling the circumstances of our actions; which, whoever neglects, will be sure to spoil his work, and mar his hopes.

Is there a spiritual patient to be cured? Take him aside. To undertake his cure before the face of the multitude, is not to heal, but to wound him. Reproof and good counsel must be, like our aims, *in secret*; that being the best remedy, which is least seen and most felt.

What means this variety of ceremony? O Saviour, thy word alone, thy nod alone, thy wish alone, yea, the least act of thy will, might have wrought this cure. Why wouldst thou employ so much of thyself in this work? Was it to shew thy liberty, in not always equally exercising the power of thy Deity;—that at one time thy command only shall raise the dead, and eject devils; at another thou wouldst accommodate thyself to the mean and homely fashions of natural agents, and, condescending to our senses and customs, take those ways which may

## C H A P. VIII.

*Christ feedeth the people miraculously: refuseth to give a sign to the Pharisees: admonisheth his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod: giveth a blind man his sight: acknowledgeth that he is the Christ, who should suffer, and rise again; and exhorteth to patience in persecution for the profession of the gospel.*

[Anno Domini 31.]

**I**N those days <sup>a</sup> the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus

called his disciples *unto him*, and saith unto them,

2 <sup>b</sup> I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:

3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

4 And his disciples answered him, ' From

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 15. 32—39.

15.

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 9. 36. & 14. 14. Pf. 103. 13. & 145. 8, 9, 16. & 146. 9. & 34. 10. & 23. 1, 5. Heb. 4. 15. & 2. 17. If. 63. 7.

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 15. 33.

2 Kings, 4. 42, 43. & 7. 2. Numb. 11. 21, 22. Ch. 6. 52. John, 6. 7—9.

carry some nearer respect to the cure intended? or was it to teach us, how well thou likest that there should be a ceremonious carriage of thy solemn actions, which thou art pleased to produce clothed with such circumstantial forms?

It did not content thee to put one finger into one ear: both ears equally need a cure; thou wouldst establish the means of cure to both: the Spirit of God is the finger of God; then dost thou, O Saviour, put thy finger in our ear, when thy Spirit enables us to hear effectually. Hence the great philosophers of the ancient world, the learned rabbis of the synagogue, the great doctors of a false faith, are deaf to spiritual things. It is that finger of thy Spirit, O blessed Jesus, which can open our ears, and make through them a passage into our hearts; and thou art willing to do this for all who will come unto thee: let that finger of thine be put into our ears, so shall our deafness be removed, and we shall hear, not the loud thunders of the law, but the gentle whisperings of thy gracious motions to our souls.

Our Saviour was not content to open the ears only, but to untie the tongue: with the ear we hear, with the mouth we confess. There are those whose ears are open, but their mouths are still shut to God; they understand, but do not utter the wonderful things of God. There is but half a cure wrought upon these men; their ear is but open to hear their own judgment, except their mouth be open to confess their Maker and Redeemer. O God, do thou so moisten my tongue with thy graces, that it may run smoothly (as the pen of a ready writer) to the praise of thy name.

While the finger of our Saviour was on the tongue and in the ear of the patient, his eye was in heaven. Never man had so much cause to look up to heaven as he; there was his home, there was his throne: he only was from heaven, heavenly: what does thine eye, O Saviour, in this, but teach ours where to be fixed? Every good and every perfect gift comes down from above; O let not then our eyes or hearts grovel upon this earth; but let us fasten them above the hills, whence cometh our salvation. Thence let us acknowledge all the good that we receive; thence expect all the good that we want.

But why did the Saviour *sign*? Surely it was not for *assistance*. How could he but be heard of his Father, who was one with the Father? Not for any *fear* or *distrust*;

—but partly for *compassion*, partly for *example*. For *compassion* towards those manifold infirmities, into which sin had plunged mankind;—a pitiable instance whereof was here presented to him: for *example*, to fetch sighs from us for the miseries of others; sighs of sorrow for them, sighs of desire for their redress. This is not the first time that our Saviour spent sighs, yea, tears upon human distresses. We are not bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, if we do not so feel the pains of our brethren, that the fire of our passion breaks forth into sighs. *Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?*

Christ was not silent, while he cured the dumb: his *epbphatha* gave life to all his other actions. His sighing, his spitting, his looking up to heaven, were the acts of a man; this command was the act of God. In his mouth the word cannot be severed from its success. No sooner are the Saviour's lips opened in his *epbphatha*, than the mouth of the dumb and the ears of the deaf are opened at once. Behold here united celerity and perfection. Natural agents work leisurely, by degrees; omnipotence knows no rules.

And can we blame the man, if he bestowed the first fruits of his speech upon the power that restored it? Or can we expect other than that our Saviour should say, "Thy tongue is free, use it to the praise of him who made it so; thy ears are open, hear him who bids thee proclaim thy cure upon the house-top?"—But now, behold, on the contrary, he that opens this man's mouth by his powerful word, by the same word shuts it again!—Charging silence by the same breath wherewith he gave speech;—*tell no man!* O Saviour, thou knowest the grounds for thine own commands. It is not for us to inquire, but to obey. We must not honour thee with a forbidden celebration; good meanings have often proved injurious.

Those men whose charity employed their tongues to speak for the dumb man, do now employ those tongues to speak of his cure, when they should have been dumb. This charge, they imagine, proceeds from a humble modesty in Christ, which respect to his honour bids them violate. I know not how, but we itch after those forbidden acts, which, if left to our liberty, we too often willingly neglect. This prohibition increases the rumour; every tongue is busied about this one. What can we make of this, but a well-meant disobedience?

REFLEC-

whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness?

5 And he asked them, 'How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

\* Numb. 11. 22. Mat. 14. 15. & 15. 34.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The scribes and Pharisees could not bear to see the poor people follow Jesus, though to be cured; yet they could take a long journey merely to cavil with him.

1. They found fault with his disciples for eating with unwashed hands, contrary to the tradition of the elders; and complained to Christ of their criminal neglect; for so they esteemed it, being superstitiously scrupulous to wash before they sat down to meat, when they returned from market, and on a variety of other occasions; pretending great carefulness to avoid defilement. And for the same purpose they washed also their pots, cups, brazen vessels, and tables, or beds; lest by the touch of any impure person they should have contracted pollution; and fancying much religion consisted in these absurd traditions, they were ready to condemn every deviation from them with greater severity, than even the breaches of God's written law.

2. Christ vindicates his disciples, and reproves the hypocrisy and wickedness of their accusers. They truly fulfilled the prophesy of Isaiah; apostate in heart from God, while they pretended to honour him in much apparent devotion. They stamped human traditions with divine authority; imposed them as obligatory on men's consciences; and not only laid great stress upon the observance of these superstitious washings, but really subverted the plainest and weightiest commands of the law, when they stood in competition with their traditions. A more flagrant evidence of which cannot be conceived, than our Lord here produces against them. The tradition of the elders had established it as a rule, that if a man swore by *Corban*, by the gold of the temple, or that he would devote such a thing to the treasury of the temple, or would regard it as a devoted thing, and not part with it on any occasion, he was bound to fulfil his vow: and though the commandment of God had so expressly provided for the honour and support of parents, laying an awful curse upon the undutiful son that spoke or acted contemptuously against them; yet they held he was bound by his vow, and dispensed with from observing the evident commands of God, and the plainest dictates of duty and gratitude; so that he might safely withhold the least relief from his parents, however indigent, infirm, or aged; yea, was conscientiously obliged to do so: a tradition so iniquitous and shocking, as most strictly violated the word of God, and made it of no effect. Yet that, and many other things as impious, did the Pharisees impose on their disciples; and, under the mask of pretended sanctity, and reverence for the temple, sapped the very foundations of true religion.

3. To prevent the people from being imposed upon by those blind guides, he demands their attention to his discourse, as being a matter of highest importance; for if their principles were right, a correspondent practice would follow. This great axiom therefore Christ lays down, that nothing without a man, which he touches or eats,

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any farther than it has a bad influence upon his heart, can render him in God's sight morally unclean; but that all impurity comes from within: and the evil thoughts and desires which are expressed in words and actions, these are what defile the man, and render him odious in the sight of God; and this he bids them carefully remark and remember. The disciples, far from being yet emancipated from the vulgar opinions concerning the things by which a person was defiled, when they were alone, desired our Lord to explain his last observation to them, which appeared to them hard to be understood. With an air of surprise at their dulness, our Lord reproves their stupidity: if others were in the dark, they at least should have understood him. However, he is pleased to explain his meaning, so as to prevent the possibility of mistake. Two things he lays down, and supports with the clearest arguments. (1.) That whatever meats a man may eat, as they do not enter into his heart, which is the source of all moral purity or pollution, but merely pass through the body, they cannot, without intemperance, communicate any defilement before God. (2.) That the origin of all evil, and the cause of all uncleanness, is from within; whence proceeds all that train of evils before observed, Mat. xv. 19. to which others are here added; *covetousness*, the unsatisfied cravings of the heart after worldly things; *wickedness*, the contrivances of malice, and delight in mischief; *deceit*, in words or deeds, to conceal the designs of iniquity; *lasciviousness*, the impure imaginations, dalliance, or discourse, which the lewd indulge, though deterred from grosser acts of impurity; *an evil eye*, envying the enjoyments of others, or coveting what they possess; *blasphemy*, offering injury or indignity to God, or heavenly things; *pride*, the high conceit, the lofty look, the contemptuous or insolent carriage of the swelling heart; *foolishness*, the boasts of vanity, the ebullitions of folly, the rashness of inconsiderate censure, and the hastiness of imprudence. These, and these alone, are the defiling things that spring from the fountain-head of evil in the fallen spirit, and render the soul vile in itself, and abominable in the eyes of God.

2dly, We have one short excursion of the divine Redeemer into the coasts of the Gentiles; an earnest of the gracious designs that he had in store for them; but, perhaps that he might not offend the Jews, to whom he was particularly sent, he chose not to appear in public, and therefore entered into a house; but, though he would have no man know it, his fame was too much spread abroad to admit his concealment. And we have,

1. The application of a poor Gentile to him in behalf of her daughter who was possessed. Falling at his feet, she earnestly importuned him to cast out the devil from her child. At first her address met with such discouragement as Jesus was unaccustomed to give to poor petitioners. Compared with the chosen people of Israel, his visible church, he speaks as if the Gentiles were but as dogs, to whom the children's meat (the miracles that he wrought) must not be thrown, at least not till the children

3 I

first

6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before *them*; and they did set *them* before the people.

7 And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them*.

8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

10 ¶ And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts

of Dalmanutha.

11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

13 And he left them; and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

14 ¶ Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees,

\* Ch. 6. 39, 40. 1 Cor. 14. 33, 40. 1 Kings, 10. 5. Pf. 46. 10. Phil. 4. 19. f Ch. 6. 41. & 14. 22. Rom. 14. 6. 1 Sam. 9. 15. Deut. 8. 10. 1 Tim. 4. 4, 5. Mat. 26. 26. & 24. 45. b Pf. 37. 16. & 23. 1. & 68. 10. & 145. 18. Prov. 13. 25. Ver. 19, 20. Mat. 15. 37, 38. & 16. 10. h Mat. 15. 39. i Mat. 16. 1—4. & 12. 38. & 22. 23, 24. Acts, 5. 17, 34. & 23. 6—8. John, 7. 48. Luke, 12. 54—57. & 11. 16. Mat. 12. 38. & 19. 3. & 22. 18. 1 Cor. 1. 22. John, 4. 48. & 6. 30. k Ch. 3. 5. & 9. 19. l Mat. 12. 39, 40. & 16. 4. 1 Cor. 13. 4. m Pf. 81. 12. Hosea, 4. 17. Mat. 7. 6. & 15. 26. n Mat. 16. 5—12. Pf. 37. 16. o Mat. 16. 6. Luke, 12. 1. 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. Ch. 12. 14. Mat. xxii.

first be filled. Far from desisting on such a repulse, she wonderfully turns the apparent refusal into an argument for granting the favour which she asked and desired, as a dog, only to have one crumb, one miracle, among the multitudes that every day were so abundantly dispensed to the Jewish children. *Note*; (1.) They who have children possessed with unclean spirits, and have any genuine religion, cannot but earnestly present their sad case before the Lord, who alone can cure them. (2.) Poor supplicants at the feet of Jesus may confidently hope, amidst every discouragement, for an answer of peace at the last. If Jesus delays, it is to exercise their faith, and prove their perseverance.

2. The cure is wrought. Pleased with the poor Gentile's address, and admiring her faith, he grants her request: *The devil is gone out of thy daughter*; as she found to her unspeakable comfort, when, depending on the accomplishment of the word of Jesus, she returned to her house. So sure is the prayer of faith to prevail.

3dly, Jesus was never weary of the delightful work of going about doing good. On his return from the Gentile coast into the region of Decapolis, a new object of mercy is presented before him.

1. The case was afflictive: the poor patient was deaf, and either quite dumb, or not able to speak without much difficulty; the emblem of a miserable sinner, whose ears are closed to all the sweet sounds of gospel-grace, and unaffected by the thunders of Sinai; his lips sealed up, unable to speak the language of prayer or praise, or in conversation to communicate grace to the hearers.

2. The cure was singular; not by a word merely, as Jesus usually wrought his miracles; but, taking the poor man aside, he put his fingers into his ears, and spat, and touched his tongue; not as causes that could contribute to his cure, but to shew that he was not bound to any method of procedure. Then, looking up to heaven, he sighed, in com-

passion to human misery; or was grieved for the hardness of their hearts, who, after so many miracles, believed not on him; and he then saith unto him, *Ephphatha*, that is in the Chaldee dialect, *Be opened*; and instantly the cure was wrought, he heard distinctly and spoke plainly. And thus by the commanding voice of his Spirit he saith to the spiritually deaf and dumb that come to him, *Be opened*; and the ears are unstopped, the tongue is loosed, they know the joyful sound of gospel-grace, and speak aloud the praises of their Redeemer.

3. To avoid all appearances of vain glory, and not to exasperate his malicious enemies, he gave the people a charge to conceal the miracle; but they could not be silent; nay, rather the more they published it, that such modest excellence might be known: and all with astonishment heard the report, and from such repeated instances were compelled to acknowledge to his honour, that all his works bespoke the glory of his character, full of power and grace, without the least tincture of ostentation. *He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.* Is not this then the Christ? See Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.

#### CHAP. VIII.

*Ver. 11. Began to question with him,*] Συζητεῖν, to dispute. Heylin. This may refer to the ancient method of disputation, which was carried on by question and answer, Dr. Doddridge renders it *began to examine him*.

*Ver. 12. There shall no sign be given*] Εἰ δὲ ζήσεται. *I am not alive, if a sign, &c.* That this is an elliptical form of adjuration, is evident from Heb. iii. 11. in the original. The oath must be supplied thus: *Let me not be true, if this shall enter into my rest,—if a sign shall be given, &c.* Or as in Ezek. xiv. 16. *I live not, if sons or daughters be delivered.* See the LXX. and Bos's Ellipses. Some MSS. and versions read οὐ ζήσεται, *shall not be given.* See Wetstein.

*Ver. 15. And of the leaven of Herod.*] See the note on

and of the leaven of Herod.

16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* <sup>p</sup> because we have no bread.

17 And when Jesus <sup>a</sup> knew *it*, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? <sup>r</sup> perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

19 When <sup>s</sup> I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

20 And <sup>t</sup> when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

21 And he said unto them, <sup>u</sup> How is it that ye do not understand?

22 ¶ And he cometh to <sup>x</sup> Bethsaida; and

they <sup>y</sup> bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

23 <sup>z</sup> And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

24 And he looked up, and said, I <sup>a</sup> see men as trees, walking.

25 After that he put *his* hands <sup>b</sup> again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, <sup>c</sup> Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.

27 ¶ <sup>d</sup> And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

<sup>p</sup> Mat. 16. 7. <sup>q</sup> Mat. 9. 4. & 12. 15, 25. Ch. 2. 8. Jer. 17. 10. John, 2. 24, 25. Heb. 4. 12. 13. Rev. 2. 23. Pf. 139. 1—4. <sup>r</sup> Deut. 10. 17. Pf. 69. 23. & 94. 8. <sup>s</sup> If. 6. 9, 10. & 42. 18—20. & 63. 17. Ch. 3. 5. & 6. 52. & 9. 19. <sup>t</sup> Ch. 6. 34—44. Mat. 14. 17—21. Luke, 9. 12—17. John. 6. 2—13. <sup>u</sup> Ver. 1—9. Mat. 15. 34—38. Prov. 11. 24, 25. <sup>v</sup> Mat. 16. 11, 12. Heb. 5. 12. Pf. 94. 8. <sup>w</sup> 1 Cor. 3. 2. John, 14. 9. <sup>x</sup> Mat. 11. 21. John, 1. 44. <sup>y</sup> Ch. 2. 3. & 5. 28, 29. & 6. 56. <sup>z</sup> Ch. 7. 32, 33. <sup>a</sup> 1 Kings, 17. 19. <sup>b</sup> 2 Kings, 4. 33. If. 42. 2, 6, 7. John, 5. 41. & 7. 18. & 9. 6. Rev. 3. 18. <sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. 13. 11, 12. Prov. 4. 18. Job, 17. 9. Hosea, 6. 8. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 13. 12. & 25. 29. Phil. 1. 6. Prov. 4. 18. Job, 17. 9. <sup>e</sup> 2 Pet. 3. 18. Dan. 12. 4. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 9. 30. & 12. 16. & 16. 20. & 17. 9. & 8. 4. Ch. 7. 36. If. 42. 2. John, 5. 41. & 7. 18. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 16. 13—23. Luke, 9. 18—22.

Matth. xxii. 16. It seems evident from this passage, that the Herodians were of the sect of the Sadducees; for what St. Mark calls the *leaven of Herod*, St. Matthew, in the parallel passage, calls the *leaven of the Sadducees*. *Herodian*, therefore, was but another name for such sort of Sadducees as maintained the expediency of submitting to the innovations introduced by Herod and the Romans; for it may easily be thought, that those who favoured Herod and the powers who supported him, were generally of this sect. At the same time all the Sadducees were not Herodians, some of them shewing little of that complaisance to the reigning powers, for which their brethren were so remarkable: and this accounts sufficiently for the distinction between the Herodians and Sadducees, found Matth. xxii. 16, &c.

Ver. 17. *Heart yet hardened?*] *Still insensible*. Heylin.

Ver. 18. *And do ye not remember?*] Continue this on with what follows, and it seems to connect more properly. *Do ye not remember, when I brake the five loaves, how many baskets?* &c. As in Matth. xvi. 9. See Bowyer's *Conjectures* on Mark.

Ver. 22—26. *And they bring a blind man, &c.*] Two things are remarkable in this miracle: first, our Lord led the man out of the town, before he would heal him; and, when the cure was performed, he forbid him to return thither, or so much as to tell it unto any who lived in the town. The reason was, the people had for a long time been solicitous to have him acknowledged as the Messiah; and every new miracle which they beheld, moved them afresh to make the attempt. Nor could the inhabitants of Bethsaida complain of being ill used, though they were

not permitted to be witnesses of the cure, since they had brought this mark of Christ's displeasure upon themselves, by their ingratitude, impotence, and infidelity. See Matth. xi. 21. And as for the man, he could not think it any hardship to be hindered from returning into the city, since it was not the place of his abode, ver. 26. Secondly, in giving sight to this blind man, Jesus did not, as on other occasions of the like nature, impart the faculty at once, but by degrees: for at first the man saw things but obscurely; then, by a second imposition of Christ's hands, he had a clear sight of every object in view. Our Lord's intention in this might be; to make it evident that in his cures he was not confined to one method of operation, but could dispense them in what manner he pleased. In the mean time, though the cure was performed by degrees, it was accomplished in so small a space of time, as to make it evident that it was not produced by any natural efficacy of our Lord's spittle or touch, but merely by the exertion of his miraculous power. The blind man's expression, after the first imposition of Christ's hands, may easily be accounted for, on the supposition that he was not born blind, but had lost his sight by some accident; for if that was the case, he might have retained the idea both of *men* and of *trees*; in which light, his words *I see men as trees walking*, express the indistinctness of his vision very properly. See Doddridge, and ch. vii. 33.

Ver. 27. *Whom do men say that I am?*] See on Matth. xvi. 13, &c. It is remarkable, that the noble confession of St. Peter, recorded in St. Matthew, is suppressed here; which is a strong presumption that either St. Peter dictated

28 And they answered, ° John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

29 And he saith unto them, But ° whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, ° Thou art the Christ.

30 And ° he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

31 ¶ ° And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

32 And he spake that saying ° openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, ° he rebuked Peter,

saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou ° favourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

34 ¶ And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, ° Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

35 ° For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

36 For ° what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

38 ° Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed

° Ch. 6. 14. Mal. 4. 5. Luke, 9. 7-9, 19. ° i. e. risen from the dead. Luke, 9. 8, 19. ° Ch. 4. 11. John, 14. 9. ° John, 1. 41, 49. & 6. 69. & 11. 27. & 4. 42. 1 John, 4. 15. & 5. 5. Acts, 8. 37. & 9. 20. ° Ch. 9. 9. Ver. 26. Ch. 7. 36. Luke, 9. 21, 22. 1 Cor. 2. 1. ° Mat. 16. 21. & 17. 22, 23. & 20. 17, 18. Ch. 9. 31. & 10. 33. Luke, 9. 22. & 18. 31. & 24. 7, 26. If. 53. 2-10. Pf. 118. 22. John 16. 17. 2 Cor. 15. 4. ° John, 16. 25, 29. & 2. 19. & 3. 14. & 6. 51. ° 2 Sam. 19. 22. Prov. 29. 27. John, 6. 70. & 8. 44. Acts, 13. 10. ° Rom. 8. 7, 8. 1 Cor. 2. 14. 2 Cor. 2. 16. James, 3. 15. ° Mat. 16. 24-28. Luke, 9. 27. Mat. 10. 32-39. Gal. 5. 24. & 6. 14. Acts, 14. 22. Col. 1. 24. Eph. 4. 16. 1 Thess. 3. 3. 2 Tim. 3. 12. 1 Cor. 3. 18. Phil. 3. 7, 8. Heb. 11. 24. ° Mat. 10. 39. Luke, 17. 33. John, 12. 25. Gal. 6. 12. Rev. 12. 17. Heb. 11. 35. ° Job, 2. 4. Mat. 16. 26. Luke, 9. 25. & 12. 19, 20. Pf. 49. 7, 8. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. ° Mat. 10. 33. Luke, 12. 8, 9. 2 Tim. 2. 12. 1 John, 2. 23.

tated this Gospel, or revised it, according to the ancient tradition.

Ver. 32. *And he spake that saying openly.*] Plainly and freely, *παρρησια*: our Lord thought fit to foretel his own sufferings plainly, to bear down any towering imaginations which might have sprung up in the apostles' minds from the preceding discourses; for their faith was now so confirmed, that they could bear the discovery. See John, x. 24. xi. 14.

Ver. 33. *Get thee behind me, Satan:*] Our Lord is not recorded to have given so sharp a reproof to any other of his apostles, on any other occasion. He saw it was needful for the pride of Peter's heart, puffed up with the commendation that he had just given him. See Matth. xvi. 17. Perhaps the term *Satan* may not only bear the meaning "Thou art my enemy, while thou fanciest thyself most my friend;" but also "Thou art acting the very part of Satan, both by endeavouring to hinder the redemption of mankind, and by giving me the most deadly advice which can ever spring from the adversary himself of mankind." Peter had advised our Lord to favour himself (see on Matth. xvi. 22, 23.). Whence we may learn (says one), first, that whoever says to us, in such case, "favour thyself," is acting the part of the devil: 2dly, that the proper answer to such an adviser is, *get thee behind me*; 3dly, that otherwise he will be an offence to us; an occasion of our stumbling, if not falling; 4thly, that this advice always proceeds from the not relishing the things of God, but the things of men: yea, so far is this advice, *favour thyself*, from being fit for a Christian either

to give or take, that if any man will come after Christ, his very first step is to deny, or renounce himself;—in the room of his own will to substitute the will of God, as the one principle of action.

Ver. 38. *Whosoever therefore, &c.*] Jesus fitly inculcated the necessity of self-denial from the consideration of a judgment to come; the most awful and important event in the whole compass of our duration, and which, the word of God directs us to believe, will be attended with the most awful circumstances. His intention was, that we should fortify ourselves with this reflection, that it is eligible to endure a little now, when that little, through grace, may preserve us from enduring unspeakably more hereafter, and lead us to the possession of infinite and endless joys. Wherefore, if our great Master should ever honour any of us so far as to call us forth to suffer for him, let us do it bravely, and be true to God, to religion, and our own souls; having our eyes always steadily fixed on the bright crown, the white robe, the triumphant palm of the noble army of martyrs. The first verse of the next chapter should properly be joined to this. See its connection in the note on Matth. xvi. 28.

*Inferences.*—How apt is unbelief to raise, and to stop at difficulties, as if they were too great for Christ to surmount, (ver. 4.) and how prone to misconstrue his dispensations, and to forget the *years of the right hand of the most High!* How unreasonably does it reject the plainest and properest evidence which Christ has given, and want to be gratified in some extraordinary way of its own suggest-

of me and of my words in 'this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the 'Son of man be ashamed when he' cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

\* Mat. 16. 4. & 3. 7. † Dan. 7. 13. Pf. 80. 17. Zech. 13. 7. John, 1. 14. Mat. 16. 13. \* Mat. 24. 30. & 25. 31. & 25. 64. Zech. 14. 5. Jude, 14. Job, 19. 25. Dan. 7. 10.

ing! ver. 11. But faith, and not fancy, is to be encouraged; and all this unbelief, whether in the total, or only in a particular degree, argues such hardness of heart, as calls for lamentation and severe reproof. Yet, alas! how great is its remainder in too many of God's people? ver. 17. How does an *evil leaven* exist, and attempt to insinuate itself into them; and what need have they to be warned, and to be continually watching against it; and that with respect to corrupt doctrine, as well as practice, because of the bad influence which principles have upon the heart and life! This works and prevails, to the ruin of obstinate sinners; for if they persist in infidelity and impenitence, Christ will never gratify their curiosity or humour to reclaim them. He will turn away from them in righteous indignation, and leave them to the heavy judgment which they deserve.

But, on the contrary, how ready is this Lord of love to bear with his people's infirmities; to help and heal, and save those who are sensible of their wants, and apply by faith to him for mercy! He sometimes relieves them in an instant; at others in a more gradual way, ver. 23. Sometimes in a public, at others in a more private manner; as may be most for his glory, and their good: and all his gracious discoveries to them, are at the most seasonable times, when they are fittest to receive them, and most likely not to abuse them. But, if Satan gets an advantage, and they, through his influence, and the carnal workings of their own hearts, make a wrong use of them, Christ will shew his dreadful displeasure, ver. 33.

The *hand* of our blessed Saviour, ver. 23. may be considered as an emblem of his healing grace, and of the conduct of his ministers. He here uses it to three purposes. 1. That he may be a guide to the blind man, while he continues blind. 2. That he may apply the remedy to him. 3. That he may give him imposition of hands, ver. 25. A man may imitate Christ herein. 1. By treating the person spiritually blind with a charitable mildness before his cure. 2. By applying to him the remedy of evangelical truths with all discretion. 3. By praying, and doing good offices for him.

Retirement of some sort or other, is absolutely necessary after conversion, ver. 26. When a man has once received the knowledge of the truth, he must meditate upon it, feed on it, and let it take deep root in his heart.

How low were the disciples' notions about the nature of Christ's kingdom! and how slow of understanding, believing, and consenting to the plainest notices which he gave them of his sufferings and death! ver. 32. But we must receive a humbled as well as an exalted Saviour. If we would have him for our own, we must be ready to suffer with him; and not be ashamed to own him, by a professed subjection to him, however we may be reproached for it, as ever we hope to be glorified with him, and to be owned by him, when he shall come in the illustrious pomp and grandeur of the last day. What are all the sufferings

and shame of this present state, compared with the glory that shall be then revealed? What is all the gain which we can make in this life, compared to the eternal loss of our souls? Fatal and dreadful experience this, when, after having enjoyed pleasures, riches, or empire a few years, men find, by losing all in a moment, that all is nothing, and that whatever they possessed here, is altogether unprofitable for the other life!

How tremendous and alarming is our Lord's threatening! ver. 28. We may flatter ourselves, if we please, here below, and by trivial reasons excuse ourselves from giving testimony to the word of Christ, and to himself in his servants: the day of the Lord will disperse all those thin clouds with which we cover ourselves, and expose to open view the base interests which we shall have preferred to those of God and his Gospel. How much happier will it be to represent to ourselves that awful day in all its terrors, whenever a regard to an adulterous and sinful generation would lead us to be ashamed of Christ and of his word! So shall we be bold to confess and acknowledge that Son of man, that Son of God, below; who will reward us fully above, for all that we suffer for his sake, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The compassions of Jesus flow without ceasing towards the wretched and indigent. Vast multitudes followed him; and, so eager were the people to attend him, that neither toil nor hunger discouraged them. He therefore who graciously fed their souls with his heavenly doctrine, is again pleased by a miracle to feed their almost famished bodies. We have seen it recorded in nearly the same words, Mat. xv. 32, &c. and may learn, (1.) To count nothing hard in the way of duty, while we are following Christ. (2.) To trust him with our bodies as well as our souls, and verily we shall be fed. (3.) Not to be discouraged if we do not sometimes see any immediate prospect of relief under our difficulties: the Lord can open an unexpected door of deliverance for us.

2dly, Dalmanutha was a place not far from Magdala, Mat. xv. 39. Thither our Lord bent his course.

1. The Pharisees there met him, and, cavilling as usual, demanded a sign from heaven; as if all other miracles did not sufficiently prove his divine mission: not that they desired to be convinced, but sought a pretence for their infidelity. Therefore,

2. Christ refused to grant their request. Not that he could not work the miracle they sought, but because he knew the wickedness of their intentions in asking it; and therefore *sighed deeply*, as grieved for the hardness of their hearts, and expostulated with them on the unreasonableness of their infidelity, when such amazing signs had been given them for their conviction already: and, denying their request, he abandons them to their ruin. *Note*; They who will not submit to the evidence of the Scriptures, are justly

## C H A P. IX.

*Jesus is transfigured: he instructeth his disciples concerning the coming of Elias: casteth forth a dumb and deaf spirit: foretelleth his death and resurrection: exhorteth his disciples to humility: bidding them not to prohibit such as are not against them, nor to give offence to any of the faithful.*

[Anno Domini 31.]

**A**ND he said unto them, <sup>a</sup> Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them

that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

<sup>2</sup> ¶ <sup>b</sup> And after six days Jesus taketh *with him* <sup>c</sup> Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain <sup>d</sup> apart by themselves: and he was <sup>e</sup> transfigured before them.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 16. 28. & 26. 64. Luke, 9. 27. & 21. 18. Heb. 2. 8, 9. & 12. 28. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 17. 1—11. Luke, 9. 28—36. <sup>c</sup> Ch. 5. 37. & 14. 33. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 6. 31, 32. Song, 7. 11. <sup>e</sup> Exod. 34. 29, 35. II. 33. 17. John, 1. 14. <sup>2</sup> Pet. 1. 16, 17. Mat. 23. 3. Dan. 7. 9.

justly given up to the blindness of their minds, and left to perish in their unbelief.

3. On this he took occasion, as they were crossing the lake, to caution his disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod; which they, having taken scarcely any bread with them, interpreted literally as a rebuke for their carelessness, and an admonition not to apply to the Pharisees for relief, or to eat of their bread. And while they were casting the blame of their negligence upon each other, Jesus, who perceived their folly and stupidity, sharply rebuked them for their uneasiness in this matter, as arguing great unbelief of his power, which they had seen so wonderfully and lately exerted, whereof he reminds them; and therefore it was strange that they should be so senseless, and their hearts yet so hardened, as not to perceive, that he intended not his discourse concerning bread literally, which he could so easily supply, but of the doctrines of the Pharisees and Herod, which were to be shunned as dangerously pernicious. *Note*; (1.) It is amazing to think of the hardness of our hearts in general; that, after multiplied experiences of God's goodness, we are apt again to distrust his care the moment new difficulties arise. (2.) The more we know and understand what Christ is, and has done for us, the more will our hearts be engaged to trust him in every emergence.

3dly, The miracle recorded, ver. 22—26. is related by St. Mark alone, and is probably selected from the innumerable multitude of others, because some circumstances in it are singular.

1. The application was made to Jesus by a poor blind man's friends, who led him to the Saviour, desiring that he would touch him, persuaded that this would effectually work a cure. *Note*; In our prayers we should not cease to pray for poor blind sinners, intreating the Lord to open the eyes of their mind.

2. He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town, choosing to heal him secretly, and perhaps in just judgment upon the place, where so many miracles had been wrought, and yet the people continued in their infidelity.

3. He healed him; and this he did, not by a word, but in an unusual manner, and gradually. He spat on his eyes, and, asking what he saw, some glimmerings of light broke in upon him, and he beheld *men as trees walking*, his vision being yet indistinct and confused; but when Jesus had put his hands upon his eyes, and bid him look up again, then he saw every object clearly. Thus often is he

pleased to work in the heart: at first the light, like the dawning day, breaks upon the soul, and some glimmerings of spiritual things are perceived; of the danger and guilt of sin; the necessity of caring for the soul; the want of a Redeemer, &c. Afterwards our views enlarge; we gain deeper discoveries of our own corruption, and Christ's all-sufficiency; we enter into spiritual liberty, and then into fuller liberty; till at last, if we be faithful to the grace of God, we come to the most perfect day in glory, and know even as we are known.

4. He charges the man not to return to Bethsaida, nor acquaint any one there with his cure: their obstinate impenitence under the miracles that they had seen, rendered them unworthy of any more of those mighty works. They who slight their own mercies, justly forfeit them.

4thly, In the journey of Christ and his disciples to the towns of Cesarea-Philippi, we are told,

1. The inquiry of Christ concerning the opinion which the people entertained of him, and what were the sentiments of the apostles in particular. They inform him of the general veneration in which he was held, though men's opinions concerning him were divided; some supposing him the Baptist risen from the dead; others Elias; others one of the former prophets returned. With regard to themselves, St. Peter, in the name of the rest, professes their faith in him as a much greater character, even that of the divine Messiah. Hereupon Jesus commanded them to keep this for the present secret, the time being not yet come for declaring in such express terms his pretensions; lest the people, prepossessed with notions of a temporal Messiah, should be excited to an insurrection, or his enemies be exasperated to attempt to cut him off immediately, before he had finished his work.

2. Christ hereupon informs them more freely and openly than he had done before, concerning the sufferings that he must endure, to wean them from those vain imaginations concerning the temporal kingdom which they expected, and to prepare them for so afflictive an event. Peter's heart, fired at the mention of this, could not bear to hear of his Master's death, when he had just entertained the most sanguine hopes of his greatness; and therefore, taking him aside, expressed his astonishment that he should talk in such a manner; for which Peter got a severe and just rebuke before his fellow-disciples, to check their aspiring views, as well as his own. Christ tells him, that he acted as his bitterest enemy in opposing his sufferings: Satan could do no worse: and he shewed an utter want of discernment concerning

3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

6 For he wist not what to say; for they were fore afraid.

7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

<sup>f</sup> Ch. 4. 11. Acts, 10. 43. Rom. 3. 21. Luke, 24. 27, 44. 1 Peter, 1. 10, 11. <sup>g</sup> Pf. 30. 6. <sup>h</sup> 2 Peter, 1. 17. Exod. 40. 34. 1 Kings, 8. 10. Pf. 97. 2. Rev. 15. 8. <sup>i</sup> 2 Peter, 1. 17. Mat. 17. 5. & 3. 17. If. 42. 1. Pf. 2. 7. John, 1. 14. & 3. 16. & 1. 34. Col. 1. 13. <sup>k</sup> Exod. 23. 21. Deut. 18. 15—18. Acts, 3. 22. Heb. 2. 3. & 1. 1. & 12. 5, 20. <sup>l</sup> Ver. 30. Ch. 1. 45. & 5. 43. & 7. 36. & 8. 30. Mat. 11. 29. Luke, 9. 36. If. 42. 2. John, 5. 41. & 7. 18. <sup>m</sup> John, 2. 19. Ch. 8. 31. Ver. 31. & 10. 34. & xvi. Mat. xxviii. Luke, xxiv. John, xx.

concerning the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, and the great ends that God designed to accomplish by that death which he was about to undergo. In truth, Peter's eyes were so fixed on temporal grandeur, that he could relish nothing which seemed to contradict his aspiring views. *Note*; The cross is ever displeasing to our fallen nature, and we are too apt, like Peter, to be seeking for ourselves ease or greatness: hence in suffering times so many are offended.

3. He takes occasion hereupon to declare the terms of discipleship, and to suggest arguments to engage his faithful followers to meet courageously the persecutions which they must expect in his service. Self-denial, readiness to take up the cross, and conformity to the pattern of a suffering Saviour, are absolutely required of every follower of Jesus: nor must we count our lives dear to us, when his service requires us to part with them. Not that our sufferings, or even death itself, will be our loss; no: they will prove our greatest gain, and we shall find in life eternal an abundant recompense: whereas, if through fear or dread of suffering in this world, we save our lives by base compliances, our loss will be irreparable and eternal; we shall perish without remedy; and the gain of ten thousand worlds will never countervail the loss of an immortal soul: and as sure as ever we are ashamed of the cause of Jesus, and disown him by our unfaithfulness, so surely may we expect to be disowned by him in the great day of his appearing and glory: let us therefore count the cost, and with full purpose of heart cleave unto the Lord.

CHAP. IX.

*Ver. 1. Come with power.*] This was in some degree verified in the transfiguration which follows; but see the last note of the preceding chapter.

*Ver. 5. It is good for us to be here.*] *To stay here.* Heylin. Who observes, "I understand it of *staying*, from the proposal which Peter makes of setting up tents for their continuance there."

*Ver. 6. He wist not.*] *He knew not.*

*Ver. 10. With themselves.*] *To themselves. And they kept*

*the matter secret; yet they questioned, or debated, &c.* Heylin. Dr. Doddridge renders it, *And they laid hold on that word, disputing among themselves, &c.* See Matth. ix. 25. xiv. 3. Mark, xii. 12. and Rev. xx. 2. Sir David Dalrymple observes, that it should not be here, "what the rising of the dead should mean,"—for in those days that tenet was received; but "what *this* resurrection signified;"—what was meant by this rising of the Son of man from the dead. Being much surpris'd at the sudden departure of Elias, and of their Master's ordering them to keep this transaction a secret, the disciples had no sooner finished their dispute about what the rising from the dead should mean, than, addressing themselves to Jesus, they proposed this doubt, ver. 11. "Since Elias is so soon dismissed, and since thou hast ordered us to keep his appearance a secret, how come the scribes to teach on all occasions that Elias must appear, before the Messiah erects his kingdom?" Supposing that Elias was to have an active hand in modelling and settling the kingdom, they never doubted that he would have abode awhile on earth; and knowing that the scribes affirmed openly that Elias was to appear, they could see no reason for concealing the thing. That this is the connection of the disciples' question is plain from Matth. xvii. 9, 10. Jesus not only acknowledged the necessity of Elias's coming before the Messiah according to Malachi's prediction; but he assured his disciples, that he was already come; and described the treatment that he had already met with from the nation in such a manner as to make them understand that he spake of John the Baptist, ver. 12, 13. and Matth. xvii. 13. At the same time he told them, that though the Baptist's ministry was excellently calculated for producing all the effects ascribed to it by the prophets, they needed not be surpris'd to find, that it had not had all the success which might have been expected from it, and that the Baptist had met with much opposition and persecution, since both the person and preaching of the Messiah himself was to meet with the same treatment. Our Saviour, in the 12th verse, alludes to Malachi, iv. 6. where see the note.



21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, <sup>a</sup> Of a child.

22 And oft-times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, <sup>b</sup> have compassion on us, and help us.

23 Jesus said unto him, <sup>c</sup> If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; <sup>d</sup> help thou mine unbelief.

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, <sup>e</sup> he rebuked the foul spirit,

saying unto him, *Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, Come out of him, and enter no more into him.*

26 <sup>f</sup> And *the spirit* cried, and rent him fore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; infomuch that many said, He is dead.

27 But <sup>g</sup> Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

28 <sup>h</sup> And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

29 And he said unto them, <sup>i</sup> This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

<sup>a</sup> Job. 14. 1. & 5. 7. John. 9. 1, 20. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 15. 22. Pf. 25. 7. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 17. 20. & 21. 22. Ch. 11. 23. Luke. 17. 6. <sup>d</sup> Chr. 20. 20. Acts, 14. 9. 11. 7. 9. <sup>e</sup> Luke, 17. 5. <sup>f</sup> Phil. 1. 29. <sup>g</sup> 2 Theff. 1. 11. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 17. 18. Luke, 9. 42. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 4. 24. & 9. 33. & 12. 22. Acts, 10. 38. 1 John, 3. 8. Gen. 3. 1. <sup>j</sup> Ch. 1. 26. Ver. 18. 20. with Gen. 22. 14. Deut. 32. 36. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 3. 10. & 5. 41. & 7. 33. & 8. 23. Mat. 17. 19. & 13. 10, 36. & 15. 15. Pf. 109. 31. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 17. 20, 21. Eph. 6. 18. 2 Cor. 12. 7, 8. 1 Kings, 17. 20, 21. 2 Kings, 4. 33. 34. <sup>m</sup> Pf. 50. 15. 11. 45. 11. Mat. 7. 7. James, 5. 16.

spectators might be impressed with a more lively notion of the young man's distress. It was for the same reason also that he asked his father how long he had been in that deplorable condition? who informed him, that he had been so *even from his childhood*. The afflicted father, greatly discouraged by the inability of our Lord's disciples, and dispirited by the sight of his son's misery, and by the remembrance of its long continuance, was afraid that this possession might surpass the power even of Jesus himself, as the scribes averred; and so could not help expressing his doubts and fears, *If thou canst do any thing, &c.* Wherefore, to make him sensible of his mistake, Jesus said unto him, ver. 23. in allusion to the expressions of diffidence which he had uttered, *If thou canst believe, &c.* The father, hearing this, cried out with tears, that he believed; and besought Jesus to supply, by his goodness and pity, whatever deficiency he might find in his faith, ver. 24. As Christ's miracles were the proof of his mission, it may seem strange that on this and several other occasions, (see Matth. ix. 28.) before he would work the desired miracles, he required the subjects of them to believe on him. Perhaps these were the reasons: 1. His enemies frequently desired to see signs or miracles, feigning a disposition to believe (Matth. xvi. 1.): but the persons they brought to be cured, and the signs that they demanded, being generally such as they hoped would prove superior to his power, their true intention was, that, failing in the attempt, he should expose himself. For Jesus, therefore, to have wrought miracles in such circumstances, would have served scarcely any purpose, unless it was to gratify the unreasonable curiosity of his enemies, or rather their malignant disposition; a conduct, which instead of convincing must have enraged them, and prompted them to contrive, if possible, some more speedy method of destroying him. We know that Lazarus's resurrection had this effect; which is an incontestable demonstration that the obstinacy of

Christ's enemies was not to be overcome by any evidence, how clear or strong soever; and therefore he in his divine wisdom avoided performing miracles before this sort of persons, who could not be profited by them; as for instance, in his own country, where *he did not many mighty works, because of their unbelief*. Matth. xiii. 58. For the same reason, when any came to him begging miraculous cures, whether for themselves or others, it was very proper to ask, if the cure was sought to gratify a vain curiosity, and with secret hopes that Jesus would fail in the attempt, or from a real persuasion that he was able to perform it. Our Lord, it is true, was intimately acquainted with the thoughts and intentions of all men, and so had no need to put this question for his own information; but he did it to signify, that he would not work miracles merely to gratify the evil dispositions of unreasonable men. 2. It should be considered, that while the secular power did not interpose its authority to support the credit of our Lord's miracles, the more universally the faith of them prevailed in the country, where, and at the same time when they were wrought, the greater must their evidence be to us in after-times. Because such a general persuasion demonstrates, that our Lord's miracles were publicly performed; that many persons were present at them; that the eye-witnesses entertained no doubt of them; and that they related them to others, who, giving their testimony, believed them to be real. In this view of the matter, it concerns us not a little to know the opinion which our Lord's countrymen entertained of him, and of his works. We may therefore justly suppose, that one of the reasons of his asking those who came to him, if they believed that he was able to perform the cures they solicited, might be, to make us, who live in after-times, sensible how far the reports of his miracles were spread, how firmly they were believed, how great was the number of those who believed them, and how highly he himself

30 ¶ \* And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know *it*.

31 \* For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

32 But <sup>n</sup> they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

33 ¶ ° And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?

34 But they held their peace: <sup>p</sup> for by the way they had disputed among themselves who *should be* the greatest.

35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and said unto them, <sup>q</sup> If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all.

\* Mat. 17. 21. Luke, 9. 44. <sup>1</sup> Ch. 1. 45. & 3. 7. & 4. 10, 11. & 6. 31, 32. Ver. 2. o. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 16. 21. & 17. 22, 23. & 20. 18, 19, 28. & 26. 2. & 21. 38, 39. Luke, 9. 44. & 18. 31. & 24. 26. John, 2. 19. & 3. 14. & 10. 18. & 12. 32, 33. & 19. 11. Acts, 2. 23. & 4. 27, 28. 1 Cor. 15. 4. 2 Tim. 2. 8. Ch. xiv—xvi. <sup>n</sup> Luke, 2. 5. & 18. 34. Ver. 10. <sup>o</sup> Mat. 17. 24. & 18. 1—7. Luke, 9. 46—48. <sup>p</sup> Prov. 13. 10. Jer. 45. 5. Ch. 10. 42. Luke, 22. 24—27. 3 John, 9. <sup>q</sup> Ch. 10. 43. Mat. 20. 26, 27. & 23. 3—12. Luke, 14. 11. James, 4. 6. <sup>r</sup> Ch. 10. 14. Pf. 34. 11. & 45. 10. Prov. 8. 17. Eccl. 11. 9. & 12. 1. <sup>s</sup> Mat. 18. 5. & 10. 40—42. & 25. 40. 45. Luke, 9. 48. & 10. 16. John, 5. 23. & 12. 44. & 10. 30. & 14. 21. 1 Thess. 4. 8. <sup>t</sup> Luke, 9. 49. 50. & 11. 19. Num. 11. 27. Job, 5. 2. Eccl. 4. 4. Gal. 5. 26. <sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. 12. 3. Luke, 9. 50. & 11. 23. Mat. 12. 30. Phil. 1. 18. <sup>x</sup> Mat. 10. 42. & 25. 40.

was revered on account of them. This observation shews the wisdom and propriety of the expression which our Lord often made use of in conferring his miraculous cures; Matth. viii. 13. *As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.* Matth. ix. 22. *Thy faith hath made thee whole.* Luke, viii. 50. *Believe only, and she shall be made whole.* Luke, xviii. 42. *Thy faith hath saved thee.* For the cures following leave us no room to suspect, that the declarations which they gave of their faith in his miracles were feigned or doubtful. See Luke, viii. 48. But, 3. and especially, it must be added, that faith in the goodness and power of Christ, tended so much to the glory of the Creator, and the humiliation of the creature, that above all things it prepared the poor petitioner to receive the benefit of our Lord's miraculous interference; which, consistently with his own honour and perfections, he could in this case exert to the uttermost:

Ver. 30. *Passed through*] *Travelled about through.*

Ver. 38. *Master, we saw one, &c.*] Some commentators have supposed, that this was one of the Baptist's disciples, who, though he did not follow Christ with the rest, had been taught by his Master to acknowledge him as the Messiah, and entertained so great a veneration for him, that he attempted to call out devils in his name. Or if the character given of this person, *he followeth not with us,* (see Luke, ix. 49.) and the apostles' prohibition, *we forbid him,* are thought inconsistent with the above mentioned

36 And he took <sup>r</sup> a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

37 <sup>s</sup> Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

38 ¶ <sup>t</sup> And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us.

39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: <sup>u</sup> for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

40 For he that is not against us is on our part.

41 <sup>x</sup> For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

opinion, we may suppose that he was an exorcist, like the seven sons of Sceva (Acts, xix. 14.); who, having seen the miracles which the apostles had performed in their Master's name, while out on their first mission, thought there might be some great occult virtue in it, and so made use of it in his exorcisms, as Sceva's sons did in theirs, but with better success; for God might see reason now to grant that efficacy to such adjurations, which he afterwards denied, when the evidences of the Gospel were proposed so much more distinctly and fully after the descent of the Holy Spirit. See on ver. 40.

Ver. 39. *Lightly*] *Readily.* Campbell.

Ver. 40. *For he that is not against us, &c.*] This is one of those maxims which take different senses, as they are applied to different subjects. The circumstances determine the signification. Our Lord had formerly said, Matth. xii. 30. *He that is not with me, is against me;* thereby giving his hearers a just and necessary admonition, that on the whole, the war between him and Satan admitted of no neutrality, and that those who were indifferent would finally be treated by him as his enemies. But here, in another view, he very consistently uses a different and seemingly opposite proverb, the counterpart of the former; directing his followers to judge of men's characters in the most candid manner, and charitably to hope, that they who did not oppose his cause, wished well to it; a conduct peculiarly reasonable, when his cause lay

42 <sup>7</sup> And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in me, <sup>2</sup> it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

43 <sup>\*</sup> And if thy hand <sup>\*</sup> offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

44 <sup>b</sup> Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45 And if thy foot <sup>†</sup> offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life,

than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if thine eye <sup>‡</sup> offend thee, <sup>\*</sup> pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

49 <sup>d</sup> For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

<sup>7</sup> Mat. 18. 6. Luke, 17. 1, 2. Rom. 14. 13, 21. 1 Cor. 8. 9—13. & 10. 32. <sup>\*</sup> Acts, 9. 4. Mat. 25. 41—46. 2 Theff. 1. 6—9. <sup>\*</sup> Mat. 5. 30. & 18. 8. Deut. 13. 6, 8. Heb. 12. 1. 1 Peter, 2. 1. Col. 3. 5. Rom. 8. 13. <sup>\*</sup> Or *cause thee to offend*. <sup>b</sup> II. 66. 27. Jer. 7. 20. 2 Theff. 1. 9. Mat. 25. 45. Rev. 14. 10, 11. & 21. 8. & 20. 10 15. <sup>†</sup> Or *cause thee to offend*. <sup>‡</sup> Or *cause thee to offend*. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 18. 9. & 5. 29. Heb. 12. 1. 1 Peter, 2. 1. James, 1. 21. Col. 3. 5. Gal. 5. 24. Rom. 8. 13. <sup>d</sup> Lev. 2. 13. Ezek. 43. 24.

lay under so many discouragements. Probably, many who now concealed their regard to him, were afterwards animated courageously to profess it, though at the greatest hazard. See Doddridge and Heylin.

Ver. 42. *Whosoever shall offend*] *Whosoever shall insnare*. Campbell.

Ver. 43. *Offend thee,*] *Make thee offend*.

Ver. 44. *Where their worm dieth not,*] These expressions seem to be borrowed from Isaiah, lxvi. 24. *And they shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.* In this passage the prophet is describing the miserable end of hardened sinners, by a similitude taken from the behaviour of conquerors, who, after having gained the battle, and beaten the enemy out of the field, go forth to view the slain. Thus at the last day, the devil with all his adherents being finally and completely vanquished, the saints shall go forth to view them doomed by the just judgment of God to eternal death. And this their punishment is represented by two metaphors, drawn from the different way of burying the dead, in use among the Jews. Bodies of men interred in the earth, are eaten up of worms, which die when their food faileth; and those that are burned, are consumed in fire, which extinguishes itself when there is no more fuel added to feed it. But it shall not be so with the wicked; their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched. These metaphors, therefore, as they are used by our Lord, and by the prophet Isaiah, paint the eternal punishments of the damned in strong and lively colours. Dr. Doddridge observes, that there may indeed be an allusion here to Isaiah, lxvi. 24. but that the expression would have been just and proper without it. Dr. Rymer supposes, that both the *worm* and the *fire* are meant of the body, and refer to the two different kinds of funerals among the ancients, *interment* and *burning*. So that our Lord may seem here to prevent an objection against the permanent misery of the wicked in hell, arising from the frail constitution of the body; as if he should have said, “The body will not then be as it is at present, but will be incapable of consumption

“ or dissolution. In its natural state, the *worms* may devour the whole, and die for want of nourishment; the *fire* may consume it, and be extinguished for want of “ fuel: but *there* shall be *perpetual food* for the *worm* that “ corrodes it; *perpetual fire* for the *fuel* that torments it.” The most superficial reader must be sensible that our Lord’s repeating so frequently his declaration concerning the duration of future punishment, (see ver. 46. 49.) has in it something very awful, and implies that mankind should attend to it, as a matter of infinite importance to them. It likewise affords a lesson to all ministers of the gospel, directing them to enforce the principles of religion which they inculcate, by frequently and earnestly holding forth to the view of their hearers, the terrors of a future judgment.

Ver. 47. *It is better, &c.*] From what has been said, ver. 42. our Saviour infers, that it is better to deny oneself the greatest earthly satisfactions, and to part with every thing most precious,—represented by the figures of a *hand*, a *foot*, an *eye*, than by these things to cause the weakest of his friends to stumble, as some of the disciples had lately done. The amputation of our hands and feet, and the plucking out of our eyes, when they cause us to offend, import also that we should deny ourselves such use of our members and senses as may lead us into sin. Thus the hand and the eye are to be turned away from those alluring objects which raise in us lust and ambition; the foot must be restrained from carrying us into evil company, unlawful diversions, and forbidden pleasures; nor can we complain of these injunctions as severe, since by tempting others to sin, as well as sinning ourselves, we are exposed to the eternal punishments of hell. See on Matth. v. 29. It is observable, that what is called *the kingdom of God* in this verse, is called *life* in those preceding; whence it appears, that this kingdom, and life, are the same.

Ver. 49. *For every one shall be salted*] This difficult text has been interpreted very variously: I shall lay before the reader only such explanations of it as appear to me most reasonable. I. The proper translation of this passage, says Dr. Macknight, is, *Every one shall be salted for the fire,*

50 'Salt is good: but if the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it? 'Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

• Mat. 5. 13. Luke, 14. 34. with Job, 6. 6. 2 Tim. 2. 22. Heb. 12. 14.

f Col. 4. 6. Eph. 4. 29. Pf. 34. 14. Mat. 5. 9. Rom. 12. 18. & 14. 19. 2 Cor. 13. 11.

πᾶς πρὶ ἀλισθίσεται, namely, by you my apostles; for πρὶ here is the dative, not the ablative; as it is likewise 2 Peter, iii. 7. where the same construction is found, πρὶ τηρέμενοι, reserved for the fire.—“Every one shall be salted for the fire of God’s altar;” that is to say, shall be prepared to be offered a sacrifice to God, holy and acceptable: For though the proposition be universal, it must be limited by the nature of the subject, thus, “Every one who is offered a sacrifice unto God, shall be salted for the fire, as every sacrifice is salted with salt;” nor is it any objection against this interpretation, that the word ἀλισθίσεται will thus stand construed with different cases in the same sentence; for both sacred and profane writers make use of such constructions; nay, they often affix different senses to the same word in one sentence. See James, iv. 8. But the reader will have no doubt of the meaning of the passage, when he considers that our Lord is not giving a reason of the unquenchableness of hell-fire, as is commonly supposed, but a reason why his apostles and followers should cut off their hands, and pluck out their eyes, if these members prove the occasion of sin, either to themselves or others. This I think is plain from the clause that follows: *If the salt have lost its saltness*; if you, who are the salt of the earth, and whose office it is to season others, have lost your saltness, that is to say, your grace and goodness, wherewith will you season it?—*Have salt in yourselves, &c.* According to this interpretation, the argument stands thus: “That ye, my apostles, do mortify yourselves, is absolutely necessary, not only on account of your future well-being, but for the sake of mankind, who are to be salted by you for the fire;” that is, seasoned with piety, holiness, and virtue, by means of your doctrine and example, and so put into a fit condition for being offered unto God; in opposition to the condition of the wicked, who, being an *abhorrence unto all flesh*, must be consumed by the worm that never dies, and the fire that is not quenched. The necessity of men’s being thus seasoned with grace, in order to their becoming acceptable sacrifices unto God, you may learn from its being typically represented under the law, by the priest’s salting the sacrifices for the fire of the altar with salt. Having therefore this high honour, of salting mankind for the altar of heaven, conferred upon you, it is fit that you contain in yourselves the spiritual salt of all the graces, and particularly the holy salt of love and peace, in order that you may be, as much as possible, free from the corruption of ambition and pride, contention, and every evil work. II. Dr. Doddridge, following many learned commentaries, translates and paraphrases the passage thus: “For as the flesh burned on the altar has salt rubbed upon it, in consequence of which it burns so much the more fiercely; so every one of those unhappy creatures, the victims of divine justice, shall be, as it were, salted with fire; and instead of being consumed by it, shall, in those wretched abodes, continue immortal in the midst of their flames. Whereas every acceptable sacrifice shall be

seasoned with another kind of salt, even that of divine grace, which purifies the soul, and preserves it from corruption.” Sinners are represented as victims of divine justice, Isaiah, xxxiv. 6. Jer. xii. 3. xlvii. 10, &c. and good men, as in this place, are exhibited as acceptable sacrifices, consecrated to God. See Rom. xii. 1. xv. 16, &c. The version of 1729 translates this verse, *Such a one shall be consumed by fire; but the offering that is salted, shall be preserved from corruption*: but it does not any where appear that ἀλισθίσεται, bears the sense of *consumed*. The learned reader will find in Wolfius a multitude of different interpretations of this text.

Ver. 50. *But if the salt have lost, &c.] But if the salt become insipid.* See on Matth. v. 13. and on Lev. ii. 13. The ancients looked upon salt, as the symbol of friendship and peace; in reference to which Eschines speaks of the salt of the city, meaning thereby the public peace and prosperity; and hence, says Eustathius, to imitate the peace and friendship which should subsist between all those who partook of the same feast, salt, before all other, was set before the guests; for, continues he, as salt things, being compacted in many drops of water, every one in itself fluid and unsteady, becomes one solid body; so they, who from distant places unite in a league of friendship, meet together both in the same place and in the same friendly disposition. See Hammond.

Inferences drawn from the transfiguration of Christ on the Mount. How glorious and delightful must have been the view which the apostles had of our blessed Redeemer, when he was transfigured before them; clothed, as it were, with the divine *Schechinah*, and shining with a lustre like that of the sun! how pleasing and how edifying must it have been to them, to see with him Moses and Elijah, those two eminent saints, who had so many ages ago quitted our world, and whose names they had often read in the sacred records with wonder and reverence! and how great a happiness was it for these two illustrious prophets to see that glorified Saviour, who before his incarnation had spoken to them! to speak to that Man of God by whom they were glorified, and to become prophets, not to men, but in some sense to God: and what consolation, what confirmation was it to the disciples, to behold such examples of their future glory! They saw in Moses and Elijah what they themselves should be: how could they ever fear to be miserable, who saw such precedents of their ensuing happiness! How could they fear to die, who saw in others the blessedness of their own change! In this believing view, how truly may we say to death, *Rejoice not mine enemy; though I fall, yet shall I rise; yea, I shall rise in falling! We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed*, says St. Paul: Elijah was changed, Moses slept. When therefore, O faithful Christian, thou shalt receive the sentence of death on mount Nebo; or when the fiery chariot shall come, and sweep thee from this vale of mortality; remember thy glorious and

## CHAP. X.

*Christ disputeth with the Pharisees touching divorcement: blesteth the children that are brought unto him: resolueth a rich man how he may inherit life everlasting: telleth his disciples of the danger of riches: promisseth rewards to them that forsake any thing for the gospel: foretelleth his death and resurrection: biddeth the two ambitious suitors to think rather of suffering with him: and restoreth to Bartimeus his sight.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

AND he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther

side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

2 ¶ And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.

3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

5 And Jesus answered and said unto them,

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 19. 1—9. Luke, 4. 16. John, 3. 22. & 10. 40. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 4. 23—25. & 8. 1, 18. & 9. 35. & 12. 15. & 13. 1. & 14. 35. & 15. 30. & 17. 14. Ch. 6. 33. & 8. 1. <sup>c</sup> Ch. 2. 16, 18, 24. & 3. 6. & 7. 1, 2. & 8. 11. & 12. 13. Luke, 11. 53, 54. <sup>d</sup> If. 8. 20. John, 5. 39. <sup>e</sup> Deut. 24. 1. Jer. 3. 1. Mat. 5. 31. & 19. 7.

and future appearance with thy Saviour, and thou canst not but be comforted, and cheerfully triumph over that last enemy.

This transfiguration of our Lord is one of the most surprising occurrences that ever beset him: the four following may be reckoned up as the principal wonders of his life; his incarnation, temptation, transfiguration, and agony.—The first, worthy of all admiration, that God should become also man; the second, that the God-man should be tempted, and transported by Satan; the third, that man should be glorified upon earth; the last, that he who was man and God, should sweat blood, under the sense of God's wrath for man: and all these either had the angels for witnesses, or the immediate voice of God; that it may be no wonder that the earth marvels at those things whereat the angels of heaven stand amazed.

O Saviour! if thou wert such in Tabor, what art thou in heaven? If this were the glory of thy humanity, what is the presence of thy Godhead? But how glorious the reflection! he shall change our vile bodies, that they may be like his glorified body: Behold thy pattern, faithful soul, and rejoice. These very bodies, that are now like the earth, shall, if we be faithful, be bright as the sun; and we, who now see clay in one another's faces, shall then see nothing but heaven in each other's countenances. We who now adorn our perishing bodies with clothes, shall then be clothed upon with immortality, out of the wardrobe of heaven. Let us therefore look upon this flesh, not so much with contempt of what it was and is, as with a joyful hope of what it shall be; and when our courage is assaulted with a change of these bodies, from healthful to weak, from living to dead, let us comfort ourselves with the assurance of this change from dust to incorruption for every persevering believer. The faithful are not so sure of death, as of transfiguration.

Well might St. Peter say, *It is good for us to be here!* well might he be contented to resign his entertainments and his hopes elsewhere, that they might prolong these delightful moments, feasting their eyes with these divine visions, and their minds with these more than human discourses. But if a glimpse of this heavenly glory did so ravish this great disciple, how shall the faithful be affected with the contemplation, yea, fruition of the divine

presence! here was but Tabor, there is heaven; here were but two saints, there many millions of saints and angels; here was Christ transfigured, there he sits at the right hand of Majesty; here was a representation, there a gift and possession of blessedness. Oh that we could now forget the world, and, fixing our eyes upon this better Tabor, say, *It is good to be here!* Alas, how has our corruption bewitched us, to be affected with the shipwrecks of this world, to doat upon the misery of this fading life, rather than fly up to that blessed contemplation, wherein we shall see God in himself; God in us; ourselves in Him. There shall be no sorrow, no pain, no complaint, no fear, no death. There will be no malice to rise against us, no misery to afflict us. There, O there, *one day is better than a thousand*: there is rest from our labours, peace from our enemies, freedom from the possibility of sinning. How many clouds of discontent, in regard to too many of us, darken the sunshine of our joy, while we are here below: complaint of evils past, sense of present, fear of future, have too much shared our lives among them. There the saints shall be always joyful, always satisfied with the vision of that God, in whose presence there is fullness of joy. Shall we see that heathen Cleombrotus abandoning his life, and casting himself down from the rock, upon an uncertain notion of immortality?—And shall not we, Christians, abandon the tempting superfluities of life and the pleasures of sin, for that life which we are most assured the righteous shall obtain? At what do we hesitate?—Is there a heaven, or is there none?—Have we a Saviour there, or have we none?—We know that there is a heaven, as sure as that there is an earth below us; we know we have a Saviour there, as sure as there are men whom we converse with upon earth. Miserable then will be our folly and infidelity, if we do not despise the best offers of the world, and, lifting up our eyes and hearts to heaven, say, *It is good to be there.*

We may easily conceive with what astonishment the three disciples stood compassed in the bright cloud, expecting some miraculous event from so heavenly a vision; (ver. 7.) when suddenly they heard a voice sounding out of that cloud, *This is my beloved Son: hear him.* They need not be told whose that voice was; the place, the matter evinced it; no angel in heaven could or durst have said so.

How

' For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

<sup>f</sup> Deut. 9. 6. & 31. 27. Acts, 7. 51. & 13. 18. & 14. 16.

6 But <sup>e</sup> from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.

<sup>e</sup> Gen. 1. 27. & 5. 2. & 2. 24. Mal. 2. 14—16. with Jer. 6. 16.

How gladly does St. Peter, many years after, and but a little before his death, speak of it! 2 Peter, i. 16—18. Twice had God spoken these words to his Son from heaven, once in his baptism, and now again in his transfiguration. Other sons are beloved as of favour; this is *the beloved*, as in the unity of his essence. O incomprehensible and extensive love of God the Father to the Son, that for his sake he is pleased with all that believe! O happy complaisance! out of Christ, there is nothing but enmity betwixt God and the soul; in him there can be nothing but peace: when the beams are met in one centre, they do not only heat but burn. Our weak love is diffused to many; God hath some of it; the world perhaps some, and generally too much; and therein wives, children, and friends: but this infinite love of God has all the beams united in one infinite object, the Son of his love; neither does he love any thing but in the participation of his love, or in the derivation from him. O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, let me be found in thy beloved Son, and how canst thou but be pleased with me?

This one voice proclaims Christ at once the Son of God, the Reconciler of the world, the teacher and lawgiver of his church: as the Son of God, he is essentially interested in his love; as the Reconciler of the world, in whom God is well pleased, he most justly demands our love and adherence; as the teacher and lawgiver, he justly claims our attention, our obedience: even so, Lord, teach us, to hear and obey thee as our teacher, to love and believe in thee as our Redeemer, and to adore thee as the eternal Son of the Father!

*Suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man, save Jesus only*, ver. 8. and that doubtless in his usual form; all was now gone; Moses, Elias, the cloud, the voice, the glory. Tabor itself cannot be long blessed with that divine light, and those shining guests. Heaven will not allow earth any long continuance of glory: only above is constant glory to be looked for and enjoyed, where the faithful shall ever see their Saviour in his unchangeable brightness, where the light shall never be either clouded or varied. Moses and Elias are gone; only Christ is left. The glory of the law and the prophets was but temporary, that only Christ may remain unto us entire and conspicuous. They came but to give testimony to Christ; when that is done, they are vanished.

Neither could these disciples find any loss of Moses and Elias, when they had Christ still with them. Had Jesus been gone, and left either Moses or Elias, or both, that presence, though glorious, could not have comforted them. Now that *they* are gone, and *he* is left, they ought not to be discomfited. O Saviour, it matters not who is away, while thou art with us. Thou art God all-sufficient; what can we want, when we want not thee? Thy presence shall make Tabor itself a heaven; yea, no place of deepest distress can make us miserable, if accompanied with the fruition of thee.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The first verse of this chapter should properly, as in St. Matthew, have closed the preceding; as it is the conclusion of that discourse, and an argument to engage the fidelity of Christ's disciples, from the view of the nearness of his coming with power and glory, to punish the persecutors of his people by the destruction of the Jewish state and nation; and, by the mighty effusion of his spirit, to erect his church in the world, and bless the labours of his faithful ministers with the most astonishing success: and these events some of those then present should live to see.

Six days after the former discourse, we have an account,

1. Of his transfiguration on the Mount, in the presence of three of his disciples, (see Matth. xvii. 1, 2.) This glimpse of his glory would serve to prevent the *effence of the crisis*, and enable them, when they reflected on what they now saw and heard, to stand fast, unmoved under all the discouragements which their faith might afterwards encounter.

2. Of the discourse which passed between Christ and his disciples as they came down from the mountain. However desirous Peter was of dwelling there, the glorious scene was transient. Our Lord, as they returned from the mount, particularly charged them to take no notice of what they had seen and heard; at least, not till after his resurrection from the dead, when this vision would gain the more ready credence, and serve to prove his divine glory even in the midst of his humiliations. What this *resurrection from the dead should mean*, they were at a loss to conceive; whether it was to be taken literally, or to be applied metaphorically to his exaltation from his present state of poverty and indigence, to the throne of that glorious temporal kingdom which their prejudices still expected. And as they had been taught by their scribes, that Elias was to prepare the way for the Messiah's coming and kingdom, they inquired of him whether there was any real ground for such an expectation, especially as Elias had made so short a stay with them on the mount, and had not appeared at all in public. Christ clears up their doubts: the person spoken of by the prophet Malachi, was not to be Elias personally, according to the traditions taught by the scribes, but one in his spirit and power; and he had already appeared, and been rejected; plainly pointing them to John the Baptist, in whom the prophesy was fulfilled. And the same inspired writings that foretold the coming of John, predicted also the sufferings and indignities which the Messiah should suffer; these therefore altho they may assuredly expect to see accomplished in their season.

28ly, At the return of Jesus with his three disciples from the mount, he found their companions in no small perplexity:

1. The cause of it was, their being unable to heal a youth possessed of a devil, who was brought to them for cure,

7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife ;

8<sup>h</sup> And they twain shall be one flesh : so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 2. 24. Eph. 5. 31. 1 Cor. 6. 16.

cure, during their Master's absence ; whereupon the scribes triumphed over them, and probably were now disputing against them concerning their Master's doctrine and miracles, and the authority which they pretended to derive from him. In this juncture Jesus himself appeared ; and, struck with surprise at his critical arrival, the people with eagerness ran to him, congratulating him on his return, and giving him a hearty welcome. *Note ;* (1.) They who have ever tasted the sweetness of communion with Jesus, cannot but mourn his absence, and welcome his return. (2.) Frequently when we are most at a loss what to say or do, the Lord then appears peculiarly gracious in coming to our help, and ordering our goings.

2. Addressing himself to the scribes on the cause of the dispute, they dared not answer him ; but the father of the youth represented the piteous case, and the unsuccessfulness of his application to the disciples. His son was possessed of a *dumb spirit*, under whose malicious influence he was often thrown into terrible convulsions, foaming at the mouth, gnashing his teeth, and pining away under the frequent and violent returns of these diabolical agitations. And he had brought him to the disciples, who had in vain attempted to cure him.

3. With a sharp rebuke to the malicious scribes, and all others who had joined them in their dispute with the disciples, (among whom probably the father of the youth might be included, on being disappointed in his application) he brands them as a *faithless generation*, wilfully blind to all the stupendous evidences of his power which he had shewn, a people who wearied out his patience ; but he would give them, notwithstanding, a fresh evidence of that divine mission which they disputed, and therefore bids the father bring his son to him. If they will not believe, they shall, at least, be left without excuse.

4. No sooner was the lad brought within sight of Jesus, than the spirit, enraged at being about to be dispossessed, threw him to the ground in the most violent agonies, as if he would have torn him in pieces ; and there he lay wallowing and foaming. To make the cure appear more singular, Jesus hereupon asked, how long he had been thus afflicted ? The father answered, from his very infancy ; and representing the imminent dangers to which he was frequently exposed, of being drowned or burnt, by this malicious spirit, who had often cast him into the fire, and into the water, he importunately begs, if this be not a case beyond the power of Jesus, that he would compassionate a parent as well as a child so distressed, and help them out of their miseries. *Note ;* (1.) The possession of inveterate corruption is from the womb, and nothing but the Almighty grace of Jesus can cure the deeply-rooted evil. (2.) Sometimes we doubt Christ's power, sometimes his willingness to help us, and both shew the unbelief of our hearts : this is the case, more or less, with all believers who do not live up to the glorious privileges of their dispensation.

5. In answer to his suggestion, Christ replied, *If thou*

*canst believe, all things are possible, &c.* He had said ; *If thou canst do*, as if he suspected Christ's want of power ; therefore our Lord retorts upon him, and bids him suspect his want of faith ; yet, to encourage his trust, assures him, that this and every other case is possible, when the application is made in faith. With eagerness and tears, between fear and hope, the afflicted father cried out, *Lord, I believe thy all-sufficiency, and, grieving over the hardness and infidelity of my heart, beg thee to help mine unbelief, and enable me confidently to trust thee.* *Note ;* (1.) If ever we come short of any of our requests for the good of our souls, we may assuredly impute it to our unbelief. (2.) It is a sure sign of some faith, when a man is convinced of, and really cries to be delivered from, the unbelief of his heart. (3.) The strongest in faith need every day to pray for an increase of this most necessary grace.

6. Christ performs the wondrous cure. The people came running to see how the affair would end, and whether Jesus or Satan would prevail ; when with a voice of authority our Lord bids the foul fiend, who had made the child dumb and deaf, to depart, and never more return to him : nor dared the devil disobey, though with the deepest reluctance and most violent struggles quitting his hold, inasmuch that the lad lay breathless and motionless, so that many verily thought him dead. But Jesus, stretching out his hand, lifted him up ; and immediately he arose perfectly well.

7. When the disciples inquired privately why they had miscarried, our Lord lets them know that it was through want of this kind of faith, and their having neglected the instituted means for obtaining it—prayer and fasting. *Note ;* If we continue to neglect the means, our graces will necessarily decay, languish, and die away.

3dly, Being in haste to go towards Jerusalem, and desiring to be alone with his disciples, he travelled through Galilee with all secrecy, to prevent any interruption from the people assembled around him. And by the way, we are told,

1. The repeated notices which he gave to his disciples of his approaching sufferings, death, and resurrection ; but they understood not his meaning, clear as the words were. Their prejudices concerning his temporal kingdom spread a veil over their hearts, and they were ashamed and afraid to ask him, lest they should meet with a rebuke for their dulness. *Note ;* Many live and die in ignorance, because they are ashamed to own it, and to inquire of those who would instruct them.

2. He reproves them for their pride and affectation of superiority. He knew that the subject of their disputes in the way had been, who should possess the first honours in his kingdom ; but he put a question, as if he wanted to be informed concerning it ; to which, ashamed of what had passed, they returned no answer. But Jesus, to shew them that he knew the secrets of all hearts, and to check these most unbecoming desires of temporal grandeur, assured

9<sup>1</sup> What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*.

Mat. 5. 31, 32. Mal. 2. 14—16. Rom. 7. 1—3. 1 Cor. 7. 10—13.

fured them, that this ambitious affectation of pre-eminence would be punished with the lowest degradation: while the surest way to rise, would be by entertaining the lowest thoughts of themselves, and studying how to be most serviceable to the meanest of his disciples. And to impress what he had spoken the more deeply, he took a little child into his arms, whose humility, teachableness, and unambitious simplicity they ought to imitate; assuring them, that whoever shewed regard to the lowest of his people, because of such a spirit in them, for the sake of their resemblance and relation to him, he would regard it as done to himself; yea, God the Father, who sent him, would requite it. *Note*; (1.) Christ observes, and is displeas'd with the angry disputes of his disciples, and will call them to account for them. (2.) Nothing is so contrary to the spirit of Christianity, as the affectation of pre-eminence.

3. He checks the jealousy and rashness of the beloved disciple. John, in his travels, when he was sent forth with his fellow-labourers to preach the Gospel, had seen a man casting out devils in Christ's name, perhaps one of the Baptist's disciples, who, though a believer in Jesus as the Messiah, had not constantly attended him as they had done, nor been invested with any particular commission from him. Jealous therefore for their Master's honour, or perhaps rather for their own; unwilling that others should share these miraculous powers with them, they had forbidden him, because he had not been a professed disciple, or invested with any such commission as they had received. But Jesus said, *Forbid him not*. One who had such faith in his name, would not easily be brought to say or do any thing dishonourable to his cause. Such a one ought rather to be countenanced than discouraged; and, as he took not part with the enemy, but rather the contrary, he was to be regarded as a friend. *Note*; (1.) Partial to our own opinions and party, we are apt to monopolize Christ, and to think our cause is so much his, that all who follow *not with us* are to be regarded as *separated from him*: but there may be a great diversity of opinion in lesser matters among those who together hold the Head; and therefore we should bear and forbear, think and let think, without rash and rigid censures of those who differ from us. (2.) Wherever real good is done, where Christ is preached, and souls rescued from the power of Satan, though we may count the methods pursued irregular and unauthorized, we must leave every man to stand or fall to his own Master, and beware how we oppose what is attended with a blessing from God. (3.) Where nothing appears contradictory to the faith of the gospel, Christian love ever bids us hope the best.

4thly, Christ will not suffer the least kindness done to his poorest disciples to be unrewarded, nor the least offence given to them to go unpunished. The heaviest of all judgments hangs over that guilty head which shall hinder, discourage, or grieve the weak, or do ought to turn them back from Christ. And if any corruption in our hearts, or allurements from the world, or darling idol, would se-

duce us from the path of duty, and lead us and others into sin, though they were near and dear to us as a hand, a foot, or an eye, they must be cut off without pity. Eternity is at stake; and as a life of everlasting glory will amply repay us for every such sacrifice that we make, so will the endless torments in hell make us rue the indulgence of our sins, when, for a momentary gratification, we should be doomed to endure the gnawings of a guilty conscience, filled with the wrath of God, and the intolerable agonies of burnings unquenchable and eternal. For as, under the law, every burnt-offering was salted before it was laid on the altar, where the fire never went out; so every apostate shall fall a sacrifice to divine justice, and be cast into the fire of hell, preserved by the power of God from an extinction of their being, to suffer that wrath of God which is for ever wrath to come. And, on the other hand, the soul which is seasoned with divine grace, and offered daily and perseveringly as a living sacrifice to God, shall be preserved incorruptible, separated from the taint of this world's pollutions, and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. For, as *salt is good* to preserve meat from putrefaction, and renders it savoury, so does the grace of God preserve the soul from the corruption of sin, and renders those who possess this inestimable gift blessings to others, by spreading the sweet savour of Christ in the world. *But if the salt have lost its saltiness*, and they, whose hearts, lips, and lives, should be seasoned with this salt of grace, prove destitute of it, and apostatize from their profession, their fall is usually irrecoverable, and their ruin inevitable. Therefore, see that ye *have salt in yourselves*, the life of grace in your souls, subduing the corruptions within, and shewing itself in a savoury conversation, in every good word and work that may minister edification to others; and *have peace one with another*, united in the closest bonds of love and friendship, laying aside all disputes and envyings, and concurring to promote and propagate the gospel through the world. *Note*; (1.) The terrors and eternity of the torments of hell, if really believed, will be a powerful check to the raging passions of the soul. (2.) They who have the salt of grace, must shew it in their lips and in their lives.

## CHAP. X.

*Ver. 1.* By the farther side of Jordan] Through the country upon the Jordan. Campbell.

*Ver. 12.* And if a woman shall put away her husband,] Though it is certain that the Jewish law did not put it in a woman's power to divorce her husband; yet it is plain from Josephus, that it was done, not only by several ladies of distinguished rank, but even that his own wife did it, having probably learned of the Roman women, who, in this age, are known to have practised it in the most scandalous manner. See Juv. Sat. vi. ver. 222, &c. Compare 1 Sam. xxv. 44. 1 Cor. vii. 13. and Lardner's Credibility, part i. vol. 2. p. 890.

*Ver.*

11 And he saith unto them, <sup>k</sup> Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

13 ¶ <sup>l</sup> And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and *bis* disciples <sup>m</sup> rebuked those that brought *them*.

14 But when Jesus saw *it*, he <sup>n</sup> was much displeased, and said unto them, <sup>o</sup> Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

15 Verily I say unto you, <sup>p</sup> Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

16 <sup>q</sup> And he took them up in his arms, put *bis* hands upon them, and blessed them.

17 ¶ <sup>r</sup> And, when he was gone forth into

the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, <sup>s</sup> Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

18 And Jesus said unto him, <sup>t</sup> Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God.*

19 <sup>u</sup> Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, <sup>v</sup> all these have I observed from my youth.

21 <sup>w</sup> Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, <sup>x</sup> take up the cross, and follow me.

<sup>k</sup> Mat. 5. 32. & 19. 9. Luke, 16. 18. Rom. 7. 1-3. Mal. 2. 14-16. 1 Cor. 7. 10-13. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 19. 13-15. Luke, 18. 15, 16. Gen. 48. 14, 15. Jer. 49. 11. <sup>m</sup> Ch. 9. 38. & Mat. 15. 23. <sup>n</sup> Ch. 3. 5. & 8. 31. & 9. 39. Luke, 9. 54-56. <sup>o</sup> Mat. 18. 3. & 19. 14. Luke, 18. 19. Gen. 17. 7. Deut. 29. 11. 1 Cor. 14. 20. Prov. 8. 17. & 23. 26. Eccl. 12. 1. Pf. 34. 11. & 45. 10. <sup>p</sup> Mat. 18. 3. & 20. 26. 1 Pet. 2. 2. John, 3. 3, 5, 6. Rom. 12. 2. Eph. 4. 24. Col. 3. 10. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Gal. 6. 15. <sup>q</sup> Gen. 48. 14. & 16. 8. Luke, 4. 40. & 13. 13. If. 40. 11. Numb. 8. 10. <sup>r</sup> Mat. 19. 16-22. Luke, 18. 18-23. <sup>s</sup> John, 3. 2. & 11. 28. <sup>t</sup> John, 6. 28. Acts, 2. 37. Exod. 19. 8. Rom. 9. 31, 32. & 10. 2, 3. & 2. 17, 18. Gal. 2. 16. & 3. 10, 12. <sup>u</sup> 1 Sam. 2. 2. Pf. 119. 68. James, 1. 17. <sup>v</sup> Gal. 4. 21. Exod. 20. 12-17. Deut. 5. 16-21. Rom. 13. 9. James, 2. 11. Lev. xix. Gal. 5. 14. <sup>w</sup> Phil. 3. 6. Titus, 2. 16. 2 Tim. 3. 5. If. 58. 2. Ezek. 33. 31. Luke, 18. 11, 12. <sup>x</sup> Ch. 8. 34. Luke, 12. 33. & 16. 9. 1 Tim. 6. 18, 19. Acts, 2. 44. & 4. 32, 34. Mat. 6. 19, 20. <sup>y</sup> Ch. 8. 34. John, 16. 33. Acts, 14. 22. 2 Tim. 3. 12.

Ver. 15. *Whosoever shall not, &c.*] "As to adult persons, I assuredly tell you, who, by your behaviour on this occasion, plainly need the admonition, whoever he be, that does not embrace the Gospel of the kingdom with humility and meekness, free from hypocrisy, wrath and malice, pride and ambition, in resemblance of the temper of a little child, shall never be a partaker of its great and glorious blessings."

Ver. 17-19. *There came one running,*] St. Luke, xviii. 18. calls this person *αρχων της, a certain ruler*, by which may be meant either a ruler of the synagogue, or a member of the sanhedrim. This person expected to have found Jesus in the city of Ephraim; but when he understood he had just left that place to go to Jerusalem, he ran after him, and, coming up to him, he kneeled to him, in token of respect, and addressed him upon an important question, with the title of *good master*, or, as the words might better be rendered, *good teacher*. See on Matth. xxiii. 7. This young ruler, in his address, intended or pretended to do great honour to Jesus, by kneeling to him, and giving him the title of *good teacher*, and asking him such an important question, with an air as if he would have acquiesced in his decision whatever it might be. Jesus therefore first of all rebuked him for the flattery of his address, ver. 18. *Why callest thou me good? There is none good, but one,—that is God.* "What means thy calling me, by way of eminence, *God*, since thou dost not take me to be any thing more than a man? This title is too high and flattering

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to be applied so emphatically to any rabbi, or mere creature; for there is none absolutely good but God himself, who is the author of every kind of goodness." See Matth. xix. 17. However, because he had expressed a desire of knowing the way to eternal life, and possessed some virtuous dispositions, Jesus answered his questions, by directing him to keep the commandments of the second table of the law, ver. 19. which he mentioned on this occasion, not because they are of greater importance than the precepts of the first, but because there is a necessary connection between the duties of piety towards God, and of justice, temperance, and charity towards men; and because these latter are not so easily counterfeited as the former. As St. Mark seems to put the words *defraud not* for the tenth commandment, some have supposed it to be a key to the sense of those words, *thou shalt not covet*; as if it had been said, "Thou shalt not be so desirous of thy neighbour's possessions, as to be willing to injure the owner, by depriving him of them, that thou mayest secure them to thyself." But St. Paul strongly intimates, that the sense of that command is much more extensive, Rom. vii. 7.: and as the preceding commandments had forbidden to invade the life, the bed, the property, or reputation of another; so this undoubtedly requires a guard on those irregular appetites and passions, which might by insensible degrees lead men to murder, adultery, theft, or false testimony.

Ver. 20-22. *All these have I observed, &c.*] The phrase

22 <sup>b</sup> And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

23 ¶ And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, <sup>c</sup> How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom

of God!

24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them <sup>d</sup> that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

<sup>b</sup> 2 Cor. 7. 10. Judges, 18. 24. Ch. 4. 19. Phil. 3. 19. Ps. 17. 14. 2 Tim. 4. 10. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 19. 23—26. Luke, 18. 21—27. Mat. 13. 22. Luke, 21. 34. Job, 31. 24. Ps. 62. 10. 1 Cor. 1. 26. James, 4. 4. & 5. 1—3. & 2. 5. 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. <sup>d</sup> Ps. 52. 7. & 61. 10. & 17. 14. Prov. 11. 18. & 18. 11. & 23. 5. 1 Tim. 6. 17.

ἐκ νεότητος, may indeed be very exactly rendered *from my youth*; but as he was yet but a young man, Matth. xix. 20. it is probably here put for *infancy* or *childhood*. It is plain that he did not understand the spiritual meaning and intent of the law, according to our Lord's explication of it in his sermon on the mount, or he would not have pleaded his exact obedience. But the Jews in general seem to have thought, that if they abstained from gross crimes, sacrifices might atone for smaller neglects or offences; and this compound seems to have been that righteousness of their own, in which, to their final ruin, they trusted for justification before God, in neglect of the righteousness which is of God by faith. Compare Rom. x. 3. and Philip. iii. 9. This ruler had most probably maintained a fair external character amid the temptations of youth, of wealth, and greatness: but I can by no means believe, that it was upon this account that Jesus loved him. The nature of all true religion, as held forth in the Gospel, forbids this idea. It was most probably on account of the sweetness of his disposition, visible even in his countenance; a thing amiable, though found in a character tainted with pride, and the love of the world,—that Jesus loved him: and with this the words of the evangelist seem best to agree. *Then Jesus, beholding him*,—looking steadfastly upon him,—*loved him*. But notwithstanding the young ruler had maintained a fair character, and was blessed with great sweetness of disposition, he was not only puffed up with a high opinion of his own righteousness, but altogether faulty in respect of his affection for worldly and sensual enjoyments; a sin which perhaps had escaped his own observation. Wherefore Jesus, willing to make him sensible of the secret fore of his mind, touched it gently, to shew him that he lacked a great deal still, and had by no means arrived at that pitch of virtue which he boasted, but was worldly-minded in a high degree. Jesus required him to sell his estate, to distribute the price of it to the poor, and to become a preacher of the Gospel; promising him a much greater estate in return,—*treasure in heaven*. He could not refuse to do this, if he was the good man that he pretended to be, since he had in words acknowledged Christ's divine mission, and had desired to know what more, besides obedience to the moral law, was necessary to render him perfect in goodness. When our lord says, *one thing thou lackest*, we are not to suppose that he meant *but one thing*; for the Pharisaic righteousness of the young ruler disqualified him for all the righteousness of the Gospel,—for all the holiness which flows from humble love. He wanted that humility, which makes us conscious of our infinite demerit, and makes us willing to part with every thing which keeps us

from the Saviour, as dross and dung. When the ruler heard what was necessary for him, that is, to part with all for Christ,—he was greatly disconcerted, inasmuch that, without making any reply, *he went away grieved*; for he had a great estate, which he could not by any means think of parting with. See the note on Matth. xix. 21. The truth is, though God does not absolutely require every man to distribute all his goods to others, and so in effect to become one of the number of *poor* to be relieved out of his own possessions; yet, since holiness and piety demand an habitual readiness, not only to sacrifice our possessions, but our lives, at the command of God; and Providence does in fact call some out to trials as severe as this; the young man's refusal plainly shewed, that he valued his worldly possessions more than eternal life; and our Lord, with consummate wisdom, took this direct and convincing way of manifesting, both to himself and others, that secret insincerity and carnality of temper, which prevailed under all these specious pretences and promising appearances. It has been conjectured by some, from the circumstance of his being called a young man, (see Matth. xix. 22.) that this ruler was unmarried; on which account our Lord's command was less grievous to him than if he had had a wife and children. It may be proper just to hint, that there are some who view this passage of Scripture in a rather different light; supposing the young man, however attached to the world, yet sincere in his application to Christ. They observe, that he proposed his important question with the highest deference and respect to our blessed Lord, as well as with the greatest eagerness to know his sentiments. He *came running*, he *kneeled*, and he addressed him under the title of *good Master*, which was a title of peculiar and unusual respect, it being scarcely to be met with any where else in the Scriptures. It is true, continue they, upon our Saviour's informing him of the qualifications necessary to be acquired, and of the commands requisite to be kept, to entitle him to eternal life, he answered that, He had *kept all these things from his youth*; yet there is nothing in these words which necessarily leads us to conclude that they were spoken arrogantly, or with a vain and groundless ostentation. St. Paul, who was remarkable for the low and humble thoughts which he entertained of himself, has used terms not greatly unlike them, 2 Cor. i. 12. Acts, xxii. 16. Had they been the language of arrogance and false presumption, our Saviour most probably would have charged him with this crime, either expressly, or by some distant hint, as we usually find him treating persons of such character; yet as nothing of this kind appears, but indeed the very contrary, our Saviour *looking upon* this young man

25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, ° Who then can be saved ?

27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, ' With men *it is* impossible, but not with God : for with God all things are possible.

28 ¶ <sup>s</sup> Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, <sup>h</sup> There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or

mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's,

30 But he shall receive <sup>i</sup> an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, <sup>k</sup> with persecutions ; and in the world to come eternal life.

31 <sup>l</sup> But many *that are* first shall be last ; and the last first.

32 ¶ <sup>m</sup> And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem ; and Jesus went before them : and they were amazed ; and as they followed, they <sup>n</sup> were afraid. ° And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,

\* Mat. 7. 14. Luke, 13. 24. Numb. 24. 23. f Job, 10. 17. & 42. 2. Jer. 32. 17, 27. Zech. 8. 6. Luke, 1. 37. Heb. 7. 25. If. 63. 4. ° Mat. 19. 27—30. Luke, 18. 28—30. Ch. 1. 20. Phil. 3. 7—9. Deut. 33. 9—11. <sup>h</sup> Luke, 22. 28, 29. 2 Cor. 6. 8. <sup>i</sup> Pf. 19. 11. If. 61. 10. 2 Chron. 25. 9. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 16. 24. John, 16. 33. Acts, 14. 22. 2 Tim. 3. 12. Col. 1. 24. Heb. 12. 6. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 19. 30. & 20. 16. & 8. 11, 12. & 21. 13. Acts, 13. 46. Luke, 13. 30. & 7. 29, 30. & 18. 14. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 20. 17—19. Luke, 18. 31—34. Pf. 40. 8. If. 53. 7. <sup>n</sup> John, 11. 8, 56. Ch. 9. 31. ° Mat. 11. 25. & 13. 11. Ch. 4. 34.

man immediately after he had uttered these words, and *loving him*, we cannot, without offering an indignity to our Saviour's character, suppose him to entertain the least degree of approbation towards an insolent assuming hypocrite, vainly justifying himself for righteousness, though really destitute of all true goodness. The same observations are in general applicable to his third question, *What lack I yet ?* It is evident therefore, say they, that this young person was desirous of being acquainted with our Saviour's sentiments concerning his first question, from the high opinion that he had of him. See Matth. xix. Luke, xviii. and the *Inferences*.

Ver. 25. *A camel*] Or, *A cable*. See on Matth. xix. 24.  
Ver. 27. *With men it is impossible, but not with God, &c.*] This is indeed utterly impossible to every man by any power of his own ; but is not so to the mercy and power of God, with whom nothing is too hard to do : he can make an effectual change upon the heart by regenerating grace, and enable it freely to render up all the affluence of this world, and every thing which is dearest to it here, when they stand in competition with me, and the blessings of my kingdom, and when he demands a resignation of them for his glory.

Ver. 29. *There is no man that hath left, &c.*] Our Lord is not here speaking of such as have actually separated themselves from the persons, and parted with the possessions here mentioned ; for if that had been his meaning, he would not have said, that wives and children were to be forsaken, having himself, on a former occasion, expressly prohibited divorce on any account, except fornication. He is speaking of those, who, for his sake and the Gospel's, have renounced the pleasures and satisfaction which relations and possessions usually afford. See Luke, xiv. 33. Our Lord promises to all such great rewards, *He shall receive, &c.* ver. 30. " He who hath forsaken all for my sake, shall be no loser in the issue ; because God, who designs

" to admit him into heaven, will give him the comforts  
" necessary to support him in his journey thither, and will  
" raise him up friends, who shall be as serviceable to him  
" as the nearest kindred whom he has forsaken. By the  
" special benignity of Providence he shall have every thing  
" valuable, which relations or possessions can minister to  
" him : and, besides, shall have *persecutions*, whose heat  
" shall nourish virtues in him of such excellent efficacy, as  
" to yield him, even in this present world, joys a hundred  
" times better than all earthly pleasures : but, above all,  
" in the world to come, he shall have everlasting life.  
" His afflictions contributing to the growth of his graces,  
" which are the wings of his soul, he shall in due time be  
" raised on them even up to heaven, leaving all sorrows  
" behind him, and shall fly swiftly into the bosom of God,  
" the fountain of life and joy, where he shall have full  
" amends made him for all the evils that he may have un-  
" dergone on account of Christ and his Gospel." See on  
Matth. xix. 30.

Ver. 32. *They were in the way going up, &c.*] The rulers at Jerusalem had issued out a proclamation against our Lord, immediately after the resurrection of Lazarus, and probably promised a reward to any that would apprehend him, John, xi. 57. This seems to have been the reason why the disciples were *amazed*. The alacrity which their Master shewed in so dangerous an expedition, surprized them, and *they were afraid*, being struck with a fearful apprehension of the consequences *while they followed him*. They all expected indeed that the kingdom was immediately to appear, Luke, xix. 11. ; but recollecting what had been said to them concerning the difficulty of rich men's entering into it, and comparing that declaration with the behaviour of the rulers, who had hitherto opposed and persecuted Jesus, they became very apprehensive of the dangers they should be exposed to at Jerusalem. In such circumstances our Lord knew that a repetition of the prophesy

33 *Saying*, ' Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles:

34 And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

35 ¶ ' And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, ' we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one ' on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

38 But Jesus said unto them, ' Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of " the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

39 And they said unto him, ' We can. And Jesus said unto them, ' Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

40 ' But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared.

41 And ' when the ten heard *it* they began

to be much displeas'd with James and John.

42 But Jesus called them *to him*, and said unto them, ' Ye know that they which \* are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

43 ' But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

45 ' For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

46 ¶ ' And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway side begging.

47 And, when he heard that it was ' Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, *thou* ' son of David, have mercy on me.

48 And ' many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

49 ' And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, ' Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.

50 ' And he, casting away his garment, rose,

¶ Mat. 16. 21. & 17. 22, 23. & 20. 18, 19. Ch. 8. 31. & 9. 31. Luke, 9. 22. & 18. 31—33. & 24. 7. with ch. xiv—xvi. John, xviii. xx. Mat. xxvi—xxviii. Luke, xxii—xxiv. Pl. xxii. lxix. If. liii. Acts, 4. 27. & 2. 23. ' Mat. ac. 20—28. & 4. 21. Ch. 1. 19. & 5. 37. & 9. 2. ' 1 Kings, 2. 16. Rom. 8. 26. James, 4. 3. Jer. 45. 5. They asked by, or along with, their mother. \* Be thy chief ministers of state. 1 Kings, 2. 19. & 22. 19. Pl. 45. 9. & 110. 1. Mat. 16. 27. & 19. 28. ' Rom. 8. 26. James, 4. 3. ' John, 18. 11. Pl. 75. 8. Luke, 12. 50. & 22. 42. Ch. 14. 36. Mat. xxvi. xxvii. Pl. xxii. lxix. ' John, 11. 16. Ch. 14. 31. ' John, 16. 33. Mat. 10. 17—34. & 24. 9. Col. 3. 24. Acts, iv—xii. Rev. 1. 9. ' If. 52. 13. & 49. 3. John, 17. 2, 6, 24. Mat. 25. 34. Rom. 8. 30, 31. 1 Peter, 1. 3, 4. ' Luke, 22. 24. Mat. 20. 24. Prov. 13. 10. James, 4. 1. Job, 5. 2. ' Luke, 22. 25. Mat. 20. 25. \* Or *think good*. ' Mat. 20. 26, 27. & 17. 33, 4. & 21. 8—13. Luke, 22. 26, 27. & 14. 11. & 18. 14. John, 13. 12—17. 1 Cor. 9. 19—23. James, 4. 6. 10. 1 Peter, 5. 5, 6. ' Mat. 11. 29. & 28. 20. & 26. 28. Phil. 2. 5—8. Heb. 5. 8. 1 Tim. 2. 4—5. Titus, 2. 14. Gal. 3. 13. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Dan. 9. 24, 26. See Mat. 20. 28. If. 53. 10. 1 Peter, 1. 16. ' Mat. 20. 29—34. Luke, 18. 35—43. with If. 59. 10. ' Mat. 1. 21. & 2. 23. Luke, 4. 16. John, 1. 45, 49. ' If. 11. 1. Jer. 23. 5, 6. Mat. 1. 1. & 9. 27. & 12. 23. & 15. 22. & 22. 42, 45. Rom. 9. 3, 4. Rev. 22. 16. ' Mat. 20. 31. & 19. 13. & 15. 23. Luke, 18. 1. ' Heb. 4. 15. & 2. 17. Pl. 145. 8. & 86. 15. & 105. 10—14. ' John, 11. 28. If. 45. 22. ' Eccl. 9. 10. Phil. 3. 7—9. Song, 1. 4. Pl. 84. 2. & 42. 1, 2.

phesy concerning his own sufferings was proper, because it shewed the disciples that they were entirely voluntary; and as he told them expressly, that they had been predicted by the prophets, the opposition he was to meet with, though it would end with his death, instead of weakening their faith, ought to have increased it; especially as he informed them at the same time, that he would rise again the third day. See the next verses, and the note on Matth. xx. 18.

Ver. 33, 34. *Shall condemn—shall deliver, &c.] Will condemn, &c.*

Ver. 46. *Blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus,]* Bartimeus, which signifies in the Syriac language, *the son of Timeus*.

Ver. 50. *He, casting away his garment,]* That is, his upper garment, that it might not hinder him a moment in his approach to Christ. The blind man herein furnishes us with an instructive lesson, that we should rise no less eagerly, no less gladly cast away our *cloak*, lay *aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us*, and without all delay or hesitation follow Christ *in the way, running with patience the race that is set before us*, whenever he calls us by his word and Spirit. Our repentance must not be de-

and came to Jesus.

51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?"

The blind man said unto him, "Lord, that I might receive my sight."

52 And Jesus said unto him, "Go thy way;

\* Ver. 36. Mat. 7. 7, 8. with If. 35. 5.

\* Gr. *Ribboni*. John, 20. 16.

\* Mat. 8. 13. & 15. 28. & 9. 22. Luke, 7. 50. Ch. 5. 34.

ferred from day to day: but to-day, if we will hear his voice, we must take care not to harden our hearts.

Ver. 51. *That I might receive my sight.*] *That I may have my sight.* Heylin. *That I may recover my sight.* Doddridge: who observes that this is the exact meaning of ἀναελέψω; which seems to import, that he was not born blind, but lost his sight by some disease or accident, which made him so much the more sensible of the calamity. It appears, however, from John, ix. 11, 18. that the word is sometimes used in a greater latitude.

Ver. 52. *Hath made thee whole.*] Σίσσωσέσθε, *hath saved thee*, which seems evidently to refer to something more than a mere bodily cure.

*Inferences drawn from the application of the young ruler to Christ.*—When our Saviour dwelt upon earth, he found a young man in the coasts of Judæa, who preferred the riches of this world to all the treasures of heaven;—and yet Jesus cast an eye of love upon him. This love was not properly a divine love, except as a love of pity. We must understand it chiefly in this sense, that the affections of his human nature were drawn out towards something that was very amiable in this young Israelite. He approved of those accomplishments which he beheld in him, and felt a sort of complacency in his person and character. He had a desire after his welfare which was more than human. He gave him divine instructions for this end, and pitied him heartily that he was so far gone in the love of the world, as to forego the offer of heaven.

The qualities which might chiefly attract our Saviour's peculiar love were probably such as these: he was young, and it is likely had something very agreeable in his aspect. His carriage was courteous and obliging; for he knelt before our Lord, and saluted him with much civility. He had a religious education and much outward sobriety and virtue, so that he was ready to think himself a complete saint. *All these commands, says he, have I kept from my youth;* yet he was willing to receive further instructions, if any thing else were necessary in order to eternal life. Add to all this, that he was rich and powerful; he was a ruler among the Jews, and had large possessions; which made his condescension and other virtues appear the more amiable, because they are too often wanting in persons of an exalted station.

From this remarkable person then, who had so many good qualities, and yet missed of heaven, we may learn not to disclaim any thing that is worthy and excellent, though it is mixed with much iniquity; but to pay respect and love, as our Lord Jesus did, to persons who have any thing valuable in them, though their virtues are imperfect, and fall short of genuine religion. We are taught further, that many lovely accomplishments joined together are not sufficient to attain eternal life, unless through grace we renounce this world, and follow Christ: and we are divinely

warned of the danger of riches, how great a snare they sometimes prove to persons of a hopeful character.

Let such, however endowed they may be with natural excellencies of body or mind, seriously reflect while they are in their bloom and vigour. Youth and beauty, strength and health, wit and reason, judgment, memory, or sweet disposition, are all the gifts of God, and certainly render persons so far amiable, as they are possessed of them; yet who can fail mourning with much compassion over those who flourish in the possession of any of these endowments, and yet have no saving acquaintance with God in Christ, no right to eternal life! What pity is it, that the flower of age should be employed only to soothe vanity, to adorn guilty passions, to dress up the scenes of sin! That flower will wither in old age, and it leaves no perfume behind, but what arises from piety, holiness, and virtue.

Who can fail pitying the young, the vigorous, the comely figures of human nature, who neglect to seek after divine grace, who are ruined and made wretched to all eternity by their excessive love of the pleasures, or the pomp, or the riches of this world! Who can fail pitying those endowed with a lively imagination, without sanctifying grace! What a lovely wilderness of blooming weeds! fair indeed in various colours, but useless and unfavoury,—persons whose happy talents give a relish to the common comforts of life, diffusing joy and pleasure, enlivening the dullest hours, courted and beloved by all: but how dismal is their state, if they neglect holiness, and are not beloved of God! Can they imagine that their gay fancy will brighten the gloom of hell, divert the anguish of a tortured mind, or relieve the heavy and everlasting misery of themselves or their companions, in the hideous regions of future punishment!

Who can fail to pity the man of strong reason and great sagacity, who has traced nature in her most secret recesses, but has spent no time in searching into the deep things of God? Reason is a faculty of supreme excellence among the gifts of nature; and it is dreadful to think that it should ever be engaged in opposition to divine grace. How great, and wretched, are the men of reason, who strain the nerves of their soul to overturn the doctrine of Christ! who labour with all their intellectual powers to shake the foundations of the Gospel, to diminish the authority of the Scriptures, and to unsettle the hope of feeble Christians!

There are others, who employ the best powers of the soul in pursuing the interests of this life. They are wise in contrivance to gratify their appetites, to fill their coffers; wise to secure all their wealth and honours to their posterity after death; but make no provision for their own souls. They are wise to set in order their houses in the day of their health, and to prepare all things for their dying hour, except the concerns of their own eternity: these are delayed from day to day, and left at the utmost hazard; and still they think that the next month, or the next year,

it

thy faith hath \* made thee whole. <sup>P</sup> And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

• Or saved thee. <sup>P</sup> Gen. 1. 3. Pf. 33. 9. If. 35. 5. & 42. 18. Mat. 11. 5. & 9. 29. & 12. 22. Ch. 8. 25.

It will be time enough to prepare for heaven; when perhaps a summons is sent suddenly from on high, *Thou fool, this night is thy soul required of thee!* What confusion and fear will seize them at that hour!—They have laid out all their wisdom upon the little business of this life, and trifled with affairs of everlasting concern. They must leave all the fruits of their wisdom behind, and be branded for eternal fools!

Who again can fail pitying those who are blessed with a large memory, the noble repository of the mind, to receive divine truths, to be stored with the ideas of God and his grace, to supply the heart and tongue upon all occasions for worship, for conference, and for holy joy? What pity is it that so wondrous a capacity should be crowded with vile images, with wanton scenes, with profane jests, with idle stories; or, at best, filled with the transitory things of this life,—night and day the buyers and sellers passing through this temple which should be consecrated to God, and yet no room left there for the thoughts of heaven? Shall these busy swarms of cares and vanities for ever fill up so large a chamber of the soul? Shall impertinences for ever be thrust into this treasury, such as will stand in no stead when we are dismissed from the body, but will vanish all at once in that hour, and leave our spirits poor and naked; or, if they follow us to the future world, it will be but as so much fuel gathered for our burning?

Once more, who can fail to pity those who are born with a sweet disposition, and seem to be cast in a softer mould than the rest of men; who can fail mourning, to think that any of these should perish for ever, who have tenderness and something like goodness in their very form and aspect! They are the favourites of all men; alas! why will they not strive to become the favourites of God too!—Good humour is the companion of their nature, and the law of kindness is on their lips. But is this enough to depend upon for eternal life?—There is so much natural tenderness in their spirits, as leads them on by a sweet instinct to the practice of many charities: but all this is not converting grace. If Jesus Christ himself were upon earth, in his humble state as *man*, he would look upon such, and love them; but as God, he looks down from heaven, and beholds them as the objects of his just hatred, while they live in a state of vanity and sin, drunken with sensual pleasures, and at enmity with God.

This sweetness of temper, which springs from the blood, and a happy mixture of humours, or at best from the mere natural frame of spirits, will never pass before the great tribunal for holiness and inward religion. With all this charming appearance of virtues, these colours that look like heaven, they will be doomed to hell, and perpetual misery, unless nobler qualities be found in them; love to God, mortification to this world, the knowledge and faith of Jesus Christ. If these be not the springs of our charity and love to men, we shall not be secure from the condemning sentence of the eternal Judge.

Think then a little with yourselves, such of you, my

readers, as possess these rich endowments of the mind, after that you have been honoured here on earth, can you bear to be doomed to shame and punishment everlasting? Shall this wit and this reason be there employed to express your hatred against your God, and to forge perpetual blasphemies against the Majesty of heaven? Shall this sprightly fancy, this penetrating judgment, this large memory, serve for no purpose, but to aggravate your guilt, and your damnation? Shall these fine talents sharpen your misery, and give edge to the keenest reflections of conscience,—that immortal tormentor? Yet this must be the certain portion of those, who spend their life, and lie down in death, with these talents un sanctified; for the anguish and torture of sinful souls will be proportioned for ever to the excellence of their abused endowments. And say, O ye of soft and gentle natures, how will you bear the insult and rage of malicious spirits? How will your temper, that had something so lovely in it, bear to be banished for ever from the world of love? You that delighted on earth in the works of concord and peace, how will you endure the madness and contention, the envy and spite of wicked angels? What will ye do, when your tender dispositions shall be hourly ruffled by the uproar and confusion of those dark regions; when, instead of the society of God and blessed spirits, you shall be eternally vexed with the perverse tempers of your fellow-sinners, the sons of darkness?—O that it were possible by any means to awaken your souls to jealousy and timely fear; that so many natural excellencies as God hath distributed among you, might not be wasted in sin, abused to dishonour, and aggravate your everlasting misery; but that, on the contrary, as furnished with every amiable natural quality, so you might be blessed with divine grace, and be at once beloved by God and by man!

Such a one was our Lord Jesus Christ, respecting his humanity, in the days of his flesh; from his very childhood in favour with God and with man. In the whole composition of his nature, in the mildness of his deportment, and in all the graces of conversation, he was *the chiefest of ten thousand, and altogether lovely*. Such too was John, the man who attained that glorious appellation, *the disciple whom Jesus loved*,—that is, with a distinguishing and particular love.

O how happy are the persons who most nearly resemble this apostle! who are thus privileged, thus divinely blest! How infinitely are they indebted through Christ to God, their benefactor and their Father, who has endowed them with so many valuable accomplishments on earth, and has given them an interest in the happiness of heaven! It is he, O ye blessed among men, who has made you fair or wise. It is he who has given you ingenuity or riches, or perhaps has favoured you with all these; and yet has weaned your hearts from the love of this world, and led you to the pursuits of eternal life. It is he who has cast you in so refined a mould, and given you so sweet a disposition; who has inclined you to holiness, sobriety, and virtue,

CHAP. XI.

*Christ rideth with triumph into Jerusalem: curseth the fruitless fig-tree; purgeth the temple: exhorteth his disciples to steadfastness of faith, and to forgive their enemies: and defendeth the lawfulness of his actions, by the witness of John, as a man sent from God.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

AND when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at

<sup>b</sup> the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.

3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that <sup>c</sup> the Lord <sup>d</sup> hath need

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 21. 1—11. Luke, 19. 29—40. John, 12. 12—16. <sup>b</sup> 2 Sam. 15. 30. <sup>1</sup> Kings, 11. 7. <sup>2</sup> Kings, 23. 13. Luke, 22. 39. Acts, 1. 12. Zech. 14. 4. Ch. 13. 3. <sup>c</sup> Pl. 24. 1. & 50. 10, 11. Acts, 10. 36. Heb. 1. 2. <sup>d</sup> 2 Cor. 8. 9. Zech. 9. 9.

virtue, and raised you to honour and esteem, made you possessors of all that is desirable in this life, and offers to you, and is preparing you for, a nobler inheritance in that which is to come. What thankfulness does every power of your nature owe to your God, that heaven looks down upon you, and the world around you fix their eyes upon you, and love you? That God has formed you through his grace to so bright a resemblance of his own Son, his first Beloved; and, if you continue faithful, will make you joint-heirs of heaven with him!

Watch hourly against the temptations of pride; remember the fallen angels, and their once-exalted station; and have a care lest ye also be puffed up, and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Walk before God with exactest care, and in deepest humility: let that divine veil be spread over all your honours, that as ye are the fairest images of Christ, ye may be dressed like him too; for he who is the highest Son of God, was also the holiest of the sons of men.—He who is God over all, blessed for ever, was the humblest of every creature.

REFLECTIONS.—Ist, Wherever our Lord journeys, we find him employed in the blessed work of preaching the word, to teach us to be instant in season and out of season. Multitudes still followed him, some to hear, some to be healed, and some with a malignant purpose to entangle him in his talk, and raise some matters of accusation against him. Of this number were the Pharisees, who, by an ensnaring question concerning divorce, endeavoured to lead him into a dilemma, either of contradicting Moses, or being exposed to the censure of being a man of loose morals. He asked them what Moses had commanded? They answered, that in many cases he had permitted divorce. Our Lord replies, that it was no more than a *permission*, granted merely because of the hardness of their hearts and their cruel disposition, as a law of the state to prevent worse consequences; but at the beginning it was not so: the very creation of one man and one woman, and but one, intimated the inseparable union between them: the settling of the law of marriage, Gen. ii. 24. declared it; since, for the sake of this relation, a man must quit even the dearest ties of nature, and prefer his wife to father and mother: and the connection arising from marriage is so close, that, as Adam and Eve were one flesh, her body being formed from his, so must every husband and wife reckon themselves as *no more twain, but one flesh*. Whom God therefore

has thus indissolubly joined together, it would be the highest presumption in man to separate.

The disciples, who had been used, according to the generally received opinion among the Jews, to think divorces lawful, desired in private farther information on this point. And our Lord informs them that there was but one lawful cause for divorce; and, except in the case of adultery, whatever man or woman divorced their partner, and married again, would themselves be adulterers, and expose the injured party to the like crime. *Note*; It becomes us first well to weigh the case before we take a companion for our lives: when once the choice is made, mutual kindness and forbearance, and desire to please, should every day endear the relation, and remove whatever might occasion a wish of separation.

2dly, Jesus Christ has a tenderness for the lambs of his flock: he does not refuse the request of those pious parents who present their babes to him before they can lift his praises. The disciples indeed opposed their application; but Jesus encouraged it, took up the infants in his arms, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them. And, if they were capable of receiving the spiritual blessings of his kingdom, what should hinder their being admitted by baptism into the visible communion of his church? Of such he declares the kingdom of God consisted, as well as of grown persons, who in humility, teachableness, and dependence on their Father's care, must become as little children; without which they never can partake of the privileges of his kingdom. Lord, give me then this spirit of a child, that I may be enabled to cry, Abba, Father, with an unwavering tongue!

3dly, We have,  
1. The young ruler's application to Christ, and sorrowful departure from him; when we considered, Mat. xix. 21. His address was most respectful, and his question infinitely important; eternal life being our great concern, and to secure that the one thing needful: and where the value of an immortal soul is felt, we cannot surely but be solicitous in our applications to Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life. Our Lord perceived the error under which he laboured, and rebuking him for giving the title of *good* to any person whom he regarded as a mere man, desired to discover to him the insufficiency of his own righteousness for justification before God, and his inability to keep that law of innocence by a perfect obedience, to which eternal life alone could be secured without a Mediator: and in the precepts

of him ; and straightway he will send him hither.

4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place

precepts of the second table our Lord sets before him the path of duty. Ignorant of the spiritual extent of the commandments, he conceives that he may venture to say he has kept all these from his youth, because he has escaped the grosser violations of them. So apt are we to flatter ourselves in our own eyes that we are righteous, when indeed it is our ignorance that hides from us our sinfulness. Something amiable in him attracted the regards of Jesus, and, looking upon him with compassion, he would fain humble those high thoughts of himself which he had entertained: and, to bring him to the test, he bids him give one proof of his obedience and charity, by selling all his possessions, distributing them to the poor, trusting in the promise of a more enduring substance in heaven; and then let him take up his cross and follow a suffering Saviour; and this would infallibly bring him to the eternal life which he sought. But alas! these were too hard sayings for so rich a man to comply with: he went away forcibly chagrined at the proposal; and, if such was the only alternative, he rather chose to part with eternal life than his great possessions. *Note*; (1.) The only proper use of worldly wealth is to do good with it. Though we may not be commanded to sell all literally, we must remember that we are really no more than stewards, and that a solemn account will shortly be required concerning every penny that we have possessed. (2.) Great riches often prove a great snare. How many by these have lost eternal life? (3.) A man may be possessed of a thousand amiable qualities, and yet be utterly destitute of genuine religion.

2. Christ observes, to the astonishment of the disciples, the difficulty of their salvation who have the abundance of this world, and whose hearts, in consequence thereof, are engaged to trust in their riches: and when, by the impracticability of a camel's going through a needle's eye, he intimated the immense obstructions that there were in the way of a rich man's salvation, the disciples, above measure astonished, concluded the impossibility of any man's being saved; since such as were not rich, wished in general to be so; and they were conscious to themselves how much their hearts were set on temporal grandeur. Jesus, looking with compassion upon them, to relieve in some measure their anxiety, bid them consider that, though such a change of heart as was needful to every mortified disciple of his, was beyond the mere power of man, it was not beyond the power of God, who can give the most wealthy, who penitentially seek him, the deepest poverty of spirit; and enable those, who have the greatest obstructions in their way to glory, to surmount them, if they cleave to him.

3. They who leave all for Christ, shall be no losers thereby. Peter mentions with some satisfaction, that, though their possessions and connections were not great, they had given them up to follow him. And Christ assures him, that what they or any others should part with for his sake, would prove in the issue to be their unspeakable gain: whether a man quitted his home, his substance, his relations, or friends, or whatever else was dear to him, for the sake of a faithful adherence to Christ and his Gos-

pel, he should find his truest advantage in it, in present comfort; and sometimes in kind, the Lord will give him a hundred-fold, *with persecutions*, which all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must expect more or less as long as they are in the body, and in the world to come an eternal life of happiness and glory. *But many that are first* in profession, will be so outstripped in zeal and fidelity by others, who will be called after them, as to come in *last* in the race: while *the last*, who seemed farthest from the kingdom of heaven, and latest embrace the offers of the Gospel, by their diligence will often first reach the goal; see 1 Cor. xv. 10. *Note*; (1.) The nearest and dearest relations must not weigh with us, when set in competition with our profession of Christ, and the service of the Gospel. (2.) Till we come to heaven, however prosperous our circumstances may be, we are to expect the cross; it is only then that we shall have finished our warfare, and entered into our eternal rest.

4thly, The nearer Christ drew to the scene of his sufferings, the plainer he warns his disciples of them, that they might be the less surpris'd at them when they came.

He now appears eagerly hastening to the face of his enemies; while his disciples, considering what he had suggested would happen to him at Jerusalem, were amazed at his resolution, and followed him trembling, apprehensive, probably, lest they might be involved in his troubles. To prepare them for this distressing event, Christ again called them, and told them distinctly all that would befall him; that, when it came to pass, they might remember that he suffered nothing of which he was not apprized, and to which he did not voluntarily submit. Then he rebukes the pride and ambition of the disciples, which all these warnings could not cure. Two of them wanted to be prime ministers in his kingdom; and, through their mother, wished to have a general promise granted them that he would bestow on them a request that they were about to make, which proved to be no less than securing the two most honourable places next the throne, when Christ should, as they expected, set up his earthly reign. But alas! they mistook the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, which called them to suffer, not to bear rule. The ten, as culpable as the two petitioners, and equally ambitious of the places they sought, were exceedingly displeas'd at their affecting this precedency, to which they thought themselves equally entitled. But Jesus, to silence both parties, lets them know, that the kingdom which he was about to erect, was not to be governed as earthly monarchies, where the rulers exercised despotic sway; but, on the contrary, he should be the greatest in the Messiah's kingdom, who was in his own eyes the most abas'd, and most ready in every work and labour of love to serve the meanest disciple; for herein he nearest resembled his Master, who came with deepest humility as a servant, and was to die upon the cross as a slave, paying down the ransom, and perfecting the atonement for our sins.

5thly, In St. Matthew we were told of two blind men, who were restor'd to sight; but in this chapter we are inform'd but of one; perhaps he was most remarkable, as the

where two ways met; and they loose him.  
 5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?  
 6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.  
 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.  
 8 And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.  
 9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; blessed

is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:  
 10 Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.  
 11 And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.  
 12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:  
 13 And seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any

<sup>a</sup> 2 Kings, 9. 13. John, 12. 12-14. & 1. 14. Lev. 23. 40. <sup>f</sup> Pl. 118. 24-26. Mat. 27. 9. & 23. 39. John, 12. 13. Luke, 19. 37, 38. & 2. 11. & 1. 32. Pl. 72. 17-19. If. 9. 6, 7. & 11. 2-4. & 52. 13. & 53. 12. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 21. 16-17. Luke, 19. 45. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 21. 18. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 21. 19. Luke, 13. 6-9. & 19. 42-44. Phil. 3. 18, 19. 2 Tim. 3. 5. Tit. 1. 16. Heb. 6. 4-8. & 10. 26-31. 2 Peter, 2. 20-22. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 12. 43-45. & 20. 40-44. Rev. 3. 1.

son of Timeus. He sat begging by the way-side; and no sooner heard of Jesus passing by, than, crying incessantly, he would not be silenced till Jesus stood and called him; when, eager to be led to him, he threw off his upper garment, and, coming before the Saviour, presented his request, and received his cure. In him we see, (1.) An emblem of the sinner's misery, poor, blind, and destitute. And a happy thing it is when, brought to a sense of his misery, he is found at the way-side of ordinances, crying after Jesus. (2.) The blind and lame are among the truest objects of charity, and to their cries we must never be deaf. (3.) The calls of Jesus are our encouragement to come to him; and they are so general, free, and full, that, whenever a poor, guilty, corrupted creature feels his wants, we may safely say to such a one, *He calleth thee*. (4.) When we are coming to Christ, whatever would prove a hindrance, like this garment, should be cast off. (5.) None truly cry to Jesus, and go away without relief. If we have faith in his power and love, we shall assuredly see the salvation of God. (6.) When Christ enlightens the eyes of our minds, it is in order that we should henceforth keep him ever in view, and follow him in all his holy ways.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 2. *Go your way, &c.*] *Go to the village there before you.* Heylin. *To yonder village that faces you.* Version of 1729. Our Saviour probably pointed with his finger to the village.

Ver. 11. *Even-tide*] Or, evening.

Ver. 13. *And seeing a fig-tree, &c.*] The time of the year when this event happened, was undoubtedly three or four days before the passover at which our Saviour was crucified; and the passover that year fell in the beginning of April. Upon this it is inquired, "How would Christ expect to find figs on the tree at that season of the year? And what is the meaning of the Evangelist's saying, *the time of figs was not yet?*" I. In the first place it is asked, "How could Christ expect to find ripe figs on the tree in the latter end of March?" The plain answer is, because figs are ripe so soon in Judea; all

the difficulty here has arisen from men's not considering the difference of the climate. Judea is a country vastly hotter than England, and there the fruits are brought forth and ripened much sooner than they are in our colder climate. The barley in Judea was ripe in March, and the wheat in April; we cannot therefore wonder if there were ripe figs in the beginning of April too. But this is not all; it can be directly proved, concerning fig-trees in particular, that in Judea they brought forth good figs, which were ripe as early as the passover, in the beginning of April. The proof, in short, is this: figs were ripe before summer,—summer is harvest-time,—harvest-time began at the passover,—therefore figs were ripe before the passover. Each of these propositions shall be briefly proved. 1. Figs were ripe before summer. That there are *two seasons* of the year for figs is plain from hence, that the Scripture mentions the first time of figs, Hosea, ix. 10. Micah, vii. 1. These *first ripe figs* were fully ripe, for they would fall from the tree, if it was shaken by the wind, as it is written Nahum, iii. 12. That these first ripe figs were very good, we are informed by the prophet Jeremiah, xxiv. 2. These fig-trees had *leaves* before the summer in that country, as it is expressly said, Matth. xxi. 19. But concerning the fig-tree it should be noted, that it puts forth its fruit first, and its leaves afterwards; consequently, if its leaves, much more does its fruit come forth before summer; and that the fig-tree in Judea brought forth fruit before, is expressly said, Canticles, ii. 11-13. Isaiah is more express, Ch. xxviii. 4. where what our translators call *the heavy fruit*, is the *first ripe fruit*, as they have well translated the same word in the places before quoted. Thus it appears, that the first ripe figs were very good, were fit to be eaten, and were ripe before summer. 2. The word *summer*, in Scripture, signifies the time of harvest. Compare Jer. viii. 25. and Dan. ii. 35. Those who have travelled into Egypt, the next country to Judea, inform us, that the summer in Egypt begins in March; whence we may conclude, that the summer in Judea began about the same time of the year. They then in Egypt cut down their corn, and immediately

thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

15 ¶ <sup>k</sup> And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

<sup>k</sup> Mat. 21. 12—16. Luke, 19. 45—48. John, 2. 12—16. Deut. 14. 25, 26. <sup>l</sup> If. 56. 7. & 60. 7. Zech. 2. 11. & 8. 20—23. with Jer. 7. 11. Hof. 12. 7. Luke, 19. 46. Mat. 21. 13. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 21. 15. Luke, 19. 47, 48. John, 12. 19. Acts, 4. 2. & 13. 45. If. 26. 11. Eccl. 4. 4. Job, 5. 2. Ch. 1. 22. & 6. 2. <sup>n</sup> Ver. 11. Ch. 13. 1. John, 12. 36. Luke, 21. 37.

mediately thrashed it; and that they immediately thrashed it also in Judea, is plain from their having loaves made of new corn for an offering at Pentecost. 3. That the *harvest* in Judea began at the passover is plain, because the Jews were required, on the second day after the passover, to bring a sheaf of the first fruits of their barley harvest, for an offering to God, Lev. xxiii. 10, 11. Seven weeks after the passover was Pentecost, in the *beginning* of which seven weeks, it is expressly said, the corn began to be reaped, Deut. xvi. 9. See also Lev. xxiii. 15—17. and Ruth. ii. 23. 4. From all this it follows, that figs in Judea were ripe before the passover; for figs were ripe and good before the summer or harvest began at the passover; therefore figs were ripe and good before the passover;—as was to be proved. Hence it appears, that the disciples might reasonably expect to find good ripe figs on a fig-tree three days before the passover; and our Lord *appeared* to expect them, that he might have the opportunity of strengthening his disciples' faith by the present miracle, and of affording them, and the church in after-ages, all the useful lessons resulting therefrom. It was the usual time for the first ripe figs, and therefore it was natural to expect that there should be figs upon this tree; and this was the more natural, because, as the Evangelist observes, there were *leaves* upon the tree, before which leaves the fruit always came forth, if the tree bore any fruit at all. The leaves then were naturally a token that fruit was to be found on the tree also, and thus it was natural to expect it. II. We now easily see how to account for the expression of St. Mark before us, which has been thought so extremely difficult; *for the time of figs was not yet*. While it was supposed that this expression signified "the time for trees to bring forth fruit was not yet come," it looked very unaccountable that Christ should reckon a tree barren, though it had leaves, and curse it as such, when he knew that the time of bearing figs was not yet come: it seemed unaccountable that Christ should come to seek figs on this tree, when he knew that figs were not used to be ripe so soon in the year. But since the true sense of the phrase, "*The time of figs*," has been discovered to the world by the learned Bishop Kidder, the matter is easy. The expression does not signify the time of the *coming forth* of

16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, 'My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

18 <sup>m</sup> And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people were astonished at his doctrine.

19 <sup>n</sup> And when even was come, he went out of the city.

figs, but the time of *gathering in ripe figs*, as is plain from the parallel expressions. Thus *the time of the fruit*, Matth. xxi. 34. most plainly signifies the time of *gathering in ripe fruits*, since the servants were sent to receive those fruits for their master's use. St. Mark and St. Luke express this same matter only by the word *time*, or *season*;—*At the season he sent a servant*, &c. that is, at the season or time of gathering in ripe fruit, Ch. xii. 2. Luke, xx. 10. In like manner, if any one should say in our language the *season of fruit*—the *season of apples*,—the *season of figs*,—every one would understand him to speak of the season or time of gathering in these fruits when ripe. When therefore St. Mark says, that *the time or season of figs was not yet*, he evidently means, that the time of gathering ripe figs was not yet come; and if the gathering-time was not come, it was natural to expect figs upon all those trees which were not barren; whereas after the time of gathering figs, no one would expect to find figs on a fig-tree, and its having none then would be no sign of barrenness. St. Mark, by saying, *for the time of figs was not yet*, does not design to give a reason for what he said in the immediately following clause,—*he found nothing but leaves*; but he gives a reason for what he said in the clause before that, *He came, if haply he might find any thing thereon*; and it was a good reason for our Saviour's coming and seeking figs on the tree, because *the time of gathering them in was not come*. We have other like instances in the Gospels, and indeed in the writings of all mankind, of another clause coming in between the assertion and the proof. Thus, in this very Evangelist,—Ch. xvi. 3, 4. *they said among themselves, who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? and when they looked, they saw the stone was rolled away, for it was very great*; where, its being *very great* is not assigned as a reason of its being *rolled away*, but of the women's wishing for some one to roll it away for them. See Hallet's notes on Scripture, vol. ii. p. 114. and Wittius's *Meletemata*.

Ver. 14. *And Jesus answered and said unto it,*] *And Jesus said to it upon this occasion.* Doddridge. See the note on Matth. xi. 25.

Ver. 16. *Any vessel*] Or *utensil*; that is, any kind of burden. See John, ii. 14, &c.

Ver. 21.

20 ¶ And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter calling to remembrance faith unto him, Master, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering faith unto them, ' Have faith in God.

23 ' For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, ' What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

25 ' And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Fa-

ther also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

27 ¶ ' And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,

28 And say unto him, ' By what authority dost thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

29 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

30 ' The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.

31 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say,

\* Mat. 21. 19, 20. & 24. 42, 44, 50. & 25. 6, 13. Job, xviii. xx. If. 30. 13, 14. Heb. 6. 8. & 10. 26, 27. P Or have the faith of God.  
 2 Chr. 20. 20. If. 7. 9. Prov. 3. 5. Pf. 62. 8. Ch. 5. 36. & 9. 23. 9 Mat. 17. 20. & 21. 21. Luke, 17. 6. James, 1. 5. 6. Rom. 14. 19,  
 20. 1 Cor. 13. 2. Mat. 7. 7, 11. & 18. 19. & 21. 22. Luke, 11. 9. John, 14. 13. & 15. 7. & 16. 24. James, 5. 16-18. 1 John, 3. 22,  
 & 5. 14. If. 45. 11. Gen. 32. 26. Pf. 118. 5. & 123. 2. 2 Cor. 12. 8. Heb. 4. 16. Mat. 6. 14. & 18. 23-35. Eph. 4. 32. Col. 3. 13.  
 Mat. 7. 1, 2. James, 2. 13. Mat. 21. 23-32. Luke, 20. 1-8. Mal. 3. 1. Hag. 2. 7, 9. Pl. 2. 1-5. & 27. 21, 16. H. 13.  
 3. Acts, 4. 27, 28. Exod. 2. 14. Acts, 7. 27. & 4. 7. Mat. 7. 29. If. 52. 13. Amos, 5. 13. Mat. 10. 10. Eph. 6. 15. John, 5.  
 13. Or ibing. Ch. 1. 1-11. Mat. iii. Luke, 1. iii. John, 1. 6-36. & 3. 22, 36. & 5. 32-36. Luke, 7. 29, 30. Ch. 9. 13.

Ver. 21. Behold the fig-tree, &c.] Our Lord had said, ver. 14. No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. This St. Peter, according to the Jewish manner of speaking concerning things that are barren, calls *curfing* the fig-tree; (see Heb. vi. 8.) and some ill-disposed readers, not apprehending the proper force of the words, are apt to form a very unbecoming notion of our adorable Lord from this action; but they do so without the least cause, since every thing that he said on this occasion was consistent with the most perfect decency, even in their sense of the word. Moreover, the transaction itself was emblematical and prophetic, prefiguring the speedy ruin of the Jewish nation, on account of its unfruitfulness, under greater advantages than any other people enjoyed at that day; and, like all the rest of his miracles, it was done with a gracious intention, namely, to alarm his countrymen, and induce them to repent. It is observable, that the destruction of the swine, and this blasting of the fig-tree, are the only instances of punitive miracles in the whole course of our Saviour's ministry, notwithstanding they do not appear to have been injurious. The case of the swine we have already considered; and with respect to the fig-tree, St. Matthew informs us, Ch. xxi. 19. that it was *in the way*, that is, in the common road, and therefore, probably, no particular person's property; but if it was, being barren, the timber might be as serviceable to the owner as before. So that here was no real injury; but Jesus was pleased to make use of this innocent miracle for the valuable pur-

poses above suggested, as well as to teach his disciples the efficacy of a strong and lively faith.

Ver. 22. Have faith in God.] Or, a divine faith; literally, the faith of God. And who could find fault, if the Creator and Proprietor of all things were to destroy, by a single word of his mouth, a thousand of his inanimate creatures, were it only to imprint this important lesson more deeply on one immortal spirit? See on Matth. xvii. 20.

Inferences drawn from our Lord's curfing the fruitless fig-tree. When our Saviour had rode through the streets of Jerusalem, that evening he lodged not in the city; whether it was that he would not, left, after the public acclamations of the people, suspicions of plotting, or of a desire of popularity, might be raised against him; or whether he could not for want of an invitation. Hofunnabs were more cheap than an entertainment; and accordingly he goes that evening, without eating, from Jerusalem. O unthankful citizens, do you thus part with your no less meek than glorious King; whose title was not more proclaimed in your streets, than was your own ingratitude! There is no wonder in men's unworthiness; but there is more than wonder in thy mercy, O Saviour of men, who wouldst yet return thither on the morrow; and if thou mayest not spend the night with them, wilt yet spend with them the day.

Thou, that givest food to all things living, art thyself hungry,

Why then did ye not <sup>b</sup> believe him?

32 <sup>c</sup> But if we shall say, Of men; they

feared the people: for all *men* counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

<sup>b</sup> John, i. 26, 29—36. & 3. 28—36. & 5. 32, 33.

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 3. 5. & 11. 9. & 14. 5. John, i. 25. & 5. 35. Ch. 6. 20. Luke, 7. 26—30.

*hungry*, (ver. 12.): Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, kept not so poor a house, but that thou mightst have eaten something at Bethany: whether thy haste outran thine appetite, or whether on purpose thou forbarest any repast, to afford opportunity for thy ensuing miracle, I neither presume to resolve nor conjecture. This was not the first time that thou wast hungry; as thou wouldst be a man, so thou wouldst suffer those infirmities which belong to humanity. Hence thou knowest to pity what thou hast felt. Are we pinched with want? we endure but what thou didst, and have reason to be patient: thou enduredst what we do; we have reason to be thankful.

But what shall we say to this thine early hunger? The morning, as it is privileged from excess, so likewise from need; the stomach is not used to rise with the body; surely, as thine occasions were, no season was exempted from thy want. Thou hadst spent the day before in the holy labour of thy reformation; after a supperless departure, thou spendest the night in prayer; no meal refreshed thy toil. Why do we think much to forbear a morsel, or to break a sleep for thee, who didst thus neglect thyself for us?

As if meat were no part of thy care, as if any thing would serve to stop the mouth of hunger, thy breakfast is expected from the next tree, ver. 13. A fig-tree grew by the way-side, full-grown, well-spread, thick-leaved, and such as might promise enough to a remote eye; thither thou camest to seek that which thou didst not find; and not finding what thou soughtest, as displeas'd with thy disappointment, didst curse that plant which deluded thy hopes; thy breath instantly blasted that deceitful tree; what then could it do,—otherwise than the whole world must needs do under thy malediction,—but wither and die away.

O Saviour, I would rather wonder at thine actions, than discuss them. If I should say that, as man, thou either didst not know, or didst not consider this fruitlessness, it could no way prejudice thy divine Omniscience. It were no greater disparagement to thee to grow in knowledge, than in stature; nor was it any more disgrace to thy perfect humanity, that thou, as man, knewest not all things at once, than that thou wert not in thy childhood at thy full growth. But herein I doubt not to say, it is more likely thou camest purposely to this tree, and fore-resolving the event; thus to found the occasion of so instructive a miracle: like as thou knewest Lazarus was dying, was dead, yet wouldst not seem to take notice of his dissolution, that so thou mightst more gloriously display thy power in his resurrection.

Besides, I have learned that thou, O Saviour, wert accustomed not to *speake* only, but to *work* parables; and what was this but a real parable of thine? All the while thou hadst been in the world, thou hadst given many proofs of thy mercy; the *earth was full of thy goodness*: but now, immediately before thy passion, thou thoughtst

fit to give a double demonstration of thy just austerity; how else should the world have seen that thou canst be severe, as well as meek and merciful? And why mightst not thou, who didst make all things, freely destroy a plant for thy own glory? Wherefore were thy best creatures created, but for the praise of thy mercy and justice! What great matter was it, if thou, who once saidst, *Let the earth bring forth the herb yielding seed, and the tree yielding the fruit of its own kind*, shalt now say, *Let this fruitless tree wither?*

Yet was all this done in figure: in this act of thine, I see both an emblem and a prophecy. How didst thou therein mean to teach thy disciples how much thou hatest an unfruitful profession, and what judgment thou meantst to bring upon that barren generation? Once before hadst thou compared the Jewish nation to a fig-tree in the midst of thy vineyard, which, after three years' expectation and culture yielding no fruit, was by thee, the owner, doomed to a speedy destruction. Now thou aatest, what then thou saidst. Scarce any tree abounds more with leaves and shade; no nation abounded more with ceremonial observances, and semblances of piety. Outward profession, where there is want of inward truth and real practice, does but help to draw down and to aggravate judgment: had this tree been utterly bare and leafless, it had perhaps escaped the curse. Hear this, ye vain hypocrites, who, only solicitous for a fair outside show, never care for the sincerity of a conscientious obedience; and thus with your own hands, draw and help forward the curse upon you!

That which was the fault of this tree, was also the punishment of it,—*fruitlessness*, ver. 30. Had the boughs been appointed to be torn down, and the body split in pieces, the doom had been more easy; the juicy plant might yet have recovered, and have lived to recompense this deficiency. Now it shall be, what it was, *fruitless*. Horrible state of that church, or that soul, which is punished with her own sin! Outward plagues are but favour, in comparison of spiritual judgments.

Our Lord's malediction might have been perfectly consistent with a long continuance; the tree might have lived long, though *fruitless*; but behold! no sooner is the word passed, than the leaves droop and turn yellow,—the branches wrinkle and shrink,—the bark changes colour,—the root dies,—the plant withers.

O God! what creature is able to abide the blasting of the breath of thy displeasure? Even the most great and glorious angels of heaven could not stand one moment before thine anger, but perished under thy wrath everlastingly. How irresistible thy power! how dreadful thy judgments! Lord, chasten my fruitlessness, but punish it not: at least, if thou punishest, oh curse it not; lest I wither, and be consumed!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The last week of the life of Jesus

33 And they answered and said unto Jesus, unto them, ° Neither do I tell you by what  
 4 We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith authority I do these things.

° Rom. 1. 18, 21, 22, 28. 2 Cor. 2. 15. & 4. 3, 4. 2 Theff. 2. 9, 10. If. 6. 9, 10.

° Prov. 26. 4. Job, 5. 13.

is now come, and we see him entering Jerusalem in triumph, not terrified with the fears of his enemies, or cast down by the sufferings that he was about to undergo.

1. He enters Jerusalem amid the hosannas of the people. He ordered his disciples, when he drew near the city, to bring an ass's colt from the opposite village, directing them to the spot, and delivering a message from him, if any questioned them for what they did. Accordingly they went as Jesus had commanded them; and when the owners of the colt demanded why they loosed him, they told them *the Lord hath need of him*; and they contentedly let him go. Seated on this mean animal did Jesus enter the city, while, to express their gladness, his poor followers spread their garments in the way, and cut down branches from the trees as at the feast of tabernacles, surrounding him with hosannas, wishing prosperity to the long-expected Messiah, now bringing salvation to his people; praying that his reign may be long and happy who comes to sit on his father David's throne, invested with divine authority; calling on the angels to join their praises, and begging God to pour down the best of blessings on the Messiah and his people.

2. He went directly to the temple: that was his palace: he aimed not at a temporal but spiritual dominion. And looking round to observe what was done there, and to take notice of the abuses which called for his correction, and, as appears from Matth. xxi. 12, 13. casting out those who trafficked there, he retired in the evening to Bethany with the twelve, the place that he chose for his abode. *Note*; The eye of Jesus is upon his temple, to see what the priests do there: it is upon the living temple of his people's heart, observing every rising thought of evil. How watchful then need we be!

2dly, We have,

1. The cursing of the barren fig-tree, the type of the destruction of the Jewish nation. Our Lord, on his return from Bethany to the temple in the morning, being hungry, seeing a very flourishing fig-tree, came, expecting to find some figs thereon; *for the time of figs was not yet, or the time of figs*, when they should be gathered in, *was not yet*, and therefore he might expect fruit on the tree; but, finding none, he cursed the tree in the hearing of his disciples, who took particular notice of it. For the curses of the Lord are fearful, and never fall in vain.

2. He purges the temple of the buyers and sellers, who had made that sacred place a house of merchandize. It appears from Matth. xxi. 12. that he had done the same the preceding day; but, probably supported and encouraged by the priests, the traders had returned to their former traffic the next day, and were thus again expelled. And, to vindicate his procedure, he quoted the words of the prophet, Isaiah, lvi. 6, 7. where God, speaking of the sons of the stranger, the proselytes, undertakes to welcome them to his house, which should be a house of prayer to all nations. But the court, which was appropriated to the service of the Gentiles, they had profaned

by turning it into a market; and made it by their knavery and extortion a den of thieves.

3. The priests and scribes, incensed at what they saw and heard, especially at those severe rebukes which reflected so deeply on their characters, were bitterly exasperated; and, being determined to murder him, sought only how they might do it without exposing themselves to the fury of the populace; for they were afraid openly to use violence, the people in general expressing such a veneration for Christ's person, and such respect and reverence for his doctrine. *Note*; Envy and malice naturally lead to murder; and it is only the fear of men that in a multitude of instances deters the wicked from the very act.

4. In the evening they returned to Bethany; and the next morning, in their way to the city, the disciples took notice with surprise of the withering of the fig-tree; and Peter, pointing to the tree, observed to his Master how it was withered away in consequence of the curse that he had pronounced upon it. Thence Christ took occasion to encourage them confidently to exercise faith in God at all times: and, especially in the exertion of the miraculous powers with which he had furnished them, they should find nothing impossible, not even to remove the mountain on which they stood, and cast it into the sea, if they had an unshaken trust in the divine power and promises, and looked up to God, nothing doubting: for whatever they should ask in prayer, which should be for his glory to give, and they were warranted from his word to expect, should certainly be given them. And on this occasion, as what would be essential to their obtaining an answer to their prayers, he inculcates fervent love and mutual forgiveness: when they stood praying for forgiveness, they must be ready to grant that pardon to others which they themselves sought at God's hand. But if, under the spirit of uncharitableness, they refuse to forgive their brother his trespasses, their prayers would be in vain, and they must never hope for the pardon which themselves sought at the hands of their heavenly Father. *Note*; (1.) Faith is the conquering grace that overcomes the world, and bears down all obstacles before it. If at any time we are terrified by guilt, or enslaved by corruption, it is through our want of *faith in God*. (2.) Nothing can be a more powerful argument to engage our charity and forgiveness towards others, than what arises from our own prayers.

3dly, Vexed at the heart to behold the respect paid to Jesus, and impatient to revenge his rebukes, which they construed into reproaches, we have,

1. The demand of the chief-priests and elders, challenging Christ to produce his authority for what he had said and done the preceding days, as if he had been lord and master of the temple.

2. He answers their question by another. By what authority did John preach and baptize? give me a direct reply. The answer was easy; but the difficulties in which on either side it involved them were great. They saw that

## C H A P. XII.

In a parable of the vineyard let out to unthankful husbandmen, Christ foretelleth the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles: he avoideth the snare of the Pharisees and Herodians about paying tribute to Cæsar: convinceth the Sadducees of their error, who denied the resurrection: resolveth the scribe, who questioned what was the first commandment: refuteth the opinion which the scribes held of Christ; bidding the people to beware of their ambition and hypocrisy: and commended the poor widow for her two mites above all.

[Anno Domini 33.]

**A**ND <sup>a</sup> he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the wine-fat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

2 And <sup>b</sup> at the season he sent to the husbandmen <sup>c</sup> a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

3 <sup>d</sup> And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.

4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled.

5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

6 <sup>e</sup> Having yet therefore one son, his well-

beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

7 <sup>f</sup> But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the <sup>g</sup> heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be our's.

8 And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

9 What shall therefore the Lord of the vineyard do? <sup>h</sup> he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

10 And have ye not read this scripture; <sup>i</sup> The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

11 This was the Lord's doing, and <sup>k</sup> it is marvellous in our eyes?

12 And they sought to lay hold on him, but <sup>l</sup> feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

13 ¶ <sup>m</sup> And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the <sup>n</sup> Herodians, to catch him in his words.

14 And when they were come, they say unto him, <sup>o</sup> Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: <sup>p</sup> Is it lawful to give tribute to \* Cæsar, or not?

15 Shall we give, or shall we not give?

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 21. 33—46. Luke, 20. 9—19. If. 5. 1—4. Jer. 2. 21. Pf. 80. 8—15. Song, 8. 11, 12. Exod. xxxv—xl. Lev. i—xxv. 1 Kings, vi—viii. Numb. iii. iv. viii. Deut. 1. 15. & 16. 18. 1 Chron. xxii—xxvii. <sup>b</sup> Pf. 1. 3. Song, 8. 11, 12. <sup>c</sup> 2 Kings, 17. 13. 2 Chron. 36. 15. Jer. 44. 4. Zech. 7. 7. Neh. 9. 29. Heb. 1. 1. <sup>d</sup> 1 Kings, 22. 24. 2 Chron. 16. 10. & 23. 19, 21. & 36. 16. Jer. xx. xxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii. 1 Theff. 2. 15. Mat. 23. 34—37. Acts, 7. 52, 59. Heb. 11. 36. <sup>e</sup> John, 3. 16. Rom. 8. 3. Gal. 4. 4. John, 1. 14. Luke, i. ii. iv. &c. Mat. i—xv. Ch. i—xiii. John, i—xvi. <sup>f</sup> Acts, 2. 23, 36. & 3. 15. 1 Cor. 2. 8. 1 Theff. 2. 15. Pf. 22. 6—21. & 69. 1—21. Mat. 2. 3—20. & 12. 14. & 21. 46. & xxvii. xxviii. Ch. 3. 6. & xiv. xv. Luke, 4. 28, 29. & 11. 53, 54. & xxii. xxiii. John, v. vii—xii. xviii. xix. Heb. 13. 12. <sup>g</sup> Heb. 1. 2. Pf. 82. 8. & 2. 8, 9, 12. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 21. 41, 43, 44. & 8. 11, 12. & 12. 43—45. & 23. 35—38. & 22. 7. & 3. 12. & 24. 2—34. Ch. xiii. Luke, 19. 27, 42—44. & 20. 15, 16. & 17. 22—37. & 21. 6—33. John, 9. 39—41. Prov. 1. 21—32. Acts, 28. 23—28. Lev. xxvi. Deut. 4. 26, 27. & xxviii—xxxiii. Rom. xi. Acts, 13. 46, 47. <sup>i</sup> Pf. 118. 22. Acts, 4. 11, 12. Rom. 9. 33. 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8. If. 28. 16. Eph. 2. 14—22. & 1. 19—23. Psal. 2. 6—11. Mat. 16. 18. <sup>k</sup> 1 Tim. 3. 16. Rom. 16. 26, 27. Col. 1. 25—27. Eph. 3. 3—9. 1 Cor. 2. 7. <sup>l</sup> Ch. 11. 18, 32. Mat. 21. 26, 46. Luke, 20. 6, 19. John, 7. 19. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 22. 15—22. Luke, 20. 20—26. & 11. 53, 54. Pf. 2. 2. Jer. 18. 18. Eccl. 4. 4. Job, 5. 2. If. 29. 21. <sup>n</sup> Ch. 8. 15. Mat. 16. 6. <sup>o</sup> Ch. 14. 45. Pf. 12. 2. & 55. 21. with 2 Cor. 2. 17. 1 Theff. 2. 4. Gal. 1. 10. Acts, 10. 34, 35. <sup>p</sup> Ezra, 4. 13. Acts, 5. 37. Mat. 17. 25. Jer. 42. 2, 3, 20. \* i. e. the Roman emperor.

that to confess his mission divine, was to own all that Jesus claimed, John having borne testimony to him; on the other hand, to deny that the Baptist was sent of God, and to brand him as a pretender and impostor, would instantly enrage the people to rise up, perhaps, and stone them, all men in general being persuaded of John's prophetic character; therefore, after reasoning on the matter, they are forced to conceal under a lie a truth which they dared not own, and to pretend ignorance of what they knew, as the only way to evade the answer that Christ demanded of them. He therefore was fully justified in refusing them farther information, when it evidently appeared that they

sought not conviction of the truth, but merely his destruction. Note; (1.) It is a mercy to be able to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and at last to confound those who refuse to be convinced. (2.) They who wilfully choose to be ignorant, are justly abandoned to judicial blindness.

## C H A P. XII.

Ver. 10. Is become] Is made.

Ver. 11. This, &c.] By the Lord was it so made, and it is wonderful, &c.

Ver. 13. To catch him] Ἀγγεῖοναι is a metaphorical word,

But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, ' Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it.

16 And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cesar's.

17 And Jesus answering said unto them, ' Render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's. ' And they marvelled at him.

18 ¶ ' Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying,

19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, ' If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

20 Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed.

21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

22 And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also.

23 In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

24 And Jesus answering said unto them,

Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?

25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.

26 And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, ' how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

28 ¶ ' And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, ' Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: This is the first commandment.

31 And the second is like, namely this, ' Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 9. 2. & 8. 12. Luke, 11. 16, 53, 54. <sup>b</sup> Seven-pence halfpenny; as Mat. 18. 28. & 20. 2. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 17. 25. & 22. 21. Luke, 20. 25. Rom. 13. 7. Prov. 24. 21. 1 Pet. 2. 17. <sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. 14. 19, 20. Job, 5. 12, 13. Mat. 22. 22, 33, 46. Luke, 20. 26. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 22. 23-33. Luke, 20. 27-39. Acts, 23. 8. 1 Cor. 14. 12. 2 Tim. 2. 17. <sup>f</sup> Gen. 38. 8. Deut. 25. 5, 6. <sup>g</sup> 1st. 8. 20. & 27. 11. & 28. 9, 10. Hosea, 4. 6. & 8. 12. John, 20. 9, 31. Rom. 15. 4. 2 Tim. 3. 15-17. John, 5. 59. Acts, 17. 11. <sup>h</sup> Job. 19. 25. Ezek. 37. 5-10. Dan. 12. 2. <sup>i</sup> Gen. 17. 1. & 18. 14. Jer. 32. 17. Ch. 10. 27. Luke, 1. 37. Eph. 1. 19, 20. Phil. 3. 21. <sup>j</sup> Mat. 22. 30. Luke, 20. 36. 1 Cor. 15. 41, 44, 49, 52. & 7. 29, 30. 1 John, 3. 2. <sup>k</sup> Exod. 3. 6, 16. Acts, 7. 32. Gen. 17. 7. & 28. 21. & 32. 9. Lev. 25. 12. Heb. 11. 16. with Rom. 4. 17. Job, 5. 21. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 22. 35-40. Luke, 10. 25-28. <sup>m</sup> Deut. 6. 4, 5. & 10. 12. & 30. 6. Prov. 23. 26. Mat. 22. 37. Luke, 10. 27. 1 Cor. xiii. 1 Tim. 1. 5. <sup>n</sup> Lev. 19. 18. Rom. 13. 9. Gal. 5. 14. 1 Tim. 1. 5. James, 2. 8. 1 John, 3. 15. 1 Cor. xiii. Mat. 7. 12. & 22. 39. Luke, 10. 27, 36, 37.

word, borrowed from the chase, and signifies to run down, or to take a prey in hunting. Some render it, *to make a prey of*; and Dr. Heylin, *to ensnare*. See Matth. xxii. 16.

Ver. 16. *Superscription*?] *Inscription*. Doddridge.

Ver. 19. *Master, Moses wrote, &c.*] The Sadducees are thought by many to have agreed with the Samaritans in rejecting all the other parts of holy Scripture but the five books of Moses. See the Inferences from Matth. xxii. But there are others who strenuously maintain the contrary; and it is most reasonable to believe, that they did not absolutely reject the other books of the Old Testament, but only gave a great preference to the Pentateuch; and, laying it down as a principle to receive nothing as an article of faith, which could not be proved from the law, if any thing was urged from other parts of Scripture that could not be deduced from Moses, they would explain it

in some other way: and this might be sufficient to induce our Lord to bring his argument to prove the resurrection from what Moses had said, and to confirm it by that part of Scripture which was most regarded by the Sadducees, and upon which they now had grounded their objection to it. See Serrarius, Lightfoot, and Doddridge.

Ver. 24. *Do ye not therefore err, &c.*] *Does not the error you are fallen into arise from your ignorance both of the Scriptures, and of the power of God?* Heylin. This translation is rather paraphractical: Wynne renders it more literally, *Do ye not err on this account (namely) because ye know not the Scriptures, nor, &c.?* in St. Matthew, what is here expressed by a question, is delivered affirmatively: *Ye do err*. See ch. xxii. 29.

Ver. 26. *As touching, &c.*] *As concerning*.

Ver. 29. *Is one Lord:*] See the note on Deut. vi. 4. on Matth.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for <sup>s</sup> there is one God; and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, <sup>b</sup> is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, <sup>i</sup> Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. <sup>k</sup> And no man after that durst ask him *any question*.

35 ¶ <sup>l</sup> And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?

36 For David himself said <sup>m</sup> by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and <sup>n</sup> whence is he *then* his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

38 ¶ And he said unto them in his doctrine, <sup>o</sup> Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the market places,

39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts:

40 <sup>p</sup> Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: <sup>q</sup> these shall receive greater damnation.

41 ¶ <sup>r</sup> And Jesus sat over-against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast <sup>s</sup> money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two <sup>t</sup> mites, which make a farthing.

<sup>s</sup> Deut. 6. 4. & 5. 7. & 4. 30. If. 45. 6, 14, 22. & 46. 9. 1 Cor. 8. 4—6. <sup>b</sup> 1 Sam. 15. 22. If. 1. 11—17. & 58. 5—7. & 66. 3. Jer. 6. 20 & 7. 22, 23. Hosea, 6. 6. Amos, 5. 21—24. Micah, 6. 6—8. <sup>i</sup> Acts, 26. 28. Ch. 4. 16. & 1. 14, 15. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 22. 46. Luke, 14. 6. & 20. 45. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 22. 41—45. Luke, 10. 41—44. <sup>m</sup> 2 Sam. 23. 2. 2 Tim. 3. 16. 2 Pet. 1. 21. Pf. 110. 1. Acts, 1. 16. & 2. 30, 34. 1 Cor. 15. 25. Heb. 1. 3, 13; & 4. 14. & 8. 1. & 10. 13. <sup>n</sup> Rom. 1. 3, 4. & 9. 5. Mat. 1. 1. & 15. 22. Rev. 22. 16. <sup>o</sup> Mat. 23. 5—7. Luke, 11. 43 & 20. 45—47. & 14. 7. 3 John, 9. <sup>p</sup> Mat. 23. 14. Luke, 20. 47. Ezek. 20. 25. Micah, 3. 11. 2 Tim. 3. 5, 6. Titus, 1. 11. Mat. 6. 5. <sup>q</sup> Mat. 11. 22, 24. Luke, 12. 47, 48. <sup>r</sup> Luke, 21. 1—4. 2 King, 12. 9. <sup>s</sup> A piece of brass money: see Mat. 10. 29. <sup>t</sup> It is the seventh part of one piece of that brass money. Two mites are not quite the fifth part of a farthing.

Matth. xxii. 37, 38. and the Inferences at the end of that chapter.

*Ver. 33. Is more than all whole burnt-offerings.]* That is, "is more acceptable to God, and important to mankind." See Hosea, vi. 6.

*Ver. 34. Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.]* Jesus applauded the piety and wisdom of the scribe's reflection, by declaring, that the person who made it, was *not far from the kingdom of God*, or from being a real Christian. He had expressed sentiments becoming a subject of God's kingdom, and such as might have a happy influence in disposing him to embrace the Gospel in sincerity, by which he might obtain a share in all the blessings of the children of God. It is added, that *no man, after that, durst ask him any questions*: the plain meaning of which is, they asked him no more such captious questions; for the memory of this confusion impressed their minds, during the short remainder of Christ's continuance among them; and he was soon removed from them, so that they had no further opportunities of doing it, when that impression was worn off.

*Ver. 37. And the common people heard him gladly.]* They heard with great attention and pleasure; for the clear and solid answers which he returned to the ensnaring questions of his foes, gave them a high opinion of his wisdom, and shewed them how far he was superior to their most renowned rabbies; whose arguments to prove their opinions, and answers to the objections that were raised against them, were, generally speaking, but mean and trifling, compared to his. Besides, the common people were neither so much

prejudiced in behalf of the commonly-received opinions, nor so much interested, as the scribes or other teachers.

*Ver. 38. Long clothing.] Long garments, or robes.*

*Ver. 39. Rooms.] Seats.*

*Ver. 41. And Jesus sat over-against the treasury,]* Jesus was now in the treasury, or that part of the women's court, where the chests were placed for receiving the offerings of those who came to worship. These chests, being thirteen in number, had each of them an inscription fixed to the pillars of the portico which surrounded the court, and signifying for what use the offerings put into them were destined. Hence the propriety of St. Mark's expression, *Jesus sat over-against the treasury*; he sat in the portico of the women's court, opposite to the pillars where the chests for receiving the offerings of the people were fixed. From these voluntary contributions they bought wood for the altar, salt, and other necessaries, not provided for any other way. It was in this court of the women, according to the Talmudists, that the libation of water from Siloam was made annually at the feast of tabernacles, as a solemn public thanksgiving and prayer for the former and latter rain; to which rite it is supposed that our Lord alluded, John, vii. 38.

*Ver. 42—44. She threw in two mites, which make a farthing, &c.]* Κεκοινητος. This coin in value was no more than three-fourths of our farthing; wherefore the offering given by this poor widow was very small in itself, though in another respect it was a great gift, being *all that she had, even all her living*. We can hardly suppose, that at each of the chests there were officers placed to receive and

43 And he called unto him his disciples, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, all they which have cast into the treasury :

\* 2 Cor. 8. 2, 12.

count the money which the people offered, and to name the sum aloud before they put it in; it is more reasonable to believe, that each person put his own offering privately into the chest, through a slit in its top. Wherefore, by mentioning the particular sum which the poor widow put in, as well as by declaring that it was all her living, our Lord shewed that nothing was hidden from his knowledge; and at the same time, to encourage charity, and to shew that it is the disposition of the mind, not the magnificence of the offering, which God regards, our Lord applauded this poor widow, as having given more in proportion than they all. They did cast in of their abundance, out of their superfluous substance,—*ἐκ τῆς περισσεύουσης αὐτοῖς*; their offerings, though great in respect to her's, bare but a small proportion to their estates; whereas she cast in of her want,—*ἐκ τῆς ἐσπέρας αὐτῆς*. Her offering was the whole of her income for that day, and perhaps the whole of the money in her possession at that time; *Ὅλον τοῦ βίου αὐτῆς*, —the whole of her substance. See the Inferences. Some render the last verse,—*For all they did cast in out of their abundance; but she, out of what she wanted for herself, did cast in all that she had, even all that she had to live upon.*

*Inferences drawn from the widow's mites.*—The sacred wealth of the temple consisted either in stuff, or in coin; for the one the Jews had a house, for the other chests. At the concurrence of all the males thrice a year, upon occasion of the solemn feasts, the oblations of all kinds were liberal; our Saviour, as taking pleasure in the prospect, sets himself to view those offerings whether for holy or charitable uses.

Those things which we delight in, we love to behold: the eye and the heart will go together: and can we think, O Saviour, that thy glory has diminished aught of thy gracious respects to our beneficence? or that thine acceptance of our charity was confined to the earth? Even now, that thou sittest on the right hand of thy Father's glory, thou seest every hand that is stretched out to the relief of thy poor saints here below; and if vanity have power to stir up the liberality of some out of a conceit to be seen of men, how should faith encourage our bounty in knowing that we are seen of thee, and accepted by thee? Alas! what are we the better for the notice of those perishing impotent eyes, which can only view the outside of our actions, or for that kind of applause which vanishes in the lips of the speaker? Thine eye, O Lord, is piercing and retributive; as to see thee is perfect happiness, so to be seen of thee in favour is true contentment and glory.

And dost thou, O God, see what we give thee, and not see what we take away from thee? Are our offerings more noted than our sacrileges? Surely thy mercy is not more quick-sighted than thy justice! In both kinds our actions are reviewed, our account is kept. With thine eye of knowledge thou seest all that we do; but what we do well, thou seest with thine eye of approbation. Thus didst thou probably now behold these pious and charitable obla-

tions.—How well wert thou pleased with this variety? Thou sawest many rich men give much, and one poor widow give more than they, in lesser room.

The Jews were now under the Roman pressure. They were all tributaries, yet many of them rich, and many of those rich men were liberal to the common chest. Hadst thou seen those many rich give little, we probably had heard of thy censure; thou expectest a proportion between the giver and the gift, between the gift and the receipt: where that fails, the blame is just. But Jesus saw a poor widow casting in two mites.

It was misery enough that she was a widow; the married woman is under the careful provision of a husband; but poverty was here added to the sorrow of her widowhood; she was not more desolate than needy.

Yet this poor widow gives!—and what?—An offering like herself;—two mites. Alas! poor woman! who was poorer than thyself?—Wherefore was that *Corban*, but for the relief of such as thou?—Who should receive, if such are the givers! Thy mites were something to thee, nothing to the treasury!

Some thrifty neighbour might, perhaps, have suggested this probable discouragement; Jesus publishes and applauds her bounty; He called to him his disciples, &c. ver. 43. While the rich put in their offerings, we see no disciples called; it was enough that Christ noted their gifts only:—but, when the widow comes, with her two mites, the domestics of Christ are immediately summoned to assemble, and taught to admire this munificence. A solemn preface makes way for her praise, and her mites are rendered more precious than the talents; she gave more than they all; more, not only in respect of the mind of the giver, but also of the proportion of the gift, as hers, a mite, was more to her than pounds to them. Pounds were little to them, two mites were all to her. They gave out of their abundance, she out of her necessity. That which they gave, left the heap less, yet a heap still; she gives all at once, and leaves herself nothing. Thus did she give, not merely more than any, but more than they all.

O Father of Mercies, who dost not so much regard what is taken out, as what is left behind; thou lookest at once into the bottom of her heart, and the bottom of her purse, and esteamest her gift according to both. Thou neither seekest as man, nor valuest as man: man judges by the worth of the gift, thou judgest by the mind of the giver, and the proportion of the remainder. Alas! what have we but mites, and those of thine own lending? It is the comfort of our meanness, that our affections are valued, and not our presents. If I had more, O God, thou shouldst have it; had I less, thou wouldst not despise it, who acceptest the gift according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

Yea, Lord, what have I but two mites,—a soul and a body? Mere mites, yea, not so much, compared to thine infinity? O that I could perfectly offer them up unto thee, according to thine own right in them, and not ac-

44 For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

ording to mine! How graciously wouldst thou be fure to accept them! How happy shall I be in thine acceptance!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Since the Jews had wickedly rejected their Messiah, he sets forth before them in parables the guilt and ruin coming upon them in consequence thereof. The parable of the vineyard we had before; Matth. xxi. 33. The scope and design of it is, to charge them with their continual rejection and persecution of God's prophets from the days of their forefathers to that hour, the measure of whose guilt they were now about to fill up in the murder of the Son of God; and thus they would bring down the temporal and eternal wrath of God upon their devoted heads; who, instead of the Jewish people, would admit the Gentiles into his visible communion in their stead, and, in spite of all their envy and enmity, erect his glorious church on that one foundation and chief corner-stone the Messiah, whom they rejected; and hereby make his marvellous power and grace evident to all. The parable was too plain for them to mistake the meaning: the chief priests and elders perceived that it was levelled at them; and, enraged beyond measure at his boldness, though they dared not apprehend him publicly, they consulted how they could privately get him into their power, and cut him off. *Note*; (1.) God expects from those who are placed in his vineyard, the church, that they should render him that tribute of love and duty, for which they stand so highly indebted. (2.) In all ages the true ministers of Christ have met with the cruellest usage; and usually their bitterest persecutors have been those who pretended a divine commission, and to be labourers in God's vineyard. (3.) God will have a church and people in the world, whatever opposition may be formed against them. (4.) They who refuse to be convinced by the truth of God's word, are generally exasperated both against the minister and his message; and thus what was sent as a *savour of life unto life*, to them becomes a *savour of death unto death*.

2dly, We have a new attempt made by the Pharisees and Herodians, bitter enemies to each other, but closely leagued against Christ. They wanted to catch up something which might serve to accuse him, and they thought they had a question which would not fail, either to render him obnoxious to the civil powers, or blast his reputation with the people, should he enforce subjection to the Roman yoke, which they so abhorred. Pretending therefore great respect to Christ, as a person of unspotted integrity, and above the fear of men, they bring to him a case of conscience, as if they wished to be guided by his superior judgment. The question was, whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cesar or not? He sees their hypocrisy, and confounds their devices; bidding them produce the tribute money, and tell him whose image and superscription it bore. On their saying *Cesar's*, he bids them render to Cesar his own. By admitting the currency of his coin, they owned their subjection to him, and were bound to pay the tribute required in return for the protection they

enjoyed; while God's right over them remained unalienably the same: in all religious concerns he alone was the Lord of their conscience, and to all his commands unreserved submission must be paid,—an answer so wise, so convincing and unexceptionable, as even astonished his very enemies. *Note*; (1.) The professions of false friends are usually most specious, when their designs are most malignant. (2.) It is a dangerous thing for ministers to interfere about civil rights: their business is to teach subjection to the powers that are. (3.) Hypocrisy, however artful the veil, cannot be concealed from the knowledge of him who trieth the reins and the heart.

3dly, The Sadducees, the freethinkers of the age, came next, fraught with wisdom and sophistry, and thought that, though others had been unequal to the task, they were able to propose a question which the wisdom of Jesus would find it hard to answer. But they were deceived to their cost, their ignorance exposed, their errors detected, and that resurrection which they denied proved by the clearest evidence of Moses, whose authority they admitted; see Matth. xxii. 23, &c. *Note*; (1.) Many infidels pretend a reverence for the Scriptures, in order the more artfully to introduce their suggestions, to shake our faith, and destroy the credit of the word of God. (2.) It is impossible but they should err, not knowing the Scriptures, who, instead of submitting their fallen reason to God's word, insist that even the doctrines of revelation shall be first cited to this fallacious tribunal, and be admitted only so far as they are pleased to stamp them as rational; and, if found incomprehensible, rejected as absurd.

4thly, Struck with the force of our Lord's reasoning, one of the scribes, who were of the sect of the Pharisees, acknowledged that he had *answered well*; yet, willing to try his judgment farther, he proposes,

1. An important question for our Lord's solution: *which is the first commandment of all?* the greatest, most necessary to be observed, and most influential over the whole tenor of our conduct?

2. Christ fully answers him. The first and great commandment is *the love of God*. He, who is God alone, demands and deserves the whole heart and mind, and soul and strength: and in this one word is comprehended the principle of all holy obedience, and that which necessarily engages in his worship and service the whole body, soul, and spirit; and, without his love, nothing acceptable to him can be performed. The second commandment is of a like comprehensive nature, enjoining us to *love our neighbour as ourselves*, fervently and unfeignedly, behaving to him with such justice and mercy, as we, if our circumstances were reversed, might justly desire and expect from him. These two comprehend every supposable duty towards God and man; and there can be no greater commandment, since in these the whole law is fulfilled.

3. The scribe confesses the justness of our Lord's answer, convinced of its admirable propriety and wisdom; and adds his testimony to the truth of his observations, that there is one only living and true God; and that to love, worship, and serve him with the most active powers of

our

CHAP. XIII.

*Christ foretelleth the destruction of the temple: the persecutions for the gospel: that the gospel must be preached to all nations: that great calamities shall happen to the Jews: and the manner of his coming to judgment. The hour whereof being known to none, every man is to watch and pray, that we be not found unprovided, when he cometh to each one particularly by death.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**A**ND as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!

2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 ¶ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,

4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

5 And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you:

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 24. 1-8. Luke. 21. 5-21. John, 2. 20. Ezek. 7. 20. & 24. 21, 25. <sup>b</sup> Luke, 21. 6. & 19. 44. Jer. 5. 10. & 26. 18. Mic. 3. 12. <sup>c</sup> 1 Kings, 9. 7. Ezek. 7. 20-22. & 24. 21, 25. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 7. 16, 19. & 6. 37. & 9. 2. & 10. 35. & 14. 33. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 13. 10, 36. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 24. 3. Luke, 21. 7. Dan. 12. 6, 8. John, 21. 21. Acts, 1. 6. <sup>g</sup> Jer. 29. 8. Eph. 5. 6. Col. 2. 8. 2 Thess. 2. 3. 1 John, 4. 1. & 3. 7. Gal. 6. 7. 1 Cor. 6. 9. & 15. 33.

our souls, and to exercise this divine charity to our neighbour, is in God's account far more acceptable than the most expensive services, or all the ritual observances.

4. Christ approves of the judicious remarks that he made: he shewed himself a man of understanding, unbiassed by the generally-received traditions, and, as his mind appeared ingenuous and open to conviction, he was not far from the kingdom of God. In such a spirit, if he had examined the prophets, and weighed, under the divine benediction, the evidence of Christ's mission and miracles, he would be led into the truth, and become a member of the Messiah's kingdom.

5. From that time all the captious cavillers were silenced; such consummate wisdom appeared in him, that none durst any more encounter him. *Note*; (1.) They who improve the light which God has given them, will receive an increase of it, and be led into all truth. (2.) Many a man goes to the borders of the truth, *not far from the kingdom of God*, and yet never enters into it—almost, but not altogether, a Christian.

5thly, They had frequently endeavoured to puzzle him with questions captious and difficult. Our Lord now poses them with a question, which, as expositors of the Scriptures, the scribes should have thoroughly understood.

1. The question was, how the Messiah, whom they all admitted to be David's son, could at the same time be David's Lord, as he expressly calls him, Pf. cx. 1. This was a mystery to the scribes: not understanding the two-fold nature of the Messiah, as God and man, they could not possibly answer the question. Hereupon the common people, convinced how far Jesus in wisdom surpassed all their teachers, hearkened with delight to his divine discourses. *Note*; (1.) A babe in Christ understands more of the mysteries of godliness, than the wisest unenlightened scribe. (2.) Popularity, and the approbation of the people at large, is often cast as a reproach on the ministers of the Gospel by those who envy them, as the scribes of old did their Master.

2. He takes occasion to caution the people from being deceived by the sanctified appearance of their false teachers, whilst in fact they were slaves to pride and worldly-minded-

ness. They wore particular garments, long and trailing on the ground, or with fringes of extraordinary breadth, as a token of superior piety; and made long prayers, that to men they might appear of extraordinary devotion; but all that they did was hypocritical and designing, in order to gain the seat of pre-eminence and public salutations of high respect, and as a cloke under which to worm themselves into the confidence of widows, whom they plundered to enrich themselves: for which abominations they would bring down the heaviest wrath of God upon their souls.

*Note*; (1.) Inordinate desire of human respect and honour is the sure symptom of a proud, worldly, and unmortified heart. (2.) Hypocrisy is among the most common and most crying sins. Beware of it.

6thly, For the maintenance of the temple-worship and sacrifices, there were coffers placed in the court for the reception of the free-will offerings of the people. Our Lord being seated near the treasury, where these stood, observed the people who cast in their money. Many of the rich gave much, as became them; but, among the rest, a poor widow came and cast in two mites. Highly applauding the deed, our Lord pointed her out to his disciples, as having presented a richer and more acceptable offering, than those who, out of their abundance, had given more liberally. They had enough left still to supply their wants; but she, out of love to the service, threw in her little all, trusting in divine Providence for her future sustenance.

*Note*; (1.) Almsgiving is a most needful duty; and our Lord expects, according to our abilities, that we should be ready to distribute, willing to communicate: but he looks not merely at the gift, but the spirit and temper of the giver; for that stamps the offering with its value in his account. (2.) None can be supposed poorer than this widow; yet she gave. If we have but little, that must be no excuse; we must give our diligence to give of that little; and then it is accepted, according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. (3.) A truly gracious and charitable person will sometimes straiten himself to supply the more urgent wants of others, willing not only to his power, but above his power, to assist them.

6 <sup>a</sup> For many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and shall deceive many.

7 <sup>b</sup> And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but <sup>c</sup> the end shall not be yet.

8 <sup>d</sup> For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these *are* the beginnings of <sup>e</sup> sorrows.

9 <sup>f</sup> But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

10 <sup>g</sup> And the gospel must first be published among all nations.

11 <sup>h</sup> But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

12 <sup>i</sup> Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

13 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: <sup>j</sup> but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 <sup>k</sup> But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet,

standing <sup>l</sup> where it ought not (let him that readeth understand), then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains:

15 <sup>m</sup> And let him that is on the house-top not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house:

16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.

17 <sup>n</sup> But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

19 <sup>o</sup> For *in* those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

20 <sup>p</sup> And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

21 <sup>q</sup> And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, *he is* there; believe *him* not:

22 <sup>r</sup> For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, <sup>s</sup> if it were possible, even the elect.

23 <sup>t</sup> But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

24 ¶ <sup>u</sup> But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,

25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

<sup>a</sup> Jer. 14. 14. & 23. 21, 25. John, 5. 43. Ver. 22. <sup>b</sup> Jer. 4. 19. & 5. 10, 11. & 51. 46. with Pf. 46. 2, 3. & 27. 1-3. & 112. 7. If. 8. 12. Jer. 4. 27. & 5. 10, 18. <sup>c</sup> If. 19. 2. Hag. 2. 22. Zech. 14. 13. Heb. 12. 27. Dan. 2. 44. Acts, 11. 28. Mat. 24. 8. <sup>d</sup> Or the pains of a woman in travail. If. 37. 3. & 66. 7, 8. Pf. 48. 6. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 24. 9-14. Luke, 21. 12-19. Mat. 10. 17-22. & 23. 34, 37. & 22. 6. & 13. 21. & 11. 6. John, 15. 20. & 16. 2. Acts, ii-xxvii. Rev. 2. 10. Phil. 1. 28. 2 Thess. 1. 5. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 24. 14. & 26. 13. & 28. 18-20. Ch. 16. 15. Rom. 1. 8. & 10. 18. & 15. 19. Col. 1. 6, 23. Acts, ii-xix. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 10. 19, 20. Exod. 4. 12. 2 Sam. 23. 2. Jer. 1. 6-9. Luke, 12. 11, 12. & 21. 14, 15. Acts, 2. 4, 17. & 4. 8, 31. & 6. 10, 15. Dan. 3. 16, 17. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 10. 21. Ezek. 38. 21. Mich. 7. 4-6. John, 15. 18-25. & 16. 1-3. <sup>i</sup> Rev. 2. 7, 10. & 3. 10. Mat. 10. 22. & 24. 13. Heb. 3. 6, 14. & 10. 39. Gal. 6. 9. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. 1 Peter, 4. 16. 18. Dan. 12. 13. <sup>j</sup> Mat. 24. 15-28. Luke, 21. 20-24. & 19. 43. Dan. 9. 27. & 12. 11. with Gal. 1. 17. Gen. 36. 8. <sup>k</sup> Lam. 1. 10. Ezek. 44. 9. Deut. 23. 3. <sup>l</sup> Job, 2. 4. Mat. 6. 25. Prov. 22. 3. Heb. 11. 7. Acts, 27. 18, 19. Luke, 17. 31, 33. <sup>m</sup> Luke, 21. 23. & 23. 29. Hof. 13. 16. Deut. 28. 26, 57. <sup>n</sup> Lev. 26. 14-39. Deut. 28. 15-68. & 29. 18-28. & 31. 17, 18. & 32. 21-31. Prov. 1. 24-32. Pf. 21. 8-12. & 69. 22-28. If. 65. 12-15. See on Mat. 24. 21. Joel, 2. 2. Dan. 12. 1. <sup>o</sup> Zech. 13. 8, 9. If. 1. 9. & 6. 13. & 65. 8. <sup>p</sup> Mat. 24. 23. Luke, 17. 23. & 21. 8. Deut. 13. 1-3. 2 Thess. 2. 11. <sup>q</sup> Ver. 6. 2 Thess. 2. 9-11. Deut. 13. 1, 2. Rev. 13. 3, 13. John, 5. 43. Mat. 7. 15. 2 Peter, 2. 1. & 3. 17. <sup>r</sup> Johr, 6. 37. & 10. 20, 28, 29. Rom. 8. 28-39. 1 Peter, 1. 5. 2 Tim. 2. 19. 1 Jhn, 2. 19. <sup>s</sup> Ver. 5. Luke, 21. 8, 34. Mat. 7. 15. 2 Peter, 3. 17. John, 16. 1. If. 44. 7, 8. & 46. 10. & 48. 5, 6. <sup>t</sup> Mat. 24. 29-41. Luke, 21. 25-33. Jcl, 2. 30, 31. Acts, 2. 19, 20. Zeph. 1. 14-18. Amos, 5. 20. with If. 13. 10. Ezek. 32. 7. Rev. 6. 12-17. & 20. 12.

### CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 7. *Such things must needs be;*] "That is, not by any necessity imposed of God, but from the wickedness of the world."

Ver. 9. *In the synagogues ye shall be beaten;*] It is certain that *whipping* and *beat.ing* were punishments inflicted in the

synagogues. Thus Paul punished the Christians, Acts, xxii. 19. xxvi. 11. And that it was customary to whip both their wife men and their disciples, when guilty of any perverseness, may be fully proved from Vitringa *de Synag. vet.* lib. iii. cap. ii. All that is mentioned in this verse was exactly accomplished; for Peter and John were called before the Sanhedrim, Acts, iv. 6, 7. James and Peter

26 \* And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

27 † And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

28 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near :

29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, ‡ know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors.

30 Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

31 <sup>b</sup> Heaven and earth shall pass away : but my words shall not pass away.

32 ¶ <sup>i</sup> But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

33 <sup>k</sup> Take ye heed, watch and pray : for ye know not when the time is.

34 *For the Son of man is* <sup>l</sup> as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

35 <sup>m</sup> Watch ye therefore : for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning :

\* Dan. 7. 10, 13. Ch. 8. 38 & 14. 62. Mat. 16. 27, 28. & 26. 64. Rev. 1. 7. Zech. 14. 5. Acts, 1. 11. 1 Thess. 4. 16. 2 Thess. 1. 8—20. Mat. 25. 10, 31. † Prov. 9. 1—5. Pf. 22. 27—31. & xiv. lxxii. lxxxvii. If. 2. 2—5. & liv. lx. xlix. Zech. 2. 11. & 8. 20—23. John, 10. 16. Ch. 16. 15, 16. Mat. 23. 18—20. Acts, i—xx. or 1 Cor. 15. 52. 1 Thess. 4. 16. Mat. 25. 31. & 13. 41. ‡ Luke, 21. 29—33. Mat. 24. 32—35. James, 5. 9. 1 Peter, 4. 17. 18. Heb. 10. 37. Mat. 11. 16. & 16. 28. & 23. 36. Ezek. 7. 2—13. & 12. 22—28. <sup>a</sup> Mat. 24. 35. & 5. 28. 2 Peter, 3. 10. If. 40. 8. & 51. 6. Heb. 1. 11. 1 Peter, 1. 25. Rev. 20. 11. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 24. 36—51. Luke, 17. 26—36. Mat. 25. 10, 19, 31. John, 5. 28. Acts, 1. 7. & 17. 31. 1 Thess. 5. 2. 2 Peter, 3. 10. <sup>c</sup> Luke, 21. 34—36. & 12. 40. Mat. 24. 42, 44. & 25. 13. & 26. 41. 1 Cor. 16. 13. 1 Thess. 5. 6. 1 Peter, 5. 8. Rev. 16. 15. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 25. 44—1. & 25. 1—30. Luke. 19. 12—27. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 25. 13. Luke, 12. 37, 40. & 21. 34. Rom. 13. 11. 1 Cor. 15. 34. Eph. 5. 14. 2 Peter, 3. 10, 13. Rev. 3. 3. & 16. 15. Mat. 24. 42. & 25. 13.

Peter before Herod, Acts, xii. 2, 3. and Paul before Nero, as well as before the Roman governors, Gallio, Felix, and Festus; and some were *beaten*, as Paul and Silas, &c. See the note on Matth. x. 17, 18.

Ver. 29. Know that it is nigh,] Know that He is nigh ;—the Son of man. See ver. 26.

Ver. 32. Hour] Though we have given an explanation of this verse, as well as the whole chapter, in the notes on the parallel passage of St. Matthew; yet an ingenious commentator having offered a different solution from that which we have given, we here subjoin it: The word *ὄρα*, says he, here seems to have the force of the Hebrew conjugation *hiphil*, which, in verbs denoting *action*, makes that action, whatever it is, pass to another; wherefore *ὄρα*, which properly signifies, *I know*, used in the sense of the conjugation *hiphil*, signifies, *I make another to know*. The word has this meaning without dispute, 1 Cor. ii. 2. *I determined to know [εἰδέναι] nothing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified*; that is, “I determined to make *known*, to preach nothing, &c.” So likewise in the text, “*But of that day and that hour none maketh you to know:—No, not the angels, neither the Son, but the Father; neither man nor angel, neither the Son himself, can reveal the day and hour of the destruction of Jerusalem, because the Father has determined that it shall not be revealed.*” The divine wisdom saw fit to conceal from the apostles the precise period of the destruction of Jerusalem, that they might be laid under a necessity of watching continually; and this vigilance was especially proper at that time, because the success of the gospel depended in a great measure upon the activity and exemplary lives of those who first published it. It is an excellent observation of Mr. West, relating to the authors

who have recorded this prophecy, which is expressed in terms so very plain and circumstantial,—that Matthew and Mark were incontestably dead before the event, as Luke also might probably be; and as for John, the only evangelist who survived it, it is remarkable that he says nothing of it, lest any should assert that the prophecy was forged after the event happened. See West on the Resurrection, p. 393.

Ver. 35. At even,] ὄρα, evening, answers to the first watch of the night, which began at sunset: at nine Μεσονυκτίον, or midnight, answers to the second watch, which ended at twelve; ἀλεκτοροφωνία, or the *cock-crowing*, answers to the third watch, which ended at three in the morning: ὄρα, or the *morning*, answers to the fourth watch, which ended at six. See Chap. xv. 1. and on Matth. xxviii. 1.

Inferences.—We are taught, from the whole of this remarkable prophecy, how vain and dangerous it is to trust in external privileges, and to cry out, as these foolish wretched Jews did, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these buildings!*—when of this stately and magnificent structure, within less than half a century after it was finished, not one stone was left on another undemolished.

Let us bless God that our own eyes have not seen such desolation and ruins, such commotions in the natural and moral world, such dissensions in civil life, such persecutions and hatreds among the nearest relations, (ver. 12, 13.) *under the pretence of propagating religion*; for however propagated, it is nothing, without that *love* which is to often made the first victim to it; yet too often do we see, in one of them or another, *iniquity abounding, and the love*

36 Left coming suddenly, he find you  
a sleeping.

37 And what I say unto you I say unto  
all, Watch.

<sup>a</sup> Song, 3. 1. & 5. 2. Mat. 25. 5. Luke, 21. 34. 1 Thess. 5. 6, 7. Eph. 5. 14. Rom. 13. 11—13. Prov. 6. 9—11. & 24. 33, 34.

of many waxing cold. To avoid this, we should endeavour to revive in our own hearts a deep and lasting impression of divine things; and remember, whenever we are tempted to let go our integrity, that *he alone who endures to the end shall be saved.*

If our Lord urges his disciples to flee with such speedy and solicitous haste from the sword of God's temporal judgments, how much greater diligence should we give to flee from the wrath to come! ver. 15, 16. What are any of the little interests of life, that out of regard to them we should be willing to continue one moment longer exposed to a danger, which may sink us into everlasting ruin and despair!

The unhappy Jews eagerly listened to the very name of *Messiah*, by whomsoever it was assumed, ver. 21, 22. while they rejected him whom God had sent them, and who had so long, and with so much importunity been renewing to them the offers of life and salvation. May none of us ever know the sad impatience with which condemned sinners will wish, and wish in vain, for those overtures and messages of grace which they now despise! In that sense *wheresoever the carcase is, thither will the eagles be gathered together*: wherever there is the like unbelief and impenitence, there will be in its degree the like ruin. Christ has graciously *told us these things before*; may we humbly attend to the warning, that none of this terror and destruction may come upon us!

And, to render us still more attentive, raise we our contemplation to that awful day, when all that was figuratively spoken of the destruction of Jerusalem shall be literally accomplished: where will our hope and comfort, our light and safety then be, when *the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light*? Where indeed, unless the Almighty God, the everlasting Jehovah, by whose voice they were created, and by whose hand they shall be dashed in pieces again, shall condescend to be our light and our salvation. If indeed he be so, we shall hear the solemn summons to judgment with joy. What though the day and season be unknown, it is enough for us that we know that all these interposing days and years, be they ever so numerous, will at length be past; for the promise of the great Redeemer is our security, and he will hasten it in its time.

We are by profession the *domestics* of Christ, ver. 34. it is our duty therefore to attend to the offices that he has assigned us, though he seem at a distance; diligently to wait his coming, at whatever season: his ministers ought more especially to wait it, and be solicitous that they may be found so doing; conducting themselves like wise stewards of the mysteries of God, dispensing to every one their portion of food in due season; and always remembering that every exhortation which they give to others, returns with redoubled weight upon themselves: then will their account be honourable, and their reward glorious. See the Inferences on Matth. xxiv.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Our Lord departing now from the temple to return no more, one of his disciples, pleased with the beauty of that stupendous fabric, could not help observing to him, of what massy stones it was built, and how magnificently adorned. But Christ assures him, that, admirable as it appeared, and strong as it stood, the day was near when it should be so utterly razed from the foundations, that one stone should not be left upon another. Struck with so sad a prospect, four of the disciples came privately to him, as he sat in the mount of Olives, desiring to be informed when these awful predictions would come to pass, and what would be the sign of their approaching fulfilment.

2dly, In answering the question which their curiosity raised, Christ gives them some cautions for the direction of their conscience, it being infinitely more their concern to be always ready to meet the approaching calamities, than to know the precise time of their arrival.

1. He cautions them against the false Christs who should arise, and seduce many of the Jews, who were ready to run after every impostor, though they had rejected the true Messiah.

2. He warns them not to be discouraged with the wars and commotions, the famines, earthquakes, and pestilences, which would ravage the earth; these being but the beginning of sorrows, *the end is not yet*; and what is here spoken with reference to the Jewish state and nation, seems also to have a view to the like calamities which will be the signs and prefaces of either the millennium or the final dissolution of all things. But amid the wreck of nature, and the flames of a dissolving world, the soul that is stayed upon Christ need not be troubled.

3. He bids them prepare for persecutions, and exhorts them to bear up courageously under them. Far from possessing that earthly greatness and respect with which they flattered themselves, they must expect the very reverse; they will *be hated of all men* for his sake: in enmity to Jesus and his gospel, the world in general would combine against them: yea, even *their nearest relations* would prove false and faithless, and become the bitterest enemies; and, breaking the strongest ties of nature, persecute them even to death. They would be dragged before the rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, and punished as heretical and seditious: yea, even before the heathen kings and magistrates they would be accused, and called to seal with their blood, the testimony which they bore. But distressing as these things might appear, they have abundant reason to trust and not be afraid: Jesus assures them that he will stand by them. When called to answer before the tribunals of the mightiest, they need not distress themselves about what they shall say; a divine revelation shall be given to them, and they shall be directed to reply to every charge in the properest manner; yea, their very trials before the kings and rulers shall prove a testimony against those great men; they will thereby have an opportunity

CHAP. XIV.

*A conspiracy against Christ: precious ointment is poured on his head by a woman: Judas selleth his Master for money. Christ himself foretelleth how he shall be betrayed by one of his disciples: after the passover prepared, and eaten, he institutes his supper: declareth aforehand the flight of all his disciples, and Peter's denial. Judas betrayeth him with a kiss: he is apprehended in the garden, falsely accused, and impiously condemned by the Jews' council; shamefully abused by them, and thrice denied of Peter.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**A**FTER two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and

the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.

2<sup>b</sup> But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people.

3<sup>c</sup> ¶ And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of \* spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

4<sup>d</sup> And there were some that had indigna-

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 26. 2—5. Luke, 22. 1, 2. Pf. 2. 1—5. & 22. 12, 16. John, 11. 47, 53. & 13. 18. Acts, 4. 26—8. <sup>b</sup> John, 7. 12, 40, & 13. 1. Luke, 20. 6. Ch. 11. 18, 32. with Prov. 19. 21. & 21. 30. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 26. 6—13. Luke, 7. 37. John, 11. 2. & 12. 3—9. <sup>d</sup> Or pure nard, or liquid nard. <sup>e</sup> Eccl. 4. 4. Job, 5. 2. Mat. 26. 8. John, 12. 4—6.

portunity of preaching the gospel to those who might never else have heard it. And whatever attempts are made to suppress and silence them, they shall prove abortive; Christ will cause his gospel to be preached, and spread, in defiance of opposition, into all lands; and either shelter them from the malice of their persecutors, or reward their fidelity unto death with a crown of everlasting life and glory—considerations sufficient to make them welcome the cross, while such a crown was in view. Note; (1.) Sufferings for Christ stumble many; we need to take care that we be not thereby offended. (2.) The image of Jesus, as it must reprove the world, will ever procure the hatred of worldly men against those who possess it. (3.) The spirit of bigotry and enmity, which is in the natural heart, against Christ and his people, sometimes breaks through the strongest ties of blood; makes children rebellious, and parents unnatural, even to wish the death of those they are most bound to love and cherish. (4.) Wherever the gospel is preached, if it be not received, it will at least rise up for a testimony against all who neglect or reject so great a salvation. (5.) When we are called to stand forth for Christ, we may still confidently expect to be supported by him, and to be taught by his Spirit how to speak and act for his glory. (6.) All sufferings, and even death itself, will be regarded as light afflictions that are but for a moment, by those whose faith realizes to their minds the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

3dly, Two things the disciples are taught by our Lord, 1. To secure their lives by flight, when the Roman army, the abomination of desolation, appears before Jerusalem. No moment must be lost, no attempt made to save any thing; they must seek their safety in instant flight. Those who are heavy with child, or have babes at their breasts, will be in that day most peculiarly miserable, as least able to fly, or to bear the hardships which they must undergo; and if this flight were in winter, the inclemency of the season would make the situation of the fugitives more deplorable; therefore they need pray that it may not be so. But whenever the time comes, such a scene of affliction, misery, and desolation, will appear, as never was from the creation before, and never will be again to the end of

time. They who read the history of Josephus, may see this prophecy awfully fulfilled. Indeed it is marvellous that any inhabitant of Judea survived this dire catastrophe; nothing but the most gracious interposition of divine Providence could have prevented their utter extirpation. But God having gracious designs towards his once favoured people; in the latter days, will shorten the days of affliction, and pluck some as brands from the burning.

2. To take care of their souls. Seducers will abound in those evil days, and with large promises of procuring them relief from the impending calamities, will persuade many to join them; giving themselves out for the Messiah, or pretending to have found him; and, with lying wonders and false miracles, will impose upon many. Christ therefore warns them against impostures, which he so plainly foretels.

4thly, The things here predicted, primarily refer to the destruction of the Jewish people; but they seem also to have respect to the final appearing to judgment of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. As his hand visibly appeared in the ruin of Jerusalem, the temple, and the Jewish nation, and also in his separating his disciples, who fled to Pella when the calamity drew near, and escaped the Roman sword; so will he fulfil this prophecy in the approaching dissolution of all things, when he shall personally appear, coming in the clouds with power and great glory, to execute judgment on all impenitent sinners, and to gather his saints into his eternal kingdom. Concerning these great events he warns them;

1. That the time of their fulfilment is near, and they might judge of its approach by the preceding signs, just as surely as they would of the summer's drawing nigh by the budding of the fig-tree. Some of that generation would live to see the utter ruin of Jerusalem and Judea: his prophetic word must infallibly take place, and heaven and earth sooner pass away, than one tittle of his predictions fail. Near also, even at the door, is the great day of judgment. The period of time, which yet remains, we know is short; how short, who can tell?

2. The time when, is uncertain. None in heaven or on earth precisely knows the hour, not even the Son as man, or in virtue of his designation to the mediatorial office;

tion within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

5 For it might have been sold for more than \* three hundred pence, and ° have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

6 And Jesus said, ' Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

7 8 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand <sup>h</sup> to anoint my body to the burying.

9 Verily I say unto you, <sup>i</sup> Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole

world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

10 ¶ <sup>k</sup> And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

11 And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to ' give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

12 ¶ <sup>m</sup> And the first day of unleavened bread, when they \* killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?

13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.

\* About 91. 7s. sterling. ° Pf. 12. 2. & 55. 21. & 78. 36, 37. John, 12. 6. & 13. 29. <sup>f</sup> Pf. 109. 31. Job, 42. 7, 8. 2 Cor. 10. 18. <sup>g</sup> Deut. 12. 11. Mat. 6. 11. John, 12. 8. & 13. 33. & 16. 5, 28. & 17. 11. Acts, 3. 21. with Mat. 18. 20. & 28. 20. & 14. 19. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 27. 5—60. Ch. 15. 42—47. Luke, 23. 50—56. John, 19. 38—42. <sup>i</sup> Ch. 16. 15. Mat. 26. 13. & 28. 19. Rom. 1. 8. & 10. 18. & 15. 19. Col. 1. 6. 23. 1f xxxv. xlii. xlix. liv. lx. Pl. lxxvi. lxxvii. lxxviii. lxxxvii. Acts, i—xix. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 26. 14—16. Luke, 22. 3—6. Pl. 41. 9. & 55. 12—4. John, 6. 70, 71. <sup>l</sup> 1 Tim. 6. 10. Prov. 28. 22. & 1. 10—16. Zech. 11. 12, 13. Exod. 21. 32. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 26. 17—29. Luke, 22. 7—23. John, 13. 28. Exod. 12. 6. & 13. 3. Lev. 23. 5, 6. Numb. 9. 3. & 28. 16, 17. Deut. 16. 1—4. <sup>n</sup> Or sacrificed.

office; it is a secret locked up in the bosom of God, and neither revealed to men nor angels. We are left in this awful uncertainty, that we may be always ready.

3. He admonishes them, in the view of what he had spoken, to watch and pray; which he enforces in the following parable: his appearing would be like that of a master who took a long journey, committed to his stewards the management of his affairs, and directed the work in which he would have his servants employed during his absence; charging the porter to take especial care that no thief broke in, and that all should be ready to receive him at his return, which he left uncertain, that they might be in constant expectation of him, and prepared to welcome him. Thus when Jesus ascended on high, he left a charge with all his servants, whether ministers or private Christians, to employ themselves diligently in the work that he has appointed them, and to be prepared to give an account of their fidelity. He is coming again to make a solemn inquiry; the time when, is uncertain; every hour we stand in jeopardy, not knowing whether by day or by night the calls of death or judgment may place us before him. Our care therefore must be, above all things, that we are not surprized by him, slothful, negligent, and unprepared to meet him, though he come never so suddenly. What, therefore, our Lord inculcates upon his disciples, we are alike bound to hear; for unto us it is alike addressed, *I say unto all, Watch.* Note, Our great concern upon earth is to be ready for death and judgment: each breath we draw may be our last: let us seize then the moment as it flies; and, while the hour lasts, give all diligence that we may be found of him in peace.

#### CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. *By craft,*] *By surpris.*

Ver. 3. *Ointment, &c.] Balsam of spikenard, which was very costly; and she broke open the box, or vessel, &c.* See Blackwall's Sac. Classics, vol. ii. p. 166. The *spikenard*,—*ωσικινθε ναρδου*, pure and unadulterated spikenard, was esteemed a very valuable aromatic. Sir Norton Knatchbull, Dr. Hammond, and others maintain, that *συντριψασα* does not signify that she *broke the vessel*, but only that she *shook it*, so as to break the coagulative parts of the rich balsam, and bring it to such a liquidity, that it might be fit to be poured out. Dr. Doddridge, however, and others think the original does not so naturally express this, and therefore they imagine that the woman broke off the top of the vessel in which the balsam was contained. See the note on Matth. xxvi. 7. and Stockius on the word *συντριψασα*.

Ver. 4. *Ointment]* *Perfume.*

Ver. 8. *To the burying,]* *To its funeral.* See John, xii. 3, &c. where I shall enlarge, and compare the accounts of the evangelists.

Ver. 10. *To betray him,]* Παρεδδ;—*deliver him up.* See Matth. xxvi. 15.

Ver. 12. *When they killed the passover,]* *When the passover is sacrificed.* Campbell.

Ver. 13. *There shall meet you a man, &c.]* This is set in opposition to the *good-man*, or master of the house, ver. 14. and consequently means a servant of the lowest rank, or a slave, (Luke, xii. 36.) it being a servile office to draw water, as appears from Deut. xxix. 11. Josh. ix. 21. As Samuel, having anointed Saul, for the confirmation of his faith gave him several predictions relating to some very contingent occurrences that he was to meet with in his journey (see 1 Sam. x. 2—7.); so our Lord seems by these predictions to have intended the same with regard to his disciples; and also to give them a most important hint, that he foresaw all the particular circumstances which were

14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples ?

15 And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.

16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, one of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I?

20 And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.

21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but wo to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many.

25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

28 But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

29 But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.

30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even in this night,

\* Mat. 8. 25. & 21. 3. & 23. 8-10. John, 11. 8, 28. & 20. 16. Acts, 10. 36. Mat. 26. 18. Ch. 11. 3. & 10. 17. Exod. 12. 6-11. Lev. 23. 5. Numb. 9. 5-5. Deut. 16. 1-4. Acts, 1. 13. & 9. 39. & 20. 8. Pf. 33. 9. Numb. 23. 19. 1 Sam. 15. 22. Exod. 23. 21. John, 15. 14. Deut. 11. 32. Exod. 12. 6. Lev. 23. 5. Deut. 16. 1. Mat. 26. 20-25. Luke, 22. 14-18. John, 13. 21-30. John, 6. 70, 71. Mat. 26. 2, 21. Pf. 41. 9. & 55. 12-14. Mat. 9. 15. 2 Kings, 8. 13. 2 Sam. 3. 8. John, 13. 18, 26. Luke, 22. 21, 22. See on ver. 18. Gen. 3. 15. Pf. 22. 1-21. & 69. 1-21. Jf. 52. 14. & 53. 1-12. & 50. 5, 6. Dan. 9. 24, 20. Zech. 13. 7. Pf. 55. 15-23. & 109. 1-20. Mat. 27. 3-5. Acts, 1. 16-20. Mat. 26. 25-29. Luke, 22. 19, 20. 1 Cor. 11. 23-29. & 10. 16, 17. Re- presents. Gen. 41. 26, 27. 1 Cor. 10. 4. Exod. 12. 11, 12. Exod. 24. 8. Zech. 9. 11. Mat. 20. 28. Heb. 9. 14-17. Rom. 5. 10, 11, 15-11. Heb. 13. 20. Jer. 31. 33. Luke, 22. 16. Pf. 104. 15. Acts, 10. 41. Mat. 3. 2. & 4. 17. 1 Cor. 15. 24, 28. Luke, 22. 29, 30. Or psalm, i. e. Pf. cxliii-cxviii. Mat. 26. 30-35. Luke, 22. 39. John, 18. 7-4. Mat. 26. 31. John, 16. 32. Jer. 10. 23. Zech. 13. 7. H. 53. 2-10. Dan. 9. 26. Gen. 3. 15. Rom. 8. 32. Mat. 16. 28. Mat. 26. 32. & 28. 10, 16. Ch. 16. 7. Mat. 26. 33-35. Luke, 22. 31-34. John, 13. 36-39. with ver. 66-71. Mat. 26. 69-75. Luke, 22. 54-62. 1 Cor. 10. 12.

were to befall him at Jerusalem, when he went up thither for the next and last time before his sufferings. The sending them to Jerusalem in this manner seems to intimate, that he did not go thither himself that morning; so that it is probable he spent most of the day in retirement, for meditation and prayer.

Ver. 22. And as they did eat, &c.] And having eaten. See the note on Matth. xxvi. 26.

Ver. 24. New Testament,] New covenant.

Ver. 25. I will drink no more, &c.] "From this instant I will no more drink of the passover-cup, nor have that commemorative and typical ordinance continued any longer in my church, than till it be suppressed and fulfilled (Luke, xxii. 16.) by the great salvation which I shall bring into the gospel-kingdom upon my resurrection from the dead, and which is to be afterwards commemorated by a new use of wine in the supper that I have now instituted; nor will I so familiarly commune with you again, VOL. I.

"as I do now in this New Testament ordinance, till we shall have the most intimate fellowship together, in the more excellent entertainments of the heavenly state; which, for their superior and always fresh delight, may in the language of a festival be called new wine." See Guyle, and the note on Matth. xxvi. 29.

Ver. 26. They went out] At the conclusion of the supper, Jesus and his disciples sung a proper Psalm or song of praise together, as was customary at the close of the passover, and then he set out for the mount of Olives; choosing to retire thither that he might prevent a riot in Jerusalem, and bring no trouble upon the master of the house where he celebrated the passover.

Ver. 29. Although all shall be offended,] It is most probable that Judas by this time had slipped away from the disciples, to fulfil his vile contract with the sanhedrim; and Peter missing him vaunted, that though all his fellow-apostles should follow Judas's example, he would stand by his

before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

31 <sup>a</sup> But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. <sup>b</sup> Likewise also said they all.

32 ¶ <sup>c</sup> And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I <sup>d</sup> shall pray.

33 And he taketh with him <sup>e</sup> Peter and James and John, and began to be <sup>f</sup> fore amazed, and to be very heavy;

34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and <sup>g</sup> watch.

35 And he went forward a little, and <sup>h</sup> fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

36 <sup>i</sup> And he said, Abba, Father, <sup>j</sup> all things are possible unto thee; <sup>k</sup> take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? <sup>l</sup> couldst not thou watch one hour?

38 <sup>m</sup> Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak.

39 And <sup>n</sup> again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

40 And when he returned, he found them <sup>o</sup> asleep again: for their eyes were heavy: neither wist they what to answer him.

41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, <sup>p</sup> Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: it is enough, the hour is come; <sup>q</sup> behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

43 ¶ <sup>r</sup> And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever <sup>s</sup> I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead *him* away safely.

<sup>a</sup> Pf. 50. 6. 2 Kings, 8. 13. Prov. 16. 18. & 29. 23. <sup>b</sup> Exod. 19. 8. & 25. 3, 7. Deut. 5. 27. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 26. 36—46. Luke, 22. 39—46. John, 18. 1—4. <sup>d</sup> Pf. 22. 2. & 109. 4. Heb. 5. 7. Ver. 36, 39. <sup>e</sup> Ch. 1. 16, 19. & 5. 37. & 9. 2. <sup>f</sup> 1f. 53. 3, 4, 10. John, 12. 27. Gal. 3. 13. Heb. 5. 7. Pf. 116. 3. & 69. 1, 2. & 22. 14. <sup>g</sup> Ver. 38. Ch. 13. 33, 35, 37. 1 Pet. 5. 8. Eph. 6. 18, 19. <sup>h</sup> Numb. 14. 5. & 15. 22. Deut. 9. 18. 2 Chron. 21. 16. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 6. 9. Gal. 4. 6. Rom. 8. 15. <sup>j</sup> Gen. 17. 1. & 18. 14. Jer. 32. 17, 27. <sup>k</sup> Luke, 22. 41. John, 12. 27. Heb. 5. 7, 8. Phil. 2. 8. Pf. 40. 8. John, 5. 30. & 6. 38, 39. & 18. 11. Mat. 20. 22. <sup>l</sup> Ver. 29. 31, 34. Matt. 25. 5. Jer. 10. 23. John, 15. 5. <sup>m</sup> Ch. 13. 33—37. Mat. 24. 42. & 25. 13. 1 Cor. 16. 13. 1 Pet. 5. 8. Eph. 6. 18. <sup>n</sup> Pf. 109. 4. & 22. 2. 2 Cor. 12. 8. Heb. 5. 7. Luke, 18. 1. <sup>o</sup> Song, 5. 2. Mat. 25. 5. Ver. 34, 37, 38. <sup>p</sup> 1 Kings, 18. 27. Eccl. 11. 9. Judges, 10. 14. <sup>q</sup> Ver. 18. John, 13. 2. Ch. 8. 31. & 9. 31. & 10. 32. <sup>r</sup> Mat. 26. 47—56. Luke, 22. 47—53. John, 18. 3—11. Acts, 1. 16. Pf. 3. 1. & 2. 1, 2. & 22. 12. 16. <sup>s</sup> John, 18. 3, 12. 2 Sam. 20. 9. Pf. 28. 3. & 12. 2. & 55. 21. Prov. 27. 6.

his Lord. We may observe, that if St. Mark's Gospel was dictated or reviewed by St. Peter, as the ancients affirm, the latter, out of his deep penitence, represents the event with the highest aggravations; for nothing can be stronger than the expressions in ver. 31.

Ver. 30. *Before the cock crow twice,—thou shalt*] *Thou wilt.* See the note on Matth. xxvi. 33, &c. Dr. Owen, in his Observations on the four Gospels, p. 56. has observed further, that as the *Jews*, in the enumeration of the times of the night, took notice only of one cock-crowing, which comprehended the third watch, (see on chap. xiii. 35) so St. Matthew, to give *them* a clear information that Peter would deny his Master thrice before three in the morning, needed only to say, that he would do it *before the cock crew*; but the *Romans*, for whom, and the other Gentiles, St. Mark wrote his Gospel, reckoning by a double crowing of the cock,—the first of which was about midnight, and the second at three,—stood in need of a more particular designation; and therefore St. Mark, to denote the same hour to them, was obliged to say, *before the cock crew twice.* Juvenal uses exactly the same phrase to specify the same hour. Sat. ix. ver. 107.

Ver. 33. *He began to be sore amazed,*] See the note on Matth. xxvi. 38.

Ver. 37. *Simon, sleepest thou?*] Jesus calls him by his first name: that of Peter did not then suit him; he was degenerated from it. Heylin.

Ver. 40. *Neither wist they*] *Neither knew they.*

Ver. 41. *Sleep on now,* &c.] Some commentators read this interrogatively, *Do you sleep on still, and take repose?* The passage, however, may be read with propriety agreeable to our version; as much as to say, "My previous conflict is now over, and you may sleep on, because I have no farther occasion for your watching. *It is enough*; the time is expired in which your watching would have been of any service to me." The original word ἀπίχε, sometimes signifies an acquittal, or discharge from any debt or duty, and implies our Saviour's discharging his disciples from the duty and obligation of watching at that time, which he had laid them under by his commands, ch. xiii. 33, 37. See Mill's Greek Testament.

Ver. 44. *A token,*] *A signal.* Take him,—seize him, or lay fast hold of him:—καταλαβέτω αὐτόν. See Heylin and Matth. xxvi. 48.

45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, <sup>1</sup> Master, master; and kissed him.

46 <sup>k</sup> And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

47 <sup>l</sup> And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and *with* staves, to take me?

49 <sup>m</sup> I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled.

50 <sup>n</sup> And they all forsook him, and fled.

51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about *his* naked body; and the young men laid hold on him:

52 And <sup>o</sup> he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

53 <sup>p</sup> And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.

54 <sup>q</sup> And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

55 <sup>r</sup> And the chief priests and all the council fought for witnesses against Jesus to put him to death; and <sup>s</sup> found none.

56 For many bare false witnesses against him, but their witness agreed not together.

57 And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying,

58 We heard him say, <sup>t</sup> I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within

<sup>1</sup> Gr. Rabbi, Rabbi. Ch. 10. 51. John, 20. 15. Mat. 27. 8-10. & 26. 49. <sup>k</sup> Lam. 4. 20. Acts, 2. 23. Pf. 22. 12, 16. <sup>l</sup> John, 18. 10. Ver. 33. Mat. 26. 51, 52. Luke, 22. 49-51. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 26. 4-56. Luke, 22. 52, 53. Pf. 22. 1-12. & 69. 10. If 53. 2-11. Luke, 24. 25, 27, 44. <sup>n</sup> Ver. 27. John, 10. 32. Job, 17. 13, 14. Pf. 88. 8, 18. & 38. 11. 2 Tim. 1. 5. & 4. 16. <sup>o</sup> Gen. 39. 12. Job, 2. 4. See ch. 13. 1-16. <sup>p</sup> Mat. 26. 57-68. Luke, 22. 66-71. John, 18. 12-14, 19-24. Acts, 8. 32. If. 53. 7. Pf. 22. 12, 16. <sup>q</sup> Ver. 29. 31. John, 8. 15, 17. Prov. 6. 6. & 13. 20. Ch. 13. 33-37. Ver. 38. <sup>r</sup> Mat. 26. 59-62. John, 18. 19-23. Pf. 27. 12 & 35. 11. Acts, xiii. 1 Kings, 21. 10. <sup>s</sup> Dan. 6. 4. <sup>t</sup> 1 Pet. 3. 16. <sup>u</sup> John, 2. 19. Mat. 27. 40. & 26. 61. Ch. 15. 29. Acts, 6. 13.

Ver. 51, 52. *There followed him a certain young man, &c.*] Bishop Pococke, in describing the dresses of the people of Egypt, observes, "that it is almost a general custom among the Arabs and Mohammedan natives of the country, to wear a large blanket, either white or brown, and in summer a blue or white cotton sheet; which the Christians constantly wear in the country. Putting one corner before over the left shoulder, they bring it behind and under the right arm, and so over their bodies, throwing it behind over the left shoulder, and so the right arm is left bare for action. When it is hot, and they are on horseback, they let it fall down on the saddle round them; and about Faiume I particularly observed, that young people especially, and the poorer sort, had nothing on whatever, but this blanket; and it is probable the young man was clothed in this manner, who followed our Saviour when he was taken, having a *linen-cloth* cast about his naked body; and when the young men laid hold on him, he left the linen-cloth, and fled from them naked." See his *Description of the East*, vol. i. p. 190. "I am very much disposed," says the author of the *Observations on Scripture*, "to think as the Bishop does upon this point; and as he has made this remark, I should not have thought of noting it, had I not apprehended some additional observations might not be altogether useless. The account here given relates to Egypt; but Egmont and Heyman inform us, that the inhabitants of Palestine are as slightly clothed now as these Egyptians, and we may believe were so anciently. They observe, that they saw several Arabian inhabitants of Jassa (called Joppa in the New Testament) going almost naked, the greatest part of them without so much

"as a shirt or drawers, though some wore a kind of mantle: as for the children there, they run about almost as naked as they were born, though they had all little chains about their legs, as an ornament, and some of silver." The ancients, or, at least many of them, supposed that the young man here mentioned by St. Mark, was one of the apostles; though Grotius wonders how they could entertain such an idea; and apprehends that it was some youth who lodged in a country-house near the garden of Gethsemane, who ran out in a hurry to see what was the matter, in his night vestment, or in *his shirt*, as we should express it. But the word *χιτών*, used to signify what he had upon him, denotes also such a cloth as they wrapped up the dead in, and occurs in no other sense in the Old Testament: but the Eastern people do not lie like corpses wrapped up in a winding-sheet, but in drawers, and one or two waistcoats, at Aleppo; and those who go without drawers (as the Arabs of Barbary do, according to Dr. Shaw, and many of the Holy Land, if we believe Egmont and Heyman) sleep in their raiment; and the *byke*, which they wear by day, serves them for a bed and covering by night. It might as well then be an apostle in his day-dress, as an ordinary youth wrapped up in that in which he lay; and it is rather to be understood of an apostle in his common clothing, than of a person of figure in his drawers and waistcoat, in which such persons now lay; and which we may believe that Dionysius Alexandrinus meant by *εν λινω εσθηματι*, in his epistle quoted by Grotius. A late commentator takes notice, that though this youth is said to fly away naked upon his leaving the linen cloth in the hands of those that secured him; yet it is by no means necessary to suppose that he was *absolutely naked*;—which

three days I will build another made without hands.

59 But neither so did their witness agree together.

60 And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

61 <sup>u</sup> But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou <sup>x</sup> the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

62 And Jesus said, I am: <sup>v</sup> and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

63 Then the high priest <sup>z</sup> rent his clothes, and said, What need we any further witnesses?

64 Ye have heard <sup>a</sup> the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to

be guilty of death.

65 <sup>b</sup> And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

66 ¶ <sup>c</sup> And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of <sup>d</sup> the maids of the high priest: <sup>v</sup>

67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus <sup>e</sup> of Nazareth.

68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

69 <sup>f</sup> And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them.

70 And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter,

<sup>u</sup> If. 53. 7. Acts, 8. 32. Pf. 38. 13, 14. Ch. 15. 3, 5. John, 19. 9. <sup>v</sup> Mat. 11. 29. <sup>x</sup> Mat. 11. 4, 5. & 16. 16. John, 1. 49. <sup>y</sup> Mat. 24. 30. & 25. 31. & 16. 27. Ch. 8. 38. & 13. 26. Pf. 110. 1. Dan. 7. 13, 14. John, 6. 62. Acts, 1. 11. & 17. 31. Rom. 14. 10. <sup>z</sup> Theff. 1. 7—10. <sup>a</sup> Theff. vii—x. Rev. 1. 7. & 20. 11. <sup>b</sup> Lev. 21. 10. If. 36. 22. & 37. 1. <sup>c</sup> Lev. 24. 16. Acts, 6. 13. John, 19. 7. <sup>d</sup> If. 50. 6. & 52. 14. & 53. 3—5. Ch. 15. 19, 29—32. John, 19. 3. Luke, 22. 63. Micah, 5. 1. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 26. 58, 69—75. Luke, 22. 54—62. John, 18. 15—18, 25—27. with ver. 29, 31. John, 13. 36—38. <sup>f</sup> Gen. 3. 13. & 16. 2. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 1. 21. & 2. 23. Luke, 4. 16. John, 1. 45, 49. Ch. 10. 47. Acts, 10. 38. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 26. 71. Luke, 22. 58. John, 18. 25. See ver. 66, 67.

is indeed very true: is not this precisely the thing, however, that the evangelist designs to intimate,—in order to mark out the extreme fear of this young man, who rather chose to quit his *byke* than run the risk of being made a prisoner; though, by doing this, he became entirely exposed? Dr. Lightfoot supposes, as I do, says this author, that he had nothing on under this linen cloth; which he inclines to attribute to mortification or a superstitious austerity. But if he was not an apostle, yet he must be understood to have been a disciple of Jesus, or he needed not to have been afraid. And from ch. ii. 18. we learn, that though the disciples of John followed a rigorous institute, those of Christ did not. See the Observations, p. 403, &c. Instead of *young men* at the end of ver. 51. Dr. Heylin reads *soldiers*, as the original word frequently signifies in the best writers.

Ver. 59. *But neither so did their witness agree together.*] *But neither was their evidence found consistent.* Heylin. The original, literally rendered, is, *Neither thus was their testimony equal.* See ver. 56.

Ver. 61. *The Son of the Blessed?*] This is a very sublime and emphatical method of expressing the happiness of God. It conveys such an idea of the divine blessedness, that, comparatively speaking, there is none happy but he. See the note on Matth. xxvi. 62, 63. It is plain from the parallel passage, Luke, xxii. 67. that the answer of our Saviour, set down by St. Mark as well as St. Matthew, is an answer only to this question, *Art thou the Son of God?*

and not to that other, *Art thou the Christ, or the Messiah?* which preceded, and which he had answered before; and though St. Matthew and St. Mark connect them together, as if making but one question, and omit all the intervening discourse, yet it is plain from St. Luke, that they were two distinct questions, to which Jesus gave two distinct answers; in the first whereof, according to his usual caution, he declined saying in plain and express words that he was the Messiah, though in the latter he owned himself to be *the Son of God*: which, though they, being Jews, understood to signify the Messiah, yet he knew could be no legal or weighty accusation against him before a heathen; and so it proved. There was, however, a great deal of craft in the question, which consisted in this, that if Jesus answered in the affirmative, they were ready to condemn him as a blasphemer; but if in the negative, they proposed to have him punished as an impostor, who, by accepting the honours and titles of the Messiah from the people, had deceived them. See Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 154.

Ver. 64. *Guilty of death.*] *Worthy of death.*

Ver. 67. *Thou also wast with Jesus.*] This young woman expresses her contempt of Jesus very strongly: for the original runs, *Thou also wast with that Nazarene Jesus.* See Wynne, and on Matth. xxvi. 73, 74.

Ver. 68. *I know not, &c.*] That is, “I know not the man, nor do I understand what thou art talking about.”

Ver.

Surely thou art *one* of them : for thou art <sup>a</sup> a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*.

71 <sup>b</sup> But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 1. 16. Luke, 13. 1. John, 1. 43, 44. Judges, 12. 6. <sup>b</sup> Ver. 29, 31. Mat. 26. 74. Luke, 22. 60. John, 18. 26, 27. Pl. 114. 3. 1 Cor. 10. 12. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 26. 34, 75. Ver. 30. John, 13. 38. Luke, 22. 61, 62. <sup>k</sup> Or *he wept abundantly, or he began to weep.* Pl. 119. 59, 60. Ezk. 7. 16. Zech. 12. 10. Jer. 31. 18. 2 Cor. 7. 11. 2 Sam. 24. 10.

Ver. 70. *And thy speech agreeth thereto.*] *And your pronunciation is of that country.* Heylin.

Ver. 72. *And when he thought thereon, he wept.*] Raphaelus, and some learned critics, would render επιβλαων, *throwing himself out of the company*, in a passionate manner, which it is very probable he did : but others, and particularly Elfner, Salmasius, and Bos, with much better authority, would translate it, *covering his head*, which was a token of mourning and shame, well becoming Peter on this occasion. Compare 2 Sam. xv. 30. Esth. vi. 12. and Jer. xiv. 3, 4. The expression is elliptical, and should be supplied thus : επιβλαων ιματιον τη μεφαλη αυτης, as is evident from Lev. xix. 19. LXX. και ιματιον εκ δυο υφασμενον κισθηλον επιβλαεις σεαυτω. Besides, it was the custom of persons in confusion to cover their heads, as in the aforementioned place of Jeremiah ; *They were ashamed, and confounded, and covered their heads.* Wetstein defends, by a variety of instances, our version : but see Duport's excellent "Letters on Theophrastus," p. 232.

*Inferences on Christ's apprehension, &c.*—Wherefore, O Saviour, didst thou take those three chosen disciples with thee, but that thou expectedst some comfort from their presence ? ver. 33. A seasonable word may sometimes drop from the meanest attendant ; and the very society of those whom we trust, carries in it some kind of satisfaction. Alas ! what broken reeds are men ! wrapped up in sleep and security, while thou art sweating in thine agony ! Admonitions, threats, entreaties, cannot keep their eyes open : thou tellest them of danger ; they rather prefer dreams of ease ; and, though twice roused, carelessly sleep out thy sorrow, and their own danger.

What assistance hast thou from such followers !—In the mount of thy transfiguration they slept ; yea, and fell on their faces, when they should have beheld thy glory. In the garden of thine agony they fall upon the ground for drowsiness ; and when they should compassionate thy sorrows, lose themselves in a stupid sleepiness, ver. 37. Perhaps even this disregard made thy prayers but so much the more fervent. The less comfort we find on earth, the more we seek above ; nor didst thou seek more than thou didst find : an angel supplies the place of men ; that spirit was vigilant, while thy disciples were heavy. Happy exchange !

No sooner is this good angel vanished, than that domestic devil appears in view. Judas comes up, (ver. 43.) and shews himself at the head of those miscreant troops. He, whose too high honour it had been to follow so blessed a Master, is now the wicked leader of this rabble ; the fleece is now cast off ; the wolf appears in his own likeness ; yet still the bold traitor dares to mix hypocrisy with villainy, and murders with his very salutations and kisses.

72 <sup>i</sup> And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And <sup>k</sup> when he thought thereon, he wept.

O Saviour, this is no news to thee : all those who, under a mere shadow of godliness practise humility, do still betray thee thus. Thou who hadst said, "one of you is a devil," didst not now say, "get thee hence, Satan ;" but, *friend, wherefore art thou come ?* And yet all this sunshine of mildness cannot thaw that obdurate heart. The sign is given ; Jesus is taken, ver. 46.

Wretched traitor ! why wouldst thou for this vile purpose be thus attended ? And ye, foolish priests and elders, why sent you such a band, and so armed ? One messenger had been enough for a voluntary prisoner. Had my Saviour been unwilling to be taken, all your forces, with all the legions of hell to help them, had been too little : when he did but say, *I am he*, that easy breath alone routed all your troops, and *cast them to the earth*, (John, xviii. 6.) whom it might as easily have cast into hell ! Had he but said, "I will not be taken," what would your swords and staves have done against Omnipotence ?

Those disciples who failed of their vigilance, failed not of their courage : they had heard their Master speak of providing swords, and now they thought it was the time to use them : *Shall we smite ?* They were willing to *fight* for him now, with whom they were not careful to watch. But of all other, Peter was most forward : instead of opening his lips, he unsheathes his sword ;—and instead of "Shall I ?"—smites : ver. 47. He had noted Malchus, a busy servant of the high-priest, too ready to second Judas, and to lay his rude hands upon the Lord of life : against this man his heart rises and his hand is lifted up ; that ear which had too officiously listened to the unjust and cruel charge of his wicked master, is now severed from that worse head which it had mis-served.

I love and honour thy zeal, O blessed disciple : thou couldst not brook the wrong done to thy divine Master ! Had thy life been dearer to thee than his safety, thou hadst not drawn thy sword upon a whole troop. It was in earnest that thou saidst, *Though all men,—yet not I,—though I should die with thee, yet I will not deny thee*, (ver. 29, 30.) Lo ! thou art ready to die upon him that should touch that sacred Person : what would thy life now have been, in comparison of renouncing Him ? Since thou wert so fervent, why didst thou not rather fall upon the traitor who betrayed him, than upon the serjeant who arrests him ? Surely the sin was so much greater in him, as the plot of mischief is more than the execution ; as a domestic is nearer than a stranger ; as the treason of a friend is worse than the forced enmity of a hireling. Was it that thou couldst not so suddenly apprehend the odious depth of that villainy, and instantly hate him who had been thy old companion ? or was it that, though Judas was more faulty, yet Malchus was more imperiously cruel ? However, thy courage :

## C H A P. XV.

*Jesus brought bound and accused before Pilate. Upon the clamour of the people, the murderer Barabbas is loosed, and Jesus delivered up to be crucified: he is crowned with thorns, spit on, and mocked: fainteth in bearing his cross: hangeth between two thieves: suffereth the triumphing reproaches of the Jews: but is confessed by the centurion to be the Son of God: and is honourably buried by Joseph of Arimathea.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**A**ND straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with

the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried *him* away, and delivered *him* to Pilate.

2<sup>b</sup> And Pilate asked him, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest *it*.

3<sup>c</sup> And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.

4<sup>d</sup> And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 27. 1—23. Luke, 22. 66. & 23. 1—28. John, 18. 28—40. & 19. 1—15. Acts, 3. 13 & 4. 26—28. & 2. 23. Luke, 18. 32.  
27. 11. Luke, 23. 3. John, 18. 33—37. 1 Tim. 6. 13. <sup>c</sup> Luke, 23. 2, 5. John, 18. 30. & 19. 7, 12. Mat. 27. 12. 11. 53. 7.  
14. 61. Mat. 26. 62. & 27. 13, 14. John, 19. 10.

<sup>b</sup> Mat.  
<sup>d</sup> Ch.

courage was now awakened with thyself; and thy heart no less sincere, than thy hand was rash: *Put up thy sword again, &c.* Matth. xxvi. 52. Good intentions are no warrant for rash actions: thou, O Saviour, canst at once accept our meanings, yet censure our deeds: warm as was Peter's love, and just as was his quarrel, neither of them can shield him from thy rebuke: thy meek tongue smites *him* gently, who had furiously smote thine enemy: *Put up thy sword.*

It was *Peter's sword*; but to be *put up*; not *used*. There is a sword which Peter may use, but it is of another metal: our weapons are, as our warfare, spiritual. When the Prince of peace bade his followers *sell their coat* and buy a *sword*, he meant to insinuate the need of these arms, not their improvement; and to teach them the danger of the time, not the manner of repulsing the danger. Can I choose but wonder how Peter could thus strike unwarranted? How he, whose first blow made the fray, could escape from being hewn in pieces by that band of ruffians? This could not have been, O Saviour, had not thy power restrained their rage, had not thy seasonable and sharp reproof prevented their revenge.

Peter's ear is no less smitten now by the mild tongue of his Master, than Malchus's ear by the sword of Peter. "Weak disciple, thou hast zeal, but not according to knowledge. There is not more danger in this act of thine, than inconsideration and ignorance: *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* Thou drawest thy sword to rescue me from suffering: alas! if I suffer not, what would become of thee? What would become of mankind? Dost thou go about to hinder thy own and the world's redemption? Canst thou be so weak as to imagine that this suffering of mine is not free and voluntary? Have I not given thee and the world many undeniable proofs of my omnipotence? Didst thou not see how easy it had been for me to have blown away these poor forces of mine adversaries? Dost thou not know, that, if I would require it, all the glorious troops of heaven (any one whereof is more than *troops* of men) would presently shew themselves ready to attend and rescue me? My power could have triumphed over the impetuous malice of my enemies; but as I am determined to ransom mankind, my mercy must rather be

approved; and this cannot be done without my suffering. Thus then, O Peter, thy well-meant valour is no better than a wrong to thyself, to the world, to me, to my Father."

O gracious Saviour, while thou thus smitedst thy disciple, thou didst heal him whom thy disciple smote, Luke, xxii. 51. Many *greater* miracles hadst thou done; none that displayed more of mercy and meekness than this last cure. Of all other, this ear of Malchus has the loudest tongue to blazon the praise of thy clemency and goodness to thy enemies. Wherefore came that man, but in a hostile manner to attack thee? And if *he* had not been more forward than his fellows, why had he not escaped as unhurt as they?

Yet,—even amid the throng of thy enemies,—in the heat of their violence,—in the height of their malice,—and thine own instant peril of death,—thou didst heal that worthless ear, which had been guilty of listening to blasphemies against thee, receiving cruel and unjust charges concerning thee!

O Malchus! could thine ear be whole, and not thy heart broken and contrite with remorse, for rising up against so merciful and so powerful a hand? Couldst thou choose but say, "O blessed Jesu, I see it was thy providence that preserved my head, when my ear was smitten: it is thine Almighty power which has miraculously restored that ear which I had justly forfeited: this head of mine shall never be guilty of plotting any further mischief against thee: this ear shall never entertain any more reproaches of thy name: this heart shall ever acknowledge and magnify thy tender mercies, thy divine omnipotence?"

Could thy fellows see such a demonstration of power and goodness with unrelenting hearts? Unthankful Malchus, and cruel soldiers! ye were wounded, and felt it not: ye still persisted in your bloody impious enterprize:—*They that laid hold on Jesus, led him away, &c.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The scene of our Saviour's sufferings now approaching, we have the steps preparatory thereto.

1. The anointing him as he sat in the house of Simon the leper, so called, probably, as having been cured by Jesus of that nauseous disease. *Note*; When the sin is forgiven,

5 But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

6 ¶ Now at *that* feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

\* Mat. 26. 2, 5. & 27. 15. Luke, 23. 17. John, 2. 13. & 4. 45. & 18. 39.

forgiven, and the backslider restored, the reproach will still frequently abide. While Jesus was at supper, a woman came behind him, and poured upon his head a box of precious spikenard. Some of the disciples, with Judas at their head\*, with indignation beheld what they esteemed such unnecessary waste, the value of the ointment amounting to above nine pounds, which they suggested might have been much more profitably employed in charitable uses; but Christ, who knew the secret murmurs they were afraid to utter, reproved their rash censures, and commended the deed as highly praise-worthy; it being intended as a burial unction, which, according to her power, willing to honour her Lord whilst alive, thus she anticipated, as she would not have an opportunity to do it for him after his death. Their care indeed for the poor was commendable, but they being ever present, abundant occasions would offer to relieve them. Therefore, as he was ready to depart, it was the only opportunity of shewing him respect which would be ever afforded her: therefore to her honour shall this be mentioned, wherever in future days the Gospel shall be preached; and this remarkable instance of her faith and love shall for ever accompany the narrative of his death and resurrection. *Note;* (1.) They who love the Lord Jesus Christ, never think they can do enough to testify their regard for him. (2.) They who honour him, whatever censures others may cast on them, he will honour.

2. The scheme laid for his betrayal and ruin. Determined upon his death, the chief priests and scribes consulted only on the means of effecting it with the least noise; and at first thought that on the feast day it would be dangerous to arrest him, for fear of the people: but while they were in council, a most unexpected incident fixed their resolutions. Judas, one of the twelve apostles, came and offered to betray his Master. The bargain was instantly struck, the money engaged for, and immediately he set himself to find the properest opportunity to put him into the hands of these his implacable enemies. *Note;* (1.) Where the love of filthy lucre reigns, whatever profession a man may make, there wants nothing but temptation to draw forth the apostacy of his heart. (2.) The devil often favours his servants with most unexpected success, in order to embolden and harden them in wickedness, and to bind them faster in his chains.

2dly, We have,

1. Christ's celebration of the passover with his disciples. By his orders, two of them had been sent with particular directions where to prepare it; and having accordingly found the person with the pitcher of water and followed him home, they were shewn by the master of the house a furnished room, where they prepared the supper; and in the evening Jesus came with his disciples, and sat down to

eat the paschal Lamb. *Note;* (1.) When we have our Lord's orders, we must go forth depending on his providence, even when we know not whither we go. (2.) The purest societies must not expect to be always without false brethren on this side the great millennium: of twelve apostles, one was a traitor.

2. At the table he startled his disciples with information the most alarming,—that one of them, who now appeared so friendly, would prove a traitor, and betray him into the hands of his enemies. Exceedingly grieved at such an assurance, each, unwilling to suspect another, and unconscious of such design, Judas excepted, began to say, *Lord, is it I?* I dread the thought of such villainy, and wish not a moment to lie under the suspicion of it. In answer to their question, Christ points out the traitor, by directing them to one of the twelve then dipping in the dish with him, adding a most fearful commination against him, if any thing at last might touch that hardened traitor's conscience. *Note;* (1.) A zealous soul is grieved but to be suspected of unfaithfulness. (2.) We cannot be too jealous over ourselves. A sincere disciple wishes others to search him, and prays the Lord every day to try the ground of his heart, and shew him if there be any hidden iniquity there, that it may be repented of and renounced. (3.) Not one jot or tittle of God's word can fail: even wicked men, when most invenomed against him, are nevertheless made subservient to his purposes; though this neither extenuates their guilt, nor will at all mitigate their punishment.

3. At the close of the paschal supper, our Lord instituted that ordinance, which in his church should supersede, and supply the place of this solemn feast. Having taken bread, he blessed it, brake, and gave to each of them, to be eaten in remembrance of his broken body, which should procure for them a more glorious redemption than in the passover they commemorated; a redemption from sin, and death, and hell. Then taking up the cup in like manner, after his solemn benediction, he bid them all drink of it, as they did; and this he explains as his *blood of the New Testament*; by the shedding of which, all the promises of the covenant of grace would be confirmed to them, and to as many as in faith would receive these instituted seals of that covenant, and cleave to him, faithful unto death. And hereupon our Lord takes his farewell of them, till the day came when they should sit down with him in glory, and drink the new wine in the kingdom of God, partaking of the joys at his right hand for evermore. Then closing the solemnity with a hymn, they departed for the mount of Olives.

4. In the way to the retirement whither Jesus went, he took occasion to warn his disciples of their approaching desertion of him, which the Scriptures had foretold and they were about to fulfil that very night. But to encourage them to return to him again, he lets them know, that though he should be smitten, and they scattered from him, yet, after his resurrection, they should again see him to their comfort in Galilee. Peter, shocked at the thought, confident

\* See John, xii. 3. &c. where I shall compare the evangelists concerning the anointing of our Lord, and fully account for the seeming contradictions.

7<sup>f</sup> And there was *one* named Barabbas, *whicb* lay bound with them that had made in- surrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

<sup>f</sup> Luke, 23. 18, 19, 25. John, 18. 40. Mat. 27. 16.

confident in himself, and with warmth resenting the suspicion, solemnly engages, that, though every one of his brethren should desert his Master, he never would. And notwithstanding the repeated warnings which our Lord gives him that he would not only forsake him, but deny him before the morning returned; more resolute and peremptory than before, Peter with vehemence insists that he would die with him, sooner than deny him. And all the rest, unwilling to be outdone in assurances of fidelity, declared this also to be their determined resolution. *Note*; We know not our own hearts, when we confidently boast what we will do. The first temptation may prove our weakness.

3dly, We have before us in this chapter the amazing scene of the Redeemer's agony in the garden of Gethsemane. Having left eight of his disciples at a greater distance, he took three of them to be nearer spectators of his sufferings.

1. His anguish was unutterable. Amazement and horror seized his soul, and a sense of the divine wrath oppressed him with its intolerable load. Sorrows, like the agonies of death, compassed him about; and pains, like those which the damned feel, gat hold upon him. He acquaints his three disciples with something of what he endured, which words were too feeble to express; and bids them wait there, and watch with him, in this hour of temptation. We may here, as in a glass, observe, (1.) The dreadful evil of sin; and every pang the Redeemer feels should be a dagger to our hearts, begetting the deepest self-abbhorrence and most unfeigned grief for those abominations, which nothing but the sufferings of the Son of God could expiate. (2.) The sure foundation of our faith: the Lord has laid on him the iniquities of us all. (3.) The inexpressibly transcendent love of our Lord and Saviour, willingly resigning himself thus for our sakes: what returns, then, do we not owe him? (4.) The comfort procured for us under our afflictions and trials. Whatever we suffer, Jesus has drank deeper of the bitter cup; and having been thus tempted himself, can tenderly feel for his believing people, and will succour them under their sorrows.

2. His prayer was humble, fervent, importunate, submissive. As *man*, he could not but wish that the bitter cup might remove; as *Mediator*, he bowed submissive to his Father's will, content, whatever might be endured, to finish the work which God had given him to do. Thrice he renews the same request, and thrice resigns himself to suffer whatever might be for the glory of the divine justice to inflict. *Note*; (1.) We are not forbid to mourn, and pray for a removal of our burdens, even when most resigned to suffer God's holy will. (2.) Though our troubles be not soon removed, we must not be weary in waiting upon God. In his time they shall end, and we shall finally receive an answer of peace, if we faint not; either deliverance from our trials, or strength to endure them.

3. On coming to his disciples, he finds them asleep; and therefore rouses them with a just and sharp rebuke, espe-

cially addressed to Simon, who had lately appeared so zealous, and promised such distinguished fidelity. How shameful, that they could not watch one hour with their agonizing Master! or if not for his sake, at least for their own, when it was so needful for them to watch and pray; such a temptation being ready to overtake them, as nothing but Almighty grace could enable them to bear: but while he thus upbraids and warns, the tender Saviour pities them, and kindly seeks to excuse what he must condemn. Their spirit was willing; he knew their hearts; but the flesh was weak to withstand the effects of weariness and the oppression of grief: and the infirmities incident to this feeble frame disabled them from doing what they desired. A second time he goes to pour out his sorrows before God; again he returns, and they are asleep, and, when awaked, are unable to answer his just rebuke, after having received such repeated admonition. The third time he retires to redouble his cries, yet finds them on his return sleeping still. Now therefore he bids them *sleep on*, if they dared any longer; or, *will ye sleep yet?* when danger was now at the door; he calls them, therefore, to go with him to meet his betrayer. *Note*; (1.) Slothfulness in prayer is usually the forerunner of sad falls. (2.) Jesus, by his word and providence, is repeatedly knocking at our stupid hearts, to awaken our attention, and rouse us to watchfulness and prayer. (3.) Those who have made the strongest professions, are peculiarly criminal if they act unsuitably. (4.) It is well for us that we have a compassionate High-priest, who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. (5.) They who do not watch and pray when danger threatens, will be unprepared to meet it, and sink under the temptation.

4thly, His internal sufferings in the garden being ended, his external sufferings began; so fast doth billow roll on billow, till all the storms of wrath are gone over him.

1. He is apprehended by a band of men sent from the chief-priests, scribes, and elders, under the conduct of Judas the traitor; who, as it was night, that they might not mistake the person of Jesus, gave them this signal,—that they might know him, by his going up and kissing him. And hereupon, with great pretended respect, approaching Christ, he kissed him, and they who were at his heels laid hands upon him. *Note*; (1.) Apostates ever prove the blackest instruments of hell; and no height of office, or profession, is safe from temptation. We need not stumble at the falls of the greatest apparent Christians, when we see an apostle a traitor and a devil. (2.) The basest schemes of villainy are often crowned with success, and the wicked triumphant; but their time is short.

2. Peter, ever violent, no sooner saw his Master apprehended, than he attempted a rescue; and, drawing his sword, struck at one of the men who had seized Jesus, and cut off his ear: his intention was good, but his zeal intemperate. *Note*; (1.) Many have more zeal than prudence, and their good intentions are no excuse for their rashness. (2.) In times of persecution, it is much easier

8 And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.

9 But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

\* John, 24. 15. 1 Kings, 18. 21. Mat. 27. 17, 21. Luke, 23. 13—21. John, 18. 39. & 19. 12.

to draw the sword and fight, than patiently to bow down and meekly suffer.

3. Christ expostulates with his enemies on this clandestine manner of apprehending him, as if he had been some infamous villain and murderer that needed to be seized, and overpowered with arms and numbers; when they knew that he had every day appeared in the temple, where they might easily have taken him: and now the disciples no sooner saw him submit quietly to be bound, than they all forsook him and fled, glad every one to shift for himself, lest they also should be apprehended. *Note;* (1.) The most innocent men are often proceeded against, as if they were the vilest of mankind; and such accusations are studiously raised against them, to cloke the malice of their persecutors. (2.) We need not think it strange, if in times when we most need such support, our dearest friends abandon us, through fear of being involved in our troubles. In these seasons we should remember Jesus in the garden.

4. A young man near the garden, perhaps disturbed by the noise, started up from his bed, and ran down with only a sheet about him, or some linen garment, to inquire into the cause; and followed the crowd a little way. Being observed by one of the soldiers, and perhaps suspected for a disciple, they attempted to lay hold of him; but with the loss of his garment he got loose, and fled naked. This incident seems to be related, to shew the inverteeracy of those enemies of Jesus: none that looked like his disciples, might expect to receive any quarter from them.

5thly, Our blessed Lord, after being dragged through the streets as a criminal, is now carried before the high-priest and Sanhedrim, in order that some matter of accusation might be found whereon to ground his condemnation: and Peter, now a little recovered from his fright, and prompted by strong curiosity to see the end, at a distance followed the band; and, having got admission into the palace, sat and warmed himself with the servants at the fire, presuming that in such company none would take him for a disciple. We are informed,

1. What pains were taken to suborn false witnesses, in order to have a pretence for putting Jesus to death, this being their bloody resolution, and the process a mere veil to cover the murder. But though many, to please the priests, witnessed against him: and though some, perverting the words which he had spoken of the temple of his body a long time before, and applying them to the temple of Jerusalem, would have represented him as an enemy to their worship and religion; yet all the charges they could muster up, amounted to nothing capital, while the most glaring contradictions appeared in their evidence.

2. Unable to condemn him upon the evidence of others, the high-priest seeks to extort from himself something more material. Finding him silent under all these frivolous and false accusations, and not to be prevailed upon to reply aught to these charges, he rose with vehemence, and solemnly adjured him to say directly, whether he really

was, as he pretended, the Messiah, the Son of the blessed God? Then Jesus, undismayed, with dignity becoming his office, asserted his divine character as the Son of God, with an awful warning to them who now thus despised and set him at nought,—that the time would come, when they should tremble at his presence, and behold him executing his temporal judgments on their place and nation, and yet more fearfully meet him at the great day, when they must stand at his tribunal, and perish eternally. The high-priest, hereupon, pretending indignation against what he termed blasphemy, rent his clothes, exclaimed against the need of further evidence, and, branding our Lord as a blasphemer, appealed to the rest for their opinion; who, following such a wicked example, unanimously condemned him to death. *Note;* (1.) We must not be staggered, if we see the most reverend, aged, wise, and noble, conspiring against the cause of Jesus, and persecuting his people. By such was Jesus himself condemned. (2.) The silence of our Redeemer under every accusation should teach us patience when we are thus reviled, committing our cause to him that judgeth righteously. (3.) It is easy to brand those as blasphemers, who, in the highest, desire to give glory to God. The best men have often been dressed up in the most shocking colours, and blackened with the most opprobrious names, in order to make the persecution of them appear necessary and laudable.

3. No sooner was judgment given against him, than they began to insult him with the most grievous indignities. They spat upon him, blindfolded him, buffeted him, struck him on the face, and in derision bid him exercise his prophetic office, by telling who smote him. Thus did not he hide his face from shame and spitting, that we might be enabled without shame to stand before the tribunal of God.

6thly, Peter's fall had been foretold; and we, in this chapter see the prediction sadly verified.

1. He had rushed needlessly into temptation, and thrust himself into the midst of bad company, and then no wonder that he fell. He was first ashamed of Christ, and that was but one step from denying him. *Note;* They who care not to be found among the disciples of Jesus, because it is reproachful, and associate with the world in order to gain estimation, and to be thought well of, will pierce themselves through with many sorrows.

2. On the slightest trial Peter repeatedly denied and disowned his Master; and from words descended to oaths, sealing perfidy and lies with foulest perjury. Lord, what is man, when left to himself! A servant-maid confounded an apostle, when trusting for a moment to the strength of his own resolution. Peter's mouth hardly knew how to pronounce an oath, and would before have shuddered at the thought; but, when a lie had first opened the door, profaneness and perjury easily entered. When once men turn aside from the path of truth never so little, they know not to what dreadful lengths they may be hurried. Complicated

10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him <sup>a</sup> for envy.

11 <sup>1</sup> But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the <sup>k</sup> King of the Jews?

13 And they cried out again, Crucify him.

14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? <sup>1</sup> And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

15 <sup>m</sup> And *so* Pilate, willing to content the

people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged *him*, to be crucified.

16 ¶ <sup>n</sup> And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Pretorium; and they call together the whole band.

17 And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his *head*,

18 And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

19 <sup>o</sup> And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and <sup>p</sup> bowing *their* knees worshipped him.

<sup>a</sup> Acts, 7. 9. John, 9. 22. & 12. 42. Eccl. 4. 4. Job, 5. 2. Prov. 27. 4. Luke, 12. 47. James, 4. 17. 1 John, 3. 12. Luke, 23. 18. John, 18. 40. Acts, 3. 14, 15. Hof. 5. 1. Ezek. 32. 26. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 2. 2. 1f. 9. 6, 7. Jer. 23. 5, 6. & 30. 21. & 33. 15, 16. Mic. 5. 2. <sup>1</sup> Prov. 27. 4. 1f. 53. 3. John, 15. 18, 24, 25. Pf. 35. 19. & 69. 5. Luke, 23. 27. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 27. 24—53. Luke, 23. 24—46. John, 19. 13—30. <sup>n</sup> Mat. 27. 27, 31. Luke, 23. 31. John, 19. 1—5. Gen. 3. 18. Pf. 22. 16. Prov. 29. 12. <sup>o</sup> Ch. 14. 65. Mic. 5. 1. 1f. 50. 6. & 52. 14. & 53. 3—5. Pf. 22. 6, 7, 12—21. & 69. 7, 8, 19. <sup>p</sup> Ch. 1. 40. & 10. 17. Gen. 41. 43.

ated crimes loaded the apostle's conscience; denial of his Master, falsehood before God, repeated lies, horrid profaneness, and wilful perjury. Yet even this melancholy history may be improved for the good of others. Many a poor sinner might have despaired, if he had not seen such examples, and read in their pardon and recovery the possibility of his own.

3. When he was sunk into the lowest depths of sin, the infinite grace of God once more made him an offer of help. Once had the cock crowed, after his first denial of his Master, and that warning had passed unnoticed. The second time after his repeated crimes this herald of God reminds him of his Master's words, and his dire fulfilment of them. And now in full view his horrid guilt stared him in the face: every reflection shocked him: and, unable to bear that place, he retired to pour out in tears his bitter anguish. Some render the words, *covering his face as a mourner, he wept bitterly*, with penitential sorrow returning to a pardoning God: and it stands upon record, for the comfort of the chief of sinners, that he found mercy with him.

#### CHAP. XV.

*Ver. 1. And straightway in the morning*] The horrid transactions of this dismal night being over, it was no sooner day, than the Jews hurried the blessed Jesus away to the Roman governor; for though the Sanhedrim had the power of trying and condemning men for crimes which the Jewish law had made capital; yet, like the court of inquisition, they had not the power of putting such sentences into execution, without the approbation of the civil magistrate, or Roman governor;—for nothing but necessity could have brought the Jewish rulers to Pilate on this occasion. They had bound Jesus when he was first apprehended; but perhaps he had been loosed while under examination, or else they now made his bonds stricter than before; the better, as they might think, to

secure him from a rescue, as he passed through the public streets in the day-time. See Matth. xxvii. 1, 2. Doddridge, and Biscoe's Boyle's Lectures, p. 113. Instead of, *And the whole council*, we may read, *Even, &c.*

*Ver. 6. Now at that feast*] Κατὰ εὐχρην, *after the manner*, or according to the nature of that feast. See Rom. iii. 5. Gal. iii. 15. 1 Cor. iii. 3. Now the feast of the passover being celebrated by the Jews in memory of their release from Egypt, it was agreeable to the nature of the feast to make this release at that time, and therefore customary. See Whitby, and on Matth. xxvii. 15.

*Ver. 15. Willing to content the people,*] Pilate had given them too much cause of disgust before, as appears from what Josephus says concerning him; and probably he was afraid of a general insurrection, therefore *he was desirous to remove all cause of complaint*: notwithstanding which, the complaints of this very people afterwards pursued him to his ruin. See on Matth. xxvii. 19. *Whipping or scourging* was a punishment frequently used both by the Jews and Romans; the Jews commonly inflicted it by a whip of three cords, and limited the number of stripes to thirty-nine, that they might not exceed the number sentenced, Deut. xxv. 3. But the usual way of scourging among the Romans, was with such rods or wands as the lictors carried in a bundle before the magistrates; and they were exceeding cruel in this kind of punishment, tearing with their scourges even to the veins and arteries, and laying the very bowels of the malefactors bare: and as our Saviour was scourged at Pilate's order, it was done most probably by *his officers*, after the Roman manner, and was therefore no less severe than disgraceful; for Pilate intended hereby to have moved the compassion of the Jews towards him, in order to his release, rather than to have him scourged preparatory to his crucifixion; as appears from Luke, xxiii. 15, 16, 22. See Matth. xxvii. 26. Guyse, and Calmet.

*Ver. 19. A reed,*] Ὀξ, *A cane.*

*Ver. 21.*

20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

21 And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.

22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, the place of a skull.

23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.

24 ¶ And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

25 And it was the third hour, and they

crucified him.

26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

28 And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

29 ¶ And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days,

30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He

<sup>9</sup> Ch. 12. 8. Heb. 13. 12. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 27. 32. Luke, 23. 26. Rom. 16. 13. <sup>10</sup> Num. 15. 35. 1 Kings, 21. 15. Acts, 7. 58. Heb. 13. 12. Mat. 27. 33. Luke, 23. 33. John, 19. 17. <sup>11</sup> Pl. 9. 21. John, 19. 28. Mat. 27. 34. Luke, 22. 36. <sup>12</sup> Pf. 22. 18. John, 19. 23, 24. Mat. 27. 35. Luke, 23. 34. <sup>13</sup> John, 19. 14. Luke, 23. 44. Mat. 27. 45. Ver. 33. <sup>14</sup> Mat. 27. 37. Luke, 23. 38. John, 19. 19—22. Deut. 21. 5. <sup>15</sup> Mat. 27. 38. Luke, 23. 32, 33. John, 19. 18. <sup>16</sup> If. 53. 12. with Numb. 23. 19. Tit. 1. 2. Heb. 6. 18. <sup>17</sup> Pf. 22. 7, 8. & 69. 7, 20. & 109. 25. Lam. 2. 15. Mat. 27. 39—43. Luke, 23. 35—38.

*Ver. 21. The father of Alexander and Rufus.]* In the note on Matth. xxvii. 32. we have observed, that these two persons were two noted men among the first Christians, who resided at Rome, and who being well known there, St. Mark makes this mention of them, on account of the Christians at Rome and others, who were acquainted with them or their names.

*Ver. 24. They parted his garments,] They shared his garments, casting lots for them, to decide what each man should take; or, "They divided his garments into lots, and drew among themselves, which each of them should take." See Heylin.*

*Ver. 25. And it was the third hour, &c.]* The third Jewish hour ended at our nine o'clock in the morning: by St. Mark's account, therefore, the crucifixion and the lots may have been finished at the striking of eight, when the third hour, answering to our ninth, began. This indeed seems at first sight to clash with St. John, xix. 13, 14. who tells us, that when Pilate sat on the judgment seat in the Pavement, and brought Jesus out to the people the last time, it was about the sixth hour, that is to say, the sixth Roman hour, the same with our six o'clock in the morning: but to reconcile these accounts, the following series of transactions should be considered: after the governor brought forth Jesus, he spoke both to the people and to the priests, before he finally condemned him; and though each speech is discussed by the evangelist in a single sentence, they may have been drawn out to some length, that if possible an impression might thereby be made on the people. When Jesus was delivered to the soldiers, they had to strip him of the purple robe, and to clothe him in his own garments; the thieves were to be brought out of prison; the necessary preparations for the cruci-

fixion of the three were to be made; in particular, crosses were to be provided; the crimes laid to the charge of the prisoners were to be written upon whitened boards, in black characters; the vinegar, sponge, and reed were to be procured: soldiers were to be appointed for watching the crosses, &c. &c. In travelling from the prætorium (which may have been situated in that quarter of the town farthest from the place of execution,) they could move but slowly; because Jesus, being very much fatigued, must have borne his cross with difficulty. When he grew faint, it might be some time before they found one to assist him in bearing it; and, being come to the place of execution, they had the crosses to make ready, by fixing the transverse beams on their proper supporters; the prisoners were to be stripped, and nailed to them; the titles were to be fixed, the holes for the crosses to be dug, the crosses themselves to be erected and fixed; and, last of all, the prisoners' clothes were to be divided by lot. These, with other circumstances unknown to us, accompanying executions of this kind, may be supposed to have filled up the whole space between six in the morning when the governor shewed Jesus the last time, and the third Jewish hour when Jesus was crucified; that is to say, a space less than two hours: for about the sixth hour, the expression in St. John, may signify "a while after the striking of six, "when the sixth hour ends;" and the third hour, the expression in St. Mark, answering to the ninth Roman hour, may signify at the beginning thereof, or at the striking of eight, when the eighth hour ends, and the ninth begins. See Doddridge.

*Ver. 31. Himself he cannot save.] Cannot he save himself? Beza, Bengelius.*

saved others; himself he cannot save.

32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

33 ¶ And <sup>d</sup> when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole \* land until the ninth hour.

34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard *it*, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

36 And one ran and filled a sponge full of <sup>e</sup> vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

37 And <sup>h</sup> Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

38 ¶ <sup>i</sup> And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

39 ¶ <sup>k</sup> And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

40 <sup>m</sup> There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;

41 (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him); and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

42 ¶ <sup>n</sup> And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,

43 <sup>o</sup> Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

44 <sup>p</sup> And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

45 And when <sup>q</sup> he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

46 <sup>r</sup> And he bought fine linen, and took *him* down, and wrapped him in the linen, and <sup>s</sup> laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

47 <sup>t</sup> And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses beheld where he was laid.

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 27. 44. But one afterwards repented. Luke, 23. 39—43.

<sup>d</sup> Mat. 27. 46. Pf. 22. 1—21. & 69. 1—21. & 109. 4. Heb. 5. 7.

<sup>e</sup> Ver. 23. Pf. 69. 21. Mat. 27. 34, 48. Luke, 23. 36. John, 19. 29.

<sup>f</sup> Mat. 27. 50. Luke, 23. 46. John, 19. 30. & 10. 11, 15, 18. ii.

<sup>g</sup> 53. 10. Dan. 9. 26. Heb. 5. 7. Pf. 22. 15.

<sup>h</sup> Exod. 26. 31. 2 Chr. 7. 14. Mat. 27. 51. Luke, 23. 45. Heb. 6. 19. & 10. 19. Eph. 2. 14. 18.

<sup>i</sup> Mat. 27. 54—56. Luke, 23. 47—49.

<sup>j</sup> Mat. 3. 17. & 8. 27. & 14. 33. & 16. 16. John, 1. 49. & 6. 69. Acts, 8. 37.

<sup>k</sup> Luke, 8. 2, 3. & 23. 48, 49. & 7. 37—50. Mat. 27. 55, 56. & 20. 20, 21. & 13. 55. John, 19. 25. & 20. 1—18. Pf. 38. 11.

<sup>l</sup> Mat. 27. 57—61. Luke, 23. 50—56. John, 19. 38—42.

<sup>m</sup> Pf. 22. 29. If. 53. 9. Luke, 2. 25, 38.

<sup>n</sup> John, 19. 33. Ver. 37.

<sup>o</sup> John, 19. 31—34. Mat. 27. 58.

<sup>p</sup> Mat. 27. 59, 60. Luke, 23. 52, 53. John, 19. 40—42.

<sup>q</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>r</sup> Mat. 27. 61. Luke, 23. 55, 56. Mat. 28. 1. Ch. 16. 1.

<sup>s</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>t</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>u</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>v</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>w</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>x</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>y</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>z</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>aa</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>ab</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>ac</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>ad</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>d</sup> Amos, 8. 9. If. 50. 3. Mat. 27. 45—53. Luke, 23. 44—46.

<sup>e</sup> Pf. 56. 5. Mat. 11. 14. & 17. 11—13. Ch. 9. 11—13.

<sup>f</sup> Mat. 27. 50. Luke, 23. 46. John, 19. 30. & 10. 11, 15, 18. ii.

<sup>g</sup> 53. 10. Dan. 9. 26. Heb. 5. 7. Pf. 22. 15.

<sup>h</sup> Exod. 26. 31. 2 Chr. 7. 14. Mat. 27. 51. Luke, 23. 45. Heb. 6. 19. & 10. 19. Eph. 2. 14. 18.

<sup>i</sup> Mat. 27. 54—56. Luke, 23. 47—49.

<sup>j</sup> Mat. 3. 17. & 8. 27. & 14. 33. & 16. 16. John, 1. 49. & 6. 69. Acts, 8. 37.

<sup>k</sup> Luke, 8. 2, 3. & 23. 48, 49. & 7. 37—50. Mat. 27. 55, 56. & 20. 20, 21. & 13. 55. John, 19. 25. & 20. 1—18. Pf. 38. 11.

<sup>l</sup> Mat. 27. 57—61. Luke, 23. 50—56. John, 19. 38—42.

<sup>m</sup> Pf. 22. 29. If. 53. 9. Luke, 2. 25, 38.

<sup>n</sup> John, 19. 33. Ver. 37.

<sup>o</sup> John, 19. 31—34. Mat. 27. 58.

<sup>p</sup> Mat. 27. 59, 60. Luke, 23. 52, 53. John, 19. 40—42.

<sup>q</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>r</sup> Mat. 27. 61. Luke, 23. 55, 56. Mat. 28. 1. Ch. 16. 1.

<sup>s</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>t</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>u</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>v</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>w</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>x</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>y</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>z</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>aa</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>ab</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>ac</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

<sup>ad</sup> If. 53. 9. Pf. 22. 15. Hof. 13. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 4.

Ver. 36. *Saying, Let alone;*] The Syriac version reads here, *While some said, Let alone.*

Ver. 44. *Marvelled if he were*] Or, *That he was, &c.*

Ver. 47. *Beheld where he was laid.*] Ἐθελεν, *carefully observed*, in order to bring their spices and unguents to embalm the body, as soon as the sabbath should be over.

*Inferences drawn from our Lord's appearance before Pilate. These Jews well deserved to be tributary: they had cast off the yoke of their God, and had justly earned this Roman servitude. Tiberius had befriended them too well with so favourable a governor as Pilate. If they had retained the power of life and death in their own hands, they would not have been beholding to a heathen for a legal murder.*

But what is the cause, O ye rulers of Israel, that ye stand thus thronging at the door of the judgment-hall?

Why do ye not go into that public room of judicature, to demand the justice for which you are come? Was it because you would not defile yourselves with the contagion of a heathen roof? Holy men,—your consciences would not suffer you to yield to so impure an act! your passover must be kept! your persons must be clean! while you expect justice from the man, you abhor the pollution of the place! woe to you, priests, scribes, elders, hypocrites! can there be any roof so unclean as that of your own breasts! Go out of yourselves, ye false dissemblers, if ye would not be unclean. Pilate has most cause to fear, lest his walls should be defiled with the presence of such monsters of impiety, thirsting for innocent blood; the blood of *the Son of the Blessed.*

The plausible governor condescends to humour their superstition; they dare not come in to him, he therefore yields to go forth to them, Even Pilate begins justly,

CHAP. XVI.

An angel declareth the resurrection of Christ to three women. Christ himself appeareth to Mary Magdalene: to two going into the country: then to the apostles, whom he sendeth forth to preach the gospel: and lastly, he ascendeth into heaven.

[Anno Domini 33.] -

AND when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of

James, and Salomé, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

\* Mat. 28. 1-8. Luke, 23. 56. & 24. 1-12.

\* Luke, 24. 1.

John, 20. 1. Mat. 28. 1.

\* Pf. 14. 5. Ch. 5. 36. Mat. 6. 34.

What accusation bring you against this man? See John, xviii. 28; 29. There is no judging fully of religion by men's outward demeanour: there is more justice among Romans than among Jews. The malicious rabbis thought it enough that they had sentenced Jesus; no more was now expected than a speedy execution: "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee. We have condemned him to death; we need no more than thy command for execution."

O monsters, whether of malice or injustice! must he then be a malefactor whom you will condemn? Is your bare word ground enough to shed blood? Whom did you ever kill but the righteous? By whose hands perished the prophets?—the word was but mistaken; ye should have said, "If we had not been malefactors, we had never delivered up this innocent man to thee."

That must needs be notoriously unjust, which nature itself teaches pagans to abhor. Pilate sees and hates this bloody suggestion and practice. "Do ye pretend holiness, and urge so injurious a violence? If he be such as you accuse him, where is his conviction? If he cannot be legally convicted, why must he die? If I must judge for you, why have you judged for yourselves? Could ye suppose that I would condemn any man unheard? If your Jewish laws grant you this liberty, the Roman laws allow it not to me. Since you have gone so far, be your own carvers of justice: Take ye him, and judge him according to your law."

O Pilate! how happy had it been for thee, if thou hadst continued steadfast to this determination! Thus thou hadst washed thy hands more clear than in all the water in the world. Might law have been the rule of this judgment, and not malice, this blood had not been shed. How palpably does their tongue betray their heart; *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.* Pilate talks of judgment, they talk of death. This was their only aim; law was but a colour, judgment was but a ceremony.

Where death is fore-resolved, there cannot want accusations. They began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, &c. Luke, xxiii. 2. "What accusation, saidst thou, O Pilate?—Heinous and capital. Thou mightest have believed our confident intimation; but since thou wilt still urge us to particulars, know that we come furnished with such an indictment, as shall make thine ears glow to hear it. Besides that blasphemy whereof he has been condemned by us, this man is a seducer of the people, a raiser of sedition, an usurper of sovereignty." O impudent suggestions!

What wonder is it, blessed Saviour, if thy honest servants be loaded with slanders, when thy most innocent person escaped not accusations, so palpably, so shamefully false!

Pilate now startles at the charge: the name of *tribute*, the name of *Cesar* is in mention. These potent spells can bring him back, and call Jesus to the bar. There meekly stands the Lamb of God to be judged, who shall once come to judge both the quick and dead. Then shall he, before whom the suffering Jesus stood guiltless and dejected, stand before his dreadful majesty guilty and trembling. Pilate, however, hears and fully acquits him of the charge: his declaration is, *I find in him no fault at all.* Noble testimony of Christ's innocency, from that mouth which afterwards doomed him to death!

I tremble to think how just Pilate as yet seemed, and how soon after depraved: how fain would he have liberated Jesus, whom he found faultless! but though he proposed a *Barabbas*, a thief, a murderer, seditious, infamous, and odious to all; yet they preferred even this *Barabbas* to the Prince of Life. O malice beyond all example, shameless and bloody! Who can but blush to think, that a heathen should see Jews so impetuously unjust, so savagely cruel! he knew there was no fault to be found in Jesus; he knew there was no crime that was not to be found in *Barabbas*: ye he hears, and blushes to hear them say, *Not this man, but Barabbas.* What a killing indignity was this, O blessed Lord, for thee to hear from thine own nation! hast thou refused all glory, to put on shame and misery for their sakes? hast thou disregarded thy blessed self to save them; and do they now refuse thee for *Barabbas*? Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unjust.

Pilate would have chastised thee and let thee go: that cruelty had been true mercy to this of the Jews; whom no blood would satisfy but that of thy heart. He calls for thy fault; they clamour for thy punishment. *They cried the more, Crucify him! crucify him!*

As their outrage increased, so the president's justice declined; those graces which lie loose and ungrounded, are easily washed away with the first tide of popularity. Thrice had that man proclaimed the innocence of Him whom he now inclines to condemn, *willing to content the people.* O the foolish aims of ambition! Not God, not his conscience comes into any regard; but the *people.* What a base idol does the proud man adore! What is their breath, but an idle wind? or their anger, but a painted fire? O Pilate, where now are thyself and thy people?—Whereas a good conscience would have struck

by

4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

5 ° And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they

<sup>d</sup> Ch. 15. 46. Mat. 27. 60, 66. & 28. 2. Luke, 24. 2. S. 17, 27. & 10. 8, 16, 17.

<sup>e</sup> John, 20. 11, 12. Mat. 28. 6. Dan. 10. 4, 5. Rev. 18. 1. Luke, 1. 12, 19. Dan.

by thee for ever, and have given thee boldness before the face of God in glory.

*Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him.* Thou that didst so lately water Gethsemane's garden with the drops of thy bloody sweat, now bedewest the pavement of Pilate's hall with the showers of thy blood. Blessed Jesus, why should I think it strange to be scourged with tongue or hand, when I see thee bleeding? What lashes can I fear from heaven or earth, since thy scourges have been borne for me, and have sanctified them to me? Now what a world of insolent reproaches, indignities, tortures, art thou entering upon! To an ingenuous and tender disposition scorns are sufficient torment; but here the most exquisite pain must help to perfect thy misery and their despite.

O adorable Redeemer, was it not enough that thy sacred body was stripped, and wealed with bloody stripes, but thy person must be made the mockery of insulting enemies?—thy back disguised with purple robes, thy temples wounded with a thorny crown, thy face spit upon, buffeted, smitten; thy hand sceptred with a reed, thyself derided with grimace, bended knees and scoffing acclamation?

O whither dost thou stoop, Co-eternal Son of the eternal Father, whither dost thou abase thyself for me! I have sinned, and thou art punished; my head has devised evil, and thine is pierced with thorns; I have smitten thee, and thou art smitten for me; I have dishonoured thee, and thou art made the sport of men for me who have deserved to be insulted by devils!

Thus disguised, bleeding, mangled, deformed, *behold the man*, brought forth to the furious multitude, whether for compassion, or for more cruel derision. Look upon him, O ye merciless Jews; see him in his shame, and in his wounds; his face all livid with blows; his eyes swollen, his cheeks besmeared with spitting, his skin lacerated with scourges, his whole body bathed in blood;—and would ye yet have more? *Behold the man*, whom ye envied for his greatness!

Yea, and *behold him well*, O thou proud Pilate; ye cruel soldiers, ye insatiable Jews; ye see him base, whom ye shall see glorious: the time is coming, wherein ye shall behold him in another garb; when ye, who now bend the knee to him in scorn, shall see all knees in heaven and earth, and under the earth, bowing before him in awful adoration; when ye who now see him with contempt, shall behold him with trembling and horror.

What an inward war do I yet find in the breast of Pilate? His conscience bids him spare; his popularity bids him kill. His wife, warned by a dream, cautions him to have no hand in the blood of that *Just One*; the importunate multitude presses him for a sentence of death. All artifices have been tried to liberate the man whom he has pronounced innocent; all violent motives are urged to condemn the man whom malice pretends guilty.

8

Just in the height of this bosom-strife, when conscience and moral justice were ready to sway Pilate's distracted heart to an equitable dismissal, the Jews are heard to cry out, *If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend.* There is the word that strikes it dead: in vain shall we hope that a carnal heart can prefer the care of the soul, to honourable safety; or God, to Cæsar.

Now Jesus must die; Pilate hastes into the judgment hall; the sentence rests no longer with him; *let him be crucified.*

Yet how foul soever his soul,—his hands shall be clean; he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, *saying, I am innocent, &c.* Now all is safe; this is sufficient expiation; water can wash off blood; the hands cleanse the heart: protest thou art innocent, and thou canst not be guilty.—Vain hypocrite! and canst thou think to escape so? Is murder of no deeper die?—What miserable evasions do foolish sinners invent, to beguile themselves? Any thing will serve to charm the conscience, when it chooses to slumber and sleep. O Pilate, if that very blood thou sheddest, do not wash off the guilt of thy bloodshed, thy water-washing does but the more defile thy soul.

Little did these desperate Jews know the weight of that blood which they were so forward to imprecate upon themselves and their children!—And have ye not now felt, O nation worthy of plagues, have ye not now felt what blood it was, whose guilt ye so furiously affected? Near eighteen hundred years are now elapsed since ye thus wished for wretchedness? And have ye not been almost ever since the hate and scorn of the world? Did ye not live, many of you, to see your city buried in ashes, and drowned in blood? To see yourselves no nation? Was there ever a people under heaven made so eminent a spectacle of misery and desolation? Your former cruelties, uncleannesses, idolatries, cost you but some short captivities: God cannot but be just; this sin under which ye now lie groaning and forlorn, must needs be so much greater than those, as your devastation is more unbounded; and what can that be, other than the murder of the Lord of Life?—Ye have what ye wished, unhappy people! be miserable till ye be penitent!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Unwearied in wickedness, we see those who had great part of the night sat up to seize and condemn the Lord Jesus, early in the morning again in consultation how to get their sentence confirmed by the Roman governor, and executed. Let it shame our slothfulness, that they should be carried farther by enmity against Christ, than we by zeal to serve him.

1. They bound and led him prisoner to Pilate's tribunal. Our mighty Samson might indeed easily have snapped these cords asunder; but, faster bound with bands of love to our sinful souls, he quietly submitted to be led as a lamb to the slaughter.

2. Be-

were affrighted.

6 And he saith unto them, ' Be not af-

frighted : ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified : ' he is risen ; he is not here : be-

<sup>f</sup> Mat. 28. 4. <sup>g</sup> Luke, 24. 5. <sup>h</sup> If. 41. 10, 14. <sup>i</sup> Rev. 1. 17, 18. <sup>j</sup> Ch. 5. 36.

<sup>k</sup> John, 2. 19. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 12. 40. & 16. 21. & 17. 23. & 20. 19.

2. Before Pilate our Lord witnessed the good confession. In answer to his interrogatories, he confessed, and denied not, that he was the Christ, the King of his spiritual Israel : but to the clamorous charges of the priests, his invenomed persecutors, he observed a profound silence ; nor, when urged by Pilate to answer, deigned to make the least reply. He despised their malice ; he was prepared to suffer ; he desired not to be delivered ; and he knew it was in vain to remonstrate with those who wilfully and obstinately rejected the truth ; and therefore, to Pilate's admiration, he still held his peace. *Note ;* (1.) Christ is a king ; and they who refuse to bow as willing subjects to his government, will find him able to punish the rebels that will not have him to reign over them. (2.) We need not wonder, if false brethren are our bitterest accusers. Read the Scriptures, and from the beginning it will be seen, that wicked, worldly, and sensual priests are ever the most invenomed enemies to the cause of truth. (3.) Silence is in general the best answer to false and scurrilous invective.

3. Pilate, convinced of the innocence of Jesus, greatly desired to deliver him from his enemies ; as he plainly saw, that the envy of the priests was alone the cause of this malicious prosecution : and as it was an established custom at the passover, to gratify the people by the release of any prisoner they desired, he thought of an expedient which he imagined could scarcely fail of success. There was a most infamous miscreant then in prison for murder and insurrection ; and he doubted not, but if he proposed to the people these two, Jesus and Barabbas, they would infallibly prefer the former. The supposition was reasonable ; but he was disappointed in the issue. *Note ;* (1.) When people think to extricate themselves from their difficulties by indirect means, because if they act openly and honestly it may expose them to censure, they often but farther involve themselves. (2.) Whatever many pretend as the specious pleas for reviling the zealous ministers of truth, it is envy that instigates their enmity ; they cannot bear the reproof of their lives and doctrine.

4. Swayed by the malignant insinuations of the priests and elders, who, forgetting their dignity, mingled with the crowd, the people rejected Jesus, and demanded Barabbas. Pilate, amazed, laboured still to get Jesus off, and proposed a question to them—what he should do with that poor man, who was called the King of the Jews, and more to be pitied than feared. They cried out all together, *Crucify him, crucify him.* In vain the governor attempted to expostulate on the injustice, the cruelty of such a punishment, where a man had been proved guilty of no crime : they only grew more outrageous and clamorous, and tumultuously demanded an instant compliance with their request. *Note ;* We must not judge of the justice of a cause by the clamours of the populace : the voice of truth is often silenced amid the louder cries of prejudice.

adly, The importunity and clamour of the people over-

came the convictions of Pilate's conscience. To content them, he released Barabbas, pronounced sentence of crucifixion on Jesus, and delivered him up for execution, having before scourged him, in hopes of moving their compassion. But,

1. The soldiers, in order more bitterly to insult him, dragged him to the hall called *Prætorium* ; and gathering their whole company, in derision of the pretensions of Jesus, arrayed him, as a king, in a purple robe, placed a crown of thorns upon his head, and, ridiculing his mock dignity, wished all happiness to the King of the Jews ; striking him on the head with the cane which they had put into his hand, to make the thorns on his head pierce the deeper ; and spitting upon him in contempt, while they fell on their knees, pretending to pay him homage. Thus, because sinful man had affected to be like God, he who came to bear the punishment of our pride, must submit to the basest indignities to expiate our guilt. With wonder and love then let us behold the man, astonished at his humiliation, and bowing with no fictitious homage, but with the deepest reverence before him, as our incarnate God and king.

2. When they were tired of this inhuman sport, they disarrayed him of the purple robe, put on him his own garment, and led him away to the place of execution, bearing his cross. But he being unable to support the load—lest he should die by the way, and disappoint their cruelty—they took it off from him, and seizing one who passed by, perhaps known to be a disciple, the father of Alexander and Rufus, men afterwards of note among the faithful, they compelled him to carry the cross after Jesus to Calvary. *Note ;* (1.) Unexpected crosses often come upon us : it is well to be habitually prepared for them. (2.) However ignominiously we may be treated now for Christ's sake, it shall hereafter redound to our everlasting honour, if we be faithful.

3dly, We are now led to the lowest step of the Saviour's humiliation, his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross.

1. They crucified him—a punishment and death the most painful, ignominious, and accursed ! The hands and feet torn with the nails, excited the most excruciating pain, the whole body hanging on the wounded parts ; the bones dislocated ; and blood streaming down : thus lingering in agonies inexpressible, he felt all the horrors of death in its most tremendous form. None but the vilest miscreants and slaves were thus punished ; and God in his law had branded the death upon a tree with his curse, Deut. xxi. 23. He who stood in the room of sinners, even of the chief of sinners, therefore submitted to bear their sins in his own body on the tree, to endure all the shame, the pain, the curse, which they had deserved, and thus to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

2. On the cross he continued to endure every fresh insult and cruelty which malice could devise. (1.) While

hold the place where they laid him. . . . Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee:  
 7 But go your way, tell his disciples and <sup>b</sup> there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 26. 32. & 28. 10, 16. Ch. 14. 28. John, 20. 19. & 21. 1. Acts, 1. 3. & 10. 41. & 13. 31. 1 Cor. 15. 5.

he hung in agonies, the soldiers, who were more immediately his executioners, sported themselves with dividing his clothes as their fee, and casting lots for their several shares. (2.) Two thieves were crucified with him, one on each side, that he might not only appear numbered with the transgressors, but branded as the vilest of the vile. Thus undesignedly they fulfilled the Scriptures concerning him, Isaiah, liii. 12. (3.) Every passenger, with bitterest sarcasms, cast in his teeth what they regarded as an arrogant boast, wagging their heads in scorn, and bidding him prove the mission which he pretended, by coming down from the cross. The chief priests and scribes also, who came to glut their vengeance with this spectacle, and to see the execution performed with every circumstance of ignominy and cruelty, now triumphed over him, deriding his pretensions as a Saviour to others, who was so little able to save himself; insultingly demanding that now he would shew himself the Messiah, the king of Israel; and promising to believe on him, if he could give an instance of the power that he assumed, by unfastening himself from the tree, and coming down before them all. While, with horror and amazement at such wickedness, we read and tremble, let us fear, that we do not repeat those crimes we so condemn, by our sins crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame.

4thly, Death at last brings the welcome release, after Jesus had hung on the tree about six hours; during which we are told,

1. Of the dreadful darkness that for the three last hours covered the earth, portending that fearful state of blindness and hardness of heart to which the Jewish people were now abandoned for their wickedness.

2. The darkness of the sun was but an emblem of the more dreadful darkness which involved the Redeemer's soul, and extorted from him that exceeding bitter cry, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Such a complaint from the mouth of the Son of God may well amaze every hearer. The arrows of wrath now drank up his spirit, the powers of darkness struggled with all their might, and all that Jesus could endure was laid upon him. Never had such an hour passed since the sun began its revolutions; nor shall be again, till he is plucked from his sphere.

3. Astonishingly hardened, notwithstanding all that had passed, some that stood by mocked him, as if he now wanted Elias to come; and running, and filling a sponge with vinegar, they put it to his lips; while others said, *Let alone*; let us see whether Elias will appear to save him or not. Thus they regarded him as abandoned of God, and concluded that none in earth or heaven desired to help him.

4. Having finished the atonement, he dismissed his spirit, and left the lifeless corpse upon the tree. *He cried with a loud voice*, not as one worn out with pains, but as a triumphant conqueror; and vanquished as he fell, by death

destroying him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

5. At that instant the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, intimating the abolition of the ritual service, the rending of the Jewish state in pieces, and the access opened through the cross of Jesus, and his body there offered, for every sinner unto the holiest of all; God being reconciled through the blood of his cross, and willing to receive all that come unto him through this dying Redeemer.

6. This amazing cry, and sudden departure of Jesus, deeply affected the Roman centurion, under whose command the soldiers were; and, convinced by what he saw and heard of his innocence, and the truth of that assertion for which he suffered, he could not but confess, that *this was verily the Son of God*. He was probably the first fruits of the Gentile confessors, and bore testimony of the Redeemer's glory in the hour of his deepest humiliation. See the Annotations.

7. Those pious women who had followed Jesus from Galilee, and supported him out of their substance, continued with him to the last. The names of some of them are mentioned to their everlasting honour. Mary Magdalene is one: much had been forgiven her, and she thus proved how much she loved the Saviour in return; and *Mary the mother of James the less*, so called probably from his low stature; and *Salome*, the mother of Zebedee's children: and now all their hopes seemed to be extinguished by the death of their Lord. Thus frequently, when we seem sunk into the lowest depths, then does the glory of God more eminently appear in raising our desponding souls venturing upon Jesus, and filling us with the triumphs of faith and joy.

5thly, Nothing now remained but to take down the bodies as the evening approached, longer than which they were forbidden to hang there; and also it being the preparation of the sabbath, the work needed to be hastened. But who shall perform this last kind office to the corpse of Jesus? The Lord had prepared an unexpected person for the service, Joseph of Arimathea, a person of distinction, a counsellor, probably one of the great Sanhedrim, (see Luke, xxiii. 51.) a secret disciple of Jesus; and who, notwithstanding his sufferings and death, expected that his glorious kingdom would come, and in faith waited for it.

1. He went *boldly* to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus, when none of his apostles or followers had the courage to own him. Pilate, who could hardly believe that Christ was yet dead, called the centurion, and, when he was assured of the fact, readily granted Joseph's request, and gave an order for delivering the body. *Note*; (1.) In Christ's cause we have need of courage. They who dare appear on the side of the people who are every where spoken against, must not be shamefaced. (2.) God has his faithful ones among the great, the noble, and honourable

8 And they went out quickly, and fled were amazed: neither said they any thing to from the sepulchre; for they trembled and any man; for they were afraid.

Mat. 28. 8. Luke, 24. 9. John, 20. 18. Eccl. 9. 10.

able counsellors—though not many, yet enough to leave the rest utterly inexcusable in their infidelity.

2. Joseph having taken down the mangled corpse of his Lord with great respect, and wrapped it in fine linen bought for this occasion, interred the body in his own new tomb, which was hewn out of a rock; and closed the door with a large stone; while the two Marys, who had continued near the cross, now followed their Master to his grave, and marked the place, intending after the sabbath to embalm the corpse. *Note*, (1.) They who love the Lord Jesus, serve him with their best, and count nothing too much to bestow for his honour. (2.) Visits to the grave are very useful; they serve to quicken us to prepare for our great change.

CHAP. XVI.

*Ver. 1. Had bought sweet spices*] Mr. West observes, that St. Mark, having written his gospel for the use of the Gentiles, who were strangers to the Jewish customs and religion, (as may be inferred from several little explanatory notes dropped up and down in his gospel,) in order to give these strangers a perfect intelligence of the fact related in this chapter, it was necessary for him to begin his account with that circumstance of the women's having bought spices to anoint the body of Jesus; that they might understand what business carried them so early to the sepulchre, and see by the preparations made by those women for the embalming of the body of Jesus, and the little credit given by the apostles to the reports of those who had seen our Lord on the day of his resurrection, that his rising from the dead was an event, not in the least expected by any of them, and not believed by the apostles, even after such evidence as Jesus upbraided them for not assenting to: from all which it was natural for them to conclude, that this fundamental article of their faith was neither received nor preached, but upon the fullest conviction of its truth. See Observations on the Resurrection, p. 33. and the notes on Matth. xxviii.

*Ver. 4. And when they looked, &c.*] ἤναρξέψχσαι, lifting up their eyes. The reader will observe, that the parenthesis at the end of this verse, is an instance of the same mode of expression as that remarked in the latter part of the note on Ch. xi. 13.

*Ver. 5. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw, &c.*] The circumstance of the angel's being within the sepulchre, expressly mentioned by this apostle, is so far from being contradicted by St. Matthew, xxviii. 2—7. as some infidels have imagined, that it is plainly implied by the words *He is not here; come,*—(δευτε,—which might more properly be translated, *Come hither;*) *see the place where the Lord lay;* as is also that other circumstance of the women's entering into the sepulchre, by the Greek word εἰσέλθουσαι, which should have been rendered *they went out,* instead of *they departed;* as it is in ver. 8. of this chapter. To which may be further added, that the description of the angel's clothing, which according to St. Mark was a

long white garment, corresponds with the only particular relating to it, taken notice of by St. Matthew, which was its whiteness:—*His raiment was white as snow.* In the latter, indeed, this angel is described with a countenance like lightning. The purposes of the angel's descent are mentioned in the note on Matth. xxviii. 2—4. and as one of these was to strike terror into the guards, it is not unreasonable to suppose that he might at first assume a countenance of terror, and after the resurrection was accomplished, put on the milder appearance of a young man: in which form the women, as St. Mark says, saw him sitting within the sepulchre. That the angel was not seen by the women sitting on the stone without the sepulchre, is evident, not only from the silence of all the Evangelists with regard to such an appearance, but also from what is observed concerning Mary Magdalene, John, xx. 1. who, though she saw the stone rolled away, yet saw no angel. Besides, had the angel remained sitting on the stone without the sepulchre, with all his terrors about him, he would, in all probability, by frightening away the women and disciples, as well as the soldiers, have prevented those visits to the sepulchre, which he came on purpose to facilitate. It was necessary, therefore, either that he should not appear at all to the women; or that he should appear within the sepulchre; and in a form which, although more than human, might however not be so terrible as to deprive them of their senses, and render them incapable of bearing, certainly of remembering that message, which he commanded them to deliver to the disciples: from all which considerations it may be fairly concluded, that the appearance of the angel without the sepulchre, mentioned by St. Matthew, was only to the keepers; and that when he was seen by the women, he was within the sepulchre, as St. Mark expressly says, and as the words above cited from St. Matthew strongly imply: so that these two evangelists agree in relating, not only the words spoken by the angel, but the principal, and, as it were, characteristic circumstances of the fact; which, from this agreement, we infer to be one and the same. The like agreement is also to be found in their account of the terror of the women upon seeing the angel, their speedy flight from the sepulchre, and the disorder and confusion which so extraordinary an event occasioned in their minds; a confused and troubled mixture of terror, astonishment, and joy; which, according to St. Mark, was so great, as to prevent their telling what had happened to those whom they had met upon the way; for so must we understand the words, *neither said they any thing to any man,* ver. 8. since it is not to be imagined that they never opened their lips about it. Their silence doubtless ended with the cause of it; namely, their terror and amazement: and these, in all probability, vanished on their seeing Christ himself; who, as St. Matthew has informed us, met them, as they were going to tell the disciples the message of the angels;—accosted them with an *al hail*, and bade them dismiss their fears. See West on the Resurrection, p. 35. The reader will find in Tasso's Jerusalem,

9 ¶ Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first day of the week, <sup>k</sup> he appeared first to *Mary Magdalene*, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

<sup>k</sup> John, 20. 14, 16. Luke, 8. 2. & 7. 37, 50. Ch. 15. 40, 47.

rusalem, b. i. cant. 1. the amiable appearance of an angel like a youth, finely embellished with poetical painting.

*Ver. 6. Be not affrighted*] The speech of the angel to the women, in this and the next verse, informs them, in a concise and emphatical manner, of every particular that might satisfy their affectionate curiosity, and dissipate their fears; for they were afraid to ask him any questions. Mr. West has observed, that the appearance of an angel upon this occasion was highly proper, nay, we may almost say, necessary. *Jesus* had but two days before been put to death by the rulers of the Jews, as an impostor; one, who by the authority of Beelzebub cast out devils, and, by assuming the character of the Messiah, blasphemed God. His sepulchre also was guarded by a band of soldiers, under the pretence of preventing his disciples from carrying on the imposture begun by their master, by stealing away his body, and giving out that he was risen from the dead, in consequence of what he had said before the crucifixion. Under these circumstances, the attestation of heaven was necessary, to shew that God, though he had suffered him to expire on the cross, had not forsaken him; but, on the contrary, had co-operated with him even in his sufferings, his death, and burial, and resurrection from the dead on the third day, having by the secret workings of his providence, and his Almighty power, accomplished in every point the several predictions of *Jesus* relating to each of those events; events which, at the time of those predictions, none but God could foresee, and which nothing less than his all-controlling power could bring about. The descent therefore of the angel, and his rolling away the stone, was a visible proof that the finger of God was in the great work of the resurrection, was a proper honour done to him who claimed to be the Son of God, and unanswerably refuted the impious calumnies of those who, upon account of that claim, stiled him an impostor and blasphemer. The next thing to be considered in this matter is, the internal evidence which the several appearances of angels to the women, &c. carry along with them of reality and truth; for by some infidels they have been treated as mere illusions, and by others as downright falsehoods. That these appearances were illusions, the effects of superstition, ignorance, and fear, has been insinuated rather than asserted; but, I apprehend, has never been attempted to be proved. Waving therefore a vain search after arguments which I presume are not easy to be found, or they would have been produced by those who have so diligently laboured to ridicule the Christian faith, I shall proceed to lay down a few observations, tending to prove the reality and truth of these appearances of the angels to the women.

The angel first seen by the women, was that described by St. Mark, in the form of a young man (sitting within the sepulchre) on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; at the sight of whom, the women (*Mary* and *Salome*) discovering great signs of fear, he saith unto them,

*Be not affrighted*, &c. That this was a real vision, and no phantom of the imagination, is evident from these particulars. 1st, As it does not appear from this or any other account, that the women, upon coming to the sepulchre, were under any such terrors or perturbation, as are apt to fill the fancy with ideal spectres;—on the contrary, they went thither a little after day-break, prepared, and expecting to find the dead body of *Jesus*, there, and purposing to embalm it; about the doing of which they had been calmly conferring by the way:—so 2dly, by their coming with a design to embalm the body, it is plain that they had no notion either of his being already risen, or that he would rise from the dead. And therefore, 3dly, had the angel been only the creature of a disturbed imagination, they would scarcely have put into his mouth a speech that directly contradicted all the ideas upon which they proceeded but one moment before. 4thly, It is to be observed farther, that the illusion must have been double; two senses must have been deceived, the hearing and the sight; for the angel was heard as well as seen: and though this frequently happens in dreams, and sometimes perhaps in a delirium, or a fit of madness, yet I question whether an instance exactly parallel in all its parts to the case here supposed, was ever known; for no two people dream together exactly alike, nor are affected in a delirium with exactly the same imaginations. 5thly, The words spoken by the angel refer to others spoken by Christ to his disciples before his passion, in which he told them, that after he was risen, he would go before them to Galilee. According to this promise or prediction, of which the angel here reminds them, he bids them tell the disciples from him, to go into Galilee, and promises them that Christ will meet them there. Now as not only the resurrection, but the personal appearance of Christ, is implied in these words, the reason above given in the third particular, concludes in the present case still more strongly against supposing them to have proceeded only from the imagination of the women; for the sudden change of whose opinion from a disbelief of the resurrection to a full and explicit belief of it, no adequate cause can be assigned. For if it should be allowed that they knew of this prediction of Christ's (which however does not appear), yet the business which brought them to the sepulchre makes it evident, that till that instant they either did not recollect, not understand, or not believe it. And if it be farther said, that upon their entering the sepulchre, and not finding the body of *Jesus*, this prediction might naturally come at once into their heads, and they might as suddenly and as reasonably believe Christ to be risen as St. John did, whose faith was built upon no other evidence than what these women had now before them; I answer, that allowing St. John, when he is said to have first believed the resurrection, had no other evidence than those women now had, or might have had; yet it is to be observed, that St. John was in a fitter disposition of mind to reflect and judge upon that evidence than the women, St. John ran

10 *And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.*

was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

11 *And they, when they had heard that he*

12 ¶ *After that he appeared in another*

<sup>1</sup> Lukr. 24. 10, 17. John, 20. 17, 18. & 16. 20. Mat. 9. 15. & 5. 4. 17. Luke, 24. 11, 25. & 16. 31.

Jer. 31. 18—20. Esek. 7. 15. If. 66. 2. <sup>2</sup> Exod. 6. 9. Ver. 23;

to the sepulchre, upon the information given him by Mary Magdalene that the body of Jesus was removed thence, and *laid she knew not where*, nor by whom: and as the sepulchre was at some distance from his habitation, many thoughts must naturally have arisen in his mind, tending to account for the removal of the body; and among the rest, perhaps, some confused and obscure hope that he might be risen from the dead, pursuant to many predictions to that purpose delivered by him to his disciples. But whatever his thoughts were at the time of his coming to the sepulchre, (about which, it must be owned, nothing can be offered but mere conjecture) it is certain, that he had leisure to reflect upon the predictions of his Master, and to examine into the state of the sepulchre, which both he and Peter did (and that implies some deliberation and presence of mind); and that, after this deliberate examination, he departed quietly to his own home; whereas the women are represented as falling into the utmost terror and amazement, immediately upon their entering into the sepulchre, and continuing under the same consternation till they were met flying thence by Christ himself. Under such a disorder of mind, can we suppose them capable of recollecting the predictions of Christ about his resurrection? of considering the proofs of their accomplishment arising from the state of the sepulchre; and of persuading themselves at once that he was not only risen from the dead, but would personally appear to his disciples? and then, immediately upon this conviction, of fancying that they saw an angel, and heard him assure them in a distinct manner, that Christ was risen; call them to review the place where he had been laid, and bid them tell his disciples that he would meet them in Galilee?—In a word, if this supposed illusion proceeded from a strong persuasion that Christ was risen from the dead, whence arose that belief? If it arose from cool reflection upon the predictions of our Saviour, and the state of the sepulchre (the cause of St. John's faith), whence came their terror? which, if not previous to the apparition of the angel, was at least prior to the words *Be not affrighted*, with which he first accosted them. If it be urged, that this terror was of the nature of those causeless and unaccountable terrors called *panics*, it may be answered, that this is giving a name instead of a reason; and is in effect saying nothing at all, or no more than that they were affrighted, but nobody can tell why or wherefore. 6thly, It is observable, that the speech of the angel to the women consists of ten distinct particulars: As, 1. *Be not affrighted.* 2. *Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.* 3. *He is risen.* 4. *He is not here.* 5. *Behold the place where they laid him.* 6. *But go your way, tell his disciples.* 7. *And Peter.* 8. *That he goeth before you into Galilee.* 9. *There shall you see him.* 10. *As he said unto you.*—The order and connection of which several particulars are no less remarkable than their number; and therefore, taking both these

considerations into the account, I leave any one to judge, whether it be conceivable, that women under so great a terror and distraction of mind, as to fancy that they saw and heard an angel, when there was no such thing, should be able to compose a speech for this phantom of their fear and imagination, consisting of so much matter, order, and reason, and proceeding upon the supposition that they were not then convinced that Christ was risen from the dead, though the belief of his resurrection is presumed not only to have preceded, but even to have occasioned this illusion. I have dwelt the longer upon the examination of this first appearance of the angel to the women, because the settling of the nature of that, will save us the trouble of entering into a particular discussion of the rest, the several articles of which will fall under one or other of the foregoing observations.

*Ver. 7. Tell his disciples, and Peter, &c.]* St. Peter is particularly mentioned, because he had most need of comfort, under the anguish of his mind on account of his late denial.—As this gospel is supposed to have been dictated, or at least revised by him, the addition of this circumstance implies the deep sense he had of the divine benevolence in sending this comfortable message to him, which gave him to understand, that though he had so basely denied his Lord, he had not entirely lost his favour; and that as he had let in a gleam of light upon the darkness of his affliction, so he would for the future help and succour those who fell like him, if, like him, they deeply and thoroughly repented of their former sins. It might have served another end, and been intended by St. Peter to shew us, that though he had recovered his faith, and was re-instated in the favour of his Master; yet he had not forgotten how basely he had forfeited it, and how generously his Master had restored him. Our Lord's promise of appearing to the disciples in Galilee, referred to in the words *as he said unto you*, was given to the twelve apostles, Matth. xxvi. 32. yet the angel speaks of it as made to the women, and to all the disciples. Hence we learn, that every promise made to the apostles which had not an immediate relation to their office and character, was really made to all the disciples, and was intended to be made known to them. This message, as well as that from Jesus himself, Matth. xxviii. 10. was sent to all the disciples, and not to the apostles in particular. The reason may have been this: our Lord intending to visit his apostles that very evening, there was no occasion to order them into Galilee to see him; but as most of his disciples were in Jerusalem, celebrating the passover, it may easily be imagined that on receiving the news of their Master's resurrection, many of them would resolve to continue there, in expectation of meeting with him—a thing which must have been very inconvenient for them at that time of the year, when the harvest was about to begin, the sheaf of the first fruits being always offered on the second day

form " unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

13 ° And they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.

14 ¶ Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat \* at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

<sup>a</sup> Luke, 24. 13—35. with 16. 31.

<sup>b</sup> Or together.

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 28. 19. Luke, 24. 47. Acts, 1. 8. 1f. 2. 2, 3. & 52. 10.

<sup>d</sup> John, 3. 3, 5, 16, 18, 36. & 12. 48. Acts, 2. 38. & 8. 37. 1 Peter, 3. 21. Rom. 10. 9.

<sup>e</sup> Luke, 10. 17. Acts, 2. 4. & 5. 16. & 8. 7. & 10.

of the passover week: Wherefore to prevent their being so long from home, the messages mentioned were sent, directing them to return into Galilee, well assured that they should have the pleasure of seeing their Lord there, and by that means be happily relieved from the suspicion of his being an impostor, which probably might arise in the minds of many of them, when they saw him expire upon the cross. Accordingly, he *appeared to more than five hundred of them at once*, who, in consequence of his appointment, gathered together to see him.

Ver. 8. *Neither said they any thing to any man;*] If these words, agreeably to what we have observed on ver. 5. be construed to signify, that they did not tell, while their terror and amazement continued, what they had seen and heard to some whom they saw as they were flying from the sepulchre, it seems rational to conclude, that *these* were some of the disciples to whom they were ordered to deliver the message of the angel, and to whom they would probably have delivered it, had they not been under the greatest perturbation of mind. For had the persons whom they saw, been any other than the *disciples* of Jesus, it is not likely that St. Mark would have taken any notice of their *not saying any thing to any man*; since it is reasonable to imagine that they would not, even though they had not been affrighted, have told the message of the angel to any but disciples. And as the time of Peter and John's running to the sepulchre, upon the first report of Mary Magdalene, coincides with that of these women flying from it, it is no improbable conjecture, that these were the persons whom they saw in their way, at a distance perhaps, and coming by a different road to the sepulchre; especially if it be considered, that as the words of St. Mark, *neither said they, &c.* seem to carry with them an imputation of neglect upon these women,—though he at the same time accounts for and excuses it, by adding, *for they were afraid*;—so the same evangelist has before acquainted us, ver. 7. that they were ordered by the angel to deliver the message he gave, to Peter in particular. See for an explanation of the following verses, the passages referred to in the marginal references.

Ver. 9. *Now when Jesus was risen*] *Now Jesus being risen early on, &c.* See Maii Observ. c. ii. p. 72. The *earliness* of his rising was before expressed, ver. 2. *λίαν ἄρῃ*, very early. This appearance after it, was *ἄρῃ*, *early*. See Bengelius and Grotius.

15 ° And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 ° He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 ° And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

<sup>a</sup> Luke, 24. 36—46. John, 20. 19—29. 1 Cor. 15. 5, 7.

<sup>b</sup> John, 15. 16. Rom. 10. 18. Col. 1. 6, 23. 1f. 45. 22.

<sup>c</sup> Luke, 10. 17. Acts, 2. 4. & 5. 16. & 8. 7. & 10.

Ver. 15. *Go ye into all the world, &c.*] “And having, after this, during his abode on earth, frequently shewn himself to his apostles, for the greater confirmation of their faith, and further instruction about the glorious things of his kingdom, (see Acts, i. 3.) he, a little before his ascension, gave them their final and standing commission, saying, Go ye forth in my name unto all the nations of the earth, and preach my gospel, as ye have opportunity, to all mankind, whether Jew or Gentile, without exception.” This was the plain import of Christ's commission; though the apostles themselves were so dull of apprehension, through their prejudices against the Gentiles, that they did not understand it in that sense for some years afterwards; and so confined their ministrations to the Jews, till St. Peter was more fully instructed by a vision, and sent to preach the gospel to Cornelius and his family, Acts, x.

Ver. 16. *He that believeth, &c.*] That is, “*He who believeth* the gospel, and entereth into a solemn obligation to obey it, and verifies that obligation by a suitable practice in the following part of his life,—*shall be saved*;” for so the apostle expressly explains it, that *the baptism which saves us, is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.*—*But he that believeth not*, that is, who persists wilfully in infidelity, *shall be damned.* Dr. Macknight observes, that the last clause should be explained by John, iii. 19. where our Lord sets forth the reason of the condemnation of such unbelievers, as are damned for not believing the gospel when preached to them: *This, says he, is the condemnation, the reason of the condemnation, (namely of those whom in the preceding verse he had represented as condemned for not believing in the name of the only-begotten Son of God) that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.* Dr. Doddridge observes, that as to the objection which has been urged against the truth of Christianity from the damnatory sentence which it here and elsewhere pronounces on those who reject it, it is so far from being conclusive, that it would rather have been a great difficulty in the scheme of Christianity if it had contained no such argument; as he has proved at large in his second letter to the author of *Christianity not founded on Argument*, p. 28, 47. to which we refer the reader.

Ver. 17. *These signs shall follow, &c.*] It is very evident, that

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19 ¶ So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven,

<sup>1</sup> Acts, 28. 5, 8. Luke, 10. 19. James, c. 14. 15. John, 14. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Luke, 24. 50, 51. Pl. 110. 1. Acts, 1. 2, 3, 9. & 3. 21. & 7. 56. Heb. 1. 3. & 4. 14. & 8. 1. & 10. 12. Rev. 3. 27. & 5. 6. John, 16. 5, 28, & 17. 5, 15. <sup>3</sup> Acts, ii.—xix. & 1. 4. & 14. 3. Rom. 10. 18. & 15. 19. 1 Cor. 3. 6, 9. & 15. 10. 2 Cor. 6. 1. Heb. 2. 4.

and sat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

that the word *believe*, in this place, must signify something different from that *faith* which in the preceding verse is required as indispensably necessary to salvation, namely; that *faith of miracles* whereof we spoke on Matth. xvii. 20. Besides his promise of his perpetual presence and succours, Matth. xxviii. 20. our Lord here assures his disciples, that through the faith of him they should work most astonishing miracles, which he here particularizes; a circumstance, which not only contributed greatly, but was highly necessary, to the propagation of the gospel while at the same time the performance of it is an irrefragable proof of the truth of Christianity. That the *signs* here specified were rendered illustrious in the days of the apostles, appears sufficiently from the book of the Acts, and the several epistles; and that they were not confined to their times, but continued in the two first ages of the church, there is the most sufficient and undoubted proof. How much longer these extraordinary gifts were exerted, has been in our times a matter of great controversy. Perhaps there is nothing on this subject which will better repay a careful reading, than Dr. Whitby's General Preface to the 2d volume of his Commentary, proving the truth and certainty of the Christian faith.

*Ver. 18. They shall take up serpents;]* The power here referred to, included, as in the case of St. Paul, Acts, xxviii. 3—5. an ability to heal the most dangerous wounds given by the bite of the most noxious animals. We must understand the next clause with some restrictions; as much as to say, "If by some secret or open attempt they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them." for it is not to be imagined that God ever intended these miraculous powers should be used merely for ostentation, or to gratify the curiosity of spectators. Considering to what a degree of horrid refinement the art of poisoning was by this time brought, as well as how frequently execution was done by giving poison to condemned persons, in the age and countries in which the apostles lived or laboured, such a promise as this will appear more important than the reader might at first apprehend. See Doddridge and Grotius.

*Ver. 20. Preached every where,]* Through the whole Roman empire, or the then known world: and in spreading the knowledge of the Christian religion in far distant countries, they met with great success both among Jews and Gentiles, who were not able to resist the evidence of the miracles whereby they confirmed their doctrine. Thus St. Mark informs us; and hence it is reasonable to conclude, that he published his gospel pretty late.

*Inferences.*—It is too just, however unpleasing a remark, that while we consider the lives of those who profess a faith in the great doctrine of the resurrection, there seems but too much reason to suspect that too many are not heartily convinced of its truth. For, after all the elaborate discourses upon this subject, where is that indifference for the things of the world, that spiritual joy, that purity, that heavenly-mindedness, which the resurrection of our Lord should, through the grace of God, inspire? Where is that self-denial, that watchfulness over our own hearts, and attention to the omnipresence of God, that exact justice in our dealings, that warm benevolence towards all men, and, in a word, that zealous preparation against the day of judgment, to which an effectual assurance of our own resurrection, wrought by the Spirit of God and yielded to by us, would certainly induce us to observe?—I might ask the greater part, how they would live, if they did not believe any resurrection:—What alteration would there be in their manners? Would they be more addicted to pleasure, more intent upon their temporal interests, or less careful for the good of others? Yet they lay claim to the venerable name of Christians, and repeat creeds, professing their faith in our Lord's resurrection. I dare not therefore say of such, that they do not believe it; but it is evident that they have not duly thought about it; they are not sufficiently apprized of the wondrous effects and consequences of this great mystery. For it is not enough that we know it by name, and by hearsay; all saving knowledge is experimental; and it is not sufficient that we know the *history*; we must also *feel the power, of our Lord's resurrection*; not only that he is risen, but also that *he is the resurrection*. As the *sun* is light to itself, and the great source of day to all the worlds around it; so is our Lord *resurrection* to himself, and the cause and author of resurrection, whether bodily or spiritual, in others. Hence he says of himself, *I am the resurrection and the life*.

This resurrection to be wrought in us by Christ, is twofold, relating to the two constituent parts of man, the body and the soul; for to these two belong two distinct resurrections, very different from each other.

The *first* resurrection,—that of the *soul*,—is of a moral and spiritual nature. It is the rising of the soul from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness—states more different, and infinitely more important, than those of natural life and death: it is peculiar to the saints of God; it requires our concurrence with the operations of grace, to which alone it is to be imputed; *and blessed and holy is he, who has part in this first resurrection*.

The

The *second* resurrection is that of the *body*, after our natural death. This is common to all men, and is necessary and inevitable.

Of both these resurrections the Lord Jesus Christ is the immediate cause and author: of the first, as he is the *Saviour* of the world; and of the second, as he is the *Judge* of it. For it is a prerogative very properly annexed to his office of universal judge, that he should by his own power summon all mankind to his tribunal.

This resurrection from the natural death, is commonly well enough understood in the general. We can all, by a faith in the omnipotence of God, form satisfactory notions of our being raised again at the last day with our bodies; so that the whole man, which acted in this life, may be qualified for the rewards and punishments of the next. But the spiritual resurrection of our *souls* in this life is a thing less thought of, and less understood, by the generality of mankind. This is one of those things of God, whereof the natural or animal man is ignorant; and requires a spiritual discernment, and some spiritual experience, for the rightly apprehending it. The holy Scriptures treat of it very frequently, but no where more largely and clearly, than in the sixth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, (ver. 3—11.) where a death to sin is joined with the spiritual resurrection, as a circumstance indispensably requisite to, and implied in it: for no person is capable of a resurrection, till he is once dead.

It is necessary, therefore, that we consider this death here mentioned; that we inquire what the *old life* is, and how it is extinguished, before we can understand any thing of the spiritual resurrection that follows it, and the *new life* to be conferred. The life to be lost by this death, is said to be that of our *old man*, which is a scriptural phrase, signifying that nature, temper, or disposition of mind, with which we are born, as we are the sons of Adam, and heirs of original corruption; whereby, as the Scripture assures us, we are *the children of wrath*: it is this innate depravity which makes us ignorant of God, blind and stupid to all spiritual things, selfish, covetous, proud, unjust, deceitful, intemperate, impure, and hateful in the sight of God.

But, as it would be a hard matter to make a blind man comprehend what darkness is, at least to give him such a notion of it as we have, though he lives in it continually; so it is alike difficult to give unconverted sinners a right notion of what is here meant by the *old man*, because this, as most other things, is *best* known by its contrary. But in general we are to know, that whatever tendency there is in our nature to the commission of sin, it is a part or member of the *old man*: while we are yet in our natural state, unreformed by divine grace, this lives, this *reigns in our mortal bodies*. Why is this man a drunkard, that malicious, a third unjust in his dealings? The reason is, because the resurrection of Christ has not had its due effect; the mind is not renewed, and the old man of sin is yet unmortified: that corrupt nature, which we received from Adam, is still active and vigorous; lives and reigns in the hearts of unregenerate men; and would for ever reign there, did not Christ interpose, and by virtue of his sufferings and death communicate to believers such powers of grace, as are sufficient to destroy this root of evil in their souls. This corruption of our nature is such

as we cannot possibly resist by our own strength. In vain does the law encounter it with her impotent discipline; in vain does she set before us her rigorous commands and prohibitions; in vain does she display her rewards and punishments. These all serve only to shew us our guilt and danger, but cannot work our deliverance; we are still the same men; and all our struggles after holiness, are like the motions of a door upon its hinges, still fixed to the same place.

But behold, a greater than Moses is come in the gospel dispensation, even our Lord Jesus Christ; and *what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh*, that is to say, through our corrupt nature, *that, St. Paul saith, God hath done for us, by sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh*. He has for and through him, and by his spirit, granted believers new powers, whereby they are enabled to *mortify* and destroy their corrupt nature.

But this of itself is still insufficient to make us either holy or happy; it is, at best but a negative goodness; there is more required of us than a mere abstinence from vice: we must not only *cease to do evil*, but *learn to do well*; and as the *old man of sin is to be destroyed*, so the *new man is to be raised up in us*.

And this is a natural consequence of the former: for if *we be dead with Christ*, we believe also that *we shall be raised up with him*. If *we have been planted together in the likeness of his death*, we shall also grow up in the likeness of his resurrection. But how few are there who rightly value this: the men of the world relish none of these things; they have no eyes to discern the beauty of holiness; they fear lest the thoughts of it should make them melancholy; all their concern is about the animal life, all their care is for the old man, his maintenance and support, and how they may make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. What wonder then that they feel no joy arise in their hearts at the news of our Lord's resurrection, or at his assuring us, that he is *the resurrection*, and will raise us up, as he did himself? They have no interest in it; they are not likely to be gainers by it; and therefore they see no glories in the gospel that relates it.

Others, again, who pretend to have a higher opinion of virtue, and who own, by their words at least, that it is the most noble acquisition our nature is capable of, yet think that there is no such great difficulty in attaining it; no need of such *heavenly machinery*, as they may lightly term the mysteries of our redemption. "Good morality," say they, "will carry us to heaven;" but they cannot see much ground for believing all the abstruse revelations of Christianity, nor how we shall be made wiser or happier by such belief.

But let these men endeavour to live up even to their own notions of morality: let them try how they can acquit themselves in the duties of temperance, meekness, universal benevolence, and a suitable homage to the Supreme Being; and then if they do not wilfully deceive themselves, they will learn by their own experience, that they cannot do these things by their own strength. Then, —provided they be sincere, and consequently not indisposed for the illumination of God's Holy Spirit,—the gospel will appear to them in its proper beauty; and they will find it, according to its true interpretation, *glad tidings*; shewing them that the Lord Jesus Christ is ready to do that

that for them, which they cannot do for themselves; that by the merits and power of his death he will destroy their *old man*, the principle of evil that now tyrannizes in their souls; and by the power of his resurrection work their spiritual resurrection to the new life of righteousness. *The sting of death is sin; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, No sooner was the sabbath past, during which Christ had lain in the grave, than we find,

1. Early in the morning on the first day of the week, the pious women, who the preceding evening had provided spices for embalming the body, little expecting our Lord's resurrection from the dead, set out from the city for the sepulchre, which they reached just at sun-rising; and by the way having expressed to each other their concern how to roll back the ponderous stone from the mouth of the cave, to their surprise they beheld it already done for them. *Note;* (1.) Though difficulties at a distance seem insurmountable, when we go on steadily depending upon God, we shall often meet with unexpected assistances. (2.) It is mentioned to their distinguished honour, how assiduous and faithful the women who followed Jesus proved, when the men forsook him. The weaker vessel is often seen to be the stronger Christian.

2. An angel appears to them. As they entered into the sepulchre, to their great surprise and terror, they beheld one in the likeness of a young man in long white robes, sitting within. But the angel endeavoured to quiet their fears, and bid them not be terrified; he knew that their business there was to seek the crucified Jesus; and, to their inexpressible joy, informs them, that he is no longer with the dead, but *risen*. There was the place where he had lain: they are therefore enjoined, without delay, to carry the glad tidings to Peter and the rest of the apostles; and to tell them, according to his promise, that their glorified Master will meet them in Galilee, and make them happy with his presence and converse. *Note;* (1.) We are often apt to fear where no fear is, and to dread our mercies as miseries. (2.) They who seek a crucified Jesus, are sure to find comfort to their souls. (3.) Though we for our unfaithfulness might justly be left to mourn our folly, Christ is a compassionate Saviour, willing to pardon, and in haste to speak peace to the souls of his afflicted disciples, who mourn for his presence. (4.) Peter is particularly mentioned: had he not, perhaps he would have thought that the message was good news to the rest, but not for him, as having rendered himself unworthy the name of a disciple. (5.) They who know the joy of meeting Jesus, and of his spiritual presence in the ordinances of his worship, will not account the way long to go, where his word is dispensed, and his voice is still heard.

3. The women ran earnestly to carry the message, trembling with a mixture of surprise and joy, and spoke to no man by the way; afraid that the news was too good to be true, or that the Jews would be exasperated if they heard it, and say they had stolen the body. See the Annotations.

2dly, Christ appears,

1. To Mary Magdalene, the morning he rose—that remarkable sinner, out of whom he had cast seven devils. O wondrous grace! She immediately carried the joyful news to the eleven, who, inconsolable, with bitter anguish lamented their departed Lord, and their own unfaithfulness

to him; and seemed sunk in despair of ever seeing him again. So slow of heart were they to believe, notwithstanding the repeated predictions which Christ had given them of his rising from the dead, that they received her declarations as a mere fancy, and imagined her to have been deceived by some spectre or apparition. *Note;* The very incredulity of the disciples tends to the confirmation of our faith: it shews, they were not themselves willing to believe, but upon the most indubitable evidence.

2. The same day in the evening he appeared to two other of his disciples, who were going towards Emmaus, a village about seven miles from Jerusalem: but perhaps being in a different dress from what he usually wore, and *their eyes being holden that they should not know him*, Luke, xxiv. 16, 34. they conversed with him for a while, and at last their eyes were opened, and they knew him: whereupon they instantly returned to acquaint their brethren, who even then would not be persuaded, though the witnesses were so unexceptionable.

3dly, Since they are so loath to believe the report of others, Jesus condescended to put the matter beyond dispute, by appearing himself the same evening to all the apostles, except Thomas, as they were sitting at table together.

1. He *upbraids them with their unbelief and hardness of heart*, that they were so backward to receive the testimony of those who had seen him, notwithstanding the many assurances of his rising again, which he had given them before his death. *Note;* Unbelief is a most besetting sin, and highly displeasing to the Lord Jesus.

2. He solemnly invests them with authority to go and preach the gospel among all nations, and to confirm their mission by the miracles that he would enable them to work. This transaction passed, it should seem, not at the time of his first appearing to them, but afterwards, just before his ascension.

[1.] He enlarges their commission to go into all the world, and to preach the gospel (which had been hitherto confined to the Jews,) to every human creature as far as their labours would reach; with power also to send out others, as fellow-labourers with them, to spread the favour of the truth in every place.

[2.] The summary of their preaching must be faith in the Son of God, in his life, death, and resurrection; the necessity of the salvation obtained by his obedience to the death of the cross for lost sinners; the fulness and all-sufficiency of it to procure pardon, life, and glory for all who perseveringly trust in him; and the sin and danger of those who reject this method of divine wisdom and love, and refuse obedience to the faith of the gospel, their damnation becoming inevitable. *Note;* The ungodly perish, not merely because of the greatness of their sins, but principally because they sin against the remedy, and seal themselves up under wrath by their unbelief.

[3.] In confirmation of their doctrine, they are empowered to work the most astonishing miracles. *In the name of Jesus*, depending on his power, and to advance his gospel, they shall be enabled to *cast out devils* from those that were possessed; to *speak with new tongues*, which they had never learnt, with most entire fluency and readiness, as if they had severally been their native language. *They shall take up serpents*, the most venomous, without the least harm, (i. e. Acts, xxviii. 3—6.) *If they drink any deadly thing*,

*it shall not hurt them; when openly or secretly their persecutors might strive to make away with them. They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover, every disease giving way to their healing touch. And these miraculous powers they not only possessed themselves, but were enabled to impart to others.*

4thly, When our Lord had thus commissioned and qualified them for the great work that he had committed to their charge, we see him,

1. Ascending to his throne, and exalted to the right hand of Majesty on high. Having finished the great work of atonement, all power is put into his hands as Mediator, to reign in and over his faithful subjects; while his enemies, as vanquished, must bow before him, and, whether they be devils or wicked men, will shortly receive from his lips their eternal doom.

2. We see them going forth according to their Master's

orders, preaching the gospel in defiance of all opposition from earth and hell, the Lord supporting them against all their persecutors, giving the most amazing success to their labours; by wondrous miracles attesting their mission to be divine; and by the power of the Holy Ghost making their word powerfully effectual to the conversion of the hearts of innumerable multitudes. And this sign will ever follow the gospel to the end of time: wherever it is preached in spirit and in truth, it will be found the power of God unto salvation: and as the evangelist adds his *Amen* hereunto, so are we also bound so to do, assured that thus it *will* be for all the faithful, and praying that it thus *may* be; that the word may daily run and be glorified, till the ends of the earth shall remember themselves, and be turned unto the Lord, and all flesh shall see the salvation of our God. Amen. So come, Lord Jesus!

# THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

## S A I N T L U K E .

*SAINT LUKE is generally thought to have been a physician by profession, Col. iv. 14. and is supposed to have been one of the seventy disciples. He was the constant companion of St. Paul in his travels, and assisted him at Rome for some time, as appears from Acts, xxviii. 13—16. Col. iv. 14. and Phil. ver. 24. From thence he is said to have travelled into Africa, and to have preached the Gospel at Thebes in Egypt. The ancients in general agree, that Saint Luke wrote his gospel later than Saint Matthew and Saint Mark, though they assign different years; but the most current opinion is, that he wrote it about the year 63; and according to the subscription of the Syriac version, it was published at Alexandria in Egypt. Dr. Owen, however, is of opinion, that Saint Luke wrote his gospel at Corinth, about the year of our Lord 53, for the use of the Gentile converts. And Dr. Macknight conjectures, that it may be fairly inferred from Saint Luke's preface, that he published his gospel before either Saint Matthew or Saint Mark wrote theirs.*

### C H A P. I.

*The preface of St. Luke to his whole gospel. The conception of John the Baptist, and of Christ. The prophecy of Elisabeth, and of Mary concerning Christ. The nativity and circumcision of John. The prophecy of Zacharias concerning both Christ and John.*

[Year of the world 4004.]

**F**ORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration

of <sup>a</sup> those things which are most surely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered them unto us; which from the beginning were <sup>b</sup> eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word;

3 <sup>c</sup> It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, <sup>d</sup> most excellent Theophilus,

<sup>a</sup> John, 1. 14. <sup>1</sup> Timi. 3. 16. Acts, 1. 1—3. 21, 22. & 4. 36. <sup>1</sup> John, 1. 1—3. <sup>2</sup> Peter, 1. 16—18. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 24. 48. Acts, 1. 3, 8, 27. & 4. 20. & 10. 41. Heb. 2. 3. <sup>2</sup> Peter, 1. 16. <sup>1</sup> John, 1. 1—3. <sup>c</sup> Acts, 15. 19, 25, 28. <sup>1</sup> Cor. 7. 40. Heb. 2. 3. <sup>1</sup> Thess. 1. 5. & 2. 13. <sup>d</sup> Acts, 1. 1. <sup>1</sup> Sam. 2. 30.

### C H A P. I.

*Ver. 1—3. Forasmuch, &c.] Forasmuch as many have undertaken to compose a narrative of those things which have been accomplished amongst us, ver. 2. as they who were from the beginning eye-witnesses, and afterwards ministers of the word, delivered them to us; ver. 3. I have also determined, having exactly traced every thing from the first, to write, &c. "This must refer," says Dr. Doddridge, "to some histories of the life of Christ which are now lost; for, Matthew and Mark, the only evangelists who can be supposed to have written before Luke, could not with any propriety*

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"be called many; and of these two, Matthew at least wrote from personal knowledge, not the testimony of others. One must readily conclude, that the books referred to are lost, as none of the apocryphal gospels now extant, published either by Fabricius, in his Cod. Apocryph. Nov. Test. or by Mr. Jones in his History of the Canon, can with any shew of reason pretend to equal antiquity with this of St. Luke; but I cannot suppose with some of the ancient fathers, that the evangelist here intends the gospels of Basilides, Cerinthus, and some other early heretics, since he seems to allow these histories, whatever they were, to have been at

3 R

"least

4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

5 THERE was ' in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, ' of the course of Abia : and

\* John, 20. 31. † Peter, 1. 10. ‡ Peter, 1. 15, 19. § Theff. 1. 5. & 2. 13.

¶ Mat. 2. 1.

‡ Chr. 24. 5, 10, 19. Neh. 12. 4, 17.

“ least honestly written, according to information received from the most capable judges; and it is strange that Eusebius should imagine the words to be intended as a severe censure on the now-unknown compilers of these histories, whoever they were.” This appears to be a fair and candid state of the case: Dr. Macknight however observes upon this preface, that, at first sight of it, one would be apt to think, that Luke speaks here of the other gospels, and their authors; yet the character which he gives of the writers whom he had in view, makes it evident that they were historians of a different kind from the evangelists, properly so called; for they wrote according to the information they had received from the eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; whereas the evangelists, being eye-witnesses themselves, wrote from their own personal knowledge, improved by inspiration; at least Matthew and John were in both these respects writers of this character; and as for Mark, though he was not an apostle, he was most probably an early disciple, and consequently an eye-witness of the greatest part of the things which he has related. Epiphanius affirms, that he was one of the seventy. But, to set the matter in another light, if we interpret St. Luke’s preface of the evangelists, we must allow, that he had none but Matthew and Mark in view, since, by the acknowledgment of all, John did not write his gospel till long after Luke’s was published;—but that he should call *truo* historians many, is hard to be conceived. Further, if the gospels of Matthew and Mark were abroad when Luke was writing, we may be assured that he would peruse them; and as he speaks of persons who had composed histories of Christ’s life, he could not by any means overlook authors of their character. On this supposition, can it be imagined, that while his own gospel was penned under the direction of the Spirit, according to the information that he had received from those who were eye-witnesses, he would only say, of an eye-witness, and an apostle, on whom the Spirit hath descended, or even of an apostle’s companion, that *they had taken in hand to give the history of Christ’s life*, and not rather have mentioned both them and their works with particular approbation. The probability of this opinion is heightened by the following consideration: It makes the gospels appear with a noble and beautiful propriety; for, on a supposition that St. Luke wrote before the rest, we conceive the reason why they have passed over in silence the many miraculous circumstances with which the conception, birth, and circumcision both of the Messiah’s fore-runner, and of the Messiah himself were honoured, together with the prophecies of Simeon and Anna uttered at our Lord’s presentation in the temple, as also the history of his childhood and private life: Luke had accurately, and at great length related all these things, without omitting any particular that deserved to be mentioned. On the other hand, if we think that Matthew and Mark wrote before Luke, their gospels will appear defective in these important points, and no reason will offer itself to justify such

material omission. Instead of *have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration*, Heylin, Doddridge, &c. read, *have undertaken to compose a history*. The word *παρανοπορηματων*, Dr. Doddridge renders, *confirmed with the fullest evidence*: it implies both that fulness of evidence by which any fact is supported, and likewise that confidence, or fulness of assent, by which facts so supported are believed. Compare 2 Tim. iv. 5, 7. in the Greek.

Ver. 2. *Ministers of the word*;] Some have supposed, that by the word, St. Luke meant Christ himself. See John, i. 1. Others however understand by the word, the transactions of our Lord’s public life or the gospel; called the word, as being the great subject of the preaching of the apostles, who were eye and ear witnesses of these things. It seems as plain as possible, from this verse, that they could not be false or heretical gospels to which St. Luke alludes.

Ver. 3. *Having had perfect understanding—from the very first, &c.*] By tracing them from their first rise. *Παρανοπορηματων*, *παισι ακριβως*, plainly signifies that accuracy of investigation, on which the perfect understanding of his subject was built. To write in order, may signify to give a particular detail, in opposition to an abridgement, or a concise account; and the evangelist may, with great propriety, be said to have given an orderly account of the history of Christ, as the leading facts are in their due series, though some particulars are transposed. The title of *most excellent*, *Κεχαριστος*, was commonly given to persons in the highest stations of life. Accordingly St. Paul, speaking to the governors Felix and Festus, uses it in his addresses to them; wherefore their opinion seems to be groundless, who, attending to the signification of the Greek word *Theophilus*, “beloved of God,” imagine that the evangelist does not mean any particular person, but all true Christians, and lovers of God. Theophilus seems to have been a Greek, and a person of high rank. Probably Luke, while in Greece with St. Paul, had received particular civilities from him, and in testimony of his respect, inscribed his two books to him, bestowing on him thereby a fame which will last while Christianity subsists. St. Luke might have a thorough knowledge of the facts which he here refers to, by intimate conversation with the apostles, and particularly St. Paul; or, he might have been present himself at a number of the transactions which he has recorded. The assurance with which he speaks of his own knowledge of these things, leads us to think that he was an eye-witness of some of them. On this supposition, his reasoning in the preface to his history, will be more conclusive than on any other, and will stand thus: “Seeing many have written from the information of eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word, I, who from the very first have had perfect knowledge of all things, both by conversing with the eye-witnesses, and by being present myself at many of the transactions of Jesus, thought it incumbent on me to write his history, for the more certain information of mankind.”

Ver. 4.

his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elifabeth.

6 <sup>b</sup> And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 <sup>1</sup> And they had no child, because that Elifabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass that, while <sup>k</sup> he exe-

cuted the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9 <sup>1</sup> According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 <sup>m</sup> And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 6. 9. & 5. 24. & 17. 1. Job, 1. 1, 8. & 1. 2. Ps. 119. 6. 2 Kings, 20. 3. Phil. 3. 6. Acts, 24. 16. 2 Cor. 1. 12. <sup>1</sup> Gen. 18. 11. 12. & 25. 21. Judges, 13. 3. John, 13. 1. 1 Kings, 1. 1. <sup>k</sup> 1 Chr. 24. 19. Heb. 9. 6. <sup>1</sup> Exod. 30. 7. 1 Chr. 6. 49. & 28. 21. Heb. 9. 6. <sup>m</sup> Exod. 30. 7. Lev. 16. 17.

*Ver. 4. Wherein thou hast been instructed.*] Κατηχηθης, the original word, expresses with great accuracy the instructions given to those who were training up for admission into the Christian church, whose name of *catechumens* was derived hence, and applied without any particular regard to the age of the persons concerned. See Acts, xviii. 25. Rom. 2. 18. and Doddridge.

*Ver. 5. In the days of Herod, &c.*] See on Matth. ii. 1. The descendants of Aaron multiplied to such a degree, that they could not all do duty in the temple at once; David therefore divided them into twenty-four courses, who ministered weekly in their turns. The time of their ministrations was called εφημερία, as was likewise the *course* itself; but the name belonged originally to the Athenian magistrates, called *Prytaneis*, who, being fifty men chosen by lot out of a tribe, and each man governing the city a single day, the days which any tribe governed, as well as its fifty *Prytaneis* succeeding one another, were called εφημερ.α. Hence, because the Jewish *courses* of priests resembled the Athenian *Prytaneis* in several respects, they had their name applied to them by those who wrote in Greek. The course of *Abia*, to which Zacharias belonged, was the eighth in David's regulation; but whether the courses were the same now as at the first institution, it is impossible to determine. Comp. 1 Chron. xxiii. 6. and xxiv. 10. and see Potter's Antiquities.

*Ver. 6. In all the commandments and ordinances*] The critics are generally agreed that these words signify, the one the moral, the other the ceremonial precepts of the law; but they are greatly divided in fixing the particular sense of each. The truth is, undoubted examples may be produced, to prove that both words were used promiscuously in both senses; for which reason, to dispute nicely about them is needless. The plain meaning is, that this exemplary couple were faithfully observant both of the moral and ceremonial institutions of the law; so that they were not only of a fair character in their dealings with men, but likewise illustrious for their piety, and sincere in their worship of God. This appears to be St. Luke's meaning. See Bell's Inquiry into the Missions of St. John, &c. p. 46.

*Ver. 9. His lot*] Because some parts of the sacred service were more honourable than others, both the priests and Levites divided the whole among them by lot. The Jews tell us, that there were three priests employed about the service of the incense; one carried away the ashes left

on the altar at the preceding service; another brought a pan of burning coals from the altar of sacrifice, and, having placed it on the golden altar, departed; a third went in with the incense, sprinkled it on the burning coals, and, while the smoke ascended, made intercession for the people. This was the part that fell to Zacharias, and the most honourable in the whole service. Dr. Heylin renders this verse, *According to the custom of distributing the sacerdotal functions, the lot fell upon him to enter into the sanctuary, and offer incense.*

*Ver. 10. The whole multitude, &c.*] Because it sometimes happened, that, on ordinary week-days, few or none of the people attended the morning and evening sacrifices, there were four and twenty men employed to attend this service, as representatives of the people of Israel, to lay their hands on the heads of the sacrifice, to pray, and to receive the blessing. These were called, from their office, *stationary men*. Wherefore the manner in which the evangelist has expressed himself on this occasion—the *whole multitude of the people*, shews that an unusual concourse was in the temple when Zacharias had this vision. Probably the day on which he burned this incense was a sabbath, or some high festival, when there was always a great multitude assembled. Zacharias's remaining in the temple beyond the usual time, must thus have been taken notice of by many. See ver. 21. There were likewise many, who, upon his coming out dumb, conjectured that he had seen a vision, ver. 22. Matters of so public a nature, the truth or falsehood whereof so many must have known, would never have been thus openly appealed to by St. Luke, if they had been false. The evangelist adds, that the *people were praying without at the time of incense*.—As the daily sacrifice represented the sacrifice of Christ, and the incense the prayers of the saints, Rev. viii. 1—4. the incense was ordered to be burned while the sacrifice was offering, to teach mankind that it was through the sacrifice of Christ they had access to God. Accordingly, the sacrifices and incense both morning and evening were fitly accompanied with the prayers of the people; and that not in the temple only, but every where else; pious men choosing to put up their supplications particularly at the hours of sacrifice, while the ministers of religion interceded for the nation. Hence these hours were called *hours of prayer*, Acts, iii. 1. What is above-mentioned was the foundation of that elegant figure by which prayer is so often compared in scrip-

11. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12. And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

<sup>a</sup> Heb. 1. 14. Dan. 8. 16. & 9. 21. Zech. 2. 1. & 3. 1. Ver. 19, 26. Ch. 2. 10. <sup>o</sup> See Exod. 30. 1. <sup>p</sup> Judges, 13. 20, 22. Dan. 10. 8. Mark, 16. 5. <sup>q</sup> Judges, 6. 27. Dan. 10. 12. & 11. 23. Rev. 1. 17. Ver. 30. Ch. 2. 10. Mark, 16. 6. <sup>r</sup> Gen. 21. 21. 1 Sam. 1. 19. Ver. 24, 57—69. <sup>s</sup> Gen. 17. 19. Ver. 48. John, 5. 25. Prov. 15. 20. <sup>t</sup> Mat. 11. 9, 18. Numb. 6. 3. Judges, 13. 4, 5. <sup>u</sup> Lev. 10. 9. Jer. 1. 5. Gal. 1. 15. Ver. 16, 17. <sup>v</sup> Mal. 3. 1. & 4. 5, 6. If. 40. 3—5. Mat. iii. Ch. 3. 1—23. John. 1. 6—36. & 3. 2:—36. & 5. 3:—35. Mat. 11. 14. Mark, 9. 12. Ver. 76—79. <sup>w</sup> Or ty. <sup>x</sup> Mat. 3. 2. If. 40. 3, 9—11. & 9. 6, 7. John, 1. 24, 29. Rom. 9. 3. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Tit. 2. 13.

ture to incense: perhaps one reason of ordaining incense might be to intimate the acceptableness of those pious prayers which were to accompany it; and indeed burning fragrant perfumes was, and in Eastern nations still is, so important a part of the entertainment of illustrious families, that one might well expect it in the house of God, where so great a part of the worship was of the ceremonial kind. It is so plain that this was only an office of daily ministrations, and that Zacharias was one of the ordinary priests, that one cannot but be surpris'd that any should conclude from this circumstance, that Zacharias was *sagan*, or assistant to the high-priest, and was now performing his grand office on the day of atonement, and so on this foundation should calculate the birth of John the Baptist and of Christ, and all the other feasts which depend upon them; yet this is done in the calendars both of the Roman and Greek churches. See Doddridge and Hammond.

Ver. 11. *There appeared unto him an angel*] It is altogether uncertain whether this happened at the morning or evening sacrifice. Grotius thinks it was in the morning; others fancy it was in the evening; but neither opinion is properly supported. It is observable from the rabbinical writings, that these divine appearances used generally to be made at the time of burning incense.

Ver. 12. *He was troubled, &c.*] That is, according to the Hebrew idiom, *he was exceedingly afraid*. The angel's form was such, as shewed him plainly to be a being of a superior nature. See Judges, xiii. 6. But Zacharias knew not on what errand he was come: no wonder then that he was exceedingly terrified.

Ver. 13. *Thy prayer is heard*;) We cannot imagine that this holy man, at so advanced an age, and on such an occasion, would pray for the pregnancy of his wife, who was very old. The priests in this office considered themselves as the mouth of the people, and made the welfare of the nation the subject of their prayers. Wherefore, since it is reasonable to suppose that Zacharias now interceded for the coming of the Messiah, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, we may consider the angel's words as having a reference to such a prayer,

thus: "The Messiah, for whose coming thou prayedst, is about to be born; for thy wife shall bring forth his forerunner." Some indeed are of opinion, that those prayers are meant which Zacharias may have put up for offspring when he and his wife were young; yet the time and place of the vision give reason to believe that the object of it was a matter of more general concernment. It was the office of the father to name the child, as appears from ver. 62. *John*, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies *The grace of God*. Hence it was fitly given to the Messiah's forerunner, who was sent to proclaim the immediate accomplishment of God's merciful intentions towards men, the expectation of which had been raised in them by all the preceding dispensations of religion. *Αγαλλίασις*, which we render *gladness*, in the next verse, properly answers to the word *exultation* or *leaping for joy*. See 1 Petèr, i. 8. iv. 13. and Matth. v. 12.

Ver. 15. *He shall be great, &c.*] By this some understand that true greatness, whereof God is the sovereign judge, in opposition to that greatness which men acknowledge, who very often err in their opinion of things. "He shall be great in the sight of God, not of man." But *great in the sight of God* seems to be a Hebrew expression of the same form with *ἀρεῶς τῷ Θεῷ*, Acts, vii. 20. *fair to God, or exceeding fair*, and signifies, *he shall be exceeding great*; namely, in respect of his character, his office, his inspiration, and the success of his ministry, as it is explained by the angel himself. He was *to drink neither wine nor strong drink*; that is, to convince mankind that he was separated in a peculiar manner for the service of God. He was to live the life of the Nazarites, Numb. vi. 3. who were esteemed as devoted to God's service in a particular manner. He was to be filled with the Holy Ghost, which, in Scripture, commonly signifies that degree of inspiration by which the prophets anciently spake. Accordingly, in this chapter it is applied to Elizabeth, to Mary, and Zacharias, in cases where they all spake by a particular inspiration.

Ver. 17. *And he shall go before him, &c.*] That is, before Jesus Christ, here stiled *the Lord their God*. The son of Zacharias had the *spirit of Elijah*, equalling if not exceeding

18 ¶ And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

7 Gen. 17. 8. & 17. 17. Judges, 6. 36—40. & 13. 19. 11. 7. 11. & 18. 22. 2 Dan. 9. 21—26. & 8. 16. Ver. 26. Mat. 18. 10. Heb. 1. 14. 8 Ezek. 3. 26. & 24. 27. 9 Gen. 18. 10, 12, 13. Numb. 20. 12. 11. 7. 9. Rom. 3. 3. Numb. 23. 19. Heb. 6. 18. Tit. 1. 2. 10 For the blessing. Numb. 6. 23—26.

ing him in severity of manners, in courage, and in sustaining persecutions; for he was clad in a garment of camel's hair, fed on locusts and wild honey, rebuked sinners of the highest distinction with great boldness, and was put to death on that account. He had the power also of Elijah; for though he did no miracle, he was honoured with the like success in restoring the lost spirit of true religion among his countrymen. Nay, he even excelled Elijah in that, which is properly the power of a prophet, and to which all his other gifts, were subservient,—the power of converting men; being in this more successful without miracles, than Elijah had been with them. By his preaching he made such a general change in the manners of the nation, that he turned the hearts of the fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to their children the Jews, from whom they had been alienated, on account of their wickedness; and the hearts of the children to their fathers, by begetting in them a love of religion and religious characters, and by so doing prepared a people for the coming of the Lord. See the note on Mal. iv. 5, 6. and on Mark, ix. 10. Some, however, render the passage, To turn the hearts of the fathers with the children, and the disobedient to a sense of righteousness, &c. Dr. Doddridge translates and paraphrases it thus: "He shall meet with such glorious success in his ministry, as to convert the hearts of the fathers with those of the children; that is, he shall bring many, both of the rising and the declining age, to that real piety towards God, which will be the surest band of their mutual duty towards each other: and many of those who have hitherto been disobedient to the wisdom of the just (that is, insensible of the obligations to real religion, which is the greatest wisdom,) shall be made ready, as a people prepared for the Lord; their minds being raised to an expectation of the Messiah, and a disposition to welcome him when he shall appear."

Ver. 18. And Zacharias said, &c.] In the Old Testament there are instances of holy men, who, on occasions like this, spake as Zacharias is said to have done; and who, instead of being reproved, are greatly commended for their faith. (Compare Gen. xv. 8. with Rom. iv. 19, 20.) Nevertheless, the treatment which he met with, will not appear hard, when it is considered that the dispositions of his mind were very different from those of the persons mentioned. They believed the messages which were brought them, and desired to be confirmed in the faith thereof; consequently the language of their demand was, "Lord, I believe; help mine unbelief." Whereas Za-

charias hardly believed at all, or was exceedingly doubtful. This we are expressly told, ver. 20. His sin therefore was great, and his punishment just; and the more so, as he could not but often have read the account which the Scripture gives of the births of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samson, Samuel, &c. all descended from mothers who had been long barren. The resemblance in circumstances might well have produced a peculiar regard to them, and one would have imagined that he should immediately have recollected the history of the angel's appearance to Manoah in particular. See Judges, xiii. 2—14.

Ver. 19. I am Gabriel, that stand, &c.] As much as to say, "I am the angel Gabriel, the same servant of God" (so the name signifies, being by interpretation *vir Dei*,— "a man or servant of God") who, as the Scripture informs thee, appeared anciently to the prophet Daniel, with a message concerning the Messiah. (See Dan. viii. 16. ix. 21.) The truth of this thou mayest know from the place where I now stand, and from the time at which I appear to thee; for I am now in the presence of God, even in his sanctuary, where no evil spirit, pretending a commission from him, can possibly enter. I, who now stand in the presence of God, am Gabriel.—(for so the words may be rendered). Moreover, I am not come of myself, but I am sent of God, to tell thee the glad tidings of the near accomplishment of the things which I long ago shewed to Daniel at a great distance. Thou therefore, whose advanced age ought to have been venerable by an advanced knowledge of divine things, as well as by a strong faith in the power of God, art much to blame for calling in question the truth of my message; especially as by the prophecies of Daniel thou mightst have understood that this is the period determined for the coming of the Messiah, and his fore-runner."

Ver. 20. Thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak,] The affirmation of a thing joined with the denial of its contrary, is an idiom peculiar to the Jewish language, and is the strongest affirmation possible. The style of St. John is remarkable for the frequency of this idiom. See on ver. 22.

Ver. 21. The people waited for Zacharias,] They waited for his blessing, and could not imagine what had detained him so much longer than usual. See Numb. vi. 23—27. Lev. ix. 22, 23. All that is here recorded, might have passed in a few minutes; it seems probable therefore, that, since the people took notice of his continuing so much longer

22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24 ¶ And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in

the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

26 ¶ And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Kings, 11. 5. 1 Chr. 9. 25. Heb. 9. 6. & 5. 1. <sup>e</sup> Gen. 21. 1, 2. & 25. 21. & 30. 22, 23. 1 Sam. 1. 19, 20. Judges, 13. 5. <sup>f</sup> Gen. 21. 1, 2. & 30. 23. 1 Sam. 1. 6. 1f. 4. 1. & 54. 1, 4. <sup>g</sup> Ver. 24, 30. <sup>h</sup> John, 7. 41, 52. & 1. 46. Mat. 2. 23. <sup>i</sup> 1f. 7. 14. Jer. 31. 22. Gen. 3. 15. Mat. 1. 18. Ch. 2. 4, 5. <sup>k</sup> Ver. 30, 42. Judges, 5. 24. & 6. 12. Ruth. 2. 4. & 3. 10. Prov. 11. 16. Eph. 1. 6. <sup>l</sup> Or graciously accepted, or much graced: (see ver. 30. <sup>m</sup> Gen. 18. 15. 1f. 41. 10, 14. Rom. 8. 31. 2 Tim. 4. 22. <sup>n</sup> Judge, 5. 24. Ch. 11. 27, 28.

longer than ordinary in the holy place, he spent some time in secret devotion, where, in the mixture of holy affections arising on so great and extraordinary an occasion, he might easily forget how fast the moments passed away.

Ver. 22. For he beckoned unto them,] He made signs to them. The word κωφός, rendered speechless, signifies deaf, as well as dumb, the latter being generally the consequence of the former; and accordingly it is concluded from ver. 62. that Zacharias lost his hearing with his speech during that interval.

Ver. 24, 25. And hid herself five months,] The meaning is, either that she saw no company, judging it proper to spend most of her time in the duties of devotion, and in meditating silently on the wonderful goodness of God; or that she concealed her pregnancy for awhile, lest she should expose herself to ridicule. That barrenness was a reproach among the Jews, appears from Gen. xxx. 23. 1 Sam. i. 11. Isaiah, iv. 1. liv. 1, 4. and many other passages. That a branch of the family of Aaron should fail, would also be looked upon as a particular calamity, and might, by ignorant and uncharitable people, be interpreted as a judgment; and so much the rather, considering the many promises which God had made to increase the families of his obedient people. See Exod. xxxii. 13. Lev. xxvii. 9. Deut. vii. 13. and Ps. cxxvii. 3, 4, 5. It may not be improper here just to observe, that considering how the whole Jewish policy was interwoven with those acts of religion which were to be performed by the priests alone, it might seem wonderful that no provision at all should be made for entailing the priesthood on any other family, if that of Aaron should happen to be extinct. Leaving this contingency unprovided for, was in effect resting the whole credit of the Jewish religion upon the perpetual continuance of the male branches of that family; an issue, on which no man of Moses's prudence, nor indeed of common sense, would have rested his legislation, if he had not been truly conscious of its divine original; especially after two of Aaron's four sons had been cut off in one day, for a rash act in the execution of their office as soon as they were initiated into it, and died without any children.

Ver. 26. In the sixth month] Namely, of Elisabeth's pregnancy. Galilee was the most northern part of Palestine. It was bounded on the north by Lebanon and Syria, on the west by Phœnicia, on the south by Samaria, and on the east, according to Josephus, by Jordan and the sea of Tiberias; yet from the gospel it appears, that a part of the country north of the sea, and eastward of Jordan, was reckoned Galilee. Galilee therefore comprehended the possessions of the tribes of Issachar, Zebulun, Naphtali, and Asher. It was divided into upper and lower Galilee, whereof the former was called Galilee of the Gentiles, (Matth. iv. 15.) because it bordered upon the Gentile nations, and was partly inhabited by them. Josephus tells us (Bel. L. iii. c. 2.) that the whole country was exceeding populous and very fruitful; that the number of its towns and villages was great; and that even in the lesser towns there were no less than fifteen thousand inhabitants.

Ver. 27. To a virgin espoused, &c.] I should render the verse thus: to a virgin of the house of David, betrothed to a man, whose name was Joseph; and the virgin's name was Mary. The original will bear this translation: and what makes for this interpretation is, that this and the preceding verse refer wholly to the virgin; who is described by the place of her residence, Nazareth; by her relation to Joseph, being espoused to him; by her lineage and descent, of the house of David; and by her name, Mary. See Whitby and others.

Ver. 28. Hail, thou that art highly favoured,] Thou who hast found favour, or mercy with God, as it is expounded, ver. 38. It follows, Blessed art thou among women: so it is said of Jacl, Judges, v. 24. of Ruth, iii. 10. See also 1 Sam. xxv. 33. Again, the Lord is with thee, is said to Gideon, Judges, vi. 12. and the words, ver. 30. thou hast found favour with God, are said of Noah, Gen. vi. 8. of Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 4. and of David, Acts, vii. 46. So that here is nothing said of the blessed virgin in this salutation, which was not before said of others. Instead of among women, some read above women; which appears a just translation: for the Jews do not express their degrees of comparison by any change at the end of the words, like

29 And when she saw *him*, ° she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, ° Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 ° And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 ° He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him ° the throne of his father

David:

33 ° And he shall reign over the house of ° Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, ° How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, ° The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called ° the Son of God.

° See ver. 12. ° See ver. 13. If. 41. 10. 14. Rev. 7. 17. Ch. 2. 10. & 9. 50. Mat. 29. 5. ° If. 7. 14. Mat. 1. 21. Gen. 3. 15. Jer. 31. 22. Gal. 4. 4. Ch. 7. 27. ° If. 9. 6, 7. Mat. 28. 18. Tit. 2. 13. Phil. 2. 9—11. If. 9. 6. ° 2 Sam. 7. 12. Pf. 132. 11. If. 16. 5. ° Dan. 7. 14. & 2. 44. Mic. 4. 7. Pf. 72. 8. & 89. 36, 37. If. 9. 6, 7. & 54. 5. Amos, 9. 11. 1 Tim. 6. 15. 1 Peter, 1. 11. 1 Cor. 15. 24. Joha. 12. 34. Heb. 1. 8. & 12. 28. Obad. 21. Eph. 1. 22. ° Gal. 6. 16. Rom. 9. 6. ° Mar. 13. 36. ° Gen. 3. 15. If. 7. 14. Dan. 2. 34. Jer. 31. 22. Mat. 1. 20. Dan. 9. 24. ° If. 7. 14. & 9. 6. Rom. 1. 3, 4. & 9. 5. & 8. 3. Gal. 4. 4. Jhn. 1. 14. & 3. 16. & 10. 30. Gal. 2. 20.

like other nations, but by doubling or trebling the positive, or by adding a preposition, such as *with*, or *among*; and accordingly, this salutation, which is expressed in the Hebrew idiom, signifies, that she was superlatively blessed. Dr. Campbell renders it, *thou happiest of women*. But this salutation gives no room for any pretence of paying adoration to the virgin, as having no appearance of a prayer, or of worship offered to her.

Ver. 29. *She was troubled, &c.*] *She was disturbed at his discourse, and reasoned with herself, or revolved in her mind, what this salutation should mean.* Heylin, and Doddridge.

Ver. 33. *And of his kingdom there shall be no end.*] So the prophet Isaiah, ix. 6, 7. *Unto us a child is born, &c. of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.* The kingdom of Christ is twofold. 1. His *spiritual* kingdom, or the dominion of righteousness in the minds of men. 2. His *temporal* kingdom, or the outward dispensation of the Gospel, together with an exercise of government over the world, by which all events are managed so as to promote the empire of righteousness in the hearts of believers. This distinction removes the difficulty arising from 1 Cor. xv. 28.—where we are told, that after the worlds are judged, Christ shall *deliver up the kingdom to God the Father*;—compared with what Gabriel said to Mary on this occasion, and with the other passages of Scripture, which affirm that our Lord's kingdom shall be *everlasting*. His *temporal* kingdom, or the gospel dispensation, will end with the world, being of no farther use. But his *spiritual* kingdom, or the dominion of righteousness in the minds of intellectual beings, which he came down to establish, will continue to all eternity. See my Annotations on 1 Cor. xv.

Ver. 34, 35. *Then said Mary unto the angel, &c.*] When Mary heard Gabriel say that she was to conceive the Messiah, being conscious of her virginity, she found the matter above her comprehension, and therefore desired him to explain it. Being young and unexperienced, it was not to be expected that she could have a comprehension of mind and strength of faith equal to that which the old priest Zacharias ought to have possessed. Besides, this

was a thing supernatural, and altogether without example. For though it is not distinctly mentioned by the evangelist, it is plain from Mary's answer that the angel had informed her that the whole would be perfectly supernatural. These seem to have been the reasons why Gabriel, who had struck Zacharias dumb for presuming to ask a sign in proof of his wife's future pregnancy, bore with the virgin when she desired to know how her's could be brought about. In the mean time it should be observed, that Mary did not, like Zacharias, insinuate that she would not believe till a miracle was wrought to convince her; but only that she did not understand how her pregnancy could be effected in her virgin state, and desired him to explain it to her, not doubting but it was possible. Wherefore the weakness of her apprehension being consistent with faith, and her request being conceived with modesty and humility, the angel told her that the wonderful event should be accomplished by the interposition of the Holy Spirit, and special energy of the power of God, who would preserve her reputation entire, at least in the opinion of impartial judges, and *protect* her from any inquiry to which this mystery might expose her; for, by the Jewish law, a severe punishment was inflicted on women betrothed, who proved with child before they lived with their husbands. This *protection*, perhaps, may be implied in the phrase, *overshadow thee*. To be *under the shadow of wings*, is a phrase used in the Psalms to express the tender affection with which God preserves his servants. But if the passage be only exegetical of the preceding clause, there may be a reference perhaps to Gen. i. 2. where the spirit of God is represented, as brooding or hovering over chaos; which Milton expresses thus:

—Thou from the first  
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread,  
Dove-like, sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,  
And mad'st it thy pregnant.

Par. Lost, B. i. ver. 19.

It is added, *That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called—that is, shall be, the Son of God*; because thou shalt conceive

36 <sup>a</sup> And, behold, thy cousin Elifabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

37 For <sup>b</sup> with God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, <sup>c</sup> Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

39 ¶ And Mary arose in those days, and went into the <sup>d</sup> hill country with haste, into a <sup>e</sup> city of Judah;

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elifabeth.

41 And it came to pass, that, when Elifabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the <sup>f</sup> babe leaped in her womb; and Elifabeth was <sup>g</sup> filled with the Holy Ghost:

42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, <sup>h</sup> Blessed art thou among women, and <sup>i</sup> blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

43 <sup>k</sup> And whence is this to me, that the mother of <sup>l</sup> my Lord should come to me?

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy:

45 <sup>m</sup> And blessed is she <sup>n</sup> that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 24—26. Mal. 3. 1. If. 40. 3. <sup>b</sup> Gen. 17. 1. & 18. 14. Jer. 32. 17, 27. Zech. 8. 6. Ch. 18. 27. Mat. 19. 26. Job, 9. 10. & 41. 2. Rom. 8. 31. <sup>c</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 25, 29. Mark, 9. 24. 2 Chr. 20. 20. Jer. 11. 5. Mat. 15. 23. <sup>d</sup> Josh. 15. 48—59. <sup>e</sup> Probably Hebron. <sup>f</sup> Gen. 12. 3. & 22. 17, 18. Pf. 21. 6. & 45. 2. & 72. 17, 19. Rom. 9. 5. 1 Tim. 6. 15. <sup>g</sup> Acts, 6. 3. <sup>h</sup> Ver. 28. Judges, 5. 24. <sup>i</sup> Gen. 12. 3. & 22. 17, 18. Pf. 21. 6. & 45. 2. & 72. 17, 19. Rom. 9. 5. 1 Tim. 6. 15. <sup>k</sup> Judges, 6. 15. Ruth. 2. 10. 2 Sam. 9. 8. <sup>l</sup> John, 20. 28. Phil. 1 Peter, 1. 8. <sup>m</sup> Or *which believed that there,*

conceive him by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost, causing him to exist in thy womb. The term, Τὸ γέννημα, in the neuter gender, denotes the human nature of Christ derived from his virgin mother:—*born of thee.*

Ver. 36. *Thy cousin Elifabeth,*] Mary and Elifabeth might be *cousins*, as the text affirms, although the former was a descendant of David, and the latter a daughter of Aaron: because the law, Numb. xxxvi. 6. forbidding women to marry out of their own tribes, related only to heiresses, and consequently did not include the tribe of Levi, which had no particular heritable possessions that could be alienated by such marriages. Accordingly, in Lev. xxii. 12. it is supposed as a common case, that a priest's daughter might be married to a stranger. It is remarkable, that Gabriel does not refer the virgin to Sarah or Rebekah, examples in former ages, but to a present one; and to magnify and heighten the miracle, he adds, that Elifabeth was advanced in years, and, what was more, never had a child.

Ver. 38. *Behold the handmaid, &c.*] Mary expressed in this answer both great faith and great resignation. She believed what the angel had told her concerning her conception, and wished for it, not regarding the inconveniences to which she might be exposed thereby; as well knowing that the power of God could easily protect her. It is worthy of our remark, that Mary, though a young virgin, should so readily believe an event, in itself so much more wonderful than that which Zacharias, though an aged priest, had found it so difficult to credit; and it may be observed, that the sacred writers are particularly careful to record instances of this kind, in which God does as it were *out of the mouths of babes and sucklings perfect his praise.*

Ver. 39. *Went into the hill country*] This was a very wise determination, as it was very probable that by communi-

cating the vision she had seen, and perhaps also describing the form in which the angel appeared, she might convince Zacharias and Elifabeth that there was something singular in her case, and so bring in the reparation of such worthy and eminent persons to establish her own, in a circumstance which might otherwise expose her to great suspicion and censure. The *city of Judah*, where Zacharias and Elifabeth lived, is thought to have been *Hebron*; because Hebron was not only one of the cities appointed for the priests to dwell in, Josh. xx. 7. but was situated in the mountains of Judah, Josh. xi. 21. which, running from south to north, gave the name of *the hill country* to that part of Judea. Hebron lay south from Jerusalem, at the distance of about twenty-four miles, and was about seventy miles distant from Nazareth.

Ver. 42. *Blessed art thou among women,*] It is remarkable, that this is the salutation wherewith Gabriel had addressed Mary. The words, *and blessed is the fruit of thy womb*, probably allude to the child's being the promised Seed, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, and who for that reason was blessed himself: see Psalm, lxxii. 17.

Ver. 43. *That the mother of my Lord should come, &c.*] If Elifabeth had not spoken by inspiration, as we are told, ver. 41. she could not so much as have suspected that Mary was to be mother of the Messiah; but it being revealed to her, she was greatly struck with the honour that was done her, and expressed her sense thereof by asking, in a rapture of astonishment, how it came to be conferred upon her? "How have I deserved this honour, that the mother of the Messiah, my Lord and Saviour, should deign to visit me?"

Ver. 45. *And blessed is she that believed, &c.*] Dr. Heylin, in agreement with the margin of our English version, renders it, *And blessed is she who believed that there shall be, &c.* Elifabeth in these words plainly commended the faith and

46 ¶ And Mary said, \* My soul doth magnify the Lord,

47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48 ° For he hath regarded the <sup>p</sup> low estate of his handmaiden : for, behold, from henceforth all generations <sup>q</sup> shall call me blessed.

49 ° For he that is mighty hath done to

me great things ; and holy *is* his name.

50 ° And his mercy *is* on them that fear him from generation to generation.

51 ° He hath shewed strength with his arm ; ° he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 ° He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.

\* Pf. 103. 1—6. & 34. 2. & 35. 9, 10. 1 Sam. 2. 1. If. 24. 16. & 45. 25. & 61. 10. Hab. 3. 17, 18. 2 Cor. 2. 14. Rom. 5. 11. Phil. 3. 3, 4. 1 Tim. 1. 1. Tit. 2. 14. 1 Sam. 2. 8. Pf. 113. 6, 7. & 138. 6. 2 Kings, 14. 26. Pf. 25. 18. & 102. 17. P Or *lowliness*. If. 66. 2. 1 Peter, 5. 5. Gen. 30. 13. Ch. 11. 27. Judges, 5. 24. Pf. 71. 19. & 111. 9. & 126. 2, 3. Gen. 17. 7. Exod. 20. 6. Pf. 103. 11. & cxvii. cxlv. If. 59. 1. & 51. 9. & 52. 10. & 40. 10. Pf. 89. 13. & 99. 1. Pf. 33. 10. & 89. 10. If. 29. 16. Exod. 15. 9. Ehb. 6. 6. Dan. 4. 34. Ch. 12. 19, 20. 1 Peter, 5. 5. Job, 12. 19, 21. 1 Sam. 2. 6—8. Job, 5. 11. Pf. 113. 6, 7. If. 66. 2.

humility which Mary had expressed when the angel assured her that she should become pregnant in her virgin state ; with an oblique reference to the behaviour of Zacharias, who probably had informed her by writing of all that had happened ; or, as is more likely, she might attain the knowledge of the whole by revelation.

Ver. 46. *And Mary said, &c.*] The virgin, having heard Elizabeth speak thus, was likewise filled with the Holy Ghost ; so that being inspired she expressed the deepest sense of her own unworthiness, and of the infinite goodness of God, in choosing her to the high honour of being the Messiah's mother. This she did in a hymn, which, though uttered extempore, is remarkable for the beauty of its style, the sublimity of its sentiments, and the spirit of piety which runs through the whole. It is a proof how conversant the virgin was in the books of the Old Testament ; for most of the expressions in this hymn are borrowed thence, especially from the song of Hannah, in which there are many passages remarkably suitable to her own case. See 1 Sam. ii. 1—10. and the passages in the margin.

Ver. 47. *My spirit hath rejoiced*] When a person, speaking of himself, mentions his *soul* or *spirit* as doing a thing, it is the strongest expression in human language, and intimates his doing the thing mentioned with the utmost energy of all his faculties : Mary, therefore, by saying, that *her soul magnified the Lord*, and that *her spirit rejoiced in God*, meant to declare, that she exerted the utmost vigour of all her faculties in setting forth the perfections of God, which constitute his greatness : and that the consideration of his goodness towards her, filled her with joy, to the utmost extent of her capacity.

Ver. 48. *For he hath regarded*] ἑπέσχεψεν ; “ he hath looked with a distinguishing regard, and wonderful condescension. Though I am a person in the lowest station, and had not the least reason to expect that any thing extraordinary should arise from me ; yet God hath put such honour on my condition, as to make me the instrument of bringing into the world the Messiah, the desire of all nations ; for which reason all generations shall esteem me peculiarly happy.”

Ver. 49. *Hath done to me great things ;*] Μεγαλεῖα, miracles. So Μεγαλα and Μεγαλεῖα often signify in the Old Testament, being often applied to the miracles wrought in Egypt, and in the wilderness. See Deut. x. 21. xi. 7. xxxiv. 12. Doubtless, Mary had now in her thoughts the miraculous conception of the Messiah. She adds, *and holy*

*is his name*, making this remark to signify her humble faith in God's wisdom and goodness. She was astonished that God should have chosen her, a person of the meanest condition, to be the mother of the Messiah ; yet, from her belief of the divine perfections, she was convinced that all was done in wisdom and truth.

Ver. 50. *His mercy is on them that fear him*] “ So great is the goodness of God, that he rewards the piety of his servants upon their posterity to the thousandth generation.” Exod. xx. 6. By making this observation, the virgin modestly insinuated, that she imputed the great honour that was done her, not to any piety of her own, but to the piety of her ancestors, Abraham and David, which God thus rewarded upon their latest posterity.

Ver. 51. *He hath shewed strength, &c.*] It is an observation of Grotius, that God's great power is represented by his *finger* ; his greater, by his *hand* ; and his greatest by his *arm*. The production of lice was the *finger of God*, Exod. viii. 19. and the other miracles in Egypt were done by his *hand*, Exod. iii. 20. but the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red-Sea was brought to pass by his *arm*, Exod. xv. 16. Wherefore the virgin's meaning is, that in this dispensation of his providence, God mightily manifested his sovereign power. *He hath scattered the proud, &c.* means the proud great women, who indulged many fond imaginations concerning the honour that should accrue to them from giving birth to the Messiah. “ He hath filled them with shame, to such a degree, that they have scattered and hid themselves ;”—in allusion to an army of cowards, who breaking their ranks run off in despair. See Eccl'us. x. 15. Dr. Doddridge explains the passage, “ *He hath often dispersed the haughty sinners who exalt themselves against him, and confounded them in those schemes which were the most laboured imaginations of their own hearts.*” These words, says he, are thus peculiarly applicable to the gospel, in which God do h not only cast down imaginations, and every high thing, 2 Cor. x. 5. by the humbling scheme of his recovering grace, but hath remarkably confounded his most insolent enemies in their own most elaborate projects, and established his sacred cause by the violent attempts which they have made to suppress it. Compare Pf. ii. 1—3. The version of 1729 renders it, *He hath confounded the proud by the devices of their own hearts.*

Ver. 52. *He hath put down the mighty, &c.*] Δυναστεῖς ἀπὸ θρόνων, the rulers from their thrones. The kings who

53 <sup>y</sup> He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54 <sup>z</sup> He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy;

55 <sup>a</sup> As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

57 ¶ Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and <sup>b</sup> she brought forth a son.

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed <sup>c</sup> great mercy upon her; and <sup>d</sup> they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to pass that <sup>e</sup> on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother answered and said,

Not so; <sup>f</sup> but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

63 And he asked for a writing-table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64 <sup>g</sup> And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *loosed*, and he spake, and praised God.

65 <sup>h</sup> And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these <sup>i</sup> sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea.

66 And all they that heard *them* <sup>j</sup> laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, <sup>k</sup> What manner of child shall this be! <sup>l</sup> And the hand of the Lord was with him.

<sup>y</sup> 1 Sam. 2. 5. Pf. 34. 10. 1 Cor. 1. 26. <sup>z</sup> If. 41. 8, 10. & 45. 4 & 30. 18. & 61. 7. Jer. 31. 3, 20. Pf. 99. 3. Mic. 7. 18—20. <sup>a</sup> Gen. 17. 9, 10. & 22. 18. If. 132. 11. Rom. 11. 28, 29. Pf. 103. 17. <sup>b</sup> Ver. 13. Numb. 23. 19. <sup>c</sup> Ver. 25. 76—79. Mal. 4. 5. Pf. 113. 9. <sup>d</sup> Ver. 14. Rom. 12. 15. Gen. 21. 6. If. 66. 10. <sup>e</sup> Gen. 17. 9—14. Lev. 2. 3. Phil. 3. 5. Col. 2. 11. John, 7. 22. <sup>f</sup> Ver. 13. Gen. 21. 3. Mat. 1. 21, 25. Gen. 17. 21. Lev. 12. 3. Ch. 2. 21. Gen. 18. 19. If. 8. 3. Hof. 1. 4—9. 2 Sam. 12. 2c. <sup>g</sup> Ver. 20. Pf. 51. 15. & 103. 1—6. & 116. 12—18. & 145. 21. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 9. 33. & 15. 31. Acts, 5. 5, 11. <sup>i</sup> Or things. <sup>j</sup> Ch. 2. 19, 31. & 9. 44. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 2. 25—38. Gen. 21. 6. <sup>l</sup> Ver. 80. 1 King, 18. 46. Judg. 3. 13. 24, 25. Jer. 1. 5. If. 41. 10.

sprung from David had, no doubt, one after another expected to be the parents of the Messiah; and when the kingdom was taken from them, such of the royal progeny as were in the highest station would reckon this as their certain and greatest privilege: but now their hope was wholly overthrown; they were brought down by God from that height of dignity, to which in their own imagination they had exalted themselves; while a person in the meanest condition of all the royal seed was raised to it.

*Ver. 53. He hath filled the hungry, &c.]* Both the poor and the rich are here beautifully represented as waiting at God's gate in the condition of beggars; the rich, in expectation to receive the honour of giving birth to the Messiah; the poor, in expectation, not of that blessing, but of such small favours as suited their condition. While they are thus waiting, God, by an exercise of his sovereignty, bestows the favour so much coveted by the rich, on a poor family, to its unspeakable satisfaction; and *sends away* the rich, *disappointed*, and *discontented*; for such is the force of the original word ἐξαρτεσιῶ.

*Ver. 54, 55. He hath holpen.]* Ἀρτερίζετο, here translated *He hath holpen*, signifies properly "supporting a thing that is falling, by taking hold of it on the falling side." The virgin's meaning therefore was, that God had now remarkably supported the Jewish nation, and hindered it from utterly falling, by raising up the Messiah among them, the matchless renown of whose undertaking would reflect infinite honour on the nation which gave him birth. Or rather, by *his servant Israel*, she meant, or at least the Holy Ghost meant, all those who are spiritually so called. It is indeed *in remembrance of his mercy*. When men remember

things which they want to perform, they commonly perform them, if no object lies in their way. For some such reason as this, the Scriptures say that God *remembers his attributes*, when he exerts them in a signal manner; and *his promises*, when he fulfils them in spite of all opposition. So he is said to *forget a thing*, when he acts outwardly as men do when they have forgotten; yet, properly speaking, forgetting and remembering are both of them absolutely inconsistent with the perfection of God, to whose view all things past, present, and to come are ever open. Mary adds, *ver. 55. as he spake or promised to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed*, that is to say, to all his seed, Gentiles as well as Jews: for though the virgin might not have a distinct conception of what she uttered, understood in this extensive view; yet as she spoke by inspiration, there is nothing to hinder us from affixing such a meaning to her words, especially as the construction of the sentence will scarcely admit of any other. It might therefore be better translated thus: *In remembrance of his mercy to Abraham, and to his seed for ever, as he spake to our fathers.*

*Ver. 59. And they called him Zacharias,]* The law did not enjoin that the child should have his name given him at circumcision; it was an incidental circumstance, which custom had added; possibly because at the institution of the rite God changed the names of Abraham and Sarah, Gen. xvii. 5, 15.

*Ver. 63. And he asked for a writing-table,]* Πινακίδιον, a writing-tablet, or little book.

*Ver. 64—66. And his tongue loosed, &c.]* And his tongue also spake, praising God. Ellner. Zacharias had no sooner done writing than he recovered his speech, the angel's prediction

67 ¶ And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

68 *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,*

69 *And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant*

David;

70 *As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:*

71 *That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;*

72 *To perform the mercy promised to our*

¶ Numb. 11. 25. 2 Sam. 23. 2. 2 Chr. 20. 14. Rev. 1. 10. 2 Peter, 1. 21.   
 Gen. 9. 27. 1 Chr. 29. 10. Ps. 72. 17-19. & 106. 48. &   
 Exod. 3. 16, 17. & 4. 31. Ch. 7. 16. - Mat. 1. 21. Eph. 1. 7.   
 Acts, 2. 30. 1 Sam. 2. 10. Jer. 23. 5, 6. & 33. 15, 16. & 30. 9. 21. Gen. 3. 15. & 9. 10. Is. 7. 13, 14. & 11. 1-5. Ps. 72. 1-9.   
 Dan. 9. 25, 26. Zach. c. 9. Pl. 101. 10, 47. Is. 45. 1, 22. & 49. 24-26. & 53. 10, 11. & 55. 7. Mat. 1. 21. Gal. 1. 4. 1 John, 3. 8.   
 Exod. 20. 6. Lev. 26. 42. Mic. 7. 18-20. Mat. 10. 6. & 15. 24. Ver. 53. Acts, 3. 25, 26. Rom. 11. 28.

¶ Gen. 9. 27. 1 Chr. 29. 10. Ps. 72. 17-19. & 106. 48. &   
 Exod. 3. 16, 17. & 4. 31. Ch. 7. 16. - Mat. 1. 21. Eph. 1. 7.   
 Acts, 2. 30. 1 Sam. 2. 10. Jer. 23. 5, 6. Ezek. 17. 22, 23. & 34. 23, 29.   
 Dan. 9. 25, 26. Zach. c. 9. Pl. 101. 10, 47. Is. 45. 1, 22. & 49. 24-26. & 53. 10, 11. & 55. 7. Mat. 1. 21. Gal. 1. 4. 1 John, 3. 8.   
 Exod. 20. 6. Lev. 26. 42. Mic. 7. 18-20. Mat. 10. 6. & 15. 24. Ver. 53. Acts, 3. 25, 26. Rom. 11. 28.

dition being then fully accomplished. Accordingly, with an audible articulate voice, *he praised God*; probably, by acknowledging the justice of the punishment which had been inflicted upon him, and the greatness of that sin which had procured it. By this open affectionate confession, he impressed all his neighbours and acquaintance with *fear*; (ver. 65.) that is to say, with religious awe and fear of offending God; *and all these sayings, or rather things, (see ch. ii. 15.) were noised abroad*: being very extraordinary events, they were much talked of in that country; and people formed many conjectures concerning the child, *with whom was the hand of the Lord*, ver. 66. that is, (as it is explained ver. 80.) he was remarkable, even from his infancy, for the qualities both of his body and mind. He had an eminent degree of the protection, blessing, and assistance of God, visibly bestowed upon him. It should be observed, that the extraordinary circumstances recorded in this chapter, which attended the birth of the Baptist, were all wisely ordered by Providence; that he who was the Messiah's forerunner, might not seem an obscure and ordinary man. He was introduced into the world in this magnificent manner, that the attention of his countrymen being awakened, and high expectations of him raised, he might execute the duties of his ministry with greater advantage, and effectually prepare the people for receiving the Messiah himself, who was soon to appear in person. But see more on this subject in Jortin's Discourses, p. 184. and Bell's Inquiry into the Divine Missions of John, &c.

Ver. 67. *Zacharias—prophesied.*] Some imagine that by Zacharias's prophesying, St. Luke means only that he celebrated the praises of God with great elevation and affection of soul. And it must be acknowledged, that the word has this sense in other passages of Scripture, particularly 1 Chron. xxv. 1. where Asaph and Jeduthun are said to *prophesy with the harp and cymbal*, which is explained ver. 3. by their *giving praise and thanks to God*. However, as Zacharias is said on this occasion to have been *filled with the Holy Ghost, and to have uttered a prophecy concerning his son*, the ordinary sense of the word may very well be admitted here.

Ver. 68. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel.*] "Let all honour and glory be ascribed to the Possessor and Governor of the world, the God of Israel, *because he hath visited and redeemed his people.*" For God to *visit his people*, is a metaphorical expression, signifying to shew them

great favour: it is taken from the custom of princes, who commonly visit the provinces of their kingdom, in order to redress grievances, and to confer benefits. The great benefits accruing to the people of God from the visitation which this holy man speaks of here, is their redemption or deliverance from all their spiritual enemies, by the coming of the Messiah, *the horn of salvation*; that is to say, the power which works or brings salvation. See on Ps. xviii. 2. &c. &c.

Ver. 70. *Which have been since the world began.*] *ἄρ' ἀιωνος*: "from the beginning of the world." By *the world*, in this passage, some understand the Jewish dispensation, because, before the giving of the law, no prophet spake either of God's raising up a Horn of Salvation in the house of David, or of performing his covenant with Abraham. And to these promises they suppose Zacharias now alluded, because the general strain of his discourse seems to respect the temporal deliverance which the Jews imagined the Messiah would accomplish for the Israelites. Nevertheless, if we carefully attend to the text, we shall be sensible that this 70th verse is connected, not with the verse which precedes, but with that which follows it, in this manner: "He hath raised up an Horn of Salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, &c. as the accomplishment of a promise which he made by the prophets from the beginning of the world; which promise was, that we, the spiritual Israel, should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us." Accordingly we find that a promise of this sort was made to the parents of mankind immediately after the fall, and by them handed down to their posterity, *that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head*. This sense renders Zacharias's words more consistent than the other, which can never shew how a horn of salvation in the house of David was promised by the prophets from the beginning of the Jewish dispensation. And though it should be granted, that Zacharias had not now in his eye the general spiritual deliverance of the people of God, yet, as he spake by inspiration, the meaning of the Holy Ghost here, as in many other prophecies, is much more extensive than the ideas of the prophet by whom he spake, and who often did not understand what he uttered; as St. Peter informs us, 1 Ep. i. 10, 11.

Ver. 71. *That we should be saved from, &c.*] *Salvation from, &c.*

fathers, and ' to remember his holy covenant ;

73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74 That he would grant unto us, " that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

75 \* In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

76 And thou, child, shalt ' be called the prophet of the Highest : for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways ;

77 \* To give knowledge of salvation unto his people \* by the remission of their sins,

78 Through the \* tender mercy of our God ; whereby the ' day-spring from on high hath visited us,

79 ° To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 ° And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was ° in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 12. 3. & 17. 4, 7. & 22. 16—18. Pf. 105. 8, 9. Jer. 31. 3. Heb. 6. 13—18. <sup>2</sup> Gen. 22. 17, 18. Lev. 25. 18. Deut. 12. 10, 11. If. 45. 17. Jer. 23. 6. Rom. 6. 18, 22. & 8. 15. Heb. 2. 15. & 9. 14. & 12. 28, 29. <sup>3</sup> Jer. 32. 39, 40. Eph. 4. 24. 1 Peter, 1. 15. Tit. 2. 12. <sup>4</sup> Ver. 15—17. If. 40. 3. Mal. 3. 1. & 4. 5, 6. Mat. 11. 9—14. <sup>5</sup> Ver. 15—17. Ch. 3. 3—18. Mat. 3. 1—12. John, 1. 6—36. & 5. 32—36. <sup>6</sup> Or *for*. <sup>7</sup> Or *bowels of the mercy*. If. 63. 7. Eph. 2. 4—7. <sup>8</sup> Or *sun rising, or branch*. Num. 24. 17. If. 11. 1. Zech. 3. 8. & 6. 12. Mal. 4. 2. <sup>9</sup> If. 9. 2. & 42. 7. & 49. 6. & 60. 1. & 43. 8. Mal. 4. 2. Mat. 4. 16. John, 8. 12, & 1. 9. 1 Sam. 2. 9. <sup>10</sup> Ch. 2. 40, 52. Judges, 13. 25. 1 Sam. 3. 19, 20. <sup>11</sup> Mat. 3. 1. & 11. 7.

Ver. 74. *Without fear,*] Αἰδέσθαι,—without a slavish fear, or that *spirit of bondage*, mentioned Rom. viii. 15. For the whole of this promise, both as it was originally made to Abraham, and as it is here applied to the coming of the Messiah, respected a spiritual deliverance; though the Jews generally understood it of a deliverance from their enemies on earth, as possibly Zacharias also did.

Ver. 75. *All the days of our life.*] *Serving God in holiness and righteousness*, as well as *deliverance from enemies*, being spoken of as in the merciful grant of God, we may reasonably conclude that it refers to those passages, in which God promised to pour out extraordinary degrees of a pious spirit on his people, under the reign of the Messiah. Compare Isai. xliv. 1—5. Jer. xxxi. 31—34. and Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.

Ver. 76. *And thou, child,*] Zacharias here either pointed to John, or took him in his arms: the messenger or forerunner in Malachi was to be a prophet; Zacharias says of his son, *Thou shalt be called the prophet of the Most High*; and our Saviour declares, that John was *more than a prophet*; that is, he was a great preacher of righteousness, who called aloud unto the people to *repent* that they might be forgiven, and declared that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. See Mal. iii. 1. iv. 5. Isai. xl. 3. and Sharpe's Second Argument.

Ver. 78. *The tender mercy*] Σπλαγχνα ελεος, *the bowels of mercy*. These two words are often used in Scripture both jointly and separately. They signify *pity*, because that passion is commonly attended with a motion in the bowels, especially when the object of it is one we have an interest in. See Isai. lxiii. 15. Phil. ii. 1. Col. iii. 12. where *the bowels of mercy* signify the *most tender mercy*. The phrase used by itself signifies any strong affection whatever. Thus Philem. ver. 7. *The bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother*. *The day-spring from on high*, is in the original ἀνατολή εἰς ὕψος. As the phrase, ἀνατολή σελήνης, *the rising of the moon*, (Isai. lx. 10.) signifies the *moon* itself; so ἀνατολή, the elliptical expression here used for ἀνατολή εἰς ὕψος, may signify the *sun*. For Zacharias is alluding to those passages in the prophetic writings, which describe the Messiah by the metaphors of the *light* and the *sun*;

particularly Mal. iv. 2. where he is called *the sun of righteousness*, both on account of the light of his doctrine, and of the joy produced by his appearing. See also Isa. lx. 1, 2, 19. Indeed, no figure was ever more happily imagined, or more naturally applied, than this, which represents the promised seed under the notion of the *sun*. For most aptly may Jesus be likened to the *rising sun*; his doctrine being to the souls of men what *light* is to their bodies. It is altogether necessary for directing our steps in the paths of truth and righteousness; it is exceedingly pleasant to the spiritual taste, by discovering the most important and delightful truths; nay, like the light, it throws a beauty and pleasantness upon every thing in this lower world, which, without the assurance of God's reconcilableness, would be but a dark and dreary scene to sinners, however noble and beautiful in itself. Dr. Doddridge renders ἀνατολή by *the dawning of the day*; for it is well known, says he, that the word properly signifies that part of the heavens where the light begins to arise,—and the first shining of that light. *The dawning of the day*, seems therefore a very literal version; and I apprehend it more beautifully describes the state of things just at this interval, than if the sun had been represented as actually risen.

Ver. 79. *Them that sit in darkness, &c.*] These phrases, with peculiar propriety, describe the ignorant and miserable state of the *Gentile world*, and perhaps the former part of the verse may refer to them. But as Christ's preaching to the Jews in Galilee, (for it was almost entirely to Jews that he preached) is said, Matth. iv. 14—16. to be an accomplishment of Isai. ix. 1, 2. to which Zacharias here probably refers, we are not to confine the sense to the Gentiles only; for indeed the sad character and circumstances of the Jews at this time, as described by Josephus, do well suit the representation here made.

Ver. 80. *And was in the deserts*] Though the mother of Jesus was related to Elisabeth, the mother of John; though she visited her in the hill-country about the time of her own conception, and before the birth of John; it does not appear, nor is it probable, that there was any intimacy, or any correspondence between Jesus and his forerunner:

on

CHAP. II.

*Augustus taxeth all the Roman empire. The nativity of Christ. An angel relateth it to the shepherds: many angels sing praises to God for it. Christ is circumcised. Mary purified. Simeon and Anna prophesy of Christ; who increaseth in wisdom, questioneth in the temple with the doctors, and is obedient to his parents.*

[Year of the World 4004.]

**A**ND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cesar Au-

gustus, that all the world should be \* taxed.

2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was <sup>b</sup> of the house and lineage of David):

\* Or enrolled in the registers of the empire, in order to be taxed, &c. <sup>a</sup> 1 Sam. 16. 4. & 17. 12. Micah, 5. 2. Mat. 2. 7, 5. John, 7. 42. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 1. 1-16. Ch. 3. 23-31.

on the contrary, it is expressly said that *John was in the deserts till the time of his shewing unto Israel.* The desert here mentioned is generally thought to have been that of *Ziph*, or *Maon*, where Saul pursued David: though there were several country towns and villages in these deserts, as we have heretofore observed; yet, as they were but thinly peopled, they were in the Jewish idiom called *deserts*. Now it was wisely ordered, to prevent a personal acquaintance between them, that John should continue in one of these deserts, at the distance of at least a hundred miles from Nazareth, till the time of his entering upon his ministry. See John, i. 31. He went not into any of the great cities, but when he left the place where his father lived, withdrew from mankind, retired into the wilderness, and lived an austere life, that his character might be suited to his office, —the preaching of repentance. The Levites could not serve nor be numbered, according to the law of Moses, and the example of David, till they were thirty years old. The Jews therefore would not perhaps have received any doctrines from John, if he had entered sooner than he did upon his ministry. From what has been said, it is evident that there could be no collusion, no contrivance, no familiarity between the first and second messenger; —the messenger who was to *prepare the way*, and the great *messenger of the covenant*. Elfner has shewn that the word *Aradikis*, rendered *shewing*, often signifies the *inauguration* of a public officer. See his *Observations*, Guise, Sharpe, and Bell.

*Inferences drawn from the angel's appearance to Zacharias.*—The state of the Jewish church was extremely corrupt immediately before the news of the Gospel; yet, bad as it was, not only the priesthood, but the courses of attendance continued, even from David to Christ. Judea passed through many troubles and alterations; yet this economy lasted about eleven hundred years. A settled good will not easily be defeated, but in the change of persons will remain unchanged; and if it be forced to give way, leave memorable footsteps behind it.

The successive turns of the legal ministration held on in an uninterrupted line; but how little were the Jews better for this, when they had lost the *urim and thummim*,—sincerity of doctrine and manners! It is a succession of truth and holiness, that makes or institutes a church, whatever may become of the persons: never times were so barren,

as not to yield some good; the greatest dearth affords some few good ears to the gleaners. Christ would not come into the world without having some faithful to entertain him; there would have been no equality, if all had either preceded or followed, and none had attended him.

Zacharias and Elifabeth are just, both of Aaron's blood, and John the Baptist of their's. It is not in the power of parents to transmit holiness to their children; but though there is no certainty, there is a likelihood of a holy generation, when the parents are such. If the stock and the graft be not both good, there is much danger of the fruit. It is observable, that the New Testament affords greater store of good women than the Old; Elifabeth leads the number, whose barrenness ended in a miraculous fruit, both of the body, and of her time. Among the Jews, barrenness was not a defect only, but a *reproach*: (ver. 25.) yet while this good woman was fruitful in obedience, she was barren of children: a just soul and a barren womb may well agree together.

As Zacharias had a course in God's house, so he carefully observed it; the favour of these respites doubled his diligence. The more high and sacred our calling is, the more dangerous is neglect. Woe be to us, if we slacken those duties, wherein God honours *us* more than we can honour *him*!

The lot of this day called Zacharias to offer incense in the outer temple. We do not find any prescription which the sons of Aaron had from God for this particular manner of designation; whence we learn that matters of good order in holy affairs may be ruled by the wise institution of men, according to reason and expedience. It fell out happily that Zacharias was chosen by lot to this ministration, that God's immediate hand might be seen in all the passages which concerned his great prophet; and that as the person, so the occasion might be of God's own choosing.

Every morning and evening their law called the Jews to offer incense to God, that both parts of the day might be consecrated to the author of time. Nothing can better resemble our faithful prayers than sweet perfumes, and these God expects his whole church should send up to him morning and evening. The elevations of our hearts should be perpetual; but if twice in the day we do not present God with our solemn invocations, we make the Gospel less dutiful than the law.

While the minister of God sends up his incense within the

5 To be taxed with Mary<sup>c</sup> his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 ¶ And so it was, that,<sup>d</sup> while they were

there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And<sup>e</sup> she brought forth her first-born

<sup>c</sup> Ch. 1. 27. Mat. 1. 18.—o. Thus God protested her reputation.  
<sup>d</sup> 1. 22. Zech. 3. 8. & 6. 12. John, 1. 14. Gal. 4. 4. Mat. 1. 24. 25.

<sup>e</sup> Micah, 5. 2. Mat. 2. 1, 4—6, 8, 16.

<sup>f</sup> Gen. 3. 15. If. 7. 14. Jer.

the temple, the people must send up their prayers without. Their vows, and that incense, though remote in their first rising, met ere they went up to heaven. The people might no more go into the holy place to offer up the incense of prayer to God, than Zacharias might go into the holy of holies. But *now* every man is a priest unto God;—every believer, since the veil was rent, prays within the temple. What are we the better for our greater freedom of access to God under the Gospel, if we do not make use of our privilege?

While they were praying to God, he sees an angel of God. As Gideon's angel went up in the smoke of the sacrifice, so did Zacharias's descend, as it were, in the fragrant smoke of his incense. The presence of angels is no novelty, but their appearance is; they are always with us, but rarely seen, that we may awefully respect their messages when they are seen. In the mean time, our faith may see them, though our senses do not; their assumed shapes do not make them more present, but visible only.

There is an *order* in that heavenly hierarchy, though we know it not. This angel that appeared to Zacharias, was not with him in the ordinary course of his attendances; but was purposely sent from God with this message. When could it be more fit for the angel to appear to Zacharias, than when prayers and incense were offered by him? and in the temple,—and at the altar of incense,—and on the right side of the altar? Those glorious spirits, as they are always with us, so most in our devotions; and as in all places, so most of all in God's house. They rejoice to be with us, while we are with God; as, on the contrary, they turn their faces from us, when we go about to commit sin.

He who was accustomed to live and serve in the presence of the Master, was now astonished at the presence of the servant; so much difference is there between our faith and our senses, that the apprehension of the presence of the God of spirits by faith, goes down sweetly with us; whereas the sensible apprehension of an angel dismays.

The good angel was both apprehensive and compassionate of the good old man's weakness, and presently encourages him with a cheerful excitation,—*fear not, Zacharias; thy prayer is heard.*

There was not more fear in the human face, than comfort in the angelic speech. Many good suits had Zacharias made, and, among the rest, for a son. Doubtless it was now some years since he had urged that request; for he was now stricken in age, and had ceased to hope;—and yet had the All-wise laid it up all the while in remembrance, and, when no longer thought of, brought it forth into effect: *Thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son.* Thus does the mercy of God deal with his patient and faithful suppliants; and, it may be, he has long granted our suit, ere we shall know of his grant.

Many a father repents him of his fruitfulness, and has such sons as he wishes unborn; but to have so gracious and happy a son as the angel foretold, could not be a less comfort than honour to the age of Zacharias. To hear he should have such a son;—a son whose birth should concern the joy of many;—a son who should be great in the sight of the Lord;—a son who should be sacred to God, filled with God, beneficial to man,—was news enough to anticipate the angel's sentence to take away that tongue with amazement, which was soon after loit by incredulity.

The speech was so good that it found not a sudden belief: he mistrusts the message, and asks, *How shall I know?* ver. 18. Nature was at his side, and alleged the impossibility of the event; and reason, with mis-timed hesitation, joined in to mislead him. *I am old,—and my wife also is of a great age.* Faith and reason have their limits; but if reason will be encroaching upon the bounds of faith, no wonder if she is soon taken captive by infidelity. The authority of the reporter makes way for belief in things otherwise hard to credit. The angel condescendingly tells his name, place, office, unasked, that Zacharias might not think any news impossible which was brought him by so heavenly a messenger; but lest he should no less doubt of the style of the messenger than of the errand itself, he is at once confirmed and punished with dumbness. He shall ask no more questions for forty weeks, who has adventured to ask this one distrustfully.

Neither did Zacharias lose his tongue only for the time, but his ears also; for otherwise, when they came to ask his allowance for his son's name, they needed not to have demanded it by signs, ver. 62. How striking the reflection!—It is not our previous holy union with God which can bear us out in the least sin; yea, rather, the more acquaintance we have with his Majesty, the more sure we are of correction when we offend.

Zacharias stayed, the people waited, (ver. 21.) The multitude thought him long; yet they would not depart, till he returned to bless them. How does *their* patient attendance *without*, shame many of us, who are hardly persuaded to attend *within* the holy place.

At last Zacharias comes out, speechless; (ver. 22.) and more amazes them with his presence, than with his delay. The eyes of the multitude, which were not worthy to behold his vision, yet see the signs of the vision, that the world might be put in expectation of some extraordinary sequel. Zacharias's speech could not have said so much as this dumbness. He would fain have spoken, and could not:—with us how many are dumb, and need not be so! how many mouths are stopped by negligence, fear, partiality, which shall one day say, "woe is me, because I held my peace!" Zacharias's hand speaks that, which he cannot utter with his tongue; and he makes them by signs understand: those powers which we have, we ought to use.

son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 ¶ And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping<sup>s</sup> watch over their flock by night.

<sup>1</sup> Pl. 22. 6. Mat. 8. 20. Ver. 12. 2 Cor. 8. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Or *the night watches*. It therefore seems it was not in the winter season. Exod. 3. 1, 2. Prov.

But though he had ceased to speak, yet he ceases not to minister: he takes not this dumbness for a dismissal, but stays out the eight days of his course, (ver. 23.) as one who knew that the eyes, the hands, the heart, would be accepted of that God, who had bereaved him of his tongue: we are not hastily to take occasions of withdrawing ourselves from the public services of God,—especially under the Gospel. The law, which stood much upon bodily perfection, dispensed with age for attendance: the Gospel, which is all for the soul, regards those inward powers, which, while they are vigorous, exclude all excuses of absence from our ministration.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Dedications are usually but the feather with which flattery tickles the pride of the great; but here is one, whose simplicity bespeaks the Christian spirit of the author, and recommends the book not to the patronage of his noble friend, as needing his countenance, but to the consideration of his pupil, in order to instruct his conscience, and direct his practice.

The evangelist opens his divine history with his reason for writing. Because many had undertaken to publish narratives of the birth, life, doctrines, miracles, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus, who, though probably well-meaning disciples, wrote under no infallible guidance of the Spirit; it appeared therefore to be the will of God, and highly proper, that he should compose a connected history and particular account of all things from the beginning, to prevent the errors and mistakes which might arise from uninspired writings.

1. He professes to confine himself to *the things most surely believed among the faithful*,—not matters of doubtful dispute, but facts established by the most indubitable evidence of those who *from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word*; heard the doctrines, and saw the miracles of Jesus, and were divinely commissioned by him to go forth and preach the Gospel which he had delivered to them.

2. He was fully qualified for the work that he undertook, *having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first*; and this not merely received by tradition from the best attested reports, but as the words (*ἔαυτοκόσμησεν ἀνωθεν*) may be rendered, *having attained to the exact understanding of all things from above*; which inspiration he had diligently sought, and sacredly followed.

3. The end which he proposed was, *that Theophilus, whom he addressed with the respectable title of most excellent*, being, it seems, a man of rank, *might know the certainty of those things wherein he had been instructed, or catechised*. Probably St. Luke had been the means of his conversion, and had taught him by word of mouth the great principles of the Christian religion; and therefore, that his memory might be assisted, his knowledge increased, and his faith more firmly established in the truths of the Gospel, he drew up

the following history: though the holy Spirit of God, and St. Luke also, had much higher things in view,—more extensive advantages in contemplation, in the composition of this history. *Note*; (1.) The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not a cunningly-devised fable, but contains facts supported by the most incontestable evidence, and truths the most sure and certain, whereon our faith may stand unshaken. (2.) Catechising was the ancient method of communicating to the youth, and newly-converted persons, the knowledge of the great doctrines of religion; and perhaps our present deplorable ignorance is owing to no one cause more than to the perfunctory discharge or total neglect of this most useful method of instruction. (3.) Christianity, though it forbids to give flattering titles, enjoins us to pay honour to whom honour is due; it teaches us politeness without falsehood; simplicity without rudeness; respect without servility; and courtesy without cringing.

2dly, The other evangelists commenced their history from the conception and birth of Jesus; St. Luke begins farther back, with that of John the Baptist, his forerunner, which was attended with extraordinary circumstances well deserving our regard.

1. We have an account of his parents. They lived in the reign of Herod, an Idumean, who held his kingdom under the Roman emperor. Both Zacharias and Elisabeth were of the sacerdotal family: he was of the course of Abia, the eighth of those four-and-twenty into which the priests were divided, (1 Chron. xxiv. 7—19.) To the honour of this aged pair it is recorded, that their piety was most exemplary; they approved themselves to God in a holy blameless conversation, living by faith in the expected Messiah, whom they regarded in the use of all the divine institutions, and were sincerely observant of all the ordinances of worship, and duties of morality. But notwithstanding the distinguished excellence of their characters, it was their infelicity to be destitute of children, Elisabeth being barren, and both of them now so advanced in years, as in the common course of nature to be deprived of the hope of issue. *Note*; Our mercies are often long deferred, to make them at last the more welcome.

2. An angel appeared to Zacharias as he was discharging his ministry in the temple. The services to be performed by the course in waiting were determined by lot: his office was to burn incense in the sanctuary; and while this was performing, the holy worshippers without in silent aspirations lifted up their prayers to God, expecting acceptance through the intercession of the Messiah, which the smoke of the incense offered by the priest represented, see Rev. viii. 1—4. And while Zacharias was thus employed, an angel of the Lord appeared to him on the right side of the altar of incense. Struck with the glorious sight and unusual appearance, Zacharias trembled, and feared greatly what such a vision might portend. *Note*; (1.) Prayer is the service which the truly pious never neglect; and herein their care

9 And, lo, <sup>a</sup> the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the <sup>k</sup> glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

<sup>a</sup> Ch. i. 11, 26. Mat. i. 20. & 2. 13, 19. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Pl. 91. 11. Ch. 9. 28—34. Rev. 18. 1.

<sup>k</sup> 1 Cor. i. 27. Mat. 11. 25.

<sup>k</sup> Exod. 30. 18. Numb. 16. 19, 21.

is to lift up their hearts to God, not so solicitous about the choice of words, as that internal fervent desires may speak the language of their souls. (2.) All our services and prayers must be offered through the mediation of Jesus, for then only can they be acceptable unto God.

3. The angel delivers to him the message with which he was sent. Having first kindly quieted his fears, he assures him of gracious acceptance with God, and an answer to his prayers. Probably at that time he had particularly been crying for the coming of the promised Messiah, as he had formerly often asked for a son, and both are now granted him; the latter first, in order to introduce the former. *Thy wife Elisabeth, so long barren, and now aged, shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John, which signifies The grace of God, and was most admirably suited for him who should be so great in spiritual gifts and graces, and the harbinger of the Messiah and his kingdom. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; not only in him, as a welcome child given after so long waiting, but in the view of the high character and office which he is ordained to bear: and many shall rejoice at his birth; congratulating his parents on such an unexpected blessing. And it will afford yet farther cause of joy to multitudes, who afterwards shall be blessed with his ministry and labours; for he shall be great in the sight of the Lord; highly honoured of God, and blessed with singular endowments from him: and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; a Nazarite from his birth: it becomes those designed for eminent services, to live a life of eminent self-denial, and deadness to sensual delights. He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb; sanctified, set apart, and qualified fully for the ministry to which he was appointed: and many of the children of Israel shall be turn to the Lord their God, the Messiah, their incarnate God, then ready to appear: and he shall go before him, as his messenger and harbinger, the morning-star that ushers in the rising sun; in the spirit and power of Elias; endued with the zeal of that eminent reformer, and in austerity of manners nearly resembling him: to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children; either the Jews to the Gentiles, removing their prejudices and enmity against them; or with the children, converting young and old by his preaching; (see the Annotations;) and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, convincing the most rebellious sinners, and leading them to Christ for justification, even to the Wisdom that maketh wise unto salvation; and thus to make ready a people prepared for the Lord; raising their expectations of him, removing their prejudices, and pointing him personally out to them as their Lord and Saviour. Note; (1.) Though our requests be long delayed, they are not therefore denied; and the mercy at last comes perhaps enhanced in value, as the answer of many prayers. (2.) True greatness is not to be estimated by outward grandeur or wealth; God's favour, and the possession of the gifts and graces of his Spirit, these alone make a man great in his eyes who is the fountain of honour. (3.) The*

great end of the zealous ministers of God's word is to convert the souls of men, and turn them to the Lord Jesus; nor must they despair of the most disobedient sinners.

4. Zacharias, looking at human probabilities, staggered at the promise through unbelief, and wanted some further sign to remove his doubts. He and his wife being now grown old, the age as well as barrenness of Elisabeth made him regard the event as incredible.—Very unlike a son of Abraham? Rom. iv. 19, 20.

5. The angel gives him the sign that he asked, and therewith the just punishment of his unbelief. *I am Gabriel; my very appearance to you should have been sufficient to beget confidence in my word; because that I stand in the presence of God, attentive to his orders, and employed in his service; and am sent expressly to thee with this message, and to shew thee these glad tidings, which should have been received with thankfulness and joy: but since thou askest a sign, behold thou shalt be dumb, and no more able to object to the truth of what I say, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, as a punishment upon thee, because thou hast not believed my words, which, notwithstanding all the obstacles that unbelief suggests, shall be fulfilled in their season. Note; Our unbelief is very dishonourable and displeasing to God.*

6. Zacharias returns to the people, who wondered at the length of his stay in the temple, and were waiting for the usual benediction before they retired. And their wonder increased, when coming forth he was unable to speak a word; and by his signs they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple. The Aaronical priesthood was now about to be silenced, and the dumb signs of typical institutions to be set aside, by the clear voice of gospel grace.

7. The angelic message quickly received its accomplishment. Zacharias, having stayed out the days of his ministry in the temple, returned home with his wife, who immediately conceived by him; and thereupon, perhaps because she was to bring forth a Nazarite, kept herself for five months close retired from all company, that she might contract no ceremonial uncleanness; spending the time in thankfulness, praise, and devotion; blessing God for this singular mercy, in removing the reproach of barrenness from her, under which she had so long laboured, and at last bestowing on her, in so extraordinary a way, that son who should be the harbinger of the Messiah. Note; In all our mercies God is ever to be acknowledged; and particularly we are assured, that children and the fruit of the womb are a heritage and gift that cometh from the Lord.

3dly, Six months after the former miraculous conception of Elisabeth, the same angel Gabriel is sent on a more important message, to foretel the conception and birth of the Lord's Christ. We have,

1. The person from whom the human nature of the Son of God was to be taken. Her name was Mary; of the royal race of David, but now reduced to very mean circumstances; a virgin unspotted, espoused to Joseph of the

10 And the angel said unto them, ' Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 <sup>m</sup> For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

<sup>1</sup> Judges, 13. 23. Daniel, 10. 12. Ch. 1. 13, 30. Rev. 1. 17. <sup>m</sup> Gen. 3. 15. & 49. 20. Deut. 18. 15. H. 7. 14. & 9. 6. & 11. 2. & 4. 2. Jer. 23. 5, 6. & 30. 9, 21. Ezek. 34. 23, 29. Dan. 9. 24, 26. Zech. 9. 9. Mat. 1. 21. Ch. 1. 54, 68, 69. Acts, 2. 36.

same royal line; dwelling in a remote corner of the land, and in a place despicable almost to a proverb. See John, i. 46.

2. The angel's address and salutation. *Hail, thou that art highly favoured, &c.* He wishes her all peace, prosperity, and joy; assures her of the favour of the Most High; that his gracious presence was with her; and that she of all others was singled out to be distinguished with peculiar honour, and to be called blessed in all generations, as the mother of the adored Messiah. The popish plea for the adoration of the Virgin Mary, drawn from this passage, is absurd, and utterly unsupported; these words in no wise implying prayer or worship, but merely a friendly salutation.

3. Mary's surprise on the angel's appearance and address. She was greatly astonished at such an unexpected visit, and the respect paid to her, a woman so unknown and unnoticed; and, much perplexed, reasoned with herself what this blessedness should mean, which was pronounced with such solemnity.

4. The angel, to remove the perplexity and confusion under which she appeared, proceeds with his message. *Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God;* and when this is the case, all disquieting fears are groundless: *and behold, astonishing as the tidings are, yet true, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, though a virgin immaculate, (Isai. vii. 14.) and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus, the same as Joshua, or Saviour, of whom the former deliverers of Israel were types and figures. He shall be great, in dignity, person, offices, and works; and shall be called the Son of the Highest; shall really be so, partaking of the same Divine Nature: and the Lord God shall give unto him, as the Messiah, the throne of his father David, from whom, as man, he descended, and whose kingdom was typical of that spiritual dominion which Jesus should erect in the hearts of believers, sitting as a king upon his holy hill of Sion, the church of the faithful: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob, the true Israel of God, whether Jews or Gentiles brought to the obedience of the faith, and his throne shall be established for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end; enduring as the days of time, and subject to none of the vicissitudes and changes which attend earthly sovereignty; and, when time shall end, this kingdom shall be continued in a more glorious form, coeval with the ages of eternity.*

5. The Virgin, not distrusting the truth, or questioning the possibility of what he said, humbly desires to be informed by what means this should be brought to pass, seeing that she was conscious of her own virginity.

6. He accordingly informs her of as much as she need wish to know. *The Holy Ghost, the power of the Highest, exerting his almighty influence, will by his immediate agency, as he moved upon the face of the waters in the first creation, enable her to conceive; and therefore, because in*

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this miraculous manner the body of the child Jesus should be formed, he shall be a holy thing, from his conception not partaking of the taint of human corruption, as all flesh do in the ordinary course of generation; and shall be called the Son of God, being, as such, now manifested in the human nature; and that which she conceived, henceforward indissolubly subsisting in personal union with the Second Person of the sacred Trinity, should henceforth bear his name. And he adds, as an encouragement to strengthen her faith in his word, that *her cousin Elizabeth, who was by one of her parents allied it seems to the house of David, as by the other descended from Aaron, was now with child, though so stricken in years, and in the sixth month of her pregnancy, who had before been barren. The same power therefore which had wrought this miracle, would work the greater one of which he assured her; for with God nothing is impossible; however it exceed human power or comprehension, what he promises he can and will surely perform.*

7. Mary, with deep humility and submission, yields herself up to the Lord, as his handmaid, desiring him to do with her whatever he pleased; utterly unworthy of so great an honour, yet, since such was his promise, begging it might be fulfilled, and faithfully depending upon the Lord's almighty power and grace. Hereupon the angel departed, having finished the work the Lord had given him to do. *Note;* (1.) However wonderful and surpassing great God's promises are, it becomes us to credit his word, and rest our everlasting hopes thereon; then we glorify him. (2.) Angelic visions here below were always transient; shortly these blessed spirits will be our companions to eternity.

4thly, Quickly after the angel's departure we are informed,

1. Of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth in haste, to confer with her on these strange events, that they may confirm each other's faith, and rejoice in these singular mercies. The journey was long from Galilee to the hill-country of Judea, probably to Hebron, a city of the priests; but the converse of such a friend as Elizabeth, would repay all her pains. *Note;* Nothing is more encouraging, comforting, and quickening, than when believers communicate their mutual experiences.

2. Their meeting was accompanied with circumstances very remarkable. No sooner had Mary entered the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth, than the babe, as under a divine impulse, leaped in her womb, seeming to congratulate the blessed Virgin's arrival: *and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost; with the extraordinary afflatus of the divine Spirit, revealing to her mind the Messiah's conception, the message of the angel to Mary, her faith therein, and the sure performance of what was then promised: and addressing her, welcome and highly honoured guest, she spake aloud, with a transport of holy joy, as the*

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you ; \* Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

\* If. 53. 2, 3. Pf. 22. 6. Mat. 8. 20. Ver. 7.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel ° a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

° Pf. 91. 11. & 68. 17. Dan. 7. 10. Rev. 3. 11.

Spirit gave her utterance, saying, *Blessed art thou among women* ; distinguished above all others with peculiar marks of divine favour ; and, far from envying, Elizabeth warmly congratulated her on the honour : *and blessed is the fruit of thy womb* ; that divine Messiah being there conceived, in whom all nations of the world should be blessed, and who is in himself, in the glory of the divine nature, God over all, blessed for ever. *And whence is this to me ?* how great the condescension, *that the mother of my Lord should come to me ?* that she should honour me with her company, from whom a body is preparing for the great Lord of all, to appear in the human nature. *For lo !* with wonder hear what with wonder I relate ; *as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy*, as if conscious of the nearness of his Lord, and welcoming her who should bring forth that Messiah, whose harbinger he is appointed to be. *And blessed is she that believed* ; not staggering at the promise, but acquiescing in the divine word, which shall infallibly be accomplished ; *for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.* *Note ;* (1.) True grace makes us thankful for our own mercies, and rejoice without envy in other's greater attainments. (2.) When the gospel's joyful sound reaches our ears, and the sweet name of Jesus is proclaimed ; then should our hearts leap as this babe, and bless the God of our salvation. (3.) Believing souls are truly blessed, for Christ is formed in their hearts the hope of glory.

3. Mary, deeply affected with the words of Elizabeth, and moved with the same divine inspiration, echoes back her praises, and foresees and foretels the great salvation of the Messiah now in her womb.

[1.] She rejoices in God for the distinguished honour conferred upon her. *My soul doth magnify the Lord*, exalting his great and glorious name, and admiring and adoring the wonders of his goodness ; *and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour* ; and justly was it a greater cause of joy to her, that she knew herself interested in his salvation, than that after the flesh she should be honoured as his mother ; for without the former, the latter could have profited her nothing. *For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden* ; though in outward circumstances contemptible and mean, he has been pleased to honour me so highly : *for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed* ; as distinguished with this singular mark of his favour ; as interested through faith in the salvation of Jesus ; and as the happy instrument chosen to bring forth that Redeemer, who should be the great blessing of mankind. *For he that is mighty hath done to me great things*, displaying his power beyond all conception, in the incarnation of his Son, and in his grace to me, appointed to bring him forth ; *and holy is his name*, as all his works and ways declare ; therefore from men and angels to him all praise is due ; and may it be for ever ascribed to him by all the hosts of earth and heaven ! *Note ;* (1.) When Christ is known as our God and Saviour, then shall we rejoice in him,

and magnify his name. (2.) The lower we are in our own eyes, the more admiring thoughts shall we have of the grace and goodness of our Lord.

[2.] She praises him for the wonders he doth for his people in the ways of his providence and grace. *His mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation* ; not to me only, but to all who with filial reverence and godly fear worship and serve him. His mercy to such is rich and gracious ; and now more eminently displayed than ever in the incarnation of his Son ; in whom, from generation to generation, whoever trusts, will find mercy. *He hath shewed strength with his arm* ; choosing the weak things of the world to confound the mighty ; raising up so glorious a Redeemer from a birth so obscure : *he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts* ; disappointing their schemes, and humbling them in the dust. Both in the dispensations of his providence and grace, *he hath put down the mighty from their seats* ; the proud oppressors of his people of old, as Pharaoh, Sennacherib, &c. and the spiritually proud, the lofty Pharisees, and all self-righteous sinners ; these he hurls from their fancied dignity, destroys their vain confidences, and casts them down as contemptible and vile : *and exalted them of low degree* ; he hath done so, and continues so to do, raising up by his providence the oppressed, as Joseph from the prison, to sit among the princes ; and by his grace reviving the hearts of poor and contrite sinners, exalting them to his favour, and delighting to honour them. *He hath filled the hungry*, those that hunger after righteousness, and feel their utter need of Jesus, *with good things*, satisfying their souls out of his fulness ; *and the rich*, rich in their own opinion, self-confident, and satisfied with themselves without a Saviour ; *those he hath sent empty away*, destitute of all true grace, without the least mark of his favour, and given up to their own delusions. *He hath helped his servant Israel*, in all past ages, by extraordinary interpositions on their behalf ; and now more eminently, in raising them up a Saviour from their most dangerous spiritual enemies ; *in remembrance of his mercy*, which at sundry times he revealed to them ; *as he spake to our fathers, Abraham and his seed for ever* ; to whom he had promised, that in his seed all nations of the world should be blessed, which promise God was now about to fulfil. *Note ;* (1.) Pride will surely have a fall. No height of station or self-confidence can protect those whom God abhors. (2.) There is help laid on One mighty to save ; and all the poor, the weak, and helpless, may come to him, and be helped. (3.) All God's promises to his faithful people, will, sooner or later, receive their accomplishment ; and blessed are they who wait for him.

4. Mary, after a visit of three months, returned to Nazareth, satisfied now of her own conception, and thereby perfectly assured of the truth of the angel's and Elizabeth's predictions.

5thly, Elizabeth's full time being come, we have,

1. The birth of her son, and the great joy attending it.

Tidings

14 <sup>p</sup> Glory to God in the highest, and on earth <sup>q</sup> peace, good will toward men.

15 ¶ And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the

<sup>p</sup> Ch. 19. 38. Rev. 5. 12. 13. If. 44. 23. & 24. 15, 16. & 49. 3. Eph. 1. 6. & 2. 7. & 3. 21. 1 Pet. 4. 11. John, 17. 4. & 12. 28. <sup>q</sup> Ch. 19. 38. & 1. 79. If. 49. 13. & 57. 19. & 2. 4. Rom. 5. 1. Eph. 1. 5. & 2. 14, 17. Mat. 11. 26.

Tidings of so extraordinary an event were soon spread among her relations and neighbours, and they could not but magnify the Lord for so signal a mercy vouchsafed to her, who was both barren and aged; and they came to congratulate her on the occasion, and rejoice with her. *Note*; A gracious heart takes pleasure in the comforts which others enjoy, and rejoices with those that rejoice.

2. On the eighth day, when the child was to be circumcised, as it was usual at that time to give him a name after some of his ancestors, the friends and relations, who met on that occasion, would have called him Zacharias, after his father; but Elizabeth, informed by writing from her husband, or by revelation, objected, insisting that the child should be called John. They who were present expressed their surprize at this, and objected against what was so unusual, none of her relations bearing that name: the matter therefore was referred to the father for his decision; who being deaf and dumb, they made signs to him that he would fix the child's name; and he making signs for a writing-table, to the astonishment of the company, wrote, *His name is John*. *Note*; (1.) The first concern that we owe our children is, early to dedicate them to God. (2.) Every John should remember the import of his name, and shew himself truly *gracious*.

3. Zacharias immediately thereupon recovered his speech, and, as the first and best use of his tongue, offered up his praises and thanksgivings to the God of his mercies.

4. These extraordinary events, which now were spread, and in every body's mouth, filled the people with astonishment and reverential fear, in awful expectation of what would be the issue, treasuring up in their memories, and often pondering in their minds, the wonderful circumstances attending the birth of this extraordinary child: and from his earliest infancy something amazingly great and gracious was seen in him, which farther engaged their attention; it evidently appearing that *the hand of the Lord was with him*, and that he was taken under the care and guidance of his peculiar providence and grace. *Note*; God has ways that we know not of, to communicate his grace to the souls of infants, and make them partakers of the Holy Ghost, even before they are partakers of reason: who then can say, why such should not be baptized?

6thly, Zacharias, filled with the Holy Ghost, among his other ascriptions of praise to the Lord, when his tongue was loosed, uttered the following prophetic song, relative to the Messiah's incarnation and redemption, and the fulfilment of the covenant of grace.

1. He blesses, adores, and praises the God of Israel for the salvation to be obtained by the Messiah, *who hath visited and redeemed his people*; has often done it before, but now more signally than ever, by that redemption which his incarnate Son was about to obtain for all the faithful: *and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David*; one able to save to the uttermost, and before

whom all his foes must fall; sprung from the royal race of David, according to his faithful promises, *as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began*; from the promise made to fallen man in Paradise, had this Saviour been the constant subject of the prophetic word, as the seed of the woman, the descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and the family of David; and lo! the event verifies all the predictions. The expected Saviour is now incarnate, and ready to appear, *that we should be saved from our enemies, the worst of enemies, sin, Satan, death, and hell; and from the hand of all that hate us; from this present evil world, and all the wicked who inhabit it; not a temporal, but, what is infinitely better, a spiritual salvation from all the powers of darkness and corruption: to perform the mercy promised to our fathers; that mercy of all mercies, the sending of the Messiah; and to remember his holy covenant, which is now about to be fulfilled by the obedience of Jesus to the death of the cross; whereby all our forfeited mercies may be restored, and our title to glory be recovered, according to the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, the father of all the faithful, both Jews and Gentiles; that he would grant unto us, in virtue of our divine Redeemer's undertaking, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies; (those spiritual enemies by whom we were enslaved, and to whom we must for ever continue under bondage, unless the Son make us free;) might serve him without fear; no longer in the spirit of a slave, but under the influence of that free Spirit of adoption, where love casteth out servile fear, and enables us to walk willingly and cheerfully, in holiness and righteousness before him; in the universal discharge of the duties of piety towards God, and justice towards men; with ceaseless prayer for divine assistance, all the days of our life, faithful and persevering until death in his blessed service. Blessed are they who are in such a state! But such is the state of all the faithful, and none else.*

2. He blesses God for the particular mercy shewn to himself in giving him such a son, whose office and dignity he in spirit foresees. *And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; of that divine Immanuel, who is God over all, blessed for ever: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, as the harbinger of the King of Glory, to prepare his ways, by preaching repentance, and directing sinners to him, as the only Saviour of lost souls; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, of a spiritual salvation; a salvation not obtained as a matter of desert, but freely bestowed on them by the remission of their sins through the tender mercy of our God, the original fountain whence all the great salvation flows; whereby the day-spring, or rising Sun of righteousness, from on high hath visited us, with his reviving and refreshing beams of grace, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; to those who before through a vail darkly in types and figures caught the glimmering day; to diffuse his bright influences amid the heathen world, covered with thickest darkness of idolatry*

shepherds said one to another, 'Let us now go is come to pass, which the Lord hath made even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which known unto us.

Exod. 3. 3. Pf. III. 2.

and ignorance; and to shine into the minds of blind, stupid, and hardened sinners, dispelling the mists of error, and chasing the clouds of sin away, enlightening the conscience, and softening the heart, in order to *guide our feet into the way of peace*; to peace with God through the atoning Blood; to peace within, through the application of it to our souls; and to peace with men, through the spirit of universal love.

3. The younger years of the Baptist strongly corroborated this prediction concerning him. *He grew, and waxed strong in spirit*; his parts and capacity increased wonderfully with his stature, and his soul was filled with uncommon wisdom, fortitude, and grace; *and he was in the deserts till the day of his sheaving unto Israel*; living in solitude, retirement, and devotion, till the time appointed for his entering upon his prophetic office. *Note*; They who most carefully improve their younger days in the school of true wisdom, will in general be best qualified to appear, and most likely to be successful, when they are called forth to minister in public.

## CHAP. II.

*Ver. 1. And it came to pass, &c.] At that time an edict was published by Cæsar Augustus, that all the provinces of the Roman empire should be registered or enrolled,—as in the margin of our English version. Heylin. This was the enrolment of the census, first practised by Servius Tullus, the sixth king of Rome, who ordained, that the Roman people, at certain seasons, should upon oath give an account of their names, qualities, employments, wives, children, servants, estates, and places of abode. By this institution, Servius designed to put those who had the administration of public affairs in a condition to understand the strength of every particular part of the community; that is, what men and money might be raised from it; and, according to those assessments or estimates, men and money were levied afterwards, as occasion required.*

Our version extends this enrolment to *all the world*; that is, agreeable to Dr. Heylin's explanation, to all the *provinces of the Roman empire*; but it seems most probable, according to Dr. Lardner's ingenious observations, that the word *ὅλης γῆς* is to be taken in a more limited sense,—as it is plainly, chap. xxi. 26. and in other places,—for the *land of Israel* only. The Evangelist observes, that the emperor's edict extended to *the whole land*, to shew that Galilee, Joseph's country, was comprehended in it. That this was an enrolment of the inhabitants of Palestine only is probable, because no historian whatever says that Augustus made a general enrolment of the empire: whereas, if any such had happened, they would scarcely have failed to gratify their readers with an account of the numbers of the persons, &c. that being a particular which every one must have been curious to know. But their silence concerning a particular enrolment of the land of Israel only, is not surprising, as there must have been surveys of provinces, which the Greek and Roman historians now extant had no occasion to no-

tion. There is frequent mention of the *census* at our Lord's nativity, in the most early apologies of the fathers; and as some of these apologies were addressed to the Roman emperors themselves, such appeals to a public fact imply that it was a thing well known; and would be, if need were, a sufficient confirmation of this fact. At this time Augustus was much incensed against Herod, and probably ordered this *census* as a token of his displeasure, and as an intimation that he intended soon to lay the Jews under a *tax*: Herod, perhaps, regaining the emperor's favour, prevailed with him to suspend his intention; and this possibly, together with the disgracefulness of the thing, may have been one reason why the *census* was passed over in silence by Nicholas of Damascus, one of Herod's servants and flatterers, in the history that he wrote of his affairs. It might likewise be the reason why Josephus, who copied from Nicholas, omitted the mention of it, or at best represented it simply by the *taking of an oath*, rather than by the offensive name of a *census*, (see Antiq. lib. xvii. c. 2. sect. 6.) supposing it to have been at this enrolment that the *oath* which Josephus speaks of was imposed, which the whole Jewish nation, except six thousand Pharisees, took, to be faithful to Cæsar and the interests of the king. Now, that this oath was imposed at the time of the enrolment, appears probable, because the events which followed it are the same which happened after the enrolment. The Pharisees who refused to swear, from the imagination that the law, Deut. xvii. 15. forbade them, were fined; but the wife of Pheroras paid the fine for them; and they in return predicted that God had determined to put an end to Herod's government, and that the kingdom should be transferred to her family; proceeding farther to characterize the new king by the expression, that "all things should be in his power," a characteristic of the Messiah. The disturbances which happened in Jerusalem after this, and the slaughter made in Herod's family, were all on account of the birth of this new king. The persons who predicted the birth of this king were the Pharisees, according to Josephus: in the Gospel they are called the chief priests and scribes, who, from the ancient prophecies, informed Herod that his rival king was to be born in Bethlehem. Indeed the whole affair is but slightly handled by Josephus; but it must be remembered, that Josephus, being a Jew, would consult the reputation of his country; and being also an enemy to Christianity, it cannot be supposed that he would relate at large such particulars as had any strong tendency to support it. The reader desirous of entering more fully into this subject, will meet with ample satisfaction in B. ii. c. 1. of Lardner's *Credibility*; where the point is discussed with equal learning and accuracy. It may be proper just to add, that this affair of the taxing is mentioned by St. Luke, not so much to mark the *time of Christ's birth*, as to prove two things; *first*, that he was born in Bethlehem; *secondly*, that his parents were at that time known to be branches of the royal family of David. The importance of ascertaining these points arose hence, that they were fixed by the

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

\* Eccl. 9. 10. Pf. 119. 60. & 19. 11.

† John, 4. 28, 29. Mark, 1. 46. & 5. 20. Gal. 1. 15, 16.

17 And, when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

the prophets as express characters of the Messiah; *Hath not the scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?* John, vii. 42. By the particular destination of Providence, therefore, while Joseph and Mary were attending the enrolment at Bethlehem, Mary brought forth her Son.

*Ver. 2. And this taxing, &c.]* Dr. Lardner translates this verse, *This was the first enrolment of Cyrenius, governor of Syria;* which is also favoured by the Vulgate. Dr. Lardner supposes, that Cyrenius came, in the latter end of Herod's reign, to tax Judea by order of Augustus; and that it is called Cyrenius's first enrolment to distinguish it from that which he made after Archelaus was banished; and on the supposition of two enrolments made by Cyrenius, the distinction was proper, the latter being the most remarkable, as it gave rise to the sedition of Judas the Galilean. Dr. Lardner supposes further, that St. Luke gives Cyrenius the title of an office which he did not bear till afterwards—the governor of Syria; as we say *Cato the censor*, to distinguish him from others of the same name,—even in a period of his life before he obtained that office. The interpretation which Valerius, Prideaux, Bishop Chandler, and others have espoused, deserves likewise to be mentioned. It is as follows: *Now this enrolment was first performed, or took effect, when Cyrenius was governor of Syria:* so the word *ἐγένετο* is used in various passages. See ch. i. 20. Matth. v. 18. The enrolment was made in Herod's time, but the taxation according to the enrolment not till Cyrenius was governor of Syria. Perizonius, Bos, Heylin, and others render the passage, *This taxation was made before Cyrenius was governor of Syria.* They suppose that *ὑποτίθη* is used by St. Paul for *ὑποτίθη*; which sense it has sometimes. See ch. xvii. 25. John, i. 15. xv. 18. Some one or other of these interpretations must be espoused; the first appears to be most natural and judicious; for, as St. Luke affirms that Jesus was conceived in the days of Herod king of Judea, ch. i. 5, 26. by consequence, according to St. Luke himself, the enrolment under which he was born must have happened in Herod's reign, or soon after; whereas the taxation under Cyrenius did not happen till after Archelaus was banished: but Archelaus, according to Josephus, reigned ten years; it is evident therefore that St. Luke cannot be supposed to connect Cyrenius's government of Syria with the birth of Jesus, which he has fixed to the end of Herod's reign.

*Ver. 3. And all went to be taxed]* When the census was made in any country under the dominion of the Romans, the inhabitants were obliged to attend in the cities to which they belonged. See Livy, lib. xlii. c. 10. The reason was, that without a precaution of this kind, the census would have been excessively tedious, and people who were abroad might have been omitted, or set down among the inhabitants of other cities, where they would not have been found afterwards; or they might have been enrolled twice, which would have bred confusion in the registers. Herod, who, it is pro-

bable, executed the census in his own dominions by the appointment of Augustus, seems to have made a small alteration in the mode of it; for instead of ordering the people to appear, as usual, in the cities where they resided, or to whose jurisdictions the places of their abode belonged, he ordered them to appear according to their families; perhaps, because it was the ordinary way of classing the Jewish people, or because he desired to know the number and strength of the dependants of the great families in his dominions. But on whatever account the alteration was made, it appears to have been owing to a providential interposition; for otherwise Christ might not have been born at Bethlehem, his mother and reputed father having long resided at Nazareth, and having no other cause for changing their situation when Mary was so near her time, unless on some such necessity. We may just observe further, that this obedience of the Jews to the decree of Cæsar, is a plain proof that they were now dependant on the Romans, and that the sceptre was departing from Judah. See Lightfoot's Harmony, and compare Gen. xix. 10. and Numb. xxiv. 24.

*Ver. 4, 5. And Joseph also went up]* Herod's order for the taxation being, as we observed on the last verse, that every one should repair to the city of his people to be enrolled, Joseph and Mary, the descendants of David, went from Nazareth, the place of their abode, to Bethlehem, the city where David and his ancestors were born: 1 Sam. xx. 6, 29. Accordingly Boaz, David's great-grandfather, calls it *the city of his people*; Ruth, iii. 11. See on Matth. ii. 1. Joseph is said to be of the house and lineage of David, which Dr. Doddridge renders, of *the family and household of David*; supposing with Grotius, that it refers to the divisions of the tribes into families and households. Compare Numb. i. 18, &c. In this sense of the words, after having told us that Joseph was of the house of David, it would have been very unnecessary to add, he was also of his family; but it was not improper to say, that he was of his family and household. It may seem strange that Mary, in her condition, should have undertaken so long a journey: perhaps the order of the census required that the wife as well as the husband should be present; or, the persons to be taxed being classed in the roll according to their lineage, Mary might judge it proper on this occasion to claim her descent from David, in order to her being publicly acknowledged as one of his posterity; and the rather as she knew herself to be miraculously with child of the Messiah. However, all this was done by the divine direction; for, questionless, whatever the emperor's commands were, such a case as Mary's must have been admitted as a full excuse for her not complying with it.

*Ver. 7. And she brought forth her first-born son]* The words might be rendered literally, *she brought forth her son the first-born.* The word *first-born* is sometimes used to signify that which is of superior excellence; and if it be applied to Christ in that sense, it will denote his superiority

18 And all they that heard it <sup>u</sup> wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But <sup>v</sup> Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, <sup>y</sup> glorifying

<sup>u</sup> 16. 8. 18. & 9. 6. Ver. 33, 47.

<sup>v</sup> Ver. 51. Ch. I. 29. 66. Gen. 37. 11. 1 Sam. 21. 11, 12.

<sup>y</sup> Gen. 9. 27. 1 Kin. 8. 15. 1 Chron.

25. 10, 11. 16. 24. 2. & 72. 18, 19. & 106. 42. & 107. 8, 15. & cxlv. cxlvii.

to all the sons of Adam, as well as to Adam himself. Dr. Doddridge observes, that the blessed virgin was so miraculously strengthened by God in her hour of extremity, as to be able to perform herself the necessary offices for her new-born infant. The vast concourse of people coming from all parts to be registered in the city belonging to their respective families, must inevitably have exposed those who came latest to the inconveniences mentioned in the text. The probability of this circumstance will appear greater, when we consider, that it is no uncommon thing, in the east and other countries, for travellers to lie in the same apartment with their camels, horses, &c. Even in Europe, particularly in Germany, many inns may be met with, where the stable is the first room you come into, and there the *veturini* or carriers usually lodge with their beasts. Tradition informs us, that the stable in which the holy family was lodged was, according to frequent usage in that country, hollowed out of a rock; and consequently the coldness of it, at least by night, must have greatly added to its other inconveniences. It is asserted by the best civilians and historians, that at such public enrolments as that referred to in this chapter, it was customary to register children of all ages, as well as their parents. This circumstance must have afforded the greatest proof to ascertain the place of Christ's birth; for it was customary to suspend the tables on which the enrolment was taken, in some public place; and we find Justin, Tertullian, and Chrysostom appealing to the tables extant in their days, as really containing the name of Jesus. Upon this humiliating circumstance of our Saviour's birth in a stable, we may observe, how much the blessed Jesus, through the whole course of his life, despised the things most esteemed by men; for though he was the Son of God, when he became man he chose to be born of parents in the meanest condition of life; though he was heir of all things, he chose to be born in an inn; nay, in the stable of an inn, where, instead of a *cradle* he was laid in a *manger*. The angels reported the *good news* of his birth; not to the rabbies and great men, but to shepherds, who, being plain honest people, were unquestionably good witnesses of what they heard and saw. When he grew up, he probably wrought with his father as a carpenter; and afterwards, while he executed the duties of his ministry, he was so poor, that he had not a place where to lay his head, but lived on the bounty of his friends. Thus, by going before men in the thorny path of poverty and affliction, he has taught them to be contented with their lot in life, however mean and humble.

*Ver. 8. Keeping watch, &c.]* Literally, *Watching the watches of the night*; which intimates their taking it by turns to watch, according to the usual divisions of the night; and as it is not probable that they exposed their flocks to the coldness of *winter-nights* in that climate, where, as Dr. Shaw has shewn, they were very unwhole-

some,—(see his *Travels*, p. 379.) it may be strongly argued from this circumstance, that those who have fixed upon *December* for the birth of Christ, have been mistaken in the time of it. But see more on this head in the note on ver. 11.

*Ver. 9. Came upon them] Stood over them,—ἐπίσην αὐτοῖς,* hovered in the air over their heads, surrounded with a glorious effulgence; like that *Shechinah*, which, during the tabernacle, and the temple of Solomon, was the symbol of the divine presence.

*Ver. 10. Which shall be to all people]* This plainly refers to the promise made to the patriarch, that *in his seed all nations should be blessed*. And as the Jews interpreted this prophecy of the Messiah, the angel's address could not but be an intimation that this prophecy was now fulfilled; and certainly this declaration of the angel's must for ever remain an invincible barrier against their opinion, who believe a partial redemption. The joy which the birth of Christ should occasion among them, according to the angel, is universal joy,—*to all people*; but how could it be so to those, who from all eternity were reprobated, and consequently rendered incapable of any of the blessings and benefits of the gospel?

*Ver. 11. For unto you is born, &c.]* Because one of the Bodleian manuscripts reads this *ἐμίν, to us*, Mr. Fleming has conjectured, that the angel who spoke was a glorified human spirit, perhaps that of Adam, all of whose happy descendants might, he thinks, make up the chorus, ver. 13. But considering the great dissent of copies to the present reading, this conjecture leans upon a very slender support. Grotius imagines (which is more probable) that this angel was Gabriel. Almost all the Greek fathers, after the fourth century, taught that *this day*, upon which our Saviour was born, was the sixth of January; but the Latins fixed his birth to the twenty-fifth of December. However, the principles upon which both the one and the other proceeded, clearly prove their opinion to be without foundation. They imagined that Zacharias, John the Baptist's father, enjoyed the dignity of high-priest, and that he was burning incense on the day of expiation, when the angel appeared to him in the temple; and as the national expiation was always made on the tenth of Tifri, answering to the twenty-fifth of September, they fixed Elizabeth's pregnancy to that day, and supposed that Gabriel appeared to Mary precisely six months after; so that reckoning nine months forward, they brought the birth of Christ exactly to the twenty-fifth of December. The Greek fathers, though they proceeded upon the very same principles, were not so exact in their calculations, making the birth to happen some days later; but the uncertainty, or to express it better, the fallacy of those principles, has induced Scaliger, Calvisius, and most learned men since that time, to maintain, in opposition to the ancient doctors of both churches, that our Lord was born in September. The writers above mentioned

and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

21 ¶ And, when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his

\* Gen. 17. 12. Lev. 12. 3. Ch. 1. 59. Phil. 3. 5.

mentioned support their opinion by the following calculation: when Judas Maccabeus restored the temple worship on the twentieth of the month Casleu, answering to the beginning or middle of our December, the course of Johaniab, or first course of priests, (according to 1 Chron. xxiv. 7.) began the service, the rest succeeding in their turns. By making computations according to these suppositions, it is found, that the course of *Abia*, to which Zacharias belonged, served in the months of July or August, at which time the conception of the Baptist happened. And as Mary had her vision in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, that is to say, about the beginning of January, she conceived so as to bring forth our Lord in the September following. To this agrees the circumstance of the shepherds lying out in the fields the night of the nativity, which might happen in the month of September, but not probably in January. So likewise the taxation at Christ's birth, which might be executed more conveniently in autumn than the depth of winter, especially as the people were obliged to repair to the cities of their ancestors, which were often at a great distance from the places of their abode.

After the time, the angel mentions the place of the Saviour's nativity,—in the city of David; informing us, that thus it pleased God, that He who is described as of the house and lineage of David, and of whom David himself was but a type, should have his birth in the same city where David had, to make the parallel more complete and exact. But there is yet something further in the case; for this city of David was Bethlehem, whence we find his father called *Jesse the Bethlehemite*; and from hence it was that the prophet Micah foretold that the ruler in Israel should come forth, ch. v. 2. Now since Hebrew names are usually significant, and imposed to some special end or purpose, we may observe that the name of this city signifies *the house* or *place of bread*; and what place fitter for his birth and reception, who was and is the *living bread which came down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die?* After the place, the angel makes out the great characteristics of the Saviour,—*who is Christ the Lord,—the Messiah, or Anointed.* The natural properties of things, though separated from common to religious use, continue the same. They are hallowed by such separation; they are applied to greater objects, and employed in the highest service; but are not altered in themselves. The frankincense, the salt, the oil are the same, whether in the temple or the cottage, and are subservient to like purposes. The properties of oil are such, as have recommended it to various offices, civil and religious. It not only preserves itself, but also gives a lustre to other bodies; is a proper vehicle for odorous perfumes, is soft and bright, and makes the face to shine, which was of old esteemed a symbol of joy and magnificence; to which may be added, that as it feeds and maintains life in the lamp, so it served to denote the influences of the Spirit. Hence the king, the prophet, the priest, consecrated persons and things, were anointed, to

give them a lustre, and to denote and publish the separation of them from common men, and common use. Hence the offerings of a sweet savour were with oil and frankincense; but the *sin-offering* was without them. Lev. v. 11. Oil was poured on the head of Aaron with such profusion, as to run down upon his beard, and the skirts of his garments. His sons were anointed with oil; the altar and all its vessels, the tabernacle, the laver, and its foot were anointed. We have also, in sacred and prophane history, many examples of anointing with oil. See Luke, x. 34. Homer's Iliad, T. 38. Σ. 350. It has been already said, that kings, priests, and prophets were anointed. The word *anointed* was often used for *prince* or *king*. Cyrus is called the *Lord's anointed*: Saul was anointed captain before he was king: Zerubbabel, with his crown of gold, and Joshua the high-priest, with his crown of silver, are the *two anointed ones* in Zechariah, iv. 14. See also Iai. lxi. 1. So usual was the phrase of *the anointed* for *kings*, that in the parable of the trees, Judges, ix. 9. they are said to go forth to anoint a king. Hence it follows, that the expected king of the Jews, their greatest prince, prophet, legislator, priest,—each of which offices alone would have entitled him to the name of Messiah, or Anointed,—should eminently be called by the Jews *the Messiah*, or Christ. It is not without particular emphasis, that the angel has added to this character that he is *the Lord*. The title of *Anointed*, or *anointed of the Lord*, is, as we have shewn, given to kings and God's vicegerents upon earth; but the character of *Christ the Lord* is more exalted and sublime, and belongs only to Him, whom the prophet calls *Jehovah our righteousness*; and the apostle, *the Lord from heaven*; and who, being co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, is *God of gods, or Lord of lords*. He was the *Lord*, the *Jehovah*, who appeared so often under the first dispensation; to Abraham, in the plains of Mamre; to Isaac, in Gerar; to Jacob, in Beth-el; to Moses, in the wilderness. He is the Leader of the host of Israel; the Word of God; by whom he made the world, by whom he conversed with the first and best of mankind; whom he sent as a Saviour to redeem his people from their servitude in Egypt, their captivity in Babylon, and at last, in the flesh, to redeem the world from the pollution of sin, and the dominion of death.

Ver. 14. *Glory to God in the highest, &c.*] This verse is very differently understood, and the original is certainly capable of different senses. Some choose to render it, *Glory to God in the highest*, that is to say, in heaven,—and on earth; peace, yea, favour towards men. Others have given as the sense of it, that the *good will* or favour which is now shewn to men, is the *glory to God in the highest*, and is the peace and happiness of those who dwell on earth: which is indeed an important sense, and what the original will well enough bear; but thus to change the doxology into a kind of proverb or aphorism, seems to destroy much of its beauty. "I rather think," says Dr. Doddridge, "that they are all to be considered as the words of a rejoicing acclamation, and that they strongly represent

name was called <sup>a</sup> JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

22 ¶ And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord;

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 1. 21. Ch. 1. 31. Ver. 10, 11. If. 45. 17, 22. Before the account called *Anno Domini the 3d or 4th year.* <sup>b</sup> Exod. 13. 2. & 22. 29. & 34. 19. Numb. 18. 15. & 3. 13. & 8. 16, 17. <sup>c</sup> Lev. 12. 2, 6, 8.

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, <sup>b</sup> Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord);

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to <sup>c</sup> that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons.

25 ¶ And, behold, there was a man in Je-

“represent the piety and benevolence of these heavenly spirits, and their affectionate good wishes for the prosperity of the Messiah’s kingdom.” See Luke, xix. 38. As if they had said, “*Glory be to God in the highest heavens; and let all the angelic host resound his praises in the most exalted strains; for, with the Redeemer’s birth, peace, and all kinds of happiness, come down to dwell upon earth; yea, the overflowings of divine benevolence and favour are now exercised towards sinful men; who, through this Saviour, become the objects of his complacental delight.*” We may observe, that the shouts of a multitude are generally broken into short sentences, and are commonly elliptic; which is the only cause of the ambiguity here. Dr. Macknight gives a somewhat different turn to the passage, explaining it thus: “*Glory to God in the highest heavens, or among the highest order of beings; let the praises of God (so the word glory signifies, be eternally celebrated by the highest orders of beings, notwithstanding they are not the immediate objects of his infinite goodness on earth: let all manner of happiness, (so peace signifies in the Hebrew language) from henceforth prevail among men for ever, &c.* And as they departed, they shouted in the sweetest, most sonorous, and seraphic strains, BENEVOLENCE; expressing the highest admiration of the goodness of God, which now began to shine with a brighter lustre than ever, on the arrival of his Son to save the world.”

Ver. 15. *As the angels] As soon as, &c.*

Ver. 19. *But Mary, &c.] But Mary observed all those sayings, perceiving their meaning in her own mind.* Elfnor. Mary was greatly affected with, and thought upon the shepherd’s words; the sense of which she was enabled to enter into, by what had been revealed to herself. She said nothing, however; being more disposed to think than to speak; which was an excellent instance of modesty and humility in so great a conjuncture.

Ver. 20. *For all the things, &c.] Besides what they had heard from the angel and seen at Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary would, no doubt, upon such an occasion, give them an account of those particulars, which the sacred historian has related above, respecting the conception of this divine Infant; and this interview must have greatly confirmed and comforted the minds of all concerned.*

Ver. 21. *When eight days were accomplished] Among the Jews it was reckoned dishonourable to keep company with persons uncircumcised: Acts, xi. 3. wherefore, to render Jesus acceptable to the Jews, to fit him for conversing familiarly with them, and to qualify him for dis-*

charging the other duties of his ministry, it was in some sense necessary that he should be circumcised. Besides, as the Messiah was to be the descendant of Abraham, whose posterity was distinguished from the rest of mankind by this rite, he received the seal of circumcision, to shew that he was rightly descended from that patriarch. And further it was necessary that Jesus should be circumcised, because thereby he was subjected to the law of Moses, and put into a condition to fulfil all righteousness.

Ver. 22. *And when the days of her purification] As Jesus was circumcised, though perfectly free from sin; so his mother submitted to the purifications prescribed by the law, notwithstanding she was free from the pollutions common in other births. It was evident, indeed, that she was a mother,—but her miraculous conception was not generally known. Because the law required that the child should be presented in the temple at the end of forty days from his birth, and that the usual offering should be made, our Lord’s parents would therefore find it more convenient to go up with him from Bethlehem, where he was born, at the distance of sixty miles only, than after Mary’s recovery to carry him first to Nazareth, which was a great way from Jerusalem: so that we may suppose reasonably enough, that they continued in Bethlehem all the days of the purification; and that from Bethlehem they went straightway to Jerusalem.*

Ver. 23. *Every male, &c.] God having acquired a peculiar right to the first-born of Israel, by preserving them amid the destruction brought on the first-born of the Egyptians, though he had accepted of the tribe of Levi as an equivalent, yet would have the memory of it preserved by the little acknowledgement of five shekels, or about 12s. 6d. of our money (see Numb. xviii. 15, 16) and in case of an omission herein, it might reasonably have been expected that the child should be cut off by some judgment. The first-born, therefore, were redeemed, by paying this money, in such a sense as all the people were, when, at the time that they were numbered, each of them paid half a shekel, as a ransom for their souls, that there might be no plague among them. See Exod. xxxii. 12—16.*

Ver. 24. *A pair of turtle doves, &c.] This was the offering appointed for the poorer sort, Lev. xii. 6—8. It is evident, therefore, that although Joseph and Mary were both of the seed royal, they were in very mean circumstances. The Evangelist mentions the presentation of the child to the Lord, before the offering of the sacrifice for the mother’s purification; but in fact this preceded the presentation, because, till it was performed, the mother*

rusalem whose name was Simeon; and the same man was <sup>d</sup> just and devout, <sup>e</sup> waiting for the consolation of Israel: and <sup>f</sup> the Holy Ghost was upon him.

26 <sup>g</sup> And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen <sup>h</sup> the Lord's Christ.

27 And he came <sup>i</sup> by the Spirit into the temple: and, when the parents brought in the child Jesus <sup>k</sup> to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then <sup>l</sup> took he him up in his arms, and <sup>m</sup> blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, <sup>n</sup> now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

30 For mine eyes have seen <sup>o</sup> thy salvation,  
31 Which thou hast <sup>p</sup> prepared before the face of all people;

32 <sup>q</sup> A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

33 <sup>r</sup> And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the <sup>s</sup> fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for <sup>t</sup> a sign which shall be spoken against;

35 (Yea, <sup>u</sup> a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also); that <sup>v</sup> the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

<sup>d</sup> Ch. 1. 6. Gen. 6. 9. Acts, 24. 16. & 10. 2. <sup>e</sup> Ver. 38. Mark, 15. 43. Titus, 2. 13. <sup>f</sup> Peter, 3. 12. If. 25. 9. & 40. 10. Ch. 19. 10, 11. Acts, 1. 6. <sup>g</sup> Numb. 11. 25. <sup>h</sup> 2 Sam. 23. 2. <sup>i</sup> 2 Chron. 20. 14. <sup>j</sup> Rev. 1. 10. <sup>k</sup> 2 Pet. 1. 21. <sup>l</sup> Pf. 25. 14. Amos, 3. 7. <sup>m</sup> Dan. 9. 24, 26. If. 61. 1. Acts, 10. 38. <sup>n</sup> Acts, 16. 6, 7. Pf. 43. 14. & 73. 24. & 143. 10. <sup>o</sup> Prov. 3. 5, 6. <sup>p</sup> See ver. 22. <sup>q</sup> Mark, 10. 16. <sup>r</sup> See ver. 14, 20. Ch. 1. 46—55, 64—79. Pf. 103. 1. <sup>s</sup> Gen. 15. 15. & 43. 30. Numb. 20. 29. <sup>t</sup> 1 Cor. 15. 54, 55. Phil. 1. 23. <sup>u</sup> Rev. 14. 13. Pf. 37. 37. <sup>v</sup> Ch. 3. 6. Pf. 98. 2. If. 52. 10. Mat. 1. 21. Ver. 10, 11. Acts, 4. 10, 12. <sup>w</sup> Prov. 8. 23. <sup>x</sup> 1 Pet. 1. 20. <sup>y</sup> 1 Ph. 2. 14. <sup>z</sup> If. 42. 6. & 49. 6. Acts, 13. 47. & 28. 28. Rom. 15. 8. If. 60. 19. <sup>aa</sup> If. 8. 18. & 9. 6. Pf. 35. 10. <sup>ab</sup> If. 8. 14. Mat. 21. 44. <sup>ac</sup> Rom. 9. 32. <sup>ad</sup> 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24. <sup>ae</sup> 2 Cor. 2. 16. <sup>af</sup> 1 Peter, 2. 7, 8. <sup>ag</sup> John, 3. 20. & 9. 39. <sup>ah</sup> Acts, 28. 22. <sup>ai</sup> If. 8. 18. <sup>aj</sup> John, 7. 7. & 15. 18, 24. <sup>ak</sup> John, 19. 25. <sup>al</sup> 1 Cor. 11. 19. <sup>am</sup> 1 John, 2. 19.

could not enter the temple; accordingly St. Luke himself introduces both the parents presenting Jesus, ver. 27.

Ver. 25. *The consolation of Israel*] This is a phrase frequently used both by the ancient and modern Jews for a description of the Messiah. The *days of consolation* is a common phrase among them to signify the days of the Messiah; nor is there any thing more usual with them than to swear by their desire of seeing this consolation. The Messiah was very fitly called the *consolation of Israel*, because in all ages the prophets had been sent with express promises of his coming, to comfort the people of God under their afflictions. See Isaiah, xlix. 13. lii. 9. lxii. 13. Jer. xxxi. 13. Zech. i. 17, &c.

Ver. 29. *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart, &c.*] The word rendered *depart*, or *dimiss*, is generally used to express *death*, and joined to the word *peace*, signifies a *happy and contented death*. There may, perhaps, be an allusion here to the custom of saying, especially to an inferior when parting, *Go in peace*. See Ch. vii. 50. This good old man, having attained the utmost pitch of felicity, in the gratification of that which had always been his highest wish, and having no farther use for life, desired immediate death; yet he would not depart of himself; knowing that no man can lawfully desert his station, till dismissed by the sovereign Master who placed him there.

Ver. 30—32. *Mine eyes have seen, &c.*] Simeon, being well acquainted with the prophetic writings, knew from them that the Messiah was to be the Author of a great salvation, which, because it was planned by God, this pious man very properly refers to God;—*thy salvation*. He knew likewise that this *salvation* was not designed for the Jews only, but for all mankind; therefore he says, ver. 31. that it was *prepared by God, to set before the face*

*of all people*, as the glorious object of their faith and hope: withal, because in the prophecies the Messiah is introduced teaching and ruling the Gentiles, he calls him after Isaiah, *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel*; whom he greatly honoured by condescending to arise among them.

Ver. 34, 35. *Behold, this child is set for the fall, &c.*] In this prediction Simeon was directed to use a metaphor, corresponding to that found in Isaiah, viii. 14. xxviii. 16. which passages St. Paul has joined in one citation, and applied to the Messiah, Rom. ix. 33. *Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone, and a rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed*. In allusion to this metaphor, Simeon, holding up the child in his arms, cried, *Behold, He is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel*. This is the *stumbling-stone and rock of offence*, which God hath long ago foretold he *will lay in Zion*, and by whom *many in Israel shall fall*; for they shall reject him on account of the meanness of his birth and fortune: at the same time, this is a stone set for the *rising again* of many in Israel; because, those who are fallen may raise themselves up by leaning upon it; that is, receiving in faith and obeying him and his religion; or as the apostle has expressed it, *Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed*. Simeon adds, *for a sign which shall be spoken against*;—*εἰς σημεῖον ἀντιλεγόμενον*; that is, “for a mark to “be shot at,”—the butt of the malice of wicked men. The phrase finely intimates the deliberate and hellish artifice with which the character and person of Christ were assaulted, while he *endured the contradiction of sinners against himself*. In these words, which he addressed to Mary, he foretold the reception which her Son was to meet with from his countrymen, he added, ver. 35. *Yea, a sword,—[ῥομφαία, a javelin, a dart; properly a Thracian javelin]*

36 ¶ And there was one <sup>a</sup> Anna a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: <sup>b</sup> she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

37 And she *was* a widow of about fourscore and four years: which <sup>c</sup> departed not from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day.

38 And she coming in that instant <sup>d</sup> gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of

him to all them that <sup>e</sup> looked for redemption in <sup>f</sup> Jerusalem.

39 ¶ And, when they had <sup>g</sup> performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they <sup>h</sup> returned into Galilee to their own city Nazareth.

40 <sup>i</sup> And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 ¶ Now his parents went to Jerusalem <sup>j</sup> every year at the feast of the passover.

<sup>a</sup> Exod. 15. 20. Judges, 4. 4. <sup>b</sup> 2 Kings, 22. 14. <sup>c</sup> Pf. 91. 16. & 92. 14. Job, 5. 26. <sup>d</sup> Exod. 38. 8. <sup>e</sup> 1 Sam. 1. 22. <sup>f</sup> 1 Tim. 5. 5. <sup>g</sup> 2 Chron. 22. 11. <sup>h</sup> Ver. 28—32. Ch. 1. 46—55, 64—79. <sup>i</sup> 2 Cor. 9. 15. Pf. 107. 8. <sup>j</sup> Ver. 25. Mark, 15. 43. <sup>k</sup> Or Israel. <sup>l</sup> Ch. 1. 6. Deut. 12. 32. Ver. 21—24. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 2. 22, 23. Ver. 4. <sup>n</sup> Ch. 1. 80. <sup>o</sup> 1f. 4. 2. & 11. 1—4. & 61. 1. <sup>p</sup> Deut. 16. 1, 16. Exod. 23. 15, 17. & 24. 13. Lev. 23. 5. Numb. 28. 16.

*shall pierce through thine own soul also.* This seems to be a beautiful allusion to the preceding figure; as if it had been told the holy mother, that the darts levelled at her Son, should be reflected from his breast to her's in such a manner, as to wound her very heart. Whether it be rendered *sword* or *dart*, it must undoubtedly refer to the part which the blessed virgin took in all the reproaches and persecutions which Jesus met with: but never was it so signally fulfilled, as when she stood by the cross, and saw him at once most scornfully insulted, and cruelly murdered. See John, xix. 25. It is added, *that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed*: that is to say, "All these things are ordered by the Providence of God, that the dispositions of men, whether good or bad, may be made to appear."

Ver. 36, 37. *And there was one Anna*] While these things were transacting, there came into the temple an aged woman named *Anna*, whose mortification to the world partly appeared by her having lived a widow ever since her husband's death; which happened while she was very young, for she had been a widow fourscore and four years;—as did her piety likewise towards God, by the constancy with which she waited on the temple, both *night and day*. The meaning is not, that *Anna* abode continually in the temple, for none lived there except the priests and Levites; but, she attended constantly at the morning and evening sacrifices, (see ch. xviii. 1.) and was often in the exercise of private prayer and fasting; spending the greatest part of her time in the temple, as we find the apostles doing, Acts, ii. 46. Perhaps she might sometimes attend those anthems, which the priests sung in the temple during the night-watching, Psalm, cxxxiv. 1, 2. to which David may also allude, Psalm, cxix. 62. Some, instead of *departed not*, read *absented not*,—*stayed not away*.

Ver. 38. *Gave thanks likewise*] The version of 1729 renders it, *she expressed her thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Jesus*; and it must be acknowledged, that there are in ver. 22. and 27. instances, in which the relative pronoun refers to a remote, and not immediately preceding substantive: but it is so evident, that Christ is so often called *the Lord* by St. Luke, as well as by the other sacred wri-

ters, that there can be no necessity for giving the passage such a turn. If it be objected, that the infant Jesus, as an infant, did not seem capable at that time of returning her gratitude, we answer, that *Anna* might properly be said to make her acknowledgements to the Lord, if she addressed herself to the child; as Simeon had done, confessing him to be the Messiah. The original phrase *αὐτομολογείτο*, may have reference to Simeon's speech, and might be intended to intimate that this of *Anna* was a kind of response or counterpart to his; and it is not improbable that she, like Simeon, might also address some lofty hymn of praise to the God of Israel on this great occasion: at least this may be inferred from the words, "She spoke of him to all those of her acquaintance in Jerusalem, who were waiting, like herself, for the promised redemption of Israel by the Messiah;" of whose speedy appearance there was an earnest expectation raised among the pious and devout, as the appointed period of his coming now evidently approached. For the sceptre appeared to be departing from Judah, though it was not actually gone; Daniel's weeks were plainly near their period; and the revival of the spirit of prophecy, joined with the memorable occurrences relating to the birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus, could not but encourage and quicken the expectation of pious persons at this time. See Dr. Doddridge and Bishop Chandler. An old copy mentioned by Dr. MNL, reads the last clause of this verse thus; *to all who looked for the redemption of Israel*. The example of these aged saints ought to impress and animate those, whose hoary heads, like theirs, are a crown of glory, being found in the way of righteousness. Their venerable lips, so soon to be silent in the grave, should now be employed in the praises of their Redeemer, that they, by the grace of God, may have the pleasure to see, through their pious attempts, the rising generation improved in true religion, and that they may quit the world with the greater tranquillity in the view of leaving those behind them, to whom Christ will be as precious as he hath been to them, and who will be waiting for God's salvation, while they are gone to enjoy it.

Ver. 40. *And the grace of God was upon him*] See the note on ver. 52.

42 And when he was twelve years old they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 And when they found him not, they

turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days, they found him \* in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47 And all that heard him <sup>k</sup> were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48 And, when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee forrowing.

<sup>a</sup> Pf. 42. 4. & 84. 6, 7.

<sup>b</sup> In some chamber of the court.

<sup>c</sup> If. 50. 4. & 11. 2—4. & 61. 1. & 49. 1, 2.

<sup>d</sup> Mat. 7. 28. Mark, 1. 27.

Ch. 4. 22, 32. John, 7. 15, 46.

*Ver. 42. And when he was twelve years old*] To shew how eminent Jesus was for his wisdom even in his childhood, the evangelist gives us the remarkable instance here recorded. When he was twelve years of age his parents carried him up to the passover, with a view to instil an early regard for religion and its precepts into his tender mind. See Exod. xxxiv. 23. Deut. xvi. 16. It is generally allowed by learned men, that twelve was the age when young people, according to the Jewish maxims, came under the yoke of the law. See Lightfoot's Hor. Heb. on the place, and Wotton's Miscel. vol. i. p. 320.

*Ver. 44. Supposing him to have been in the company*] Several families then travelled together, as they do at present on such occasions, in companies, or *caravans*, as they are called in the East. In these companies it was not unusual for persons to leave their own families, and mix with others, for the sake of conversation in the day-time; but at night they always joined their own families again. The parents of Jesus therefore supposing him to have been among their relations, were not solicitous about him in the day; but not finding him at night, they became anxious on account of his absence; and thus having spent one day on their journey, they reached Jerusalem on the second, and spent the third in searching after him there. See on ver. 49. Grotius, and Shaw's Travels, Preface, p. 9.

*Ver. 46. They found him in the temple*] On the morrow after their arrival, the parents of Jesus, to their great joy, found him in one of the chambers of the temple, sitting among the doctors, who at certain seasons, and particularly at the great festivals, taught there publicly; a custom hinted at in Jer. xxvi. 5—10. See also John, xviii. 20. There were no less than three *Sanhedrim*, or assemblies of the doctors, who had apartments in the temple, two of these consisted of twenty-three persons each, one of which sat at "the east gate of the mountain of the house," the other "at the gate Nicanor," or, "the east gate of the court of Israel;" as the *great Sanhedrim*, consisting of seventy-one, did in the room named *Gazith*, near the great altar. The doctors sat on seats in the form of a crescent, but the disciples on the ground, till after the death of Gamaliel. Into which of these courts our Lord came, is quite uncertain: however, it was customary

in these assemblies to propose doubts concerning the meaning of the precepts of the law, and the traditions of the elders, which was generally done by way of question. The word *hearing*, is used in the rabbinical writings to imply such skill in the traditions of the elders, as to be capable of proposing any questions concerning them, and likewise of giving answers to such as were proposed. It is certainly a great injury to the character of our blessed Redeemer, to represent this history, whether in pictures or words, as if Christ went up into the seats of the doctors, and there *disputed* with them. Not one word is said of his *disputing* by the evangelist; but only of his asking some questions, and answering others. It was a very usual thing in these assemblies, and indeed the very end of them; for they were principally designed for the catechetical examination and instruction of young people. All was conducted, no doubt, with the utmost modesty and decorum; and if Jesus were with others at the feet of these teachers, where, as we observed, learners generally sat, he might be said to *be in the midst of them*, as they sat on benches of a semicircular form, raised above their auditors and disciples. See Lightfoot, Drusus, and Dodridge.

*Ver. 47, 48. And all that heard him were astonished*] The words rendered *astonished* in this verse, and *amazed* in the next, are much more forcible than our translation: of them. They import, that *they were in a transport of astonishment, and were struck with admiration*. As our Lord himself has told us, that on this occasion he was *employed in his Father's business*, it is probable that in these his answers and objections, he modestly insinuated corrections of the errors wherewith the Jewish teachers had now greatly disfigured religion. If we recollect that the school learning of the Jews was at this time at its highest pitch, and that our Lord, at the age of twelve years, was superior to the greatest doctors whom the Jews could boast of, there will appear very just grounds for the admiration here mentioned. His parents were particularly and beyond measure surprised, to find him engaged in such an employment; and his mother in particular, not able to express the emotion she was in, chid him with a tender vehemence for leaving them without their knowledge, and putting

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 ¶ And he went down with them, and

came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

<sup>1</sup> Mal. 3. 1, 2. Pf. 40. 8. John, 4. 34. & 8. 29. & 2. 16. Ver. 19. Gen. 37. 31. Dan. 7. 28. Pf. 119. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ch. 9. 45. & 13. 34. P 1 Sam. 2. 26. Ch. 1. 80. Ver. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Ver. 39. Mar. 2. 22, 23. Mark, 6. 3. Mat. 3. 15. \* Or age.

them to so much pain. The word rendered *sorrowing*, ὀδυνώμενοι, is expressive of the most racking anguish, and is often applied to the distress and pain of a woman in travail; it has therefore been rendered, *with great concern*,—*with inexpressible anxiety and distress*.

Ver. 49. *Wist ye not, &c.*] Some render this, *Know ye not that I must be in my Father's house?* With this translation the Syriac version agrees: and it is certain that the Greek will well bear this translation, and that the reply appears with peculiar propriety, if it be supposed to signify, that though they thought him lost, yet he was at home; he was in his Father's house. He calls the temple his Father's house, John, ii. 16. and thus gives a tacit hint, that in staying behind at Jerusalem, he had not left his true Father. It is to be remembered, that this is the first visit Christ had ever made to the temple since he was a child in arms; it is no wonder, therefore, that the delight he found here inclined him to prolong it. How happy those children, who, like the Holy Jesus, love the house and ordinances of God, and thirst for the instructions of his good word!

Ver. 50. *They understood not the saying*] They did not fully comprehend the meaning of this expression. The phrase implies, that there was something more in Christ's words than at first appeared.

Ver. 51. *But his mother*] *And his mother.*

Ver. 52. *And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature*] The word signifies either *age* or *stature*; but the latter seems evidently to be here meant. Erasmus remarks, (nearly in these words) that all the endowments of the Man Christ Jesus were owing to the divine beneficence, and that his Deity communicated itself in a gradual manner to that human nature which it had assumed. Some perhaps may wish to know the history of our Lord's childhood and private life; what early proofs he gave of his having the divine nature united to the human; what proficiency he made in knowledge, and the methods by which he advanced therein; in what way he employed himself when he arrived at man's estate; what notions his acquaintance formed of him; the manner of his conversation with them, and other things of a like nature,—which the Holy Spirit has not thought fit to explain. The following particulars only are left upon record:—that he had not the advantage of a liberal education, (John, vii. 15.) receiving no instructions, probably, but what his parents gave him according to the law; (Deut. iv. 9, 10. vi. 7.) yet that at the age of twelve years, when carried up to Jerusalem, he distinguished himself among the doctors by such a degree of wisdom and penetration, as far exceeded his years:—that he very early understood the

design on which he was come into the world;—*Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*—That as he grew in years, he became remarkable for his wisdom and stature, advancing gradually in the former as well as in the latter; and that by the comeliness of his person, the sweetness of his disposition, and the uncommon vigour of his faculties, he engaged the affections of all who had the happiness to be acquainted with him:—that, as his mind was filled with wisdom, and always serene, being perfectly free from those turbulent passions which distract other men, his countenance no doubt must have been composed and agreeable, such as did betoken the strength of his understanding, and the goodness of his heart. This may be implied by the expression, *the grace of God was upon him*, ver. 40. unless it be thought an explication of the preceding clause, *He waxed strong in spirit, and was filled with wisdom*. Raphelius, Not. Polyb. p. 186. makes it probable, that the *grace of God*, in that passage, is the highest Hebrew superlative, being an expression of the same form with, *the mountains of God*, that is to say, *exceeding high mountains*,—and so is equivalent to the description which Stephen gave of Moses's beauty, Acts, vii. 20. *He was ἀσπερ τῷ Θεῷ, fair to God,—exceeding fair*. Besides, we find the word *χαρις*, *grace*, used in a similar sense by St. Luke, iv. 22. and all—wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, ἐπὶ τοῖς λόγοις τῆς χάριτος, at the harmony and beauty of his diction, as well as the importance of his subject. However singular this observation concerning our Lord's form may appear, yet a nearer view of it will conciliate our approbation: for if his *stature* was so remarkable in his youth, that it twice deserved the notice of the evangelist, ver. 40, 52. his *comeliness* might be so likewise. Nor is any thing which the prophets have said of him, as for instance, Isai. lii. 14. inconsistent with this conjecture: for the meanness of the Messiah's condition, and the disposition of the Jews towards him, are described in that prophecy, rather than the form of his person. Just as Pf. xlv. 3. describes the triumphs of his religion, rather than the majesty and glory of his outward form. The evangelist tells us farther, that Jesus was possessed of an uncommon and prevailing eloquence, inasmuch that his hearers were often amazed at the beauty of his discourses; (ch. iv. 22.)—and some of them made to cry out, *Never man spake like this man*, John, vii. 46.—That he remained subject to his parents, and lived with them in humble obscurity, till he entered on his public ministry, which commenced about the thirtieth year of his age; the excellency of his divine nature having been for the most part veiled during the whole course of his private life:—and, that probably as soon as his strength permitted, he wrought

with

## C H A P. III.

*The preaching and baptism of John: his testimony of Christ. Herod imprisoneth John. Christ baptized, receiveth testimony from heaven. The age and genealogy of Christ from Joseph upwards.*

[Anno Domini 26.]

**N**OW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being

governor of Judea, and Herod being \* tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lyfanius the \* tetrarch of Abilene,

2 <sup>a</sup> Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, <sup>b</sup> the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias, in the <sup>c</sup> wilderness.

<sup>a</sup> Governor of a fourth part of the country. Hof. i. 1, 6. Mat. iii. Mark, i. 2—11.

<sup>b</sup> John, 12. 40, 51. & 18. 13. Acts, 4. 6.

<sup>c</sup> Ch. i. 80. Joh. 6. 1. 62. i. e. a country thinly inhabited.

<sup>d</sup> Jer. i. 2, 4. & 2. 1. & 7. 1. Ezek. i. 3.

with his father at his occupation as a carpenter, (Mark, vi. 3.) leaving us an admirable example both of his filial duty, and prudent industry. These are all the particulars which the Holy Spirit has thought fit to communicate to us concerning our Lord's life.

*Inferences drawn from Christ's sitting among the doctors.*—Even the spring shews us what we may hope for from the tree in summer. In his younger years, therefore, would our Saviour give us a taste of his future excellence; lest, if his perfection should have shewed itself without warning to the world, it might have been entertained with more wonder than belief. If after this early demonstration of his divine graces, the incredulous Jews would nevertheless say, *Whence hath this man his wisdom and his mighty works?* Let us ask what would they have said, had he suddenly leaped forth into the clear light of the world?—The sun would dazzle all eyes, were it to break forth at its first rising into its full strength: now, it has both the day-star to go before it to bid men look for the glorious day, and also the lively colours of the day to publish its approach. The eye is comforted, not hurt, by its appearance.

The law of the passover extended only to the males; I do not find the blessed virgin bound to this annual voyage; the weaker sex received indulgence from God; but she, knowing the spiritual profit of the journey, takes the voluntary pains of measuring that long way every year. Piety regards not, any more than God's gracious acceptance, the distinction of sexes. They who would go no farther than they are dragged in their religious exercises, are not at all of kin to her, *whom all generations shall call blessed.*

In all his examples the blessed Jesus meant our instruction; this pious act of his youth was intended to lead our first years into timely devotion, and set us on our way to Jerusalem. The first liquor seasons the vessel for a long time after. *It is every way good for a man to bear God's yoke even from his infancy.* He that sets out betimes in the morning, is more likely to dispatch his journey, than he who lingers till the day be spent.

This holy family came not to look at the feast only, and be gone; they duly staid out all the appointed days of unleavened bread: their worldly business, their secular concerns, could not either keep them from Jerusalem, or send them away immaturely. Worldly cares must give way to sacred; and unless we will depart unblest, we must

attend God's service till we may receive his dismissal; and can indeed say with Simeon, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.*

The feast ended, what should they do but return to Nazareth? God's services may not be so attended, as that we should neglect our particular callings. They are grievously mistaken, to their own hurt, and the dishonour of the Almighty, who think God cares for no other trade but devotion. Piety and diligence must keep due interchange with each other; nor does God less approve of our return to Nazareth, than of our going up to Jerusalem.

We cannot think that the blessed virgin, or the good and solicitous Joseph, could be so neglectful of their divine charge, as not to call him to them on their setting forth from Jerusalem; but their back was no sooner turned on the temple, than his face was towards it. He had business to do, and meat to eat in that place, when their services and their feasts were ended. He in whom the Godhead dwelt bodily, could do nothing without God: his true Father led him away from his supposed parent: sometimes the affairs of our ordinary vocation may not grudge to yield unto spiritual occasions.

The parents of Christ knew him well to be of a disposition not strange, nor sullen, but sweet and sociable. They supposed therefore that he had spent his time on the way in the company of their friends and neighbours; and when evening came, *they go to seek him among* their kinsfolk and acquaintance. He had not been sought among them now, had he not been accustomed to converse with them heretofore. Neither as God, nor man, does he take pleasure in a stern, froward austerity, and wild retirement; but in a mild affability, and amiable conversation.

Gracious Saviour! who can miss, and not mourn for thee? Just is that sorrow, and seasonable are those tears, which are bestowed upon thy loss. Of what comfort are we capable, while we want thee? O let thyself loose, my soul, to the fulness of sorrow, when thou findest thyself bereaved of him, in whose presence is fulness of joy; and refuse to receive comfort from any thing but his return.

In vain is Christ sought among *his kindred according to the flesh.* So far, alas! are they still from giving us their aid to find the true Messiah, that they are but too apt to lead us from him. Back again, therefore, must Joseph and Mary be gone, to *seek him* in Jerusalem, *whom their soul loved.* At last, on the third day, they find him in the temple.

He

3<sup>d</sup> And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins ;  
4 As it is written in the book of the words

<sup>d</sup> Mat. 3. 1, 2. Mark, 1. 4. John, 1. 31. Acts, 19. 4. & 13. 24, 25. Ezek. 13. 30.

He who could rise again the third day, and be found among the living, would now also the third day be found of his parents, after the sorrow of his absence.

But where wert thou, and how tended, O blessed Jesu, for the space of these three days? I know, if Jerusalem should have been as unkind and niggardly to thee as Bethlehem, thou couldst have commanded the heavens to harbour thee; and if men did not minister unto thee, thou couldst have commanded the service of angels:—but further I inquire not,—for further thou revealest not. This only I know, that hereby thou intendedst to teach thy parents that thou couldst live without them; and that not out of any indigency but out of a gracious dispensation alone, thou choicest ordinarily to depend on their care.

In the mean time, thy divine wisdom could not but foreknow all those corroding thoughts wherewith the heart of thy mother must needs bleed:—yet wouldst thou leave her for the time to sorrow, and visit her who bore thee with this earthly affliction. None ever sought thee with a sincere desire, of whom thou wert not found; and where should we rather hope to find thee, than *in the temple*?—There is the habitation for the God of Israel; there is his resting-place for ever.—O all ye who are grieved with the want of your Saviour, see then where you must seek him: in vain shall you hope to find him in the streets, in the taverns, in the theatres: seek him in his holy temple; seek him with piety; seek him with faith; there shall ye assuredly meet and recover him.

While children of that age were playing in the streets, Christ was found *sitting in the temple*, to hear and converse with the doctors of the law. He who, as God, gave them all the wisdom they had, as the Son of man, hearkens to the wisdom that he had given them. He who sat in their hearts, as the author of all knowledge, sits in the midst of their schools a humble disciple, that, by learning from them, he might teach all the younger sort humility and due attendance on their instructors: he contents himself to hear with diligence, to ask with modesty, and to teach only by insinuation. Behold him, that could have taught the angels, listening, in his minority, to the voice of men. First, he hears, then he asks, (ver. 46.) after that he answers. How much more then does it concern us to be hearers, ere we offer to be teachers of others? He gathers that hears; he spreads that teaches. If we spend before we gather, no wonder if we soon prove bankrupts.

What wonder was it that these great rabbins all *wondered at the understanding and answers* of this infant tutor? ver. 47. Their eyes saw nothing but human weakness; their ears heard divine sublimity of matter. And why then did ye not remember, O ye Jewish teachers, that *to us a child was born, that to us a son was given, whose name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace*? Why did ye not now call to remembrance what the star,—the sages,—the angels,—the shepherds,—*Zachary, Simcon, Anna* had pre-admonished you? Fruitless is the wonder, that endeth not in faith.

No light is sufficient where the eyes are held through prejudice or unbelief.

The doctors were not more amazed to hear so profound a childhood, than the parents of Christ were to see him among the doctors, ver. 48. And now, not *Joseph*,—he knew how little right he had to that divine offspring,—but Mary breaks forth into that loving expostulation, *Son, why hast thou dealt so with us?* Wherein she evidently meant to express rather grief than correction and reproach. Herein, only, the blessed virgin appears to have offended, in that her inconsideration did not recollect, that some higher respects than could be due to flesh and blood, must have called away the Son of God from her, who was the daughter of a man. How naturally are we all partial to ourselves! how prone to the regard of our own supposed rights! Questionless this gracious saint would by no means wilfully have preferred her own attendance to that of her God: through heedlessness, however, she offends. Her Son and Saviour is her monitor. *How is it that ye sought me? Knew ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

Immediately before, the blessed virgin had said, *thy father and I had sought thee with heavy hearts*. The Son of God stands not upon contradiction to his mother in this case; but leading her thoughts from his supposed father to his true, from earth to heaven, he answers, *Knew ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* It was honour enough for her to hear, that he had vouchsafed to take flesh of her. It was his eternal honour, that he was God of all, the everlasting Son of the heavenly Father. Good reason therefore was it, that the respects of flesh should give place to the God of spirits. How well contented was holy Mary with so just an answer! How does she now again in her humble heart renew her reply to the angel, *Behold the servant of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word!* We are not worthy to say we have a Father in heaven, if we cannot steal away from these earthly distractions, and employ ourselves in the service of God, in the all-important *business* of our heavenly and eternal Father.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The morning-star being arisen, the fun of righteousness cannot be far behind: in the fulness of time God sends forth his Son, born of a woman. We have,

r. The time of Christ's birth; in the reign of Augustus Cæsar. When he had extended the Roman monarchy to the greater part of the known world, and was now in perfect peace throughout his vast empire, he orders a general enrolment to be made through the provinces, that every man, according to his ability, might pay a suitable tax: and this was done under the inspection of Cyrenius, the governor of Syria, with which Judea was joined as one province; so that it evidently appeared the sceptre was departed from Judah, by this badge of servitude, Gen. xlix. 10. the fourth monarchy was now risen to its glory. Dan. ii. 44. and therefore in this time of peace was the proper and appointed period fixed by the ancient prophets

of Esaias the prophet, saying, ' The voice of way of the Lord, make his paths straight.  
one crying in the wilderness, ' Prepare ye the 5 ' Every valley shall be filled, and every

\* Il. 40. 3—5. Mark. 1. 3. Mat. 3. 3. John. 1. 23. Mal. 3. 1. & 4. 5, 6. † Mal. 4. 6. Ch. 1. 16, 17, 76—79. John. 1. 7, 26—36. & 3. 27—36. & 5. 33. Acts, 13. 24, 25. & 19. 4. ‡ Il. 2. 14. & 62. 10. Zech. 4. 6, 7.

phesies for the appearing of the Prince of Peace, the Messiah.

2. The place where Jesus was born; at Bethlehem; whither his parents were obliged to go, on account of this enrolment, they being of the lineage of David, and therefore called to appear at the feat of their ancestors. Augustus only meant his own glory and advantage in this matter; but God had designs to serve by him which he knew not: it was thus evident that our Lord sprung from David, and the scripture was fulfilled which fixed his going forth from Bethlehem, Micah, v. 2. By such mysterious ways does God work, accomplishing his own gracious purposes, and making those who least intend it, subservient to his own designs.

3. The wretched circumstances in which Christ came into the world. Though a first-born son, and of royal extraction, not to mention his divine honours, yet was he born in the stable of an inn, and his cradle a manger. Thus did the everlasting Father become an infant of days; he who bound up the deep in swaddling-bands, was himself swathed as a babe; he, whom the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain, was hid in a manger. He, who in uncreated glory on his eternal throne, was the object of adoration to all the angelic hosts, is thrust into a stable to dwell among the beasts of the earth: so low did he humble himself, when he became man for us men and for our salvation; and took the form of a servant as a prelude to his submitting to the death of a slave.

2dly, Amid the deepest humiliation of Jesus, some bright displays of his uncreated glory still broke forth, that we might not stumble at the meanness of his appearing in the flesh, but be made to confess, Truly this is the Son of God. We have,

1. The appearance of an angelic minister to notify the birth of the Prince of Peace; not to the mighty monarchs of the earth, that they should come and pay their homage before the King of kings, and Lord of lords; but to poor shepherds, who were by night watching their flocks. They were employed in their honest calling, and were then favoured with this unexpected visit from above: God will put this honour upon industry. The angel stood over them in the air, and the earth shone with his brightness; a divine glory compassed him about, and fear seized their minds at the presence of this celestial messenger. Visits from the unseen world to men, conscious how ill they have deserved at God's hand, may well alarm us, and make even gracious souls afraid.

2. The heavenly visitant soon quieted their troubled minds, saying, *Fear not*, no danger is near, no evil portended, but the very contrary; *for behold* (with wonder and delight attend my message) *I bring you good tidings of great joy; the happiest news that ever reached the sinful sons of men, and which shall be to all people; not to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles also, alike interested in this message. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David,*

*a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, the long-expected Messiah, the Lord of life and glory, the Saviour to the uttermost, unto all those who come to God by him, who without him must have been for ever undone. And this shall be a sign unto you, whereby you may assuredly know him, and a strange sign indeed it was; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, the last place surely where they would ever have sought the Messiah, after such a glorious herald had proclaimed his birth and titles; but the most eminent distinction of God incarnate was his deep humiliation. Note; (1.) If there be a Saviour born, we must seek him for ourselves, that we may obtain an interest in him. (2.) None perish in their sins, but they who will not come to him that they may have life; for he is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him, seeing that he is Christ the Lord.*

3. Suddenly a multitude of the angelic host joined this celestial messenger, to celebrate the divine glory, and to congratulate the sons of men on this auspicious occasion. The morning-stars that sang together, and all those sons of God who shouted for joy to see the world's foundation laid, now join with greater transport to adore this more transcendent display of the divine benignity in the redemption of sinners by the incarnation of Jehovah. (1.) They ascribe to God *glory in the highest*; all his divine perfections are to the uttermost exalted; his infinite mercy, that moved him to pity sinners; his surpassing wisdom, that contrived, and his almighty power and grace, that accomplished the wondrous means of man's salvation; his adorable justice; his matchless love; his unchangeable faithfulness to his promises, all shine with peculiar lustre in the redemption which is by Jesus Christ. (2.) They congratulate the sinful sons of Adam on the peace sent down from heaven to earth:—Peace with God, as reconciled through his Son; peace in the believer's conscience now undisturbed with fears of guilt; peace between the discordant sons of men; and all these blessings purely flowing from God's *good will*; not for the sake of any merit in us, but to the praise of the glory of his grace. If angels sing, shall men be silent? How ought we to echo back the sound; for us, and not for them, is this salvation wrought; to us this mercy is extended; most bounden are we for ever to bless and praise the God of all grace for this inestimable gift, the Son of his love.

4. No sooner had these angelic ministers finished the heavenly song, and returned to their shining realms of bliss, than instantly the shepherds resolved to go and see this wondrous child, fully persuaded of the truth of what they had heard, and acknowledging the distinguishing mercy of God in having thus revealed it unto them: hastening therefore to Bethlehem, they found every circumstance as it had been told them, and *the babe lying in the manger.* Note; When God sends us on his errands, we should make no delay: all must be left to go where he calls.

5. Fully confirmed in the persuasion that this was the promised

mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways *shall be* made smooth;

6 And <sup>a</sup> all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

7. Then said he to the multitude that came

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 2. 11, 30—32. Pf. 98. 2. Jf. 52. 10. Mark, 16. 15, 16

promised Saviour, they failed not to spread the glad tidings, relating all that they had seen and heard from the angel, or Mary, concerning this child. And as they were plain and undefigning men, concurred in the same report, were eye and ear-witnesses of the facts which they asserted, it exceedingly amazed all those to whom they gave the account; they knew not how to question the truth, and yet—that the Messiah should be born in a stable; that his parents should be persons so obscure; that poor shepherds only should be favoured with the notice of his birth, and not the chief-priests and rulers of the nation; all these circumstances staggered them. Thus the report was the wonder of a day, and soon died away, and was forgotten; but *Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart*, comparing them with what had before passed; confirmed thereby in her faith and hope, and silently storing up every circumstance in her memory against some future occasion. Mean time the shepherds returned to their former occupation, blessing and praising God for what they had heard and seen, so exactly correspondent with all that the angels had told them; and waiting, no doubt, in hope for the day when this child should come to manhood, and publicly appear as Israel's Saviour.

3dly, He who was made under the law for us, submitted not only to all the moral precepts, but to the ceremonial institutions.

1. He was circumcised the eighth day, binding himself thereby to the observance of the law; humbling himself to this painful rite, as born in the likeness of sinful flesh; owning himself of the seed of Abraham, and wearing this badge of the children of God, as under the instituted seal of the covenant devoted to him. At this time, as usual, his name was also given him, and he was called *Jesus*, having been so named of the angel before his conception, to signify his glorious character as a *Saviour* from sin, Satan, death, and hell.

2. He was, at the end of the time appointed for his mother's purification, or forty days, *their* purification as some copies read, Lev. xii. 4. presented in the temple as holy to the Lord, Exod. xiii. God having reserved to himself the first-born of Israel, in commemoration of his sparing them when he slew the Egyptians; while his mother also brought an offering for herself, according to the prescription of the same law, a pair of turtle-doves, or young pigeons, which in case of poverty were accepted instead of a lamb and a dove, Lev. xii. 6—8. the one as a sin-offering of atonement, in testimony of her unworthiness of the mercy that she had received; the other as a burnt-offering, expressive of her thankfulness.

4thly, Amidst all the meanness and poverty of Jesus, very glorious were the testimonies borne to him from heaven and upon earth. We have,

1. The public declarations of Simeon; a man, it seems, of distinguished note in Jerusalem, who just then came, by divine direction, into the temple.

[1.] The account given concerning him is greatly to his honour. *He was just* towards men, and *devout*, eminently religious toward God, *waiting* in faith and patience for the consolation of Israel, the promised Messiah, whose coming in the flesh was to be the great joy of all believers, Gentiles as well as Jews; the time of whose appearing, fixed in the prophetic writings, was now at hand: *and the Holy Ghost was upon him*, not only as a Spirit of holiness, but as a Spirit of prophecy: *And it was revealed unto him by the secret inspirations of the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ*, whom his eyes should behold before they were closed in the dust. *And accordingly, just at that instant, he came by the Spirit into the temple*, under some divine warning of what was doing there: *and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, to present him to the Lord, and pay the price of redemption, then took he him up in his arms*, in a transport of joy, as having found him whom he had so long and so earnestly expected; *and blessed God*, and broke forth into the following prophetic song of praise. *Note*; (1.) We must not be weary of waiting; though the Lord may for a while exercise our patience, all his promises are sure to persevering believers. (2.) Christ is the consolation of his Israel; he makes all those happy who by faith embrace him. (3.) They who have Jesus in their hearts, in their hearts, can look death in the face with confidence.

[2.] His discourse on this occasion was solemn and joyful. He said, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word*, farewell life, welcome death! He is now content to be gone, since God has thus graciously fulfilled his promise to him; and cheerfully resigns his soul in confidence of exchanging a perishing world for an eternity of glory: *For mine eyes have seen thy salvation*, that Messiah, who is come to be the author of eternal salvation to all the faithful; *which thou hast prepared before the face of all people*, and now manifested in the flesh to accomplish the glorious work; *a light to lighten the Gentiles*, who have long sat in darkness, ignorance, and idolatry, but now shall be made partakers of the light of truth and the grace of the gospel; *and the glory of thy people Israel*, among whom his personal ministry was employed; who were spectators of his miracles; from whom he descended after the flesh; by whom, as his apostles and evangelists, he first propagated the knowledge of his salvation; and, in him all the spiritual Israel are justified, and in him they glory. Isai. xlv. 25. *Note*; (1.) A believing sight of Christ, and of the great things that he has prepared for the faithful, will not only enable us to overcome the terrors of death, but to triumph in its approach. (2.) We may not leave our post till the Lord grants us our dismissal; our time is in his hand; while he has work for us to do, we must be content to be here, till he calls us to depart, and be with him; which is far better. (3.) Christ is the Sun of righteousness; there is nothing but

forth to be baptized of him, <sup>1</sup> O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

<sup>8</sup> Bring forth therefore fruits \* worthy of repentance; and begin not to say within yourselves, <sup>m</sup> We have Abraham to our father:

<sup>1</sup> Mat. 3. 7—10. & 12. 34. & 23. 33. Ch. 10. 9, 17. Acts, 23. 8. Gal. 3. 21, 23. 2 Peter, 1. 4—10. 2 Cor. 7. 11. 11. 1. 16, 17.

<sup>k</sup> 1 Thess. 1. 10. 2 Thess. 1. 9. Rom. 5. 10. <sup>l</sup> Acts, 26. 20. <sup>m</sup> Or meet for. <sup>n</sup> John, 8. 33, 39. Act, 13. 26. Jer. 7. 4.

but darkness and death in the spiritual world, till he arises with healing in his wings.

[3.] Simeon concludes with his benediction on the parents of Jesus, and a prediction for their notice. They marvelled at these transcendently glorious testimonies which were borne to their infant Son; while Simeon congratulated them on their distinguished felicity, and prayed that the best of blessings might descend upon them. *He blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother,* as more especially the parent of Jesus, and interested in what he was about to say; *behold, with wonder, and with confidence in the truth which I declare; this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; he will be to many native Jews a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, Isa. viii. 14—18. while by his power and grace others will be raised up to newness of life, even many who at first were offended at him; and he shall quicken all believers in Israel and throughout the world, and bring all those who perseveringly cleave to him unto eternal glory; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; his humiliation and sufferings will give a handle to his persecutors to blaspheme and revile him; yea, and so bitter will the enmity be against him, that it will extend to all his relations and friends, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, such anguish and pain you will endure from the view of his insults and sufferings, and from those which you may be called to endure for the profession of your faith in him; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed, these times of persecution most effectually serving to discover the faithful disciples from the hypocrites and apostates.* *Note;* (1.) The same gospel is to some the favour of death unto death, which to others is the favour of life unto life. (2.) They whom Jesus raises, must first be laid low in the dust of humiliation. (3.) Most of our comforts in this world have some crosses annexed to them.

2. Anna the prophetess confirms, just at the same instant, what Simeon had spoken concerning the glory of the child Jesus.

[1.] Her person and character are described. Her name was Anna, whom the Lord had endued with a spirit of prophecy. She was the daughter of Phanuel, a person probably of some note, and of the tribe of Asher; a very aged woman, having lived seven years with a husband, and ever since continued a widow of about eighty-four years, a great age, if comprehending the whole of her life; but if reckoned as her years of widow-hood, will carry her age at lowest to above a hundred years. Yet though so old, she constantly attended the stated worship of the temple morning and evening, and on all solemn occasions; and was much in fasting and prayer, a singular instance of piety and devotion.

[2.] Her testimony concerning Jesus is recorded. Just at the instant that Simeon was discoursing concerning him, she came in; and, with thanksgiving and praise to the

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Lord, confirmed what he had spoken concerning the child. And among all her religious acquaintance, who were expecting the Messiah's appearing, and looking for his redemption, she spake of the Son of Mary, as the person raised up of God for this great design. *Note;* (1.) They who are constant at the temple, and careful to keep up communion with God, will find many a blessed and happy visit from him, which they perhaps hardly expected. (2.) They who know Jesus themselves, are in duty bound to spread that knowledge far and wide, and to endeavour to bring others to an acquaintance with his salvation.

5thly, Our curiosity might have tempted us to wish for some more large and particular accounts of the infancy and childhood of Jesus; but as till his public appearance in the character of the Messiah we had no particular need of it, all that the Holy Ghost has been pleased to record of the first twenty-nine years of his life, is contained in a few verses; where some beams of his glory, even from his earliest days, are seen to break forth, as presages of his future greatness.

1. After he was presented in the temple, he for the most part, till twelve years of age, lived with his parents at Nazareth, whither they were directed to go after their return from Egypt, Mat. ii. There he grew up as other children do; and as his stature increased, and reason began to dawn, he displayed the most uncommon natural abilities; was endued with wisdom far beyond his years; and instead of that foolishness which is bound up in the heart of all other children, and immediately begins to discover itself with the first dawns of sense, in him nothing was seen of folly or perverseness. The grace of God eminently governed his spirit and conduct from his tenderest years, and the favour of God towards him appeared most evident and singular.

2. At the age of twelve, he gave some amazing evidences of his extraordinary wisdom, and some intimations of the great work that he had in view.

[1.] At this time he went up to Jerusalem with his parents to the passover, where all the males from that age were commanded to appear to celebrate this solemnity. *Note;* It is highly incumbent on parents to acquaint their children betimes with their covenant-relation to God, and to endeavour to engage them early, with their own free choice; to surrender themselves up to him as his willing servants.

[2.] When they had stayed during the seven-days of the feast, and then had set out on their return for Nazareth, the child Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem: probably when they went up to worship on the morning before they proceeded on their journey, he left them in the temple; and as the men and women travelled in different companies, each of his parents supposed that he had been with the other, or with some of their relations, great numbers of whom travelled together; till, at even, when they met,

3 X

to

for I say unto you, that God is able of <sup>a</sup> these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9 ° And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which

<sup>a</sup> Joh. 4. 3, 8. Mat. 8. 11, 12. & 21. 43. Ch. 19. 40. 4. 17, 18. Ezek. xv. Heb. 2. 1, 3. & 4. 1. & 6. 8.

° Mat. 3. 10. & 7. 19. Ch. 19. 43. & 23. 31. John, 15. 2, 6. & 13. 35. 1 Peter,

to their surprize they missed their son; and after a fruitless search among all their relatives and acquaintance, they turned back to Jerusalem in the morning to seek for him. (See the Annotations.) *Note*; Our relatives and acquaintance are too often unable to direct us to Jesus; we must go farther for our information.

[3.] At last they found him on the third day in the temple, in one of the chambers, probably where the Sanhedrim sat, or where the wise men instructed their catechumens; there Jesus was, among other young persons, hearing their discourses, answering their questions with the most amazing acuteness, and proposing others to them, which shewed uncommon wisdom and penetration; inso-much that they were all astonished at the sagacity of his replies, and the depth of his understanding, so exceedingly beyond his years, and such as made him appear worthy a place among the highest rabbis, instead of a seat at their feet as a catechumen.

[4.] Having found him, they were amazed to see him thus admired and esteemed by the doctors; and his mother began tenderly to expostulate with him on his stay, which had given them such anxiety and grief: but he gently rebuked her sollicitude, who, after all that had passed, ought not to be surprized at finding him there. Where should he be so properly as in the courts of his Father's house? and what so fit an employment for him, as to be thus *about his Father's business*? but they understood not his meaning: his regal office, as the Messiah, the son of David, they believed; but of his prophetic character, and the nature of his spiritual kingdom, they seem not yet to have had clear ideas.

3. He returned to Nazareth, submitting to his parents in every instance of filial duty; and his mother stored up his sayings in her mind, expecting, that though she now but little understood them, hereafter they would be explained more fully. Till he was thirty years of age, he continued in this obscure abode, and under the government of his parents, probably working as a carpenter for their maintenance and his own: and as he advanced to manhood, his attainments in wisdom and understanding were amazing, his faculties most enlarged, and his soul filled with all those gifts and graces which the human nature, by its union with the Divine, was prepared to receive. Thus he grew highly in God's favour, and admired and esteemed by all who were acquainted with his singular excellencies. *Note*; (1.) Let children, when grown up, learn of Jesus subjection to their parents; that is a duty which we must ever pay. (2.) Though the truths of God, which we are taught, may not at first be understood by us, yet the knowledge of them will prove highly useful, when afterwards God gives the spiritual understanding. (3.) Those children are indeed their parents' glory and joy, whose wisdom and graces increase with their years, and exceed them.

### CHAP. III.

*Ver. 1. Now in the fifteenth year, &c.]* Though the evangelist has told us in what year the Baptist made his first public appearance, he has not intimated in what period of his ministry Jesus came to be baptized; (see ver. 21.) wherefore, seeing the Baptist's fame had spread itself in every corner, and brought people to him from all quarters, it is probable that he had preached at least several months before our Lord arrived at Bethabara. If so, as it is natural to think that John came abroad in the spring, Jesus could not be baptized by him sooner than in the summer or autumn. The reign of Tiberius had two commencements; one when Augustus made him his colleague in the empire, and another when he began to reign alone after Augustus's death. If, as historians tell us, Tiberius's proconsular empire began about three years before Augustus died, that is to say, August 28, in the year of our Lord, 11, and from the building of Rome 764, the whole of that year would, by common computation, be reckoned the *first* of Tiberius; and consequently, his *fifteenth* year, though really beginning August 28, in the year of our Lord 24, and from the building of Rome 778, would be reckoned from the January preceding. Supposing then, that the Baptist began to preach in the spring of this fifteenth year, according to common computation, and that Jesus came to him in the summer or autumn following, the latter would be, at his baptism, thirty years of age, a few days more or less, provided we fix his birth to September, from the building of Rome 748, that is, a little more than a year before Herod died;—or, but twenty-nine years of age, if we suppose that he was not born till September, from the building of Rome 749, that is, a few months only before Herod died.

At this period Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea: after the death of Herod the Great, Augustus confirmed the partition which that prince by his latter will had made of his dominions among his children. According to this partition, Archelaus obtained Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, with the title of *Ethnarch*; for though his father had called him *king* in his testament, the emperor would not allow him that dignity, till he should do something for the Roman state which deserved it. Archelaus, after a tyrannical reign of ten years, was deposed for his mal-administration; and his country was made a province of the Roman empire, under the name of Judea. Properly speaking, indeed, Judea was an appendage to the province of Syria, being governed by a procurator, subject to the president of that province. Yet the procurators of Judea were always vested with the power of presidents or governors; that is to say, gave final judgment in every cause, whether civil or criminal, without appeal, unless to the emperor, by whom Roman citizens, in whatever part of the empire they lived, had a right to be tried, if they demanded it. Judea therefore was, in effect, a distinct province

bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down,  
and cast into the fire.

10 And the people asked him, saying,  
'What shall we do then?'

¶ Acts, 2. 37. & 16. 30. John, 6. 28.

province or government from Syria. Accordingly, the evangelists give its procurators, when they have occasion to mention them, the title of *governors*, as that which best expressed the nature of their dignity. The proper business of a *procurator* was, to take care of the emperor's revenues in the province belonging to him; as the *questor's* business was to superintend the senate's revenue in the province belonging to him. But such procurators as were the chief magistrates of a province, had the dignities of governor and *questor* united in their persons, and enjoyed privileges accordingly.

By virtue of the partition above-mentioned, *Herod Antipas*, another of the first Herod's sons, governed Galilee and Perea, or *the country beyond Jordan*, with the title of Tetrarch; which, according to some, was the proper denomination of the *fourth* dignity in the empire; or, as others think, the title of one who had only the fourth part of a country subject to him; though in process of time it was applied to those who had any considerable share of a kingdom in their possession. This is the Herod, under whose reign John began his ministry, and by whom he was beheaded. It was to him likewise that Pilate sent our Lord, in the course of his trial.

St. Luke tells us, that *Philip's* dominions were Iturea and Trachonitis: but Josephus says, they were Auranitis and Trachonitis. Reland reconciles the historian with the evangelist, by supposing that *Iturea* and *Auranitis* were different names of the same country. The Itureans are mentioned with the Hagarites, 1 Chron. v. 19. and half the tribe of Manasseh is said to have seized upon their territories. *Jetur*, the son of Ishmael, the son of Hagar, was their father, and gave them their name. *Trachonitis* was situated between Palestine and Cœlo-Syria; its ancient name was *Argob*, Deut. iii. 13. It was full of rocky hills, which in Herod the First's time afforded shelter to bands of robbers, whom he was at great pains to extirpate. *Abilené* was a considerable city of Syria, whose territories reached to Lebanon and Damascus, and were peopled with great numbers of Jews.

*Ver. 2. Annas and Caiaphas being the high-priests*] According to the institutions of the Jewish religion, there could be only one *high-priest*, properly so called, at a time; that minister being typical of the one Mediator between God and man. The most probable solution therefore of the difficulty in the text, is, that Annas was the *high-priest*, and Caiaphas his *sagan*, or deputy; to whom also the title of high-priest might, in an improper or secondary sense, be given. Aaron, the high-priest, left two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar; Eleazar, the eldest, obtained the sacerdotal tiara by birth-right; but under the judges it was translated from his family to that of his brother; for Eli, who was both high-priest and judge, is not mentioned among Eleazar's posterity; (see 1 Chron. vi. 4, &c.) So that he must have been of Ithamar's family, as indeed Josephus expressly affirms. Accordingly, Ahimelech, the father of that Abiathar (1 Sam. xxii. 20.) whose deposition by So-

lomon is declared to have been an accomplishment of the word of the Lord concerning the house of Eli, 1 Kings, ii. 26, 27. and who, for that reason, must have been one of Eli's descendants, is said to have been of the stock of Ithamar, 1 Chron. xxiv. 3. But the high-priesthood passed from one family to the other more than once; either through the legal incapacity of him to whom it appertained by right of succession, or by the decree of the chief magistrates, who seem to have claimed the disposal of this dignity; for it was brought back to the family of Eleazar, in the person of Zadok, by Solomon, 1 Kings, ii. 27—35. In latter times, the high-priesthood was possessed by the Asmonæans, who were neither of the one family nor the other, but common priests of the course of Joarib. The dignity of the high-priesthood made him who enjoyed it, whether he was of the posterity of Eleazar or Ithamar, the first of the sacerdotal order; the head of the other family being second only, and next to him. It is supposed that the prophet Jeremiah speaks of both, when he mentions a *chief-priest* and a *second priest*, ch. lii. 24. In like manner, notwithstanding Abiathar, of the line of Ithamar, was deposed from the high-priesthood, he is honoured with the title which in those days was given to the high-priests, and set almost on an equality with his successor Zadok, of the line of Eleazar, 1 Kings, iv. 4.—and *Zadok and Abiathar the priests*. If therefore Caiaphas was the *second priest*, as is probable from his succeeding Annas, he might be called the *high-priest* in a less proper sense. Or, if Annas was removed, and Caiaphas succeeded him before the year expired, they might both properly be said to have been *high-priests that year*: but though Annas was deposed to make way for Caiaphas, he was restored to his dignity soon after our Lord's death, Acts, iv. 6. It should be observed, that those who once bore the office of *high-priests* always retained the title afterwards; and Annas having enjoyed it before Caiaphas, might for that reason have been honoured with the title. It has been suggested, that Annas represented *Moses*, as the *nasi*, prince, or head of the Sanhedrim; and Caiaphas *Aaron*, as the proper high-priest; and that they both continued in their office till the death of Christ. See John, xviii. 13.

*Ver. 3. And he came into all the country about Jordan*] What St. Luke terms *the country about Jordan*, St. Matthew calls *the hill-country of Judea*: their accounts may be illustrated from Josephus, who tells us, that the mountains above Jericho ran north as far as Scythopolis, and south to the territory of Sodom, at the bottom of the Asphaltic lake: opposite to this there was another range of mountains on the other side of Jordan, beginning at Julias, where the river falls into the sea of Galilee; and extending themselves southward to the extremity also of the Asphaltic lake. The plain between these mountains, and through which the Jordan ran, was called *the Aulon*, also the *Campus Magnus*, or *Great Plain*; and is often mentioned in the Jewish history. According to Josephus, the

11 He answereth and saith unto them,  
 ' He that hath two coats, let him impart to  
 him that hath none; and he that hath meat,  
 let him do likewise.

12 ' Then came also publicans to be bap-  
 tized, and said unto him, Master, what shall  
 we do?

13 And he said unto them, ' Exact no

<sup>9</sup> James 2. 15, 16. & 1. 27. <sup>1</sup> John, 3. 17. & 4. 20. <sup>1</sup> Peter, 4. 8. <sup>2</sup> Cor. 8. 14. Ch. 11. 41. <sup>1</sup> Tim. 6. 18. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 21. 31, 32. & 8. 10.  
 Ch. 7. 29, 30. & 15. 1, 2. & 5. 27—32. <sup>1</sup> Ch. 19. 8. Mic. 6. 8. Mat. 7. 12. <sup>1</sup> Tim. 6. 8.

length of the *Aulon* was from the village of Ginnabris, to the northern extremity of the Asphaltic lake, and measured 1200 stadia; but its breadth between the mountains was only 120 stadia. The Scriptures, however, extend the *Campus Magnus* to the southern extremity, or bottom of the Dead Sea; Deut. xxxiv. 1—3. which for that reason they call *the sea of the plain*. There is another *Campus Magnus* mentioned by Josephus, called also *The Plain of Esdraelon*, from the city of *Jerzeel*. This plain extended itself from Scythopolis on the east, to the plain of Ptolemais, or Acre, on the west. The plain of Acre on the north was bounded by a range of hills, and to the south by mount Carmel, but eastward it was joined to the plain of Esdraelon by a narrow way. Besides the above-mentioned, there is a large extent of flat country lying along the Mediterranean, from mount Carmel to the utmost boundary of the land southward. In this plain there were no mountains, only a few sandy hillocks, such as at *Joppa*, on which Gath of the Philistines is said to have been built. These were all the remarkable plains in the land of Israel; the rest of the country was high and mountainous, having but small openings or flats between the ridges of the hills. With respect to the Jordan, we learn from Josephus, as well as from other modern travellers, that it was a very large and rapid river. See his Wars, B. iii. c. 18. Shaw's Travels, p. 373. Maundrell's Journey, p. 81. and the notes on Josh. iii. 13. Jer. xlix. 19. The particular part of the river where John baptized was called *Bethabara*, or *the house of the passage*; either because the Israelites anciently passed over at that place, or because it was the common fording or ferrying place, to and from Judea. On either supposition, the banks of the river there must have been free of wood, and not so steep as those described in the place above referred to. If Bethabara was the place where the people under Joshua passed the river, it stood directly opposite to Jericho. If it was the then common ferrying-place, we may suppose that the Baptist chose it for the sake of making himself better known, and that he might have an opportunity of addressing greater numbers of his countrymen, as they travelled from one part of the country to another.

*Preaching the baptism of repentance*] John being called to prepare the Jews for the reception of the Messiah, he achieved this work through divine grace, by pressing all ranks of men to *repent*,—*Metanoia*, that is to say, to alter their practical judgments concerning things, and to be suitably affected with remorse and shame for their guilt and past misconduct: but the Baptist did not stop here; he required all his hearers to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*; (ver. 8.) that is, enjoined them to make a thorough reformation in their lives: and all this is well

described, and fully expressed, in the metaphorical language of the prophet, quoted in the next verses. The Baptist inculcated likewise this doctrine by the rite of baptism, which represented the nature and necessity of repentance to men's senses, as his sermons set these things before their understandings. See the note on Matth. iii. 2. and on Isaiah, xl. 3.

*Ver. 6. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God*] The evangelist seems to have quoted these words from Isaiah, lii. 10. though they may very well agree with Ch. xl. 5. where the prophet says, *all flesh shall see it together*, that is to say, *the glory of the Lord*, amply revealed in the *salvation of mankind*. See Ch. ii. 30. St. Luke seems to have taken in this part of the prophecy, which is omitted by St. Matthew, in order to point out its accomplishment, by the admission of the Gentiles into the church of Christ; for it plainly appeared to every discerning believer, at the time when he wrote, that *all flesh was to see the salvation of God, and to partake, if faithful, of its inestimable benefits*.

*Ver. 7. O generation] Ye brood*. Some would read the last clause, *τις ὑποδείξει*;—*Who will warn you to flee?* A mere servile fear of punishment, says Dr. Heylin, was not a sufficient motive to a total reformation, and would soon wear out of their minds; John therefore censures it as defective.

*Ver. 10. What shall we do then?*] *Ποιήσωμεν*, the same word as that used in ver. 8. and rendered *bring forth*; and consequently it should be translated in the same manner, to make the propriety of the reply more conspicuous.—*Bring forth therefore fruits, ver. 8.*—*Ver. 10. What fruits shall we bring forth?*

*Ver. 12. Then came also publicans*] The publicans, or tax-gatherers, willing by all means to keep their places under the Messiah, might be anxious to know what qualifications were necessary for that purpose: or rather, since our Lord hath elsewhere declared, that the tax-gatherers, with the rest of the people, were sincere in their professions of repentance, Matth. xxi. 32. we may believe that the gravity of the Baptist's exhortation, the vehemence with which he delivered his threatenings, and his character for sanctity, accompanied with the power of divine grace, affected them to such a degree, that many, who till then had looked on ceremonial righteousness as a principal requisite to salvation, sensible of their error, came to him, and said, "If matters be so, what must we do?" Indeed the tax-gatherers and others, who thus addressed the Baptist, were, in general, people of infamous characters; yet he did not, like the Pharisees, shun their company for that reason: on the contrary, he received them with great humanity, and recommended to them equity in the discharge of their office, *Exact no more, &c.* that is to say, "In levying the taxes, compel no man to pay you more  
 " than

more than that which is appointed you.

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, \* Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your † wages.

15 ¶ And as the people were \* in expectation, and all men † mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: † he shall

baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

17 \* Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

19 ¶ † But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

20 Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

\* Mat. 8. 5. & 27. 34. Acts. 1. † Lev. 19. 11, 12. † 1 Tim. 6. 8—10. \* Or put no man in fear. † Or allowance. \* Or in suffrage.  
 John. 1. 19—21. † Or reasoned, or debated. † Mat. 3. 11, 12. Mark. 1. 7, 8. John. 1. 15, 26, 33. Acts. 13. 24, 25. & 19. 4. & 1. 5. & 11. 16.  
 † 16. 4. 3. 4. Joel. 2. 28. Mal. 3. 2. 3. John. 7. 39. Acts. 1. 5. & 2. 4, 17. & 10. 45. & 11. 16. 1 Cor. 12. 13. Prov. 12. 23.  
 † Mat. 3. 12. & 13. 30. Mic. 4. 12. Mal. 3. 3. & 4. 1. 1. i. xxi. cx.  
 † Mat. 14. 3, 4. & 11. 2. Mark. 6. 17, 18.

“than his just proportion of the sum which you are allowed by the law to raise.”

Ver. 14. *And the soldiers likewise*] It was the custom of the Romans to recruit their armies in the conquered provinces; wherefore, as the Jews did not scruple to engage in a military life, many of them might now have been in the emperor's service. Or we may suppose, that after Judea was made a province, the Romans took into their pay the Jewish troops which Herod and his son Archelaus had maintained; for it is certain that the soldiers who now addressed the Baptist were not heathens, otherwise his advice to them would have been, that they should relinquish idolatry, and embrace the worship of the true God. The word rendered *do violence*, *διασίωντε*, properly signifies *to shake*, and sometimes “to take a man by the collar and shake him:” and it seems to have been used proverbially for that violent manner, in which persons in this station of life are often ready to bully those about them, whom they imagine their inferiors in strength and spirit; though nothing is an argument of a meaner spirit, or more unworthy that true courage which constitutes so essential a part of a good military character. The word *συκοφαντείν*, which we render *to accuse falsely*, answers to the Hebrew *שָׁקַף*, *shakaf*, and signifies not only to accuse falsely, but to circumvent and oppress. “Do not turn informers and give false evidence against innocent persons, in order that, with the protection of law, you may oppress them, and enrich yourselves with their spoils.” He adds, *and be content with your wages*: “Live quietly on your pay, and do not mutiny, when your officers happen not to bestow on you donations and largesses to conciliate your favour.” It seems the Baptist, in his exhortations to penitents who asked his advice, did not follow the example of the Jewish teachers; for he was far from recommending the observation of ceremonies, and the little precepts of man's invention. He attended to the character of the persons; he considered the vices to which they were most addicted; and he strenuously enjoined the great

duties of justice, charity, moderation, and contentment, according as he found those who applied to him had failed in them; and so by giving Pharisees, Sadducees, publicans, soldiers, and all sorts of persons, instructions adapted to their circumstances and capacities, he prepared them for receiving the Messiah, who he was sure would soon appear, although he did not know the person particularly who was to sustain that high character.

Ver. 15. *And as the people were in expectation,*] John had now acquired an extraordinary reputation by the austerity of his life, the subject of his sermons, the fervency of his exhortations, and the freedom, impartiality, and courage with which he rebuked his hearers: yet his fame received no small addition from the various rumours current in the country at that time; for the vision, which his father Zacharias had seen in the temple, the coming of the Eastern philosophers to Jerusalem, the prophecies of Simeon, the discourses of Anna, the perplexities of Jerusalem, and Herod's cruelty, though they had happened full thirty years before this, must still have been fresh in the memories of the people, who, no doubt, applied them all to John. Their *expectations* therefore being raised to a very high pitch, they began to think he might be the Christ, and were ready to acknowledge him as such: so that had he aspired after grandeur, he might, at least for a while, have possessed honours greater than any of the sons of men could justly claim. But the Baptist was too strictly virtuous and holy, to assume what he had no title to; and therefore he declared plainly, that he was not the Messiah, but the lowest of his servants; one sent to prepare the way before him. See the next verse.

Ver. 17. *Purge his floor,*] *Cleanse, &c.*  
 Ver. 18. *Preached he*] *ἠγγέλιζεν*, *He evangelized*, or preached as an evangelist. See Ch. ii. 10. It is observable, that in the parallel place; Matth. iii. 1. the word *κηρύσσει* is used, which implies the notice given by Christ's herald, who is sent before to make preparation for his prince, and to announce his approach. Dr. Doddridge renders

21 ¶ Now when all the people were baptized, ' it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a

voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art ' my beloved Son ; in thee I am well pleased.

23 ¶ And Jesus himself began to be about ' thirty years of age, being (as was supposed)

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 3. 13—17. Mark, 1. 9—11. John, 1. 29—34. Mat. 7. 7, 11. 17. & 16. 16. & 17. 5. & 12. 18. Ch. 9. 35. <sup>a</sup> Peter, 1. 17. Col. 1. 13.

If. 11. 2. & 61. 1. John, 12. 28. <sup>c</sup> Gen. 41. 46. Num. 4. 39. 53.

<sup>d</sup> Pl. 2. 7. If. 43. 1. Mat. 3.

ders and paraphrases the present verse thus : *and offering many other exhortations to them, to the same effect, he published to the people these glad tidings of the Messiah's approach, and endeavoured to prepare them to receive him in a proper manner.* Dr. Heylin renders it, *And with many other exhortations, he preached the gospel to the people :* for, says he, the doctrine of a second baptism, or purification, &c. is purely evangelical.

*Ver. 21. Now when all the people were baptized,] Now while all the people were receiving baptism.* Heylin. If we reflect on the number of the people who followed John, and were baptized by him, and the regard which they expressed for him before and after his death, and yet that no sect was produced in consequence of such a belief and baptism, it will afford a very good argument in favour of the superior power, dignity, character, and office of Jesus. It is observable, that all the three voices from heaven, by which the Father bore witness to Christ, were pronounced while he was praying, or very quickly after it. Compare Ch. ix. 29—35. and John, xii. 38.

*Ver. 22. Thou art my beloved Son ;] See on Matth. iii. 17.* The epithet *beloved* given to the Son on this occasion, marks the greatness of the Father's affection for him, and distinguishes him from all others to whom the title of *God's Son* had been given. Accordingly we find our Lord alluding to it with peculiar pleasure, in his intercessory prayer, John, xvii. 26. It was therefore the voice of God the Father which was heard at Christ's baptism ; probably loud like thunder, as in the instance recorded by John, xii. 29. making a sound which no human organ of speech was able to form, and consequently it could not be mistaken for the whispering voice of any of the multitude present, see Prov. viii. 30. to which it is thought the voices allude. *The Son of God* was one of the Messiah's known titles, founded on Psalm, ii. 7. Isaiah, vii. 14. where it is expressly attributed to him ; and therefore, according to the received language of the Jews, Jesus was on this occasion declared from heaven to be their long expected Deliverer, and his mission received a most illustrious confirmation from the Father Almighty ; a confirmation, on which Jesus laid great stress, as absolutely decisive, John, v. 37. For, lest the people might have applied the words of the voice to the Baptist, the Holy Spirit alighted upon Jesus, and remained visible for some time in that singular symbol, see John, i. 33. which probably surrounded his head in the form of a large glory, and pointed him out as God's beloved Son, in whom the richest gifts and graces resided. Thus all present had an opportunity to hear and see the miraculous testimony ; particularly the Baptist, who, as soon as

he beheld the Spirit remaining upon Jesus, is supposed to have made use of the words, *This is he of whom I spake, &c.* John, i. 15. The descent of the Spirit on Jesus was predicted Isaiah, xlii. 1. lxi. 1. In like manner, the voice from heaven is supposed to be predicted Psalm ii. 7.

*Ver. 23. And Jesus himself began to be, &c.] Our Lord having received these different testimonies from his Father, from the Spirit, and from John the Baptist, all given in the presence of the multitudes assembled to John's baptism, began his ministry when he was about thirty years old, the age at which the priests entered on their sacred ministrations in the temple. See the beginning of the first note on this chapter. To understand St. Luke's account of our Lord's age at his baptism aright, we must take notice, that his words stand thus in construction: *Καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀρχόμενος, ἦν ὡσεὶ ἑτῶν τριάκοντα:* and *Jesus himself, when he began, was about thirty years of age ;* that is to say, when he began his ministry,—in opposition to the commencement of the Baptist's ministry, the history of which is given in the preceding part of this chapter. In Acts, i. 21, 22. we read, *Wherefore, of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning [ἀρχόμενος,] from the baptism of John unto the same day that he was taken up from us, &c.* Here Christ's ministry is evidently said to have commenced at the baptism of John,—the time that John baptized him, and to have ended at the day of his ascension. The author of the Vindication of the beginning of St. Matthew's and St. Luke's Gospels, would render the words, *and Jesus was obedient* (or lived in subjection to his parents) *about thirty years :* and he produces several passages from approved Greek authors, in which ἀρχόμενος signifies *subject* ; but in all these places it is used in some connection or opposition, which determines the sense, and therefore none of them are instances parallel to this ; and since the evangelist had before expressed our Lord's subjection to his parents by the word ὑποτασσόμενος, Ch. ii. 51. there is great reason to believe that he would have used the same word here, had he intended to give us the same idea. With what amazement should we reflect upon it, that the blessed Jesus, though so early ripened for the most extensive services, should live in retirement even till the thirtieth year ! that he deferred his ministry so long, should teach us not to thrust ourselves forward to public stations, till we plainly discover a divine call. That he deferred it no longer, should be an engagement to us to avoid unnecessary delays, and to give God the prime and vigour of our life. Our great Master attained not, as it seems, to the conclusion of *his thirty-fifth year*, if he so much as*

entered

'the son of Joseph, which was *the* son of Heli,

24 Which was *the* son of Matthat, which was *the* son of Levi, which was *the* son of Mel-

† Mat. 13. 55. Mark, 6. 3. John, 6. 42. Ch. 4. 22. ‡ Sen-in-law. The 40 men here mentioned from Joseph to David, were Christ's natural progenitors by his mother: whereas those mentioned by Matthew, Ch. 1. 6—16. were ancestors in office, and progenitors of Joseph his supposed father.

entered upon it; yet what glorious achievements did he accomplish within those narrow limits of time! happy that servant who with any proportionate zeal dispatches the great business of life!

Being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph,] I. In the first place, with respect to the genealogies of St. Matthew and St. Luke, we may observe, that St. Matthew opens his history with our Lord's genealogy, by Joseph his supposed Father; St. Luke gives us his genealogy on the mother's side. The words before us, properly pointed and translated, run thus; being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli. He was the son of Joseph by common report; but in reality the son of Heli, by his mother who was Heli's daughter. We have a parallel example, Gen. xxxvi. 2. where Aholibamah's pedigree is thus deduced; Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon; for, since it appears from ver. 24, 25. that Anah was the son, not the daughter of Zibeon, it is undeniable that as Moses calls Aholibamah the daughter both of Anah and of Zibeon, because she was the grand-daughter; so Jesus is fitly called the son of Heli, because he was his grandson. However, the common pointing and construction of the passage may be retained, consistently with the present opinion; because though the words the son of Heli should be referred to Joseph, they may imply no more than that Joseph was Heli's son-in-law, his son by marriage with his daughter Mary. The ancient Jews and Christians understood this passage in the one or other of these senses; for the Talmudists commonly call Mary by the name of Heli's daughter. In proof of what we have advanced above, we observe that the two genealogies are entirely different, from David downward; and that if, as some have supposed, these genealogies exhibit Joseph's pedigree only, the one by his natural, the other by his legal father, the natural and legal fathers would have been brothers, when it is plain they were not; Jacob, Joseph's father in St. Matthew, being the son of Matthan, the son of Eleazar; whereas Heli, the father supposed to be assigned by St. Luke, was the son of Matthat, a different person from Matthan, because the son of Levi. And further, on this supposition we should be altogether uncertain whether our Lord's mother, from whom alone he sprang, was a daughter of David; and consequently could not prove that he had any other relation to David, than that his mother was married to one of the descendants of that prince. Let the reader judge whether this fully comes up to the import of the passages of Scripture which tell us, he was made of the seed of David. Rom. i. 3. Acts, ii. 30.

II. Taking it for granted, then, that St. Luke gives our Lord's real pedigree, and St. Matthew that of his supposed father, it may reasonably be asked, why St. Matthew has done so? To which it may be replied, that he intended to remove the scruples of those who knew that the Messiah was to be the heir of David's crown; a reason, which appears the stronger, if we suppose with some learned writ-

ters, that St. Matthew wrote posterior to St. Luke, who has given the real pedigree. Now, though Joseph was not Christ's real father, it was directly for the evangelist's purpose to derive his pedigree from David, and shew that he was the eldest surviving branch of the posterity of that prince; because, that point established, it was well enough understood that Joseph, by marrying our Lord's mother, after he knew she was with child of him, adopted him for his son, and raised him both to the dignity and the privileges of David's heir; accordingly, the genealogy concludes in terms which imply this; Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus. Joseph is not called the father of Jesus, but the husband of his mother Mary; and the privileges following this adoption will appear to be more essentially connected with it, if, as is probable, Joseph never had any child: for thus the regal line of David's descendants by Solomon, failing in Joseph, his rights were properly transferred to Jesus, his adopted son, who indeed was of the same family, though by another branch. St. Matthew therefore has deduced our Lord's political and royal pedigree, with a view to prove his title to the kingdom of Israel, by virtue of the rights which he acquired through his adoption; whereas St. Luke explains his natural descent in the several successions of those from whom he derived his human nature, down to the Virgin Mary. See the note on Matth. i. 16.

III. Our Lord's genealogy given by St. Luke, will appear with a beautiful propriety, if the place which it holds in his history is attended to. It stands immediately after Jesus is said to have received the testimony of the Spirit, declaring him the Son of God (which includes his being the true Messiah), and before he entered on his ministry, the first act of which was, his encountering with and vanquishing the strongest temptations of the arch enemy of mankind. Christ's genealogy by his mother, who conceived him miraculously, placed in this order, seems to insinuate that he was the seed of the woman, which, in the first intimation of mercy vouchsafed to mankind after the fall, was predicted to bruise the serpent's head. Accordingly, St. Luke, as became the historian who related Christ's miraculous conception in the womb of his mother, carries his genealogy up to Adam, who together with Eve received the before-mentioned promise concerning the restitution of mankind by the seed of the woman. That the genealogy, not only of our Lord's mother, but of his reputed father, should have been given by the sacred historians, was wisely ordered; because the two, taken together, prove him to be descended from David and Abraham in every respect, and consequently that one of the most remarkable characters of the Messiah was fulfilled in him; the principal promises concerning the great personage, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, having been made to those patriarchs in quality of his progenitors. See Gen. xxii. 18. Pf. cxxxii. 11, 12. and Matth. i. 1.

chi, which was *the son* of Janna, which was *the son* of Joseph,

25 Which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Amos, which was *the son* of Nahum, which was *the son* of Essi, which was *the son* of Nagge,

26 Which was *the son* of Maath, which was *the son* of Mattathias, which was *the son* of Semei, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Juda,

27 Which was *the son* of Joanna, which was *the son* of Rhesa, which was *the son* of <sup>h</sup> Zorobabel, which was *the son* of Salathiel, which was *the son* of Neri,

28 Which was *the son* of Melchi, which was *the son* of Addi, which was *the son* of Cosam, which was *the son* of Elmodam, which was *the son* of Er,

29 Which was *the son* of Jose, which was *the son* of Eliezer, which was *the son* of Jorim, which was *the son* of Matthat, which was *the son* of Levi,

30 Which was *the son* of Simeon, which was *the son* of Juda, which was *the son* of Joseph, which was *the son* of Jonan, which was *the son* of Eliakim,

31 Which was *the son* of Melea, which was *the son* of Menan, which was *the son* of Matathatha, which was *the son* of <sup>i</sup> Nathan, which was

*the son* of David,

32 Which was *the son* of Jesse, which was *the son* of Obed, which was *the son* of Booz, which was *the son* of Salmon, which was *the son* of Naasson,

33 Which was *the son* of Aminadab, which was *the son* of Aram, which was *the son* of Elrom, which was *the son* of Phares, which was *the son* of Juda,

34 <sup>l</sup> Which was *the son* of Jacob, which was *the son* of Isaac, which was *the son* of Abraham, <sup>m</sup> which was *the son* of Thara, which was *the son* of Nachor,

35 Which was *the son* of Saruch, which was *the son* of Ragau, which was *the son* of Phalec, which was *the son* of Heber, which was *the son* of Sala,

36 Which was *the son* of \* Cainan, which was *the son* of Arphaxad, which was *the son* of Sem, <sup>n</sup> which was *the son* of Noe, which was *the son* of Lamech,

37 Which was *the son* of Mathusala, which was *the son* of Enoch, which was *the son* of Jared, which was *the son* of Maleleel, which was *the son* of Cainan,

38 Which was *the son* of Enos, which was *the son* of Seth, which was *the son* of Adam, <sup>o</sup> which was *the son* of God.

<sup>h</sup> Whether Zorobabel and Salathiel are the same as those in Mat. 1. 12, 13. 1 Chr. 3. 17, 19. Ezra, 3. 2. is uncertain. <sup>i</sup> 1 Chr. 3. 5. & 14. 4. 2 Sam. 4. 11. Zech. 12. 12. <sup>k</sup> 1 Chr. 2. 4, 5, 9—15. Mat. 1. 3—6. Ruth. 4. 18—12. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 1. 2. 1 Chr. 2. 1. & 1. 34. Gen. 2. 3. & 25. 26. & 29. 35. Acts. 7. 8. Heb. 11. 8—21. <sup>m</sup> Gen. 11. 10—26. 1 Chr. 1. 24—28. <sup>n</sup> This name ought to be thrown out, as it is not found in the correspondent lists. <sup>o</sup> Gen. 1. 26, 27. & 2. 7. & 5. 1, 2. Acts, 17. 26. 1 Cor. 15. 45. 1 Tim. 2. 14. If. 64. 8. Gen. 3. 15.

IV. Bishop Burnet, speaking of the authentic tables which, according to the custom of the Jewish nation, were preserved with the greatest accuracy, observes, that had not the genealogy of Christ been taken exactly according to the temple registers, the bare shewing of them had served to have confuted the whole. For, if any one thing among them was clear and uncontroverted (the sacred oracles excepted), it was the register of their genealogies; since these proved that they were Abraham's seed, and likewise made out their title to the lands, which from the days of Joshua were to pass down either to immediate descendants, or, as they failed, to collateral degrees. Now this shews plainly, that there was a double office kept of their pedigrees; *one* was natural, and might be taken when the rolls of circumcision were made up; and the *other* relative to the division of the land; in which, when the collateral line came instead of the natural, then the last was dropped, as extinct, and the other remained. It being thus plain from their constitution, that they had these two orders of tables, we are not at all concerned in the diversity of the two evangelists on this head; since

both might have copied them out from those two offices at the temple; and if they had not done it faithfully, the Jews could have authentically demonstrated their error in ascribing to our Saviour by a false pedigree, that received character of the Messiah,—that he was to be the son of David. Therefore, since no exceptions were made at the time when the sight of the rolls must have ended the inquiry, it is plain that they were faithfully copied out; nor are we now bound to answer such difficulties as seem to arise out of them, since they were not questioned at the time in which only an appeal could be made to the public registers themselves.

*Ver. 36. Which was the son of Cainan.*] This Cainan is found only in the LXX: but all the other names, from Abraham back to Adam, are found also in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, in the like order as St. Luke has placed them; and all the names from David back to Abraham are the very same as are mentioned in St. Matthew's genealogy.

*Ver. 38. Adam, who was the son of God.*] Adam being descended from no human parents, but formed by the immediate

CHAP. IV.

*The temptation and fasting of Christ: he overcometh the devil: beginneth to preach. The people of Nazareth admire his gracious words: he cureth one possessed of a devil, Peter's mother-in-law, and divers other sick persons. The devils acknowledge Christ, and are reproved for it: he preacheth throughout the cities.*

[Anno Domini 29.]

AND <sup>a</sup> Jesus, being <sup>b</sup> full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was <sup>c</sup> led by the spirit into the <sup>d</sup> wilderness,

2 Being forty days <sup>e</sup> tempted of the devil. And <sup>f</sup> in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward <sup>g</sup> hungered.

3 And the devil said unto him, <sup>h</sup> If thou be the Son of God, <sup>i</sup> command this stone that it be made bread.

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, <sup>k</sup> It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 4. 1—11. Mark, 1. 12, 13. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 3. 22. Mat. 3. 16. Mark, 1. 10. John, 1. 32. & 3. 34. If. 61. 1. & 11. 2—4. <sup>c</sup> 1 Kings, 18. 11. Ezek. 3. 14. & 8. 3. & 11. 1, 24. & 40. 2. & 43. 5. Acts, 8. 39. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 1. 80. & 3. 2. Joshua, 15. 61. <sup>e</sup> Heb. 2. 18. & 4. 15. Gen. 3. 15. <sup>f</sup> Exod. 34. 23. Deut. 9. 9, 18. 1 Kings, 19. 8. <sup>g</sup> Mark, 1. 13. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 4. 2. & 21. 18. John, 4. 6. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 4. 3. & 3. 17. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 2. 8. Gen. 18. 14. <sup>l</sup> Deut. 8. 3. Exod. 23. 25. Ch. 12. 15. 1 Tim. 4. 5. Prov. 10. 22. & 30. 8.

mediate power of the divine creating hand, might with peculiar propriety be called *the Son of God*, in his original state, the heir of immortality and glory. The evangelist might likewise intend by this expression to prove, if need were, the possibility of Christ's being born of a pure virgin; for if divine Omnipotence could create or produce the first Adam from the dust of the earth, without a parent, it was equally capable of producing the second Adam from the womb of a virgin. Wetstein observes, that St. Matthew, writing for the Jews, deduces our Saviour's pedigree from Abraham to David; but St. Luke, writing for the Gentiles, traces his pedigree as high as Adam, the common father of mankind, to shew that Jesus is the Saviour of the world, born for the common good of the human race: and when he calls Adam *the son of God*, he means to express that Christ, born of the virgin, is the second Adam, and that his birth, by the Holy Spirit, is a no less singular instance of the divine power, than was the creation of the first Adam.

*Inferences drawn from Ver. 23—38. of this chapter.*— We have before observed, that when we survey such a series of generations as this before us, it is obvious to reflect, how, like *the leaves of the tree, one passeth away, and another cometh*. Of those who formerly lived upon the earth, and perhaps made the most conspicuous figures, how many are there whose names have perished with them! how many, of whom only the name is remaining! and in this view, how vain is the search after posthumous fame, a desire to render ourselves conspicuous to future ages!

It is observable, that all which the divine wisdom has been pleased to tell us concerning Methuselah, the oldest of the sons of men, is, that at the age of 187 he begat a son called Lamech; that after this he begat other sons and daughters; that he lived 969 years, and that he died. Gen. v. 25—27. This is the whole history of his life and actions; and it is a picture of the generality of mankind, who think themselves of great consequence in the world. They marry, and are given in marriage; they perform the common offices of nature; and all that their posterity is like to know of them is, perhaps, barely their names, in a genealogy like that before us; or, at most, the number of years they lived, the names of the children they begat, and possibly the sum total of the wealth they

left behind them, after a painful and penurious life. Now, who would wish for such a fame as this! Or who would desire to be so impertinently remembered for circumstances which do no honour to his memory?

It would be well, therefore, if those who are fond of a posthumous acquaintance with mankind would seriously consider with themselves, from a review of their character, in what light they may suppose posterity will regard them. They should consider and examine, whether they are masters of the amiable and useful qualities of the genuine Christians; and whether, if their actions were drawn out to view, and the sources of them opened, they would appear to flow from pure motives, and tend to promote the glory of God and the good of mankind: if not, their names are not worth preserving, and silence is the best compliment that can be paid them.

There are others, of a more lively and active turn indeed than the former; yet they are as far from entertaining any pious and truly Christian sentiment, or doing any thing more agreeable to their holy calling: I mean those who are led away by their sensitive appetite, and who have a great alacrity in all brutish pleasures; pretenders to wit and humour, ridiculers of the preachers of righteousness, and far gone in those fashionable vices which erewhile caused the universal deluge. What a mortifying reflection must it be to a polite and well-bred sinner, to consider, that even at that awkward age, before the modern arts of gallantry probably were in being, iniquity should be carried to so great a height, that it was very near extirpating the species! surely nothing can give us so mean an idea of the pretensions of our men of pleasure, as to compare them with an antediluvian reprobate.

Whatever we may fancy of our refinements upon wickedness, it will appear that we can no more out-act the vices than the virtues of our predecessors. Some advantages our ancestors before the deluge certainly had above any of their puny successors: they had a long scene of life before them, to perpetrate and lengthen out their pleasures; and as their bodies were more durable than ours, so were they likewise proportionably more robust, since it requires less natural vigour to support a man to the age of eighty or ninety, than eight or nine hundred years. How then must it have moved the scorn of one of these ancient libertines, to see a creature so full of weakness and infirmity,

5 <sup>1</sup> And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, <sup>2</sup> All this

<sup>1</sup> Mat. 4. 8, 9. 2 Cor. 4. 4. 1 Cor. 7. 31. 1 John, 2. 15, 16. Eph. 6. 12. <sup>2</sup> John, 8. 44. 2 Cor. 11. 14. Rev. 20. 2, 3. & 13. 2, 7.

infirmity, pretending to primitive vigour and activity, and aping his strong progenitors!

If the abandoned could be persuaded to think seriously of their condition; if they would look backward upon what they have been doing, and forward to what they have to do; if they would reflect upon the transitory nature of their enjoyments, and the certainty of either a weak old age, or an immature and hasty death; they could not, if they had the least degree of gracious sensibility, withstand the terrors of so powerful a conviction. Alas! if we speak truth, when we tell one of this stamp and character that he must die at last, what matters it how long his life is? What matters the youth and beauty, the strength and vigour that he enjoys!

But where is the voluptuous libertine that lives out even half his days! how often is he cut off in a midnight revel, or in prosecuting a criminal amour! the pains and infirmities of age are his portion even in the bloom of youth. His vigour is worn out at once, and the rest of his days are but labour and sorrow,—under the fears of quitting even this wretched being, and of entering into another more dreadful and discouraging! Disabled for the pleasures of this life, he has no relish for the happiness of a better; and the most that can be said of him is, that he lives under a perpetual uncertainty whether he should wish to live or die. What an abject state of mind! thus to linger upon the brink of a precipice, when we are sure that we must take the leap at last!

There is not in nature a more melancholy consideration than is afforded to us by a poor wretch of this stamp. His youth is despicable, but his old age is almost beyond contempt. At the same time he sees that he is the jest of fools, and scarcely pitied by the wife and good; the scorn and derision of all around him, and not so much as the favourite of himself. What horror, to be conscious that no one values or esteems him, and, at the same time, to be conscious that he deserves it all! to have out-lived the capacity of enjoying life, and yet to be convinced by every thing he hears and sees, that it is time for him to quit the stage and make room for others!

This indeed is the case of the wicked only—of those particularly who are full of youthful follies. But old age is far from being an object of desire, even in its best and most venerable circumstances. How often do we see the ruins of an excellent understanding, so disfigured and defaced with age as to be a reproach to human reason! and who knows how soon he himself may sink down to circumstances as miserable and disgraceful? Who would accept of life upon such ignominious terms? Surely none can be so fond of this present world, but those who *fear* to venture upon another!

The happiness and value of human life therefore consists not in the number of years, but in the internal experience of the life of God, and in the outward manifestation of every divine grace and virtue. It is but a passage to a

better state; and he who has his eye fixed upon his journey's end, will never be offended at the shortness of it.

Methuselah, we read, lived 969 years; Enoch but 365. One of them secured a blessed immortality; he *walked with God, and was translated*: concerning the other, we only know that *he died*. Need I put the question to any one, Whether, at first sight, he would rather be Methuselah or Enoch?

Thus much for human life in general; and as to the titles and marks of honour that distinguish us from each other in it, however they may divide the world, yet how very soon will they be extinguished! what do we know of these patriarchs before us?—And what a poor idea must we form hence of all our little strifes and competitions! Are any of these worthies either the better or the worse for the high or low stations which they possessed in life?—Their fortunes are now determined:—*Their love also, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.* Eccles. ix. 6.

And such will be the state of all the great ones whose names now fill the world with wonder. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them. And is it worth while then for an ambitious spirit to rend the world into parties, for the sake of so short-lived a glory?

Vain and despicable indeed is all sublunary glory depending on the breath of men. But religion opens to us a new scene of ambition, in the realms of bliss, by recommending to us beings of a superior character. The time will come, when, if it be not our own fault, we shall be removed from the groveling pursuits of this transitory life, to the society of the glorified saints and angels of God. The reason why we are so apt to be unmoved with these thoughts in our lifetime, is, because they are so refined and abstracted, and we so fallen and carnal. But the day will arrive, when the partition between the two worlds will be broken down, and all the tribes of intellectual beings be laid open to our view; and, if we be faithful to the grace of God, we *shall know, even as also we are known*: we shall then with ever-waking eyes behold the glories of our blessed Redeemer, who will be the joy of our hearts to all eternity; when the frail monuments of which the world is so proud shall for ever be buried in oblivion.

To conclude. If we desire that our lives here may not be useless, let us, under the aid and blessing of heaven, fill them up with acts of love, charity, and benevolence. If we would avoid being bewitched with pleasure, let us begin to despise it while young: If we will provide against the miseries of age, let us, through the grace of God, arm ourselves with early piety; if we be fond of rank and precedence, let us consider that death will level us; nay, and if we be desirous of fame upon earth hereafter, let us reflect that we shall be incapable of enjoying it. *In short,*

power will I give thee, and the glory of them : for that is delivered unto me ; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt \* worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him,

\* Or fall down before me.

short, let us all remember, that we are intended for another life, and let us fix all our hopes of happiness, of fame, and of pleasure there; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Great expectations had been raised concerning the son of Zacharias from his infancy; and now he appears to answer them.

1. The time of his entering publicly on his ministry, is here observed. It was in the reign of Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip of Iturea, and Lysanias of Abilene. They were called tetrarchs, either as having each the fourth part of what was under the dominion of Herod the Great, or as standing in the fourth rank of governors, which are reckoned thus; the emperor, proconsuls, kings, tetrarchs. They were all foreigners, a mark of the sad subjection of the Jewish people, now reduced entirely under the Roman yoke, the sceptre being finally departed from Judah, and the very kingly office abolished in Judea:—*Annas and Caiaphas being the high-priests*, not that they both bore that office at the same time, but Annas had been, and Caiaphas was now in that station; or as some suppose, Annas was the *sagan*, or chief of the priests, who stood next to the high-priest in rank and honour. See the Annotations.

2. The origin and tendency of his ministry is declared. *The word of God came unto John in the wilderness*, he was inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to go forth, being endued with extraordinary gifts and graces, and possessed of the spirit of prophecy; and hereupon leaving the solitude where he had hitherto abode, he came into a more populous part of the country near to Jordan, preaching publicly the necessity of repentance, and admitting to his baptism those who made profession of it, as the sign and seal of the remission of their sins. *Note*; All who repent truly of their sins, and by faith turn to Jesus, are assured of their pardon.

3. John herein eminently fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, chap. xl. 3—5. He was *the voice of one crying in the wilderness*, loud and vehement, *prepare ye the way of the Lord into your hearts*; by a deep and humbling sense of your sins *make his paths straight*; let every obstruction from pride and ignorance be removed, as the harbinger clears the way for the entry of the king. *Every valley shall be filled*, the lowly and depressed with sin shall be raised up by pardoning grace and divine consolations; *and every mountain and hill shall be brought low*, the proud and self-righteous shall be humbled into the dust of humiliation, or sunk into the belly of hell; *and the crooked shall be made straight*, the perverse dispositions and conduct of sinners shall by divine grace be rectified; *and the rough ways shall be made smooth*, the most untractable spirits softened and subdued, or every

difficulty in the way of men's receiving the Messiah shall be removed. *And all flesh*, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, *shall see the salvation of God*; multitudes of all nations, ranks, and ages, will embrace the gospel of Jesus, and partake of his eternal redemption.

4. He addressed himself with very awakening language to the multitude who came to him. He charges them as a *generation of vipers*, full of venom, hypocrisy, and Satanical subtilty; and asks, *who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* from the national judgments ready to descend upon them, or the more terrible and eternal vengeance hanging over every guilty sinner's head? He warns them therefore of the necessity of a speedy and real change of heart and life, evident in the fruits of all holy conversation and godliness; without which, their boasted privilege as Abraham's descendants would profit them nothing, but rather aggravate their guilt. God wanted them not; he could, and would, from stones, from Gentiles, raise up a more illustrious and numerous race, the heirs of Abraham's faith, his spiritual children, who should supply their place, if they continued hypocritical and impenitent: now therefore the call of mercy was sent to them, that they might prevent their impending doom, before the axe of divine vengeance was laid to their roots; and they, as barren trees, were cut down and cast into the fire, utterly destroyed as a nation; and as the sinners of old, suffering also the vengeance of eternal fire. *Note*; (1.) The sinner has no moment to lose; death and judgment are at his heels. (2.) No outward privilege can profit those whose hearts remain unrenewed and unholy. (3.) True repentance will be seen by its fruits; the change will be internal, universal, evident. (4.) It is a fearful thing for an impenitent soul to fall into the hands of the living God.

5. The Pharisees and Sadducees were probably disgusted at these hard sayings, and left him; but the people, the publicans and soldiers, were deeply affected, and earnestly solicitous to know what those fruits of repentance were, which they were required to produce: and a blessed symptom it is of real penitence, when we are thus diligent to inquire what is the mind of God, and really disposed through grace to follow it. To these, therefore, John directs his instructions, suited to their several circumstances and temptations.

[1.] To the people in general, he recommends a liberal distribution to the necessities of their brethren; supplying them according to their ability with food and raiment; and where the call was urgent, straitening themselves, rather than suffer their neighbours to perish with cold, or be famished with hunger: and a truly charitable soul is not only to its power, but sometimes above its power, willing.

[2.] To the publicans, the collectors of the public taxes, many of whom were Jews, he gave in charge, that they should use no exaction, nor levy more than the government demanded. Their employment, though in general odious

<sup>a</sup> Get thee behind me, Satan : for it is written,  
<sup>o</sup> Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and  
 him only shalt thou serve.

<sup>9</sup> And he brought him to Jerusalem, and  
 set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said  
 unto him, <sup>9</sup> If thou be the Son of God, <sup>1</sup> cast

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 16. 23. James, 4. 7. <sup>1</sup> Pet. 5. 9. <sup>o</sup> Deut. 6. 13. & 10. 20.  
<sup>9</sup> 8. 29. Heb. 4. 15. & 2. 17, 18. <sup>1</sup> John, 8. 44. <sup>1</sup> Peter, 5. 8.

<sup>1</sup> Sam. 7. 3. Mat. 4. 10. <sup>9</sup> Job, 1. 12—19. & 2. 6. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 3. 17.

to the people, was not in itself unlawful, while they demeaned themselves in it with justice and integrity.

[3.] To the soldiers, who seem to have been also Hebrews, perhaps the guards of Philip, or Herod, he said, *do violence to no man*, extort nothing from the people by threatening, behave not insolently nor outrageously in your quarters : when employed in war, use no unnecessary devastations, nor wanton cruelty ; *neither accuse any falsely*, neither their comrades to their officers, nor the people where they might be stationed, through malice, or for the sake of money ; *and be content with your wages*, neither increasing them by plunder, nor seeking to advance them by mutiny ; a caution well deserving the notice of all servants, who, if once they give way to discontent, will soon be tempted to use unlawful means to gratify their covetousness.

2dly, We have;

1. The general expectations which the people were in of the Messiah. The sceptre was departed from Judah, and the prophecies of Daniel concerning him now required his coming ; which made many turn their eyes to John, who appeared with marks of such singular distinction, and spoke with such authority and zeal, that they began to think that this might be the long-expected Messiah.

2. John immediately undeceived them, disclaiming all pretensions to that honour ; and directs them to expect shortly the *Great Prophet*, whose forerunner he was. The meanest office under him he acknowledges himself unworthy to discharge ; and his baptism was not worthy to be compared with the more powerful and efficacious influences of that Holy Ghost, which, under the ministry of Jesus, should be abundantly dispensed, and act, like fire, with astonishing energy upon the souls of men. By *his gospel* he would make a thorough separation between the faithful and the hypocrites ; and by *his judgments* on the Jewish people sweep them away as the chaff before the fan : and, when he has gathered in his saints, the wheat, into his garner ; the wicked, the self-righteous, and the apostate, will be cast into the everlasting burnings,—an awful declaration, which deserves the most awakened attention. These and many other things did John with great freedom and fidelity deliver, preaching the glad tidings of the gospel (*εὐαγγέλιον*) to the people, and urging upon their consciences the importance of the truths that he declared. Such ministers ought all who are put in trust with the gospel to be ; affectionate, zealous, indefatigable, free, copious, evangelical. Then may we expect to reap the fruit of our labours, in a harvest of immortal souls.

3. After a short but glorious course of about a year and a half, a sudden stop is put to the Baptist's ministry by a most unjust imprisonment. Unable to flatter, yea, zealous to reprove the most exalted sinners, Herod the tetrarch escaped not his sharp rebukes for the complicated crime of taking his brother Philip's wife, and marrying her during

his life ; thus joining incest to adultery ; and for all the other evils which Herod had done, which were many and notorious. Exasperated at this plain and faithful dealing, he added this to all his other wickedness, that he shut up John in prison, and after a while was prevailed upon to take away his life. *Note* ; (1.) When God's ministers are thus compelled to an involuntary silence, their sufferings speak as loud as their sermons. (2.) Mysterious are the ways of Providence. The excellent of the earth become a prey to persecutors, who triumph at their fall. Where, will some say, is the God of judgment ? Wait a moment. The mystery will soon be unfolded.

3dly, The evangelist finishes the history of John's ministry, which continued near a year after Christ's baptism, before he enters upon the public appearance of Jesus.

1. After a multitude of others had been baptized, at last Jesus also comes to John, and is baptized of him in Jordan : when, looking up in prayer to his Father, instantly the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost in a bodily shape descended upon him, both to qualify him for his mediatorial work, and to be a sign to John that he was the Messiah ; which was farther confirmed by an audible voice from heaven, God the Father testifying his delight in this Son of his love, and his perfect satisfaction in his undertaking. *Note* ; (1.) Christ prayed, to set us the example. In this way the communion between earth and heaven is to be maintained. (2.) If God be well pleased in his Son, then may we confidently rest our souls on him as our Saviour, and never doubt of his willingness and power to save to the uttermost.

2. The age and pedigree of Jesus are recorded by the evangelist. He was about thirty years of age when he entered on his public ministry, descended from David by his mother's side, as well as by Joseph's his reputed father. See the Annotations.

#### CHAP. IV.

*Ver. 2. Being forty days tempted, &c.]* Where he was forty days, and he was tempted by the devil. Bengelius and Heylin. See Matth. iv. 2, 3. For notes on this remarkable transaction we refer to that chapter and the *Inferences* drawn from it, and also the *Inferences* from the present chapter.

*Ver. 5. The devil, taking him up into a high mountain, &c.]* This temptation is placed the last of the three in St. Matthew. To reconcile the evangelists, it is observed, that St. Matthew recites the temptations according to the order in which they occurred ; for he plainly affirms this order by the particle *then*, ver. 5. and *again*, ver. 8. and at the conclusion of the temptation (relating to Christ's casting himself down from the *pinnacle or wing of the temple*) that *then the devil left him*. In this order, considering the natural temper of the Jews, they appear to rise progressively in strength one above another ; St. Matthew therefore having preserved the true order of the temptations, St. Luke must

thyself down from hence :

10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee :

11 And in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, ' It is said, ' Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

13 And <sup>2</sup> when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

14 ¶ <sup>1</sup> And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee : and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And <sup>2</sup> he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 ¶ And he came to <sup>2</sup> Nazareth, where he

<sup>1</sup> Pf. 91. 11, 12. <sup>1</sup> Tim. 3. 16. Heb. 1. 14. <sup>1</sup> Ver. 3, 8. Rom. 15. 4. Eph. 6. 17. <sup>1</sup> Deut. 6. 16. Mat. 4. 7. <sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 10. 9. Heb. 3. 8, 9. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 4. 11. Mark. 1. 13. James, 4. 7. John, 14. 30. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 4. 12. Mark. 1. 14. John, 4. 43. Mat. 4. 23—25. Acts, 10. 37, 38. <sup>2</sup> 16. 61.—; & 52. 13. & 54. 13. & 48. 17. & 50. 4. <sup>2</sup> Mat. 13. 54. Ch. 1. 26, 27. & 2. 39, 51. Mat. 2. 23. Mark, 6. 1.

be supposed to have passed it over, as a thing not very material; and the supposition may be admitted without weakening his authority in the least; for he connects the temptations only by the particle *naí*, which imports, that he was tempted so and so, without marking the time or order of the temptations as St. Matthew does. If the reader be of a different opinion, he must suppose, with Toinard, that the temptation to idolatry was twice proposed, once before Jesus went with the devil to the temple, as the order observed by St. Luke may imply; and again when he was returning from the temple, to receive new testimonies from the Baptist and make disciples at Jordan, the devil taking him a second time into the mountain for that purpose. As it seems unlikely that the devil should have shewed Christ the kingdoms of the earth in a moment, strictly speaking, some would place a comma at *world*, referring the words *in a moment* to the celerity with which Christ was carried to the mountain: *The devil, taking him up into an high mountain in a moment of time, shewed him,* &c.

*Ver. 6. For that is delivered unto me, &c.]* Grotius has well observed, that this contains a vile insinuation, that God had done what no one who truly understands the nature of God and the creature can suppose possible; namely, that he had parted with the government of the world out of his own hands: and we may add to this, that in the text which Christ has quoted, there is enough to overthrow that notion; since God's appropriating to himself the worship of all his creatures, plainly implies his universal empire and dominion over all, and the regard that he has to the religious observation thereof and the obedience of all the subjects of his kingdom. It is remarkable, that among other things which several heathen writers learned from the primitive Christians, this was one; to represent evil spirits as tempting men from their duty by worldly riches and grandeur; over which, Porphyry in particular says, they often would pretend to much more power than they really had. We may observe from this verse, that the impudence of the tempter is boundless: he promises liberally what is peculiar to God to give; and, in return, asks what is due to God alone,—religious worship; that is, an acknowledgment, not of his being the first cause of all things, the Maker, Preserver, and Governor of the universe,—for on this very occasion he confessed that what he had was *delivered unto him*;—but an acknowledgment

of his being lord of the world, so far as to dispense its joys to whomsoever he pleased. Which acknowledgment implied likewise a promise of submission to the measures, which he, as lord of the world, should prescribe.

*Ver. 12. Thou shalt not tempt, &c.]* See on Matth. iv. 7. To tempt God, in the sense in which the phrase is here used, is, to make an improper trial of his power. The expression of our Saviour may likewise be interpreted, as signifying that the scripture forbids us to prescribe to God in what instances he shall exert his power; and as we are not to rush into danger without a call, in expectation of extraordinary deliverance, so neither are we to dictate to divine wisdom what miracles shall be wrought for men's conviction. Probably in this and the preceding temptations the devil transformed himself into an angel of light, or assumed the appearance of a good spirit, hoping the better to deceive Jesus. See the *Inferences*.

*Ver. 13. He departed—for a season.]* This implies that he assaulted him afterwards; see John, xiv. 30. We may therefore believe, that he was not much wiser for the trial which he now made. It is true, we find the devils more than once confessing our Lord in the course of his ministry; but it does not thence follow, that they were fully satisfied of his character. If they suspected him to be the Messiah, they might give him the title, in order to make his enemies believe that he acted in concert with them. Besides, towards the conclusion of his ministry, we find the devil active in procuring his death; which he could not have been, had he known who our Lord was, or understood the method in which the redemption of the world was to be accomplished. It cannot be denied, indeed, that the devils had some knowledge of God's merciful intentions to save the world by his Son. At the same time it is equally true, that the knowledge of this grand event was very imperfect, the prophecies relating to it having been all along conceived in such terms, as made it difficult, if not impossible, to understand them *fully* in all their parts, till the events explained them; probably on purpose that evil spirits might not have it in their power to frustrate the beneficent work, in the execution of which, contrary to their dispositions, they were to be active; and in which God did not judge it proper to act by a constant exertion of omnipotence.

*Ver. 15. Being glorified of all.]* With universal applause. Heylin.

*Ver.*

had been brought up: and, as his custom was, and <sup>b</sup> stood up for to read.  
 he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, 17 And there was delivered unto him the

<sup>b</sup> Neh. 8. 5, 6. Acts, 13. 15, 16. & 17. 2.

*Ver. 16. He went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, &c.]* They who are acquainted with Jewish literature know, that the five books of Moses have long ago been divided in such a manner, that by reading a section of them every sabbath, the whole is gone through in the space of a year. For though the sections or *parashoth* be fifty-four in number, by joining two short ones together, and by reading the last and the first in one day, they reduce the whole within the compass of the year. It is generally thought that Ezra was the author of these divisions; and that the Jews from his time read Moses publicly on the sabbaths, till Antiochus Epiphanes prohibited that part of their service on pain of death. Awed by the terror of so severe a punishment, the Jews forbore reading their *law* for a time, and substituted in its place certain sections of the prophets, which they thought had some affinity with the subjects handled by Moses; and though more peaceable times came, in which they again brought the law into their worship, they continued to read the prophets, joining the two together, as is evident from St. Luke's account of the synagogue service, Acts, xiii. 15. By the rules of the synagogue, any person whom the directors called up, might read the portion of scripture allotted for the service of the day. Our Lord therefore read, by the appointment of those who presided in the service. Vitringa, indeed, and Surenhusius imagine, that he did not officiate on this occasion in the low capacity of a reader, but as a teacher; alleging, that none of the circumstances which usually attended the reading of the law are to be found here; particularly, it is not said that Jesus was called to read; nothing is spoken of the benedictions with which this part of the service was accompanied; and only one verse, with part of another, was read. Vitringa also affirms, that, as far as he knows, the passage which he mentioned makes no part of any section of the prophets now read in the synagogue. *De Vet. Synag.* p. 1000.—But the first objection proves too much; for the fore-cited passage, Acts, xiii. 15. shews that a call from the rulers was necessary to a person's preaching in the place of public worship. It is therefore strange that Vitringa should have insisted on the omission of this circumstance, to prove that Jesus now performed the office, not only of a reader, but a teacher: the truth is, an omission of this kind can prove nothing at all, as it is well known that the evangelists, in their narrations, have omitted many circumstances which really existed. But to pass this, the historian himself appears to have determined the matter in dispute; for he says expressly, that *Jesus went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read*; which seems to imply, that he did read the section for the day, and that he was authorized to do so. The reason is, it does not appear that any portion of scripture was used in the synagogue-service besides the appointed sections, the *shemas* excepted, which were three passages in the books of Moses, beginning with the word *shema*, whose signification is *Hear thou*, and which were written on the phylacteries. See on Matth. xxiii. 5. As

for the benedictions, it was quite foreign to the evangelist's purpose to take notice of them at all; and that there was only one verse read, with a part of another, if I mistake not, Vitringa will find it hard to prove from any thing that St. Luke has said. He tells us, that Jesus *stood up for to read, ver. 17. and there was delivered to him the book of the prophet Isaias*; and when he had opened the book, he found the place.—No sooner had he separated the two rolls of the volume, (*αναπτύξας το βιβλιον*) than that lesson of the prophet presented itself—*where it is written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*. Therefore, since the evangelist says expressly that Jesus *stood up for to read*, those who understand the customs of the synagogues, and the manner in which the books of the ancients were written and rolled up, must acknowledge that what he read was in all probability the section for the day, which presented itself of course, and that he did not deliver the book to the minister till he had finished it. For, consistently enough with these suppositions, St. Luke might characterize the lesson read, by that particular passage of it which Jesus chose to make the subject of his sermon to the congregation, especially as that sermon occasioned his removal to Capernaum, which was the principal point that the historian had in view.—To Vitringa's last argument it may be replied, that though the passage read should not be found in any section of the prophets read at present in the synagogue, it will by no means follow, that it was not used in the synagogue anciently; especially as it is well known that all the Jews do not now observe one rule in this matter: nor, though they were perfectly agreed about the lessons, should the practice of men, who in many instances have deviated from the institutions of their fathers, outweigh, in a matter of antiquity, the testimony of an author who lived in the age that he wrote of, and who could not but know the form of worship then practised. Nevertheless, if the reader be pleased to consult the table printed at the end of Vender Hooght's edition of the Hebrew Bible, he will find that Isai. lxi. 1. according to the custom of all the synagogues, falls to be read with the fiftieth section of the law. For the section of the prophets corresponding with the fiftieth section of the law, begins at Isai. ix. 1. and ends where the next section begins, viz. at lxi. 11. It was therefore the section for the day which Jesus read in the synagogue of Nazareth:—If so, the chronology of this part of the history is determined; for the first section of the law being anciently read on the fifth sabbath of Tisri, the seventh month, according to our September, because Ezra, the father of the synagogue, began the public reading on the first day of that month, (Neh. viii. 2.) the fiftieth section, with its corresponding passage in the prophets, fell to be read on the last sabbath of August, or the first of September. The Jews at present begin the law, answering to the primitive institution of Moses, Deut. xxxi. 10, 11. on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, that is, the twenty-second day of Tisri. By this commencement it was a week or two later in the year when our Lord read the scriptures publicly in the syn-  
 gogue

book of the prophet Esaias: And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to

the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the 'acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

<sup>c</sup> If. 6. 1-3. & 42. 1-7. & 50. 4. Pf. 45. 2, 7. Dan. 9. 24. Acts, 10. 38. Mat. 11. 5. John, 3. 16, 17. & 5. 24, 25. & 6. 27, 40. If. 42. 6, 7. & 49. 6, 8, 24-26. <sup>a</sup> Lev. 25. 8. 2 Cor. 6. 2. If. 63. 4. & 47. 8. Ch. 19. 42.

gogue of Nazareth, was expelled the town, and fixed his residence at Capernaum. We may just remark further, that the attitude observed in reading the Scripture was *standing*; but when they commented upon or explained what had been read, they sat down. There was a settled reader in every synagogue, but it was likewise customary to compliment any person with this honour, though a stranger, provided he was any way famous for his mental abilities or gravity; therefore, though Jesus was not one of the stated ministers of religion in the town of Nazareth, the office now assigned him was agreeable to the regulations of the synagogue. Perhaps the rulers, having heard the report of his miracles, (see ver. 14.) and of the Baptist's testimony concerning him, were curious to hear him read and expound the scriptures, and the rather, because it was well known in Nazareth that he had not had the advantage of a learned education. Some would point the latter part of this verse thus: *He went into the synagogue, as he was wont to do, on the sabbath-day, and stood up to read.*

Ver. 17-19. *When he had opened the book, &c.*] *Ἀνοίξας τὸ βιβλίον, unrolling the volume.* The sacred books were written anciently on skins of parchment, and sewed together; and the books thus written were rolled up into volumes like the Pentateuchs used by the modern Jews in their synagogues. The reader will find a full account of them in Jones's Vindication of St. Mathew's Gospel, ch. xv. As the scriptures were read in order, the passage of the prophet Isaias which fell of course to be read in the synagogue of Nazareth that day, would naturally present itself on separating the two rolls of the book. This happened to be the celebrated prediction, Isai. lxi. 1. in which the Messiah is introduced describing his own mission, character, and office; the reader is referred to our notes on that chapter. The doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity is often interwoven, even in those scriptures where one would least expect it. We have a clear declaration of the great THREE-ONE in the words before us.—*The Spirit—of the Lord—is upon Me; because he hath anointed me, that is, commissioned me—to preach the Gospel to the poor, that is to say, the meek and lowly in heart.* To one who considers the matter attentively, it must appear an unspeakable recommendation of the gospel economy, that it offers the pardon of sin and salvation to all, on the same terms. The rich here have no pre-eminence over the poor, as they seem to have had under the law, which prescribes such costly sacrifices for the atonement of sin as were very burdensome to the poor. The prophet Isaias, therefore, in describing the happiness of gospel-times, very fitly intro-

duces the Messiah mentioning this as one of the many blessings which would accrue to the world from his coming; that the glad tidings of salvation were to be preached by him and his ministers to the poor, and consequently were to be offered to them *without money, and without price*, Isai. lv. 1. Instead of *recovering of sight to the blind*, which is in the LXX, the Hebrew copies of Isaias have, *and the opening of the prison to the bound*. Some render the clause in Isaias, *and to the prisoners broad day-light, or open vision*. The last clause in the 18th verse is neither in the LXX, nor in the original Hebrew. We find it indeed in Isai. lviii. 6. where the LXX have the very words. The 18th verse contains a magnificent description of the Messiah's miracles and mighty works: all that he needed to do, for the deliverance of such persons as were *held captives*,—or, as the apostle expresses it, were *oppressed of the devil*, Acts, x. 38.—was to *preach* (*ἠνεγγεῖλαι*), to *proclaim*, or *declare* them *delivered*. In like manner, to *give recovery of sight to the blind*, or to work any other miracle of healing, no more was requisite, but that he should speak the word. It is observable, that in this description of the Messiah's ministry, Isaias has alluded to the manners of the easterns, who in ancient times were so inhuman as to lead captive into far distant lands those whom they conquered. Their principal captives they cast into prison, loaded with irons, which sorely bruised their bodies; and to render them incapable of raising fresh disturbances, or it may be to increase their misery, they sometimes put out their eyes. In this manner Nebuchadnezzar treated Zedekiah. Wherefore, as the Messiah in many other prophecies had been represented under the notion of a great and mighty conqueror, Isaias, in describing his spiritual triumphs, with great propriety introduces him declaring, that he was come to subdue the oppressors of mankind, and to deliver from captivity and misery those wretches whom they had enslaved, by opening the prison-doors, healing the wounds and bruises occasioned by their chains, and even by giving sight to those whose eyes had been put out in prison. Some, understanding this prophecy in a literal sense, are of opinion, that it foretels the alteration which by the Christian religion has been made in the policy of nations, but especially in the manner of making war, and of treating the vanquished, in both which much more humanity is now used than anciently, to the great honour of the Christian institution, and of its Divine Author; and this sense we have no objection to including in the passage, though not as the primary or most important one.

Ver. 20-22. *And sat down.*] In agreement with the custom

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months,

when great famine was throughout all the land;

26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

\* Mark, 6. 2, 3. Mat. 13. 54. Pf. 45. 2, 4. Prov. 10. 32. If. 50. 4. Ch. 46. 47. John, 7. 46. & 1. 14. f Mark, 6. 3. Mat. 13. 55. John, 6. 42. g Mat. 4. 13. & 13. 54. John, 7. 3, 4. h Mat. 13. 57. Mark, 6. 4, 5. John, 7. 44. & 6. 42. i 1 Kings, 17. 9. & 18. 1. James, 5. 17, 18. k 2 Kings, 5. 14. l Eliha. 1 Kings, 19. 19—21. 2 Kings, ii—viii. xiii. m 2 Chron. 16. 10. Acts, 7. 54. & 22. 22. n John, 8. 5. 24, 25. & 10. 32. & 8. 37, 40, 59. o Or edge.

custom which we have spoken of at the end of the note on ver. 16. our Lord sat down to preach, after he had read the passage in the prophet which he made the subject of his discourse. The custom of preaching from texts of scripture, which now prevails throughout all the Christian churches, seems to have derived its origin from the authority of this example. In speaking to the congregation from the prophesy, he told them, it was that day fulfilled in their ears, ver. 21. for although no miracle had been done in their city, they were credibly informed of many which had been wrought by him; and, it may be also, at the passover had seen him do such things as fully answered the prophet's description of the Messiah. By some illustration of this kind, Jesus proved his assertion in a sermon of considerable length, the subject of which only is mentioned by St. Luke, though at the same time he leads us to think of the sermon itself; for he tells us, ver. 22. that all the congregation bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. The phrase in the original, λογους της χαριτος, signifies literally, words of grace, and probably refers to the agreeable manner of Christ's discourse, as well as to the matter of it. And as they could not but take notice of the majesty and grace with which he spoke, so it must naturally fill them with admiration, considering the meanness of his birth and education. At the same time, the malevolence of their disposition led them to mingle with their praises a reflection, which they thought fully confuted his pretensions to the Messiahship, and shewed the absurdity of the application which he had made of Isaiah's prophesy to himself as the Messiah.—They said, Is not this Joseph's son? See John, vii. 27. and the next note.

Ver. 23—27. And he said unto them, &c.] When our Lord came to Galilee, with a view to exercise his ministry, he did not go to Nazareth: on the contrary, he passed by it, and went straight to Cana, which lay not far from Sidon. See John, ii. 1. This exasperated the Nazarenes. Be-

sides, he had not performed any miracle in their town; far less had he done any like that which they heard he had performed in Capernaum, where he cured the nobleman's son without stirring from Cana. It seems they thought, since their townsman could so easily give health to the sick at a distance, there ought not to have been so much as one diseased person in all Nazareth. At least our Lord's own words suggest this conjecture: He said unto them, Ye surely say to me, (for so it should be rendered) ye apply to me this proverb,—which was a common one among the easterns, Physician, heal thyself. Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country, plainly alluding to the cure of the nobleman's son; as if they had said, "Since thou possessest powers so great, and art able to cure sick persons at a distance, we cannot help thinking, that in thine absence thou oughtest to have recovered the sick of thy native city, rather than those of any other town; it being expected of every physician, that he will bestow his healing virtue and his art upon his own relations and friends who need it, sooner than upon strangers." In answer to their ill-natured whispers, Jesus told them plainly, that his character would suffer nothing by their rejecting him; because it had ever been the lot of prophets to be despised in their own country, ver. 24. and see on Matth. xiii. 57. And with relation to his having wrought no miracle of healing in their town, he insinuated, that the very heathens were more worthy of favours of this sort than they, to such a pitch of wickedness had they proceeded; in which respect they resembled their ancestors, whose great sins God reproved by sending his prophets to work miracles for heathens, rather than for them, in a time of general calamities, ver. 25—27. By putting them thus in mind of Elijah's miracle in behalf of the widow of Sarepta, a heathen inhabitant of a heathen city, in a time of famine, while many of Israel were suffered to starve; and of Elijah's miracle upon Naaman, the Syrian leper, while many lepers in Israel remained un-

30 \* But he passing through the midst of them went his way,

31 † And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

\* John, 8. 59. & 7. 50. & 10. 39. Pf. 31. 15. † Mat. 4. 13. Mark, 1. 21.

cleansed; he shewed them both the sin and the punishment of their ancestors, and left it to themselves to make the application. St. James speaks of the same period of time, that the heavens were shut up in the days of Elijah, ch. v. 17. as our Lord does, ver. 25. which is grounded either on our Lord's authority here, or was a circumstance, probably, established by tradition: for in both places it is spoken of as a thing well known; nor can we doubt but the account is very exact, though the time is not determined in the Old Testament. Dr. Lightfoot and others have observed, that there is somewhat remarkable in this circumstance of time, as it agrees with the continuance of Christ's public ministry, that as Elijah shut up heaven by his prayers, so that it rained not upon the earth for the space of three years and six months; so from the baptism to the death of Christ the heavens were opened for a like space of time, when his doctrine dropped as the rain, and his speech distilled as the dew. God sent Elijah to Sarepta, a Gentile city in the coasts of Sidon, and so made him the first prophet that was ever sent among the Gentiles; and when our Lord himself went among the Gentiles, it was into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, to shew mercy to a poor woman, as Elijah had done to a poor widow; thereby giving a tacit intimation of the mercy intended to be shewn to the Gentiles. See the note on Matth. xiii. 58.

Ver. 30. *Passing through the midst, &c.*] In the midst of the confusion our Lord escaped, probably by making himself invisible: but though we cannot certainly determine, whether the miracle lay in this, or in our Lord's assuming some other form, or in affecting their eyes and ears in such a manner that they should not know him; it is unquestionable that there was something miraculous in the case; and therefore the Nazarenes could no longer complain that he had wrought no miracle among them. Compare ch. xxiv. 16. John, viii. 59. and 2 Kings, 18—20.

Ver. 31. *To Capernaum,*] Capernaum is no where mentioned in the Old Testament, either by its own name, or by any other. Probably it was one of those towns which the Jews built after their return from Babylon. Its exact situation has not yet been determined with certainty by geographers; only, from its being on the confines of the tribes, Rehad and others conjecture that it stood somewhere on the north-west shore of the lake of Genesareth. According to Josephus, (Bell. b. iii. c. 18.) the length of this lake was a hundred furlongs, or twelve miles half, and its breadth forty furlongs, or five miles. It says it was sixteen miles long and six broad. Another name of the lake of Genesareth was called the Sea of Chinnereth. Numb. xxxiv. 11. but in latter times it was named the Sea of Galilee, because that country formed part of its name—and the Sea of Tiberias, from the city of Tiberias on the south-west coast thereof. Its bottom is gravel, and gives its water both a good colour and taste. The Jordan runs through the middle of it, and stocks it with a great variety of excellent fish. In the countries round

this lake our Lord spent two or three years of his public life; and though he afterwards enlarged the compass of his journies, yet they always enjoyed a considerable share of his blessed company and divine instructions. There were several reasons which might determine Jesus to be so much about the sea of Gallilee. 1. The countries which surround this sea were large, fertile, and populous, especially the two Galilees. For, according to Josephus, (Bell. l. iii. c. 2.) they alone had many towns and a multitude of villages, the least of which contained above 15,000 souls. On the east side of the lake were Chorazin, Bethsaida, Gadara, and Hippon; on the west, Capernaum, Tiberias, and Tarrichea, with other places of inferior note. Wherefore, as it was agreeable to the end of Christ's coming, that his doctrine should be spread extensively, and his miracles wrought publicly, no country could be a better scene for his ministry than this. Besides its numerous inhabitants, there were at all times many strangers resorting to the trading towns on the lake, who, after hearing Jesus preach, could carry home with them the glad tidings of salvation, which were the subject of his sermons. Capernaum, chosen by Christ as the place of his residence, was a town of this kind, and much frequented. 2. The countries round the lake were remote from Jerusalem, the seat of the scribes and Pharisees, a most malignant sort of people, who would not have borne with patience the presence of a teacher held in such estimation as Jesus deservedly was. We know this by what happened in the beginning of his ministry, when he made and baptized many disciples in Judea. They took such offence at it, that he judged it expedient to leave the country: John, iv. 1. compared with ch. iii. 22. Wherefore, as it was necessary that he should spend a considerable time in preaching and working miracles, both for the confirmation of his mission, and for the instruction of his disciples in the doctrines which they were afterwards to preach, these countries were, of all others, the most proper for him to reside in; or rather, they were the only places where he could be with safety for any time unless he had used his divine power for his own protection. 3. It was agreeable to the end of our Lord's mission, that he should be in a low station of life; because to have affected pomp and grandeur was inconsistent with the character of a teacher sent from God. Some readers, perhaps, will be here pleased to be informed, that Plato, drawing the character of one perfect in virtue, says, "He must be poor, and void of all recommendation but virtue alone." *Repub.* 2. That the duties of his ministry might be executed as extensively as possible, he and his disciples were obliged to make long journies, the fatigue of which would have been too great for ordinary constitutions to have sustained, had they been all performed on foot. This inconvenience was remedied by the easy passages which the lake afforded. Hence the countries round it were chosen by him as a scene of his ministry, preferably to the other parts of the land of Israel. Farther, as the multitude earnestly wished that he would take

32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

33 ¶ And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

34 Saying, \* Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

35 And <sup>u</sup> Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had <sup>x</sup> thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36 <sup>y</sup> And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he com-

mandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

37 <sup>z</sup> And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

38 ¶ <sup>a</sup> And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

39 <sup>b</sup> And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: <sup>c</sup> and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

40 ¶ <sup>d</sup> Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

41 ¶ <sup>e</sup> And devils also came out of many,

\* Mat. 7. 28, 29. Mark, 1. 22. Ch. 5. 17. John, 6. 61. Titus, 2. 15. 1 Thess. 1. 5. <sup>f</sup> Mark, 1. 23—28. 1 Pet. 5. 8. <sup>g</sup> Or *ostendit*.  
<sup>h</sup> Mark, 1. 24, 34. & 5. 7. Mat. 8. 29. Ver. 41. <sup>i</sup> Pf. 16. 10. Daniel, 9. 24. Ch. 1. 35. Acts, 4. 27. & 2. 31. <sup>j</sup> Ver. 14. Mark, 1. 25, 34. & 3. 11, 12. Acts, 16. 17, 18. Pf. 50. 16. <sup>k</sup> Mark, 1. 26. & 9. 26. Ch. 9. 39, 42. & 11. 22. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 12. 23 & 9. 33. Mark, 1. 27. & 7. 37. & 9. 25. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 4. 23—25. & 9. 31. Song, 1. 3. Micah, 5. 4. If. 52. 13. <sup>n</sup> Mark, 1. 29—31. Mat. 8. 14, 15. <sup>o</sup> Ex. d. 15. 26. Rev. 16. 9. Pf. 103. 3. & 147. 3. & 107. 20. <sup>p</sup> Pf. 103. 1, 2. & 116. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 14. Ch. 8. 3. <sup>q</sup> Mat. 8. 16, 17. Mark, 1. 34—34. with 21. 1. & 3. 2. Luke, 14. 1. Gen. 49. 10. Mat. 11. 5. & 4. 23. <sup>r</sup> Mark, 1. 34. & 3. 11, 12. See ver. 34, 35. Acts, 16. 17, 18.

the title of king, and set up a secular empire, it was necessary, according to the mode which he had prescribed for his own conduct, that he should have the opportunity of retiring from them when they became troublesome. Accordingly, we find him and his disciples making their escapes by the lake; passing easily and speedily in their own boats, from one country to another, as occasion required. 4. Capernaum, of all the towns near the lake, was pitched upon by Jesus as the place of his ordinary residence after his expulsion from Nazareth, because he was sure of meeting with a favourable reception there. He had gained the friendship of the principal family in the city; viz. that of the nobleman, whose son he had cured at Cana: and the good-will which this family, with its relations, bare to him, was not an ordinary kindness, like that which persons bear to a benefactor; but, being struck with the miracle, they firmly believed him to be the Messiah, heartily espoused his cause, and, no doubt, were ready to assist him on all occasions. Besides, this miracle must have conciliated the love and respect of the inhabitants of Capernaum, to whom it could not but be well known. Nor must we omit the foreknowledge which Jesus had of his being to gain the favour of a Roman centurion, (Matth. viii. 5, &c.) and of a ruler of the synagogue, (Mark, v. 22.) both living in this town, whose friendship likewise would protect him from the insults of his enemies. To conclude, Capernaum was a place where the men dwelt who had become his disciples immediately after his baptism, and whose presence he chose to have very frequently, before he called them to leave their families, and attend upon him constantly. But we must ever remember that all this arose primarily from his not judging it expedient to use the power of his supreme Godhead on trivial occasions.

Ver. 32. *They were astonished*] *They were powerfully struck, or much affected.* See ch. ii. 47, 48.

Ver. 35. *Had thrown him in the midst,*] See on Mark, i. 26. The meaning of the last words seems to be, *and did him no further harm*; Μηδεν ελαψαν αυτον; for while the convulsion continued, it must have given him some pain, and might have been attended with lasting disorder, had not the restraining power of Christ prevented it.

Ver. 38. *And Simon's wife's mother*] *For, &c.*

Ver. 39. *Rebuked the fever,*] This is an expression of the same kind and signification with *rebuking the winds and the sea*, Matth. viii. 26. Not that either the one or the other was considered by Christ as persons; but it intimates his authority over all diseases, and over the elements, being analogous to the figurative expressions of scripture, which represent, not only all inanimate creatures as God's servants, but diseases, famines, pestilence, &c. as executioners waiting on him to inflict punishment upon rebellious sinners. Thus Habakkuk, iii. 5. *Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet*; a figure which excellently represents the divine power, to which all things are subject. See Pf. civ. 7. cvi. 9. We may remark, that this cure was effected in an instant, and not slowly, like the cures produced in the course of nature, or by medicine; for though the length and violence of her distemper had brought her into a weak and languid state, her full strength returned all at once, inasmuch that, *rising up immediately*, she prepared a supper for them, and *served them while at meat*, shewing that she was restored to perfect health.

Ver. 41. *And devils also came out of many,*] See ch. xi. 14. It is to be considered, that the view under which Christ is frequently represented, is as the great antagonist of the prince of darkness; and the gospel has its foundation in the victory which Satan has gained over mankind. Compare Gen. iii. 15. Matth. xii. 28, 29. 1 John, iii. 8. Heb. ii. 14. and Rom. xvi. 20., as also Matth. vi. 13. John,

erying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking *them* suffered them not \* to speak : for they knew that he was Christ.

\* Or to say that they knew him to be Christ.

John, xvii. 15. Ephes. vi. 16. and 1 John, ii. 13, 14. iii. 12. v. 18, 19. in all which places the original *ὁ πονηρὸς* seems to signify the *wicked one*, that is, the devil, whose powerful influence over men is intimated or expressed in each of them. And it appears from Wisd. ii. 24. that the Jews before Christ's time held this sentiment, and considered the wicked as taking part with the devil. The words are, *Through envy of the devil came death into the world, and they who hold of his side do find it.* The inspired texts above shew that the expression is just; and it was certainly on this account a most wise and gracious dispensation to permit the devil about this time to give some unusual proofs of his existence, power, and malice, in thus attacking men's bodies; which might convince them what a dangerous enemy he was to their souls, and what need they had of the power and patronage of Christ; and the sensible victory of Christ in these dispositions could be a proof and specimen of that illustrious and comitate triumph over the devil and his confederate powers, which our Lord's mediatorial kingdom is to end. No kind of miracles therefore could be more fit to attest his mission, and to promote his interest among men; and hence it is that hardly any are more frequently and circumstantially described. This seems a sufficient answer to the objection proposed by Dr. Mede, in his Works, p. 28. and to the objection; and a clear proof that we shall do no service to the cause of Christianity by endeavouring to disprove the reality of these dispensations, or by dropping the mention of the *infernal* powers in our preaching, how fashionable soever such omisions may grow.

Arguments drawn from our Saviour's temptation.—The scenes of the wonderful transactions recorded in this chapter, were presented to our Lord in the form, and at the end, of a present trial. But this was not all; they appear to have been directly and properly intended as *real predictions* and representations of the future scenes of his office and ministry. We will consider this view.

With respect to the *first* scene, (ver. 3, 4.) it is clear that it had reference to our Saviour's future mission, through the whole course of which he was pressed under the same kind of temptations, and resisted them on the same principles. This part of the temptation very clearly conveyed this good instruction, "that Christ, the Son of God, was to struggle with the hardships of hunger and thirst, and all the other hardships of humanity, like the lowest of the sons of men; and he was never to exert his divine power for his personal relief under the most pressing difficulties, or for the supply of his most urgent occasions." Accordingly we find that Christ regulated his conduct by these principles.

He did not subsist by miracles; but though he possessed power capable of controlling all nature; though heir and Lord of all, he behaved and lived an indigent life, without any settled

habitation, or certain provision. He knew how much more blessed it is to give than to receive, and yet disdained not to accept kindness from others, or even to stand indebted to their bounty for his support. In some circumstances he felt the pressure of hunger, without having food to eat; at other times he had no leisure to take any, through a zealous application to the duties of his office, such as was not to be interrupted by the pressing calls of nature. He chose rather to deny himself necessary refreshment, than lose an opportunity of healing and instructing the multitude; and neither on these nor on any other occasion did he relieve himself by a miracle. This is the more extraordinary, as he interposed with readiness on the behalf of others, who daily rejoiced in the temporal as well as spiritual benefit of his divine power; and at different times fed the hungry multitude in the desert, by a miraculous increase of his own slender provisions.

Nor did he only endure hunger and thirst, but all the other evils incident to human nature. He lived a laborious, and led an itinerant life. Instead of commanding angels to his service, he submitted to the inconveniences and fatigues of travelling on foot, from one part of Judea and Galilee to another, and was tossed about by tempests at sea. He was exhausted by the incessant labours of his ministry, and that intense application of mind with which he engaged in it. After performing tiresome journies, and preaching to the crowds which followed him in the day, he often spent a considerable part of the night, sometimes the whole of it, in prayer to his Heavenly Father, and in the open air; notwithstanding that the copious dews which fell by night in those parts must have been very dangerous, especially when the body was heated by the exercise of the preceding day. So many injuries did his constitution suffer, that the *crasis* or texture of his blood was destroyed, and sweated through every pore of his body; and to such a degree was he enfeebled by the violence to which he patiently submitted, as to be unable to bear his cross. He, who in so many thousand instances renewed the health and vigour of others, never exerted any miraculous power, either to preserve or restore his own, but sunk under the pressure of his infirmities! In all his exigencies he referred himself to his Heavenly Father. Even under the greatest extremity, his agony in the garden, as man, he sought and waited for the interposition of his Heavenly Father; who, in answer to his prayer, sent an angel from heaven to strengthen him: and when the hour of his death approached, he used no means for his rescue; but meekly resigned himself into the hands of his most malicious enemies, in obedience to his Father's will.

The divine powers with which Christ was invested as man, were designed as the seal of his mission; and accordingly they were never applied to a different purpose. This strict appropriation of his miracles to their proper intention, served to point it out more clearly, and to keep it in constant view; to manifest his wisdom, and the necessity

42. ¶ And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: <sup>2</sup> And the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

<sup>1</sup> Mark, 1. 35. Eccl. 9. 10. John, 4. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Mark, 1. 45. John, 6. 24. Ch. 24. 29.

of the works themselves, and to preserve their dignity and authority, which would have been impaired, if not destroyed, by a more general application of them. As Christ never applied them to any purpose foreign to their grand intention, so it was in a very peculiar manner necessary, that he should never be employed to protect himself from the calamities and distresses to which human nature is liable. Had he, when made in the likeness of man, saved himself by miracles from the evils of humanity, where had been his conflict, his victory, his triumph? Or, where the consolation and benefit that his followers derived from his example, his merit, his crown?

The *second* scene of his temptation (ver. 9—12. Matth. iv. 5—7.—The reader will see that we follow St. Matthew's order, agreeable to the observation on ver. 5.) has also an evident reference to our Saviour's future ministry. Through the whole course of it he was assaulted with temptations similar to that here proposed, and repelled them upon the maxim here adopted. Instead of needlessly running into danger, and then exerting his divine power to extricate himself, which might have occasioned an unnecessary and endless multiplication of miracles; we find him using the utmost caution in declining dangers where the great end of his divine mission was not concerned, avoiding as far as possible what might exasperate his enemies, and enjoining silence with regard to his miracles, when the publication of them was likely, by raising envy or popular commotions, to inflame their minds yet more against him. We find him also disappointing their malice, by prudently retreating from its reach, till the appointed period of his ministry was fulfilled: so that, although there were some instances in which he protected himself from his adversaries in a miraculous manner, yet, considering how eagerly the Jewish rulers were bent upon his destruction, and how often they attempted it, those instances are few, compared with what they must have been, had not Christ been perpetually attentive in his whole conduct to this maxim,—*Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

In producing the evidences of his divine mission, he still acted upon the same maxim: instead of opening his commission at Jerusalem, and displaying all at once upon that grand theatre the divine powers which he possessed in all their fullness; he performed his first miracle at Cana in Galilee, and made that obscure country, for a considerable time, the principal scene of his ministry; which he endeavoured to fulfil with all the privacy which the nature of the work would admit. Instead of courting the favour of the opulent and powerful, to engage them to countenance and support his cause, or challenging from the rulers of the Jewish nation the homage due to his divine character, he did not bear a commission chiefly or particularly directed to them (an honour which some of the ancient prophets enjoyed); but conversed freely with all sorts of people; not only with the lowest, but with the worst, in order to bring them to repentance.

Now these circumstances of Christ's ministry correspond with those in the scene before us, where he was tempted to a public and ostentatious display of his miraculous powers; and his answer to this second temptation contained a new limitation under which those powers were to be used: even in bringing men to the faith, he was not to exceed the order which was consistent with the divine perfections. And though the determination of God in this respect was certainly founded in the highest wisdom; though it was perfectly analogous to the other measures of his government over his moral creatures; and though it was well calculated to promote the credit and true interest of the Gospel; yet did it require the greatest humility, fortitude and piety in him as man, who had the power of working miracles at pleasure, to acquiesce herein.

Ambition and vain-glory could never have resisted the temptations that Christ was under to an incessant and unlimited exertion of his miraculous powers, by which he would have advanced his own honour, rendered his ministry more illustrious, and forced universal submission. This temptation was the more difficult to be overcome, as, in consequence of the method which was taken, his doctrine was embraced only by a few well-disposed persons, and those generally in the lower rank of life. See Matth. xi. 25, 26.

The *third* and last scene of this temptation (ver. 5—8. Matth. iv. 8, 9.) was also a presignification and warning of the like temptations in the course of his future ministry; during which he was called upon to prostitute himself, with all his miraculous endowments, to the service of Satan, for the sake of worldly honours. The Jewish nation expected their Messiah to deliver it from the yoke of servitude, and to raise it to a pitch of grandeur superior to what it had ever enjoyed. As these were the expectations which the Jews entertained, so they were very solicitous that Jesus should answer them; and would have done every thing in their power to promote the success of such an undertaking:—they even would have *taken him by force, and made him a king.* And it is certain, that had his miraculous powers, which were wholly consecrated to the erecting of the kingdom of God among them, been employed in paving his way to secular honour, he might not only have escaped sufferings and death, but easily have ascended the throne of the universe. How readily would not only the Jews, but all other nations, have repaired to the standard of a prince, who by a word, or silent volition only, could provide for his own armies, or destroy those of his enemies? “Why then,—it might have been suggested to him,—instead of spending your life in affliction, and then ending it upon the cross, will you not use your power for your own benefit, to deliver yourself from misery, and make yourself master of the world?”

But temptation never at any time prevailed over our Lord, notwithstanding universal empire carries with it charms almost irresistible to noble and heroic minds, conscious of their superior wisdom and abilities, and an intention to employ

43 And he said unto them, <sup>h</sup> I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.

44 <sup>i</sup> And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

<sup>h</sup> Mark, i. 15; 15. 2 Tim. 4. 2. Acts, 10. 38. Rom. 15. 8. 1st. 6r. 1—3. & 42. 1—7. & 49. 1—8. & 50. 4.

<sup>i</sup> Mark, i. 39. Mat. 4.

their power to the true ends for which it was bestowed. If any thing can heighten the virtue of despising worldly greatness, if it come in competition with our duty, it is the being practised in circumstances of indigence, such as are infinitely beneath that rank to which our talents enable us: and therefore to refuse, as our Saviour did, grandeur, and royalty, and universal empire, while he was more destitute of the accommodations of life than even the beasts of the field, or the birds of the air, and was struggling with poverty, reproach, and persecution, and death itself in certain prospect before him,—all which might have been avoided by a misapplication of his miraculous powers,—was the highest act of virtue that could possibly be exhibited. See the *Inferences* drawn in Matth. iv.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, As the great enemy of souls had seduced the first man in the midst of a paradise of delights, the second man, the Lord from heaven, who came to destroy the works of the devil, that he might render his victory more illustrious, gives the tempter every advantage. Though deep retired in a dreary desert, without human assistance, without food, during forty days, to satisfy his hunger, he stood like a rock in the midst of the sea, defying the impotent attacks of the raging fiend of darkness. Being full of the Holy Ghost, and just then anointed to the most sacred office, and furnished with the fulness of divine grace, Satan, to his bitter shame and vexation, found him immovable; and every attack that he made but ended in his own defeat.

He tempted him to distrust his Father's care, and to entertain his suspicions of the character that he assumed as the Son of God; seeking to shake the faith of the people, and challenging him to give a proof of it by performing a miracle for his own supply of food in his extremity.

But Jesus refused to gratify him; and by the testimony of the Spirit, the word of God, foiled his assault, and destroyed his confidence in his Father's provision for him, and would not take the matter out of his hands, and persuaded him to depend on God by other means than by bread alone. He taught us, that in every temptation to have recourse to the word of God. (2.) Not to give place to the devil, but to bring for a moment his suggestions. (3.) Never to be our own carvers, or think by our own strength and wisdom, exclusive of God, to extricate ourselves from our difficulties, or gain our own support. (4.) That we should not estimate our strength by his outward dispensations, nor call in for our adoption by him, because we are severely exercised. Many of God's dearest children have known the necessity of hunger, to prove their faith, and try their

2. He tempted him with the enticing offers of temporal grandeur. This St. Matthew places the last, and such it seems to have been; though St. Luke inverts the order. (See the Annotations.) Taking him up into a mountain, the devil in a moment caused all the kingdoms of the world in their greatest glory to pass in review before our Lord, as if to dazzle and charm him with their united splendor: then boldly challenging them as his own, as if delivered to him, either by the Most High, which was false; or by the willing subjection of these nations and their kings, who yielded themselves up to the devil's power; and, as Lord of all, he pretends to exercise a right to dispose of them at his pleasure: on one condition he proffers to lay them all at the feet of Jesus, and constitute him the universal sovereign, *If thou wilt worship me, all shall be thine.* With indignation and abhorrence at such insolence and impicity, he rejects the tempter's offer; and still drawing his weapons from the sacred magazine of scripture, condemns the daring attempt of this hateful spirit thus to invade the divine prerogative; and confounds him with producing that eternal and invariable rule of worship, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Note; All adoration of saints, angels, and the virgin, is in fact but the worship of Satan.

3. Once more the devil returns to the charge, and, since Christ is unmoved with grandeur, and unshaken with distrust, he tries to fill him with unwarrantable presumption; and setting him on a pinnacle of the temple, bids him cast himself down into the court of worshippers below; and, if he was really the Son of God, to prove it by such a sign from heaven as the Jews sought, which, he suggests, would not fail of engaging them to receive him as the Messiah; nor could there be danger in the experiment, since God had given him an express promise of protection, and he was under angelic care, Psalm, xci. 11, 12. Christ laid such stress upon the scripture, that Satan quotes it also to support his cause. The word of God, in the hands of wicked men, is thus often perverted and wrested to serve the vilest purposes. But Jesus detects Satan's fallacy. God is to be trusted, not tempted, as it is written, Deut. vi. 16. In the way of duty, he will hold us up: if, without any warrant from him, we expose ourselves to needless danger, we have not the least ground to hope for preservation.

Utterly defeated now, the devil quits the field, covered with shame; in malice still inveterate. Waiting therefore for a more favourable season, he departed, resolving to seize the first occasion of returning with sharpened malignity; see Luke, xxii. 53.

2dly, Having vanquished his infernal foe in the wilderness, Jesus enters upon his ministerial office, and publicly appears, destroying, by his doctrine and miracles, the power of Satan over the bodies and souls of men.

1. In the power of the Spirit he returned to Galilee, strengthened with might in the inner man for the arduous work

## C H A P. V.

*Christ teacheth the people out of Peter's ship; in a miraculous taking of fishes, sheweth how he will make him and his partners fishers of men; cleanseth the leper; prayeth in the wilderness; healeth one sick of the palsy; calleth Matthew the publican; eateth with sinners, as being the physician of souls; feretelleth the fastings and afflictions of the apostles after his ascension: and likeneth faint-hearted and weak disciples to worn-out garments and old bottles.*

[Anno Domini 30.]

**A**ND<sup>a</sup> it came to pass, that, as the people<sup>b</sup> pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he<sup>c</sup> stood by the lake of Gennefaret,

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 4. 12—22. Mark, 1. 16—20.

<sup>b</sup> John, 21. 6. <sup>c</sup> John, 21. 3. Hag. 1. 6. 1<sup>d</sup> Sam. 3. 1. Mat. 9.

1<sup>e</sup> 127. 1. Eccl. 9. 12.

<sup>e</sup> Act, 16. 13. Ch. 8. 4. Mark, 4. 1.

work which he had undertaken; and immediately he set himself to discharge his high commission, preaching in their synagogues the gospel of the kingdom: and such power accompanied his word, and such miracles confirmed his doctrine, that the people in general admired and extolled him, and his fame quickly spread through all that country.

2. After passing through other parts of Galilee, he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up to read some section of scripture, as was usually done on that day: and a most laudable custom is this, in every worshipping assembly, to read the word of God. The volume, which was delivered to him for this purpose by the minister of the synagogue, contained the prophecy of Isaiah; and, unrolling the parchment on which it was written, he found the place, Isai. lxi. 1, 2. which spake so evidently of himself. Whether it was the portion of scripture for the day, or that he chose it as the properest introduction to his discourse, is uncertain; but, which-ever was the case, it gave him the fairest opportunity to describe his own office and character, and left them inexcusable who should reject him notwithstanding the voice of the prophets was heard every sabbath-day.

[1.] The text gave a full account of the Redeemer's undertaking. 1. He was eminently qualified for his arduous work by that plenitude of gifts and graces conferred upon him by the Spirit of the Lord; and fully commissioned by this unction from the Holy One for the discharge of his divine office. 2. The great end of his mission is set forth. (1.) *To preach the gospel to the poor*, to evangelize them; not only to speak to their ears, but to make his work effectual to convert the hearts of all believers. By the poor are meant not merely the indigent and common people, though of such did Christ's disciples chiefly consist; but the poor in spirit, who, convinced of their spiritual wants and wretchedness, would gladly embrace that free pardon and salvation which the gospel revealed to them. (2.) *To heal the broken-hearted*, whose sins pierced their souls with sorrow, and whose troubled consciences and corrupted hearts nothing but the balm of his blood and grace could relieve and cure. (3.) *To preach deliverance to the captives*,

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4 ¶ Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night and have

to sinful souls enslaved by Satan's power. Their chains of guilt are broken through faith in the atonement of Jesus, and by his Spirit they are delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. (4.) *To preach recovering of sight to the blind*, to open the darkened understanding of fallen man, and to shine into his heart, communicating the knowledge of the salvation which is by grace. (5.) *To set at liberty them that are bruised*, to break off the galling yoke of the law from the necks of those who, under a spirit of bondage, continued miserable and unhappy, and, in its stead, to give them the spirit of adoption, and liberty from every slavish fear. (6.) *To preach the acceptable year of the Lord*, that joyful year of gospel jubilee, when insolvent but believing sinners shall obtain free remission of all their sins, deliverance from their miseries, restoration to the divine favour, and, if faithful unto death, their forfeited inheritance in the heavenly Canaan.

[2.] Having read this text, and delivered the roll again to the minister, he sat down, as was the custom of the Jewish doctors, and began to discourse at large on all the various particulars; shewing how the words referred to the Messiah and his office, and were that very day fulfilled in himself.

3. The audience hung with attention on his lips, their eyes eagerly fastened on him, and admiration seized every hearer: such eminent wisdom, such energy of diction, such majesty and grace, appeared in all his words and address, that they were astonished above measure, especially considering the meanness of his birth and education. *Is not this Joseph's son, the carpenter?* which, though it increased their wonder at his discourse, prejudiced them against his person, and would not suffer them to admit the application to himself of this high office of the Messiah. *Note;* (1.) To have our eyes directed to the minister, serves often to fix the attention to his discourse. (2.) Many admire the preaching, and are pleased with the orator, whose hearts are never truly converted by what they hear.

4. He anticipates and answers the objection which he saw rising in the hearts of many against him. *Ye will surely say*

taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they en-

closed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto their partners,

John, 21. 11.

*Apply unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself:* if thou art the wondrous personage, as reported, shew it, by working the same miracles at home, which we have heard done in Capernaum. But, in answer hereunto, he assures them, that, if he did the same or greater wonders among them, who knew their prejudices against him were such, that they would notwithstanding reject him, *no prophet being accepted in his own country;* they, who had known his parentage and education, and been used for so long a time to regard him as vastly their inferior, would still think meanly of him through the wilful obtinacy of their hearts. But he assures them, that though he withheld his favours from them, it would be no proof against him, since he had the examples of former prophets to plead. As great or greater objections would therefore lie against these prophets, than were suggested against him.

The people were highly exasperated at the reproach which they apprehended was couched under these instances, and they of Nazareth were as wicked as the Israelites in the days of Ahab, and that even Gentiles would be provoked before them in the divine regard. Though so lately he admired his gracious words, this application cut them to the heart; and, rising in a popular tumult, they cast Jesus out of the synagogue, hurried him through the city, dragging him to the brow of the hill on which their temple was built, intended to hurl him headlong down, and break him in pieces. *Note;* It is a mercy that even the rage of the people is under a divine restraint: else the fury of God's faithful ministers had met an untimely end, who have escaped under the divine providence.

It disappoints their malice. His time to suffer was come, and therefore, by his divine power, either by closing his eyes, or rendering himself invisible, he passed through the midst of them, leaving them to their impotent rage and ruin. *Note;* They who reject Jesus and his gospel, are justly given up to a reprobate mind.

When Jesus departed from Nazareth, he returned to Capernaum, and, as usual, on the sabbath-day he taught in their synagogues, to the astonishment of all who heard him; such divine authority and commanding power accompanied his word. In proof of the doctrine he preached, we have,

1. The miracle performed in the presence of the people, where he preached; see Mark, i. 23. A man full of an unclean devil was in the synagogue. His enmity against Christ and his gospel, and his fears that Jesus would dispossess him, made the man's organs of speech, cried out, *Let us see some signs of thee, wicked spirits dread their doom, and stand forward to their terrible judgment.* They were the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, for Satan had driven them into the wilderness; and, fully satisfied concerning Jesus, they confess him to be the Holy One of God, and of good kind intention: malice dictated here the blasphemy, and they would fain fix upon him the

suspicion of a confederacy with them, by bearing such an honourable testimony to him. But Jesus in a moment silenced this foul fiend, and with a word rescued the miserable sinner from his power. With rage, compelled to depart, the devil vented his last efforts, throwing the man down with violent convulsions, as if he would have torn him in pieces; but his power was broken, he was unable to hurt him, and the cure was complete. Amazed, the whole congregation beheld, and questioned with each other concerning a miracle so wondrous and incontestible. Never had such power and authority appeared before; that with a word the infernal spirit should thus be dispossessed, without the least ability to make effective resistance. And immediately the fame of the cure spread far and wide.

*Note;* The power of Satan, as an unclean spirit, over the souls of men, is still exceeding great, and nothing but the powerful word of gospel-grace can cast him out.

2. No sooner was Jesus returned from the synagogue, than St. Peter's wife's mother, who lay ill of a fever, experienced his healing grace. At the request of some of the company, who mentioned her disorder, he arose, stood by her bed-side, rebuked the fever with a word; and instantly she was so perfectly restored to health, as to be able to wait on the guests who were in the house. *Note;* (1.) When they who are near and dear to us are sick, we must beseech Jesus on their behalf; and the prayer of faith still availeth much. (2.) They who are restored to spiritual health by the Saviour's grace, will be ready to discharge every kind office of love and service to the least of his people.

3. A multitude of other cures were performed by him the same day at even. All who had friends or relations diseased applied to him, and, whatever was their malady, he with a touch healed them all: even devils, unable to stand before his word, came out of those that were possessed, confessing him to be the Messiah; but he silenced them, refusing to receive any testimony from such as they were. *Note;* When they who, we know, bear enmity towards us, speak of us most respectfully, their civilities are to be most suspected of design.

4. Early next morning he departed from Capernaum to a solitude for retirement. Thither the people followed him, and intreated him to return to their city: but he chose to diffuse the favour of his gospel, and dispense his miracles of mercy, in the country around; for this was the design of his mission, to be a general blessing. *Note;* (1.) They who have much public work, have especial need of seasonable retirement also. To be alone with God is the best preparative for the pulpit. (2.) They who have found Christ's presence so desirable, naturally wish for its continuance. And though he refused his bodily presence to them, he has engaged to his faithful people, who perseveringly cleave to him, that he will abide with them for ever.

which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

12 ¶ And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

13 And he put forth his hand, and touched

him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

16 ¶ And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

17 ¶ And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

\* Acts, 16. 9. Phil. 4. 3. Gal. 6. 2. Heb. 13. 1. 1 Sam. 6. 9. 1 Kings, 17. 18. Mat. 8. 8. Job, 42. 5, 6. If. 6. 1-5. Dan. 8. 17. & 10. 8, 16, 17. Ch. 4. 32, 36. Ch. 6. 14. & 8. 51. & 9. 28. Mat. 26. 37. 1 Mat. 4. 1, 20. Mark, 1. 17, 18. Eccl. 47. 9, 10. Mat. 13. 47. 2 Tim. 2. 26. 1 Tim. 4. 16. Mat. 19. 27. & 16. 24. Phil. 3. 7, 8. Ch. 18. 28, 29. & 14. 33. Mat. 10. 37. Pl. 73. 25. Mat. 8. 1-4. Mark, 1. 40-45. Chr. 26. 21. Lev. xiii. 2 Kings, 5. 25. Ch. 18. 1-13. Mat. 7. 7, 11. Pl. 50. 15. & 91. 15. Gen. 18. 14. Jer. 32. 17, 27. Heb. 7. 25. If. 67. 1. Hos. 13. 9. If. 46. 12, 13. Ch. 4. 39. & 8. 45. Mat. 15. 28. John, 4. 50, 54. Pl. 31. 9. Mat. 3. 4. & 9. 30. & 12. 16. Mark, 1. 24. & 5. 43. & 7. 30. & 8. 26. Lev. xiii. xiv. Mat. 4. 23-25. & 9. 26. & 14. 35. & 17. 14. If. 52. 13. & 35. 5, 6. Mark, 2. 1, 2. Mark, 1. 35, 45. Mat. 6. 6. Ch. 6. 12. Mat. 21. 30. Ch. 7. 30. & 11. 53, 54. & 15. 2. Ver. 15. Jer. 18. 18. Mat. 11. 5. & 4. 23, 24. & 9. 35. & 12. 15. Heb. 7. 25. Mat. 9. 2-8. Mark, 2. 3-12. Acts, 9. 33. John, 5. 3, 5. Deut. 28. 22. 1 Cor. 11. 30. James, 5. 15, 16.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 6. And their net brake.] Δεῖν γινώσκειν, — was breaking, or began to break. This translation is justified by the words ὡσεὶ ἑσπέρηται αὐτοί, in the following verse, which without dispute is there properly rendered so that they began to sink. Thus also Matth. ix. 18. My daughter ἔστι ἐκείνη θνήσκουσα, is now (almost) dead, as is evident from Mark, v. 23. Luke, viii. 49. So likewise chap. xxi. 26. in the original men (almost) killed through fear.

Ver. 8. Depart from me,] Peter's words on this occasion may be variously interpreted; for we may suppose that, conscious of his sinfulness, he was afraid to be in Christ's company, lest some infirmity or offence might have exposed him to more than ordinary chastisements. Compare Judges, vi. 22. xiii. 22. Or, it being an opinion of the Jews, that the visits of the prophets were attended with chastisements from heaven, 1 Kings, xvii. 18. he might be struck with a panic, when he observed this proof of Christ's power: or he may have said to his Master, depart, because he was not able to shew him the respect that he deserved, and was not worthy to be in his company. In this latter sense St. Peter's words were full of reverence and humility, being not unlike the centurion's speech so

highly applauded by Jesus himself,—I am unworthy that thou shouldst come under my roof. It is so well known that it scarce needs observing, that the ancients thought it improper and unsafe, where it could be avoided, for good men to be in the same ship with persons of an infamous character; nor would the heathens sometimes permit the very images of their deities to be carried in a vessel with such. See the Inferences and Reflections.

Ver. 10. Thou shalt catch men.] Thou shalt captivate, or take alive. The exact meaning of the word λαμβάνω. See 2 Tim. ii. 26. in the margin. To catch, implies something more of artifice than the word carries with it, or the occasion seems to require.

Ver. 11. Brought their ships to land.] Or, Their boats to shore.

Ver. 17. And the power of the Lord was present, &c.] Our Lord not only preached such awakening sermons as might have converted them to righteousness, but he was ready to perform such astonishing miracles as ought to have removed all their scruples with respect to his mission. Some suppose, that the word them refers not to the doctors and Pharisees of the law, but, in general, to those who had need of healing, and faith to be healed—the crowds, mentioned Mark, ii. 2. See on Matth. ix. 1.

19 And, when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the house top, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?

22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

23 Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

24 But that ye may know that the Son

of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house.

25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

27 And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

29 And Levi made him a great feast

Deut. 21. 8. 2 Sam. 11. 2. Jer. 19. 13. Mat. 10. 27. Acts, 10. 9. Mark, 2. 4. Gen. 21. 12. John, 2. 25. & 22. 17. Heb. 4. 13, 2. 23. Mat. 9. 2. Mark, 3. 5. Acts, 5. 31. If. 38. 17. & 44. 22. & 53. 11. Eph. 1. 7. John, 5. 14. Pf. 103. 3. Mat. 9. 3. 65. John, 5. 18. & 10. 33, 36. Pf. 32. 5. If. 43. 25. & 44. 22. & 1. 18. Pl. 107. 3. Rom. 8. 33. Job, 14. 4. Dan. 7. 13. Pf. 1 Chr. 29. 17. Pf. 7. 9. & 139. 1-4. Jer. 17. 10. John, 2. 25. & 21. 17. & 6. 64. Heb. 4. 13. Rev. 2. 23. Zech. 13. 7. Mat. 16. 13. Rev. 1. 13. 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6. & 3. 16. John, 5. 22, 23. If. 53. 11. 1 Tim. 1. 13-16. Jhn. 7. 2. Mat. 28. 18. Ver. 13, 17. Gen. 1. 3. Pf. 33. 9. John, 6. 63. & 5. 8, 9. Pf. 107. 20. Pf. 103. 1-3. & 107. 1, 8. & 111. 1. Ch. 18. 43. Ch. 7. 16. & 17. 15, 18. Mat. 9. 8, 33. & 12. 23. Mark, 2. 12. & 1. 27. & 5. 26. Ch. 7. 6. Act. 5. Mat. 9. 9-13. Mark, 2. 13-17. Mat. 4. 19, 21. & 16. 24. & 11. 28-30. P See ver. 11. John, 6. 63. 1 Kings, 19. 19. Mat. 9. 10. Mark, 2. 15. 1 Kings, 19. 21. Ch. 15. 1, 2.

20. And when he saw their faith,] That of the man, his friends,—though they themselves spake nothing; the miserable condition of the paralytic yet pleading with far more eloquent than all language. St. Chryso- stom making of this act of the bearers, says, “ So inge- nious a thing is affection, and so fruitful in invention is it.” And upon the paralytic’s patience in bearing difficulties, and not waiting for some other oppor- tunity to observe, he said nothing of all this to his bear- ers; thought it became him to make such a number of witnesses as were present, witnesses of his cure. His faith, was not only visible from hence, but likewise from the words used by Christ on this occasion; for which Christ did not go out to him, but waited for him to come to him, that he might have an opportunity of demonstrating the faith of the paralytic to all eyes. For could not he have made the admission of the paralytic to him an easy thing? But he did not do so, because of the nature, that he might exhibit to all the com- munity the evident and fervent faith of the paralytic and his

Jerusalem, together with the vast concourse of people; or whether you attend to the effect which the miracle had upon the witnesses;—that the Pharisees and doctors of the law, not able to find fault with it in any respect, though they had come with a design to refute our Lord’s pre- tensions as a worker of miracles, were astonished, and openly confessed that it was a strange thing which they had seen;—that the multitude glorified God, who had given such power unto men;—that the person upon whom the miracle was wrought, employed his tongue, the use of which he had recovered, in celebrating the praises of God:—in short, view it in whatever light you please, you will find in it a most illustrious miracle, highly worthy of your attention and admiration.

Ver. 27. A publican named Levi,] There were at this time in the Roman empire two sorts of people, who might be called publicans, (τελωναι.) First, such as farmed the taxes of whole provinces. These generally were Roman knights, men of very honourable characters, as we learn from the commendations which Cicero gives of them. It was this sort of tax-gatherers, who were properly termed publicans by the Romans; but it does not appear that they are ever mentioned in the Gospels. These did not levy the taxes in person, but they employed their freed-men and slaves in that office; and to make out the number, gave them for assistants as many of the natives of the country as were necessary. This sort of men were likewise called publicans, (τελωναι) being as it were under-farmers of the taxes; but in Latin their proper name was portitores. Their employment was attended with great temptations; for the taxes being farmed for a sum, in levying them from individuals

They were all amazed,] That is, the Pharisees of the law, mentioned ver. 17. as well as all See Matth. ix. 8. And indeed, whether you consider the nature of this miracle, as being a perfect and efficacious cure of an obstinate universal palsy, in a person advanced in years had laboured for a perfect cure produced by pronouncing a word; or whether you consider the number of the witnesses present, Pharisees and doctors in every town of Galilee and Judea, and from

in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

33 ¶ And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise *the disciples* of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

36 ¶ And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.

37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

39 No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 17, 21. Ch. 7. 29, 30. & 11. 53, 54. & 14. 1, 3. & 15. 2. & 19. 7. & 16. 14. Mark, 7. 2. Mat. 23. 23. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 9. 12, 13. Mark, 2. 17. <sup>c</sup> 1 Tim. 1. 15, 16. <sup>d</sup> Il. 1. 18. & 55. 7. & 45. 22. <sup>e</sup> Hof. 13. 9. Ch. 19. 10. Acts, 5. 31. Ch. 18. 10—14. <sup>f</sup> Rom. 5. 6, 8, 20, 21. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 9. 14—17. Mark, 2. 18—22. Ch. 18. 12. John, 3. 25. Mat. 6. 5, 16. <sup>h</sup> Rom. 10. 2, 3. & 9. 31. & 2. 17—24. <sup>i</sup> Song, 1. 4, 17. & 2. 3—6. & 3. 10, 11. <sup>j</sup> Mat. 22. 1—12. & 25. 1—10. <sup>k</sup> Rev. 19. 7, 9. <sup>l</sup> Christ, Mat. 22. 2. & 25. 1, 5, 6, 10. <sup>m</sup> Rev. 19. 7, 9. <sup>n</sup> Song, 3. 4. 11. & 7. 5. & 8. 5, 6. <sup>o</sup> Il. 62. 5. <sup>p</sup> Zeph. 3. 17. <sup>q</sup> Dan. 9. 26. <sup>r</sup> Zech. 13. 7. <sup>s</sup> John, 7. 33, 34. & 12. 8, 32. & 13. 33. & 14. 2, 12. & 16. 7. & 17. 11, 13. <sup>t</sup> Acts, 1. 9. & 3. 21. <sup>u</sup> Acts, 1. 14. & 13. 2, 3. & 14. 23. <sup>v</sup> 1 Cor. 7. 5. <sup>w</sup> 2 Cor. 11. 27. <sup>x</sup> Zech. 12. 10—14. <sup>y</sup> Mat. 9. 16, 17. <sup>z</sup> Mark, 2. 21, 22. <sup>aa</sup> Deut. 33. 25. <sup>ab</sup> 1 Cor. 10. 13. <sup>ac</sup> Pf. 103. 9—13. <sup>ad</sup> H. 63. 9, 15. <sup>ae</sup> But. Job, 17. 9. <sup>af</sup> Prov. 4. 18. <sup>ag</sup> 2 Peter, 3. 18. & 1. 4—10. <sup>ah</sup> The power of religion is better than bodily services in religion. <sup>ai</sup> Col. 2. 23. <sup>aj</sup> 1 Tim. 4. 8.

Individuals they had it in their power to exact more than was due. Farther, in every country the raising of taxes for a foreign power being an odious business, not many of the natives would choofe to be employed in it, except such as were of the lowest station and character. In the execution therefore of this office, these men did not fail to push matters to the utmost, levying the taxes with rigour, and enriching themselves by the spoils of the people. Hence this class of publicans, in all countries, became the objects of universal hatred. In Judea especially they were particularly infamous, because the paying of taxes to heathens was by many looked upon as little better than apostacy from their religion. These circumstances, together with the injustice which the publicans usually committed in the execution of their office, occasioned them always to be ranked with *sinners*, and made those who valued their own reputation shun their company. But though the publicans in general were bad men, there were among them some of a different character. Zaccheus was most probably a person of great probity and charity, even before his conversion; and *Matthew* (here called *Levi*) may have resembled him; at least in the Gospels there are no hints to be found of any unjust practices committed by him in the execution of his office. It is generally thought, that the taxes he levied were those imposed upon commodities transported by the sea of Galilee to and from Capernaum.

Ver. 34. *The children, &c.] The bridesmen.*

Ver. 37, 38. *Bottles shall perish.]* Some render it, *Skins will be left.*

Ver. 39. *No man also, having drunk old wine]* That is,

“As people who have been accustomed to drink wine made mellow with age, do not willingly drink new wine, which for the most part is harsh and unpleasant; so Christ’s disciples, having been accustomed for some time to live without practising any kind of severities for which the Pharisees were remarkable, could not relish that new way of life which they had been recommending; they were not yet so fully acquainted with and established in his doctrine, as to submit cheerfully to any extraordinary hardships.” This is Le Clerc’s interpretation of the passage; but Wolfius and others apply it to the Pharisees, who were much better pleased with the traditions of the elders, than with the doctrines of Christ; because the latter prescribed duties more difficult and disagreeable to the corrupt natures of men than the former. See on Joel, i. 5. We may just remark how applicable these proverbial parables were to the time and occasion. See ver. 29.

*Inferences* drawn from the calling of Simon, &c.—As the sun in its first rising draws all eyes to it, so did the Sun of Righteousness, when he first shone forth in the world. His miraculous cures drew patients; his divine doctrines drew auditors; both together drew the admiring multitude by troops after him, ver. 1.

And why do we not still follow thee, O Saviour, through deserts and mountains, over land and seas, that we may be both healed and taught?—It was thy promise, O Saviour, that when thou wert lifted up, thou wouldst draw all men after thee; behold, thou hast been lifted up since, both

CHAP. VI.

*Christ reprooveth the Pharisees' blindness about the observation of the sabbath, by scripture, reason, and miracle: chooseth twelve apostles: healeth the diseased: preacheth to his disciples before the people, pronouncing blessings and woes: how we must love our enemies; and join the obedience of good works to the hearing of the word, lest in the evil day of temptation we fall, like a house built upon the face of the earth without any foundation.*

[Anno Domini 31.]

AND 'it came to pass on the \* second sabbath after the first, that he went

through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, <sup>b</sup> Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?

3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, <sup>c</sup> what David did, when himself was an hungered and they which were with him;

4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 12. 1-8. Mark, 2. 23-28. Deut. 23. 25. <sup>b</sup> Or first after the second day of the feast of unleavened bread. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 12. 2. & 15. 2. Mark, 2. 24. & 7. 2. Ch. 5. 33. & 13. 14. & 15. 2. Mat. 7. 5. & 23. 23, 24. with Exod. 20. 10. & 31. 15. & 35. 2. Num. 15. 32, 35. <sup>d</sup> 1 Sam. 1. 3-6. Mark, 2. 25, 26. Mat. 12. 3, 4.

both to the tree of shame, and to the throne of heavenly glory: O draw us, then, blessed Lord, and we will run after thee. Thy word is still the same, though proclaimed to men; thy virtue is still the same, though exercised on the spirits of men; give us to hunger after both, that both our souls may be satisfied.

The people, in the present instance, not only follow Christ, but press upon him: even indecorum here finds excuse and acceptance. They did not keep their distance in awe of the majesty of the Speaker, while their hearts were ravished with the power of the speech; yet did the Saviour check their unceremonious thronging, but he encourages their forwardness: we cannot offend O God, with the importunity of our desires; nay, that well pleased that the kingdom of heaven should be open to all: ever art thou displeased with our slackness; thy remembrance never can displease.

The throng of his audience forced Christ to leave the temple and make Peter's vessel his pulpit. Never were his disciples cast out of that fishing-boat before. While he was upon the land, he healed the sick bodies by his power; now that he was upon the sea, he cured the sick souls by his doctrines; and is purposely fevered from the sea, that he may unite them to himself. He that can rule the sea and land, causeth both sea and land to concur in the opportunities of doing good.

And his partners were busy washing their nets, and were so soon to leave them, though they now so employed their attention; when, behold, Christ calls them with the favour and blessing of his gracious Father. The honest Simon, when he saw the people following Christ, and heard him speak with such power, but conceive a confused apprehension of some greatness in such a teacher, and therefore is glad to be in the vessel with such a guest, and to be first Christ's disciple by land: a humble and contented attendant of so great a prophet, was a good preparation to his future honour.

It is this service done to Christ, than he is to receive the bounteous reward. When the sermon is preached unto Simon, ver. 4. Launch out into the deep, it has been as easy for our Saviour to have brought

the fish to Peter's boat, close to the shore: but in all his miracles we may observe, he ever loves to meet Nature in all her boundaries; and when she has done her best, to supply the rest by his over-ruling power.

Rather from a desire to gratify and obey his guest, than to please himself, will Simon bestow one cast of his net: (Had Christ enjoined him a harder task, he had not refused;) yet not without a modest allegation of the unlikelihood of success. *Master, we have toiled all night, (ver. 5.) and caught nothing; yet at thy word I will let down the net.* The night was the fittest time, humanly speaking, for the hopes of their trade; so that not unjustly might Simon doubt his success through the day, when he had worn out the whole night in unprofitable labour: and thus it is that God sometimes crosses the fairest of our expectations, and gives a blessing to those times and means, whereof our prudence utterly despairs; those pains cannot be cast away, which we resolve to employ for Christ.

O God, how many do we see daily casting out their nets in the great lake of this world, and, in the whole night of their lives, have caught nothing in recompense of their toil! *They conceive mischief, and they bring forth iniquity: They hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spider's web; he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is trodden upon breaketh out into a serpent. Their webs shall form no garment, neither shall they cover themselves with their labours.*

O ye sons of men! how long will ye love vanity, and follow after lies?—And yet, if we have thus vainly mispent the time past, let us, at the command of Christ, cast out, with these fishermen, our newly-washed nets; and our humble and patient obedience shall come then homerichly laden with blessings: (ver. 6.) never man threw out his net at the command of his Saviour, and drew it back empty. Who would not obey thee, O Christ, since thou so bountifully requitest our weak services!

It was not mere retribution that was intended in this event, but instruction also. This act was not without a mystery: they who were to be made fishers of men, were in this draught to foresee their success: *The kingdom of heaven, we are assured, is like a drawn-net, cast into the sea, which, when it is full, men draw to land, &c.* Matth. xiii. 47, 48. Thus the very first draught which Peter made after the

also to them that were with him; <sup>d</sup> which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

5 And he said unto them, <sup>e</sup> That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

<sup>d</sup> Exod. 25. 30. & 29. 23, 32, 33. Lev. 8. 12. & 24. 5—9. 9. 14.

<sup>e</sup> Mat. 12. 8. Mark, 2. 28. Exod. 20. 10. Ver. 9. Ch. 13. 16. John, 5. 9. & 9. 14.

commencement of the gospel dispensation, inclosed no less than *three thousand souls*, Acts, ii. 41. O powerful gospel! that can fetch sinful men from the depth of natural corruption! O happy souls, that, from the blind and polluted cells of our wicked nature, are thus drawn forth into the glorious liberty of the sons of God!

Simon's net begins to break with the store; accordingly *they besken their partners in the other vessel for help*, ver. 7. There cannot be a better improvement of society, than to afford mutual assistance, than to relieve each other in all profitable labours, for drawing up the spiritual draught into the vessel of Christ's church. Gracious Saviour, if these apostolical vessels of thy first rigging were thus overladen, how do ours float and totter with an unballasted lightness! O do Thou, who art no less present in these our vessels, lade them with an equal freight of sanctified sentiments, or of converted souls, according to our station; and thus shall we too have equal cause to praise thee for thy exuberant bounty.

Simon was a skilful fisher, and well knew the depth of his trade; perceiving now therefore more than art, more than nature in this draught, *He falls down at the knees of Jesus*, and acknowledges his unworthiness, ver. 8. Himself is caught in this wonderful net. He does not greedily fall upon the unexpected and profitable booty; but turns his eyes from the draught to himself; from the act to the author; and in the utmost astonishment proclaims his own vileness, and his Saviour's majesty: *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!*

What pity had it been that the poor honest fisherman should have been taken at his word! O Simon, thy Saviour is come into thy own boat to call thee, and to call others by thee unto blessedness:—and dost thou say, *Lord, depart from me?*—as if the patient should say to the physician, “*Depart from me, for I am sick.*” But it was the voice of *astonishment*, not of dislike; the voice of humility, not of discontent: yea, Peter, because thou art *a sinful man*, therefore hath thy Saviour need to come to thee, to stay with thee; and because thou art humble in the acknowledgment of thy sinfulness, therefore does Christ delight to abide with thee, and will call thee to abide with him. No man ever fared the worse for abasing himself to his God: many a soul has Christ left for froward and unkind usage; never any for its disparagement of itself, and intractacies of humility.

O my soul, be not weary of complaining of thy own wretchedness; but be astonished at those mercies, which have shamed thy ill-deservings. Thy Saviour has no power to turn away from a prostrate heart; he that terribly *resisteth the proud*, delighteth to revive the spirits of the lowly: *Fear not*, &c. ver. 10. Behold, Simon's humility is rewarded with an apostleship! He that bade Christ go from him, shall have the honour to go first on the happy errand of gospel salvation.

This was indeed a trade in which Simon had no skill;

yet it could not but be enough to him, that Christ had said, *Follow me,—I will make thee.*—The miracle shewed him able to make good his word.

What then is this divine trade of ours, but a spiritual fishery? The world is a sea; souls, like fishes, swim at liberty in this great deep: the nets of wholesome doctrine draw some up to the shore of glory, who yield to be saved by grace. How much skill and care, how much toil and patience, are requisite for this art! *Who is sufficient for these things?* This sea,—these nets,—the fishers,—the fish,—the vessels,—all are thine, O God; do in us, and by us, what thou wilt: give us ability and grace to follow thee, and to take men; and give unto men the will and grace to be taken; and take thou the eternal glory.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Vast was the concourse that attended the preaching of Jesus; and while the scribes and Pharisees, the wise doctors of the law, despised him, the common people were eager to hear him, and pressed through the crowd to get nearer. Hereupon,

1. Christ desired the use of a fisherman's boat, for the greater convenience of being heard, and to be less incommoded with the throng; and there he sat down and taught the people who stood before him on the shore.

2. When he had done preaching, he desired Simon, in whose boat he was, to launch out farther into the lake and let down his nets. Simon told him the ill success which they had met with; but, though they had wearied themselves all night, and washed their nets, if he bade them, they would cheerfully make another trial. *Notes*; (1.) The most diligent and laborious sometimes meet with disappointments, and are apt to be discouraged by the little fruit they see of their labours; but they must persist in the way of duty, and leave the event to God. (2.) If our bread be easily earned, and our rest sweet unto us, we should remember charitably those who labour hard for little gain, and are awake at their toils, when we are sleeping.

3. Most amazing was the quantity of fishes they inclosed: their net began to give way with the weight; and, unable to draw them up themselves, they beckoned to their partners to come to their assistance, and loaded both their boats so deep, that they were in danger of sinking. Peter was now abundantly repaid for the loan of his boat; and in this display of his Master's power in the sea, as well as on the land, might be confirmed in his faith of the doctrine which he had heard.

4. Peter, deeply affected with what he saw, and perceiving the danger they were in, *fell down at Jesus's knees*, and, under the deepest sense of his own unworthiness, cried out, *saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.* Conscious of his guilt and sinfulness, he trembled, lest the Lord was come to punish instead of blessing him; and was afraid of his very mercies: *for he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of fishes they had taken*; though brought up to this business from their youth, they

unto them, <sup>1</sup> And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue

and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

<sup>1</sup> Mat. 12. 9—14. Mark, 3. 1—6.

<sup>2</sup> Judges, 3. 15. 1 Kings, 13. 4.

they had never seen any thing at all to be compared with this in their whole lives. *Note*; Though we have grievously offended our Lord, we must not say, *Depart from me*, but, *Stay with me*, or, *Return to me in mercy*; for nothing but his presence and grace can keep us from sinking.

5. Jesus quiets their fears. He is not come to them in anger, but in mercy: and he has still greater kindness in store for them than this cargo of fishes; therefore *he said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men*, and be more successful in casting the gospel-net, and drawing greater multitudes out of the depths of sin and misery to life and salvation. Which was eminently fulfilled, Acts, ii. 41.

6. No sooner were they come to land, than Simon and Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee their partners, obeying his call, immediately left their boats, and all they had, quitting their employment at the time when it appeared most successful; and commenced thenceforward constant attendants on the Lord Jesus. *Note*; They who know the blessedness of Christ's service, will count nothing too much to part with for his sake.

2dly, We have,

1. The cleansing of the leper. This history both the former evangelists have recorded. It affords us,

(1.) A striking emblem of our true state. So corrupt is our nature; so spotted are our souls; so loathsome in the eyes of God, and by all natural means so utterly incurable, is the disease of sin.

(2.) It directs us where our only hope lies, even in Jesus, the great Physician. To him, with deep humiliation and confusion of face, in the sight of our own vileness, should we make application; crying earnestly for his healing grace; depending on his power to save to the uttermost; and casting ourselves wholly on his mercy.

(3.) Christ appears a gracious Saviour, ready to hear the prayer of the poor and destitute, and able to save to the uttermost all who come to him: both to pardon the sinner's guilt, however aggravated; and to deliver him from the power of his corruptions, however inveterate.

(4.) Every cleansed sinner will obediently follow the commands of Jesus; will offer up himself a living sacrifice to God; and in the blessed, evident, and universal change wrought upon him, will leave those without excuse, who will not acknowledge the divine power and grace magnified such a conversion.

2. Great multitudes resorted to him from every quarter to hear him, and to be healed. The more he sought to heal, the more his fame spread. The gratitude and report of joy this poor man felt on his cure, would not let him to hold his tongue and conceal the glory of his great Benefactor. Modest worth, that wishes to be concealed, shines the brighter.

He withdrew, after the labours of the day, from the multitude, and, retiring into a solitary place, spent some time in prayer.—To teach us this necessary duty, which we should intrench upon or interrupt.

3dly, Christ ceased not his indefatigable labours.

1. He preached in a house on a week-day at Capernaum; for no day, no place, is unsuitable or unseasonable, when an opportunity offers to speak a word for God, and for the good of men's souls. Among others of his audience, were a large number of scribes and Pharisees; who, with no good intention, were come from the distant places, not to hear and learn, but to sit by, to make remarks and cavil; and the power of the Lord was present to heal them, not the Pharisees, but many of the multitude who came to him with their several diseases; thus at least to leave without excuse those who refused the evidence of such incontestable miracles. *Note*; (1.) When persons come to hear the word of God, not to profit themselves, but to prejudice others against it, great is their guilt. (2.) Though we know the malice of those who watch for our halting, we must not be discouraged from persevering in the way of duty. (3.) The power of the Lord is present to heal wherever his gospel is preached; but they who reject the counsel of God against their own souls, have only themselves to blame for their destruction.

2. Just at that time a paralytic was brought to Jesus: unable to gain access by the door, because of the multitude, his friends carried him up to the top of the house, and let him down through the roof into the room where Jesus was. (See the Annotations.) Beholding their faith, he pronounces the pardon of his sins; and notwithstanding all the cavils of the Pharisees which he knew, Jesus confirms the divine authority that he assumed, by an immediate cure of the paralytic; proving thereby, that he who could thus by his own power remove the effects of sin, had an undoubted right to pardon it. The cure was instantaneous and perfect, and raised the amazement of all who were struck with sacred reverence and awe, when they saw him who the moment before lay stretched so helpless, now rise with full strength and vigour, take up his own bed, and go away glorifying God for the astonishing mercy; and the people in general acknowledged, that no such strange miracles were ever before seen or heard of. *Note*; (1.) All our diseases are the fruit of sin, and that should ever humble us under them before God. (2.) Jesus hath power to forgive sins, and they who by faith come to him, shall know it by blessed experience. (3.) If our sin be pardoned, the bitterness of sickness is passed away: a soul rejoicing in God, as its Saviour, has nothing to complain of. (4.) When we have received mercy at God's hand, we are bound to ascribe to him the glory due unto his name, and to speak to his praise.

4thly, The conversion of the sinner's heart to God is equally a matter of wonder, and as great an evidence of divine power, as cleansing the leper, or raising the dead. We have,

1. The calling of Matthew, or Levi the publican, and his ready obedience to the command of Jesus: instantly leaving all, he followed him. The vilest sinners who come to Jesus at his call, will hear him speak to their hearts, and

7 And the scribes and Pharisees <sup>b</sup> watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

8 <sup>1</sup> But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, <sup>k</sup> Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; <sup>1</sup> Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

10 And looking round about upon them

all, he said unto the man, <sup>m</sup> Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: And his hand was restored whole as the other.

11 <sup>n</sup> And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

12 ¶ And it came to pass in those days, that <sup>o</sup> he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

13 And <sup>p</sup> when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;

14 <sup>q</sup> Simon, (whom he also named Peter,)

<sup>a</sup> Pf. 37. 32. & 38. 12. Ch. 13. 14. & 11. 53, 54. & 14. 1, 2. & 20. 20. John. 9. 16, 26. <sup>1</sup> See ch. 5. 22. 1 Sam. 16. 7. 1 Chr. 29. 17. Pf. 7. 9. & 139. 1-4. Heb. 4. 13. Rev. 2. 23. John. 21. 17. <sup>k</sup> Dan. 6. 10. Phil. 1. 14. <sup>1</sup> Mark, 2. 27. Ch. 13. 14-17. & 14. 3-6. John. 7. 23. <sup>m</sup> Mark, 3. 5. Mat. 12. 13. 1 Kings, 13. 6. Pf. 107. 20. <sup>n</sup> Pf. 2. 1, 2. Ch. 4. 28. Acts, 17. 54. Mat. 12. 14 & 22. 16. John. 5. 16. & 7. 1. & 8. 59. & 10. 32. & 11. 47. & 12. 53. & 15. 24, 25. Prov. 4. 16. <sup>o</sup> Pf. 109. 4. & 22. 2. 1 Sam. 5. 7. Mat. 14. 23. Acts, 14. 23. & 1. 24. & 17. 3. <sup>p</sup> Mat. 10. 1-4. Mark, 3. 13-19. John, 15. 16. Acts, 1. 24. & 14. 23. Gal. 1. 1. Heb. 5. 4. This calling was some time before the 1 million. Mat. x. Mark, 6. 7. Ch. 9. 1. with Heb. 5. 4. <sup>q</sup> See on Mat. 10. 2-4. Mark, 3. 16-19. Acts, 1. 13.

and be effectually wrought upon: nothing is above his almighty grace.

2. The gracious condescension of the Lord to those publicans whom Matthew invited to his house. Our Lord disdained not to sit down with them, and vindicates his conduct from the envious, malicious, and censorious suggestions of the Pharisees. He associated not with them as approving their ways, or countenancing them in evil, but as a physician visits the diseased: the whole, at least they who fancy themselves so, need not his care. The business of the Saviour in the world was not with the righteous, or those who were vainly puffed up with a conceit of their own excellence, as was the case of the Pharisees; he came to call poor sinners, as the publicans were, to repentance; and would kindly receive them, when sensible of their guilt and sinfulness they turned to him. And he is still the same gracious Lord; no miserable sinner need despair; let him look unto Jesus and be saved. Those only perish, who through wilful ignorance know not their need of him, or proudly fancy that they are righteous.

3. He vindicates his disciples from the censures of the Pharisees respecting fasting. It was not fit that they should fast, while their Master was with them; they were not yet prepared to endure this discipline. Such austerities might tempt them to draw back, as new fermenting wine would burst old leathern bottles; their exercises must be proportioned to their strength. At present they could not bear it; but hereafter the time would come, when losing their Master, and called out to labour in his cause, they would learn to fast, 1 Cor. iv. 11. Not that the Pharisees had a right to lay such a stress upon their own bodily services: though, like new fermenting wine that sparkles high, they made a fair show in the flesh, their form of godliness was not to be compared with the life and power of religion, the old wine, which the disciples possessed, and which every spiritual person who has a true relish for the things of God far prefers.

## CHAP. VI.

*Ver. 1. On the second sabbath, &c.] On the first sabbath after the second of the passover.* Commentators are much at a loss to understand what St. Luke means by the second sabbath after the first;—Σαββάτου δευτεροπρωτου. Some think the proper translation of his words is, the first second-day's sabbath; understanding thereby, the ordinary sabbath which happened in the passover-week, and assigning the following reason of its name:—the law enjoined, that on the second day of the passover-week, they should offer the sheaf of the first-fruits, Lev. xxiii. 10, 11; but in case of a backward season, they placed an intercalary month between the last month *Adar*; and the first month *Abib*, answering to our March, and called it, the *Adar*, or the *second Adar*. From the second day of the passover-week, on which the first sheaf was offered with prayers for a blessing on the beginning of harvest, they counted seven weeks to *Pentecost*. See Lev. xxiii. 15, 16. Deut. xvi. 9. Exod. xxiii. 16. The day on which they offered the first barley sheaf, and from which they accounted the seven weeks of harvest to the feast of Pentecost, being the second day of the passover-week, it is supposed that the ordinary sabbaths happening in these weeks, carried in their name a memorial of the term whence they were computed. Thus the first of them was called Σαββάτου δευτεροπρωτου, the first second day's sabbath; or, "the first sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread:" the second was called Σαββάτου δευτεροδευτερου, the second second day's sabbath; and so on, till the seventh. There are, besides this, a variety of other interpretations and opinions: but upon the whole it may be observed, that according to all the interpretations of the passage, this first second day's sabbath happened near some passover.

*Ver. 3. An hungered.] Or Hungry.*

*Ver. 5. Lord also of the sabbath.] Lord even, &c.*

*Ver. 9. To save life, or to destroy it?] That our Lord might expose the malice and superstition of the Pharisees, he appealed to the dictates of their own minds, whether*

and Andrew his brother, James and John, Phillip and Bartholomew,

15 Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon called Zelotes,

16 And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

17 ¶ And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases ;

18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

20 ¶ And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for your's is the kingdom of God.

21 Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

24 But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

¶ Jude, 1. Acts, 1. 13, John, 14. 22. See Mark, 3. 19. Mat. 10. 4. John, 6. 70, 71. Not as Mat. 5. 1. Mat. 4. 23-25. & 12. 15. & 9. 35. & 14. 35, 36. & 15. 30. Mark, 5. 30. Mat. 11. 5. If. 35. 5, 6. Pf. 147. 3. Exod. 15. 26. Gen. 49. 10. If. 61. 1-3. Mat. 5. 2-12. Pf. 80. 19. Mat. 5. 3. Pf. 51. 17. If. 35. 3, 4. & 47. 3. & 57. 15, 16. & 61. 1. & 66. 2. Prov. 16. 19. & 29. 23. Ch. 14. 23, 33. John, 7. 48. 1 Cor. 1. 26-31. James, 2. 5. Mat. 11. 5. Pf. 113. 7, 8. Ch. 1. 53. Pf. 42. 1, 2. & 63. 1, 2. & 27. 4. & 84. 2. & 17. 15. & 65. 4. John, 4. 14. & 6. 35. & 7. 37, 38. 1 Cor. 4. 11. If. 44. 3, 4. & 65. 13. & 66. 10. & 25. 6. Ezk. 7. 16. & 9. 4. Rev. 11. 3. If. 61. 3. & 57. 18. & 30. 19. & 51. 11, 12. & 35. 10. Eccl. 7. 2, 3. Ch. 16. 25. John, 16. 20. 2 Cor. 1. 4, 7. James, 1. 12. 1 Pet. 1. 8. Rev. 7. 14-17. & 21. 3, 4. Mat. 5. 10, 11. John, 9. 22. & 12. 42. & 16. 2. 1 Pet. 2. 19. & 3. 14. & 4. 13, 14. 2 Tim. 2. 12. 2 Cor. 4. 17. 2 Thess. 1. 6, 7, 10. Acts, 5. 41. Rom. 5. 3. James, 1. 2. 1 Pet. 4. 13. Rev. 2. 7, 26-28. & 3. 5, 21. & 7. 14-17. 2 Tim. 12. & 4. 7, 8. Neh. 9. 26. Mat. 23. 31, 34. Acts, 7. 51. 2 Chron. 36. 16. Mark, 12. 3-5. Jer. xx. xxvi, &c. Heb. 11. 36-38. Job, 21. 7, 13. Amos, 6. 1. & 4. 1. James, 5. 1. Ch. 12. 15-21. Mat. 19. 23, 24. Mat. 6. 2, 5, 16. Ch. 16. 25. & 12. 15-21.

was not more lawful to do good on the sabbath-day than to do evil; to save than to kill? He meant—"more lawful for him on the sabbath to save men's lives, than for them to plot his death, without the least provocation." This was a severe but just rebuke, which in the most circumstances must have been sensibly felt.

12. In prayer to God.] Ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ, in oratory, or prayer-house of God. These *proseuchas*, or houses of prayer, were common in Judea: it is well known that they were open at the top, planted round with cedars, and often situated by the sides of seas or rivers. See Judges, xx. 26. and Calmet on the word *proseucha*. Dr. Heylin is of opinion, that the phrase is used to import an extraordinary and sublime devotion in the prayer of God. So the high mountains, and high towers, in the scripture, are called the mountains of God, the towers of God. Jesus was to appoint his disciples to pray every day.

[Zelotes,] Or, The Zealot. And stood in the plain;] Dr. Macknight is of opinion that this sermon was not the same with that delivered fifth and following chapters of St. Matthew. He gives several reasons which he urges to shew the difference, that the sermon recorded by St. Matthew was delivered on a mountain, in a sitting posture; for Jesus went up into a mountain, and sat down to pronounce it. and after he had finished it, came down to Nazareth. Mat. viii. 1. whereas when he pronounced this sermon he spoke of, he was in a plain or valley, and could not sit because of the multitude which

surrounded him, but stood with his disciples. But though there were not an evident disagreement in the facts preceding and following these two sermons, the reader might easily have allowed that they were pronounced at different times, because he will find other instances of things really different, notwithstanding in their nature they be alike, and were preceded and followed by similar events. For example, the two miraculous dinners were not only alike in their natures, but in their circumstances also; for they were introduced by the same discourses, and followed by like events; particularly at the conclusion of both, Jesus passed over the sea of Galilee; nevertheless, both being in the same evangelist, no reader can possibly think them the same. See the note on Matth. v. 1.

Ver. 24. Woe unto you that are rich!] We may observe another circumstance in this discourse, in which also it differs from that in St. Matthew, namely, that our Lord not only pronounced blessings, but likewise maledictions, in it. As poverty, which is neither good nor bad in itself, cannot be acceptable to God, unless it is accompanied with the graces and virtues which are suitable to an afflicted state; so riches do not make us the objects of God's hatred, unless they be accompanied with those vices which frequently spring from an opulent fortune; namely, pride, luxury, love of pleasure, or covetousness. Rich men, infected with such vices as these, are the objects of the woe here denounced; and not they who make a proper use of their wealth, and possess, through divine grace, the dispositions and virtues which should accompany affluence. Wherefore, though there is no restriction added to the word

25 <sup>e</sup> Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

26 <sup>h</sup> Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

27 <sup>i</sup> ¶ But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

29 <sup>k</sup> And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also.

30 <sup>l</sup> Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

31 <sup>m</sup> And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32 <sup>n</sup> For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34 <sup>o</sup> And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35 <sup>p</sup> But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

36 <sup>q</sup> Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

37 <sup>r</sup> Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

<sup>e</sup> If. 65. 13. James, 5. 5. & 4. 9. Prov. 14. 13. Eccl. 2. 2. & 7. 3. 5. 44. Exod. 23. 4. Prov. 25. 21. Rom. 12. 14, 19, 20. 1 Cor. 4. 12. 1 Pet. 3. 9. Ch. 23. 34. Acts, 7. 60. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>l</sup> Cor. 6. 7. Rom. 12. 17, 20. Lam. 3. 30. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 7. 12. & 22. 39, 40. Rom. xii. xiii. Gal. 5. 14, 22, 23. Col. 3. 8—15. Eph. 4. 25—32. Phil. 4. 8. <sup>n</sup> See Mat. 5. 46, 47. <sup>o</sup> Mat. 5. 42. Deut. 15. 8—11. <sup>p</sup> Ver. 27—31. Deut. 15. 8—11. Lev. 25. 35—37. Pf. 37. 26. Prov. 19. 17. & 22. 9. Heb. 6. 10. <sup>q</sup> Mat. 5. 45. John, 13. 35. 1 John, 3. 1, 14. <sup>r</sup> Acts, 14. 17. Pf. 145. 9. <sup>s</sup> Eph. 5. 1, 2. & 4. 31, 32. Col. 3. 8—15. Exod. 34. 6, 7. Pf. 65. 15. Mat. 5. 48. <sup>t</sup> If. 65. 5. Mat. 7. 1—5. Rom. 2. 1, 2. & 14. 3, 4, 10, 13. 1 Cor. 4. 3—5. James, 4. 11, 12. & 2. 13. Gal. 6. 1, 2. <sup>u</sup> Mat. 6. 14. & 18. 35. Prov. 10. 12. 1 Cor. 13. 7.

<sup>v</sup> If. 30. 10. Micah, 2. 11. John, 7. 7. 1 John, 4. 5. <sup>w</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>x</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>y</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>z</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>aa</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>ab</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>ac</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>ad</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>ae</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>af</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>ag</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>ah</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>ai</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>aj</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>ak</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>al</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>am</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>an</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>ao</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>ap</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>aq</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>ar</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. If. 64. 6. <sup>as</sup> Mat. 5. 39, 40. 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38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

39 And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40 The disciple is not above his Master: but every one \* that is perfect shall be as his Master.

41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that

is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

44 For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

<sup>a</sup> Prov. 10. 22. & 19. 17. & 22. 9. Eccl. 11. 1. <sup>b</sup> Judges, 1. 7. Pf. 18. 25, 26. & 41. 2. Mat. 7. 2. Mark, 4. 24. 2 Cor. 9. 6. James, 2. 13. Mat. 15. 14. Jer. 6. 15. & 5. 31. If. 56. 10, 11. & 9. 16. & 42. 19, 20, 25. 2 Thess. 2. 10—12. 2 Tim. 3. 13. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 10. 24, 25. John, 16. & 15. 20. <sup>d</sup> Or shall be perfected as his master. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 7. 3—5. Lam. 3. 40. 2 Cor. 13. 5. <sup>f</sup> Prov. 18. 7. Mat. 7. 4, 5. & 6. 23. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 7. 16—23. & 12. 33—35. & 3. 10. 1 John, 4. 1—5. 2 Peter, 1. 4. Gal. 5. 19—23. Rom. 2. 7—10. Jude, 1—20. 2 Tim. 3. 7. Titus, 2. 11—14. <sup>h</sup> Pf. 37. 30. Prov. 10. 20, 21. Mat. 7. 17, 20. & 12. 34, 35. & 13. 52. Rom. 8. 5—8.

new these acts of kindness to your brethren, not at despairing either of your present sustenance, or of your future reward." See Beza.

38. Good measure, &c.] Our Lord makes use of metaphors to express all the different kinds of good things, according to the different natures of the things. Some of them, to make the measure good, are pressed and trodden; some of them must be as the several kinds of grain; and some of them running over, as all sorts of liquors. The figure of a good measure into one's bosom, is an allusion to the habits, which were long pieces of cloth wrapped round the bodies, and girded up with a girdle. Their being of this kind, they could receive into their bosoms, a considerable quantity of such dry goods as were by measure. See Ruth, iii. 15. 2 Kings, iv. 39. 13. Prov. xvi. 33.

Every one that is perfect, shall be, &c.] "What afflictions and sufferings may attend my followers in teaching and communicating the instructions that I give them in my doctrine and example, let them be much of it: for the disciple should not be exempted from doing what his Master does, suffering what he submits to; but the highest of a disciple consists in his being like his Master in learning of him."

—What actions are so fair and lovely, that they turn them into reproach?—What characters are so embellished, what so exemplary, that uncharitable men revile and condemn them?—While the eyes of the multitude are turned to Christ, as their Lord and most valuable friend, the eyes of the

Pharisees are continually upon him for evil; and they behold his wondrous miracles, not for their own conviction, but that they may, if possible, turn them into the means of his destruction. So ineffectual are the most obvious and demonstrative arguments, to those self-righteous souls that obstinately reject the grace of God, and will not submit to be saved by faith in Jesus Christ.

The malice of the Pharisees, however, did not restrain the benevolence of our compassionate Saviour, nor deprive the poor penitent of his cure. This ought to be the pattern of our conduct. We must not be overcome of evil, nor suffer the most unjust censure, or the most malicious opposition to break our spirits so, as to prevent us from doing our duty. If others be mad with persecuting rage, let us pity them, improving all their fury against the cause of God, as a motive to excite our most zealous and courageous endeavours for its service.

We may assure ourselves, that the apostles, the future ministers of our Lord, had no inconsiderable share in those petitions, in which, with unabating fervour and intenseness of devotion, he spent this memorable night, ver. 12.—And if we have any regard for the support of religion in the present or rising age, we likewise should pray earnestly for all the ministers of the Gospel, and also that the Lord would increase the number of his faithful labourers.

Our Lord here again pronounces (ver. 20—26.) the poor and the hungry, the mournful and the persecuted, to be happy; and represents those as miserable who are rich and full, joyous and applauded: not that this is universally the case, but because prosperous circumstances are so frequently a sweet poison, and affliction a healing though bitter medicine. The thought will reconcile us to adversity, and awaken our caution when the world smiles upon

46 ¶ And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

47 <sup>e</sup> Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

48 He is like a man which <sup>h</sup> built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when <sup>i</sup> the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and <sup>k</sup> could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

<sup>f</sup> Mat. 7. 21—23. & 23. 11. Mal. 1. 6. Rom. 2. 13. James, 1. 22. Ch. 13. 25. Mark, 3. 35. John, 13. 17. & 14. 15. & 15. 14. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 7. 24—27. Pf. xv. & 24. 3—6. Ch. 11. 23. 1 John, 3. 7. Rev. 22. 14. James, 1. 27. <sup>h</sup> John, 1. 3, 5. 11. 28. 16. 1 Peter, 2. 4—5. 1 Cor. 10. 4. & 3. 11. Mat. 16. 18. <sup>i</sup> Acts, 14. 22. John, 16. 33. 1 Cor. 4. 10, 11. 2 Cor. 11. 25—27. Col. 1. 24. 2 Tim. 3. 12. <sup>k</sup> Pf. 54. 19. & 125. 1, 2. 2 Tim. 2. 19. 1 Pet. 1. 5. Jude, 1. Rev. 7. 14.

upon us; when a plentiful table is spread before us, and our cup runneth over; when our spirits are gay and sprightly, or when we hear, what to corrupted nature is too harmonious music,—that of our own praise from men. Oh that we may secure what is of infinitely greater importance, the praise of our heavenly Master by a constant obediential regard to these his precepts! May we be happy proficient in the art of bearing and forgiving injuries! May we be ready to every good word and work, maintaining an eye quick to observe, a heart tender to feel, a hand open to relieve the calamities and necessities of friends, of strangers, and of enemies; *giving to some*, and where there may be but little prospect of return; *lending to others*; which, if it engage them to greater industry, is as real a benefit as if the loan were a gift.

But let us not presume to call God our *Father*, if we do not labour to resemble him; nor dare to challenge the peculiar honour and privilege of Christ's disciples, if we do not distinguish ourselves from others by the charity of our tempers, and the usefulness of our lives, as well as by the articles of our faith, and the forms of our worship. Let a frequent reflection on our own faults teach us candour, while the sense of our continual dependence on the divine liberality makes us liberal towards those who need our assistance, lest we lose the comforts so justly forfeited, and abused mercies be another day repaid with measures of wrath *pressed down, shaken together, and running over!*—Abused mercies!—for surely it manifests peculiar kindness, that we are permitted to carve for ourselves: *With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you.* We ourselves are, as it were, to tell God how much mercy he shall shew us;—and can we be content with less than the very largest measure? Who then would not give to man, what he wishes and designs to receive of God?

On a future day, we are to give an account of ourselves before God, and therefore should judge for ourselves in matters of religion, and be very careful that we do not stupidly follow blind guides, till we fall with them into destruction:—“Lead us, therefore, O Lord, in the way everlasting; form us to a more perfect resemblance of our great Master; make us severe to ourselves, and, so far as it is real charity, indulgent to others. Sanctify our hearts by thy grace, that they may be as trees bringing forth good fruits, or as fountains pouring out wholesome streams: there may a good treasure be laid up, whence good things may be abundantly produced; there may those holy and benevolent affections continually spring up, which may flow forth with undisssembled freedom, to refresh the souls, and animate the graces of all who are around us!”

And may these beautiful, striking, and repeated admonitions which our Saviour gives us, of the vanity of every profession which does not influence the practice, (ver. 46—49.) be attended to with reverence and fear: we are *building* for eternity. May we never grudge the time and labour of a most serious inquiry into the great and fundamental principles of religion: may we discover the *sure foundation*, and raise upon it a noble *superstructure*, which shall stand fair and glorious, when hypocrites are swept away into everlasting ruin, on that awful day, in which *heaven and earth shall flee away from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne.* Rev. xx. 11.

REFLECTIONS.—1st. The passages in this chapter concerning the sabbath, we had before in the former evangelists. The time when the first of these events happened, is said to be *the second sabbath after the first*, or rather *the first sabbath after the second day of the passover.*

1. Our Lord vindicates his disciples from the censures of the Pharisees: and proves, by the example of David, the lawfulness of rubbing out the ears of corn, and eating them on the sabbath, when hunger called for food. *Note;* (1.) Works of real necessity are always allowable. (2.) The greatest censurers of the innocent actions of others are often most indulgent to their own iniquities.

2. He vindicates himself from the same malignant cavillers. As he preached in the synagogue on another sabbath, there was a man present who had a withered hand. Jesus bade him stand forth in the midst of the congregation; and, knowing the malicious purposes of his watchful enemies, who, from such a gracious work as he was about to perform, intended to ground an accusation against him as if he was a sabbath-breaker, he appeals to themselves, whether they thought the fourth commandment could possibly forbid the doing good, or saving a man's life on the sabbath-day. Unable to reply, yet resolved to find fault, they were silent. On which, he with a word restored the withered hand. And thereat his enemies were so enraged, that, with fury rising to madness, they consulted how they might destroy him. *Note;* (1.) They who would be cured of their spiritual infirmities, must be found in the assembly of the faithful, where Christ usually dispenses his healing grace. (2.) Men's perverseness and wickedness must not deter nor discourage us from the work in which the Lord would have us be employed. (3.) Violent anger is a temporary madness: during its fury neither reason nor conscience is regarded.

2dly. We have,

1. Our Lord's retirement. *He went out to a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God; which may signify*

49 But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth ; against which the

stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell ; and the ruin of that house was great.

1 Mat. 23. 3. James, 2. 22-24. Ch. 8. 5-7. Ver. 46. -21. Mat. 12. 43-45.

m Mat. 13. 18-22. & 11. 20-24. Heb. 10. 26-31. & 6. 4-8. 2 Peter, 2. 20.

signify either the object to whom his prayer was directed, or the fervency of his requests, or the house of prayer, to which he retired ; such oratories being common in that country. (See the Annotations.) The length of the time he spent there, bespoke the importance of the occasion, he being about to choose and ordain his twelve apostles. Note. When matters of deep concern lie upon our souls, we are especially called to spread the case before God, for his direction and blessing.

filled with food to satisfy the cravings of hunger, or better, with that supply of righteousness and grace which the soul desires. (3.) *Blessed are ye that weep now*, under afflictions for Christ's sake, or mourning over sin in yourselves and others ; *for ye shall laugh*, filled with present consolations, and, if faithful, you shall be blessed with everlasting joys in that kingdom where every tear shall be for ever wiped away from your eyes. (4.) *Blessed are ye when men shall hate you* for your attachment to Christ and his gospel, and when they shall separate you from their company, counting it infamous to associate with persons so obnoxious, as well as excommunicating you from their religious assemblies ; and shall reproach you, branding you with every malicious slander, and treating you with insult and contempt as the vilest of mankind ; and cast out your name as evil, never mentioning you but with malignity and virulence, abusing you wherever they go ; and all this for the Son of man's sake, because you espouse his interests, profess your faith in him, and live to his glory ; which is indeed the cause of all their enmity at the bottom, with whatever specious pretences they cloak their malevolence. Notwithstanding their curses, you are truly blessed. *Rejoice ye in that day therefore, and leap for joy* ; such reproach is your highest honour, and will, if you be faithful, prove your eternal advantage ; for behold your reward is great in heaven ; and this reward in glory will infinitely overpay all your losses and sufferings : for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. In every age, the faithful, from the beginning, have met with the same treatment from the world of the ungodly. It is your honour to be made vile in such company : and to partake of the same cross which they endured is the way to the crown that they have won. Let us weigh well these things, and we shall say, welcome reproach, welcome every opprobrious name, welcome enmity, reviling, insolence. This is the way to glory.

2. The calling and appointment of the twelve apostles. These he ordained to be his chief ministers in that kingdom, which he was come to establish, putting them in trust with his gospel, and empowering them to work miracles in confirmation of their mission. The names of the apostles are the same as before ; only he who was called Lebbeus, and surnamed Thaddeus, is here called Judas the brother of James, these names belonging to the same person ; and Simon the Canaanite is here named Simon Zelotes, being probably, before his conversion, of the sect of the Zealots.

2. He pronounces fearful woes on those whom the world calls happy ; so different are God's thoughts from man's thoughts. (1.) *Wo unto you that are rich*, who, possessed of affluence, idolize the creature, seek your happiness from worldly enjoyments, and trust in these vanities ; for ye have received your consolation ; you have your all in hand, and have nothing to hope for in eternity. (2.) *Wo unto you that are full*, living in all fleshly gratifications, and faring sumptuously every day ; for ye shall hunger, emptied of all your present abundance, and left to the rage of craving appetite, which can never be satisfied, and to raging thirst, where not a drop of water is granted to cool a flaming tongue. (3.) *Wo unto you that laugh now*, spending your days in mirth, pleasure, and sensual joy ; for ye shall mourn and weep, where the sorrow will be as unavailing, as the torment which occasions it will be intolerable and eternal. (4.) *Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you*, a sure sign that you do nothing to reprove them, either by your profession or Christian conversation, flattering them in their sins, and

3. Having finished this work, he came down with the twelve to the plain, where great multitudes attended from the most distant parts of the country, to hear his discourses, and to partake of his wondrous cures. Nor were they disappointed : he graciously taught them, and richly dispensed his favours, healing all the diseased, and casting out the unclean spirits from such as were possessed ; yea, such virtue went out of him, that the whole multitude of miserable patients, who came to him, sought but to touch him, fully persuaded that this would be effectual to heal them ; and found, according to their faith, that their cure was instantly effected.

3dly. Some have supposed, that the remainder of this chapter, from ver. 20. is an abridgement of the discourse recorded, Matth. v—vii. ; others, that it was delivered at a different time and place, though the matter be similar. And this seems most probable, as there it is said he went up into a mountain and sat ; here, that he came down and stood in the plain. (See the Annotations.)

As the disciples of Jesus would, for their attachment to him, be called to endure many hardships and sufferings, our Lord, fixing his eyes upon them, addresses them for their encouragement.

1. He pronounces those blessed, whom the world in general counts to be of all men most miserable. (1.) *Blessed be ye poor*, destitute of all earthly substance, or who have left all to follow me, and whose spirits are humbled to the dust, under the sense of your sinfulness and spiritual poverty : yours is the kingdom of God ; the present riches of grace are your treasure, and the eternal inheritance is reserved for you, as your exceeding great reward, if ye persevere in this truly evangelical spirit. (2.) *Blessed be ye that hunger now*, either wanting necessary food for the sake of Christ and his gospel, or so earnest after spiritual blessings as the hungry are for meat ; for ye shall be

## C H A P. VII.

*Christ findeth a greater faith in the centurion, a Gentile, than in any of the Jews; healeth his servant being absent; raiseth from death the widow's son at Nain; answereth John's messengers with the declaration of his miracles; declareth to the people what opinion he held of John; testifieth against the Jews, who would neither be won with the manners of John nor of the Lord Jesus; and sheweth, by occasion of Mary Magdalene, how he is a friend to sinners; not to maintain them in their sins, but to forgive them their sins, upon their repentance and faith.*

[Anno Domini 31.]

**N**OW when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, <sup>a</sup> he entered into Capernaum.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 8. 5—13.  
<sup>1</sup> Gen. 49. 10. 16. 11. 10.

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 8. 5. & 27. 54. Acts. 10. 1. & 27. 1.  
Rom. 10. 15—17.

<sup>c</sup> Eph. 4. 31, 35. Job. 31. 13. Rom. 12. 15, 16. Heb. 13. 3.

never offending them by your fidelity to their souls; then you will gain their approbation; for so did their fathers to the false prophets, whose smooth and deceitful prophecies obtained them the caresses of their countrymen; while the faithful prophets, who knew not to flatter, were abhorred and persecuted. And all these things are eminently verified and verifying every day.

4thly. The same truths are delivered in this sermon as in Matth. v. 38—44. Our Lord inculcates that universal charity, which is the eminent characteristic of his religion. Our love must extend even to our bitterest enemies, and make us ready to every good word and work for their service, rendering to them blessings for curses. Love will make us return prayers for despiteful usage. Christian charity must lead us to put up with affronts, without avenging them, or seeking litigious redress. Love must open our hearts to feel the distresses of the indigent, and our hands to relieve them liberally, according to our ability; often lending without the hope of repayment, and willing to cancel the debts of the insolvent, which unforeseen providences have disabled him from discharging. Love teaches us to put ourselves in the place of others, and act towards them in such a manner as, in their circumstances, we could with reason have expected them to act to us. And there are three reasons urged for this gracious disposition:

1. That this is the distinguishing badge of our profession. To love, serve, and lend to those who make us a return in kind, is no more than the most self-interested worldlings do: and the faith which worketh by love, must carry us much farther than these.

2. Our reward, if faithful, will be great in heaven, whatever ungrateful returns we may meet from men on earth.

3. As we shall herein most strikingly resemble the Father of mercies, who is good to the evil and unthankful. He will acknowledge us as his children, which is the most exalted honour and dignity.

5thly. The wise sayings contained in ver. 37, &c. we have considered at large on Matth. vii. and in other places.

2 And a certain <sup>b</sup> centurion's servant, who <sup>c</sup> was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, <sup>d</sup> he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the cen-

They give us the most noble directions whereon to form our judgment and conduct: happy they who observe them.

1. In judging, we must ever be candid, and lean to the most favourable side; interpreting the words and actions of others with those allowances which we wish and need for our own: and then we shall in general find the same candour from others, which we exercise towards them.

2. We must give and forgive, ready to relieve the necessities, and to pass by the offences of our brethren—charitable and merciful, as we ourselves expect mercy from God, who live pensioners on his bounty. And this will engage others the more readily to forgive us; and even in this life we shall often reap the fruits of our liberality.

3. As we deal with others, we may expect to be dealt with ourselves. Our rigour and severity to others, will provoke men to treat us with the same when we fall into their power, Judg. i. 7. whilst our known benevolence will usually engage a like return.

4. Ignorant and blind guides, who know not the way of salvation themselves, can never lead others aright; they who follow such, will perish with them. It is hardly possible that they should teach others the bitterness and burden of sin, who have never felt either; or acquaint them with the unsearchable riches of Christ, who have not experimentally found him precious to their own souls.

5. Christ's followers may not expect kinder treatment from the world than their Master met. The highest perfection of the disciple lies in conformity to his example; and when, like his Lord, he is enabled to lead a life of self-denial and deadness to the world, then he will be prepared to suffer whatever for his sake he may be called to.

6. They who set up for reformers of others, need first look well to their own souls: to be quick-sighted to the faults of others, and blind to our own, must make our rebukes absurd; and they would be justly retorted. When we are enabled to keep our own conscience void of offence, then our reproofs will come commended by the weight of example, and be doubly influential.

7. Men's actions will be good, or evil, according to their inward principles. As a tree may be known by its fruit,

centurion sent his friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof:  
 7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto \* one, <sup>h</sup> Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

9 When Jesus heard these things, he <sup>1</sup> mar-

<sup>a</sup> He first sent some of the Jewish elders, and then some of his own friends. <sup>b</sup> Mat. viii. <sup>c</sup> Gen. 32. 10. Mat. 3. 11. & 15. 27. Ch. 15. 19, 21. <sup>d</sup> Ver. 4. Prov. 27. 2. <sup>e</sup> Pl. 33. 9. & 41. 4. & 107. 20. & 147. 3. Exod. 15. 26. Rev. 16. 9. Deut. 7. 15. <sup>f</sup> Gr. *ibis man.* <sup>g</sup> Deut. 7. 15. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 15. 28. & 8. 10. & 9. 2.

to may a man by his conduct and conversation: according to the good or evil treasure in the heart, such will be the produce. A good man, by divine grace, truly renewed in the spirit of his mind, brings forth the genuine fruits of righteousness and true holiness: an evil man, whose heart unchanged, and under the power of native corruption, do nothing truly pleasing to God; his words and ways all corrupt before God; he is either grossly vicious, or habitually forgets God; or if he pretend to serve him, pride and hypocrisy stamp his duties as an abomination.  
 It is not pompous professions but real fidelity, which makes a man a true disciple of Jesus. They who call him Lord, must give a proof of their sincerity by their obedience: it is not merely hearing, but doing, which he requires. They who believe indeed to the saving of their souls, whose practice proves their faith unfeigned, are the true builders, whose house, founded on a rock, defies floods and storm. They stand fast in the hour of temptation, and are not moved away from the hope of the Lord, and, persevering in God's holy ways, they shall be brought into his power unto salvation. But the careless hearer, who hears the word of Jesus does not take effect, builds his house of heaven on a sandy foundation, and flatters himself with its ruin. The hour of temptation here often proves the hypocrite, or at least in death the hope of the hypocrite is as the sand. Let us look well then to the ground on which we stand, that we may not too late perceive our fatal error.

CHAP. VII.

[A certain centurion's servant,] In the notes on the previous chapter, we have spoken largely concerning this miracle. We have given, on ver. 13. of the eighth chapter, the reasons of those who think that the historians relate different accounts; at the same time harmonizing the accounts, and endeavouring to shew, according to our own opinion, that they are one and the same. See on ver. 5. In confirmation of this opinion, the following passage from Dr. Heylin is subjoined, nearly in his own words.  
 "The narrative which St. Luke gives of the centurion's behaviour is larger and more distinct than that of St. Matthew; and therefore we will put them together, only premising, that as it is not unusual in the Scriptures, so in the Hebrew particularly it is very usual, for the person himself what has been spoken or ordered. (See Matt. xi. 2, 3.) And accordingly, St. Luke relates as said by the centurion himself, what was spoken by those whom he had deputed to attend on his behalf; which sufficiently accounts

for the seeming difference which is found in the evangelists. The centurion was brought up under the heathen dispensation, but had attained to the knowledge of the one God; and, finding that fundamental truth so well established in the Jewish religion, had conceived a great affection to the Jewish nation, and done them all the good offices which lay in his power. His improvement also of the light given him under his inferior dispensation, had prepared him for the reception of the Gospel; and his knowledge of God in a general way, led him, through grace, by a just transition, to the acknowledgment of Christ as the God of nature; for whom therefore he had shown a reverent and awful veneration, that when he was to apply to him for the cure of his servant, he had recourse to the intercession of the elders of the Jewish church, who, at his request, came to Jesus, to entreat him that he would come and cure the sick servant, in consideration of his master who had sent them, and to whom they acknowledged great obligations. (Ver. 4.) Jesus went along with them, as they desired; but while he was yet on the way, and not far from the house, the centurion, who had refrained from addressing Jesus in person, out of a humble sense of his own unworthiness, (and perhaps too from having observed how the more religious among the Jews made a scruple of conversing with the heathen, such as himself still was, to outward appearance;) when he heard that Christ was actually coming to his house, reflected with himself, upon more enlarged views of faith, that the intended visit was a needless condescension in our Lord, and therefore sent some of his friends to prevent it by the following message in his name, ver. 6, &c. "Lord, do not give thyself farther trouble, for I am not a fit person that thou shouldst come under my roof; and that indeed was the reason why I judged myself unworthy to come to thee myself. Do thou but speak the word only, and my servant will be cured. For although I am under the authority of others, yet, as I have soldiers under me, I will say to one, Go, and he goeth; to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." As if he should have said, "I am but a *subaltern*, and have only a delegated and subordinate power; yet what I bid be done, is immediately executed: thou then, who art *Lord of nature*, what canst not thou do by thy bare command?"—When Jesus heard this, he wondered, (ver. 9,) and turning about, he said to the people that followed him, "I profess that I have not found so great a faith even among the Jews themselves." See Heylin, and on Matth. viii. 10.

Ver. 7. Say in a word,] Say the word.

Var.

velled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not <sup>k</sup> in Israel.

10 <sup>l</sup> And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

11 ¶ And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain: and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried

out, the <sup>m</sup> only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

13 And when the Lord saw her, he <sup>n</sup> had compassion on her, and said unto her, <sup>o</sup> Weep not.

14 And he came and touched the <sup>p</sup> bier: and they that bare *him* stood still. And he said, Young man, <sup>q</sup> I say unto thee, Arise.

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

16 <sup>r</sup> And there came a fear on all: and

<sup>k</sup> Pf. 147. 19, 20. Rom. 3. 1—3. & 9. 4, 5. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 8. 13. & 15. 28. Mark. 9. 23. John. 4. 50, 54. <sup>m</sup> Zech. 12. 10. 1 Kings, 17. 18. 2 Kings, 4. 27. 2 Sam. 14. 7. <sup>n</sup> If. 63. 7, 9, 15. Pf. 86. 5, 15. Judges, 10. 16. Hosea, 11. 8. Jer. 31. 20. Heb. 2. 17. & 4. 15. Mar. 9. 36. John, 11. 33, 35. Lam. 3. 32, 33. <sup>o</sup> 1 Thess. 4. 13. Mark, 5. 39. John, 11. 4, 23, 25. <sup>p</sup> Or coffin. <sup>q</sup> Pf. 33. 9. Rom. 4. 17. John, 6. 63. & 5. 21. Ch. 9. 54, 55. John, 11. 43, 44. Mar. 27. 52, 53. & 11. 5. 1 Kings, 17. 17—23. 2 Kings, 4. 20—30. & 13. 21. Acts, 9. 40, 41. & 20. 9—11. Ezek. 37. 5, 9. Eph. 5. 14. <sup>r</sup> See ch. 5. 26. Acts, 5. 5, 11. Gal. 1. 24.

*Ver. 11. Called Nain: ]* Nain was situated a mile or two south of Tabor, and near Endor. The apostles most probably were of the number of the *disciples who went with our Lord*; because it is not to be imagined, that he would suffer the chosen witnesses of his miracles to be absent, when so great a miracle was to be performed as the resurrection of a person from the dead, and to be performed so publicly, in the presence of all those who were attending the funeral. The circumstance here recorded probably happened towards the evening.

*Ver. 12. There was a dead man carried out, ]* It was customary for the Jews to bury out of the city, as appears from Matth. xxvii. 60. This custom was likewise observed by other nations. The Jews might have introduced it to prevent their being polluted by touching the biers or dead bodies of their countrymen; but both they and the heathens might have had a further reason for this institution, namely, the preservation of their health; it being notorious that the effluvia which proceed from dead bodies are very pernicious, and often cause pestilential disorders. Hence it has been matter of wonder, why modern Christians should not only have their burial-grounds contiguous to their churches, but even bury in their churches; a custom most certainly prejudicial to health, and introduced, as is most likely, by superstition and pride. But see this subject completely handled in a judicious pamphlet, intitled, “Seasonable Considerations on the indecent and dangerous Custom of burying in Churches and Church-yards.” Some particular circumstances of distress are mentioned in the case before us: the *young man* to be buried, was *the only son of his mother*, and *she was a widow*, and consequently had no prospect of more children: hence the sympathy which she received from her relations and acquaintance was singular. A crowd of people much greater than was usual on such occasions, in testimony of their concern for her, attended her; while she performed the last duty to her beloved son. This circumstance the evangelist takes notice of to shew, that though there had been no persons present at the miracle but those who at-

tended the funeral, it was illustrious on account of the number of the witnesses.

*Ver. 13—15. When the Lord saw her, &c.]* Jesus, whose tenderness made him susceptible of the strongest impressions from occurrences of this kind, knowing that the mother’s affection was bitter, and the occasion of it real, was greatly moved at the sorrowful scene. Nor was his sympathy vain: he resolved to turn their mourning into joy, by raising the young man from the dead. The opportunity was peculiarly proper, as the multitude of the people attending the corpse entirely prevented all suspicion that the person carried out was not dead; since to manage with success a fraud, in which so many must have been concerned, was absolutely impossible. The miracle therefore being liable to no objection, Jesus came nigh, laid hold on the bier, and uttered the commanding voice, *Young man, I say unto thee, arise!* Immediately, at his authoritative call, the youth revived, having received life from Jesus, who, instead of shewing him around to the multitude, by a singular exercise of modesty and humanity *presented him to his mother*; ver. 15. to intimate, that in compassion to her affliction he had wrought the life-giving miracle. At the same time, as it was performed near the city gate, which anciently was the place of public resort, the youth must have been raised from the dead in the presence of many witnesses, particularly the multitude which came with Jesus, the people who accompanied the corpse, and all who happened at that instant to be in the gate upon business: wherefore, being so publicly performed, this great miracle became a noble confirmation of our Lord’s mission. “The ancients,” says Grotius, “observe, “that in three of the miracles performed by Jesus after “his sermon on the mount, the three kinds of God’s benefits are represented us: *First*, Those which are conferred upon our suing to God for them ourselves, as in “the case of the leper. *Secondly*, Those which are obtained for us by the prayers of others, as in the case of “the centurion’s servant. And, *thirdly*, Those which “God bestows without being asked, as in the present “case.”

they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

18 ¶ And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

19 And John calling unto him two of his disciples, sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

21 And in the same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.

22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.

23 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

24 ¶ And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

25 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously appavelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

26 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

27 This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

29 And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

31 ¶ And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

32 They are like unto children sitting in the market place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

John, 4. 19. & 6. 14. & 9. 17. Ch. 24. 19. Gen. 3. 15. & 22. 17. & 49. 10. Deut. 18. 15-18. If. 7. 14. & 9. 6, 7. & 11. 1. & 35. 4. & 53. 2-12. & 52. 13-15. Jer. 23. 5, 6. & 30. 27. & 31. 22. Ezek. 21. 27. & 17. 22-24. & 34. 23, 29. Dan. 9. 24-26. Micah, 5. 2. Haggai, 2. 7. Zech. 9. 9. Mal. 3. 1-3. with John, i. & 6. 14. Ver. 21. Mat. 11. 5. Ch. 4. 38-44. & 5. 12-25. & 6. 17-19. Ver. 10, 15, 21. with If. 35. 5, 6. & 29. 18. & 42. 6, 7. & 61. 1-3. & 66. 2. Pf. 146. 8. Zeph. 3. 12. Zech. 11. 7. James, 2. 5. 2 If. 8. 14, 15. Rom. 9. 32, 33. 1 Peter, 2. 7, 8. 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24. & 2. 14. Ch. 2. 34. John, 6. 60-60. Ch. 1. 80. & 3. 2. An unface man? No. Eph. 4. 14. Titus, 1. 10. Col. 2. 4, 8. 2 Peter, 2. 3, 17. & 3. 17. A complainant gentleman? No. Gal. 1. 10. 1 Cor. 1. 26. Ch. i. iii. John, 1. 6-36. & 3. 26-36. & 5. 35. Mal. 3. 1. & 4. 5. 6. If. 40. 3. Mat. 3. 3. & 11. 10. Mark, 1. 2. Ver. 26. Ch. 1. 15-17. & 3. 16. John, 1. 15-27. & 5. 35. Mat. 3. 2-17. & 13. 17. Eph. 3. 8, 9. & 1. 9. Col. 1. 26, 27. Rom. 16. 25, 26. 2 Tim. 1. 1. 10. 1 Pet. 1. 10, 12. Mal. 11. 12. & 21. 31, 32. Ver. 35. Rom. 3. 4. Mat. 3. 5. Ch. 10. 16. Mat. 21. 31, 32. John, 12. 48. Acts, 20. 27. Or frustrated. Or within themselves. Mat. 3. 4. Ch. 1. 15. 1 Cor. 9. 27. 1 Pet. 2. 2 Tim. 2. 10. with John, 10. 10. Mat. 10. 25.

case. To which kind of mercy the apostles very justly refer the calling of the Gentiles." Ver. 16. Saying,—that God hath visited his people,] This expression which Zacharias the father of the Baptist, when he spoke of the coming of the Messiah, ch. Wherefore the meaning of the inhabitants of Nain this, God hath visited the people, by having raised up them the great Prophet, promised to Moses in the The evangelist justly observes, that by acknowledging as the Messiah, they glorified God.

Ver. 21. He gave sight.] The original is emphatical, and seems to express in how general, how compassionate, and kind a manner our Lord performed these miracles: Ἐχαρίσατο τὸ βλέπειν, he graciously bestowed sight. Ver. 29. And all the people, &c.] See the note on Matth. xi. 12, 13. Ver. 30. Rejected the counsel of God against themselves,] Rejected the divine offers made to them,—or, despised within themselves the purpose of God.

Ver.

34 The Son of man is come <sup>m</sup> eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

35 But wisdom is <sup>n</sup> justified of all her children.

36 ¶ <sup>o</sup> And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. <sup>p</sup> And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And, behold, a <sup>q</sup> woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an <sup>r</sup> alabaster-box of ointment,

38 And <sup>s</sup> stood at his feet behind *him* weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw *it*, he spake within himself, saying, ' This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that <sup>u</sup> toucheth him: for she is a <sup>t</sup> sinner.

40 <sup>v</sup> And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, <sup>z</sup> Master, say on.

<sup>m</sup> Mat. 11. 19. & 9. 11. Ch. 5. 29. Ver. 36. Ch. 11. 37. & 14. 1. & 15. 2. & 19. 7.  
 Ver. 29. Rcm. 3. 4. <sup>o</sup> Not that Mark, 14. 3. Mat. 26. 6. <sup>p</sup> Ch. 11. 37. & 24. 1.  
<sup>r</sup> Not that John, 12. 3. Mat. 26. 7. Mark, 14. 3. <sup>q</sup> Zech. 12. 10. <sup>s</sup> 2 Cor. 7. 11. 1 Tim. 5. 10. Gen. 18. 4. & 19. 2. Judges, 19. 21. 1 Sam. 25. 41.  
<sup>t</sup> Ch. 15. 2. & 23. 2. John, 7. 12. Mat. 16. 14. <sup>u</sup> Lev. xv. Numb. xix. <sup>v</sup> Ver. 37. Gen. 13. 13. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Gal. 5. 19—21.  
<sup>w</sup> Ch. 5. 22, 31. & 6. 8. <sup>z</sup> John, 13. 13. & 11. 28. & 3. 2. Mat. 7. 21.

<sup>Phil.</sup> 2. 15, 16. & 3. 7—14. 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24.  
<sup>Perhaps</sup> Mary Magdalene. Ch. 8. 2. & 21. 16.  
<sup>Ver.</sup> 37. Gen. 13. 13. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Gal.

Ver. 35. *But wisdom, &c.*] See the note on Matth. xi. 19.

Ver. 37. *Which was a sinner—box of ointment,*] *Who had been a sinner—box of perfume.* It is generally supposed, that the woman who anointed our Lord in Simon's house, was she who in the Gospel is called Mary Magdalene, for no other reason than because St. Luke, in the beginning of the following chapter, mentions her as one of our Lord's attendants, and one *out of whom he had cast seven devils*. Some indeed attempt to prove it out of the Talmud, which mentions a lewd woman called *Mary Megadella*, or *the plaiter*, viz. of *hair*, an epithet probably given to all prostitutes in those times on account of their nicety in dress; but this has no relation to the name *Magdalene*. In truth Mary Magdalene seems rather to have been a woman of high station and opulent fortune, being mentioned by St. Luke, (ch. viii. 2.) even before Joanna, though the wife of so great a man as Herod's steward. Besides, the other evangelists, when they have occasion to speak of our Lord's female friends, commonly assign the first place to Mary Magdalene, who was probably so called from *Magdala*, the place of her birth, a town situated near the lake of Tiberias, and mentioned Matth. xv. 39. The character given to this woman, that *she had been a sinner*, renders it probable that she had formerly been a *harlot*; for the word *ἁμαρτωλῶς* is frequently used in this sense: but her action on this occasion proves, that she was now awakened to a just sight and sense of her sins. The *city*, in which she is said to have lived, means Capernaum, the place of our Lord's ordinary residence, which is often described in that general way. Probably she was acquainted at the Pharisee's house, for she gained easy access even into the room where the company was sitting. It may be necessary just to remark, that this is a very different history from that of Mary's anointing Christ's head a little before his death. See Matth. xxvi. 6, &c. and the parallel places.

Ver. 38. *Began to wash his feet with tears,*] *To water his feet with a shower of tears.* Doddridge; who observes

that this is the proper signification of the word *βίβρα*. See Matth. v. 45. We are not to imagine that this woman came on purpose thus to *wash* and *wipe* the feet of Christ; but probably, hearing that the Pharisee who invited Jesus to dinner had neglected the civility usually paid in the eastern countries to such guests as they designed particularly to honour,—that of anointing the head with fragrant oils, or rich perfumes,—she was willing to supply the defect; and as she stood near Jesus, was so melted with his discourse, that she shed such a flood of tears, as wetted his feet which lay bare on the couch, his sandals being put off; and observing this, *she wiped them with the tresses of her hair*, which she now wore flowing loose about her shoulders, as mourners commonly did; and then, not thinking herself worthy to anoint his head, poured forth the liquid perfume upon his feet. Neither the Jews nor Romans wore stockings; and as for their shoes, or sandals, they always put them off when they lay down on their couches to take meat. These customs are alluded to in the law of the passover, which orders the Jews to depart from their ordinary way, and to eat the passover standing, *with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand*. See on Exod. xii. 11. The word *ἑστῆ* properly signifies *tresses*, as we have rendered it. It is well known that long hair was esteemed a great ornament in the female dress; and therefore women of loose character used to nourish and plait it, and to set it off with garlands and jewels. See 1 Cor. xi. 15.

Ver. 39, 40. *Now when the Pharisee—saw it, &c.*] Simon, perceiving what was done, immediately concluded that Jesus could not be a prophet; since in that case, instead of allowing her even to touch him, he would certainly have expelled her from his presence forthwith, as the tradition of the elders directed; for it was a maxim among the Pharisees, that the very touch of the wicked caused pollution. But though Simon did not declare his sentiments, they were not hidden from Christ; who, to shew him that he was a prophet, and that he knew not

41 \* There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed <sup>b</sup> five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

42 And when they <sup>d</sup> had nothing to pay, he <sup>e</sup> frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, <sup>f</sup> to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou <sup>g</sup> gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest me no <sup>h</sup> kifs: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kifs my feet.

\* The scope of this parable is to shew, that great forgiveness of sin naturally issues in distinguished love to God. <sup>a</sup> Mat. 6. 13. Ch. 11. 4. <sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. 1 Tim. 1. 13-16. <sup>c</sup> See Mat. 18. 28. <sup>d</sup> Pf. 49. 7, 8. Rom. 3. 23. 2 Cor. 3. 5. Eph. 2. 1. Titus, 3. 3. <sup>e</sup> Hosea, 14. 2. <sup>f</sup> Jer. 47. 2 Cor. 11. 18. & 43. 25. & 44. 22. Rom. 3. 24. & 5. 20, 21. Eph. 1. 7. Col. 1. 14. 1 Tim. 1. 13-16. Rev. 1. 5. Pf. 103. 3. <sup>g</sup> Ver. 47. 2 Cor. 5. 14. Phil. 3. 7-9. with 1 Tim. 1. 13. <sup>h</sup> Gen. 18. 4. & 19. 2. 1 Tim. 5. 10. <sup>i</sup> Rom. 16. 16. 1 Cor. 16. 20. 2 Cor. 13. 12. 1 Thes. 5. 26. 1 Pet. 5. 14.

the eastern countries are considered. There, persons of the highest rank did not think it beneath them to honour their guests by performing offices of this kind for them. Thus in Gen. xviii. 7, 8. we read, that on the arrival of the three angels, *Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf, and took butter and milk, and the calf which his servant had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree to serve them, and they did eat.* Something of this sort we find, Iliad, ix. ver. 205. And Dr. Shaw, (*Trav. p. 301.*) tells us, that these customs subsist among the eastern nations to this day, particularly among the Arabs, who are remarkable for retaining their ancient manners; and that the person who first presents himself to welcome a stranger, and wash his feet, is the master of the family: for as they still walk barefooted, or with sandals only, this piece of civility in some way or other is absolutely necessary.

Ver. 45. *Thou gavest me no kifs, &c.*] Since it was customary for the master of the house to receive his guests with such a salutation, to provide them with water to wash their feet, &c. it is possible that Simon might have omitted some of these civilities, lest his brethren who sat at table with him should think he paid Jesus too much respect; and if there was any such slight intended, it might be an additional reason for our Lord's taking such particular notice of the neglect. The author of the *Observations* remarks, that our Lord reproaches the Pharisee that he had *given him no kifs*; whereas the person whom the Pharisee had been censuring in his heart, *had not ceased kissing his feet* from her entrance into the house. It is visible by the contrast which our Lord here supposes, between the woman's kisses and the attention he had reason to expect from the Pharisee, that he did not look for his kissing his feet, but for some other salutation. But what?—Not the kisses of equality most certainly, but rather that *kissing his hand*, which marks our reverence,—the reverence customarily paid in the east to those of a sacred character, and which, contrary to the rules of decorum, he had omitted. Thus Norden tells us, that a Coptic priest, whom they took in their bark from the neighbourhood of Cairo a considerable way up the Nile, carried it pretty high, inasmuch that he dared to tell them more than once, that he could not take them for Christians, since not one of their company had offered to *kiss his hands*; whereas the Coptics

46 <sup>1</sup> Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, <sup>2</sup> Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; <sup>1</sup> for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

<sup>1</sup> Pf. 23. 5. & 104. 15. Eccl. 9. 8. Mat. 6. 17. <sup>2</sup> Ver. 37, 39, 43. <sup>1</sup> Tim. 1. 13—16. <sup>1</sup> Cor. 6. 9—11. Eph. 1. 7. Exod. 34. 6, 7. Micah, 7. 18, 19. <sup>1</sup> Tim. 1. 15, 16. <sup>1</sup> Or *therefore*. Pf. 103. 1—3. & 116. 12—19. <sup>2</sup> Cor. 5. 14. Pf. 119. 32. Ver. 43. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 9. 2. <sup>1</sup> 43. 25. & 44. 22. & 55. 7. & 1. 18. Col. 1. 14. Acts, 5. 31. Eph. 1. 7. <sup>1</sup> Ch. 5. 21. Mat. 9. 3. Mark, 2. 7. with ver. 23, 39. <sup>1</sup> If 53. 4. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 9. 22. Mark, 5. 34. & 10. 52. Ch. 8. 48. & 18. 42.

ran every day in crowds round him, to shew their respect by such marks of submission. And at Saphet in Galilee, where the Jews have a sort of university, Dr. Pocock saw the inferior rabbies complimenting the chief, who was elegantly habited in white fatten on the day of Pentecost, by coming with great reverence, and kissing his hand. See *Observations*, p. 262.

Ver. 46. *Mine head with oil, &c.*] The reader will observe the beautiful and elegant contrast in this verse, between *common oil* and *precious ointment*, as well as between anointing the *head* and anointing the *feet*; and indeed the same kind of contrast is observed in the two preceding verses. How common this circumstance of *anointing, &c.* was, will appear on referring to Deut. xxviii. 40. Micah, vi. 15. Pf. xxiii. 5. civ. 15. cxli. 5.

Ver. 47. *For she loved much:*] *Wherefore she loved much.* That nobody might put a wrong construction upon this woman's behaviour, our Lord declared, that her regard to him proceeded purely from a sense of the favour he had done her, in bringing her to repentance, and in raising her to the hope of pardon. For doubtless he had previously made her sensible of her sins by his sermon, and had raised her to the grace of true repentance; and therefore she expected her pardon from the general doctrine of the gospel; and particularly from the promise of rest which Jesus had lately made to all weary and heavy-laden sinners: but the favour of pardon bearing a proportion to the multitude and greatness of the sins pardoned, this woman, who was a notorious sinner, could not but love Jesus ardently, who had converted her, and blotted out all her transgressions. "I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, namely, by me;" for the reason will not hold without this. So that Jesus, on this occasion, in the hearing of Simon and all the guests, plainly assumed to himself the prerogative of God,—the right of forgiving men their sins. Accordingly the guests understood him in this sense, as appears from the reflection which they made upon his speech, ver. 49. The clause, *for she loved much*, is better translated as above, *Wherefore, &c.* Our Lord did not make the application of this parable more directly; but left Simon to do it.

Ver. 49. *Who is this, &c.*] "Who is this arrogant and presumptuous man, that not only transgresses our rules, by permitting a harlot to touch him, but even presumes to say that he forgiveth sins, which is the peculiar prerogative of God himself?" See Matth. ix. 3. and ch. v. 21.

48 And he said unto her, <sup>2</sup> Thy sins are forgiven.

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, <sup>2</sup> Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50 And he said to the woman, <sup>1</sup> Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Ver. 50. *Thy faith hath saved thee, &c.*] Our Lord, contemning the malicious murmuring of the Pharisees, repeated his assurance, by telling the woman that her faith had saved her, and bidding her *depart in peace*; that is, impressed with a strong sense of the love of God, and filled with the divine pleasure which arises from that attainment. *Go in peace*, was an usual form of dismissing inferiors, and was an expression of the friendship and good wishes of the person speaking. There is an evident propriety in the phrase here, considering what had happened to discompose the spirit of this humble penitent. See ch. viii. 48. ii. 29. Mark, v. 34. James, ii. 16. and Gen. xlii. 17.

*Inferences* drawn from the history of the good Centurion, &c. ver. 1—16. of this chapter, and Matt. viii. 5—13. and the raising from the dead the widow's son. No nation, no trade or profession, can shut out a simple honest heart from God. If this centurion was a foreigner by birth, yet was he a domestic in heart: he loved that nation which was chosen of God; and if he were not of the synagogue, yet did he *build a synagogue*: (ver. 5.) where he might not be a party, he would still be a benefactor. We could not love religion, were we utterly destitute of it.

We do not see this centurion come to Christ, as the Israelitish captain came to Elijah on Carmel,—but with much suit, much submission,—by others,—by himself. Could we but speak for ourselves, as this captain did for his servant, what could we possibly want? What wonder is it, if God be not forward to give, where we care not to ask, or ask as if we cared not to receive?

Great variety of suitors resorted to Christ; one for a son, another for a daughter, a third for himself; I see none come for his *servant* but this one centurion: nor was he a better man than a master. His servant is sick; he does not drive him out of doors, but lodges him at home; and then seeks to Christ for aid with most humble importunity. Had the master been sick, the faithfullest servant could have done no more: he is unworthy to be well served, who will not sometimes wait upon his followers. It behoves us so to look down upon our servants here on earth, as that we may still look up to our Master who is in heaven.

There was a paralytic, whom faith and charity brought to our Saviour, and let down through the uncovered roof, in his bed. Why was not this centurion's servant so carried, so presented?—One and the same grace can yield

contrary

CHAP. VIII.

Women minister unto Christ of their substance. Christ, after he had preached from place to place, attended by his apostles, propoundeth the parable of the sower, and of the candle; declareth who are his mother, and brethren; rebuketh the winds; casteth the legion of devils out of the man, into the herd of swine; and is rejected of the Gadarenes; healeth the woman of her bloody issue; and raiseth from death Jairus's daughter.

[Anno Domini 30.]

AND it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village,

preaching, and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

4 ¶ And when much people were ga-

Mat. 4. 17, 23. Ch. 4. 14, 15, 43, 44. & 6. 17. Mark, 1. 14, 15. Acts, 10. 38. If. 63. 1. & 61. 1-3. & 48. 17. Ch. 6. 14-16. Mat. 10. 1-4. Mark, 3. 16-19. Acts, 1. 13. Mat. 27. 55, 56. John, 19. 25. Mark, 16. 9. Perhaps the sister of Lazarus. Ch. 10. 39. John, 11. 12. Ch. 3. 19, 20. & 9. 7-9. Mark, 6. 14-28. Mat. 14. 1-11. Ch. 13. 31, 32. & 23. 7-12. Mark, 15. 40, 41. 1 Cor. 9. 11, 14. Mat. 13. 2-23. Mark, 4. 1-20.

contrary effects. They, because they believed, brought the patient to Christ; he, because he believed, brought not his servant to him. Their act argued no less desire, his argued more confidence; his labour was less, because his faith was more; and hence we find that it met an ample reward; Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him, Mat. viii. 7.

As he said, so he did; the word of Christ is his act, or concurs with it: he went as he spake. O admirable return of humility! Christ will go down to visit the sick servant: the master of that servant says, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof, ver. 6. The Jewish elders, who went before to mediate for him, could say, He was worthy for whom Christ should do this miracle, ver. 4. He for himself says, he is not even worthy of Christ's presence. And yet, while he confesses himself thus unworthy of any favour, he approves himself worthy of all. Had not Christ been before in his heart, he could not have felt himself so unworthy to entertain that divine Guest within his house: God ever delighteth to dwell under the lowly roof of a humble breast.

It is fit that the foundation should be laid deep, where the building is high: the centurion's humility was not more low, than his faith was lofty; that reaches up unto heaven, and in the face of human weakness descends Omnipotence. Only say the word, and my servant shall be whole, ver. 7.

But what foundation had this steady confidence of the good centurion?—He saw how powerful his own word was with those under his command, ver. 8. (though himself was under the command of another) the force where-extended to absent performances. Well therefore might he argue, that a free and unbounded power could infallible commands, and that the most obstinate disease yield to the beck of the God of nature. Weakness shew us what is in strength; as by one drop of water may see what is in the main ocean.

Wonder not that this centurion was kind to his servants,—for his servants were dutiful to him. He need but say, Do this, and it is done: these mutual respects draw each other. They that neglect to please, cannot justly complain of being neglected. They should rather say, Oh, could I but be such a servant to my heavenly

Master, as the centurion's servants to him.—Alas! every one of his commands says, Do this,—and I do it not: every one of his prohibitions says, Do it not,—and I do it. He says, Go from the world,—I run to it: he says, Come to me,—I run from him. Woe is me! this is not service, but enmity: how can I look for favour, whilst I return rebellion? It is a gracious Master whom we serve: there can be no duty of ours which he sees not, acknowledges not, crowns not. We could not but be happy, if we could but be officious.

What can be more marvellous than to see Christ marvel? ver. 9. All marvelling supposes an ignorance going before, and a knowledge following, some unexpected accident. Now who wrought this faith in the humble penitent centurion, but He that wondered at it—He who is equally willing to give the same faith, yea, more abundantly, to all who sincerely seek it. Yet he wondered, to teach us much more to admire that, which He at once knows and holds admirable. Our wealth, beauty, wit, learning, honour, may make us accepted of men; it is our faith, with its gracious consequences, which alone will make God in love with us. There are great men, whom we justly pity; we can esteem, love, and admire none but the gracious.

It is not more the shame of Israel, than the glory of this centurion, that our Lord says, I have not found so great faith, &c. ver. 9. Where we have laid our tillage, manure, and seed, who would not look up for a crop? But if the comparatively uncultured fallow yield more than the arable, how justly is the unfruitful ground near to a curse! Our Saviour did not mutter this awful testimony to himself, but he turned him about to the people, and spake it in their ears, at once to excite their shame and emulation. It is well if any thing can enkindle in us holy ambition. Dull and base are the spirits of that man, who can endure to see another overtake him in the way, and outrun him to heaven.

If the prayers of an earthly master prevailed so much with the Son of God for the recovery of a servant, how shall not the intercession of the Son of God prevail with his Father in heaven for us his impotent children upon earth, who cast all our care upon him? What can we want, O Saviour, while thou suest for us, and we put our trust in thee?

thered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable :

5 <sup>a</sup> A sower went out to sow his seed : and

as he sowed, some fell <sup>b</sup> by the wayside ; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 13. 3, 19, 37. Mark, 1. 14, 15. Heb. 2. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Ver. 12. James, 1. 23, 24.

He who gave thee for us, can deny thee nothing for us, can deny us nothing for thee, if we make thee our confidence.

But turn we away hence, and follow the beneficent Saviour to Nain. No sooner has he raised the centurion's servant from the palsy and his bed, than he raises the widow's son from death and the bier. His providence has so contrived his journey, that he meets with the sad pomp of a funeral ; a sorrowful widow, attended by her weeping neighbours, is following her only son to the grave, — a young man, the only son, — the only child of his mother, and she was a widow. Surely there was not a circumstance in this spectacle that did not command compassion. Nay, when God himself would describe the most passionate expression of sorrow that can attend the miserable, he can but say, *O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, cover thyself with ashes ; make lamentation and bitter mourning, as for thine only son.*

Such was the loss, such the sorrow of this disconsolate mother : nor words nor tears can suffice to discover it : a good husband may make amends for the loss of a son ; had the root been left entire, he might better have spared the young branch : but, alas ! now both are cut up, all the stay of her life is laid low with a stroke ; she seems abandoned to the very perfection of misery.

And yet, now, when she gave herself up for a forlorn mourner, past all capacity of redress, — even now, the God of comforts meets her, pities her, relieves her ! Here was no solicitor but his own compassion ; in other cases he was sought and sued to. O thou merciful God, none of our secret sorrows can be either hid from thine eyes, or from thine heart ; and when we are past almost all our hopes, all human possibilities of help, then art thou nearest to thy people for deliverance.

Here was a conspiracy of all parts to the exercise of mercy. The heart had compassion ; (ver. 13.) the mouth said, *weep not* ; the feet went to the bier ; the hand touched the coffin ; the power of the Deity raised the dead : what the heart felt, was secret to itself ; the tongue, therefore, expresses it in words of comfort, *Weep not.*

Alas ! what are words to passions so strong and so just as her's ? To bid her not to weep, who had lost her only son, was apparently to persuade her to be miserable, and not feel it. Concealment does not remedy, but aggravate sorrow ; therefore, that with the counsel not to weep, she might see cause of compliance, his hand seconds his tongue. His hand arrests the coffin, and sets free the prisoner of death : *Young man, I say unto thee, Arise* : and instantly *be that was dead sat up.* The Lord of life and death speaks with command : it is no more hard for his almighty word, which gave all things their being, to say, *Let them be repaired, than let them be made.*

Behold now this young man, thus miraculously awakened from his deadly sleep, descending joyfully from the bier, wrapping his winding sheet about his loins, casting himself down in passionate thankfulness at the feet of his Al-

mighty Restorer, and adoring that divine power which had remanded his soul to her forsaken lodging ! Doubtless the first utterance of that returning soul was couched in words of the highest praise and wonder. It was the mother whom our Lord pitied in this act, and not the son : as for her sake therefore he was raised, so to her hands was he delivered, (ver. 15.) that she might acknowledge that soul given to her, not to the possessor.

Who is there that cannot feel the amazement and ecstasy of joy which throbs in this revived mother's heart, when her son now salutes her from another world ? How soon is the funeral banquet turned into a new birth-day feast ! What strivings were here to salute the late carcase of their restored neighbour ! What awful and admiring looks were now cast on the Lord of life ! How gladly did every tongue celebrate both the work and the author ! *The great Prophet is raised up, &c.* ver. 16. (See the Annotations.) They were not yet acquainted with *God manifest in the flesh*, though this miracle might well indeed have assured them of more than a prophet. However, they shall see reason enough to know that *the prophet who was raised up to them*, was himself the *God that now visited them* ; and who at length shall do for his faithful saints, far more than he had yet done for this young man ! — raise them from death to life, and translate them for ever from dust to glory !

REFLECTIONS.—1st, When Jesus had finished his discourse in the audience of the people, an occasion offers to confirm by a miracle the truths that he had been declaring. We have had the same history in Mat. viii. 5, &c. Different circumstances are here inserted, such as the centurion's sending the elders of the Jews, and afterwards his friends, before he came himself, as it seems probable he did at last ; but his application by them was in fact the same as if he had come in person at first.

1. Hearing the fame of Jesus, and having faith in him, he greatly desired his help in behalf of a sick servant, whose fidelity and diligence had endeared him to his master ; and supposing that he, who was a Gentile, and a Roman officer, might not so easily obtain the favour, he engaged the elders of the Jews to be advocates for him, who readily undertook to serve him, as being under great obligations to him. They earnestly therefore besought Jesus for him, as one worthy his regard, having ever testified a great respect for the Jewish nation and religion, and at his own expence built them a synagogue for divine worship. *Note* ; (1.) A servant truly faithful and industrious deserves that esteem which he thus studies to engage. (2.) It is good to have an interest in their prayers whom the Lord Jesus respects.

2. As Christ was in the way to the centurion's house, he no sooner heard of his condescension, than in great humility he sent other friends in his name, as unwilling to give the Lord this trouble, and counting his house unworthy

6 And some fell upon <sup>a</sup> rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7 And some fell among <sup>k</sup> thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

8 And other fell on <sup>l</sup> good ground, and

<sup>l</sup> Ezech. 11. 19. & 36. 26. Ch. 14. 28—30. 2 Peter, 2. 20—22. Heb. 6. 4—5. Hosea, 6. 4. Ver. 13. <sup>k</sup> Jer. 4. 3. Ch. 21. 34. 1 Tim. 6. 9. 10. Ver. 14. <sup>l</sup> 2 Cor. 5. 11. Eph. 2. 10. John, 15. 4. Rom. 7. 4. Col. 1. 10. Phil. 1. 11. Gal. 5. 22, 23. with Gen. 26. 12.

worthy of such a guest, and himself undeserving of his honoured presence; which was indeed the reason why he did not in person at first make the application. He professes his faith to be such in Christ's power, that all diseases would obey his orders, more readily than even the soldiers the word of their commanding officer; and that Christ need not be present to perform the cure; if he spoke, he believed it would be instantly done.

3. Christ expresses his admiration and approbation of such uncommon faith: even among all the Jewish people had never yet appeared so remarkable an instance of humble assured faith, as in this Gentile; therefore he puts honour upon him, and with pleasure grants his request. The disease immediately departed, and the persons who had been sent from the centurion's house, on their return found the servant perfectly restored to health. *Note*; True humility, and firm trust in his power and love, above all things commend us to the Saviour's regard.

2dly, Another notable miracle wrought the day after the former, is here recorded.

1. The place where it was done was in the gate of the city, in the presence of all the multitude who followed Jesus, and of the company who attended the funeral; so that there was no want of evidences to attest the certainty of the fact.

2. The subject of the miracle was the dead corpse of a young man which they were then carrying to his grave, the only son of an afflicted widow, and all the circumstances of the case rendered it peculiarly affecting. (1.) He was a son, an only son, probably the staff of her old age; a warning to every one who looked upon his bier, not to promise themselves continuance here; for childhood and youth are vanity. (2.) His mother was a widow; one terrible stroke of death had separated her from the partner of her bosom. This son alone remained to cheer her solitude, the staff of her age, and now he too is taken away; so numerous, so repeated, are our troubles in this vale of misery and tears: like Job's messengers of evil, scarcely is the sound of one out of our ears, before another more grievous follows. May every pang that we feel, but disengage us from the world, and teach us to seek more earnestly our rest above; then shall our severest losses prove our truest gain.

3. Compassion moved the Saviour's bosom. He ever tenderly felt for human woe, and unasked he brings relief. It was kind in those who attended this poor disconsolate widow, to condole with her, and endeavour to alleviate her sorrows. They could but weep with her; Jesus alone is able to say unto her, Weep not; and, by removing the cause, to wipe away the tears from her eyes. Jesus approaching the bier whereon the corpse lay, the bearers stood; and with a word of power, in all the majesty of the Deity, he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise: and instantly his spirit returned; he that was dead sat up on the bier where he was stretched out, all his senses were per-

fectly restored, and he began to speak; when with delight Jesus delivered him back to his transported mother. *Note*; (1.) The bowels of Jesus yearn over the miserable; and in all the afflictions of his believing people he is afflicted. Let the mourners remember that Jesus compassionates their sorrows; and if he does not appear to restore those dear pledges which are gone from our arms, he will bring us together, if faithful, at a resurrection-day. (2.) Though Jesus might justly have claimed a right in him whom he had thus restored to life, he delivered him to his mother, intimating to us the great obligation lying on children to be dutiful to their parents, and a comfort and support to them in their old age.

4. Amazement and fear seized on the beholders. Astonished at this evidence of divine power, they glorified God for such an eminent instance of his goodness, and more especially that at last he had sent the Great Prophet, the expected Messiah, and in mercy visited his people: for these works of wonder proclaimed aloud that this was he who should come. Swiftly the fame of Jesus spread through Judea, and the country round; this amazing miracle bespoke his character; and among the rest John's disciples carried the report to their master, now bound in prison for his zeal and fidelity. *Note*; When dead souls are raised up to newness of life, we must give the glory to God: and these miracles, blessed be his name, have not yet ceased.

3dly, The passage of history given us, ver. 19, &c. was before recorded. It contains,

1. The message sent by John from his prison, not so much for his own satisfaction, as for the sake of his disciples, whose faith needed every confirmation, when combated by all the national prejudices so early imbibed. They found nothing of that grandeur and earthly greatness about Jesus, which they expected in the Messiah.

2. The answer of Jesus. His works, as well as words, sufficiently bespoke his real character. In the presence of the messengers from John, he performed a multitude of miraculous cures, and dispossessed many evil spirits; then bid them report to their master what they had heard and seen, that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised, evidences incontestable of his mission as the Messiah, and figures of the more beneficial works which he came to perform on the souls of men; opening the eyes of the understanding, strengthening the impotent, curing the most inveterate habits of sin, and the desperate wickedness of the heart, and quickening the dead in trespasses and sins; for which end, to the poor the gospel is preached, wherein were fulfilled the prophecies which had gone before concerning him, Isa. lxi. 1. xxxv. 5, 6. Psal. lxxii. 13. and lest, notwithstanding, they should be in danger of stumbling at the meanness of his appearance, and the enmity wherewith he was treated by the most respected characters of the Jewish people, the chief-priests, scribes, and Pharisees, he cautions them against being of-

frang up, and bare fruit an hundred-fold. And when he had said these things he <sup>m</sup> cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 ¶ And his disciples asked him, saying, <sup>a</sup> What might this parable be ?  
10 And he said, <sup>o</sup> Unto you it is given to

<sup>m</sup> Prov. 1. 20—23. & 8. 1—4. Jer. 6. 21. Deut. 29. 4. Mat. 11. 15. & 13. 9. Ch. 9. 44. 1 Kings, 22. 28. Rev. 2. 7, 11, &c. <sup>a</sup> Mr. 7. 7. Mark, 4. 10, 34. Mat. 13. 36. Prov. 3. 5, 6. Hosea, 6. 3. <sup>o</sup> Mat. 11. 25. & 13. 11. & 16. 17. Pl. 25. 8, 9, 14. Il. 29. 14. 1 Cor. 4. 7. & 2. 7—16. Eph. 3. 9. 1 Cor. 1. 26. 1 Peter, 1. 10, 11. 1 John, 2. 20, 27.

fended at these things; since he alone was happy and blessed, who through all this cloud of prejudice received him as the Christ, and believed in his word.

3. When the disciples of John were departed, Jesus began to give him just and high commendations. He was a man of unshaken fortitude and unwavering fidelity, uniformly bearing testimony to Christ, and not plying like a reed under the contradiction of sinners, but boldly testifying against their iniquities: dead to the delights of sense, and the glory of the world, he affected not soft raiment as a courtier, but as a mortified prophet lived what he preached—greater in one sense than any of the former prophets, as the immediate forerunner of the Messiah, and as seeing him appear of whom they spake. His success also was great; multitudes who heard him, and many of the vilest sinners, even publicans, affected by his discourses, glorified God, acknowledging their own sins, and the just punishment due to them; and in humble penitence fought for pardon, submitting to John's baptism, and professing thereby for the future to devote themselves to God's service. But the proud and self-righteous Pharisees, puffed up with the vain conceit of their own excellence, fancied that they were just persons who needed no repentance; therefore in general they rejected his preaching, and refused to submit to his baptism, thereby sealing themselves up under wrath: and the case is much the same to this day. Those who are converted by the ministry of the word, are chiefly of the common people, and many whom the self-righteous despise as vile and abandoned: while the rulers pay little regard to the gospel-word, the wise men of this world disregard it as foolishness; and the persons of most admired apparent goodness cannot bear to be set on a level with the chief of sinners, cannot stoop to receive the grace of Jesus freely, and thus perish in their pride.

4. Christ upbraids the perverseness of the men of that generation. No similitude could sufficiently describe their wilfulness and obstinacy; like froward and surly children, who would not join their companions when in their play they imitated either a feast or a funeral. Thus the austerities of John, his life of self-denial, and doctrine of repentance, disgusted them, and they reproached him as melancholy, or a demoniac. The Son of man, on the other hand, more familiarly associated with others, refused not an invitation to a wedding, or a feast; and they reviled him as a glutton, a drunkard, and a loose companion. *But wisdom is justified of all her children*; those who are truly made wise unto salvation, justify God in those methods which he uses for their conversion, and approve and honour the Lord Jesus, who is the wisdom of God, in all his works and ways. *Note*; (1.) They who resolve to cavil, will never want a handle. (2.) Different men and ministers have different tempers and manners; some are naturally more austere and reserved, others more free and

open; some more powerfully urge the thunders of Sinai upon the sinner's conscience, others dwell upon the softer accents of gospel-grace. And this diversity of dispensations in which men are led, is beautiful, though malice will find alike matter of objection against both. (3.) We must take care not to judge of others by ourselves; not branding on the one hand the reserved, as morose; nor, on the other, charging innocent freedom as licentiousness; but ever put the most candid constructions on men's tempers and manners.

4thly, Our Lord behaved himself courteously to all; and though the Pharisees had shewn themselves his bitter enemies, he refused not the invitation of one of them, and readily went to eat at his house. And we are told,

1. A singular circumstance which happened on that occasion. A woman, whose character had been notoriously infamous, but by the preaching and grace of the Redeemer was become a real penitent, came in, urged by her deep affection for her Lord; and standing behind him as he lay along, (which was their custom at meals,) with penitential tears she bedewed his feet, wiped them with her once-braided, but now dishevelled hair, and kissing them in humble adoration, anointed them, as a token of her high respect, with precious ointment from an alabaster box. *Note*; (1.) They who truly draw near to Jesus, cannot but feel their hearts bleed at the remembrance of past ingratitude. (2.) A soul that loves the Lord Jesus, counts nothing too good to employ in his service. (3.) When the eyes, full of adultery, become fountains of tears; and all the ornaments of pride, the lure of lust, are laid aside; these are blessed symptoms of a happy change.

2. The Pharisee was highly offended at Christ for suffering such a woman to approach him; and thought within himself, if Jesus were the prophet that he pretended to be, he must have known, and spurned from his feet a creature so infamous. Thus while persons of a proud and self-righteous spirit are looking with contempt on a poor harlot, and saying, *Stand by thyself, come not near me, I am holier than thou*, they are not aware that this high conceit of themselves, and contempt of others, is in God's sight an abomination far greater, even than those outward evils which they condemn in others.

3. Christ justifies the woman from Simon's censures. The Pharisee questioned Christ's prophetic character; therefore the Lord, by answering his thoughts, will give him an evidence of it, and draw the poor woman's vindication from his own lips: and this he does by an apposite parable; having informed Simon that he had something of importance to say him, to which he professes himself all attention.

(1.) The parable respected two debtors, the one of whom owed ten times more than the other; but being both insolvent, the creditor freely forgave them. Christ here-  
upon

know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: might not see, and hearing they might not but to others in parables; that seeing they understand.

¶ If. 6. 9. 10. & 44. 18. Jer. 5. 21. John, 12. 40. Acts, 28. 26. Rom. 11. 8. See Mat. 13. 14. Deut. 29. 4.

upon appeals to Simon for an answer, Which of the two will love their gracious benefactor most? The reply was evident, He to whom most was forgiven. The debt is sin, and sinners are deep in arrear to God; they have never paid him the obedience which they owe, and are become liable to the arrests of judgment. All are guilty; but some are more notorious offenders, and have sinned with greater aggravations than others; yet the least transgressor is an insolvent debtor; he can never make God a compensation for the least of his iniquities, and must perish eternally with the vilest, unless he is convinced of his sinfulness, and flies to the free grace of God in Jesus Christ.

In him there is plenteous redemption; the chief of sinners, who come to him, are sure of finding pardon through the ransom that he has paid; and none who come to him, shall be in any wise cast out. A sense of this abounding grace will not fail to engage the believer's heart; and in proportion to the sense that he has of his own guilt, should his gratitude be for the rich mercy vouchsafed to him. The chief of sinners are bound to become the chief of faints—to love much, because the Lord has forgiven them much.

(2.) Christ applies the parable to the case before him. This woman was the debtor who owed the five hundred pence, and she had been forgiven; no wonder, therefore, that her expressions of gratitude were singular; for which, so far from being condemned, she rather deserved to be commended. All that she had done, flowed from this source; and herein she had exceeded Simon in her returns of love, as much as she had done in the offensiveness and notoriety of her transgressions. (1.) Instead of the water which he had neglected to bring, she had, with penitential tears, bedewed his feet, and wiped them with her hair. (2.) The kisses of peace and salutation Simon had not given to his sacred guest; but this poor sinner had not ceased to express her humble gratitude and love, by repeatedly kissing even his feet. (3.) The common civility of oil to anoint his head the Pharisee had withheld; but she had poured this costly ointment on his feet, the expression of her faith in him as the Messiah, and of that unfeigned regard which made her account the greatest cost well employed in his service: therefore he seals afresh the pardon which he had bestowed upon her, on account of which she loved him so greatly; while such as Simon, who were less acquainted with their own guilt and sinfulness, and did not see their great need of a pardon, would feel themselves less obliged to the Saviour's grace, and testify, as Simon had done, regard for him.

(3.) He particularly addresses himself to the poor woman, to silence her fears, and encourage her under the Pharisee's frowns. He repeats his assurances, Thy sins are forgiven thee; and though he knew the murmurs which this woman, and the offence that it gave among the Pharisees, who were at the table, as if his arrogating such a power impious, nay, blasphemous, he, so far from receding, affirms her pardon, which, through faith in him, she now

assuredly possessed; and therefore he bids her go in peace; every fear of guilt removed, her conscience at ease, regardless of the reproaches of the proud, and waiting confidently for the rest that remaineth for the people of God. Note; (1.) As nothing renders us so fearful as the consciousness of guilt, we need promise upon promise to encourage our trust and hope. (2.) Faith alone can pacify the conscience, and produce that evangelical sorrow and genuine love, which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass afterward] Εἰς τὴν καθῆκην; that is, The day after our Lord dined with Simon,—he and his twelve apostles departed from Capernaum with an intention to go up to Jerusalem to the passover. He did not, however, keep the direct road; he set out early, and preached in many towns and villages by the way, the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; that is, the joyful tidings of God's reconcileableness to man, of the necessity of regeneration, and of the acceptableness of repentance and faith even in the chief of sinners. His going through the cities and villages to preach, are the terms made use of by the evangelists, when they describe our Lord's departure from Capernaum; therefore, as it is used on this occasion, it is highly probable that Simon the Pharisee, with whom our Lord dined the day before, lived in Capernaum: and as this latter gave him an invitation immediately after he had finished his discourse occasioned by the Baptist's message, Jesus must have been in Capernaum, or near it, when that message came to him.

Ver. 2. And certain women, &c.] Our Lord was accompanied in his journey by certain pious women, who in all probability were going likewise to the passover, and who supplied him with money, not on the present occasion only, but as often as he stood in need of it. St. Mark, as well as St. Luke, relates the circumstance of our Lord's being supported by the charity of his friends; for, speaking of the women who were present at our Lord's crucifixion, he says, ch. xv. 41. that when Jesus "was in Galilee, they followed him, and ministered unto him of their substance." The evangelists nowhere else tell us in what way our Lord and his apostles were supported. Of the number of those pious women was Mary, called Magdalene, from Magdala, the place of her residence, as we have observed on ch. vii. 37. a woman of the first rank in Judea, out of whom our Lord had cast seven devils. But it will not seem strange that she is represented as having been possessed by seven devils, when we recollect that we have in this very chapter the account of a man who was possessed by a whole legion. The reason why a woman of Joanna's quality had become an attendant upon Christ, is assigned by St. Luke. She was one of those who had been healed by him of evil spirits and infirmities. It is most probable that this wife of Chuzar was now a widow.

Ver.

11 ¶ ' Now the parable is this : The ' seed is the word of God.

12 Those by the wayside are ' they that hear ; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word ' out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

13 ' They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy ; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And ' that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 ' But that on the good ground are they, which, in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience.

16 ¶ ' No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth *it* under a bed ; but setteth *it* on a candlestick,

that they which enter in may see the light.

17 ' For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest ; neither *any thing* hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

18 <sup>b</sup> Take heed therefore how ye hear : ' for whosoever hath, to him shall be given ; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

19 ¶ <sup>d</sup> Then came to him *his* mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press.

20 And it was told him *by certain* which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee.

21 And he answered and said unto them, ' My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

22 ¶ ' Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples : and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 13. 12—23. Mark, 4. 14—20. <sup>f</sup> 1 Peter, 1. 23. 2 Peter, 2. 4. Acts, 20. 27. Mark, 1. 14, 15. & 16. 15. If. 8. 20. Mat. 28. 19, 20. James, 1. 18, 21. <sup>g</sup> James, 1. 22—24. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. & 2. 11. 1 Peter, 5. 8. <sup>h</sup> Rom. 10. 8. 2 Theff. 2. 10. <sup>i</sup> If. 58. 2. Ezek. 33. 31. Hosea, 6. 4. John, 5. 35. 2 Tim. 1. 15. Mat. 13. 20, 21. 2 Peter, 2. 20—22. Mark, 6. 20. <sup>j</sup> Ver. 7. Ch. 18. 24. & 21. 34 & 36. 13. Mat. 6. 24. 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10, 17. 2 Tim. 4. 10, 16. Jer. 4. 3. <sup>k</sup> Eph. 2. 19, 20. Rom. 7. 4. Gal. 5. 21—24. 2 Peter, 1. 5—10. Pf. 1. 3. & 92. 14. John, 15. 4. Col. 1. 6. Mat. 24. 13. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 5. 15. Mark, 4. 21—23. Ch. 11. 33. with Mat. 5. 16. Phil. 2. 15. 16. <sup>m</sup> Job, 12. 22. Mat. 10. 26, 27. Ch. 12. 2, 3. Mark, 16. 15. Eph. 3. 8. <sup>n</sup> Ch. 9. 44. If. 42. 23. Jer. 9. 12. <sup>o</sup> Mat. 13. 12. & 25. 29. Ch. 19. 26. Mark, 4. 25. & 10. 42. John, 15. 2. 1 Cor. 10. 12. & 14. 37, 38. Rev. 22. 11. <sup>p</sup> Mat. 12. 46—50. Mark, 3. 31—36. Mat. 13. 55. John, 2. 11. & 7. 3. Acts, 1. 14. 1 Cor. 9. 5. Gal. 1. 19. <sup>q</sup> Ch. 11. 27, 28. Mat. 7. 21. & 12. 49, 50. Gal. 5. 6. & 6. 15. Col. 3. 11. Pf. xv. & 24. 3—6. John, 13. 17. & 14. 15. & 15. 14. Rom. 2. 13. James, 1. 22. 1 Peter, 1. 15, 16. 2 Peter, 1. 4—10. 2 Cor. 5. 14—17. <sup>r</sup> Mat. 8. 23—27. Mark, 4. 36—49.

*Ver. 10. That seeing, they might not see,]* As much as to say, " Take this mark, among others, of the truth of my pretensions. My offers of salvation, as was foretold, " (see Ifai. vi. 8—10.) are rejected by my countrymen ; and " I have delivered my message to them in such terms, " and attended with such circumstances, as have been " foretold by the prophets." In a word, our Lord is here simply instructing his followers in the wise and wonderful accomplishment of scripture-prophecies concerning the Jews, and concerning their Messiah ; to convince them of God's righteous dealings, and of the truth of his own mission. See the *Inferences* on Matth. x.

*Ver. 14. Are choked with cares]* St. Luke expresses it thus, perhaps, to intimate the uneasy situation of the mind, while clogged and straitened with such incumbrances as these, and rendered utterly unfit to breathe and delight itself in celestial and eternal objects. Choking arises from something which straitens the gullet or wind-pipe, and so obstructs the passage of food or air ; and thus young plants or corn may properly be said to be *choked with thorns*, which do not leave them room to grow ; and the word, which otherwise by the power of the divine Spirit would exert its vital influences, is represented as choked, when thus oppressed with secular cares prevailing in the mind.

*Ver. 16. A candle,]* A lamp.

*Ver. 17, 18. For nothing is secret, &c.]* The author of the version of 1729 translates these two verses elegantly enough, in the following manner : ver. 17. " Whatever " is now obscure, shall hereafter be made clear ; whatever " is now concealed shall then be publicly known : ver. 18. " Improve therefore what you hear ; for he that improves " what he has, shall have more ; but he that does not, " shall lose even that which he thinks he possesses."

*Ver. 19. Then came to him his mother]* Our Lord's mother made this visit probably with a design to carry him to Nazareth, where she might hope that he would work miracles, and bless his countrymen with the benefits which he so freely dispensed wherever he came. She seems to have succeeded in her design ; for not long after this he went away into his own country, as Matthew informs us, ch. xiii. 53. Or, if this supposition be not allowed, perhaps his relations might come to him, from an apprehension that a continual fatigue of preaching might hurt his health ; and were therefore desirous of his resting awhile, to refresh himself. Dr. Macknight is of opinion, that this was the second time in which Mary shewed her anxiety for her Son ; the account in St. Matthew being introduced before the parable of the sower, and this in St. Luke after it.

23 But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.

24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, Master, we perish! Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? and they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner

of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

26 ¶ And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus,

¶ Pf. 14. 22, 23. & 10. 1. If. 4. 15. John, 11. 14, 15. 1 Sam. 23. 26. 1 Chron. 14. 11. & 20. 12. Pf. 63. 4. & 69. 1. 1 Mat. 4. 10. & 8. 26. & 17. 17, 19, 20. & 14. 31. Ch. c. o. John, 11. 40. V. r. 50. Mark. 4. 40. Mark. 4. 41. & 6. 1. Pf. 89. 9. & 5. 7. & 107. 29. & 6. 2-4. & 29. 10. & 63. 4. 1 John. 3. 8. Rom. 6. 20. 2 Peter, 2. 4. Jude, 1. Rev. 20. 1, 2. 1 Kings. 18. 28. 1 Peter, 5. 8. John, 8. 44. If. 65. 4. 16, 17. Phil. 2. 10, 11. Pf. 72. 4, 12-14. 1 Mat. 8. 29. Mark, 5. 7 & 1. 24.

unconversable; so fierce, that no one durst come near him. He had lived a long time in this condition, and therefore was neither capable, nor had any opportunity, of knowing any thing concerning Christ or his character. Besides, it is plain that he could not be apprized of his coming at that time, for the ship failed over from the other side in the night; and so soon as Christ came ashore, and the man saw him at a distance, he ran to him and worshipped him; ver. 28. Are these the actions of a mere madman, fierce and outrageous? What could give this sudden turn to his mind, while Christ was yet at a distance from him? And when he came up to Christ, and Christ spoke to him, how could he know and confess him to be the Son of God most high, whom he had never before heard of? What he says further is indeed agreeable to the ravings of a madman, if it came from himself: but that it could not, seems very plain from its inconsistency with his true confession of Christ, to whom he was wholly a stranger; though considering all that he says as coming from an evil spirit, the whole is in character; nor do the inhabitants of the neighbouring town seem to know more of Christ than this man, if we are to judge by their conduct. All the circumstances therefore being duly considered, it will appear very evident that the case of this man could not be merely the effect of madness, but that it was a real possession. In the present case, the circumstances mentioned are such as cannot be otherwise accounted for, than by a real possession. St. Luke observes, that Christ first spoke to them, or one of them, (ver. 29. and see Matt. viii. 28.) and commanded the unclean spirit to come out of him. If this was spoken to the man, and not to the devil,—by the unclean spirit must be meant the disease: and as Christ never spoke in vain, the man must immediately have found some change in himself for the better, and therefore could not have asked him after this, whether he came to torment him. But that this discourse was between Christ and the evil spirit appears still more evident from a preceding instance of the like kind, which happened while Christ was yet less known, and is recorded by St. Mark, ch. i. 21. &c.

Ver. 23. He fell asleep:] Some are of opinion, that on this occasion our Lord fell asleep designedly, to give as it were an opportunity for the full display of this extraordinary miracle: however, as he went on board in the evening, his falling asleep may have happened in the night-time, and in common course; particularly as he must have been fatigued with the labours of the preceding day. Instead of they were filled, some copies read the vessel was filled. See Mark, iv. 37.

Ver. 24. Master, Master, we perish!] How concise, how abrupt, and how ardent is this exclamation! therefore how strongly significant of imminent danger, and of the utmost distress! they have not time to be explicit; a moment's delay may be fatal. What they utter is conciseness itself, and all rapidity.—This is nature; this is the general language of the heart.

Ver. 25. Where is your faith?] The disciples, having seen their Master perform many miracles, had abundant reason to rely on his power and goodness, even in a greater danger than this; for though their vessel had sunk, they could not have imagined that God would have suffered him to be lost; and might have been confident, that he who had given sight to the blind, and life to the dead, could have saved them all, by making them walk firmly on the water, as he enabled one of them to do afterwards. Their timidity therefore was altogether culpable, and the reproach that he gave them just. But their views of his supreme Godhead were at that time exceedingly dark. See the note on Matth. viii. 27.

Ver. 26, 27. And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes,] Though we have given, in the notes on St. Matthew, an explanation of the principal circumstances of this remarkable miracle; yet, as it contains so full and satisfactory an account of real possession, and demoniacal agency, I cannot refuse my reader the extracts following from Dr. Doddridge's Dissertation on the subject, as they not only concur, but strongly confirm the opinions which I have added in the notes on St. Matthew. Observe we then, that the case of the man among the tombs is told with some remarkable circumstances: he is here described as wholly

thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

29 (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is

thy name? And he said, \* Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

31 And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

32 And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

33 Then went the devils out of the man,

<sup>r</sup> Mark, 5. 8. & 1. 25. & 9. 25. & 7. 29. <sup>s</sup> Mark, 5. 4. & 9. 18, 20, 22. Ch. 9. 39. 42. <sup>t</sup> Peter, 5. 8. John, 8. 44. <sup>u</sup> i. e. six or seven thousand. <sup>v</sup> Ver. 30. Mark, 5. 10. Phil. 2. 9—11. Pl. 72. 9. Job, 1. 11. & 2. 5. Ver. 28, 32. <sup>w</sup> 1 Kings, 22. 22. <sup>x</sup> Mat. 8. 30. Mark, 5. 11. Lev. 11. 7. Deut. 14. 8. 11. 65. & 66. 3. <sup>y</sup> 1 Kings, 22. 22. Job, 1. 12. & 1. 6. Rev. 10. 7.

Ver. 28. *What have I to do with thee, &c.?*] This way of speaking has been used by writers in all the ancient languages, and is applied both to persons and things. With respect to persons, it is used, sometimes by superiors towards inferiors; at other times, by one equal to another; and again, at other times, by inferiors towards their superiors; and the sense must vary according to the different circumstances of the persons whom it respects. For when an inferior thus addresses his superior, which is the case here, it is to be considered only as an expostulation; and in that sense the devils might use this form of expression to Christ: for that they did it in an expressive manner, is evident from the worship which they paid him at the same time; as likewise from their petition to him immediately afterwards, that he would permit them to go into the swine. And therefore, his being their judge seems to occasion no impropriety in the expression; for a criminal may, and often does expostulate with his judge: but the inconsistency of it, as coming from the demoniacs themselves, has been shewn already in the preceding note. It is evident indeed from many passages in the evangelists, that Christ frequently forbid not only the devils, but men likewise, in public, to acknowledge him to be *the Son of God*; the reasons for which have been already repeatedly given: but at other times he thought proper to permit such a declaration in private, and particularly from his disciples, as we find Matth. xvi. 15, &c. And as to the case of these demoniacs among the *Gadarenes*, there seems to have been the greatest propriety at that time, not only for his permitting the devils to confess him, as they do, to be *the Son of God*, but likewise to *worship* him. For it does not appear that any other persons were then present but Christ himself and his disciples, except the demoniacs; and this was not long before he sent forth his disciples before him to *preach* and to *heal*, &c. Matth. x. 7, 8. and therefore, what could be more proper, or give them higher encouragement to hope for success in this great work, than to see the devils thus subject to their Master, and paying homage to him, as they had a little before seen the winds and the waves obey his command in their passage thither? Now the power given them in their commission, as recorded Matth. x. 8. *was to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils*: if therefore the last, *cast out devils*, had meant no more than *to cure madmen*, surely it would not have been placed after *raising the dead*.—Again, in ch. x. 1. we are told that Christ appointed and sent out

seventy other disciples, who are said, ver. 17. to have returned again with joy, saying, *Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name*. Where it is plain that they did not mean mere madmen, by our Saviour's answer,—*Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven*.

Ver. 30. *What is thy name, &c.?*] Our Saviour probably asked the name of the evil spirit, to shew the extreme misery of the demoniac who was possessed by him. There is no need of concluding from the answer, that the number of these evil spirits was exactly the same with that of a Roman legion, which at this period consisted of six thousand and upwards. It was a phrase often made use of to express a great number; and it is observable that the evangelist's words lead us to this very sense: *My name is legion, for or because we are many*. It is perfectly evident from St. Luke's mode of expression—*many devils were entered into him*, that he considered this, not as a mere lunacy, but as a real possession. Probably a band of evil spirits united in the vexation of this poor wretched man; but, in what manner, or order, it is impossible for us to say, who know so little of the state of invisible beings.

Ver. 31. *And they besought him, &c.*] It seems from Dan. x. 13, 20. that different evil genii presided over distinct legions, by the directions of Satan their prince. These, who perhaps were spirits of distinguished abilities, might be appointed to reside hereabouts, to oppose as much as possible the beneficial designs of Christ; and having made their observations on the character and circumstances of the inhabitants, they might judge themselves capable of doing more mischief here than elsewhere, and on that account might desire leave to continue on the spot. See Mark, v. 10. The word *ἄβυσσος*, rendered *deep* in this passage, signifies the place where wicked spirits are punished; as it does likewise, Rev. xx. 3. where it is translated *the bottomless pit*: properly it denotes a place without a bottom, or so deep that it cannot be fathomed. The Greeks describe their Tartarus in this manner: and the Jews, when they wrote Greek, did not scruple to adopt their expressions, because they were universally understood. Besides, the Hebrew language did not furnish proper words for these ideas; which was the reason that the first Christians also, when they had occasion to speak of the state of evil spirits, made use of terms purely Greek. See 2 Pet. ii. 4. and Jude, ver. 6.

Ver. 32. *And he suffered them*] The town of Gadara,

and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

34 When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

36 They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

38 Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, laying,

39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

40 And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him.

41 ¶ And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

42 For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

43 ¶ And a woman, having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44 Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd.

45 And Jesus said, Who touched me?

John, 8. 44. 1 Peter, 5. 8. Mat. 8. 33. Mark, 5. 14. John, 10. 12, 13. Mat. 28. 11. 1 John, 3. 8. Rom. 16. 20. & 12. 29. If 49. 2. 26. Pf. 72. 2, 12-14. Mark, 5. 17. Mat. 8. 34. 1 Kings, 17. 18. Ch. 5. 8. Gen. 25. 34. Acts, 16. 39. Job, at. 14, 15. 1 Cor. 2. 14. Deut. 5. 25. with ver. 28. Mark, 1. 24. Ch. 4. 34. Mark, 5. 18. Ch. 18. 43. Pf. 116. 12. & 103. 1-6. Pf. 50. 14. & 105. 1, 2. & 66. 16. & ciii-cviii. cxlvi. cxvii. xviii. If. 63. 7-13. John, 2. 1-10. & 4. 29. John, 4. 29. Mark, 1. 45. Mat. 4. 24. & 9. 26. & 14. 35. & 17. 21. Pf. 66. 16. Mat. 9. 1. Mark, 5. 21. & 1. 45. Ch. 5. 1, 17. & 6. 17. Mat. 9. 18-25. Mark, 5. 22-43. Ch. 13. 14. Acts, 13. 15. Mat. 8. 15. John, 4. 47-50. & 11. 6, 7. Mat. 8. 13. & 15. 28. Rom. 6. 23. Ezek. 18. 4. Job 30. 23. Heb. 9. 27. Eccl. 3. 2. & 12. 1, 7. & 11. 9. Rom. 5. 12. Mark, 5. 25-34. Mat. 9. 20-22. Lev. 15. 25. John, 5. 5. John, 1. 13. Pf. 108. 12. Gen. 32. 10. Ruth, 2. 10, 11. Ezra, 9. 5. Mark, 5. 27, 28. Acts, 5. 15. & 19. 12. Exod. 15. 26. Pf. 147. 3. Mal. 4. 2. 2 Kings, 13. 21. Ch. 13. 13. & 14. 4.

near which this miracle was wrought, was a Grecian city: see Matth. viii. 28.; and as there was a mixture of Jews and Gentiles in those towns which bordered upon Judea, many of the Jews who lived there complied in some things with the Gentile customs, and among others, very probably, in eating swine's flesh; and if this was the case, part of these swine might belong to them, which, by their number, two thousand, seem to have been a common or town-herd. It was therefore a just punishment upon them, when Christ permitted the swine to be thus destroyed. And for the other inhabitants, it was nothing more than what often happens in common calamities, that all suffer alike, and was abundantly made up to them by a favour of infinitely greater importance. For though Christ did not stay to declare himself to them, yet he left the man he had cured to do it; ordering him to return home to his own house, and shew how great things God had done unto him; (ver. 39.) which accordingly he did. This must have been sufficient to acquaint the Gadarenes with his character as the Messiah, to which before they were strangers; and had them to an inquiry into his doctrine; which was a very compassionate method to make himself known in a country, beyond the usual limits of his doing it, either in person or by his disciples, till after his ascension. Nor

does it seem reasonable, or agreeable to our Saviour's conduct in other cases, to suppose that he crossed the sea in a stormy night privately, and returned back in the same manner, only to cure one demoniac, or two at the most; and to permit the destruction of two thousand swine, without any further view of doing service to the inhabitants of those parts of the country.

Ver. 37. The whole multitude—besought him, &c.] The inhabitants of the neighbouring town seem to have known no more of Christ than the demoniac; for when those who fed the swine fled thither, and told them what had happened, they immediately came to the place, and seeing the great alteration made in the man, this, together with the loss of their swine, so terrified them, that they besought Christ to depart out of their coasts. Mark, v. 15-17. They would surely not have done this, had they before heard of his character (though they had never seen him) that he went about doing good, curing all sorts of diseases, and expelling devils or demons. See on Matth. viii. 33.

Ver. 39. Shew how great things God hath done unto thee.] The divinity of our Saviour is strongly and emphatically expressed in this verse; where what Jesus had done, is placed in direct and immediate apposition with what God had done. Ver. 43. An issue of blood] A bloody flux.

When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

46 And Jesus said, Some body hath touched me: for I perceive that <sup>a</sup> virtue is gone out of me.

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and <sup>a</sup> falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

48 And he said unto her, <sup>a</sup> Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

49 ¶ <sup>a</sup> While he yet spake there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house,

saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, <sup>a</sup> Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51 And when he came into the house, <sup>a</sup> he suffered no man to go in, <sup>a</sup> save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52 <sup>a</sup> And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; <sup>a</sup> she is not dead, but sleepeth.

53 And they <sup>b</sup> laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

54 And <sup>c</sup> he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and <sup>d</sup> called, saying, Maid, arise.

55 And <sup>c</sup> her spirit came again, and she

<sup>a</sup> Mark, 5. 30. John, 1. 16. Ch. 5. 17. & 6. 10. Heb. 7. 25. If. 63. 1. 66. 16. Ch. 17. 15, 16. Pf. 103. 1—4. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 7. 47—50. & 17. 19. & 18. 42. Mat. 13. 28. & 8. 13. Acts, 14. 9. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 9. 23—26. Mark, 5. 35—43. Ver. 41, 42. <sup>d</sup> 2 Chron. 20. 20. If. 7. 9. & 41. 10. & 43. 1, 2. & 50. 10. Mark, 9. 23. & 5. 23, 34, 36. & 11. 22—24. John, 11. 25, 40. Rom. 4. 17—20. <sup>e</sup> If. 42. 2. 1 Kings, 17. 19—23. 2 Kings, 4. 33—35. Mat. 7. 6. <sup>f</sup> Mark 3. 16, 17. & 9. 2. & 14. 31. Ch. 6. 14. & 9. 28. <sup>g</sup> Gen. 23. 2. 1 Sam. 25. 1. 2 Chron. 35. 35. Jer. 9. 17. Acts, 9. 39. <sup>h</sup> John, 11. 4. 11, 13, 23. Acts, 20. 10. <sup>i</sup> Acts, 17. 32. Gen. 19. 14. <sup>j</sup> Mat. 7. 6. Acts, 9. 40. See ver. 51. <sup>k</sup> John, 6. 63. Rom. 4. 17. See ch. 7. 14. John, 11. 43. & 5. 21. Pf. 107. 20. Exod. 15. 26. <sup>l</sup> John, 5. 22. Pf. 35. 9. 1 Kings, 17. 23.

<sup>m</sup> Mark, 5. 33. & 4. 31. Pf. 89. 7. Job. 7. 19. Pf. 116. 12. & 116. 16. Ch. 17. 15, 16. Pf. 103. 1—4. <sup>n</sup> Ch. 7. 47—50. & 17. 19. & 18. 42. Mat. 13. 28. & 8. 13. Acts, 14. 9. <sup>o</sup> Mat. 9. 23—26. Mark, 5. 35—43. Ver. 41, 42. <sup>p</sup> 2 Chron. 20. 20. If. 7. 9. & 41. 10. & 43. 1, 2. & 50. 10. Mark, 9. 23. & 5. 23, 34, 36. & 11. 22—24. John, 11. 25, 40. Rom. 4. 17—20. <sup>q</sup> If. 42. 2. 1 Kings, 17. 19—23. 2 Kings, 4. 33—35. Mat. 7. 6. <sup>r</sup> Mark 3. 16, 17. & 9. 2. & 14. 31. Ch. 6. 14. & 9. 28. <sup>s</sup> Gen. 23. 2. 1 Sam. 25. 1. 2 Chron. 35. 35. Jer. 9. 17. Acts, 9. 39. <sup>t</sup> John, 11. 4. 11, 13, 23. Acts, 20. 10. <sup>u</sup> Acts, 17. 32. Gen. 19. 14. <sup>v</sup> Mat. 7. 6. Acts, 9. 40. See ver. 51. <sup>w</sup> John, 6. 63. Rom. 4. 17. See ch. 7. 14. John, 11. 43. & 5. 21. Pf. 107. 20. Exod. 15. 26. <sup>x</sup> John, 5. 22. Pf. 35. 9. 1 Kings, 17. 23.

*Ver. 48. Daughter, be of good comfort:]* What is here said of this woman, is frequently asserted by our Saviour upon other occasions, namely, that the miraculous cure which he performed was in some measure in consequence of the patient's faith. We find likewise that faith was actually required, sometimes of the persons themselves who were to be healed, at other times of those who interceded for them, and were to attest the faith of the miracle. The reasons for this have been assigned in the note on Mark, ix. 20—24.

*Ver. 55. Her spirit came again,]* This expression implies that she was really dead, and that the soul exists separately after the body dies. See the note on Mark, v. 42.

*Inferences drawn from the healing of the bloody issue, ver. 43—48. of this chapter, and Matth. ix. 20—22.* In this memorable event our blessed Lord had certainly no small respect to the faith of Jairus, to whose house he was going. How could that ruler now think otherwise than that he, who by the virtue of his garment only, could pluck this woman out of the grasp of death, who had been twelve years dying, could now as well by the power of his word, pluck his daughter, who had lived twelve years, out of the jaws of death, which had newly seized her!

The patient laboured under an issue of blood; a disease, attended with no less shame than pain; no less legal impurity, than natural infirmity. Time added to her grief; twelve long years she had languished under this woeful complaint: besides the tediousness, distates must get head by continuance; and so much more do they both weaken

nature, and strengthen themselves, by how much they afflict us: thus it is also in the soul, and in the state: vices, which are the sickness of both, when they grow inveterate, have a strong plea for their abode and uncontrollable-ness.

To consummate her distress, poverty was superadded to her sickness, ver. 43. While she had wherewith to accommodate herself, and to procure good attendance, good diet, and all the succours of distressful languor, she could not but find some mitigation of her sorrow: but now, want began to oppress her no less than her distemper, and helped to render her perfectly miserable.

And yet, could she have parted from her substance in exchange, her complaint had been the less: could the physicians have given her, if not health, yet relaxation and a recess from pain, her means had not been misapplied; but we are told, (Mark, v. 26.) that she *suffered many things of them* in the course of their applications. Art could give her neither cure nor hope.

It were indeed pity but that this woman should have been thus sick: the nature, the duration, the cost, the pain, the incurableness of her disease, all conspired to send her in search of Christ, and moved Christ to effect her cure. Our extremities are those harsh friends which drive us to our Saviour. When forsaken of all other succours and hopes, we are fittest for his redress; there is no fear, no danger, but in our insensibility to our helpless state.

This woman was a stranger to Christ; it seems she had never seen him: the report of his miracles had lifted her up to such a confidence of his power and mercy, as that she said within herself, *If I may but touch the hem of his*

arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.  
56 And her parents were astonished: but

he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

See Mark, 5. 42, 43. Ch. 7. 16. & 5. 14. Mat. 8. 4. & 9. 30.

his garment, I shall be whole. The shame of her disease stopped her mouth from any verbal suit: had her infirmity been known, she had been shunned, abhorred, and disdainfully thrust back by all beholders: she conceals therefore her grief, her desire, and her faith; and speaks within herself, where alone she may be bold to utter her sentiments.

asserts, *Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.* The effect proves the act;—that which is a rule in nature, that every agent works by contact, holds spiritually too. Then dost thou, O God, work upon our souls, when thou toucest our hearts with thy Spirit; then do we re-act upon thee, when we touch thee by our faith and confidence in thee. Nothing could please thee more than this, to feel virtue drawn out of thee by the faith of the receiver. It is the nature and the praise of God to be communicative. Thou that knowest thy store so infinite, canst not but be more willing to give than we to receive. Thou that wert wont to hold it much better to give than to receive, canst not but give gladly. Fear not, then, O my soul, to lade plentifully at this well, this ocean of mercy, which, the more thou takest, does but overflow the more.

But why then, O Saviour, didst thou thus inquire and expostulate? Was it for thine own sake—that the glory of the miracle might thus come to light, which else had been smothered in silence? Was it for Jairus's sake, that his depressed heart might be raised to a confidence in thy omnipotence? Or was it chiefly for the woman's sake, for the praise of her faith, or for the security of her conscience? Her modesty and silence through the whole transaction, as they had hidden her disease, so would they have hidden her virtue. Christ will not suffer this secrecy, or lose the honour of so singular a mercy, the knowledge whereof was well adapted to promote the noblest ends:—among which it is very obvious to remark one, namely, that as there was an error in this woman's thought of concealment, so in our Lord's words there was a correction of that error; nor will his mercy suffer her to retire with that secret offence on her head.

Omniscience cannot be eluded or deceived. Well indeed might the woman think, "He who can thus cure, and thus know his cure, can as well know my name, and discern my person, and shame and chastise my ingratitude." Accordingly, *finding she was not hid*, ver. 47. with a pale face and trembling foot she comes, and falls down before him, humbly acknowledging what she had done, and what she had obtained. Could she have found any way privately to retreat with her cure, she had not confessed it; and thus had she deprived God of his glory, and been herself a thankless receiver of so great a benefit. O my God, in the deepest darkness, in the most inward retirement, when none sees me, when I see not myself, yet let me then perceive thine all-seeing eye full upon me: and if ever my eyes shall be shut, or arrested by a prevailing temptation, check me with a speedy reproof, that with this abased penitent I may come in, confess my error, and implore thy mercy!

It is no unusual thing for kindness itself to look sternly for the time, that it may endear itself the more when it shall please to be discovered. Thus with a severe countenance had our Lord looked round him, and asked, *Who*

*touched*

## CHAP. IX.

*Christ sendeth his apostles to work miracles, and to preach. Herod desireth to see Christ. Christ feedeth five thousand: inquireth what opinion the world had of him: foretelleth his passion: propseth to all the pattern of his patience. The transfiguration. He healeth the lunatic: again forewarneth his disciples of his passion: commendeth humility: commendeth them to shew mildness towards all, without the least desire of revenge. Divers would follow him, but upon conditions.*

[Anno Domini 30.]

**T**HEN <sup>a</sup> he called his twelve disciples together, and <sup>b</sup> gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 10. 1—42. Mark, 6. 7—13. Ch. 6. 13—16. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 10. 17, 19. Mark, 16. 17, 18. John, 14. 12. Acts, 3. 6—8. & 9. 34. <sup>c</sup> Mark, 16. 15. & 6. 11, 12. & 1. 14, 15. Tit. 1. 9, 14. & 2. 10—14. Heb. 2. 3, 4. Rom. 1. 15, 17. Col. 1. 23, 25—28. Ezek. 34. 3. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 10. 9, 10. Mark, 6. 8, 9. Ch. 10. 4. & 22. 35. 2 Tim. 2. 4. Pf. 37. 3, 5. 1f. 33. 16. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 10. 11—13. Mark, 6. 8. Ch. 10. 5, 6. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 10. 14, 15. Mark, 6. 11. Ch. 10. 10—12. Acts, 13. 51. & 18. 6. Neh. 5. 13.

*touched me?* But when the woman came trembling, and confessing both the act and success, his brow clears up, and he speaks comfortably to her: *Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole: Go in peace: ver. 48.* O sweet and seasonable words, fit for those merciful and divine lips to utter; able to secure my heart, to dispel my fears!

Her cure was Christ's act; yet he gave the praise of it to her:—*Thy faith hath made thee whole.* He acknowledges a virtue inherent in her; not that her faith did it by way of merit or efficacy, but by way of gracious concession. So much does our Saviour regard her faith, that he will honour it with the success of a cure. And such is still the remedy of our spiritual diseases, our sins. By faith we are justified; by faith we are saved. Thou only, O Saviour, canst heal us, and thou wilt not heal us but by our faith; not as it issues from us, but as it appropriates thee. The sickness is our own by nature; the remedy ours by grace.

O happy dismissal, *Go in peace!* How unquiet had this poor object hitherto been!—A body diseased, a mind grievously disquieted with sorrow for her sickness, and with fear of the continuance of so bad a guest; and her soul for the present had no peace, from the sense of her guiltiness in the transaction of this business, and from a conceived displeasure of that gracious One, to whom she came for comfort and redress. But now, at once does the Saviour calm all these storms, and in one word and act restore her to perfect peace; peace in body, in mind, in soul.

Even so, Lord, it was for thee only, who art the Prince of peace, to bestow thy peace on this poor penitent. Our bodies, minds, souls, estates, are thine, whether to afflict or ease. In vain shall we speak peace to ourselves; in vain shall the world speak peace to us, except thou say to our hearts, as thou didst to this distressed soul,—*Go in peace.*

**REFLECTIONS.**—1st, With unwearied labours the divine Redeemer went about doing good.

1. He visited all the cities and villages in Galilee,

2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

3 And he said unto them, <sup>d</sup> Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

4 <sup>e</sup> And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

5 <sup>f</sup> And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

preached the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, and opened the nature, blessings, and privileges of that gospel-church which he came to erect. His twelve apostles attended him to be witnesses of his miracles, and to learn from his lips the doctrines which they were afterwards appointed to preach.

2. His support arose from the contributions of some pious women who followed him, who had experienced his healing grace both in their bodies and their souls. Among many others, three are particularly mentioned; Mary Magdalene, out of whom Jesus had cast seven devils; Joanna, the wife, perhaps now the widow, of Chuza, Herod's steward, probably a person of considerable rank and fortune; and Susanna. These, with many others, furnished him with a subsistence; and he, in great humility, condescended to be thus supported, rather than exert his own miraculous power. *Note;* (1.) Christ lived upon alms, to teach us never to despise the poor; nor, if we be reduced, proudly to scorn being obliged to others for a maintenance. (2.) They who love the gospel, cannot but delight to contribute liberally for the support of it. (3.) If we have been truly healed by the grace of Jesus, we shall immediately commence his followers in all holy conversation and godliness.

2dly, Great multitudes being collected together from all the neighbouring cities and villages, he took occasion to represent the nature of the gospel-dispensation by the parable of the sower, which we had, Mat. xiii. 3, the explanation of which he vouchsafes to give to his inquisitive disciples in private; it being their peculiar mercy, that what was left mysterious to others, should be explained to them.

1. Concerning the parable, we may observe, (1.) How vigilant is our adversary the devil, in every place where the word of God is dispensed, to harden the heart against receiving it, lest *we should believe and be saved*; and this he does by distracting the attention, by suggesting some vain or worldly thoughts immediately after we have heard God's word preached, by instilling prejudices against the sower, or doubts about the scripture itself; and thus preventing the

6 <sup>a</sup> And they departed, and went through every where. the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing

7 ¶ <sup>b</sup> Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 11. 1, 5. Mark, 6. 12, 13. Ver. 1, 2. John, 14. 12. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 14. 1—12. Mark, 6. 14—28. Pf. 14. 5. & 53. 5. Job, 18. 11. 12.

the admission or abidance of the truth in the minds of the hearers: the consequence of which is, that men neglect and despise the great salvation of God. (2.) Among the multitudes who appear from time to time to be affected with the gospel, and make some profession, the greater number wilfully fall short of the kingdom: discouraged by the frowns, or seduced by the smiles, of this present evil world, they grow cold and careless; the love of pleasure and ease, anxious cares, or the inordinate love of riches, destroy and choke the word; and they either openly apostatize; or in their hearts, at least, depart from the living God. (3.) There is a blessed multitude, who yield to be saved by grace, and to whom in consequence the seed of the gospel-word becomes the power of God unto salvation. They seriously hear, sedately weigh, and faithfully embrace the truth, as it is in Jesus: therefore their hearts, through divine grace, become honest and sincere; and patiently persevering in well-doing, they hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end; not seduced by any enticements, nor deterred by any persecutions, which for the word's sake may arise. Thus their fruit abides and abounds, and they stand ready for the harvest of eternal glory.

2. By another parable of a lighted candle, Christ teaches his disciples, and others, what was expected from them, even to shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life;—this being the great design of all the private instructions he gave them, that they should afterwards plainly and fully declare to the world the great truths couched under these similitudes. As therefore they must give a solemn account for the particular advantages which they enjoyed, they must take heed how they hear, when so much was hereby entrusted to them, and expected from them; which if they improved, farther assistances of spiritual light and greater gifts should be given them: but if they neglected to profit by these means of wisdom and grace vouchsafed to them, the consequence would be, that the gifts and knowledge which they had would decay, and be taken from them, and darkness and error succeed.

3. Christ acknowledges those who truly hear the word of God, and do it, as his nearest and dearest relations. His mother and his brethren desired to see and speak with him; but unable to approach him, because of the crowd, some of those who stood around him, informed him of their request; but he was otherwise engaged in his Father's work, and took occasion hence to encourage those who were his diligent attendants, assuring them that they shared his regards above the nearest relatives after the flesh, merely as such.

3dly. We had before in Matth. viii. an account of the two illustrious miracles contained in ver. 22—39. of this chapter. We see,

1. Christ's wonders in the deep. He, at whose word the stormy waves arise, can in a moment also restrain their rage, and silence their roaring. Christ sent his disciples by sea, on purpose to give them this fresh evidence

of his omnipotence. They embarked at his word, and little expected danger; but oftentimes, when we lull ourselves into security, our peril is most imminent: they had him with them however, and therefore needed not fear: but he was asleep; for so regardless he sometimes appears toward his people in their distress: and their danger staggered their faith, and filled their hearts with fears, as their boat was filled with water. Prayer was now their recourse; to Christ they fly, and awaken him with their cries. He slept, partly at least, with this design, to quicken their desires after him, to affect them with a deeper sense of their want of him, and to testify towards them more abundantly his power and his love. When we feel ourselves undone and perishing, then may Christ be truly precious to us; none ever perished, who thus fled to him. He arose, and with a word stilled the raging sea, and quieted their fears. He delights to speak peace to the troubled conscience, and they who wait on him shall not be ashamed of their confidence. Their only shame will arise from their dishonourable distrusts of him; for these he justly reproves them, *Where is your faith?* A measure of faith they had; but it was not strong enough for the present danger. Their sudden deliverance amazed them; and, filled with reverential fear at such a display of divine power, they could not but conclude that he must be more than man, whom winds and waves obeyed.

2. Christ's dominion over the powers of darkness. Raging devils can no more resist his power, than raging winds: and this is an unspeakable comfort to all God's people, that Satan cannot harm, even a swine, without permission. A legion here possessed one man; how numberless then these malignant spirits; how unequal a match must we be for them, if left to ourselves! No chains could hold this poor demoniac; in cold and nakedness, without clothes or covering, he was driven to the tombs: so ungovernable are we when under the influence of satanical tempers, a terror to others, a burden to ourselves. At the feet of Jesus he fell, while the foul spirit within cried out in terror, dreading to be dispossessed, and sent to the abyss, the place of torment. A slavish fear of hell sometimes drives men thus to their knees: they dread the punishment, but do not loath their sins; they cry for release from their pains, not for deliverance from their corruptions. When the devils are compelled to quit their hold of the man, they fain would be doing mischief, if but among the swine; and in correction to some, and as a warning to others, Christ permits this visitation on the property of the Gadarenes. But when they heard from the affrighted keepers the loss they had sustained, they desired him to depart out of their coast, dreading the consequences of his stay; and he departed. The visitations which should humble, often serve but to harden, the souls of sinners: instead of coming to Christ, they would get as far from him as possible. The poor man, however, who was now restored to his right mind, and sitting at Jesus's feet, would fain have followed him; but he is sent back

that was done by him : and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some that John was risen from the dead ;

8 <sup>1</sup> And of some, that Elias had appeared ; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

9 And Herod said, <sup>k</sup> John have I beheaded :

but who is this, of whom I hear such things ?

<sup>l</sup> And he desired to see him.

10 ¶ <sup>m</sup> And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done.

<sup>n</sup> And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called <sup>o</sup> Bethsaida.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 3. 7, 19. Mat. 16. 14. & 17. 10. Mark, 6. 15. John, 1. 21. Ver. 19. Mark, 8. 28. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 14. 1—12. Mark, 6. 14—23. See ver. 7. Ch. 13. 31, 32. & 23. 8. <sup>m</sup> Mark, 6. 30. Ch. 10. 17. <sup>n</sup> Mat. 14. 13—21. Mark, 6. 31—44. & 1. 45. & 3. 7, 20. John, 6. 16. II. 42. 2. <sup>o</sup> John, 1. 44. Mat. 11. 21.

to proclaim the mercy that he has experienced. When by divine grace a *right mind* is restored to us, and the power of sin and Satan broken, we are called upon to acknowledge the mercy to the praise of Jesus, and to tell what great things he has done for our souls, inviting others to come and taste how gracious the Lord is.

athly, Though the Gadarenes were glad to get rid of Jesus, the men of Galilee with open arms received him, eagerly waiting for his return. If in one place the gospel be despised and expelled, another door of utterance shall be opened, and some will be glad to welcome the ejected ministers of Christ.

No sooner was Jesus arrived, than we find an application made to him by a ruler, in behalf of his daughter at the point of death ; and while he goes to perform one miracle, by the way he works another.

1. A poor diseased woman, who was ashamed to make a public application to him, persuaded that a touch of his garment would effect that which all her physicians had attempted in vain, came in secret among the crowd ; and touching his garment, found, according to her faith, a perfect cure. But it was not proper that it should be hid : for the glory of Jesus and the comfort of her own soul, she is called upon to make an acknowledgment of the mercy. Persuaded, that he who felt virtue go out of him, and wrought the cure, could not be at a loss to find out the patient, no sooner did she hear his inquiries, than she fell trembling at his feet, acknowledged her boldness, and owned the blessing which she had received. Far from being displeased, he who healed her body now comforts her soul ; and, commending her faith, dismisses her in peace. *Note* ; (1.) There is that fulness of grace in Christ, that whoever comes to him shall be holpen. (2.) We cannot be hid from the eye of Jesus, and a gracious soul desires it not ; such a one would tell him of all his wants, and pour out his heart in simplicity before him. (3.) Christ delights to raise up the trembling sinner, and speaks comfort to the poor in spirit : such need not fear ; the language of Jesus to them shall be the voice of peace and love.

2. The ruler's daughter had now closed her eyes in death, and therefore his friends imagined it useless to trouble Jesus farther. In lesser trials many thus pretend to truit him, who, in greater, are ready to despair ; but he, who by a word can heal the diseased, can by the same power raise the dead ; he encourages, therefore, the ruler's faith ; not only while there is life there is hope, but even in death the case is not desperate, when he, who is the

resurrection and the life, is the physician. With three of his disciples, and the parents of the child, he went into the room where she lay, sending forth those as unworthy to be spectators of his power, who, when he would dry up their tears with good words and comfortable, laughed at his saying that she only slept, because they knew she was dead ; but knew not that to him it was as easy to call her from the arms of death, as to awaken her from sleep. At his word the damsel arose ; his hand of grace, his word of power, communicated life, and brought back the spirit which had fled : in perfect health her astonished parents beheld her restored to their longing arms. He commanded them hereupon to give her some food, and charged them to conceal the miracle. By the effectual word of Jesus is the believing soul thus quickened to spiritual life ; and when the union between the body and soul is dissolved, he takes care of both the body and soul of every faithful persevering believer in their state of separation ; and will bring the spirit again in the resurrection-day, and prepare for it a body glorified like his own.

#### CHAP. IX.

*Ver. 4. There abide,*] This was to prevent any reproach which might be brought against them for changing their quarters, from too great a regard to the little circumstances of domestic accommodation, or from principles of luxury, with a view to living better. See on Matth. x. 11.

*Ver. 6. And they departed,*] The reader will find in Mr. Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 133, &c. some important reflections on the propriety of our Lord's choice of his apostles, in proof of the admirable contrivance of the divine wisdom in the whole work of our redemption. See also the latter part of the note on Matth. x. 2, &c. and xi. 25.

*Ver. 7. And he was perplexed,*] *He was exceedingly anxious.* The word *Διπλωροῦ* strongly expresses a mixture of doubt and fear, which must necessarily throw the mind into a very uneasy situation.

*Ver. 9. And he desired to see him.*] Probably that he might have an opportunity of being reconciled to him ; for though at first Herod affected not to believe that John was risen, yet the perplexity he was in when he heard of it, shews plainly that he feared the worst.

*Ver. 10. Bethsaida.*] This place was only a village, till Philip the tetrarch of Iturea adorned it with new buildings, drew a wall round it, and called it *Julias*, in honour of Julia, the daughter of Augustus. This city, therefore, being under Philip's jurisdiction, must have stood some-  
where

whom I have  
see him.  
apostles, when  
all that they  
and went  
onging to the  
1-11. Mark 6  
1. 43. 83. 74. 75.

11 And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

12 ¶ And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes; and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

18 ¶ And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?

19 They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

21 And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing;

22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

23 ¶ And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

is the phisician. E  
nts of the child, he  
ending forth these  
er, who, when he  
ds and confounde  
pe. because they  
to him it was as at  
as to answer to  
; his hand on pa  
e, and brought  
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By the child  
quickened in  
the body as  
body and  
their that  
he returne  
his own

John, 6. 37. Ch. 15. 2. If. 48. 17. & 61. 1. Mark, 1. 14, 15. Acts, 10. 38. Rom. 15. 8. Exod. 15. 26. Pf. 107. 20. & 147. 3. 1 Mat. 14. 15-21. Mark, 6. 35-44. John, 6. 5-14. Pf. 78. 19, 20. 2 King, 4. 42, 43. Mark, 6. 37. John, 6. 6-10. Mat. 6. 33. Num. 11. 22. 1 Cor. 14. 33, 40. 1 Kings, 10. 5. Mark, 6. 39, 40. & 7. 6. Pf. 121. 1, 2. Mat. 14. 19. & 15. 36. & 26. 26. & 24. 45. Rom. 14. 6. 1 Sam. 9. 15. Deut. 8. 10. 1 Tim. 4. 4, 5. John, 6. 11. Mark, 6. 41. Exod. 23. 25. Pf. 37. 16. & 23. 1. & 145. 18. Prov. 13. 25. Prov. 6. 6. Mat. 16. 9. & 14. 20, 21. John, 6. 12-14. Phil. 4. 8. Mat. 16. 13-23. Mark, 8. 27-33. Privately. Ver. 8. Mark, 8. 28. Mat. 16. 14. John, 1. 21. Mat. 23. 42. & 16. 15. Mat. 16. 16. John, 1. 29, 41, 49. & 6. 69. & 11. 27. & 4. 29, 42. 1 John, 4. 14, 15. & c. 5. Acts, 8. 37. & 9. 20. Mat. 26. 63. Mark, 8. 26, 30. & 7. 36. 1 Cor. 2. 8. Mat. 17. 22, 23. & 16. 21, 22. & 20. 17, 18. Mark, 8. 31. & 9. 31. & 10. 33. Ch. 13. 31. & 24. 7, 23. Pf. 118. 22. If. 52. 14, 15. & 53. 2-12. John, 26. 13, 17. 1 Cor. 15. 4. Pf. xxii. lxxix. Mat. 10. 38, 39. & 16. 24, 25. Mark, 8. 34-38. Ch. 14. 27. Phil. 3. 7-9. Acts, 14. 22. 2 Tim. 3. 12. John, 16. 33. 1 Thess. 3. 3. Rom. 2. 7-10. Ch. 17. 33. John, 12. 25. Gal. 6. 12. Rev. 12. 11. Heb. 11. 35. Job, 2. 4. Mat. 16. 26. Ch. 12. 19, 20. Mark, 8. 36. & 9. 43-48. Ch. 16. 25, 26.

where to the east of Jordan. Josephus has marked its situation distinctly, by asserting that the river Jordan falls into the lake of Gennesaret, behind the city Julias. All the circumstances mentioned in the gospels, which have any relation to Bethsaida, quadrate exactly with this situation. Bethsaida is indeed called a town of Galilee, John, xii. 21. whereas the city which Philip rebuilt, was in Gaulonitis. To this it may be answered, that Bethsaida being situated very near the Jordan, which divided Galilee from Gaulonitis, it might be called a town of either country, and belong sometimes to the one, and sometimes to the other. Farther, though when Josephus wrote, Galilee did not extend beyond Jordan, the boundary of Herod's dominions; yet the scripture gives the name of Galilee to the whole region lying north of the sea. Ver. 12. And lodge,] The original word καταλύσασθαι, is used by mariners to signify to come back, or retire from a voyage to the haven; and thence it is applied to travellers.

who go to their inn; and in a general sense it implies to refresh one's self. Ver. 25. Or be cast away?] This expression does not signify merely to lose life, which might be applied to a man, who accidentally met death in the pursuit of gain, (as a merchant, who should be lost in his voyage;) but it properly imports undergoing a capital punishment, which is an idea of much greater terror, as well as of stricter propriety in the present case; and it were to be wished that it might be seriously considered by every one in this awful view. See on Mark, viii. 38. Our Lord frequently after this repeated the prediction of his sufferings. (See ver. 22. and compare Matth. xvii. 22. xx. 18. xxvi. 2. Luke, xvii. 25. xxii. 15.) But it is remarkable, that on none of those occasions was the prophecy delivered to any but the twelve, and a few select women, Ch. xxiv. 6-8. one instance excepted, namely, Ch. xvii. 25. where it was expressed in terms somewhat obscure. The multitude of

26 \* For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and *in his Father's*, and of the holy angels.

27 <sup>b</sup> But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

28 ¶ <sup>1</sup> And it came to pass about an eight days after these \* sayings, he took <sup>k</sup> Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain <sup>1</sup> to pray.

29 And as he prayed, <sup>m</sup> the fashion of his

countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering.

30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were <sup>n</sup> Moses and Elias:

31 <sup>o</sup> Who appeared in glory, and <sup>p</sup> spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

32 But Peter and they that were with him <sup>q</sup> were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, <sup>r</sup> they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, <sup>t</sup> it

\* Mat. 10. 33. Mark, 8. 38. Ch. 12. 8, 9. 2 Tim. 2. 12. 1 John, 2. 22, 23. Rev. 3. 5. Mat. 24. 30. & 25. 31. 2 Thos. 1. 8-10. Dan. 7. 10. Jude, 14. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 16. 28. & 24. 30, 34. & 26. 62. Mark, 9. 1. & 13. 26. Ch. 22. 18. & 17. 20, 21. <sup>2</sup> Mat. 17. 1-13. Mark, 2-10. <sup>3</sup> Or *things*. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 6. 14. & 8. 51. <sup>l</sup> Ch. 6. 12. Pf. 109. 4. Heb. 5. 7. <sup>m</sup> Exod. 34. 20, 31. <sup>n</sup> If. 33. 17. John, 1. 14. 2 Peter, 1. 16, 17. Dan. 7. 9. <sup>o</sup> Exod. xi. to Deut. xxxiv. 1 Kings, xvii-xix. 2 Kings, i. ii. Acts, 10. 43. Rom. 3. 21. <sup>p</sup> Mat. 24. 2. Col. 3. 4. Phil. 3. 21. <sup>q</sup> 1 Cor. 2. 2. Phil. 3. 8-10. Col. 2. 15. with Ver. 22. Ch. xxii. xxiii. Mat. xxvii. xxvii. John, xviii. xix. <sup>r</sup> Dan. 8. 18. & 10. 9. Ch. 22. 45, 46. <sup>s</sup> John, 1. 14. 2 Pet. 1. 16, 17. <sup>t</sup> Pf. 50. 6. Mark, 9. 5, 6. Mat. 17. 4.

of the disciples were never let into the secret, because it might have made them desert Christ; as they had not, like the apostles, raised expectations of peculiar preferments in his kingdom to bias their understandings, and hinder them from perceiving the meaning of the prediction. It is true, he foretold his resurrection from the dead more publicly; for oftener than once he appealed to it, as the principal proof of his mission, even in the presence of the priests, as is evident from Matth. xxvii. 63.

Ver. 26. *In his own glory, and in his Father's,*] In his own glory, may signify the glory peculiar to him as God-man—probably the majesty and splendor of his glorified body, a visible representation of which he exhibited in his transfiguration, about a week after this discourse was delivered. He shall come also *in the glory of the Father*, augustly arrayed in the inaccessible light, wherein the God-head dwells; (1 Tim. vi. 16. See also Acts, i. 11.) and which, darting through and enlightening all space with its ineffable brightness, shall make even the sun to disappear. Withal, to render his advent to judge the world the more grand, he will come *with the holy angels*, attended by the whole host, an innumerable company, ready to execute his commands. See Matth. xxv. 31.

Ver. 28. *About an eight days*] What St. Luke calls *eight days*, is by St. Matthew and St. Mark termed *six days*. The like differences are to be met with in prophane historians. For instance, Suetonius Galba, Ch. 17. tells us, that Piso, before he was murdered, had lived *six days* in the character of Cæsar; and Piso himself, in his speech to the soldiers, mentions the same space of time: "It is now the sixth day since I was adopted Cæsar." Tacit. Hist. lib. i. cap. 29. Nevertheless the same Tacitus, lib. i. cap. 48. tells us, that he was Cæsar only *four days*; and cap. 19. of the same book, that there were only *four days* between his being created Cæsar and his death. See Matth. xii. 40.

Ver. 29. *The fashion of his countenance was altered,*] *The appearance, &c. was changed.* See on Matth. xvii. 2. This

was so striking a circumstance, that Eunapius relates a story of Jamblichus, which seems evidently to be borrowed from this; (*Vit. Jamb.* p. 22.) as many things which Philostratus tells us of Apollonius Tyanæus seem also to be borrowed from other circumstances recorded of Christ by the evangelists. The words λευκὸν ἔλαμπαν, which we render *white and glistering*, may be literally rendered *white as lightning*;—splendid and dazzling as the blaze of lightning.

Ver. 31. *And spake of his decease*] *Ἡς ἔξοδος*, or *exit*, which he was shortly to complete at Jerusalem. See 2 Pet. i. 15. and Witd. iii. 2. It is well observed by St. Chrysostom, that our Lord never spoke of his passion but immediately before or after some great miracle; and here we may observe, that in the midst of his wonderful transfiguration the two saints speak of his passion. A strange opportunity, in his highest exaltation, to speak of his sufferings! to talk of Calvary on Tabor! when his head shone with glory, to tell him how it must bleed with thorns! when his face shone like the sun, to tell him how it must be defiled with spitting! when his garments glittered with that celestial brightness, to tell him how they must be stripped off and divided! when he was seen between two saints, to tell him how he must be seen between two malefactors! In a word, in the midst of his divine majesty, to tell him of his shame! and while he was transfigured on the mount, to tell him how he must be disfigured upon the cross! Yet these two heavenly prophets found this the fittest time for such discourse, choosing to speak of his sufferings in the height of his glory. It is most seasonable in our best, to think of our worst estate; for both that thought will be best digested, when we are well; and that change will be best prepared for, when we are the furthest from it. See the *Inferences* on Mark, ix.

Ver. 32, 33. *And when they were awake*] Probably the streams of light which issued from Christ's body, especially his countenance, and penetrated through the gloom of night, together with the voices of Moses and Elias, made such

is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

37 ¶ And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him.

38 And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee,

look upon my son: for he is mine only child.

39 And, lo, a spirit taketh him; and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him.

40 And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.

41 And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

42 And as he was yet a coming the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

43 ¶ And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did,

¶ Ps. 18, 9, 11, & 97. 2. If. 19. 1. Rev. 10. 1. Rev. 1. 17. Dan. 8. 18. & 10. 10. Exod. 35. 20. Judges, 6. 22. & 13. 22. Pf. 53. 5. 2 Pet. 1. 17. Mat. 3. 17. & 17. 5. Mark, 9. 7. If. 42. 1. Pf. 2. 7. John, 1. 14. & 3. 16. Rom. 8. 3. Gal. 4. 4. Col. 1. 13. Zech. 13. 7. Ch. 3. 17. Exod. 24. 21. Deut. 18. 15-18. Acts, 3. 22, 23. Heb. 1. 3. & 1. 1. & 12. 25, 26. & 3. 15. Mat. 17. 9. Mark, 9. 9. 10. Eccl. 3. 7. Mat. 17. 14-21. Mark, 9. 14-29. Ch. 7. 8. & 8. 41. John, 4. 47, 49. Mark, 2. 3. & 6. 56. & 8. 22. & 10. 14 & 7. 26. 1 Pet. 5. 8. John. 8. 24. Mat. 15. 22. Mark, 9. 18, 20, 22, 26. 1 Kings, 4. 31. Mat. 17. 10. & 13. 58. Mat. 17. 16. & 6. 30. & 8. 26. & 14. 31. & 16. 8. & 17. 58. Heb. 3. 19. & 4. 2. Mark, 10. 14. Mat. 11. 28. Prov. 8. 17. Ch. 13. 27. Heb. 7. 25. Gen. 18. 14. Jer. 37. 17, 27. Mark, 9. 20. & 18. 22, 26. & 1. 26. See ver. 39. Gen. 3. 15. 1 Peter, 5. 8. Rev. 12. 12. Ch. 4. 36. & 5. 9, 26. & 7. 16. & 8. 25.

such an impression on their senses, as to raise them from their slumber. The apostles, both before and after the transfiguration, were with their Master in many delightful spots of the country, heard many most blessed sermons, and saw many wonderful works; yet in no place, and on no occasion, but this, were they ever heard to say, *It is good for us to be here.* Peter fancied, no doubt, that Jesus had now assumed his proper dignity; that Elias was come, according to Malachi's prediction; and that the kingdom was at length begun: wherefore, in the first hurry of his thoughts, he proposed to provide some accommodation for Jesus and his august assistants, intending perhaps to bring the rest of the disciples, with the multitude, from the plain before them, to behold his matchless glory. He thought this was better for his Master than to be killed at Jerusalem; concerning which, he had not only conversed with his disciples, (see ver. 22.) but also with the messengers from heaven; and the design of which Peter could not comprehend. Though St. Peter's proposal was, as St. Mark observes, Ch. ix. 6. improper enough; yet, perhaps, few in such astonishing circumstances could have been perfectly masters of themselves. The tents which he proposed to build, must have been only slight bowers, like those made use of at the feast of tabernacles.

Ver. 34, 35. *There came a cloud,*] A bright cloud, St. Matthew calls it, Ch. xvii. 5. and St. Peter, the excellent glory, Peter, i. 17. whence we conclude, that it must have been the Shechinah, or visible symbol of the divine presence; as is evident also from the words that came out of

the cloud, which were the words of God himself; *This is my Son, the Beloved, hear him.* The voice uttering these words just as Moses and Elias disappeared, intimated that men were no longer to hearken unto them, speaking in the law, but for the future were to obey Jesus; because Moses and Elias, though both eminent in their stations, were only servants; whereas this was God's beloved Son. Besides, the sentence uttered by the voice, *hear ye him,* plainly alluding to Deut. xviii. 15. signified that Jesus was the prophet of whom Moses spake in that passage. See the note there.

Ver. 39. *And it teareth him*] Throws him into convulsions. And so ver. 42.

Ver. 41. *Bring thy son hither.*] In St. Mark, Ch. ix. 19. the order is general; here our Lord addresses the father of the youth. After having rebuked the Scribes for their obstinacy, he turned to the young man's father, and ordered him to bring his son to him.

Ver. 43. *And they were all amazed*] All the disciples were amazed, when they considered the greatness of the power which Jesus shewed in his last miracle. It should seem that their wonder was accompanied with proportionably high expectations of happiness in that temporal kingdom which they were now convinced he could easily erect. Jesus, knowing this, thought fit, when they came into Galilee (the country where he had most followers) to moderate his disciples' ambition, by predicting his own sufferings.

he said unto his disciples,

44 <sup>1</sup> Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

45 <sup>k</sup> But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

46 ¶ <sup>l</sup> Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

47 And Jesus, <sup>m</sup> perceiving the thought of their heart, took a <sup>n</sup> child, and set him by him,

48 And said unto them, <sup>o</sup> Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you

all, the same shall be great.

49 ¶ <sup>p</sup> And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us.

50 And Jesus said unto him, <sup>q</sup> Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.

51 ¶ And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be <sup>r</sup> received up, he <sup>s</sup> stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the <sup>t</sup> Samaritans, to make ready for him.

53 And <sup>u</sup> they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> Mat. 17. 22, 23. & 16. 21. & 20. 18, 19, 28. & 26. 2. & 21. 33, 39. & 12. 32, 33. & 19. 11. Acts, 2. 23. & 4. 27, 28. Ch. xxii. xxiii. <sup>2</sup> Ch. 2. 50. & 18. 34. If. 42. 19, 20. John, 12. 16. & 16. 16-18. & 22. 16. & 14. 6, 8, 22. Mark, 9. 32. <sup>3</sup> Ch. 22. 24-30. Mat. 18. 1-5. Mark, 9. 33-37. <sup>4</sup> Mark, 10. 14. Pf. 14. 11. & 45. 10. Prov. 8. 17. <sup>5</sup> Mat. 18. 5. & 10. 40-42. & 25. 40, 45. <sup>6</sup> Heb. 4. 13. John, 21. 17. Rev. 2. 23. <sup>7</sup> Mark, 10. 14. Pf. 14. 11. & 45. 10. Prov. 8. 17. <sup>8</sup> Mat. 18. 5. & 10. 40-42. & 25. 40, 45. <sup>9</sup> Ch. 10. 16. John, 10. 30. & 5. 22, 23. & 12. 44. & 12. 20. & 14. 21. 1 Thess. 4. 8. <sup>10</sup> Mark, 9. 38-40. Ch. 11. 19. Num. 11. 27, 28. <sup>11</sup> Job, 5. 2. Eccl. 4. 4. Gal. 5. 26. <sup>12</sup> 1 Cor. 12. 3. Ch. 9. 50. & 11. 23. Mat. 12. 30. Phil. 1. 18. Num. 11. 29. <sup>13</sup> Mark, 16. 19. <sup>14</sup> Acts, 1. 2. John, 13. 1. & 17. 11, 13. & 16. 5, 23. & 14. 2, 3. Heb. 1. 3. <sup>15</sup> Ezek. 4. 3. Acts, 21. 13. Phil. 3. 14. <sup>16</sup> Mat. 10. 5. John, 4. 4-42. Ezra, iv. v. Neh. iv. vi. <sup>17</sup> John, 4. 4, 9.

Ver. 44. Into your ears; for the Son, &c.] Into your ears; namely, The Son, &c.

Ver. 45. And they feared to ask him] "Either they imagined that Christ, by the positive manner in which he delivered his prophesy, understood it to be adapted to their capacities, and therefore they dreaded to ask any farther explanation; or they were afraid to be more particularly informed of what contradicted their favourite notion of a temporal deliverer."

Ver. 46. Then there arose a reasoning] Διαλογισμος, a debate, or dispute. As this dispute happened immediately after Jesus foretold his own sufferings and resurrection, some imagine that by his sufferings the disciples understood certain great difficulties which their Master was to meet with before the establishment of his kingdom; and by his resurrection from the dead, his surmounting those difficulties: however, the circumstances mentioned by St. Matthew, xvii. 23. that the prediction made them exceeding sorry, does not seem to agree so well with that supposition, unless the thought of his meeting with any opposition at all grieved them, even though they were sure he would surmount it. According to St. Luke's representation in our version, this dispute happened at the time when our Lord rebuked his disciples for it; but we are expressly told, Mark, ix. 33. that it happened as they went to Capernaum. But the evangelists may be easily and perfectly reconciled by translating St. Luke's words thus; Now, there had arisen a dispute, &c. namely, as they travelled into Capernaum—a translation entirely agreeable to the original.

Ver. 51. When the time was come] About this time the feast of dedication approached—a solemnity not appointed

by the law of Moses, but by that heroic reformer Judas Maccabeus, in commemoration of his having cleansed the temple, and restored its worship, after both had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes: but although this feast was of human institution, and Jesus foresaw that further attempts would be made upon his life at Jerusalem, he did not fear it, but went thither with the utmost calmness and resolution. St. Luke explains the reason of this: he had now continued upon earth very near to the final period of his life below, and was soon to be taken up to heaven, whence he had come down; he therefore resolved from this time forth to appear as openly as possible, and to embrace every opportunity of fulfilling the duties of his ministry. When the time was come, or fulfilled, (—in τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι,) according to the Hebrew idiom, signifies, when the time drew on, or approached. The word ἀναλαμβάνεις, in this passage, signifies Christ's being received or taken up into heaven; for we find the word ἀναλαμβάνειν, whence it is derived, applied expressly to his ascension, Mark, xvi. 19. Acts, i. 2. The word ἡμέρας, days or time, does not always imply a determinate space, but is sometimes used in a loose and indefinite sense, as in this place. The phrase, he stedfastly set his face, imports a strong and intrepid resolution, notwithstanding the foreknowledge that our Saviour had of the dangers which awaited him. See Ezek. iv. 3.

Ver. 52, 53. And sent messengers] Our Lord did not now travel privately to Jerusalem, as he had often done before; but, declaring his intention publicly, entered on the journey with the most perfect fortitude. The road to Jerusalem from Galilee lay through Samaria; wherefore, as the inhabitants of this country bore the greatest ill-will

54 And when his disciples \* James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

\* See ver. 28. Mark, 10. 35-37. 2 Kings, 1. 10, 12. 2 Sam. 21. 2. Gal. 4. 17, 18. 2 Prov. 9. 8. & 27. 5. Mat. 16. 23. 2 Mat. 35. Rom. 10. 2. James, 3. 14-16. John, 4. 17, 18. & 12. 47. Mat. 1. 21. & 20. 28. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Ch. 19. 10. Heb. 7. 25. Mar. 8. 19-22. & 93. 20-22. John, 6. 26. 1 Tim. 6. 5. Exod. 19. 8. & 24. 3. d at 8. 20. 2 Cor. 8. 9. Pf. 22. 6. & 109. 22. & 40. & 69. 29. Phil. 2. 7, 8. Mat. 11. 29. e Mat. 4. 19, 21. & 16. 24. & 9. 9. f Mat 8. 21. Hag. 1. 2. with 1 Kings, 19. 20. Ch. 4. 1. & 19. 29. g Mat. 8. 22. Ch. 15. 32. Eph. 2. 1. 1 Tim. 5. 6. Lev. 21. 10-12. Numb. 6. 6, 7. h 2 Tim. 4. 2. Mark, 16. 15. Ver. 2. 1 Cor. 15. 10. i 1 Kings, 19. 20. Mat. 23. 5. Ch. 14. 20, 26. John, 21. 16.

All that worshipped in Jerusalem, Jesus thought it necessary to send messengers before him, with orders to find out quarters for him in one of the villages: but the inhabitants refused to receive him, because his intention in this journey was publicly known. The Samaritans could not well refuse lodgings to all the travellers who went to Jerusalem, as the high road lay through their country: such travellers only as went thither professedly to worship, were the objects of their indignation. Hence the expression, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem, must imply, that his design of worshipping at Jerusalem was known to the Samaritans.

Ver. 54-56. And when his disciples, James and John] That these disciples, so remarkably distinguished by their Lord's favour, should have some distinguished zeal and faith, may seem less wonderful, than that a person of so sweet a disposition as John should make so severe a proposal. Our Lord, whose meekness on all occasions was admirable, sharply reprimanded his disciples for entertaining so unbecoming a resentment: Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of: "Ye do not know the sinfulness of the disposition ye have just now expressed; neither do ye consider the difference of times, persons, and dispensations." The severity which Elijah exercised on the men who came from Ahaziah to apprehend him, was a reproof of an idolatrous king, court, and nation, very proper for the times, and very agreeable to the characters, both of the prophet who gave it, and of the offenders to whom it was given; at the same time it was not unsuitable to the nature of the dispensation which they were under: but the gospel breathes a different spirit from the law; and therefore it does not admit of this sort of rigour and severity. Bengelius would rather render the clause interrogatively, Do ye not know what kind of spirit ye are of? Are you not sensible that this proceeds from a revengeful spirit, which is in every respect contrary to the nature of my dispensation, and the design of my coming

"into the world?" Accordingly he tells them, that to destroy men's lives was utterly inconsistent with that design: The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them, ver. 56. alluding to his miracles, by which he restored health to the diseased bodies of men; as well as to his doctrine and death, by which he gives life to their souls. Having said these things, he went with them to another village, the inhabitants whereof were men of better dispositions. This was a noble instance of patience under a real and unprovoked injury; an instance which expressed infinite sweetness of disposition, and which for that reason should be imitated by all who call themselves Christ's disciples. See the note on 2 Kings, i. 10. and the Inferences and Reflections at the end of this chapter. Sir D. Dalrymple observes upon this passage, that "it is of great moment, not only as pointing out the doctrine of the meek and merciful Jesus, but as shewing that we have the evangelical history without corruption; for would persecutors, that is, almost all men who have had power in all ages, have suffered such a passage against persecution to have remained, had it been in their power to have corrupted it?"

Ver. 60. Let the dead bury their dead, &c.] See the notes on Matth. viii. 21. The present circumstance was plainly extraordinary, and might turn on reasons unknown to us. Christ might, for instance, foresee some particular obstruction that would have arisen from the interview with this person's friends at his father's funeral, and have prevented his devoting himself to the ministry; to which he might refer by saying, Let the dead bury their dead.

Ver. 61. But let me first go, &c.] The phrase ἀποτάξασθαι τοῖς εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου, signifies, "Permit me first to go and settle the affairs of my family, and take my leave of them who are at my house;" as Elisha was permitted to do, when called in so extraordinary a manner to the prophetic office, 1 Kings, xix. 20. Intending to give up his possessions, he probably designed to order how they should be distributed

62 And Jesus said unto him, \* No man, looking back, is fit for the kingdom of having put his hand to the plough, and God.

\* Phil. 3. 14. Heb. 10. 33. 2 Tim. 4. 10. & 1. 15. Heb. 6. 8. 2 Peter, 2. 20—22. 1 John, 2. 19.

distributed among his friends, as Heinsius has very well explained the passage.

*Ver. 62. No man, &c.]* Hesiod has given it as the character of a good ploughman, that "he keeps his mind intent on his work, that he may make a straight furrow, and does not allow himself to gaze about on his companions." Our Lord, on the like obvious principle, may use the phrase, of one that looks behind him while his hand is on the plough, as a kind of proverbial expression for a careless, irresolute person, who must be peculiarly unfit for the Christian ministry; or he might allude to Lot's wife, whose *looking back* is explained by Philo to imply an immediate regard to the riches of this world, and attachment to family-connections, so as to make us indifferent to the life of God in the soul, the great duties of morality, and the cause of religion. How happy had it been for the church of Christ, had this lively admonition been regarded; without which it is impossible to *divide*, or rather *direct*, the word of truth aright, 2 Tim. ii. 15. See Ch. xvii. 32. See also Hesiod's *works and days*, lib. ii. ver. 60.

*Inferences drawn from ver. 51—56. of this chapter.—*The time now drew on, in which Jesus must be received up: Calvary is in his passage to mount Olivet. He must be lifted up to the cross, thence to ascend into his heaven. Yet this comes not into mention; as if all the thoughts of death were swallowed up in this victory of our Lord over death, *He stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.* Well did he know the plots and ambushes that were there laid for him, and the bloody issue of those designs; yet will he go, resolved for the worst. It is wise to send our thoughts before us, to grapple with those evils which we know must be encountered: the enemy is half overcome, for whom we are well prepared; and the strongest mischief may be counteracted by a seasonable previous resolution.

The way from Galilee to Judea lay through the region of Samaria, if not through the city. Christ, now towards the end of his ministry, could not but be attended by a multitude of followers. Purveyors therefore and harbingers were necessary to procure lodgings and provision for so large a troop: some of his own retinue are appointed to this service. He who could have commanded the angels, sues to Samaritans for house-room and food. He that filled and comprehended heaven, seeks for shelter in a Samaritan cottage. How can we either neglect means, or despise homeliness, when thou, the God of all the world, wouldst stoop to the suit of so poor a provision!

No nations were mutually so hateful to each other as the Samaritans and the Jews; the *looking towards Jerusalem* in order to go there to worship, was therefore found sufficient cause of repulse: no enmity, alas! is so desperate as that which arises from matters of religion; and agreement in some points, where there are differences in the main, does but advance hatred the more.

Which now are we to think most strange,—to hear the Son of God sue for a lodging, or to hear him repelled. And even upon such a denial, can we help wondering to hear the two angry disciples return to their Master on so fiery an errand, *Lord, wilt thou that we command fire, &c.?*

These *sons of thunder* would instantly become lightning. Whether as being kinsmen or disciples, their zeal could not brook so harsh a refusal: naturally perhaps more hot than their companions, they now thought their piety bade them be impatient. Oh what a change did the spirit of Christ soon work upon them!

Observe we their progress; a respectful preface led on a faulty suit; faulty, both in presumption, and in a desire of private revenge. *Master, wilt thou, &c.?* We do not hear them say, "Master, will it please thee, who art the sole Lord of the heavens and the elements, to command,"—but *Wilt thou that we command?* As if, because they had received power over diseases, and unclean spirits, therefore heaven and earth were at their beck and controul. But it is the fashion of our bold nature, when much is given, still to challenge more; and where we find ourselves graced with some abilities, to flatter ourselves with the faculty of large increase.

Had these disciples, indeed, either said or meant, "Master, if it be thy pleasure to command us to call down fire from heaven, we know thy word shall enable us to do what thou requirest; if the words be ours, the power shall be thine," this had been modest; but now the act had in it both cruelty and private revenge; and their zeal in general was not more worthy of praise, than their fury now of censure.

That fire should fall down from heaven upon men, is a fearful thing even to think of, and has not been often done. It was done in the case of Sodom, when those five unclean cities burned with the unnatural fire of hellish lust; it was done also repeatedly at the suit of Elijah; and it was done, in a height of trial, to that great pattern of patience, the patriarch *Job*: we find it no more, and tremble at these instances which we meet with.

But besides the dreadfulfulness of the judgment itself, who can help trembling at the thought of the suddenness of this destruction, which sweeps away both body and soul in an unprepared state; and this heavenly flame enkindles that of hell!

Thus inconceivably heavy was the revenge; but what was the offence? had these Samaritans reviled Christ and his train; had they violently assaulted him; had they followed him with stones in their hands, and blasphemies in their mouths, it had been just provocation perhaps to considerable indignation. But now their wrong was only negative; *They received him not*; so that their rejection was but a mere inhospitality to a guest most odious from national disgust;—and yet, no less revenge will serve these zealous disciples than fire from heaven.

Who will hesitate to say for you, ye *Sons of Zebedee*, that

CHAP. X.

Christ sendeth out at once seventy disciples to work miracles and to preach; admonisheth them to be humble, and wherein to rejoice; thanketh his Father for his grace: magnifieth the happy estate of his church: teacheth the lawyer how to attain eternal life, and to esteem every one as his neighbour, that needeth his mercy: reprehendeth Martha, and commendeth Mary her sister.

[Anno Domini 30.]

AFTER these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two

and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes:

Mat. 10. 1. Mark, 6. 2. Exod. 1. 5. Num. 11. 16. Mark, 6. 7. Mat. 10. 6. Mat. 9. 37, 38. John, 4. 35. Zech. 10. 2. & 11. 4, 5, 11. Acts, 16. 9, 10. & 18. 10. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Acts, 20. 28. & 13. 2. & 16. 6, 7. Jer. 3. 15. Eph. 4. 11-13. Acts, ii-xix. 2 Thess. 3. 1. Mat. 10. 5-42. Mark, 6. 7-13. Ch. 9. 1-5. Mat. 10. 16. & 7. 15. Acts, 20. 29, 30. Song, 2. 15. Lark, 2. 3. Mat. 10. 9, 10. Mark, 6. 8. Ch. 9. 3. Mat. 6. 31. Phil. 4. 6. 2 Tim. 4. 2. 2 Kings, 4. 29.

that it was not spleen but zeal that urged so fearful a suggestion? your indignation was raised, to see the great Prophet and Saviour of the world so unkindly repulsed; yet will not all this excuse you from a rash cruelty; from an inordinate and excessive rage.

Even the best heart, if not fully on its guard, and watching unto prayer, may easily miscarry by a well-meant zeal; no affection is either more necessary, or better accepted, when duly exercised; but there is nothing so bad as the corruption of the best things; and rectified zeal is not more commendable and useful, than inordinate and misguided zeal is hateful and dangerous. Fire is a necessary and beneficial element; but nothing more dreadful than fire, when raging and misplaced.

And thus it is that zeal sometimes turns to murder!—and then, they that kill you, shall think that they do God service. Sometimes it turns to frenzy, sometimes to rude indiscretion. Wholesome and blessed is the zeal which is well grounded, and well governed; grounded upon the word of truth, not upon unstable fancies; governed by wisdom, charity, and holy love—wisdom to avoid rashness and excess,—charity to avoid giving just offence.

No motion can want a pretence to countenance it. "Elias did so; why not we? he was a holy prophet; the occasion, the place differs not much; there wrong was offered to a servant, here to his Master; there to a man, here to a God-and-man; if Elias then did it, why not we?" There is nothing more perilous than to draw all the actions of holy men into examples; there must be much caution used in our imitation of the best patterns, whether of persons or things, if we would avoid the charge of servile indiscretion, or sinful absurdity.

The faults of uncharitableness cannot be swallowed up in zeal. Here our Lord turns back, and frowns on his suitors with a concise but sharp rebuke. Ye know what spirit ye are of. Another man would not perhaps have felt it; a disciple's heart could not but be sensible of it. The spirit of Elias is that which they want to imitate; they shall now know the greatness of their error. How would they have hated to conceive, that more than God's spirit had incited them to this passion! but they shall now be convinced that it was wrought by the very evil spirit, whom they most zealously professed to abhor.

It is far from the good spirit of God to stir up any man to private revenge, or thirst of blood; not an eagle's but a dove's was the shape wherein he chose to appear: neither wouldst thou, O God, be in the whirlwind, or in the fire; but in the soft, still, small voice. O Saviour, why do we then seek any precedent, but him whose name we challenge?

Those that would imitate God's saints in singular actions, as in the instance before us, must see that they go upon the same grounds. Without the same spirit, and the same warrant, it is either mockery or a sin to make them our patterns. Their Master, and not Elias, is the only fit exemplar for his disciples: The Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Then are our actions and intentions warrantable and praise-worthy, when they accord with his. O Saviour, when we look into thy sacred acts and monuments, how many a life do we find, which thou didst preserve from perishing! some that had perished, by thee recalled; but never any by thee destroyed. How then can we enough love and praise thy mercy, O thou Preserver of men! how should we imitate thy saving, thy beneficent Spirit, exercised towards us! especially, when we call to mind, that the more we can help to save, the nearer we approach to thee, who camest to save us all;—that the more destructive and merciless we are, the more we resemble him who is Abaddon,—a murderer from the beginning!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Our Lord having called his twelve apostles to closer attendance upon himself, that they might be qualified for the work in which he designed to employ them, now sends them forth in his name, and invests them with miraculous powers, as a proof of their divine mission.

1. He directs them what to say and do. The subject of their preaching must be the gospel of the kingdom; and by their beneficent acts of healing men's bodies, they would not only confirm, but recommend also their doctrine to men's souls.

2. He directs them how to go on this errand. They must make no preparation for the journey; but in their fishers' garments, without change of raiment, without money, or provision, they must go forth trusting in divine Providence for the supply of all their wants; taking up

and salute no man by the way.

5 And into whatsoever house ye enter,

first say, Peace be to this house.

6 And if the Son of peace be there, your

<sup>1</sup> Mat. 10. 11, 12. <sup>1</sup> Sam. 25. 6. Acts, 13. 46. Pf. 35. 13. If. 55. 11. <sup>2</sup> Cor. 2. 16.

up their quarters with the first family who should receive them, and abiding in the same house during their stay, to avoid all appearance of fickleness or nicety. But if any refused them a welcome entertainment, leaving that city to its fate, they need only shake off the dust of their feet, and that should stand as a testimony against them on the awful day of judgment for rejecting the gospel.

3. They immediately obeyed, and executed their commission; for every gracious soul delights to be employed for Christ, and runs at his command.

4. Herod the tetrarch was exceedingly perplexed and terrified at the reports which on this occasion reached his ears. The country rang with the miracles performed by Jesus and his apostles, and people offered various conjectures concerning this great personage; who not only wrought such wonders himself, but was able to communicate this extraordinary power to others. Some said it was John revived; others that Elias was come, the expected forerunner of the Messiah; others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. Herod's guilty conscience smote him, justly fearing that the murdered Baptist was indeed risen, or some more mighty instrument of God to avenge his quarrel; and he desired to see him.

2dly, When they had finished their work, they returned to give their master an account. He is the chief shepherd to whom we are all responsible. The remembrance that we must appear before him shortly to answer for our ministry, should quicken our diligence. Christ took them for a while into a retirement: he is a good master, and desires not to weary out his servants: rest after labour is needful. But the people, eager to hear and be healed, broke in upon their retirement; and Jesus, unwearied in labours of love, preached to them, as usual, the gospel of the kingdom, and healed their diseases. He is so gracious, that none who come to him with their complaints shall be in any wise cast out. Yea, he not only feeds their souls with heavenly manna, but their bodies with miraculous food: five thousand men, besides women and children, are made to feast on five loaves and two small fishes. This miracle is recorded by all the evangelists, and affords us still food for our faith. (1.) In times of want and distress, our care must be cast on the Lord; he feedeth the hungry. (2.) If we have but little, yet let us not fear to divide our morsel with the poor; like the widow's cruse, it shall not be diminished hereby. (3.) When we look up to heaven for a blessing from God, though we by our sins have forfeited all title to our creature comforts, in Christ Jesus they will be restored to us; and then when we eat and drink, it will be to the glory of God.

3dly, Christ having dismissed the multitude whom he had fed, retired with his disciples, to pray with them, and for them, as the master of this little family, and to teach us in our houses to follow his example. And when he had finished, we are told,

1. The *inquiries* that he made concerning the general opinion formed of him. The disciples informed him that

the people were divided in sentiment: some said he was John, revived; others, Elias; others, one of the old prophets risen again. On putting the question to them, what they thought of him, Peter, the spokesman for his brethren, declared their faith in him as the Christ of God. He said the truth; but as it was not proper that this should be publicly and expressly urged, lest tumults should ensue among the people who expected a temporal Messiah, he at present enjoined them silence on this head, till the great day of his resurrection should manifest the glory of his character.

2. The *warning* that he gave them of his own sufferings and death; and this he immediately adds after the confession they had made of him as the Messiah, in order to prepare them for what might stagger them if it came upon them unawares, and to correct the common prejudices concerning the Messiah's temporal kingdom, which they, as well as their countrymen, had imbibed.

3. The *admonitions* that he gave them of the sufferings they must expect to endure for his sake. Instead of the ambitious hopes which they entertained, they must prepare by a course of habitual self-denial for the hardships and persecutions that they would be called to endure in his service, and be ready to take up every cross which in the way of their duty should be laid upon them; even, if need be, that of martyrdom itself. They might be tempted, indeed, by the terrors of suffering, or the allurements of the world, to save their lives by base compliances, but this was the way assuredly in eternity to lose what they meant to preserve; whilst a bold and faithful profession, though it exposed them even to death, would be recompensed with a better life in the eternal world. If they were unfaithful and apostatized, nothing could balance their loss; the gain of the whole world would be no compensation for the perdition of an immortal soul: and if they were ashamed of, and disowned him, their Master, the consequence would inevitably be, that they must be disowned by him, *when in his own glory*, (as God over all blessed for ever, and as Mediator,) and in his *Father's glory*, as having all power in heaven and earth delegated to him; and in the glory of *his holy angels*, the attendants of his triumphs, and the spirits that minister before his throne, he shall appear to judge the world. *Note*: The realizing views of a judgment-day are powerfully effectual to engage the believer to take up every cross, to hesitate at no loss, shame, or suffering, for Christ's sake. He knows that these shall finally prove the eternal gain, the immortal honour of every faithful soul.

4. The *encouragement* that he suggests for his disciples' support. Some of them then present should live to see the kingdom of the Messiah erected, in defiance of all opposition; his gospel spread through the earth, and condign vengeance executed on the Jewish people their persecutors and his murderers. It is a comfort to every suffering but faithful saint of God, that the time is short; in a moment he shall be triumphant over every foe.

4thly,

peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

7<sup>k</sup> And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the

<sup>k</sup> Mat. 10. 10, 11. 1 Cor. 10. 27. & 9. 4—17. Gal. 6. 6—9. 1 Tim. 5. 18. Lev. 19. 13. Deut. 24. 14. & 25. 4.

6thly, The history of the transfiguration was recorded in the other evangelists. Some circumstances are added by St. Luke.

1. Christ went up into the mountain to pray, and then his glory broke forth, which should be an engagement and encouragement to us to maintain communion with God in prayer; since by such approach to him the glory of transforming grace is derived from him, and we become changed into his image.

2. Moses and Elias appeared in glory, as all Christ's faithful faints shall shortly do. They spake of his departure, his exodus, in allusion to the departure of Israel from Egypt; so happy an exit was Jesus shortly to make from this miserable world to the land of eternal rest and blessedness. The prophets had foretold his sufferings, and they talk with him on this subject; the time being at hand, and Jerusalem the place where he must be put to death. The way to glory lies through the grave; in our happiest days on earth this should be ever in our view; and this will reconcile us to all the horrors of death, when we consider it as opening the door of eternal life.

3. The disciples were heavy with sleep; probably it was night, and they had been wearied with the labours of the day: but when they were awake, they beheld their Master and his two attendants beaming with irradiation, and bright as the light. Note; By our drowsy frame of spirit we are ready to lose many of those glorious visits from above, with which the watchful and praying faints of God are favoured.

4. Peter, charmed with the vision, is for taking up his abode there, and proposes erecting three tabernacles, *not knowing what he said*. The faints of God who have once quitted this miserable abode, wish not again to take up their dwelling here; they have an infinitely nobler place, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

5. Fear seized them, as the bright cloud, the emblem of the divine presence, overspread them, and separated Moses and Elias from their view; but the voice of God silenced their fears, enjoining them with solemn attention to hear and obey his well-beloved Son. If he be with us, and we are following his revealed word, we need not be dismayed by any cloud which may come over us; he will bring us safely through.

6. The apostles kept the vision close, and told no man in these days, as Jesus had commanded them. The relation would meet with readier credence after his resurrection, for which time it was reserved.

5thly, It seems that Jesus and his three disciples continued all night on the mountain. The next day, descending to the multitude, he found his presence greatly needed. The people eagerly ran to him, and the father of a poor paralytic child earnestly besought that help from him, which his disciples had in vain attempted to give. The case was afflictive: he was an only child, and was fearfully torn by the malicious spirit. What a mercy that we are not left without power! what an invaluable privilege that we have the

almighty Jesus near, to whom we can apply, and who is able to save to the uttermost. Rebuking the unbelief of that perverse generation, particularly of the scribes and Pharisees, who began to insult over the disciples, he gives them a convincing proof that his arm is not shortened, nor his power abated. With a word the raging devil is dispossessed, and the child is delivered to his father perfectly cured.

6thly, The works of the Lord are great, and worthy of our admiration.

1. This miracle filled the people with amazement at the mighty power of God. His hand herein evidently appeared. Is any soul recovered from Satan's power? much more may we say, *This is the finger of God*. Though it is through faith, we must ascribe to him all the glory from the beginning to the end.

2. Christ informs the disciples of his approaching sufferings. They were very backward to receive what was so contrary to their ideas of the Messiah's kingdom, and so destructive of the ambitious hopes that they had entertained. Therefore he prefaces his discourse with a solemn warning to them deeply to consider and carefully to remember what he said; but they understood not his meaning, blinded by their prejudices, and afraid to ask him, lest they should be reproached with their dulness, or meet the same reproof as Peter had before received, if they presumed to raise objections. Note; The plainest truths, when we are under the power of prejudice, are mistaken or perverted.

3. All that they heard had no effect upon them to cure their aspiring views. They disputed among themselves as they travelled, who should have the first post of honour in that temporal kingdom which they expected. Jesus knew the subject of their reasoning, and, by a most apposite emblem of a little child, teaches them the only spirit and temper which would make a soul truly great in the eyes of God. So meek, so lowly, so free from ambition, envy, and malice, should they be; delighting in, and receiving with warmest affection, all who shewed such a childlike temper: and every kindness shewn to such persons, he tells them, he would receive as done to himself; yea, God the Father would regard it with highest approbation, and reward them. Note; (1.) Jesus is the searcher of hearts; our thoughts are known to him; we need keep a strict guard over them. (2.) Nothing is more contrary to the spirit of a disciple of the lowly Jesus, than the affectation of earthly grandeur and the pride of life.

4. Christ checks the party-spirit which appeared in John and others of the disciples. John had forbid one whom he saw casting out devils in the name of Jesus, because he followed not with them; and for this probably expected his Master's approbation: but Christ saith, *Forbid him not, for he that is not against us, is for us*. Though he may not join us, if he concur in carrying on the same design, he is to be encouraged rather than silenced. Note; Though others follow not exactly our mode of worship, or refuse to join in our communion, let us not therefore stamp them

labourer is worthy of his hire. <sup>1</sup> Go not from house to house.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set

<sup>1</sup> Phil. 4. 8. Eph. 5. 15. Ch. 9. 4. Mark, 6. 8.

as heretical or schismatic, and oppress or silence them. Do they labour to pull down Satan's kingdom, and spread the favour of the Redeemer's name? then it becomes us therein to rejoice.

7thly, Nothing is more contrary to the spirit of Christianity, which breathes universal love, than the fury of bigotry and the flames of persecution. We have,

1. Our Lord steadfastly setting his face to go to Jerusalem, which was shortly to be the scene of his sufferings. The time was come, when he should go up from Galilee, to return thither no more till after his resurrection: and this may also figurately refer to his ascension, when he should be received up into glory: and, knowing what sorrows awaited him, with unshaken courage and confidence he went forth to meet them. *Note;* (1.) When sufferings for Christ's sake stand in the way of duty, like him we should steadfastly set our face to meet them, and neither fail nor be discouraged. (2.) It is a comfort to look forward to the day when all our present troubles shall have an end, and, if faithful, we shall be *received up* to the place whither Jesus is gone before.

2. As Samaria lay in his way, he sent some of his disciples forward to prepare some refreshment in one of the villages, that he might not be delayed in his journey. But, as there was the most deadly feud between the Jews and the Samaritans about the proper place for worship, each preferring their own—when they perceived that Christ and his disciples were bent for Jerusalem, probably to celebrate the feast of tabernacles there, they were incensed against him for thus preferring the temple in mount Zion to theirs on mount Gerizzim, and therefore refused to grant him or his followers any entertainment among them. *Note;* If we be treated with rudeness and incivility, we must remember that our Master was thus used before us.

3. John and James, fired at this indignity put on their Master, would instantly, with their Lord's permission, have poured vengeance on the place, consuming them with fire from heaven, as Elias did, 2 Kings, i. 9—12. They knew that, if Christ gave them leave, one word would complete the overthrow of the city, and make it as Sodom and Gomorrah. But he rebukes their fiery spirit, and says, *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.* They seemed to be actuated by zeal for his glory, but really were under the influence of pride, passion, and revenge. How different from that spirit of peace, love, patience, and forbearance, which his gospel breathed! *for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, by making his enemies monuments of vengeance, but to save them;* not only by miracles of healing to cure their bodies, but by all meekness and long-suffering, and every mild and endearing method of grace, to work upon their hearts, and melt them with these coals of love heaped upon them. *Note;* (1.) Many good men have been sometimes carried away by false zeal, and did not perceive the malignity and selfish passions which lurked under the guise of that zeal for God. (2.)

The examples of former faints are not to be pleaded as precedents, unless the cases be parallel, and we have the same warrant and authority under which they acted. (3.) The religion of Jesus is never to be propagated by fire and sword, but by soft persuasion, and every work and labour of love. Force may make men hypocrites: choice alone can make them Christians.

4. Christ hereupon patiently put up the affront, and quietly went with his disciples to another village, where they met a more hospitable reception. *Note;* To conquer our own spirit, is a greater victory than to lay our bitterest enemy at our feet.

8thly, They who would follow Christ, must count the cost, and be ready, without hesitation, to part with all for his sake. We have,

1. The offer of one who, expecting the Messiah was about to set up his kingdom, professes his zeal to serve him, in hopes that he shall be well rewarded for it. But Christ undeceives him. He would meet with none of the honours that he expected, but, on the contrary, innumerable hardships of which he seemed not to be aware. The Son of man, so far from providing for his followers, was more destitute than the foxes of the desert or the fowls of heaven, having neither house nor home. So poor, for our sakes, he became, to teach us contentment in the lowest station of life; never to aspire at this world's greatness: patiently to submit to every want that we may be called to endure; to expect tribulations; and look for no rest below, till the day comes that we shall rest in the dust, and then enter into the kingdom of God in glory.

2. Another, called to follow Christ, wanted to make excuse, and solicits a delay, urging piety towards an aged parent, and desiring to perform the last offices to him before he commenced Christ's constant follower. But Christ denies his request: a more urgent duty lay upon him: there were enough of dead sinners to bury the dead corpse; while he, as a living soul, was wanted to preach the everlasting gospel. *Note;* (1.) Delays are dangerous: many a soul has been lost by plausible excuses for withdrawing from present duty, and putting off the concerns of eternity to a more convenient season. (2.) Religion teaches us to shew piety at home, and to requite our parents; but, if the dearest relations in life would divert us from the service of Jesus and his gospel, then we must leave father and mother to follow the Master's call, and shew our obedience to his commands.

3. A third person makes a voluntary tender of his service to Christ, and only begs that he may first bid adieu to his friends, and settle his worldly affairs. But Christ, who saw that his heart was entangled with worldly things, lets him know the impossibility of uniting the incompatible services of God and mammon. *No man, having laid his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.* While he hankers after the world, and parts from it with reluctance, he will not heartily discharge the gospel ministry. *Note;* (1.) Worldly things are the most dangerous

before you:

9 And <sup>1</sup> heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11 "Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: <sup>2</sup> notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12 But I say unto you, that <sup>3</sup> it shall be

more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.

13 ¶ <sup>4</sup> Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago <sup>5</sup> repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14 <sup>6</sup> But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

15 And thou, Capernaum, <sup>7</sup> which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

16 <sup>8</sup> He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 9. 1. John, 14. 12. <sup>2</sup> Mat. 3. 2. & 4. 17. Titus, 2. 11. Rom. 10. 8. If. 9. 7. & 2. 2-4. Dan. 2. 44. <sup>3</sup> Mat. 10. 14. Mark. 6. 11. Ch. 9. 5. Acts, 13. 51. & 18. 6. & 20. 26. & 22. 18. Neh. 5. 13. <sup>4</sup> Acts, 2. 36. & 3. 26. Rom. 10. 8. Titus, 2. 11. Ver. 9. <sup>5</sup> Mark. 6. 11. Mat. 10. 15. & 11. 20-24. John, 15. 22-24. Heb. 6. 4-8. & 10. 26-31. 1 Theff. 2. 16. <sup>6</sup> Mat. 11. 20-24. Ezek. 3. 6, 7. with If. xxiii. Ezek. xxvii-xviii, <sup>7</sup> 1 Kings, 21. 27, 29. Jon. 3. 10. <sup>8</sup> Ch. 12. 47, 48. Amos, 3. 2. Heb. 6. 4-3. & 10. 26-31. <sup>9</sup> 2 Peter, 2. 20-22. <sup>10</sup> Gen. 11. 4. Deut. 7. 28. If. 14. 13. Ezek. 26. 20. & 32. 18, 23. Jer. 51. 53. Lam. 4. 6. Mat. 11. 23, 24. Ch. 12. 48. <sup>11</sup> Ch. 9. 48. Mat. 10. 40. & 18. 5. Exod. 16. 18. Numb. 14. 2, 11, 17. & 16. 11. Mark, 9. 37. John, 5. 22, 23. & 12. 44. & 13. 20. & 14. 21. 1 Theff. 4. 8.

CHAP. X.

*Ver. 1, 2. After these things the Lord appointed*] The scene of Christ's ministry being from this time forth to lie in Judea, and the country beyond Jordan, it was expedient that his way should be prepared in every city and village of those countries whither he was to come: he therefore sent out seventy of his disciples on this work, mentioning the particular places which he intended to visit, and in which they were to preach; whereas the twelve had been allowed to go where they pleased, provided they confined their ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. St. Luke is the only evangelist who has given us this account of Christ's sending out the seventy; and it is the less to be wondered at, that he should do it so particularly, if the ancient tradition be true, which is generally believed, that he himself was one of the number. It is remarkable, that our Lord assigns the same reason for the mission of the seventy, which he had assigned for the mission of the twelve disciples. The harvest was plenteous in Judea and Peræa, as well as in Galilee, and the labourers there also were few. See Matth. ix. 37, 38.

*Ver. 4. And salute no man by the way.*] The instructions given to the seventy on this occasion, were nearly the same with those delivered to the twelve; concerning which, see the notes on Matth. xiii. Only he ordered the seventy to spend no time in saluting such persons as they met on the road, the time assigned them for going through the cities being but short. The phrase *salute no man by the way*, implies the greatest dispatch, as is evident from 2 Kings, 19. 29. For the eastern salutations were exceedingly tedious, consisting of long wishes of happiness to the person

saluted, and of very particular inquiries concerning his welfare.

*Ver. 6. If the S.n of peace be there,*] That is, "If the master of the house be a virtuous well-disposed person, and receive you kindly, your peace shall rest upon it: your blessing, which ye gave at your entrance, shall, by my power, be made effectual to that purpose." See Matth. x. 12.

*Ver. 7. Such things as they give:*] As they have.

*Ver. 13, 14. Woe unto thee, Chorazin!*] Having mentioned the punishment of those cities which should reject his ministers, it naturally introduced the state and punishment of the cities where he himself had preached most frequently, namely, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum; for, notwithstanding he had often resided in those cities, and performed many miracles before the inhabitants of them, they had continued impenitent; wherefore, because he was never to preach to them any more, and because he knew how great their punishment would be—in the overflowing tenderness of his soul, he affectionately lamented their obstinacy, which he foresaw would draw upon them the heaviest judgments. This part of his discourse too was well calculated to comfort the seventy under the ill usage they might meet with. The preaching of Christ himself had often been unacceptable, and unsuccessful to many of his hearers, and therefore they had the less cause to be surprised, if theirs should prove so likewise. Considering the affectionate temper of our Lord, it is no wonder that he should renew his lamentation over those unhappy places where he had so intimately conversed; and that he should do it in such words as these, so well calculated to alarm and impress all that should hear or read them. Would to God they might now have their due weight with those, who might pass them over too slightly when they occurred before! Matth. xi. 20, &c. Would to God that every impenitent creature who reads them might know, that the sentence of his own condemnation is now before his eyes!

that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

17 ¶ And the <sup>7</sup> seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

18 And he said unto them, I beheld <sup>2</sup> Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

19 Behold, <sup>a</sup> I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because <sup>b</sup> your names are written in heaven.

21 ¶ In that hour Jesus <sup>c</sup> rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, <sup>d</sup> Lord of

heaven and earth, that thou <sup>e</sup> hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

22 \* <sup>f</sup> All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and <sup>g</sup> he to whom the Son will reveal *him*.

23 ¶ And he turned him unto *his* disciples, and said privately, <sup>h</sup> Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 9. Ch. 9. 1. Rom. 16. 20. 1 John, 3. 8. <sup>b</sup> John, 12. 31. & 16. 11. Heb. 1. 14. Rev. 12. 8, 9. & 20. 10. 1 John, 3. 8. <sup>c</sup> Pf. 91. 13. 11. 8. Mark, 16. 18. Acts, 28. 5. Rom. 16. 20. <sup>d</sup> Exod. 32. 32. 11. 4. 3. Heb. 12. 27. Daniel, 12. 1. Phil. 4. 3. Rev. 13. 8. & 21. 27. <sup>e</sup> Ch. 15. 6, 9, 24, 32. 11. 62. 5. Zeph. 3. 17. <sup>f</sup> Pi. 24. 1. 11. 66. 1. <sup>g</sup> See Mat. 11. 25. & 13. 35. Pf. 25. 8, 9, 14. 11. 29. 14. & 32. 4. & 44. 18. 1 Cor. 1. 19, 21, 26. & 2. 6. 7. 2 Cor. 3. 14. & 4. 3. <sup>h</sup> Many ancient copies add these words: *And turning to his disciples, he said.* <sup>i</sup> Mat. 11. 27. & 23. 18. Pf. 8. 8. Heb. 2. 8. John, 1. 18. & 3. 35. & 5. 27. & 6. 46. & 10. 15. & 13. 3. & 14. 8, 9. & 17. 2. 1 Cor. 15. 27. Eph. 1. 21, 22. Phil. 2. 9—11. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 13. 16, 17. & 16. 16, 17. Ch. 2. 30. John, 20. 29.

*Ver. 17, 18. Lord, even the devils are subject unto us.]* From the manner in which the seventy speak of this latter exertion of their power, it would appear to have been what they did not expect when they set out; for though Jesus had given them power to *heal diseases*, ver. 9. he had said nothing of their *casting out demons*. Our Lord's reply may be paraphrased thus, to retain its force and beauty: "*He said to them, I know it; for I myself saw Satan the great prince of these demons, falling like lightning from heaven, on his first transgression; and well remember how immediate and dreadful his ruin was: and I foresee, in spirit, that renewed and swift victory, of which this present success of yours is an earnest, which the preaching of the Gospel shall shortly gain over all these rebel powers, who, even in their highest strength and glory, were so incapable of opposing the arm of God.*" We may observe further, that *to be exalted into heaven*, signifies to be raised to great powers and privileges, and particularly to sovereign dominion; to *fall from heaven* therefore may signify to lose one's dominion and pre-eminence. The devils, by the idolatry of the Gentiles, and the wickedness of the Jews, had been exalted into heaven, and ruled mankind in opposition to the dominion of God; but by the preaching of the gospel their power was to be destroyed in every country.

*Ver. 19. Behold, I give unto you power, &c.]* *To tread on serpents* is a proverbial expression, which signifies victory over enemies; accordingly it is added, *and over all the power of the enemy*. Though these words, in the primary sense, imply, that the apostles should be preserved from these noxious creatures, as one of them literally was, (compare Acts, xxviii. 5. and Mark, xvi. 18.) yet they seem to have likewise a secondary sense, and to be a prediction that the disciples should obtain a complete victory over the infernal

spirits in general; the devil himself being frequently mentioned in scripture, in allusion to the fall, under the appellation of *the old serpent*. If we consider how great an instrument of idolatry the *serpent* has been in all ages, it will add some weight to this opinion. There is no need to prove the fact; it is well known what the case was in Egypt, in the eastern countries, in Greece and Rome, and elsewhere. This species of idolatry, however it came there, was found in America, upon the first discovery of that country. Garcilasco del' Viga, who wrote the History of the *Incas* of Peru, tells us that the Spaniards forcing into the recess of one of their temples, found there the image of a great dragon, placed as the deity of the temple, and the object of religious worship. Other instances in abundance might be produced, from ancient as well as modern history. When we reflect how extensive this kind of idolatry has been, how it has spread over the whole world, we may judge; perhaps, that the first prophesy has been more literally accomplished than has been generally supposed; and that the old serpent, in his old form with his seed, and the Son of man, the seed of the woman, have been in perfect enmity, and will be, till the time appointed comes for destroying the power of the evil one; *when the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, shall be cast into, and confined for ever in the lake of fire and brimstone*. See the notes on Gen. iii.

*Ver. 20. Because your names are written in heaven.]* Not by an absolute decree, but approved and accepted of God, on account of their faith and sincerity. Many are of opinion, that this is an allusion to the enrolment of the citizens' names in a register, by which their right to the privileges of citizenship was acknowledged by the community. It seems most probable, that when the seventy disciples were returned, Jesus was surrounded with a great multitude

25 ¶ And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, <sup>b</sup> Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life ?

26 He said unto him, <sup>i</sup> What is written in the law ? how readest thou ?

27 And he answering said, <sup>k</sup> Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and

with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind ; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right : <sup>l</sup> this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, <sup>m</sup> willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour ?

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 19. 16. & 23. 35. Mark, 10. 17. & 12. 28. <sup>b</sup> If. 8. 20. John, 5. 39. Gal. 4. 21. <sup>c</sup> Deut. 6. 5. & 10. 12. & 30. 6. Prov. 23. 26. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 21. 37. 39. Mark, 12. 30. 31. 1 Tim. 1. 5. 1 Cor. xiii. Lev. 19. 18. Rom. 13. 9. Gal. 5. 14. James. 2. 8. 1 John, 3. 18. <sup>e</sup> Lev. 18. 5. <sup>f</sup> Lev. 20. 11. Mat. 19. 17. Gal. 3. 12. Rom. 10. 5. & 3. 19, 10. Neh. 9. 29. <sup>g</sup> Ch. 16. 15. & 18. 9—11. Rom. 10. 3. Mat. 5. 42.

multitude of people ; this may be gathered at least from ver. 23. where, after having spoken publicly to the seventy, we are told that he turned unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed, &c. The happiness here praised, was enjoyed in the same sense by the seventy, as by the twelve, and consequently it was as fit that they should be made sensible of its greatness, as that the twelve should understand it. Besides, this declaration, as well as what was spoken more publicly, was designed to moderate the joy which the seventy had conceived on finding the devils subject to them. These things shew, that what our Lord said privately to his disciples, was said to the seventy, as well as to the twelve. If so, he was now attended by the multitude ; which is the more necessary to observe, as it accounts for the behaviour of the lawyer in the subsequent verses.

Ver. 25—28. And, behold, a certain lawyer] If the connection with which St. Luke introduces the subsequent transaction implies that it happened immediately after what goes before in the history, it took its rise in the following manner : A doctor of the law, who it seems made one of the multitude which attended Jesus when the seventy returned, having listened to what he said to his disciples in private, concerning their enjoyment of a happiness which many prophets and kings had desired in vain to obtain,—(namely that of seeing his miracles, and of hearing his sermons,) thought that he would make trial of that great wisdom which he said he possessed, by proposing to him one of the most important questions which it is possible for the human mind to examine, namely, what a man must do to inherit eternal life ? For, that he asks the question, not from a sincere desire to know his duty, but merely to try our Lord's knowledge, is evident from the text. And further, he had probably an insidious design to ensnare him ; for the question having been decided by Jewish doctors, if Christ had answered differently, he might have been accused of heresy. Jesus, alluding to the lawyer's profession, made answer, by inquiring of him what he was taught on that point ? And perhaps when our Lord says, how readest thou ? he alludes to the daily service of the Jews, as appears more probable from the reply the scribe makes ; the words thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c. being then, and continuing still, to be daily performed in the morning service of the synagogues ; though it is probable, that the last clause, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, is omitted by them. But see on Matth. xxii.

interpreters are not agreed in the meaning of these words ; for it does not appear what occasion he had for any justification of himself : no accusation had been brought against him ; nobody had charged him with any neglect or contempt of the law ; so far otherwise, that our Lord had commended his wife answer, and promised him life, if he had immaculately obeyed the terms which he himself had proposed, ver. 28. Besides, it does not presently appear how any justification of himself could arise out of this question, or any answer that might be given to it. What fault did he mean to excuse, by asking, Who is my neighbour ? or how did his virtue or innocence depend upon the answer which should be returned to this inquiry ? These difficulties therefore have led interpreters into different sentiments ; but without examining their opinions, the following is proposed, as appearing the most true, because the most easy and natural exposition of the passage. This lawyer came to our Lord, and, tempting him, said, What shall I do to inherit eternal life ? Our Lord returns him to the law for an answer to his question, saying, What readest thou ? He readily answers, That in the law he found, that he was to love the Lord his God with all his heart, &c. and his neighbour as himself. This account our Saviour approves ; and adds, that if he had practised the law with immaculate obedience, he was in no danger : This do, and thou shalt live. But in this point, relating to practice, the lawyer well knew how this precept in particular of loving our neighbour had been loaded with exceptions and limitations by the Jewish doctors, and that he had never esteemed any body to be his neighbour, who was not of the same blood, and who did not profess the same religion with himself ; for which reasons he hated many, who, according to the letter, were his neighbours, as the Samaritans were, who dwelt very near, but were the aversion of every Jew, being esteemed as the corrupters of the faith and true religion. Since therefore eternal life depended, according to his system, upon his immaculate obedience to the law, as he had heard from our Saviour ; he very properly puts the question to our Lord, And who is my neighbour ? For had our Lord determined in favour of the Jewish interpretation, and told him that those only were his neighbours who were of the same stock and family, and who worshipped God in the same manner that he did, the lawyer would have thought himself justified in his practice : but when our Saviour had forced him into a confession that even the Samaritan was his neighbour, he stood condemned by his own sentence, and by the example of the Samaritan, which he had approved ; and was sent away with

29. But he, willing to justify himself, &c.] Inter-

30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 ° And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain <sup>p</sup> Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set

<sup>°</sup> Gen. 3. 1—6. John, 8. 44. Eccl. 7. 29. Rom. 3. 25. <sup>°</sup> Pf. 142. 4. Acts, 4. 12. Jer. 3. 23, 24. Rom. 3. 19, 20. & 8. 3. & 9. 31, 32. & 10. 3. Gal. 3. 21, 22. & 4. 24. Heb. 10. 1, 2. & 7. 15. & 9. 9. <sup>p</sup> Acts, 10. 28. Ch. 9. 52, 53. John, 4. 9. & 8. 48. with Heb. 2. 17, 18. & 4. 15. Mat. 1. 21. & 18. 11. & 20. 28.

with this short but full reproof and admonition, *Go, and do thou likewise*. The words, thus expounded, shew upon what motives men act, and what it is that prejudices their minds in the interpretation of God's law: they are willing to justify themselves, and therefore employ all their force and skill to make the command countenance their practice, and to speak such language only as may be consistent with their inclinations. But a truly religious man endeavours by the aid of almighty grace to bend all his passions and inclinations towards the commands, and to make them intirely submissive to it. And he knows that he can do nothing without Christ, that every thing truly good springs from his grace and Holy Spirit; and to him he ascribes all the glory of his salvation. He pleads nothing for his justification and acceptance before God but the merit of his Saviour's blood, and shouts Grace, grace, even to the laying of the top-stone. But of all this the lawyer was perfectly ignorant.

Ver. 30. *And Jesus, answering, said, A certain man, &c.* Our Lord, who well knew how to convince and persuade, answered the scribe in such a manner as to make the feelings of his heart overcome the prejudices of his understanding. He convinced him of the mistake that he had imbibed, by a *parable*; an ancient, agreeable, and inoffensive method of conveying instruction, very fit to be used in teaching persons who were prejudiced against the truth; and certainly nothing could be more amiable in the manner, and more pertinent to the purpose, than the parable which our Lord here delivers. Jericho was seated in a valley; whence we perceive the propriety of the phrase *went down from Jerusalem, &c.* This circumstance is finely chosen; for so many robberies and murders were committed on this road, which lay through a kind of wilderness, that Jerome tells us it was called *הַרְמִים Edmim—The bloody way*. As Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem when he uttered this parable, it is not improbable that he was nigh to the place where the scene of it is laid; a circumstance which could not fail of making a strong impression on the audience, and which sets the whole parable in a very beautiful light. The phrase *παράχρως ἰπιβύτες*, which we render *wounded him*, strongly implies that these robbers [ἄσραις] did so with great barbarity, laying on stroke upon stroke, and wound upon wound.

Ver. 31. *And by chance* Κατὰ συγκυρίαν. Dr. Gill says, this word may as well be derived from the word *συ* and *Κυριος* the Lord, as from *συγκυριον*, to happen; and so we

may render the words, *by divine Providence*. The propriety of the circumstance of the priest and Levite coming that way, will become more evident, if we consider that a very numerous body of priests and Levites dwelt at this time in Jericho. The word ἀντιπαρήλαθεν, which we render in this and the following verse, *passed by on the other side*, might with more propriety be rendered simply in both places, *passed by*.

Ver. 32. *Came, and looked on him,*] Came nearer and took a leisurely and attentive survey of the case; which seems to be the import of the words *ἔλθων και ἰδων*.

Ver. 33. *But a certain Samaritan,*] Though the priest and Levite had passed by their distressed brother, a Samaritan, who happened to come by that way, shewed a different example: seeing a fellow-creature lying on the road, naked and wounded, he went up to him; and though he found it was one of a different nation, who professed a religion opposite to his own, nevertheless, the violent hatred which had been instilled into his mind from his earliest years towards all who professed that religion, with every other objection, was immediately silenced by the feelings of pity, awakened at the sight of the man's distress. His bowels yearned towards the Jew; he hastened with great tenderness to give him assistance. Some writers tell us, that the hatred between the Jews and Samaritans rose so high, that if a Jew and a Samaritan met in a narrow way, they were exceedingly solicitous that they might pass without touching each other, for fear of pollution on either side. This circumstance serves as a beautiful illustration of the humanity of this good Samaritan, who not only touched the Jew, but took so much pains to dress his wounds, and set him on his own beast; supporting him in his arms as he rode, as well as making such kind provision for him in the inn. It seems this humane traveller, according to the custom of those times, carried his provisions along with him, (see the next note,) for he was able, though in the fields, to give the wounded man some wine to recruit his spirits: moreover, he carefully bound up his wounds, soaking the bandages with a mixture of wine and oil, which he poured on them, and which is of a medicinal quality; and then, setting him on his own beast, he walked by him, and supported him. As the Jew was stripped by the robbers, it is probable that the Samaritan used some of his own garments for the binding up of his wounds, which was a further instance of his goodness;—perhaps tearing them to make a more convenient bandage. The reader will find

him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.  
35 And on the morrow, when he departed,

he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more,

11. 11. 10. Prov. 9. 1-5. Mat. 16. 18. Heb. 12. 22-24. Fifteen pence sterling. Mat. 20. 2. 1 Cor. 12. 28. & 4. 1, 2. Eph. 4. 11.  
1 Cor. 3. 5. 1 Cor. 15. 58. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

an account of the use which the ancients made of wine and oil for dressing fresh wounds, in Bos's Exercitations, p. 24. and Wolfius on the text.

Ver. 34. Brought him to an inn,] In ancient times travellers used to carry their provisions along with them, because there were no inns for the entertainment of strangers, but only houses for lodging them; such as the *khanes*, or *karavanferas* in the eastern countries are to this day. These, as travellers tell us, consist of a capacious square, on all sides of which are a number of rooms on a ground floor, used occasionally for chambers, warehouses, and stables. Above stairs there is a colonnade, or gallery, on every side of which are the doors of a number of small rooms, wherein the merchants, as well strangers as natives, transact most of their business. In these *karavanferas* travellers can sometimes purchase straw and provender for their horses, mules, or other beasts, though, generally speaking, they supply them with nothing but rooms to lodge in. The *Πανδοχείον*, or *inn* here mentioned, was of this kind; for the Samaritan, while he was there, furnished the wounded Jew with all things necessary out of his own stores, and only committed him to the care of the innkeeper when he went away. We have two instances in scripture of the custom now mentioned. See Judges, xix. 19. Dr. Shaw, in the Preface to his Travels, p. 14. mentions another sort of inn, called *connack*: this, he says, denotes the place itself, whether covered or not, where travellers, or caravans halt, to refresh themselves and their beasts. Thus the *malon* or *inn*, Gen. xlii. 27. xliii. 21. where the sons of Jacob opened their sacks to give their asses provender, was no other than one of these resting-places. In the parable it is the other sort of inn that is mentioned, as is plain from its having an innkeeper, which the *connack* in the deserts of Arabia has not.

Ver. 35. And—he took out two pence,] The value of two denarii was about fifteen pence sterling; and from the smallness of the sum, it is reasonable to conclude that this charitable man was but poor: if so, this circumstance greatly enhances his kindness to the Jew. It is a very probable circumstance, that a man travelling without any attendance, and now going out to a considerable distance from home, could not have more to spare, especially as he was to travel through so dangerous a road; and so it would have been very imprudent to charge himself with much more money than he was likely to want in his journey; which would be the less, because travellers, as we have shewn in the preceding note, used in those countries to carry their baggage with them. Compare Gen. xxviii. 18. and Gen. xix. 12, 13. Another circumstance of the Samaritan's kindness is observable, in his becoming answerable for the whole expences incident to the man's unhappy case: *Neither thou spendest more, &c.* It seems as if he was that the mercenary temper of the host might have prevented him from furnishing what was necessary, if he had any prospect of being repaid. Indeed all the circum-

stances of this beautiful parable are formed with the finest skill imaginable, to work the conviction designed; so that had the lawyer been ever so much disposed to reckon none as his neighbours but men of his own religion, it was not in his power to do it on this occasion. And although favours from a Samaritan had always been represented to him as an abomination more detestable even than the eating of swine's flesh, he was obliged to acknowledge, that not the priest or the Levite, but this Samaritan, by discharging a great office of genuine charity towards the Jew in distress, was truly his neighbour, and deserved his love more than some of his own nation, who sustained the most venerable characters; that the like charity was due from any Israelite to any Samaritan who stood in need of it; and that all men are neighbours to all men, how much soever they may be distinguished from one another in respect of country, or kindred, or language, or religion. Mankind are intimately knit together by their common wants and weaknesses, being so formed that they cannot live without the assistance of each other. And therefore the relation which subsists between them is as extensive as their natures; and the obligations under which they lie to aid one another by mutual good offices are as strong and urgent as every man's own manifold necessities. By this admirable parable, therefore, our Lord has powerfully recommended that universal benevolence which is so familiar in the mouths, but foreign to the hearts, of many hypocritical pretenders to religion and morality. It would appear that the presumption of the Jews in matters of religion exceeded all bounds; for though the Supreme Being pays very little regard to outward worship, and is much more delighted with the inward homage of a holy and benevolent mind, yet, because they prayed daily in his temple, and offered sacrifices there, and carried about his precepts written on their phylacteries, and had God and the law always in their mouths, they made no doubt that they worshipped God acceptably, notwithstanding they were so enormously wicked, that they would not put themselves to the smallest expence or trouble, though they could have saved life by it; and therefore had no real love to God or their neighbour. This monstrous presumption being utterly subversive of true religion, our Lord thought fit to condemn it, in the severest manner, and to brand it with the blackest, and most lasting note of infamy, in this charming parable. We may justly observe, that as Jesus was now in Samaria, he shewed great tenderness, as well as justice, in assigning the benevolent charitable character in the parable, to a native of this country. A fine writer well observes, that nothing can be more judiciously circumstanced than the principal figure in this piece. "Had the calamity befallen a Samaritan, it would have made but feeble impressions of pity, and those, perhaps, immediately effaced by stronger emotions of hate. But when it was a Jew that lay bleeding to death, the representation

" was

when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou,

was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

“ was sure to interest the hearer in the distress, and  
 “ awaken a tender concern. Had the *relief* been admi-  
 “ nistered by a *Jew*, the benevolence would have shone,  
 “ but in a much fainter light; whereas, when it came  
 “ from the hands of a *Samaritan*, whom all the Jews had  
 “ agreed to abjure, to execrate, and to rank with the very  
 “ fiends of hell: how bright,—how charmingly and irre-  
 “ sistibly bright,—was the lustre of *such* charity! Let the  
 “ reader consider the temper expressed in that *rancorous*  
 “ reflection,—*Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil*, John,  
 “ viii. 48.—Let him compare that inveterate malevolence,  
 “ with the *benign* and compassionate spirit of our amiable  
 “ traveller: then let him say, whether he ever beheld a  
 “ finer or a bolder contrast? Whether, upon the whole,  
 “ he ever saw the ordonnance of descriptive painting more  
 “ justly designed, or more happily executed? I would  
 “ beg leave to observe farther, that the virulent animosity  
 “ of the *Jew* discovers itself even in the lawyer’s reply,  
 “ *He that shewed mercy on him*. He will not so much as  
 “ name the *Samaritan*, especially in a case where he could  
 “ not be named without an honourable distinction. So  
 “ strongly marked, and so exactly preserved, are the man-  
 “ ners or distinguishable qualities of each person in the  
 “ sacred narrations!” It may be proper just to observe,  
 “ after having given a *literal* interpretation of this parable,  
 “ that many writers, ancient and modern, have also given a  
 “ *spiritual* interpretation of it; which, it must be acknow-  
 “ ledged, is not only extremely ingenious, but very in-  
 “ structive, and certainly can be attended with no ill effects,  
 “ while the literal meaning is preserved and adhered to:  
 “ however, in the present commentary, having in general  
 “ refrained from interpretations of that kind, I shall only sub-  
 “ join a brief exposition of the parable in this way, as given  
 “ us by Dr. Stanhope, whose judgment was certainly as  
 “ mature, as his piety was indisputable. “ This account,”  
 “ say he, “ is a most lively representation of the merciful  
 “ and loving Jesus. He was the good *Samaritan* indeed,  
 “ who found poor human nature wounded and bruised,  
 “ left more than half dead, and stript of all its valuable  
 “ perfections, by the merciless robber and adversary of  
 “ souls. His bowels yearned over our distressed condition;  
 “ and when neither the *Levitical law*, nor the sacrifices  
 “ offered by *Jewish priests*, had administered any comfort  
 “ or relief, He came, a stranger, from his blessed dwelling,  
 “ kindly made towards us, bound up our wounds and  
 “ bruises, poured out his soul unto the death, and applied  
 “ the sovereign balm of his own Blood. He took us up,  
 “ and removed us away into a more saving dispensation,  
 “ and has made a perfect atonement for our sins, at the  
 “ expence of many miracles, and mighty condescensions,  
 “ and infinite hardships and sufferings to himself. His  
 “ occasions indeed would not allow him to stay with us till  
 “ all the effects of his goodness were accomplished; but  
 “ he has committed us into safe hands; he has sent his  
 “ Holy Spirit to us, even the Comforter, and has not left  
 “ us orphans: he has given commission for a constant  
 “ supply of spiritual sustenance and remedies; which those

“ who distribute faithfully, he will certainly, when he comes  
 “ again, repay; and those who receive regularly, thank-  
 “ fully, and perseveringly, he will as certainly heal and  
 “ nourish unto life eternal. And ought not such a pattern  
 “ as this to have the weight of ten thousand arguments  
 “ with us? How can *they* grudge suitable expressions of  
 “ love to *their brethren* in distress, who at all remember  
 “ what the *Son of God* did not, in their utmost, their de-  
 “ sperate extremity, esteem too much to do for *them*?  
 “ Who can have the confidence to think himself excused  
 “ towards those of a differing judgment, or disobliging beha-  
 “ viour, or most wrongful malice and spite, when they  
 “ reflect, that *herein* chiefly *God commended his love to-*  
 “ *wards us*, that *while we were yet sinners*,—the most fa-  
 “ tally mistaken, the worst and most disingenuous of his  
 “ creatures here below, the bitterest and most detestable  
 “ of all enemies,—*Christ died for us*? For which inesti-  
 “ mable benefit and love, all honour and praise, thank-  
 “ giving and obedience be unto *Him*, *who left us an ex-*  
 “ *ample, that herein we should follow his steps*.” See his  
 “ Epistles and Gospels, vol. iii. p. 436.

*Ver. 36. Which now of these three, &c.]* Great pains  
 have been taken by some, so to adjust this case, as that it  
 might yield a proper answer to the lawyer’s question.  
 He asked, *Who is my neighbour?* That is, “ Who am I  
 “ obliged to love as myself?” So that our Lord, say  
 they, ought to have determined the extent and right of  
 neighbourhood, and thence deduced the obligations of  
 love and assistance: whereas, the case supposes the love  
 and assistance, and thence infers the relation of neighbour-  
 hood. The *priest* and the *Levite* were not neighbours, be-  
 cause they did not assist the wounded man: the *Samaritan*  
 was his neighbour, because he shewed kindness to him.  
 And if this be so, that no man is our neighbour, till we  
 have either shewed or received kindness from him, we can-  
 not then from the right of neighbourhood infer the obli-  
 gations of love; but must determine, from the mutual  
 exercise of love, the notion and extent of neighbourhood.  
 And if this be the case, no man can offend against the  
 law of loving his neighbour; for if *none* are our neighbours  
 but those whom we love, then every man certainly loves his  
 neighbour. But if we consider the case fairly, and view it  
 in its due light, this supposed difficulty will vanish. The  
 question was asked by the lawyer out of a desire to justify  
 himself. He had learned to call no man his neighbour who  
 was not of the same stock and religion with himself:  
 Samaritans he expressly hated, and justified his hatred  
 because they were dissenters from the true worship, and  
 despisers of the temple at Jerusalem. This great error  
 our Lord was to wrest from him, which was not to be  
 done by combating his prejudices, and arguing upon the  
 true sense and meaning of the law: the lawyer, not unac-  
 customed to such exercises, would have held up the dispute,  
 and stood resolute against any such convictions. Our Sa-  
 viour therefore puts him a case; and states it so, that his  
 prejudices were all shut out, and could have no influence  
 in the determination. A Jew therefore is put into the

37 And he said, " He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, " Go,

and do thou likewise.

38 ¶ Now it came to pass, as they went,

\* Heb. 2. 10-16. 2 Cor. 8. 9. Mat. 20. 28. Eph. 5. 2. Rev. 1. 5, 6. \* Mat. 5. 42-48. Rom. 12. 17-21.

to him that he  
place of distress: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves. Here could be no exception taken against the person. Had the Samaritan been placed in the same case, and his calamities painted in the most moving colours, he would have found no pity from the Jew, who would have excepted to his religion, and thought himself very much in the right to have been an enemy to the enemy of God: but, when one of his own nation was represented in misery, he saw reason in every thing that was done for his relief. A priest and a Levite are said to pass by and neglect him: these persons stood in all those relations to the distressed, which the lawyer owned to be the just bonds and ties of neighbourhood: they were of his kindred, and they met at the same altar to worship the same God; he could not therefore but condemn their want of bowels to their brother. A Samaritan is represented as passing by, and shewing the greatest tenderness and compassion to the poor Jew. This could not but be approved: even the prejudice of the lawyer carried him in these circumstances to a right judgment; for knowing how inveterately the Jew hated the Samaritan, he could not but the more admire and approve the Samaritan's kindness to the Jew. Upon this case our Lord puts him to determine which was neighbour to the man in distress; or, which is the same thing, which of the three acted most agreeably to the law of God, commanding that we should love our neighbour as ourself? The lawyer answers, He that shewed mercy; confessing that the Samaritan had fulfilled the law, which was condemning the Jewish exposition, and his own prejudices. For if a Jew was rightly forbidden to shew kindness to a Samaritan, because of the difference in religion between them, the same reason made it unlawful for a Samaritan to assist a Jew. Our Saviour approves his judgment, and bids him only apply it to himself, Go thou, and do likewise; that is, " Since you command the Samaritan for acting like a neighbour to the Jew, do you learn to act like a neighbour to the Samaritan;" for this is the true force of the word likewise. For a Jew to be kind to a Jew only, is not to do like the good Samaritan, who was kind, not to a Samaritan only, but to a Jew also. And thus, we see, the case led to a full determination of the question proposed, and shewed that no restrictions were to be laid upon the law of God; that even those whom the lawyer accounted as his worst enemies, the very Samaritans, were intitled to the benefit of it, and ought to be treated with the love and kindness which is due to our neighbours.

Ver. 37. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, &c.] What a lively picture have we in this parable, of the most disinterested and active benevolence!—A benevolence, which includes no person, not even strangers or enemies, from tender regards! which disdains no condescension, judges no cost, in its labours of love! Could any method of conviction have been more forcible, and at the same time more pleasing, than the interrogatory proposed by our Lord, and deduced from the history, ver. 36.? or

can there be an advice more suitable to the occasion, more important in its nature, or expressed with a more sententious energy, than Go, and do thou likewise. In this case the learner instructs, the delinquent condemns himself; bigotry hears away its prejudice; and pride (when the moral so sweetly, so imperceptibly insinuates), even pride itself lends a willing ear to admonition.

From our Lord's conduct in the case, we learn how to apply to the passions and prejudices of men, and by what art truth is best and most successfully introduced, where error has been long in possession. Were it a defect in our reason and understanding that made us disagree, and judge and act differently in cases where we have one and the same rule to go by, no human application could reach the distemper; since it is not in our power to enlarge the faculties which are bounded by God and nature; though the Spirit of God can do wonderful things in this respect. But our reason and our understanding are not in fault; they want only to be set free, and to be delivered from the bondage of passion and prejudice, to judge rightly in cases of morality and natural justice. It is Self which influences the judgment of men, when they obstinately maintain and defend the cause of error or of vice: it is Self that always lies at the bottom: it is not so much the vice as Self that is to be defended; and if you can but separate Self from the vice, (which nothing but the grace of God can do,) the vice will soon be condemned and forsaken. By this honest, this holy art, our Lord convinced the lawyer, who put the question to him, ver. 25. He asked the question, intending that none should be admitted into the number of his neighbours, who were not nearly allied to him, of the same nation at least. Our Saviour states a case to him, and puts it so, that his prejudices were all thrown out and silenced. The consequence was, that he who wanted to exclude almost all mankind from a right to his good offices, in a few minutes owns even the Samaritan, his most hated enemy, to be the Jew's neighbour; and by owning and accepting the Samaritan's good offices done to the Jew under the relation of a neighbour, he confessed the Samaritan's right, in that relation, to expect and receive the good offices of the Jew. Whence we may draw the following consequences: 1. It is evident, that the true art of convincing of their errors men of obstinate prejudices, but of general discernment, is, to throw them as much as possible out of their case; for the less a man is concerned himself, the better he judges. You are not in such instances to stir and fret his prejudices, but to decline them; not to reproach him with the error that you condemn, but to place the error at a sufficient distance from him, that he may have a true light to view it in. We have a remarkable instance of this in the conduct of the prophet Nathan with David. But, after all, unless the sacred influences of divine grace accompany our efforts, no genuine good will ever arise even from the most refined arts of reasoning. 2. When once you find yourself, on such occasions, labouring to justify your actions, and searching for expostions

that he entered into <sup>1</sup> a certain village: and a certain woman named <sup>2</sup> Martha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also <sup>3</sup> sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was <sup>4</sup> cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me

to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art <sup>5</sup> careful and troubled about many things:

42 But <sup>6</sup> one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that <sup>7</sup> good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

<sup>1</sup> Bethany. John, 11. 1. & 12. 1-3. <sup>2</sup> John, 11. 1-45. & 12. 1-3. <sup>3</sup> Mat. 26. 6, 7. <sup>4</sup> Ch. 8. 35. Acts, 22. 3. Deut. 33. 3. Prov. 8. 34. <sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. 7. 32, &c. <sup>6</sup> Mat. 8. 14. & 6. 34. Exod. 18. 18. Ps. 83. 21. <sup>7</sup> Ch. 21. 34. & 8. 14. Mat. 6. 26-34. Phil. 4. 6. 1 Peter, 5. 7. <sup>8</sup> Pf. 27. 4. & 73. 25. & 142. 5. John, 3. 3, 5. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Gal. 6. 15. & 5. 6. Mat. 16. 16. <sup>9</sup> Pf. 16. 5, 6. If. 45. 17. & 55. 3. John, 17. 3. Pf. 73. 24-26. & 142. 5. 1 John, 5. 12.

tions which may suit your own inclinations, you may consider yourself exceedingly far gone from the true liberty of the gospel. 3. If you find yourself involved in the case you are to judge of, instead of seeking for new reasons and arguments whereby to form your opinion, you had much better look back, and reflect what sense you had of this matter before the cause was your own; for it is ten to one but that judgment was much more free and impartial than any that you will make now: or consider, if the case admits it, what is the sense of the truly pious part of mankind; you may more safely trust them than yourself, when your passions are concerned. At least, suppose your enemy in the same circumstances with yourself, and doing what you find yourself inclined to, and consider what judgment you should make of him;—and so judge of yourself.

Ver. 38, 39. *Now it came to pass, &c.] Now, &c. As they journeyed.* Our Lord in his way to Jerusalem, whither he was going to celebrate the feast of dedication, spent a night at Bethany, the village of Martha and Mary, two religious women, sisters of Lazarus. See John, xi. 1. On this occasion Martha expressed her regard for her divine Guest, by the care that she was at in providing the best entertainment in her power for him and his disciples; but Mary, the other sister, sat quietly at his feet, listening to his doctrine. It is well known, that this was the posture in which learners attended on their teachers; (compare chap. viii. 35. and Acts, xxii. 3.) and likewise grew into a proverb for humble and diligent attention. See on ch. ii. 46.

Ver. 40. *But Martha was cumbered.]* The word *περιεσπαστο* properly signifies “to be drawn as it were different ways at the same time,” and admirably expresses the situation of a mind surrounded by so many objects of care, that it hardly knows which to attend to first. She had probably servants, to whom she might have committed these affairs; and the humility and moderation of our blessed Redeemer would have taken up with what had been less exactly prepared; especially as she had so valuable and signal an opportunity of improving her mind in divine knowledge. *Bid her that she help me, is,* “That she lend her helping hand,” according to the exact import of *συνανταλαβηται*, which is also with the utmost propriety used for the assistance which the Spirit of God gives to the infirmities of our frail nature. See Rom. viii. 26.

Ver. 41. *And troubled.]* The word *τρυβαλιη* is no where else used in the New Testament. It seems to express the

situation of a person in a tumultuous crowd, where so many are pressing upon him, that he can scarcely stand his ground;—or, of water in great agitation. See Mintert and Stockius on the word.

Ver. 42. *But one thing is needful:]* “There is one thing absolutely necessary, and of infinitely greater importance than any of those domestic and secular affairs; even the care to have the soul instructed in the saving knowledge of the way that leads to eternal life, and to secure a title to it. *And Mary is wisely attending to this; therefore, instead of reproving her, I must rather declare, that she has chosen what may eminently be called the good part, which shall not be taken away from her,—which I would by no means hinder her from pursuing; but rather invite thee to join with her in attention to it, though the circumstances of the intended meal should not be so exactly adjusted as thy friendship could desire.”* There is a peculiar spirit and tenderness in our Lord’s repetition of Martha’s name, *Martha! Martha!* Nothing can be more frigid than the interpretation given by some of this passage, which certainly contains a most important truth: *Thou art careful and troubled about many dishes, but there is need of one only.* The praise bestowed on Mary, as having chosen a better part than Martha, does not imply that the contemplative life is more acceptable in the sight of God than the active, as the Papists would have us believe: for though it should be granted that the comparison is carried on between the employments of Martha and Mary, as they stand in the sight of God, the conclusion will not follow which they pretend to draw from it. The reason is plain; they are not two courses of life, but two particular actions, which are here compared; in which case nobody will deny, that to hear the word of God as occasion offers, provided we do it with a view to profit by it, is more acceptable in the sight of God, than to exercise any art or occupation relative to the present life; for no other reason, however, but that it tends more to the happiness of the person himself, which is the great end that God has proposed in all his laws and ordinances. In the mean time it may be doubted, whether this be the meaning of the comparison: our Lord designed rather to signify, that though he was not displeased with Martha’s civility, Mary’s listening to his doctrine was more acceptable to him, because he had infinitely greater pleasure in instructing, sanctifying, and saving souls, than in any kind of sensual indulgences whatsoever. As he beautifully expressed

CHAP. XI.

Christ teacheth his disciples to pray, and that instantly; assuring them that God will readily give good things to those who ask him: he casteth out a dumb devil, rebuketh the blasphemous Pharisees; and sheweth who are blessed: preacheth to the people, and reprehendeth the outward show of holiness in the Pharisees, scribes, and lawyers.

[Anno Domini 30.]

AND it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased,

one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us \* day by day our daily bread.

\* Pf. 103. 4. Heb. 5. 7. Ch. 6. 12. & 9. 28. \* John, 13. 13. & 20. 28. Phil. 3. 8. \* Rom. 8. 26. 2 Cor. 3. 5. Pf. 119. 26, 27, &c. \* Hies. 14. 2, 3. Mat. 6. 9—13. \* Mat. 6. 9. If. 63. 16. & 57. 15. & 66. 1. Pf. 8. 1. & 11. 4. & 115. 3. Heb. 8. 1. \* Pf. 8. 1, 9. & 71. 17—19. & 113. 2—5. & cxi—cl. cvii. \* Mat. 4. 17. & 3. 2. Ch. 9. 2. & 10. 9, 11. 11. 2. 2, 5. & liv. 14. & 9. 6, 7. Mat. 23. 18. & 16. 11. \* Mat. 26. 42. Acts, 21. 14. 2 Theff. 3. 1. 2 Sam. 7. 25. Pf. 119. 5. & 103. 20. \* Prov. 30. 8. 1 Tim. 6. 8. John, 6. 33. If. 33. 16. \* Or for the day.

expressed it on another occasion, His meat and his drink was, to do the will of his heavenly Father.

our Saviour never such costly delicacies, or waited on his board never so officiously, yet, had they not listened to his instructions, they would never have bidden him welcome, nor would he so well have liked his entertainment. This was truly the way to feast him;—to feed their ears with his heavenly doctrine: O Saviour, let my soul be thus feasted by thee; do thou thus feast thyself by feeding me: this mutual diet shall be thy praise, and my happiness.

Inferences on our Lord's interview with Martha and Mary. The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; he that had all things, possessed nothing: our Lord was now in his way; the sun might sooner stand still than he; the more we move according to his will, the more we resemble heaven, and God its Maker. His progress was now to Jerusalem, for some holy feast: he whose devotion neglected not any of those sacred solemnities, will not neglect the due opportunities of his bodily refreshment; he knew where a ready welcome awaited him, and retires to the village of Bethany.

Though Martha was for a time an attentive hearer, yet now her care of Christ's entertainment removes her from his audience. Mary sits still: Martha's care is to feast Jesus, Mary's to be feasted of him: good Martha was desirous to express her joy and thankfulness for the presence of so blessed a Guest, by a careful and plenteous entertainment: and who will censure this excess of her solicitude to welcome her Saviour? Doubtless, she herself thought she did well; and, out of that confidence, fears not to complain to Christ of her inactive sister.

There dwelt the two devout sisters, with their brother, his friend Lazarus: their roof receives him: O happy house, into which the Son of God vouchsafed to set his foot! O blessed women, that had the grace to be the hostesses of the God of Heaven! How might we envy your felicity, did we not see the same favour lying open to us also, if we be not wanting to ourselves. We have two ways of entertaining the Saviour:—in his members, and in himself: in his members, by charity and hospitality: for what we do to one of his little ones, we do to him; in himself, by faith:—If any man open, he will come in, and sup with him.

I do not see her come to her sister, and whisper in her ear the great need of her aid; but she comes to Jesus, and in a sort of petulant expostulation, addresses him, (ver. 40.) Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Why did not she rather make the first application to her sister? Was it that she knew Mary's ears were so tied with those adamant chains which issued from Christ's mouth, that till his silence and dismissal she had no power to stir? Or was it out of honour and respect to Christ, that in his presence she would not presume to call off her sister, without his leave?

Martha, it seems, as being the eldest sister, bore the name of the housekeeper; Mary was her assistant in the charge: a blessed pair, sisters not more in nature than in grace, in spirit no less than in flesh. How happy a thing it, when all the parties in a family are jointly agreed to entertain Christ!

We cannot, however, excuse this holy woman from some weaknesses; it was a fault to measure her sister by herself; and, apprehending her own act to be good, to think her sister could not do well, if she acted not alike. It was a fault, that she thought an excessive care for the liberal outward entertainment of Christ, was to be preferred to a diligent attention to his spiritual entertainment of them; and it was a fault, that she presumed, as it were, to question her Saviour, as of a kind of disrespect to her toil:—Lord, dost thou not care?

While his bodily repast is preparing, he prepares spiritual for his hosts: his best cheer was to see them spirituated; how then should they whom he has called to cred function be instant in season, and out of season, his blessed example! They are, by his divine ordinance, the lights of the world: and we know that no candle is lighted, than it communicates the light which it has received, never intermitting, till it be to the snuff.

And yet, surely, Martha, it will be allowed, that thou here wastest not fair pretences for the ground of thy expostulation: Mary, the younger, sits still, while thou art cumbered with much serving: and what work was thine, but

Martha's house is become a school of Divinity. Jesus, doctor, sits in the chair: Martha, Mary, and the rest as disciples at his feet. Had these sisters provided

4 <sup>k</sup> And forgive us our sins; for we also <sup>l</sup> lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from every one that is indebted to us. And from evil.

<sup>k</sup> If. 1. 18. & 43. 25. & 44. 22. Micah, 7. 18, 19. Hosea, 14. 2. Mat. 6. 13, 14. & 18. 35. Eph. 4. 31, 32.

<sup>l</sup> Mat. 26. 41. John. 17. 15.

<sup>1</sup> Cor. 10. 13. <sup>2</sup> Cor. 12. 7, 8. <sup>1</sup> Peter, 5. 8. Rev. 3. 10.

the hospitable reception of thy Saviour and his train?—Not for the gratification of thy own, or any carnal friend's luxury, but for the refreshment of Christ himself, to whom thou couldst never be too obsequious:—all this, however, cannot deliver thee from the just blame of this hasty and petulant complaint. How ready is our weakness, upon every discontentment, to quarrel with our best friend; yea, with our good God; and, the more we are touched, to think ourselves the more neglected, and to challenge heaven for our own neglect!

It could not but trouble devout Mary, to hear her sister's impatient remonstrance.—A remonstrance, urged too with so great vehemency, as if such a strangeness had now subsisted between the two sisters, that the one would do nothing for the other without the compulsion of a superior. And yet, we hear not one word of reply from that modest mouth. O holy Mary, I admire thy patient silence; thy sister now blames thee for thy piety; the disciples (afterwards) blame thee for thy bounty and cost: not a word falls from thee in just vindication of thine honour and innocence; but in a humble taciturnity thou leavest thine answer to thy Saviour. What an admirable lesson is thine for us, when complained of for well-doing, to seal up our lips, and wait our vindication from above!

And how sure and ready is our Lord to speak in the case of the modestly-dumb; *Martha! Martha!* &c. (ver. 41.) What needed Mary to speak for herself, when she had such an advocate? Doubtless, Martha had been in a manner divided from herself with the multiplicity of her anxious thoughts: our Lord therefore doubles her name in his appellation; that thus, amid such distraction, he may both find, and fix her heart: doubtless she fully expected that Christ would have sent away her sister with a check, and herself with thanks; but now her hopes fail her; and though she be not directly reproved, yet she hears her sister more approved than herself: *Martha! Martha! thou art careful, and troubled about many things.* Our Saviour receives courtesy from her in this diligent and costly entertainment; yet will he not gloss over her error, or soothe her in her weak misprision.—A caution to us, that no obligations may so enthral us, as that our tongues should not be free to reprove faults, where we find them.

Alas! how much *care* do we see every where, but how few *Marthas*? Her sollicitude was for her Saviour's entertainment, ours is for ourselves: one finds perplexities in his estate, from which he desires to extricate himself; another racks his thoughts for the raising of his house, or distracts his imagination about the doubtful condition, as he thinks, of the times, and casts, in his anxious fancy, the possible events of all things,—opposing his hopes to his fears. O why do we so needlessly, so fondly set our hearts upon the rack, and with such avidity endure to bend under those unequal burdens, which more able shoulders have offered to undertake for our ease?

Whether Martha be pitied or taxed for her assiduity, Mary is evidently applauded for her devotion: (ver. 42.) *One thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen, &c.* *One thing is necessary, not by way of negation, as if nothing were necessary but this; but comparatively, since nothing else is so necessary.* There must be no opposition, but a subordination only, between spiritual and temporal things; the body and soul must be friends, not rivals; nor may we so cultivate the *Christian* as to neglect the *man*.

How great is the vanity of those men, who, neglecting that *one thing necessary*, affect many things superfluous! Nothing is *needless* with worldly minds, but this *only necessary* thing, the care of their souls. How justly do they lose that which they care not for, while they take an over-care for that, which is neither their proper pursuit, nor possible to be kept. *Mary chose the good part*; it was not forced upon her, but taken up by her own option; and we too have still this holy freedom of choice, through the divine operation of him, who *hath called us unto the glorious liberty of the sons of God*. Happy are we, if we improve this liberty to the best advantage of our souls.

The stability of good adds much to its praise: *Martha's part* was soon gone; the thanks and use of a little outward hospitality cannot long continue; but *Mary's shall not be taken away from her*. The act of her hearing was transient: the fruit was permanent; she now hears that, which may abide with her for ever, if faithful unto death.

But what couldst *thou* hear, O Mary, from those sacred lips, which *we* hear not still?—That heavenly doctrine, for ever still the same, and equally unchangeable with its author. It is not impossible, that the *exercise* of the gospel should be taken from us; but, if we be faithful, the benefit and virtue of the gospel will be as inseparable from our souls, as is their being: in the hardest times, they shall take the closest hold upon the persevering believer; and till death, and in death, yea, and after death, shall make him eternally happy.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The harvest was plenteous, but hitherto the labourers had been few. We have therefore seventy disciples ordained to the ministry, invested with miraculous powers, and sent as harbingers to prepare the way of Christ in all the adjacent country—whither he was preparing to go. Their number corresponds with the elders of Israel on whom the Spirit of the Lord rested in the wilderness; and they were sent two and two for their mutual comfort and encouragement.

1. They must address themselves in prayer to God for success upon their own labours, and that he would raise up and qualify many more to go forth and preach the gospel. And this must be still the constant subject of our requests to God: the more we look round on the world, and see immortal souls perishing for lack of knowledge, the more zealously should we labour, and the more fervently

5 And he said unto them, " Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves ;

Ch. 18. 1-3.

vently pray that the Lord would send forth labourers into his harvest.

2. He tells them what they may expect to meet with. Though they were never so harmless and inoffensive, and their discourses breathed nothing but peace and love, they would have enemies to encounter, fierce and savage as wolves: but he who sent them would afford them protection, and minister strength and courage to them in their work. And, if God be with us, we need not fear who are against us.

3. He orders them to make no provision for their journey, but trust in Providence for the supply of their wants: and, as their work required dispatch, they must not lose any time in unnecessary discourse or civilities with any person whom they met. Not that Christ enjoined rudeness and incivility; but there was no time for compliments, when the service was urgent.

4. Wherever they entered into a house, there he orders them to say *Peace be to this house*, praying that all blessings, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, might rest upon those who dwelt there. *And if the son of peace be there, any who wait for the consolation of Israel, and of consequence into whole hearts the Son of God hath put a desire to hear and receive the gospel of peace, then an answer of peace should be given to their prayers, your peace shall rest upon it; but if not, if there be none in the family, whose hearts are open to embrace the truth, it shall turn to you again, and your prayers for them shall be answered in blessings on your own souls.* Note; (1.) They who preach the gospel of peace, cannot but fervently desire, for all those among whom they minister, that God would speak peace by them to the consciences of their hearers. (2.) Some receive, but more reject, our preaching and prayers; yet even to those who perish, our labours and prayers are not in vain; we are still a sweet savour of Christ; and, though they reject the salvation which we bring, Christ will approve and reward our fidelity.

5. In whatever house they were at first received, there they must abide; thankfully and cheerfully making use of the provision set before them, and not doubting but their labours would procure them that welcome which they deserved. They must be content with the meanest fare, and never, seeking nicety, change their lodgings for better accommodations, lest they should incur the suspicion of being fickle flesh-pleasers. Note; (1.) Christ's ministers have a right to a maintenance. (2.) When the love of souls, not thy lucre, draws men to labour in the gospel, they earn, in whatever state they are, therewith to be content and put up with the poorest accommodations.

He directs them what must be the subject of their preaching. They must say, *The kingdom of God is come nigh; the kingdom of the Messiah, with all its inestimable gifts and privileges, is now ready to appear; prepare to receive him: and he empowers them to heal the sick, and confirm the firmness of their preaching, as well as in return to bestow the kind civilities which they received.* Note; No-

thing is ever lost by kindness shewn to Jesus and his servants.

7. In case their ministry is rejected, and they are driven from their work, they are to leave that devoted city, publicly declaring the doom ready to light upon the place, and shaking off the dust of their feet for a testimony against the inhabitants thereof, assuring them of the nearness of the Messiah's kingdom, and the dreadful consequences which must unavoidably ensue from their obstinacy and impenitence. And in the day of judgment it shall be more tolerable for Sodom than for the inhabitants of that city, because they have rejected greater means of grace than were vouchsafed to that abandoned city. Note; (1.) None sink under such aggravated guilt as those who despise and reject the gospel. (2.) The day is near when these despisers will wonder and perish.

8. On this occasion our Lord turns his discourse to the inhabitants of those cities where such multitudes of his miracles had been wrought, and who notwithstanding continued impenitent. Chorazin, Bethsaida, have their fearful doom read. Had the most wicked cities of the Gentiles enjoyed their blessings, and privileges, and calls to repentance, even Tyre and Sidon had long ago been brought into the dust of humiliation. Therefore the judgment of the impenitent heathen, in the day of vengeance, shall be more tolerable than theirs: and the inhabitants of Capernaum, exalted to heaven in privileges, shall sink as low in hell under the wrath of God, provoked by their hardened infidelity. Let the lands and places that enjoy the gospel light, hear, and tremble at these denunciations.

9. He encourages the seventy to go forth. They are his ambassadors: he will reckon the treatment they meet with as shewn to himself. Those who heard and respected them, he would regard, as if they shewed this attention and kindness to his own person; while they who despised their persons, and rejected their ministry, he would consider as insulting him, and putting contempt on God who sent him. Note; Many ill-use, slight, and contemn Christ's ministers, and treat them as mean and despicable; but they will shortly feel, to their cost, that the King of glory will fearfully avenge the insults shewn to his ambassadors.

2dly, Having finished their ministry, we have,  
1. The return of the disciples to their Master, transported to find that even the devils were subject unto them, and ascribing the glory to him, in whose name they were enabled to work such stupendous miracles. Note; All our victories over Satan must be ascribed to the grace and power of the great Captain of our salvation, and in him we may and ought to rejoice greatly.

2. He received them very graciously.  
(1.) He tells them it was no news to him that the devils were subject unto them. *I beheld when I sent you forth to preach the gospel and work miracles, Satan as lightning fall from heaven; his power and kingdom began now to be shaken and totter; and this was the presage of his*

6 For a friend of mine \* in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

7 And he from within shall answer and say,

Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, though he will not rise

\* Or out of his way.

his more irretrievable ruin, when in the Gentile world the gospel should quickly spread, and, rooting up idolatry and spiritual darkness, turn the hearts of sinners from the power of Satan unto God.

(2.) He enlarges their powers, as the reward of their fidelity, and an encouragement to persevere. They shall tread upon serpents and scorpions unhurt; and the old serpent, and his venomous associates, whether men or devils, should be bruised under their feet. *And nothing shall by any means hurt you.* Under almighty protection you may defy every danger. *Note;* They have nothing to fear, who have Christ for their master, and execute his commission.

(3.) He checks their joy on this singular distinction with which he endued them, and directs them to a nobler cause for it; *rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven;* else, though they had cast out devils, they might themselves finally perish, and become companions with them. It is not gifts, but graces that evidence our adoption of God, which should afford us most joy.

(4.) Christ expresses his delight and thankfulness for the blessings conferred on these his poor disciples: and to this hour nothing rejoices the hearts of his people so greatly as beholding the progress of his gospel, the fall of Satan, and the conversion of men's souls. He said, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, the great Disposer of all things, that thou hast bid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes,* leaving the proud scribes and doctors of law under the darkness of pretended science, wilfully and obstinately prejudiced against and strangers to the mysteries of grace; while poor illiterate men, of low capacities, and contemptible in the eyes of the worldly-wise, are put in trust with the gospel, and enlightened with the Spirit of truth. *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight:* such was the pleasure of infinite wisdom, the more to manifest his own glory. *All things are delivered to me of my Father,* all power and authority, all wisdom and grace to communicate to them that believe. In Jesus are all the treasures thereof laid up, and out of his fulness we must receive. *And no man knoweth who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him:* the perfections of the divine nature are only fully known by the divine Persons themselves; and we can only be acquainted with them, and their gracious purposes towards fallen man, so far as the Son of God is pleased to reveal them to us: and he does reveal them to every believing soul.

(5.) Turning to his disciples privately, he pronounces them truly blessed, favoured with the sight of the Lord's Christ, and enjoying clear discoveries of that kingdom of grace, which the Messiah was now come to erect in the world. Prophets and kings in former ages desired in vain

to see and hear what they, more highly favoured, saw and heard. *Note;* The distinguishing mercies we enjoy, should exercise our thankfulness, and quicken our diligence to improve them.

3dly, We have the same question proposed by one of the scribes, as was put by the young ruler, Mark, x. 17. not so much with a view to be informed, as with the intention to entangle our Lord in his talk.

1. In answer to his question, Christ turns him over to the law; in which he fancied himself deeply conversant, and bids him say what he read there, as the way of obtaining the eternal life which he sought: and when the scribe replied, that the conditions there prescribed were the perfect love of God and our neighbour, Christ approves the answer, and assures him, *Do this, and thou shalt live.* Such perfection of obedience without any deviation will entitle those who can plead it, to the reward. But where alas! is this to be found? The more we read the tenor of the covenant of works, the more, if our minds are enlightened, shall we be driven to despair of ourselves, conscious how far we have been from continuing in all the things written in the book of the law to do them. But the lawyer had not read with this view. For,

2. *He, willing to justify himself,* as if he had kept the whole law, desired to know who was to be reckoned his neighbour; conceiving, probably, that his justice and charity had been so extensive to the whole house of Israel, that he might justly claim the reward of immaculate obedience.

3. Christ, by an apposite case in point, lets him see his ignorance of the divine law, and the defectiveness of his charity; correcting at the same time the corrupt notions of the Jewish teachers, who reckoned themselves not at all obliged to shew the least kindness to those who were out of the pale of their communion. The history here represented is very beautiful and affecting.

[1.] A Jew, as he travelled from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among thieves, with which the road was greatly infested; and these, not satisfied with having plundered and stripped him of his raiment, inhumanly wounded him, and departed, leaving him weltering in his blood, half dead, and ready to expire. This case may fitly represent the state of mankind, by nature way-laid by Satan the great enemy of souls, robbed of the garments of innocence, wounded, and dying in their sins, without power or strength to help themselves.

[2.] In this disastrous condition, in which the poor wounded traveller lay, by chance there came down a certain priest that way, whose office and character should have engaged him to exercise his humanity and compassion towards an object so pitiable, especially to one of his own nation and religion: but his unfeeling heart was steeled against his brother, and, turning to the other side of the road, he pursued his journey unconcerned. A Levite quickly followed,

and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 ° And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

\* Gr. impudens. Gen. 32. 26. Mat. 15. 22—28. Ch. 8. 1—8. Rom. 15. 30. 2 Cor. 12. 7, 8. ° Mat. 7. 7—11. & 21. 22. & 17. 21. Gen. 32. 26—29. Pl. 128. 5. & 123. 2. Il. 45. 11. & 62. 1, 7. Mark, 12. 24. John, 14. 13. & 15. 7. & 16. 23, 24. 2 Cor. 12. 8. Heb. 4. 16. James, 1, 5, 6. & 5. 16—18. 1 John, 3. 22. & 5. 14, 15. Pl. 31. 15, 17.

followed, as callous to every humane sensation: he just came and looked on; and, not caring to be at the trouble or expence of providing for a dying man, he kept on his way, and left him to perish there. Hard-hearted monsters! cries every tongue. But alas! such Levites and priests are found in every age, who not only withhold their hand from relieving the wants of the miserable, but leave the more precious souls of men to perish, unconcerned what becomes of them. Some suppose that these represent the law of Moses, from which no mercy is to be expected: it makes no provision for a man a sinner, nor speaks one word of comfort to the guilty; but leaves the soul under a curse which extends to eternal death.

[3.] A Samaritan, one of that despised nation, travelling that way, saw the miserable object, and compassion instantly melted his heart. Without waiting to know of what country he was, he went to him; and pouring oil and wine into his wounds, he bound them carefully up, perhaps with the very linen garments that he wore, and, gently setting him on his own beast, he carried him to the nearest inn, and saw every accommodation provided for him which the place would afford. And on the morrow, having waited that night to see the poor patient well provided for, he gave the host, on parting, two-pence, about the value of our money, with a charge to take all the possible care of the wounded man; and engaged to defray, on his return, whatever expence might be farther incurred. A noble instance indeed of humanity and generosity! We should not be at a loss to whom this character of the good Samaritan eminently belongs. Jesus is come down from heaven; he sees sinners lying in their blood, helpless and unprovided for; his compassions are kindled towards them; he binds up the wounds of the guilty sinner's soul, even of those who will not believe; his own blood is the healing balm which he pours into them; he brings them into his church, and they are fed with the provision of his ordinances; he clothes them with the cordials of his love, and bears their burden through the inn of this world, supporting them with the riches of his grace; he commends them to the care of his ministers, whose diligence, if they be faithful to the end, he will not fall, at his second coming, to punish.

Christ proposes to the lawyer the question, which of the two is the neighbour to the wounded traveller? and it was too clear to admit of hesitation; he could not answer, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus, Go, and do thou likewise. Think not you are under the law, or even understood the extent of the commandment before you feel the same compassionate spirit, and readiness to relieve even a Samaritan, as he shewed towards this Jew.—An extent of charity to which you have hitherto an utter stranger; and therefore his question was self-delusion.

4thly, We have,

1. The hospitable entertainment given to our blessed Lord by a good woman who lived at Bethany, named Martha. Though his character was obnoxious, and his retinue numerous and poor, yet she was not ashamed of owning her respect for him, and was happy to furnish him with the best that her house afforded. A gracious heart makes an open hand. We should grudge no expence, when Christ's cause demands our support.

2. Mary, the sister of Martha, sat at Jesus' feet, attentive to his divine instructions; and, as, according to his usual custom, he began to discourse about the glad tidings of his salvation, she listened with eagerness to the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. Note; (1.) Ministers not only in public, but from house to house, should delight to dispense the gospel-word. They are profitable visits, when a gracious discourse seasons the entertainment. (2.) They who would be wise unto salvation, must sit at Jesus' feet.

3. Martha, desirous to shew her respect for her honoured guest, was very busy in providing the entertainment. Her diligence was commendable; but she was too much taken up, cumbered with much serving; she wanted to make the feast splendid, and was so distracted with those worldly engagements, that she could not find leisure to attend the heavenly discourse of the Redeemer. Note; (1.) Family cares, inordinately engaging the mind, are a great snare to our souls. (2.) Christ's servants should not cumber themselves with much serving. They who eat and drink to the glory of God, will not look for delicacies.

4. Displeased that Mary came not to her assistance, Martha brings her complaint to Christ; Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? She seems not only to blame Mary's backwardness to assist her, but almost reflects upon Jesus, that he should suffer her to sit there, when she wanted her help in the family; and therefore suggests that it was but reasonable, that he should bid her go, and assist in providing for the guests. Note; (1.) They who have their own hearts much set upon the world, are ready to find fault with those as negligent, who shew not the same anxiety after it. (2.) Too many, like Martha, are apt to think that the exercises of religion encroach upon the duties of our station; but, usually speaking, the fault is, as here, far on the other side.

5. Christ reproves her inordinate carefulness. Martha, Martha; he speaks with earnestness and pity, thou art careful and troubled about many things; giving herself unnecessary anxiety, when Christ required no such sumptuous entertainment. But one thing is needful, to know Christ and partake of his salvation. Compared with this, every thing besides is unimportant; therefore should this en-

10 For every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11 <sup>p</sup> If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or

if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 <sup>q</sup> If ye then, being evil, know how to

<sup>p</sup> Mat. 7. 9, 10. If. 49. 15.

<sup>q</sup> If. 49. 15. Heb. 12. 10. Mat. 7. 11.

gauge our first and chief concern : and we are highly culpable, when other things divert us from attending to the interests of our immortal souls. *Note* ; (1.) Faithful rebukes are the truest marks of genuine love. (2.) They who are full of inordinate care, are sure to involve themselves in many troubles. (3.) Christ's disciples have need deeply to remember this reproof and caution ; for Martha's anxiety is a besetting evil.

6. Instead of blaming Mary, as her sister expected, Christ commends her choice, and approves her conduct ; *She hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.* *Note* ; (1.) However serious godliness may provoke the censures of the lukewarm, Jesus will commend what they condemn. (2.) They who have chosen Christ as their portion, and his word as their rule, have indeed wisely determined.

#### CHAP. XI.

*Ver. 1. As he was praying*] While Jesus was in the country beyond Jordan, he happened to pray publicly with such fervency, that one of his disciples, exceedingly affected both with the matter and manner of his address, begged that he would teach *them* to pray. This disciple probably had not been present, when our Lord, in the beginning of his ministry, gave his hearers directions concerning their devotions. Wherefore Jesus, who always rejoiced to find his hearers desirous of instruction, willingly embraced this opportunity, and repeated the discourse on prayer, which he had formerly delivered in his sermon on the mount ; but with this difference, that he now handled the arguments which he had offered as motives to the duty, a little more fully than before. Many learned men suppose, that the Jewish masters used to give their followers some short form of prayer, as a peculiar badge of their relation to them. John the Baptist had probably done this ; in which view only we can suppose the disciples could now ask Jesus to *teach them to pray* ; for it is not to be thought, that, in the three preceding years of his ministry, he had not often given them instructions both as to the matter and manner of prayer.

*Ver. 5—8. And he said unto them, which, &c.*] Having taught his disciples, by the preceding short form, that they were not, in prayer, to use a multiplicity of words, with *vain repetitions* ; he proceeded to caution them on the other hand against coldness, indifferency, and slackness in their supplications. The evil of this, and the necessity of asking affectionately, with importunity and perseverance, he taught them by a parable, in which he shewed them that importunity, that is to say, earnestness and frequency in asking, were the proper and natural expressions of strong desires ; and by consequence, that God very properly requires these things in men, before he bestows on them

such favours as they stand in need of ; just as he requires them to be earnestly desirous of these favours, before he bestoweth them therewith. The passage, *My children are with me in bed*, ver. 7. might be rendered, *My servants, together with me, or as well as myself, are in bed.* "My servants are in bed, as well as myself, and very probably they are fast asleep ; so that there is nobody at hand to give you what you want."

*Ver. 12. If he shall ask an egg,*] Naturalists tell us, that the body of a scorpion is very like an egg, especially if the scorpion be of the white kind, which is the first species mentioned by *Ælian* and others. *Bochart* has produced testimonies to prove, that the scorpions were about the bigness of an egg ; and therefore, in Judea a white scorpion, nearly resembling an egg, might, to children, who were not capable of distinguishing the one from the other, be offered in the place thereof, if the person so doing meant that it should sting them to death. The author of the *Observations* informs us, that *St. Jerome* reckons *wines, fish, and eggs*, together with *honey*, in his catalogue of delicacies : so that possibly, on being told that the disciples gave our Lord a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb, Ch. xxiv. 42. we, who have been ready to look upon it as a strange association of dishes, (if understood of a proper honey-comb, and not of a sort of bread,) have suffered this surprize from not entering into the views of the disciples ; they probably not attending to *Milton's* order,

—So contrived, as not to mix  
Tastes not well joined, inelegant, and bring  
Taste after taste, upheld by kindest change ;

but only designing to express their great veneration for their Master, by setting before him the most grateful things in their power, and leaving it to him to eat of which he pleased. I am not sure that there was no view, in like manner, to the delicacy of eggs in the passage before us, where our Lord is speaking of *fish* and *eggs*. On the contrary, perhaps it may add to the beauty of the passage, if we understand it as signifying, that, if a child should ask an earthly parent for *bread*, a necessary of life, he will not deny him what is requisite for his support, putting him off with a *stone* ; and if he should ask him for a sort of food of a more delicious kind, a *fish*, or an *egg*, he will not, we may assure ourselves, give his child what is hurtful, a *serpent* or a *scorpion*. If sinful men then will give good gifts to their children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the necessary gifts of his Spirit to them that supplicate for them?—not giving up to hurtful illusions, those who affectionately pray for the *hallowing of his name*, and the *coming of his kingdom*, ver. 2. But, whatever might be the view of our Lord, it is certain that *St. Jerome* was right in putting eggs into his list of Eastern delicacies ;

give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

14 ¶ And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

15 But some of them said, " He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

16 And others, " tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

17 But he, " knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through " Beelzebub.

19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do " your sons cast them out? " therefore shall they be your judges.

20 But if I with the " finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

21 When a " strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

22 But when " a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

23 " He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

24 " When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

25 And when he cometh, he findeth it " swept and garnished.

26 " Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last " state of that man is worse than the first.

27 ¶ And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, " Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

28 But he said, Yea " rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

29 ¶ " And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is " an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30 For as " Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

r. 2. If. 63. 16. & 66. 1. " Prov. 1. 23. If. 44. 3, 4. Ezek. 36. 27. Joel, 2. 28. " Mat. 9. 32-34. & 12. 22-30. " Mat. 9. 34.  
 25. & 12. 24. Mark, 3. 22-30. John, 7. 20. & 8. 48, 52. & 10. 20. " Mat. 12. 38. & 16. 1. Mark, 8. 11. Ver. 29. 1 Cor. 1. 22.  
 9, 19. " Mat. 9. 4. & 12. 25. Mark, 3. 24. John, 2. 25. Rev. 2. 23. " Gr. Beelzebub. As ver. 15, 19, &c. " Ch. 9. 49.  
 38. " Ch. 19. 22. 2 Sam. 1. 16. Job, 15. 6. " Mat. 12. 23. Exod. 8. 19. Dan. 2. 44. & 4. 34. & 7. 14, 22. Ch. 1. 35, 33.  
 28. " 1 Peter, 5. 8. Eph. 6. 12. & 2. 2. If. 49. 24, 25. Mat. 12. 29. Mark, 3. 27. " If. 9. 6. & 63. 1. Heb. 7. 25. Mat.  
 " Gen. 3. 15. If. 53. 12. & 49. 24-26. & 63. 1-4. Col. 2. 15. 1 John, 3. 8. " Mat. 12. 30. Rev. 3. 15, 16. with Ch. 9. 50.  
 2. 43-45. Acts, 8. 13. Job, 1. 7. & 2. 2. 1 Peter, 5. 8. If. 35. 1. Ch. 4. 5, 6. Acts, 17. 30, 31. Eph. 2. 2. " Pf. 81. 11, 12.  
 9-21. Eph. 2. 1-3. Tit. 3. 3. 2 Peter, 2. 12-19. " Pf. 81. 12. If. 66. 3, 4. Heb. 6. 4-8. & 10. 26-31. 2 Peter, 2. 20-22.  
 4. " Ch. 1. 28, 30, 48. with 23. 29. " Mat. 7. 21. & 12. 49. Ch. 8. 21. Rom. 2. 13. James, 1. 22-25. " Mat. 12. 38  
 Mark, 8. 11, 12. " If. 57. 3. Mat. 16. 4. & 23. 33. Mark, 8. 33. John, 4. 48. & 2. 18. " Jun. 1. 17. & 2. 2. & iii. iv. If.  
 1. 2. 34. & 9. 22, 44.

IV.

for nothing is more common than to meet with modern entertainments there, when they would be in the most respectful manner. So Dr. Porteus describes a very grand morning collation, given in a person of distinction, as consisting of the best bread, with butter, fried eggs, honey, green salted meats, and several other small things. He mentions very often in the accounts that he gives of the presents made for him by the Sheiks in the Holy Land, to which, M. D'Arvieux tells us, that compared by the peasants of a village near Mount Lebanon and for their governor, and attended with all

the marks of respect which they were capable of expressing, consisted of wine, fried fish, eggs, and some other things. It must be the reputed delicacy of eggs also, one would imagine, that occasions them so frequently to be sent to persons of figure for presents in those countries; fifty eggs being sent at one time to the English consul, whom Bishop Pocock attended to Cairo, and a hundred at another. See Observations, p. 168.  
 Ver. 14. And he was casting out a devil,] Δαιμόνιον, a demon. By this word the ancient heathens understood inferior deities or spirits both good and bad; but the ancient Jews distinguished good and evil spirits by several different

31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

32 The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

33 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine

eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

36 If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

37 And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat.

38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

1 1 Kings, 10. 1, 2. 2 Chr. 9. 1. Mat. 12. 42. 3 Ch. 3. 22. & 9. 35. If. 9. 6. & 42. 1. & 49. 3. John, 1. 14, 29. Mat. 12. 5, 42. Col. 2. 3, 9. 4 Jon. 3. 5-10. Jer. 3. 11. Ez. k. 3. 6, 7. & 10. 51. Rom. 2. 27, 29. 5 John, 1. 14. & 3. 16, 31. & 10. 30. Rom. 9. 5. Tit. 2. 13. Acts, 7. 2. 6 Mat. 5. 15. Mark, 4. 21. Ch. 8. 16. 7 Mat. 6. 22, 23. Rom. 12. 8. 1 Cor. 10. 31. Pl. 119. 5, 6, 105. 8 Pf. 81. 12. Il. 69. 4. 2 Theff. 2. 10-12. 9 If. 6. 9, 10. & 5. 20. & 29. 14, 15. & 44. 18. & 42. 19, 20. Jer. c. 21. Mat. 13. 14. Ch. 18. 17. Rom. 1. 22. 1 Cor. 1. 19-21. 10 Job. 17. 9. 2 Peter, 3. 18. 1 John, 5. 20. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Acts, 26. 18. Mat. 5. 16. Phil. 2. 15, 16. Eph. 5. 8. 11 Ch. 7. 36. & 14. 1. & 7. 34. 1 Cor. 9. 19, 20. 12 Mat. 13. 1, 2. Mark, 7. 1-5. 13 Mat. 23. 25. & 7. 15. Mark, 7. 4. Tit. 1. 15, 16. 2 Tim. 3. 5.

different names; the former of which are, in the version of the LXX, generally called ἀγγελοι, angels, and the latter δαιμόνια, demons. As for the good spirits or angels, they are frequently mentioned as appearing to the patriarchs, and other pious men; but in Deut. xxxii. 17. the Israelites are charged with having sacrificed unto demons, [δαιμόνιους,] and not to God; by which it appears, that they worshipped evil spirits so early: See also Pf. cvi. 37. In both which passages, as well as many others both of the Old and New Testament, the word δαιμονιον is translated devil in our version; whereas the Greek word δαιμονιον, whence comes the English name devil, signifies, as we have before observed, an adversary, or one who brings a charge against another; and is never applied in the sacred writings to evil spirits, in the plural number, but always attributed to Satan only, in the singular; agreeably to which he is also called the accuser of the brethren. Rev. xii. 10. See on Matth. iv. 1. And it seems highly probable, that the notion of Satan, as an enemy to mankind in general, was in some measure retained from the fall of our first parents, and the promise made consequent upon it. Compare Gen. iii. 15. and Rev. xii. 9. xx. 2. In our Saviour's time, the name given to the prince of demons by the Jews, was Beelzebub, with whom they charged him as being a confederate (see the next verse); and by their allowing that he cast out demons by his assistance, it is plain that they retained the belief of the existence of evil spirits in general. The like also appears from the several instances of demoniacs who were cured by our Saviour. In Acts, xxiii. 8., we are told, the Sadducees say, that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor

spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. From the different sentiments therefore of these two sects of the Jews, it is plain, that the latter of them believed the existence of good spirits, here called angels: and that they believed the same of evil ones, (whatever may be meant by the following word πνευμα,) appears from their charge above mentioned against our Saviour.

Ver. 31. The utmost parts] The remote parts. Ver. 34-36. When thine eye is single, &c.] That they might understand his parable, and be excited to make a proper improvement of the noble faculty, or power, whose use he had been describing, our Lord puts them in mind that the intention or will performs for the soul of man the office which the eye does for the body. See on Matth. vi. 22. Take heed, says he, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness. "Keep thy intention, through divine grace, as free as possible from the influence of prejudice, pride, revenge, lust, covetousness, and other evil passions; for they will hatch swarms of vain and foolish thoughts, by which thy will would be perverted, and the light which is in thee be turned into darkness. But if thy whole body be full of light, ver. 36. If thy mind be so completely enlightened by the Spirit of God, that no evil passion or affection interrupts the emanations of its light in any degree, all the faculties of thy soul shall be as much enlightened, enlivened, and assisted, as the members of the body are, when the bright shining of a candle gives thee light, and puts thee in a capacity of using them." Thus, comparing the direction of our will or intention to the shining of a candle, Jesus shewed, that by the parable of a lighted candle,

40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?

41 But rather give alms \* of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God :

these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

Pl. 14. 1-5; & 52. 5, 6. & 94. 8. Deut. 32. 29. \* Gen. 1. & 2. 2, 7. Num. 16. 27. Zech. 12. 7. Heb. 12. 9. 1 Thess. 5. 23. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 12. 33. & 16. 9. Mat. 5. 42. Dan. 4. 27. Is. 58. 7. & 61. 8. Ch. 19. 8. 2 Cor. 8. 12. 1 Tim. 4. 4. Tit. 1. 15. Heb. 13. 16. Liberty to the poor is a better way to sanctify your earthly enjoyments. \* Or as you are able. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 23. 23, 24. & 9. 13. & 12. 7. 1 Sam. 15. 22. Hof. 6. 6. Prov. 21. 3. Mic. 6. 3. Gal. 5. 22-24. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 20. 46. & 14. 7. Mat. 23. 6, 7. Mark, 12. 38, 39. 3 John, 9. Prov. 16. 18. & 29. 23. Hab. 2. 4. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 23. 27, 28. Acts, 23. 3. Hof. 5. 1. & 9. 8. Pl. 12. 2. & 55. 21. & 5. 9. Tit. 1. 15.

candle, he had intended to explain wherein the proper use of all the light bestowed upon us, consists.

Ver. 40. Ye fools, &c.] "What a silly as well as hypocritical part do you herein act, as if you could impose upon the all-seeing and heart-searching God, who descends to search the inward parts? Did not he create the soul as well as the body? and can you suppose, that he is pleased with your ceremonious washings of the flesh, and takes no notice of the impurity of your spirits?"

Ver. 41. But, &c.] But rather give alms of such things as you are able. Or, in proportion to your substance. Doddridge. We are not to imagine, that alms-giving was particularly mentioned by Christ in his exhortation to the Pharisees, because it is of greater value and necessity than the other virtues and graces. He recommended it to that sect, because they were generally remarkable for their covetousness and extortion; vices which must be repented of by making restitution to those who have been injured by them; and when these cannot be known or found, the satisfaction must be made to the poor, as having the right, because what is given to them is lent to the Lord. But the Pharisees were of an incorrigibly stubborn disposition, which no instruction, whether mild or severe, could influence; wherefore our Lord, on this occasion, wisely treated them with a kind of wholesome severity; denouncing most dreadful woes against them, for being so zealous in the ceremonial institutions of religion, they utterly neglected the precepts of morality. Matth. xxiii.

44. Woe unto you, scribes, &c.] The scribes were in the Hebrew language, *sopherim*,—writers, and are mentioned in the sacred history as persons of authority in the Jewish commonwealth. They were secretaries in the church, the state, the army, &c. to which offices those were intitled who were learned in the law, because anciently that art was practised but by the scribes. When Ezra made the reformation, which has since been so famous among the Jewish doctors, he was assisted by the scribes in revising the canon of Scripture, and in ordering matters so, that thenceforth a sufficient authority in them should always be employed in multiplying copies of it. This class of men, therefore, being conversant in the sacred writings, acquired a singular

knowledge of them, and in process of time expounded them to the common people with such reputation, that at length they obtained the title of *doctors* or *teachers*, and were consulted upon all difficult points of faith. See Matth. vii. 29. Luke, ii. 46. Matth. ii. 4. Hence they are said by our Lord to sit in *Moses's chair*, and to determine what doctrines are contained in Scripture; and hence an able minister of the New Testament is called a *scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*. See Matth. xxiii. 2, 3. Mark, xii. 35. But as the Jews were divided into several religious sects, it is natural to imagine, that each sect gave such interpretations of Scripture as best agreed with their peculiar tenets. Wherefore it cannot be doubted, that the doctors studied and expounded the sacred writings with a view to authorize the several opinions of the party they espoused. Accordingly, in Acts, xxiii. 9. mention is made of the *scribes that were of the sect of the Pharisees*:—οἱ γραμματεῖς τῆς μετῆς τῶν φαρισαίων, which plainly implies that some of the scribes were of the other sects. It is true, the scribes are distinguished from the Pharisees in the woes which our Lord now pronounced, and in several other passages, particularly Matth. v. 20. xxiii. 2. but from the latter of these passages it seems evident, that by the *scribes and Pharisees*, are commonly meant the *Pharisaic scribes*, according to the idiom of the Hebrew language: for as the name *Pharisees* denoted a sect, and not an office, it could by no means be said of the whole sect that they sat in *Moses's chair*. A character of this sort was applicable only to the *doctors*, or *scribes* of the sect. In other instances, where the scribes are distinguished from the Pharisees, the Sadducean doctors may be intended. The badge of a Pharisee was his placing the tradition of the elders on an equality with Scripture; whereas the Sadducees rejected all the pretended oral traditions, and adhered so closely to the text, that they acknowledged nothing as a matter of faith, which was not expressly contained in the sacred books. And in this they were followed by the *Karaites*, or *Scripturists*, a sect which subsists among the Jews to this day. It is generally supposed indeed, that the Sadducees acknowledged the authority of none of the sacred books, except the writings of Moses; nevertheless, there is reason to believe that they received all these books: for had they denied the authority of any of them, it is not probable that our Lord,

45 Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.

46<sup>m</sup>. And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grie-

vous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

47<sup>a</sup> Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

<sup>m</sup> Mat. 23. 4. If. 10. 1. Gal. 6. 13. Pf. 94. 20. <sup>a</sup> Mat. 23. 29—36.

who so sharply reprov'd their other corruptions, would have let this pass uncensured. Nay, Josephus himself, who was no friend to the Sadducees, does not, in the whole compass of his writings, charge them with rejecting any of the sacred books. He says, they rejected the traditions of the elders, so much cried up by the Pharisees; affirming, that nothing ought to be held as an institution or rule, but what was written. Perhaps of all the sacred writings, the Sadducees preferred the books of Moses; all the Jews did so, and do still; but whether in this point the Sadducees outstripp'd the rest of the sects, is hard to say. In the mean time, considering the veneration which the Jews had for the books of the law, it is reasonable to suppose, that some of the doctors of each sect would apply themselves more especially to the study of these books in private, and to the explication of them in public; and that such as did, might obtain the appellation of *lawyers*. Accordingly, the same person is called a *Pharisee and a lawyer*, Matth. xxii. 35. whom St. Mark calls a *scribe*. Farther, it is not improbable that the Pharisean lawyers, fond of their own particular study, might exalt the law, not only above the rest of the sacred writings, but above the traditions of the elders; in which respect, they were distinguished from the rest of their sect, paying only a secondary sort of regard to these traditions. It was on this account, that one of them was now so displeas'd, when he heard Jesus join the whole body of the scribes indiscriminately, and consequently *the lawyers* with the *Pharisees*, in the woes which he now denounced against them, for the hypocritical shew of piety by their zeal in giving tithes of mint, anise and cummin, according to the precepts of the divine law, while they omitted judgment and the love of God, expressly enjoined by that law. It seems he thought the rebuke undeserv'd on the part of the lawyers, even of the Pharisean sect; because they did not pay that superlative regard to tradition, for which the rest were so remarkable.

[For ye are as graves, &c.] In the repetition of the woes, Matth. xxiii. 27. this is differently expressed: *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness*. Persons of fortune among the Jews, often rais'd fine stone structures over their deceased relations, especially when they buried them in the fields; and these they whitened from time to time, to make them look beautiful. Dr. Shaw (Travels, p. 219.) gives us the following account of those sepulchres: "If we except a few persons, who are buried within the precincts of the sanctuaries of the *Marabutts*, —or tutelar saints of the country,—the rest are carried out at a small distance from their cities and villages, where a great extent of ground is allotted for the pur-

pose. Each family has a particular part of it walled in, like a garden, where the bones of their ancestors have remained for many generations; for in these inclosures the graves are all distinct and separated, each of them having a stone placed upright at the head and feet, inscribed with the name or title of the deceased, (2 Kings, xxiii. 17.) while the intermediate space is either planted with flowers, bordered round with stones, or paved with tiles. The graves of the principal citizens are farther distinguished by having cupolas or vaulted chambers, of three, four, or more square yards, built over them; and as these very frequently lie open, and occasionally shelter us from the inclemency of the weather, the *demoniac*, Mark, v. 5. might with propriety enough have had his dwelling among the tombs; as others are said, Isaiah, lxxv. 4. *to remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments (mountains)*. And as all these different sorts of tombs and sepulchres, with the very walls likewise of their respective cupolas and inclosures, are constantly kept *clean, white-washed, and beautified*, they continue to illustrate those expressions of our Saviour, where he mentions the *garnishing of sepulchres*, and compares the scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites to *whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness*."—But though the sepulchres of the rich were thus beautified, the graves of the poor were oftentimes so neglected, that if the stones by which they were marked, happened to fall, they were not set up again: by which means the graves themselves *did not appear*; they were *ἀνόρα*, as they are called in the text, so that men might tread upon them inadvertently. By the law, Numb. xix. 16. graves of all sorts polluted the persons who touched them, as well those sepulchres which were kept perfectly neat and beautiful, as those which were neglected. Hence, to shew the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, our Lord, in the one *woe*, likened them to *graves which did not appear*,—had no mark to know them by,—and which being covered with grass, men were polluted by going over them ere they were aware: in the other *woe*, he likened them to *whitened sepulchres*, which, though they looked fair and beautiful outward, were full of uncleanness. The scribes and Pharisees, however holy they might appear by their exactness in the externals of religion, were polluted with the grossest vices; inasmuch, that by the contagion of their example they defiled all who were much in their company.

[Ver. 46. *Ye lade men with burdens*] See on Matth. xxiii. 4. Perhaps the consciences of these lawyers might charge them with some private contempt of the injunctions which they most rigorously impos'd upon others, in ceremonial precepts as well as moral; or it may refer to a want of due

48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:

50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto

you, it shall be required of this generation.

52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

53 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things;

54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

Pl. 64. 8. Job. 24. 22. Ch. 19. 22. Job, 15. 5, 6. Acts, 7. 51, 52. 1 Thess. 2. 15. 2 Chr. 36. 16. Mat. 21. 35, 36. James, 5. 10. Heb. 11. 36-38. Prov. 1. 20. & 8. 7. 12. & 9. 1. 1 Cor. 1. 24. Col. 2. 3. Mark, 16. 15. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Eph. 4. 11. Mat. 23. 35, 36. 1 Thess. 2. 15, 16. Exod. 20. 5. Mich. 6. 16. Heb. 11. 4. 1 John, 3. 12. 2 Chr. 24. 21, 22. Zech. 1. 7. Mat. 23. 2-29. & 12. 38. & 16. 1. & 19. 3. & 22. 18. Ver. 16. Or forbade.

tenderness for the comfort of men's lives, which they bittered by such rigour.

[Ver. 48. That ye allow] That ye approve.

[Ver. 49. Therefore also said the wisdom of God,] If, as we suppose, Christ himself here spoke of that divine wisdom which we call the wisdom of God, it is difficult to take any tolerable sense of this verse, unless the things mentioned, as said by the wisdom of God, were to be found in the Old Testament, which, I think, is silent upon them: and therefore I take this phrase to be the apostle's appellation of Christ, who is expressly said to have spoken these things, Matth. xxiii. 34, 35. and who was presented under the character of Wisdom, in Prov. 1. 24. and so is called the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. i. 24.

[Ver. 50, 51. That the blood of all the prophets, &c.] By you will far exceed your fathers in extensive and outrageous instances of wickedness, which God will punish you to commit, in defiance of greater and more evident means of conviction, than they enjoyed; that you may bring upon the present generation of the Jews, all the terrible wrath threatened for national guilt, in shedding the blood of the prophets of God in former ages, from the beginning of the world, (ver. 51.) even from the blood of righteous Abel, which was shed by Cain on account of religion, and which cried aloud to heaven for vengeance, before the giving of the law, unto the blood of that well known man, under the law, whom your predecessors slew to death in the court between the altar of burnt-offering and the temple, for reproving their idolatry, when he died, said, The Lord look upon it, and will revenge all their blood upon the men of this generation, for their flagrant iniquity of the same kind, in the destruction of their city, temple, and nation."

[Ver. ye have taken away the key, &c.] Vitringa

understands this of one fundamental truth, which would have led them into the knowledge of the rest: but all their endeavours to embarrass and bias the minds of men in their inquiries after truth, might be intended here, as well as more especially their disguising the prophecies which relate to the Messiah. If a key was delivered to the Rabbies, when they were admitted into their office, in token of the power given them to open and expound the Scripture, as the writers of antiquities inform us was the custom, here may be a beautiful allusion to that circumstance; as if he had said, "You take that key, not to use, but to secrete it." It is certain, that the heathen priests were called *χλειδουχοι*, key-bearers. Instead of ye entered not,—ye hindered, some read, ye have not entered,—ye have hindered.

[Ver. 53, 54. Began to urge him vehemently, &c.] *Δεινῶς ἐνέχειν*, which properly signifies to fasten fiercely upon him. Several more of the words here used are metaphors taken from hunting: the word *ἀποσοματίζειν*, which we render to provoke, to speak, might be rendered to mouth, or "bear down with the violence of their words," as Theophylact excellently explains it: and the word *ἑνεύσαι*, rendered to catch, has in this connection a most beautiful propriety; for it expresses the eagerness with which sportsmen beat about for their game, to start it from its covert. It is very probable, that the Pharisee who was master of the house had invited a great many of his brethren and learned friends, on purpose to make a more formidable attack upon Christ, and by their concurrent testimony to charge upon him any thing which might render him obnoxious; and the presence of so many of them made the discourse delivered at this time more proper, and the courage and zeal which it expressed more remarkable.

Inferences.—Well does that petition become every disciple of Christ, Lord, teach us to pray! Thou hast taught us by thy example, and by the precepts of thy word, teach

## C H A P. XII.

*Christ preacheth to his disciples to avoid hypocrisy, and fearfulness in publishing his doctrine; warneth the people to beware of covetousness by the parable of the rich man who set up greater barns. We must not be over-careful of earthly things; but seek the kingdom of God, give alms, and be ready at a knock to open to our Lord, whensoever he cometh. Christ's ministers are to see to their charge, and look for persecution. The people must make use of this time of grace, because it is a fearful thing to die without reconciliation.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**I**N the mean time, <sup>a</sup> when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude

of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, <sup>b</sup> Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

2 <sup>c</sup> For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.

4 And I say unto you <sup>d</sup> my friends, <sup>e</sup> Be

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 49. 10. Ch. 5. 1, 15. & 6. 17. & 9. 11. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 16. 5—12. Mark, 8. 15—21. 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. <sup>c</sup> Mark, 4. 22. Mat. 10. 26. Job. 12. 22. Ch. 8. 17. Eccl. 12. 14. 1 Cor. 4. 5. 2 Cor. 5. 10. Rom. 14. 12. Rev. 20. 11, 12. <sup>d</sup> John, 13. 1. & 15. 9, 14, 15. Eph. 5. 30. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 10. 28—33. 11. 8. 12. & 51. 7. & 41. 10. 14. Jer. 1. 8, 17. 1 Peter, 3. 14. Rev. 14. 7. Eccl. 12. 13. Prov. 1. 7. & 23. 17.

us also by thy holy spirit! excellent is the form of sound and divine words, which our gracious Master here recommends: it is our duty to study it attentively, that, concise and expressive as it is, our thoughts may go along with its several petitions.

Let us learn to reverence and love God, and to consider ourselves as brethren in his family. Let the glory of his name, and the prosperity of his kingdom, be much dearer to us, than any separate interest of our own. Let it be our cordial desire, that his will may be universally obeyed, and with the most entire consent of soul acquiesced in by all his creatures, both in heaven and on earth. Let our appetites and passions be so moderated, that having even the plainest food and raiment, we may be therewith content; and, on the other hand, how plentiful soever our circumstances may be, let us remember, that day by day we depend on God for our daily bread. Nor do we need even the most necessary supplies of life, more than we need daily pardon: for which therefore we should be putting in our constant prayer; heartily forgiving all our fellow-creatures, as we desire to be forgiven of God. Conscious of our own weakness, let us, as far as we can, endeavour to avoid circumstances of temptation; and, when necessarily led into them, let us look up to God for support, labouring, above all things, to preserve our integrity, and to maintain a conscience void of offence.

Depending on the certainty of the gracious promises given, (ver. 9, 10.) and encouraged by the experience of so many thousands, who have on asking received, and on seeking found; let us renew our importunate addresses to the throne of divine grace; and, remembering the compassion of our heavenly Father, let us be emboldened in the full assurance of faith, to ask every necessary blessing; especially the communication of that enlightening and sanctifying spirit, without which our corrupt hearts will find out a ready way to abuse the choicest of his providential favours, to the dishonour of his holy name, and the deeper wounding of our own miserable souls.

*As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wife a prover upon an obedient ear: Christ was indeed a wife and faithful reprover; but the ears of these Pharisees were disobedient and uncircumcised. How well had all*

the entertainments of the Pharisee's table been repaid, had he and his brethren heard our Lord's reproof with candour, humility and obedience! these men despised them to their ruin: let us often review them for our instruction, that none of these dreadful woes may come upon us.

Our Lord's discourse to the Pharisees and lawyers, is a most just and severe rebuke to every hypocritical professor; who is scrupulous and exact in matters of ceremony, while he neglects morality and experimental religion; and is studious to shine in the sight of men, while he forgets the all-penetrating eye of God. It exposes the ostentation of those, who pride themselves in empty titles of honour, and eagerly affect precedence and superiority; and it evidently chastises those who press upon others the duties which they neglect themselves, and so are most righteously judged out of their own mouths.

How melancholy is it to observe, in instances like those recorded here, the hypocrisy and deceitfulness of the human heart; and to see men impose on themselves with empty appearances!—like these Pharisees, who built the sepulchres of the former prophets, while they were persecuting those of their own day; and, in contempt of all that was said by the messengers of God, were filling up the measure of their iniquities, till the cloud which had been so long gathering burst on their heads, and poured forth a storm of aggravated wrath and ruin.

May that God, who has immediate access to the hearts of men, deliver all Christian countries from such teachers as are here described; who take away and secrete the key of knowledge, instead of using it; and obstruct, rather than promote men's entrance into the kingdom of heaven! how loudly will the blood of those whom they have destroyed, cry against them in the awful day of account; and how little will the wages of unrighteousness, and the rewards of worldly policy, be able to arm them against destruction, or to support them under it!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Prayer is the great instituted means of maintaining communion with God: it is as the breath of every spiritually living soul. There can be no surer proof of our being dead in trespasses and sins than the habitual neglect of it. The prayerless live without God, and

not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed

ust die without hope. Our Lord himself was much in danger, to let us an example; and his disciples, desirous to follow him, are represented in this chapter as preferring their request to him, that he would instruct them both concerning the matter and manner of their prayers, and give them a form or directory, as John had done for his disciples.

Christ condescends to grant their request, and gives them the following short but most comprehensive form of prayer:

*Our Father which art in heaven*; thou great Creator and universal Lord, whose throne is in the heavens, and to whom ten thousand times ten thousand angels and arch-angels pay their ceaseless adorations; to thee do we sinful creatures and dust of the earth address our prayer, regarding thee not only as our common parent and the Maker of all things, but in the more endeared relation of our reconciled Father in Jesus Christ. *Hallowed be thy name*: and every other creature exalt thy glory; and, according to the displays of thy glorious perfections made in thy works and word, may we ever admire, adore, love, and serve thee. *Thy kingdom come*: erect the throne of thy grace in our hearts; O visit us with thy Holy Spirit; give us the light of thy truth, and the gracious gifts of thy Spirit, that we may become thy faithful disciples and servants. Send forth thy gospel into the world to accompany it with thy mighty power, and make it effectual to the conversion of sinners' souls; build us up in thy faith, fear, and love, and prepare us daily for the exercise of all holy conversation and godliness, for thy presence; then come and take us to thy throne of glory, day and night for ever, we may serve thee alone, and go out no more. *Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth*; may we emulate the lively, constant, and obedience paid by thy celestial hosts. Let thy word be our invariable rule; and may we, without hypocrisy and without hypocrisy, desire to know and fulfil what thou dost command: and in every trial of thy providence may our spirits be resigned, satisfied, content to wait thy leisure, meekly depend upon thee. *Give us day by day our daily bread*, O Lord, we depend for the needful provisions of our bodies during the days of our pilgrimage; our children, be supplied by thy bounty; enable us to have a constant dependance upon thee, content with what thou art pleased to assign us, and confident that thou wilt not leave us to want any manner of thing for us: and, whilst our bodies are fed by thee, let our souls be nourished with the better food which cometh down from heaven. *And forgive us our many, great, and aggravated as they have been, sins out through the Redeemer's blood, speak graciously on to our guilty souls, and glorify thyself in us, that we are emboldened, Lord, to hope for thy mercy; for we also forgive every one that is ready passing by their offences and trespasses, as we hope to be forgiven ourselves, and*

pleading thy promise, that, when we are enabled thus to do, we shall assuredly find mercy with thee our most high and justly offended God. Remember therefore the word wherein thou hast caused us to put our trust. *And lead us not into temptation*; keep us from every snare laid for our souls, and suffer us not to fall under the trials that we may be called to endure: *but deliver us from evil, from the evil one, and from the evil world*. Save us with thine uttermost salvation, and bring us at last to that eternal kingdom where no temptation nor evil can ever enter.

2. Christ directs them as to the manner of their prayers; to be fervent, persevering, and importunate; the effects of which he instances in the case of a man, who, having a sudden visit from a friend on his journey, and nothing for him to eat, should run to his neighbour's house at midnight, and desire to borrow three loaves. At that unseasonable hour his neighbour would be apt to make many excuses, and endeavour to put him off, rather than disturb his family: yet, if he is very importunate, that will usually prevail; and, if but to be rid of his importunity, he will lend him what he asks. Now if one, who shews so much reluctance to yield, is overcome by entreaty, much more will our gracious God, who is ever more willing to hear than we to pray, and wont to give more than we desire or deserve, answer the supplications of his people, if they faint not. Let them *ask* in faith, nothing doubting; let them *seek* with diligence unwearied; let them *knock* aloud, with cries fervent and reiterated; and then they will surely find an answer of peace; their prayers shall be heard, their requests granted, and the door of mercy be opened.

3. Our Lord suggests yet farther encouragement to prayer from the consideration of our relation to God as our Father. If the bowels of earthly parents yearn over their children's wants, and none are found so inhuman as, instead of the bread and meat which they ask for, to give them things noxious and poisonous—If men, by nature sinful, feel such tenderness towards their offspring, how infinitely surpassing must be the compassions of our Father in heaven; and, as his power is equal to his love, much more will he supply all the spiritual necessities of our souls, and give his Holy Spirit, which comprizes all blessedness, to them that ask him.

2dly, The most amazing manifestations of Christ's power and glory, and his noble acts of beneficence towards men's bodies and souls, could not prevent the inveterate tongue of malice from casting upon him the most malignant aspersions. We have,

1. The wicked inference drawn by the Pharisees, on seeing a most astonishing instance of Christ's power in the dispossessing a devil from a man that was dumb, who immediately recovered his speech to the amazement of the spectators. To counteract the effects of this miraculous cure among the people, some of them, who could not deny the fact, suggested that it was performed by a confederacy between Jesus and the prince of the devils: whilst others challenged him to give a sign from heaven of his divine mission, as if all besides was unsatisfactory.

So.

hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

6 Are not five <sup>s</sup> sparrows sold for two far-

things, and <sup>h</sup> not one of them is forgotten before God?

7 But <sup>i</sup> even the very hairs of your head

<sup>f</sup> Pf. 9. 17. Mat. 25. 41. Rev. 1. 18. Is. 51. 13. <sup>s</sup> See Mat. 10. 29. <sup>h</sup> Acts, 15. 18. Pf. 113. 5. & 59. 10, 11. & 145. 15, 16. & 147. 9. <sup>i</sup> Sam. 14. 45. 2 Sam. 14. 11. 1 Kings, 1. 52. Acts, 27. 34. Ch. 21. 18. <sup>i</sup> Peter, 5. 7. Phil. 4. 6.

So perverse and absurd are usually the objections of obstinate infidelity.

2. Christ knew their thoughts, and what suggestions they were labouring to instil into the minds of the people, and confutes them with the most unanswerable arguments. It was as absurd to suppose so subtle an enemy as Satan, would ever concur in establishing that doctrine which radically overthrows his empire over the souls of men, as that any community or family should propose their establishment by the means of division between the members that compose it, which must evidently tend to their mutual destruction. Besides, they condemned themselves herein, when they admitted that many of their own kindred and followers, by exorcisms, were in the name of God enabled to cast out devils; and never supposed any diabolical combination in their case. This malignant opposition to him therefore tended most effectually to their own ruin and destruction; for, since *the finger of God* was evident in these miraculous works, and proved *the kingdom of God* was come, which the Messiah should erect in the world—in rejecting the evidence of his mission, they excluded themselves from all the blessings and privileges of his kingdom. And to shew farther the real destruction of Satan's power by his miracles and doctrine, he illustrates the matter by a similitude, ver. 21, 22. As a strong man will not quit his palace, which he holds with an armed force, unless he be vanquished by a superior foe, no more will Satan quit his hold of men's bodies and souls, till compelled by the power of the almighty Saviour. When the prey therefore is taken from this mighty one, it is a sure proof that his power is broken, and his interests ruined. Nor can there be any neutrality between Christ and Belial. They who halt between two opinions, who do not join Christ's cause, admit the evidence of his mission, and profess discipleship, must expect to be treated by him as enemies, and to be scattered in his wrath.

The Redeemer's victories over Satan are still daily seen; and we are bound to experience them in our own souls, or it had been good for us we had never been born. For by nature we are children of wrath, born slaves of corruption, and under the power of this wicked one. Our desperately wicked hearts are the palace where he sits enthroned, and there his despotic orders are obeyed; by every prejudice, every allurement, every temptation, he strengthens his interest against Christ and his truth; and flatters with visions of peace the sinner's soul, filling him with false confidence, keeping him in darkness with respect to his danger, lulling him asleep in security, suffering him to entertain no doubt of the goodness of his heart and the safety of his state, and turning him away from whatever tends to disturb this deceitful repose. But, when Christ comes by his word and Spirit, the conflict begins, unusual distress seizes the soul, the enemy struggles hard to keep his hold; but if the sinner do not use irregular

methods to quench his convictions, the stronger grace and power of the Saviour prevail, the strong-holds of Satan are laid low, the sinner's proud imaginations humbled, his false confidences, his own fancied righteousness and self-sufficiency levelled with the dust. Christ then comes and takes possession of the believing heart, by his enlightening, sanctifying grace dispels the darkness of ignorance and error, and looses the bonds of sin and corruption, taking the prey from the mighty, and employing to his own glory the body, soul, spirit, and all the faculties of the sincere believer.

3. Christ intimates to them their truly deplorable condition, under another similitude. They were like a man, out of whom the evil spirit departed for a while, seeking a settlement elsewhere; but, finding none to his mind, he returned to his former house, and found it ready prepared for his reception; where, entering with seven worse spirits, he took up his abode; and the case of that man was more desperate than ever. Thus now that Satan's kingdom was shaken in Judea, he had retired for a while into the Gentile world; but when, after the resurrection of Jesus, and the preaching of his gospel among the heathen, he could find no rest there, his idols being demolished and his votaries converted, then would he return again to the Jewish people, who had rejected their Messiah, and find them ready to welcome him into their hearts: with sevenfold greater influence over them, he will take possession of them for his own, and, by hurrying them on (thus ready to coincide with all his devices) to fill up the measure of their iniquities, will hasten the destruction of their country, and effectually ruin both body and soul in hell.

This also represents the state of every hypocrite. An outward reformation may be wrought, and Satan's power for a time in some degree suspended; the house may be swept from grosser immoralities, and garnished with the form of godliness, with speculative knowledge, or a fair shew of profession, while the heart remains unchanged, unhumbled, and unholy: for a while they thus endure; but, when the hour of temptation comes, Satan finds a ready access, and enters with greater power than ever into the heart; the sins which were before hid under the veil of hypocrisy, break forth; and these usually prove the vilest and most abandoned of all sinners, and will receive the greater damnation.

3dly, A gracious woman of the company, struck with the miracle that she had seen, and deeply affected with the convincing force of evidence which appeared in our Lord's discourse, could not restrain the glowing rapture of her heart, and burst forth into expressions of wonder and admiration at what she heard and saw, counting her inexpressibly blessed and happy who was the mother of such a son. But Christ took occasion to point her to an unspeakably greater honour and happiness, of which herself might become possessed: to hear the word of God and keep

are all numbered. \* Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.

8 <sup>1</sup> Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of

<sup>1</sup> Mat. 10. 31. & 6. 26. 1 Cor. 9. 9. Pf. 8. 5. If. 43. 1-3. & 41. 10-16. & 51. 7, 12. Ps. 119. 40. Act. 4. 19. Rev. 3. 5. 1 Sam. 2. 30. 1 Cor. 15. 58.

<sup>1</sup> Mat. 10. 31. Rom. 10. 9, 10. 2 Tim. 2. 12.

keep it, so to receive the love of the truth as to be saved thereby, was a far greater blessedness than, after the flesh, have been found among his nearest relatives.

As they were so obstinate in rejecting the signs that had given them, and still demand one from heaven, as a substitute for their unbelief, Christ rejects their petition, before the people, who were gathered thick around him, assures them,

That no sign shall be given them from heaven but of which Jonas was the type and figure, even the resurrection of the Son of man from the dead; and their prediction of that would seal them up under final impenitence.

He warns them of the dreadful ruin which must be the consequence of rejecting him and his gospel. As he was far greater than Solomon or Jonah, the queen of Sheba who came so far for the wisdom of the one, and the Ninevites who repented at the preaching of the other, would rise up in the next day, to upbraid and condemn their perverseness of belief.

They had yet the light of truth among them; they were therefore inexcusable if they abode in darkness, and shut their eyes against conviction. They who received the gospel, receiving it in the light and love of God, would be infinitely blessed and benefited thereby; but those who rejected it, would be given up justly to the power of Satan, and left to fall into eternal darkness; (1.) The gospel is the lighted candle, set up as a candlestick of the public ministry, to guide benighted souls into the paths of everlasting peace. (2.) The eye is to the body, that faith is to the soul, as the eye is to see the great things which pertain unto our salvation, and to embrace them; and, as the blessed light of the gospel, we are enabled to walk in comfort and holiness in grace, till, if we be fruitful, the blessed light when no cloud of ignorance, or spot of sin, obscures the full lustre of the beatific vision. (3.) The heart remains under the power of native corruption, if understanding is darkened, the judgment corrupted, and all the glories of the law are in vain; as the sun's brightest light does no light to the person whose organs of vision are obstructed by vicious humours. (4.) We have to beware how we trifle with the gospel, lest we should be left in the dark, as the Lord to withdraw the light of truth from those who are set up under judicial blindness and hardness of heart, how great is that darkness!

They have, therefore, a temptation which one of the Pharisees gave our Lord, which he accepted, and went to sit down to meat.

As he observed, and was much offended, that he had sat down to eat and drink with the tradition of the elders, which he and his disciples scrupulously observed,

3. Christ, who knew this proud Pharisee's thoughts, took occasion freely to reprove the folly and hypocrisy of those who had placed the substance of their religion in these useless and superstitious observances, while they neglected the great and most important commands of God. He denounces therefore his woes against them,

[1.] For their hypocrisy, in shewing such solicitude to observe the various washings of their cups and platters, in conformity with the traditions of the elders; while they took no pains to cleanse their souls from the deep pollutions of sin, from the inward extortion and covetousness, which rendered them abominable in the sight of God. What egregious folly! If God required outward cleanness, must he not much more expect internal purity? The way to have a sanctified use of their creature-comforts, was by charitable distribution to the poor, (Deut. xxvi. 12-15.) and when this proceeded out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned, all things would then be clean unto them: (Tit. 1. 15.) but without this, all the water in Jordan would never cleanse them from their filthiness. [2.] For their injustice and irreligion: while they pretended the most scrupulous regard to God's service, tithing even the herbs in their garden, they lived in the gross violation of the most weighty precepts of the moral law; passing over judgment, partial as magistrates, extortioners in their dealings, and as void of the love of God as of charity to their neighbour: duties, which, being of the first importance, demanded their chief attention. [3.] For their pride. They were fond of pre-eminence; expected the most honourable seat in places of worship, where humility was especially required; and expected sounding titles of homage to be paid them in public, as if they were beings of a superior rank. [4.] For their inward filthiness. Notwithstanding all the specious appearances of devotion and piety which they wore, their hearts were a sink of uncleanness; and as graves concealed, which men, ere they were aware, walked over, and were defiled by them; so did their principles, practice, and conversation, corrupt those who followed their destructive ways.

4. One of the lawyers, or scribes, whose office it was in general to expound the law to the people, conceived that these reproofs on the Pharisees included reproaches on them also; and our Lord, without respect of persons, does not spare them. They were alike culpable, and the same words and wrath hung over them. [1.] Because they added to the divine precepts an insupportable load of human traditions; and while to themselves they were abundantly indulgent, and made the path of self-denial sufficiently easy, they exacted with rigour a scrupulous conformity from others to their human impositions. [2.] Because they pretended reverence for the memory of the prophets, and erected noble monuments over the graves of those whom their fathers had murdered; but even the care of the prophets' tombs perpetuated the memory of the crimes of their ancestors, which they were ready to repeat, being actuated by the same malignant spirit; therefore also

man also confess before the angels of God :

9<sup>m</sup> But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

10<sup>n</sup> And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him : but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.

11<sup>o</sup> And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say :

12<sup>a</sup> For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

13 ¶ And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 And he said unto him, Man, what made me a judge or a divider over you ?

15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness : for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

<sup>m</sup> Mat. 10. 33. Mark, 8. 38. Ch. 9. 26. 1 John, 2. 23. Mat. 7. 23. & 25. 12, 41. <sup>n</sup> Mat. 12. 31, 32. Mark, 3. 28, 29. 1 Tim. 1. 13, 15. Heb. 7. 25. 1 John, 1. 9. Ezek. 33. 11. Ch. 23. 34. Acts, 5. 3. with 1 John, 5. 16. Heb. 6. 4—8. & 10. 26—31. 1 Sam. 2. 25. <sup>o</sup> Mat. 10. 19. Mark, 13. 11. Ch. 21. 14, 15. Acts, iv—xxv. <sup>p</sup> Mat. 6. 34. Phil. 4. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 7. <sup>q</sup> Pl. 46. 1. Gen. 22. 14. Exod. 4. 11, 15. 2 Sam. 23. 2. 1f. 43, 1, 2. & 41. 10. & 48. 17. Jer. 1. 7. Ch. 21. 14. <sup>r</sup> Pl. 17. 14. Phil. 3. 19. John, 6. 26. 1 Tim. 6. 5, 9, 10. <sup>s</sup> Exod. 2. 14. John, 18. 36. <sup>t</sup> Ch. 21. 34. & 8. 14. 1 Cor. 5. 11. Col. 3. 5. 1 Tim. 6. 7—11, 17—19. Heb. 13. 5. Eph. 5. 3. 1 Thess. 2. 5. Hab. 2. 9. Pl. 119. 36, 37. Prov. 28. 16. <sup>u</sup> Mat. 6. 25. Eccl. 4. 6. & 5. 10, 12, 13, 17, 19. & 6. 2. Prov. 17. 1. & 15. 16, 17. & 25. 16. Pl. 37. 16.

said the wisdom of God, Jesus the divine Logos, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute, exceeding all the outrages of their forefathers ; more bloody-minded and inveterate against the ministers of the gospel ; filling up hereby the measure of their iniquities, and bringing upon themselves the vengeance due for all the righteous blood shed from Abel to Zacharias, who for his fidelity was stoned in the very courts of the temple, (2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22.) At the hands of this generation, says he, shall it be required ; and the prediction was fearfully verified in the dreadful and utter destruction shortly after poured out upon their city, temple, and nation. [3.] Because they had taken away the key of knowledge ; arrogating to themselves the right of expounding the Scriptures, they misled the people by corrupt glosses. They perverted the texts which had the plainest reference to the Messiah, and the clearest accomplishment in Jesus : instilling wrong notions of his temporal kingdom, they prejudiced the people against Christ and his gospel ; and refusing to enter themselves into the number of his disciples, they used all their art and influence to prevent others from joining them who were disposed to acknowledge his mission and character.

5. Pierced with these sharp rebukes, which unhumiliated sinners regard as affronts and reproaches, they began to urge him vehemently, with captious questions, and to provoke him to speak of many things ; trying to ruffle his temper, or draw from him some unguarded expression, whereon to ground some accusation against him ; either to render him odious to the people, or obnoxious to the government ; but his patience and prudence disappointed their malice. Note ; Fidelity in reproving men's sins will often procure us inveterate enemies ; and we have need to watch over the temper of our hearts, and the door of our lips, when in the midst of those who we know lie in wait for our halting.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. When there were gathered together an innumerable multitude] Many thousands of people ; — τῶν μυριάδων τε ἄλλῃ ;

literally, many myriads. Perhaps this vast assemblage of people might be owing to an apprehension, either that Christ might meet with some ill usage among so many of his enemies, or that he would say or do something peculiarly remarkable on the occasion. It was in the hearing of this vast assembly, that he gave his disciples in general a charge and exhortation, similar to that which he had given to the twelve apostles after their election. The precept, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, with which he began this charge, is similar to that which in the charge to the twelve runs thus, Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves : Matth. x. 16. For though the apostles and the disciples were to be remarkably prudent in their behaviour, yet the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy or deceit, was not to enter into the composition of their prudence ; because hypocrisy is only an expedient to serve a turn, the mask being always torn from hypocrites sooner or later. See the parallel places.

Ver. 6. For two farthings,] Ἀσάριων δύο.—The *asi*, or ancient *assarius*, which was the tenth part of the *denarius*, or Roman penny, was also a Roman coin then current in Judea, and in value, as is generally thought, about three farthings of our money. See on Matth. x. 29.

Ver. 10. It shall be forgiven him :] It may be forgiven him : Doddridge ; who observes that the common reading of ἀφεθίσεται, is more literal ; but the connection shews, it must be taken according to the translation here given ; for it would be madness to imagine that in such a case as this, forgiveness must come of course, whether the blasphemer does or does not repent. What grammarians call an *enallage* of words and tenses, is very frequent in the sacred writings.

Ver. 13, 14. Master, speak to my brother, &c.] While Jesus was thus exhorting his disciples, a certain person in the crowd begged that he would persuade his brother, who probably was present, to divide their paternal inheritance, and give him his share. The appellant probably thought, that as the Messiah he would act in the character of a prince, who would decide controversies relating to property ; but, because judging in civil matters was the province of the magistrate, and foreign to the end of our Lord's

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully :

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits ?

\* Job, 12. 6. Mat. 5. 45. Acts, 1. 17. Job, 21. 7-12. Ps. 73. 3-12.

Lord's coming into the world, he refused to meddle in their quarrel.

Ver. 15. *Take heed, and beware of covetousness :*] See to be upon your guard against covetousness. The original is very lively, and the full force of it not easy to be expressed. Some old versions, and very good copies, read, *beware of covetousness*. It is not said which of these brothers was in the wrong; only because the disposition which they shewed, afforded a fit opportunity for religious advice, our Lord embraced it, and cautioned his hearers in the most solemn manner against covetousness: declaring, that neither the length nor the happiness of man's life depends on the greatness of his possessions. Human life is but a very little; and therefore abundance is not necessary, for the support or comfort of it. It is not a great estate that makes a man happy in this world; and that is equal to its condition, whatever it may be. Archbishop Tillotson observes upon this verse, that it contains a peculiar kind of caution, no where else, nor on any other occasion, that I know of," says he, in Scripture; in which, for the greater emphasis and weight, the words of caution are doubled, as if the matter were of so much concernment, that no caution could be too much: to signify to us, both the danger of this sin of covetousness, and the great care we ought to use to preserve ourselves from it." Sermons, vol. 6. p. 69.

*And he spake a parable unto them,]* The first thing inquired into, is the true drift and meaning of the parable. In the 15th verse our Lord warns his hearers to *beware of covetousness*. In this parable, he reprehends a rich man enlarging his barns, that he might lay up his goods in store: in the text he warns us to *lay up treasures for ourselves, while we are rich towards God*, and ver. 33. he exhorts us to *be rich towards God, and give alms; to provide for ourselves, that our treasure may not grow old; a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, neither thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth*. In the circumstances it is commonly understood, that the crime of the rich man's crime; that enlarging his barns, and heaping up his plentiful crop was the instance and example, and that the only way to be rich towards God, is to be rich towards God, and to distribute them in works of charity. Thus the parable is commonly understood, and think, not rightly. Our Saviour, it is true, in the parable in consequence of the caution that he gave, *beware of covetousness*: but he had before given a caution against covetousness, ver. 15. and the parable was given to shew this reason given against covetousness, that the folly or vice of covetousness in general is not described in the colours of a man whose wealth arose from no oppression or fraud, but the product of his own land, which has been esteemed as honest way of being rich, and

to proceed as much from the immediate blessing of God, as any whatever. The ground was his own; he is not said to withhold it from the rightful possessor by violence or fraud. Thus far then there is no mark of covetousness, or any other fault. But when he found his crop to be great, he enlarged his barns; and this perhaps was his crime. But where was the iniquity of this? Does not every man endeavour that his barns should be in proportion to the product of his land? May not the most charitable man in the world have, or build a barn large enough to receive his crop, and yet be guiltless? Nay, it is evident hence, that *covetousness*, properly so called, was not his fault, for he built his barns to *lay up stores for many years*, proposing rest and satisfaction in the goods already gotten, and intending to trouble himself no further about wealth: he had enough. A covetous man would rather have turned his goods into money, and put it to usury, and slaved on still for more. Besides, in ver. 20. where God is brought in, reproving the rich man for his folly, there is not one word said of his building large barns to receive his fruits:—*Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee!* But, if the large barns had been the crime, the consistency of the parable requires that the reproof should have pointed to the crime, and it should have been said, "Thou fool! this night shall the lightning from heaven consume thy large barns," or something to this purpose. Further, neither upon this is it rightly concluded from the circumstances of the parable, that this rich man was void of charity to the poor. He is represented as fully satisfied in his abundance. There had been much more reason to have thought him uncharitable, had he been represented as not contented with his abundance; but still fearful of poverty and want; which is often the case, and the pretence of the rich uncharitable man. Nor, lastly, is it reasonable to limit and confine the notion of being rich towards God, to works of charity only: all good works in proportion make us rich towards God. St. Paul speaks in general of the richness of good works, and St. James of the richness of faith: and in the present passage, to be rich to God, does particularly signify to trust and rely upon his providence for our life and support, in opposition to relying on treasures of our own heaping up, or large barns of our own building and filling. And now, having thus far examined the common interpretation, and shewn how much it falls short of our Saviour's true aim and intent, I shall endeavour to point out the true meaning, which will lead us into the right understanding of the inference drawn by our Lord, ver. 21. When our Saviour exhorted his hearers to beware of covetousness, he supported his advice with this reason, *for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth*; this reason he illustrates and confirms in the following parable. So that the aim of the parable is to shew, that wealth is no security; that it is folly to pretend, by heaping up trea-

18 <sup>a</sup> And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, <sup>b</sup> Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; <sup>c</sup> take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 <sup>b</sup> But God said unto him, *Thou fool*, this night <sup>\*</sup> thy soul shall be required of thee: <sup>c</sup> then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 <sup>d</sup> So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

22 ¶ And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, <sup>e</sup> Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

23 <sup>f</sup> The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

24 <sup>g</sup> Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 17. 14. Phil. 3. 19. James, 3. 15. & 4. 4. <sup>b</sup> Job, 14. 1. Prov. 27. 2. <sup>c</sup> Eccl. 11. 9. Lk. 22. 12, 13. 1 Cor. 15. 32. James, 5. 6. <sup>d</sup> Dan. 4. 31. 1 Theil. 5. 3. Job, 21. 1. <sup>e</sup> Or do they require thy soul. <sup>f</sup> Job, 20. 20, 22. & 27. 8. Ps. 39. 6. & 52. 7. Jer. 17. 11. Lk. 49. 7. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 6. 20. Ver. 31. Hulse, 10. 1. 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 6. 25—34. Ps. 55. 22. 1 Cor. 7. 32. Phil. 4. 6. 1 Peter, 5. 7. <sup>i</sup> 1 Tim. 6. 8. Heb. 13. 5. <sup>j</sup> Job, 2. 4. 6. & 1. 12. Prov. 13. 8. & 6. 26. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 6. 26. Job, 38. 41. Ps. 104. 27, 28. & 145. 15, 16. & 147. 9.

fures, to arm ourselves against the accidents or casualties of life, from which nothing can protect us, but the good providence and care of our heavenly Father. In this point all the circumstances of the parable meet. The rich man is represented as flowing in plenty, so that he was necessitated to pull down his barns and storehouses, in order to build larger. This plenty made him forget God, and vainly imagine that he had a security in his own hands against all the calamities of life. His riches made him promise himself many happy days and years; in which confidence he expresses himself as in ver. 19. This folly God reproves him for, and checks him in his presumptuous security, ver. 20. *Thou fool*, &c.—“Thou shalt die;—and what then must become of those mighty pledges of thy security? So little will they avail thee, that they themselves will fall under the power of another, never to return to thee again. So is he, continues our Lord, “who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.” Which words being the moral of this parable, must be expounded so as to answer the design of the parable; and therefore to lay up treasures for ourselves, must signify, to lay them up for our own security, as if we meant to become thereby the carvers of our own fortune. Consequently to be rich towards God, being placed in opposition to laying up treasures for ourselves, must denote our placing confidence and trust in him; our endeavouring to procure his favour and protection, as knowing that in them only is all our hope and stability. See the *Inferences and Reflections*.

Ver. 18. *All my fruits and my goods.*] *All my increase and good things*: that is, “There will I collect and lay up all this year’s increase, and likewise the produce of former years which I have in store.”

Ver. 19. *Take thine ease, &c.*] The original is remarkably lively and expressive, and contains one proof among a thousand, of the propriety and elegance of the scripture language: *Ἀναπαύσθε, φάγετε, πίνετε, ἠδουθήτω*: *Take thy rest, eat, drink, be joyful*. Nothing can more strongly express the self-satisfied hilarity of a sensualist.

Ver. 20. *Shall be required of thee.*] It is in the original *ἄνωγειν, ἃς ἂν ἐπιβούλευσιν*; which Elfner thinks alludes to the messengers sent to fetch away the soul; and he produces a remarkable and well-known passage from Plato

to prove that Socrates thought this the office of a spirit superior to men. Others, to preserve the literal meaning of the words, suppose, that thieves broke into this man’s house, and robbed him of his life, together with his riches; but it is most probable that, according to an use of the plural number very familiar in the Hebrew language, these words may signify no more than that his life should be taken away, without determining whether angels, as executioners of the divine decree, or men should take it away.

Ver. 21. *And is not rich towards God.*] There is a force and propriety in the phrase *εἰς Θεόν*, here rendered *towards God*, which our language will not exactly express; it represents God as a depositary, in whose hands the good man has lodged his treasure, and who has as it were made himself accountable for it in another and better world. See Prov. xix. 17.

Ver. 22. *Take no thought.*] *Be not solicitous*. Our Lord, having delivered the parable of the rich glutton, proceeded in the charge: and because a hurry of business is often a great enemy to religious dispositions, he cautioned his disciples against anxious cares about the world, from the consideration of God’s providence, which is so extensively perfect, as to comprehend all his works, great and small, without exception. The caution to beware of covetousness, and the parable whereby he enforced that caution, was spoken to the contending covetous brothers, and to the multitude. This part of his discourse he directed to his disciple, founding it upon the caution and parable; as if he had said, “Since a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth; since plenty of goods and fruits is not capable of prolonging a man’s life for a moment, you, my disciples, more especially ought, for that reason, to take no thought for the prolongation of your life, by anxiously laying up a store of provisions and of clothes, as if these could preserve life. No; you should consider that *the life*,” &c. ver. 23. The sentiments in this and the following verses are great and sublime; the same with those contained in the sermon on the mount; Matth. vi. 25, &c. which see.

Ver. 24. *Consider the ravens.*] See Matth. vi. 26. Dr. Heylin renders the last clause in this verse, *Of how much greater value are ye than the fowls?*

Ver.

nor barn; and God feedeth them: How much more are ye better than the fowls?

25 <sup>h</sup> And which of you with taking thought can add to his \* stature one cubit?

26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that <sup>i</sup> Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 If then God so clothe the grass, <sup>k</sup> which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more *will be clothe* you, <sup>l</sup> O ye of little faith?

29 And <sup>m</sup> seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, <sup>†</sup> neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 <sup>n</sup> For all these things do the nations of

the world seek after: \* and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 <sup>p</sup> But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

32 <sup>q</sup> Fear not, <sup>r</sup> little flock; for <sup>s</sup> it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33 ¶ <sup>t</sup> Sell that ye have, and give alms; <sup>u</sup> provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34 <sup>x</sup> For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

35 ¶ <sup>y</sup> Let your loins be girded about, and *your* lights burning;

36 <sup>z</sup> And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from

<sup>h</sup> Mat. 6. 27. Pf. 75. 6. Eccl. 9. 12. \* Or age. <sup>i</sup> 1 Kings, iv. ix. x. 2 Chron. i. viii. ix. <sup>k</sup> Pf. 129. 6. & 102. 4. If. 40. 6, 7. <sup>l</sup> 1 Peter, i. 24. <sup>m</sup> If. 50. 10. Ch. 14. 31. Mark, 9. 24. <sup>n</sup> Ver. 22. Mat. 6. 25, 31. Phil. 4. 6. 1 Peter, 5. 7. Pf. 55. 22. <sup>o</sup> Or live <sup>p</sup> in careful suspense. <sup>q</sup> Pf. 4. 6. & 17. 14. Phil. 3. 19. Rom. 8. 5. Mat. 5. 46, 47. & 6. 32. <sup>r</sup> 2 Chron. 16. 9. Pf. 23. 1. Phil. 4. 19. <sup>s</sup> Mat. 6. 33. John, 6. 27. 1 Tim. 4. 8. 1 Kings, 3. 12—13. Pf. 34. 9, 10. & 37. 8, 19, 25, 29. & 84. 11. Ch. 10. 41. 1 Cor. 3. 22. Rom. 8. 31, 32. <sup>t</sup> If. 35. 3, 4. & 41. 10, 14. & 43. 1, 2. Rev. 1. 17. <sup>u</sup> Mat. 7. 14. & 20. 16. & 22. 14. If. 40. 11. Ezek. 34. 31. <sup>v</sup> Mat. 7. 11. Eph. 1. 3—7. Jer. 3. 19. Heb. 12. 28. 2 Peter, 1. 11. Rom. 6. 23. Mat. 11. 25, 26. <sup>w</sup> Mat. 19. 21. Acts, 2. 45. & 4. 34. 2 Cor. 8. 2. Ch. 16. 9. <sup>x</sup> Mat. 6. 19—21. Ch. 16. 9. & 18. 22. 1 Tim. 6. 17—19. <sup>y</sup> Mat. 6. 21. Col. 3. 1—3. Phil. 3. 20. 2 Cor. 4. 18. <sup>z</sup> Eph. 6. 14. 1 Peter, 1. 13. Mat. 5. 16. Prov. 4. 18. & 21. 18. <sup>†</sup> Gen. 49. 18. Pf. 62. 1, 5. & 130. 5, 6. & 123. 2.

Ver. 26. To do that thing which is least,] This proves, that to add one cubit to a thing, was a proverbial expression for making the least addition to it.

Ver. 29. Neither be ye of doubtful mind.] Neither be ye set afloat [with desire] Μη μετ'εωπιζετε: "Be not (like meteors in the air, which are tossed about by every blast of wind) hurried with anxious cares, and agitated with a variety of restless and uneasy thoughts." Any speculations and musings, in which the mind fluctuates or is suspended in an uneasy hesitation, might well be expressed by the word μετ'εωπιζω.

Ver. 32—34. Fear not, little flock, &c.] "Since the will of God is your everlasting happiness, he will surely bestow on you the necessaries of the present life." This part of the charge may be considered as parallel to the directions given to the twelve, Matth. x. 9. Provide neither gold, &c. That is, "make no provision for your journey, but rely wholly on the providence of God." Only our Lord added a precept peculiarly calculated for those times, in which the profession of the gospel exposed men to the losses of all their goods; ver. 33, 34. Sell that ye have, &c. "By bestowing that wealth in charities, send it before you into heaven, where it shall be secured from all accidents, and be a source of eternal joy to you; and if your treasure be thus laid up in heaven, your heart will be there; consequently, your dispositions, actions, and hopes will all be heavenly." This counsel was designed principally for the apostles, who, being chosen from among all the disciples to go out into the world, and convert mankind, could have no fixed possessions, con-

sistently with the duties of their function; neither had they any occasion for them, being the peculiar charge of Providence. Besides, that the first preachers of the gospel should be poor, was altogether necessary, because, if it had been otherwise, the world might have suspected that the tie which united them in the great undertaking of converting the world; was of a secular and selfish nature. See on Matth. xix. 21. And indeed, in all ages of the Christian church, the most useful ministers of the gospel have been poor in respect to this world. However, though this direction was given to the apostles in particular the disciples in general seem to have followed it after the day of Pentecost, when they sold their possessions, and put the price of them into a common stock, wherewith they supported their brethren; for it can hardly be doubted, that their behaviour in this matter proceeded from the regard which they paid to the present admonition of our Lord, joined with their charitable dispositions, and their expectation of better possessions in the Messiah's kingdom of glory. Nevertheless, from what St. Peter said to Ananias, Acts, v. 4. we learn, that this precept did not absolutely oblige them, being in the literal sense calculated, as we have already observed, for the apostles. Dr. Doddridge upon the word σιδοχνησεν, ver. 32. remarks, that it generally signifies a pleasurable acquiescence. And, agreeably to this, it is pleasing to observe how God is represented in scripture, as enjoying his own presence as it were with a peculiar relish, in the view of those glories which he has prepared for his faithful saints.

Ver. 35, 36. Let your loins be girded about] As the eastern

<sup>a</sup> the wedding; that when <sup>v</sup> he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37 <sup>c</sup> Blessed *are* those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants.

39 <sup>d</sup> And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

40 <sup>e</sup> Be ye therefore ready also: for the

Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

41 ¶ Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable <sup>f</sup> unto us, or even to all?

42 And the Lord said, <sup>g</sup> Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* lord shall make ruler over his household, to give *them* *their* portion of meat in due season?

43 <sup>h</sup> Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he <sup>i</sup> will make him ruler over all that he hath.

45 But <sup>k</sup> and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin <sup>l</sup> to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 22. 1—13. & 25. 1—12. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 24. 47—49. Song. 5. 2. Rev. 3. 20. Pf. 24. 7, 9. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 24. 46—51. Rev. 16. 15. Lam. 3. 25, 26. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 24. 43. 1 Theff. 5. 2, 3. Rev. 16. 15. & 3. 3. <sup>e</sup> Peter, 3. 10. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 24. 42, 44. & 25. 10, 13. Rom. 13. 11. 1 Cor. 16. 13. 1 Theff. 5. 6. 1 Peter, 5. 8. Mark, 13. 33—37. Ch. 21. 34—36. 2 Peter, 3. 12. Rev. 16. 15. & 21. 2. & 19. 7. <sup>g</sup> Mark, 13. 37. & 14. 34, 38. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 24. 45. & 25. 21, 23. Ch. 19. 17, 19. 1 Cor. 4. 2. John, 21. 15—17. Acts, 20. 28. Gal. 6. 10. Eph. 4. 11. <sup>i</sup> Heb. 3. 5. & 13. 17. 2 Tim. 2. 2. <sup>j</sup> Rev. 16. 15. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. Ver. 37. <sup>k</sup> See ver. 42. Ch. 19. 17, 19. & 22. 29, 30. 1 Peter, 5. 4. Daniel, 12. 2, 3. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 24. 48. 2 Peter, 2. 3, 4. Ezek. 12. 22—28. <sup>m</sup> If. 65. 5. 3 John, 9. 10. 2 Cor. 11. 26. Gal. 4. 17, 18. Phil. 3. 18, 19.

eastern nations wore long garments, it was necessary that, when they had any thing to do which required them to exert their strength or agility, they should tuck them up, and gird them close; a practice to which there are frequent references both in the Old Testament and the New. That the lamps should be found extinguished, might be an inconvenient circumstance to the master, would deprive his procession of all its grandeur, and would be a demonstration of the servant's idleness. The expressions taken together, may intimate the care which we should take to inform ourselves in our duty, and the resolution which we should apply to the performance of it. There does not appear to be any particular mystery in the circumstance of the wedding. Our Lord probably chose to mention this, because marriage-feasts were generally the most splendid, and so prolonged to the latest hour. See the note on Matth. xxv. 1.

Ver. 37—40. *Will come forth, and serve them, &c.*] It was usual for servants to sit at table, and for the master to wait upon them, among the Babylonians, at their feast called *Saccas*; among the Cretans, in their *Hernæa*; and among the Romans, in their *Saturnalia*: but whether our Lord alluded to these, or any of these, it is difficult to judge. The words certainly are very intelligible, without supposing any such reference. Our Lord, in the next verse, enforced constant watchfulness, and habitual preparation, from the consideration of the uncertainty of his coming; telling them, that as there is no master of a family but would make some preparation against a thief, if he knew of his coming, so it would be no great matter, if they should make preparation on receiving certain information of his approach; for which reason their zeal could only shew itself by keeping in a constant readiness, as they did

not know at what hour he would come. The *coming of the Son of man*, as we have before remarked, often signifies his providential interposition for the destruction of Jerusalem: but here, (ver. 40.) it cannot be taken in such a sense, because our Lord speaks of an immediate reward to be bestowed on all faithful servants, and an immediate punishment to be executed on all that were unfaithful; and expressly declares this to be a matter of universal concern: all which particulars have very little sense or propriety, when applied to the destruction of Jerusalem. It must therefore be understood of his coming to remove them from the capacities of service here, to give up their account; and if we suppose it to relate to death, as well as judgment, which, by consequence at least, it undoubtedly does, it strongly intimates his having such a dominion over the invisible world, that every soul removed into it might be said to be fetched away by him. Compare Rev. i. 18. and the note on ver. 56. Instead of *and this know*, ver. 39. some read, *but this you know*.

Ver. 41, 42. *Then Peter said, &c.*] St. Peter, who had been giving great attention to the whole of this sermon, was, it seems, at a loss to know, whether the parable of the watching servants was spoken to the multitude in general, or to the apostles in particular; he therefore begged his Master to satisfy him as to that point. The parable was directed to all the disciples; but it contained instructions which Peter thought were peculiar to the twelve: accordingly, by the steward Jesus shewed him, that though his exhortations were directed to all, they had a more especial relation to those who were entrusted with the care of the souls of others. The interrogation, *Who then, &c.* ver. 42. had a lively force to turn their thoughts inward, that each one might ask himself whether he was the man-

The

46 " The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will \* cut him in sunder, and " will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

47 " And that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with any stripes.

48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

49 ¶ " I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?

50 But " I have a baptism to be baptized

Mat. 21. 44, 45, 50, 51. 1 Thess. 5. 2, 3. Rev. 16. 15. John, 5. 28, 29. \* Or cut him off. " Job, 20. 29. Pf. 11. 6. Mat. 7. 28, 29. 11. 12. & 13. 42, 50. " Mat. 11. 21—24. Ch. 10. 12—15. John, 9. 41. & 15. 22. Acts, 17. 30. James, 4. 17. Num. 15. 30. Deut. Lev. 5. 17. P Ver. 51—53. Mat. 10. 34—36. & 16. 27, 25. & 24. 9, 10. " Mat. 20. 22. & 16. 21. & 17. 22, 23. & 28. 19, 28. 39. & xxvi. xxvii. John, xviii. xix. Ch. xxiii. xxiii.

meaning is, " What do you think ought to be the character and conduct of a steward, to whom his Lord committeth the care of his family in his absence, as I the care of my church to you? Why certainly he should be both wise to know in what manner to govern family, and faithful in executing whatever his wisdom and prudence directed as fit to be done; for thus all the members of the family under his care will have due provision made for them." The word οἰκονομία, household, exactly answers to the Latin familia, the servants of a family, for which we have no one word;—any more than for σιτομέτριον, which signifies " a determinate measure of wheat," but not for all the daily food. By such a version the sense between this and the 44th verse is set in a clearer light, as critics have generally given it. To be raised from the care of giving out food to the servants, to have the whole estate, was a noble preferment.

And cut him in sunder,] See the note on Matth.

48. And that servant which knew his lord's will, the consideration of the strictness of the act, the greatness of the punishment described in the text might terrify men of honest dispositions, who are merely through weakness, Jesus shewed them, as cases differ greatly in their circumstances and degrees, so shall they differ in their punishment also. In this part of our Lord's discourse, we must observe that the servant here spoken of had received full notice from his Lord, either before his departure, or by his letters, how he was to employ himself, and to be under his care; wherefore if he neglected his duty, he is more to blame than the inferior servants, who are ignorant of their Lord's will but from the negligence of the superior servant, who might conceal it from them, and lead a mind to serve any bye-end of his own. The emphasis in the words prepared not himself, according to his Lord's will. The sense of the foregoing verse; as if our Lord had said, not that I merely intend to forbid such vices as drunkenness, riot, oppression, &c. but that sins of omission, where there have been opportunities of learning your duty, will excite the divine wrath." Scourging was an usual punishment of negligent servants. See Deut. xxv. 2, 3: and shall I scourge us that the servant who knew not his

Lord's will, shall be beaten though with few stripes, for committing things worthy of stripes, strongly intimates, that ignorance will not entirely excuse any who have neglected God's service, since they might in general have known at least the main branches of their duty, as every servant may know in the main what kind of conduct his master will approve; though some may be much more fully instructed than others, as to his particular pleasure. We may observe further, that, as rational creatures, it is as much our duty to cultivate our reason, and to inquire into and know our duty, as it is to act through grace agreeably to the knowledge that we have. With respect to the distinctions above made, how fitly does this parable describe the aggravation of the sins of ministers and teachers of religion, who have such superior and singular advantages for knowing Christ's will! In this light it shews the justice of the more severe punishments here denounced, as to be inflicted on them for such wilful neglects and miscarriages as they are found to be guilty of in the discharge of their office. Indeed, all who are in any measure distinguished by the gifts of the divine bounty to them, or by their stations, whether in civil or sacred offices, should attentively dwell on the great truth so solemnly repeated in this 48th verse, and should seriously consider it with a view to their own account,—that to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.

Ver. 49. I am come to send fire, &c.] Jesus concluded the charge with foretelling the divisions which should be occasioned by his gospel: I am come to send fire on the earth, (see on Matth. x. 34.) and what will I, if it be already kindled? — τί θίλω, — what wish I. " Do I wish to escape that fire which I myself, if it be already kindled?" The fire that our Lord here speaks of, as the effect of his coming, being the fire of division and persecution, it was already kindled, and about to seize himself: but by this question, and what he immediately subjoins, he declared he was willing to be the first victim who should be consumed in that fire, as it would tend so abundantly to the spiritual welfare of mankind. Our blessed Lord seems to have glowed with the most ardent zeal for the good of the human race, when he breathed out this generous wish. Some render it, and how do I wish, or how desirous am I, that it were already kindled?

Ver. 50. But I have a baptism, &c.] " But I have indeed, in the mean time, a most dreadful baptism to be baptized with, and know that I shall shortly be baptized

with; and how am I ' straitened till it be accomplished!

51 ' Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law

against her mother-in-law.

54 ¶ And he said also to the people, ' When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is.

55 And <sup>u</sup> when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

56 <sup>x</sup> Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern <sup>y</sup> this time?

57 <sup>z</sup> Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

<sup>r</sup> Or *pained*. Pf. 40. 8. John, 18. 11. Acts, 21. 13. He desired, and delighted, to suffer unto death, for our redemption. <sup>s</sup> Mat. 10. 31—36. 21. Micah, 7. 5. 6. Jer. 9. 4. Acts, 13. 44, 45. & 28. 24. Pf. 41. 9. & 55. 13, 14. John, 13. 18. & 15. 18, 19. & 16. 2. 2 Cor. 11. 26. Acts, 11—13. John, 9. 16. & 10. 19. <sup>t</sup> Mat. 16. 2. Job, 36. 27—33. 1 Kings, 18. 44. <sup>u</sup> Job, 37. 17. <sup>v</sup> Mat. 16. 3. Rom. 1. 21, 22. 1 Cor. 1. 19. —24, 26, 27. Mat. 11. 25. & 24. 32. John, 4. 35. <sup>w</sup> Gal. 4. 4. Ch. 19. 42, 44. 11. 63. 4. & 61. 2. Dan. 9. 24—6. Mal. 3. 1. & 4. 2. Hag. 2. 7. Ch. 19. 42, 44. <sup>x</sup> Deut. 4. 29. & 32. 29. Pf. 94. 8.

“ as it were in blood, and plunged in the most overwhelming distress;” (see on Matth. xx. 23.) “ Yet how am I straitened [σνίχουαι] and uneasy, through the earnestness of my desire, till, terrible as it is, it be fully completed, and the glorious birth produced, whatever agonies may lie in the way to it.” See 2 Cor. v. 14. John, xvi. 21. and Acts, xviii. 5.

Ver. 51. *Suppose ye, &c.*] By subduing all the nations of the world into one great monarchy, under the Jews? I tell you nay. There are so many prophecies of the peaceful state of the Messiah's kingdom, that it is hard to say how Christ could completely answer the character of the Messiah, if he should never give peace on earth. But the error of the Jews lay in supposing that he was immediately to accomplish it; whereas the prophecies of the New Testament, especially in the book of the *Revelation*, shew, and those of the Old Testament most plainly intimate, that this prosperous state of his kingdom was not only to be preceded by his own sufferings, but by a variety of persecutions, trials, and sufferings, which should in different degrees attend his followers, before the kingdoms of the earth became, by a general conversion, the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ. See Rev. xi. 15.

Ver. 53. *The mother-in-law against the daughter, &c.*] *The mother-in-law against her son's wife, and the daughter-in-law against her husband's mother.* This is the exact rendering of the original words. Our Lord might mention this relation, because, in consequence of the obligation which the Jewish children were under to maintain their aged parents, a young man might, when he settled in the world, often take his mother, if a widow, into his family; and her abode in it might occasion less uneasiness than that of a mother-in-law in any other sense. This and the foregoing verse may be understood to express thus much;—“ So high a value shall mankind put upon my religion, that for its sake they shall forego the friendship and affection of their nearest and dearest relations; who will persecute them bitterly, because they have cast off their paternal worship.”

Ver. 54, 55. *And he said also to the people,*] When Jesus had done speaking to his disciples, he addressed the unbelieving multitude, who on this occasion were gathered together, and stood round, hearing the instruction which he gave to his disciples. See ver. 1. The Mediterranean Sea lying west of Judea, the clouds and showers usually came from that quarter. See 1 Kings, xviii. 44. The word ὄμβρος properly signifies a shower; and the word καύρων, in the next verse, sultry or scorching heat. The wind which is south of Judea, blowing over the hot sands of Arabia and Egypt, occasions a great heat in the air. Those which are properly called the hot winds in that climate, are so hot, that they bring on a faintness and difficulty of breathing.

Ver. 56. *Ye hypocrites, &c.*] “ Since ye can form a judgment of the weather which shall happen, by the signs appearing in the earth and sky, what is the reason that you do not discover this time by its signs?” Our Lord meant the time of the Messiah's appearing on earth, to accomplish the salvation of the world, according to the ancient prophecies. See Mark, viii. 11. Matth. xvi. 1.—and also the time of his coming to destroy the Jewish nation, which he had described under the similitude of one who comes secretly and unexpectedly to rob a house, ver. 39, 40.

Ver. 57. *Yea, and why even of yourselves, &c.*] The prediction of the coming of the Son of man to punish the Jews for their perfidy and rebellion, was a loud call to a national repentance: wherefore, as the improvement of that prediction, Jesus exhorted them to a speedy reformation, telling them, that common sense, with a very small degree of reflection, would point it out to them as the very best thing they could do for the averting of the impending judgments of God:—*Why, even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?* The phrase ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν, does not seem here to signify “ from the like principles of good sense which you use in common affairs, or in matters relating to yourselves;” but it seems an advance on that thought: as if our Lord had said, “ Even though I had not so exactly”

58 ¶ When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, *as thou art in the way,* give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and

<sup>1</sup> Mt. 5. 23-26. Gen. 12. 3-20. 1 Sam. 25. 28. Prov. 25. 8, 9, with Pl. 32. 6. 2 Cor. 6. 2. Heb. 3. 7-13. Ch. 14. 31, 32. If. 55. 6. Job, 12. 21. Job, 5. 22. Mark, 13. 47.

precisely drawn the consequence; yet, from the tenor of my doctrine and character, as well as from my miracles, you might have discerned yourselves that it must be a very wrong and very dangerous thing to reject and slight me.

Ver. 58. *When thou goest, &c.*] *As you are going with your adversary to the governor, endeavour to satisfy him, and your discharge while you are in the way; lest he carry you before the judge, &c.* We are all on our way to judgment; we might therefore see the necessity of being reconciled to our adversary, even the great God; through the Blood of the covenant. For he must be our adversary, as long as we continue in wilful disobedience. His justice demands, which nothing without this reconciliation to the true spirit of penitence can satisfy. See the parable on Matth. v. 25.

References drawn from the parable of the rich fool. Ver. 16.—From this striking parable before us, particularly explained in the note on ver. 16. we may easily see what are the dangerous circumstances attending riches, which make them often prove so fatal to their possessors; namely, that they beget an irreligious confidence and presumption in the heart of man, inclining him to despise God who formed him. A sense of want brings to the remembrance of our dependance, and is ever likely to look up to him, upon whose mercy and goodness we exist.

Dependent in difficulties, and supported beyond all the hopes of narrow circumstances, suggests to us that, if we have any grace, how wonderfully God has brought us on our way, when we had neither strength, nor money in our scrip. These are the thoughts and suggestions of poverty, to a soul who by true knowledge of religion: but the man who is in the midst of plenty, and fears no want, is not often of the need he has to be assisted. He despises nothing, but that his large estate has ever supplied his necessities and superfluities, will hardly be so far, so as to come to an acknowledgment that he has never been his stay from his mother's womb. The common case of riches; they steal the heart and render it insensible to the duties of religion—copying that grand principle of religion—the dependence on the providence and care of God. *this it was which made our Lord cry, Shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of*

religion?—*of mind, this disregard to God, that is good, which are the too common temptations of a plentiful fortune, that have made riches so dangerous, as is spoken of in scripture. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, it is not easy to find upon the rich man was condemned, as the case proposed to be stated. The rich man is said*

to be clothed in purple and fine linen, and to fare sumptuously every day. He was not covetous, it seems; he lived, as the world speaks, answerably to his fortune. His life is represented as a scene of ease and pleasure; but is not taxed with any notable vice or enormity. But was he not, you will say, uncharitable? For poor Lazarus lay at his door, desiring the crumbs that fell from his table. This circumstance rather shews that the poor used to be fed at his door. Had the intent of the parable been to have represented the rich man as hard to the poor, would it not have been said, that his servant drove away the poor from his door, or at least when they came, that they were sent empty away? Neither of these, however, is said; but Lazarus is represented as feeding upon the crumbs of the rich man's table.

And this is the image given us of their different conditions in this world. The rich man sat down to a sumptuous table: the poor man was glad to feed upon the crumbs and scraps which fell from it. The end of these men is well known; Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man was tormented in hell-flames!

What then does the parable teach us?—It represents to us the dangerous state of great men, who live without the fear or love of God in their hearts; and the much happier condition of the poor, who have their share of misery in this world, when it proves a means of leading them to glory and immortality hereafter.

If we look forward, we shall see that this is the true aim of the parable: when the rich man applies to Abraham for relief, and finds none, he then petitions for his brethren, that they might be warned against the danger that hung over their heads,—against coming into the same sad situation with himself. Here we may well imagine that he would desire they should be particularly warned against those crimes, which had proved his ruin; but of this nothing is said: he only desires that Lazarus might go, in quality of a prophet, and testify the reality of a future state; which plainly shews, that his condemnation was the effect of irreligion and unbelief, rather than of intemperance or uncharitableness. He lived at ease, and God was not in all his thoughts. To his request Abraham replies, *they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them*; shewing us again, that the fault of these rich men was contempt of the prophets, and irreligion. The rich man tacitly owns this contempt, both for himself and brethren, by saying, *Nay, but if one went from the dead, they will repent*; which was confessing that they had not reverence enough for Moses and the prophets, to repent upon their authority and admonition; but wanted some greater motive, which he thought might be found in the appearance of one coming from the grave, or from the other world. From these circumstances, it is evident, that the purport of this parable, as well as of that in the above chapter, is not to represent to us the heinousness of any one particular

the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

59 I tell thee, <sup>b</sup> thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last <sup>c</sup> mite.

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 5. 26. Prov. 25. 8. with Mat. 25. 41, 46. 2 Theff. 1. 9.

<sup>c</sup> Not quite the tenth part of a farthing. Mark, 12. 42.

cular crime, for which the rich man suffered, but to shew how fatally riches influence the mind to irreligion, and make men forget God; while the poor, living in continual want, are likely (but all good is through the grace of God) to have a deep sense of their dependence, and in all their distresses to look up to *him, of whom cometh their salvation*. This sense of dependence, through divine grace, creates in the poor man a fear to offend, and a desire to please; while the rich man, wanting, as he thinks, nothing from God, has no desire to court his favour; but grows negligent and remiss in all the parts of religion, whence it is a very easy step to infidelity.

It is from these considerations that *the love of the world* is said in scripture to be *enmity with God*. And therefore, the love of the world which is enmity with God, is not to be expounded by covetousness, or uncharitableness, or any other particular vice. When applied to a rich man, it denotes his whole temper and disposition,—the habit of the mind, which originates with the natural depravity of man, and grows up out of a plentiful estate: and this situation of life is very commonly characterized by enmity with God; inclining men, not only to disobey his commands, but, as far as in them lies, to throw him out of the world, and to depose him from the throne of heaven.

Thus we see plainly what it is that makes wealth to be so dangerous a possession; namely, because it is the rival of God in the heart: and if it once get possession of the mind, it will expel all trust and confidence in God, all regard to faith and religion; for, as our Lord elsewhere speaks without a parable, *ye cannot serve God and mammon*.

Hence then we may learn, where the rich man ought to place his guard: if he be not covetous or uncharitable, if he be not luxurious and intemperate, so far it is well. But above all, let him take heed, that the pride and insolence of mind too common in plentiful circumstances, grow not upon him; the pride, I mean, of self-sufficiency, as if he were able to guide and to guard himself through the world, and had not so much need of the care of God over him, as the poor who enjoy nothing. Let him learn to know, that in riches is no security; and that he wants the protection of heaven as much as the poorest wretch in the world. A rich man, who through grace has this sense as he ought to have it, will in consequence have the other virtues proper to his state: he will be gentle, affable, kind, and charitable; and his spirit, in the height of fortune, will be adorned with the meekness of the gospel of Christ.

A man who duly considers these truths, and on whose heart, through grace, they are deeply written, will learn entire submission to God in the highest fortune. Our Lord's argument, ver. 23. will teach him the reasonableness of the duty: *The life, says he, is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment*. The utmost that riches can do, upon the largest concessions made to them, is, to provide food and raiment, and such like necessaries and conveniences of life. Put the case then, that by being master of a great

estate, you are master of food and raiment, and can have them in what quantity or quality you please:—what then? Have you less reason upon this account to depend upon God, and implore his aid? Consider a little, to what purpose serves food?—Is it not for the support of life?—But can food ward off death? Are you, in all your plenty of provisions, one jot more secure against sickness, or any accident which may rob you of your life, than the poorest man? If this be the case, is it not very absurd to plume yourself, and think of security, because of your plenty, when *life itself, which is more than meat*, is still exposed, and for which you can have no security but in the goodness of God?

You have many changes of raiment, and the poor have only rags.—But will the gout, or stone, or burning fever, pay such respect to fine clothes, as not to approach them? Will health always attend upon gold lace and embroidery? If it will, you are right to multiply garments: but if, after all your care for raiment, you, as well as the beggar, must still depend upon God for health and strength of body,—how ridiculous is the joy over many changes of garments! *Is not the body more than raiment?* Since then you must trust God for your life and strength, because they are things which no care of your own, no degree of wealth, can insure; had you not even as good trust him a little farther, and ease yourself of this unreasonable care for the things of life?

From these, and the like considerations, we may see, that dependence upon God,—the great moral lesson inculcated by our Lord in the parable before us,—is as much the rich man's duty and interest, as it is the poor man's: that to trust God, and rely upon his goodness, is to be *rich towards God*, and is that sort of riches which will make us *easy and happy in this life, and glorious and ever-blessed in that which is to come*. By these means we may, through divine grace, “so pass through things temporal, that we “finally lose not the things eternal.”

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Our Lord inculcated the same truths on different occasions. We need line upon line, and precept upon precept. A vast auditory was assembled; and, as he was ever ready to speak when they desired to hear, he took occasion,

1. To caution his disciples in public against that hypocrisy of the Pharisees, which he had just before so sharply rebuked in private. He calls it *the leaven of the Pharisees*, Their hearts, lips, and lives were wholly infected thereby: swoln with pride and self-importance, and soured with envy and malice, all their specious pretences to religion were but an abomination. Christ therefore warns his disciples to shun this hateful evil themselves, and not to be imposed upon by the fair professions of these designing men. And he urges, as a powerful argument, the sure detection of hypocrisy, either in this world, or in the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. Their most retired communications, even the whispers in a closet,

CHAP. XIII.

*Christ preacheth repentance, upon the punishment of the Galileans, and others. The fruitless fig-tree may not stand. He healeth the crooked woman: sheweth the powerful working of the word in the hearts of the faithful, by the parable of the grain of mustard-seed, and of leaven: exhorteth to enter in at the strait gate: and reproveth Herod and Jerusalem.*

[Anno Domini 31.]

**T**HERE were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose

blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen upon whom the tower

<sup>a</sup> Acts, 5. 37. <sup>b</sup> Job, 5. 6, 7. Acts, 28. 4. Mat. 7. 1. <sup>c</sup> Ver. 5. John, 3. 3, 5. Ch. 19. 27, 42—44. & 21. 24. Mat. 3. 10, 12. & 12. 45. & 21. 41, 44. & 22. 7. & 23. 35—39. & xxiv. Mark, xiii. Deut. 28. 52—58.

a closet, must all shortly be proclaimed before the assembled world. How careful then need we be over every thought and word, considering that all-seeing and heart-searching God, with whom we have to do.

2. He charges them to be faithful to their trust, and never to suppress, through fear or shame, one tittle of their message; but what they have learned of him in private, that must they boldly and publicly declare in the face of all opposition. And to encourage them to approve their fidelity unshaken, he addresses them, [1.] As his friends, whom he dearly loved, and was able and willing to support under every trial. [2.] He lets them know, that the most inveterate malice of their foes can only reach the perishing body; they cannot touch the immortal soul. Better, therefore, infinitely better would it be for them, by a steady testimony of the truth, with divine fortitude to put their lives in their hands, and meet, if the Lord so permitted, the worst death their enemies could inflict; than by a cowardly silence, or suppression of the offensive truths of the gospel, to provoke a jealous God, whose wrath reaches, not only to the body, but to the soul, sink both into the flames of hell, and enduring to eternity. The fear of him should swallow up every other fear. That guardian Providence, which watches over and orders the most minute events, would take peculiar care of them. Not a sparrow is forgotten of God, or falls undivided: the very hairs of their head are numbered; their inveterate foes cannot touch one of them without permission; therefore they need not fear what man can do unto them. [4.] According to their fidelity or infidelity, so would they be owned or disowned by Christ at the last day. They who, fearless of reproach or danger, dared make confession of him in the world, shall be publicly honoured and acknowledged as his disciples in the presence of angels at the resurrection of the just; while to those who, fearing a testimony for him before men, to avoid reproach, would infallibly provoke Jesus to renounce them, and expose them to shame, and condemn them to the sentence of eternal punishment, in the day of judgment. When we are tempted to deny or to suppress our profession, let us seriously receive this warning, and be wise. [5.] Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, would expose those who commit it to endless wrath. All the revilings now cast upon the Son of man in his state of humiliation, shall be the reach of pardon; but after his ascension,

and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, to ascribe the miracles the apostles should work in confirmation of the resurrection of Jesus, to diabolical agency, would be to resist the only remaining means of conviction, and must exclude such blasphemers from the possibility of repentance or forgiveness. [6.] In all emergencies, where they are called to answer before the tribunals of their persecutors, whether Jews or Gentiles, Christ undertakes to furnish them with a tongue, and wisdom which none of their adversaries shall be able to gainsay or resist. They need not take thought a moment what to speak in their own defence; the Holy Ghost should effectually furnish them with every thing proper for the occasion; and, with such encouragements before them, they may boldly go forth, and not fear.

2dly, We have,

1. The application made to Christ by one of the company, desiring him, as a person of authority, to interpose on his behalf with his brother, who either unjustly kept him out of his part of the inheritance, or being the elder, and having by law a double portion, this worldly-minded man would fain come in for an equal share.

2. Christ refuses to interpose. The exercise of temporal power and authority did not belong to that kingdom which he came to establish; nay, had he interfered, they would have perhaps made it a ground of accusation, and quarrelled with him for daring to make himself a ruler and a judge. (See Exod. ii. 14.)

3. He takes occasion from this unseasonable application to warn his disciples against the great sin and danger of covetousness, which, being a most insinuating evil, they had need carefully to guard their hearts against it. Men are apt to fancy, that this world's goods are essential to happiness; but a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth: they conduce nothing to the spiritual satisfaction of the soul; they cannot prolong our lives a day, an hour: often, instead of being comforts to us, they prove a plague and snare here below, besides all the hindrances they put in our way, to obstruct our entrance into the kingdom of heaven. To give the greater force to his admonition, he illustrates it by a striking example.

The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully, (χώρα, a region.) His estate was vast, as the produce of it was abundant. These common gifts of Providence the evil and unthankful often enjoy in the largest measure; but

in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were <sup>d</sup> sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 I tell you, <sup>e</sup> Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

6 ¶ He spake also this parable; a certain

<sup>d</sup> Or debtors. Mat. 6. 12. & 18. 24. Ch. 7. 41. & 11. 4.

<sup>e</sup> Exod. 4. 8. II. 28. 10, 13. Mic. 6. 9. Ezek. 18. 30. & 7. 3, 4.

but we must not judge hence of God's love, or of real felicity. The *rich* man is far from being usually the *happy* man. We are told,

[1.] What anxious cares his wealth occasioned. *He thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?* He appears as full of perplexity, as if he knew not where to get another morsel to satisfy the wants of hunger. Such is the usual effect of increasing wealth; it brings an increase of cares and disquietude.

[2.] The result of his thoughts was this: *I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods;* a resolution that spoke great folly, as well as ungodliness. He calls those *his* fruits, which were really but lent him of the Lord. To hoard up *all*, when so many empty barns of the poor, and hungry bellies, might have charitably eased him of somewhat of his load of plenty, was vilely covetous. To call these *his goods*, which must perish in the using, proved his utter ignorance of a better portion. *Greater barns* would only bring greater expence and greater care, besides the plague of building; and his presumptuous *I will*, shewed that he left God far above out of his sight. So ready are they who trust in uncertain riches, to forget the living God.

[3.] He flatters himself with the most pleasing prospects, when his schemes should be completed, of sitting down and enjoying at ease the store he had collected. *I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* How absurd the conclusion? Could his *soul* relish the gratifications of a beast, or feel any satisfaction from the indulgence of appetite? The wealth of the world, and the pleasures of sense, are not a portion at all suited to its wants: these God alone with a sense of his love and favour can supply. He promised himself *many years* to enjoy his affluence, when he knew not what a day might bring forth; and ensured the safety of his goods, when in the shortest space fire or tempest might lay his storehouses in ruins: so precarious are all our earthly possessions. But if he saw his barns rise, and brooded over his plenty, *ease* was what he could no more secure to his body than his soul. All his fruits and his goods could no more alleviate the pains of an aching head, than cure the pangs of an aching heart. One stroke of sickness or disease might embitter all his abundance, and leave him pining in the midst of plenty; one unhappy incident in his family might forbid him to taste the least satisfaction in all his affluence. So poor, so precarious a portion is all sublunary good.

[4.] God suddenly confounds his schemes, and blasts his hopes. He said unto him, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* Death in a moment darkens all the gay prospect, and dashes the gaudy bubble which flattering hope had blown. The day is near, when every carnal worldling, whom men admired as *wife*, and praised as

doing well for himself, (Psalm, xlix. 18.) shall feel with terrible conviction his egregious folly, and hear *Thou fool* pronounced upon him by the lips of eternal wisdom. The affluence of the wicked must quickly change its owner, and nothing remain for them but a dreary grave and a certain fearful looking-for of judgment. Death, whenever it comes to them, will be a terrible surprise; a dreadful night of horror will surround them; and, dragged reluctant from the body, their soul, their guilty soul, must go where riches profit not to bribe a verdict in their favour; nor can all their wealth procure one drop of water to cool their tongue in those eternal flames which never shall be quenched.

[5.] Our Lord applies the parable in general to every worldly-minded man, *that layeth up treasure for himself;* sets his heart upon riches; expects his happiness from them; and every one whose concerns are engrossed merely about himself, without regard to God's glory, or care for his neighbour; *and is not rich towards God*, destitute of the treasures of grace, and without the least title to the eternal inheritance: *so is he:* so absurd are his schemes, so fruitless his cares, and so miserable will be his end. Let us be warned therefore in time, and not foolishly prefer gold to godliness, the body to the soul, and time to eternity.

3dly, The instructions given us, ver. 22—40. we have considered before in the other evangelists; but they are of such importance, as to deserve our hearing once, yea, twice, that they may be graven on our hearts; for nothing is a more fatal snare to the soul than inordinate desire after the wealth of this world.

1. Christ enjoins his disciples to cast their care upon God, and never to disquiet or perplex themselves about a worldly provision, *anxious solicitude* being as criminal as *sensual indulgence*. We must *take no thought* about the necessaries of life, disquieting ourselves with the fears of hunger and nakedness; but in the way of duty cheerfully trust him with our support, who gave us our being, ver. 23. Even the ravens are fed by his providence, and the lily is clothed with beauty, such as Solomon arrayed in all his glory could not vie with: and shall he not much more feed and clothe us, who in excellence, as creatures, are so much better, and, as his believing people, are so much dearer to him? The cause of all our anxious cares and fears is our unbelief: not that our solicitude will mend our circumstances; it is as useless as it is needless. We cannot add to our *stature* a cubit, or to our *age* a day; and if in the least things all our thought must be unavailing, why should we distress ourselves about the rest? Depend-ant therefore on the divine Providence, we need not be distressed, perplexed, and fluctuating like meteors, about a subsistence; for this would shew that we had no more confidence in God than heathens, and intimate the most criminal distrust of the power and care of him whom we call our *Father*, who knows all our wants, is able to supply them,

May: but, *man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.*

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, ' Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none:

11c. 5. 1-4. Pl. 80. 8-13. Jer. 2. 21. Mat. 21. 19, 20, 33-41. Ezek. xv. 1. Rom. 2. 4, 5. 2 Pet. 3. 9. Hof. 10. 1, 2. If. 5. 4-7. Ezek. xv. 1. John, 15. 2, 8.

them, and has engaged that we shall want no manner of thing that is truly good for us, if we love him. We have indeed greater things in view than food and raiment, even the kingdom of God, the blessings of grace and glory: these must engage our first concern, and then we may safely trust the Lord with all our temporal affairs.

2. He encourages them not to fear want, when they are the heirs of the eternal King. *Fear not, little flock:* Christ's children are like a *flock*, united in love under their kind shepherd's care: a *little flock*; few compared with the world which lieth in wickedness: yet, though compassed with enemies, they need *not fear*: their Redeemer is as mighty as he is gracious. *It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*; and if he has provided a throne in the heavens for his faithful people, we may rest assured that he will not leave them to want upon earth. Instead therefore of desiring to hoard unnecessary wealth, or being under anxiety about food or raiment, our hearts and hands should be open, according to our abilities, to relieve the necessitous; and, when God's providence calls for it, we should be ready to part with all that we possess, sending it before us, as the surest and most abiding portion, which will enrich us in the eternal world, where it will be incorruptible and inexhaustible. This will raise our affections to high and heavenly things; and then, where our treasure is, our heart will be also.

3. He bids them prepare for the day when he, their Master, shall come to take his saints with him to the mansions provided for them, to partake of the pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore. Christ, our Master, is gone up to heaven, to prepare for himself his spouse the church—even all who will perseveringly believe in him: we are his servants, appointed to watch till his return, and to be ready to meet him, the oil of grace burning in our lamps, and our souls active in his service. As many as he finds thus expecting him, and welcoming his arrival, he will reward with distinguished blessedness, and entertain them with all the unutterable delights of the eternal world, taking them with him to sit down in his kingdom of glory. As the time of Christ's coming is uncertain, like the wise householder, we need be habitually on our guard, and awake with the first alarm, that we may not be unexpectedly surprised, as by a thief in the night; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not, and woe to those whom he then finds sleeping in sin and carnal security.

4thly, Peter, the warm-hearted disciple, the ready speaker, desires to know, if our Lord's discourse was directed to the apostles in particular, or to all the disciples general? Hereupon,

Christ replies to his question. What he had spoken, both a general view to all the disciples, and was particularly applicable to them who were advanced to the most honoured posts, as stewards of the Lord's household.

(1.) Their duty was, as put in trust with the care of men's souls, to be wise and faithful dispensers of the gospel and the instituted ordinances of grace, considering the several cases and states of those to whom they ministered, and seasonably and rightly dividing to each the word of truth for their conviction, edification, or comfort. (2.) The blessedness of fidelity would be great: whoever shall be found at Christ's appearing thus zealously, diligently, perseveringly employed, shall be highly advanced by him in glory, and placed, like Joseph in Egypt, at the king's right hand. (3.) As great will be the misery, sin, and danger of those who shall be found unfaithful. It is shocking to think there should be such a character as a minister of Christ in profession, quarrelsome, oppressive, abusive, profane, drunken; yet such there have been, there are; and the cause of these, and the like enormities, is intimated; such a one says, *My Lord delayeth his coming*, and therefore in security goes on negligent and treacherous to his trust, and insensible to the awful account that he must shortly make. But such insensibility retards not the approach of danger; the dreadful hour of reckoning draws near; the judge will suddenly and unexpectedly appear, and pronounce the tremendous doom of such: according to the light and advantages that they have enjoyed, shall be the measure of their punishment. The stripes shall be fewer, where partly through ignorance men have erred and offended; while the heaviest strokes of vengeance shall fall on those who have abused the greatest gifts, and in opposition to clear knowledge and the strong remonstrances of conscience have been unfaithful to their trust: and this is agreeable to the strictest rules of equity, that where a greater trust has been committed, a proportionable improvement should be required; while unfaithfulness and negligence, in such a case, become more highly criminal.

2. Christ admonishes them of the fiery trials which he and they must pass through. His gospel, though breathing the spirit of peace and love, yet being so opposite to the pride and prejudices of men, would give occasion to the bitterest animosities and persecutions. This fire was already kindled in the rancour shewn to him by the scribes and Pharisees: but will he desist from his glorious undertaking, or suppress the offensive truths? No, in no wise. Since by no other means than the sufferings that he forefaw, the redemption of the world could be obtained, he willingly offers himself to the bloody baptism before him, eagerly longing for the time when it should be accomplished in the garden, and on the cross. How astonishing his love towards us! he forewarns his disciples, that they must expect their crosses also: far from that temporal kingdom of peace and prosperity with which they flattered themselves, war and tumult are before them. The gospel which they preached, would be opposed with the fiercest rage of men and devils, and the greatest miseries and confusions be the consequence. Even among nearest relatives it would occasion the most grievous.

cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? <sup>b</sup> let it alone this year also, till I shall dig  
8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, about it, and dung it:

<sup>b</sup> Exod. 32. 11. Jer. 18. 20. Joel, 2. 17. Heb. 7. 25. Ch. 23. 34.

grievous divisions: in families where part should be converted, and part remain in their sins, the bitterest animosities would arise in the bosoms of those who rejected the counsel of God. And such will be their enmity against those who embrace the truth, that it will break through all ties of blood, duty, and friendship, making the father unnatural, the son undutiful: even in the hearts of those, whose softer sex should breathe greater mildness, the spirit of superstition and bigotry will quench all natural affection, so that even parents will persecute their children, and children their parents, exasperated by the reproof of their holy lives, and inflamed with rage at the gentlest remonstrances, and the most endearing persuasions of those who labour for their conversion. And thus it continues to this day, and must to the end of the world, or at least to the great millennium. Let us not then think it strange.

5thly, The former discourse was addressed to the disciples; the following to the multitude.

1. Christ upbraids them for their stupidity and perverseness in not attending to, or rejecting, the evidences of his mission. They judged what weather there would be by the prognostics which experience had taught them: how inexcusable then were they not to discern *this time*, fixed for the Messiah's appearing; and how hypocritical and false their pretences to wisdom and the knowledge of the prophets, when they disregarded or perverted the plainest declarations of the scriptures, concerning the birth, family, life, doctrine, and kingdom of the Messiah, and thus knew not the day of their visitation! Amazing, that they should not, even of themselves, discern what was right, where the evidence was so cogent; and that while they shewed observation and judgment in matters of less concern, in this, of infinitely greater moment to their souls, they should act so strangely infatuated!

2. He admonishes them of the necessity of a speedy accommodation of their matters with an offended God, before it was too late. As common prudence would dictate the necessity of seeking an amicable agreement with our adversary, rather than push matters to extremities, where the cause must infallibly be carried against us, and a prison be the issue of the trial; much more should we, in the matters of our souls, shew greater concern to obtain reconciliation with God, who by our sins is become our adversary. To attempt our own justification before him, were folly; as to escape from his sentence, is impossible. While, therefore, we are in the way of life, our wisdom is to cast ourselves at his feet, acknowledging our offences; and through faith in Jesus, our surety, to plead for mercy, lest death should drag us to his dread tribunal in unpardoned guilt, and the ministers of vengeance seize us in consequence of the judgment pronounced, and cast us into the prison of hell; where even eternal torments can never satisfy eternal justice, or cancel the infinite debt of sin.

#### C H A P. XIII.

Ver. 1. *There were present, &c.*] Some of our Lord's

hearers thought proper to confirm the doctrine in the latter part of the preceding chapter by what they supposed an example of it; for the scope and connection of the passage, as well as our Lord's answer, shew it to have been the thought of these persons, that Providence had permitted the Galileans to be massacred at their devotions for some extraordinary wickedness. These Galileans were the followers of Judas Gaulonites, (see Acts, v. 37.) and had rendered themselves obnoxious to the Roman power. Josephus has given us the history of this Judas Gaulonites at large, Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 1. It appears that he was the head of a sect, who asserted God to be their only sovereign; and were so utterly averse to a submission to the Roman power, that they counted it unlawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, and rather would endure the greatest torments, than give any man the title of *lord*. Josephus does not mention the slaughter of these Galileans; but he records an action of Pilate which much resembles it, concerning the manner of his treating the Samaritans; Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 4. Perhaps this story of the Galileans might now be mentioned to our Lord, with a design of leading him into a snare, whether he should justify or condemn the persons that were slain. Some are of opinion, that these Galileans were slain, by Pilate's order, at the altar, in contempt of the temple; so that *their blood* was literally mingled with the sacrifices.

Ver. 2, 3. *Suppose ye that these Galileans, &c.*] Our Lord's hearers had insinuated a very wrong notion of Providence; for which cause he not only condemned it in the question just now mentioned, but told them expressly, that these Galileans were not to be reckoned greater sinners than others, because they had fallen by so severe a calamity; and exhorted them, instead of forming harsh judgments of others from such examples of sufferings, to improve them as incitements to themselves to *repent*; assuring them, that if they did not, *they should all likewise perish*; or, as it may be rendered, *you shall all perish thus*: which is not only more literal, but the rather to be chosen; because, as Grotius, Tillotson, Whitby, and many others have observed, there was a remarkable resemblance between the fate of these Galileans, and that of the whole Jewish nation; the flower of which was slain at Jerusalem by the Roman sword, while they were assembled at one of their great festivals; and many thousands of them perished in the temple itself, and were, as their own historian represents it at large, literally *buried under its ruins*. See Josephus's Jewish War, b. vi. c. 4.

Ver. 4. *The tower in Siloam*] This tower, by its name, appears to have been built beside the basin, or pool of Siloam, (see John, ix. 7.) whose waters running into a lower basin, formed what was called *the pool of sheeps*, probably from the sheep which were washed in it. The upper basin, or pool of Siloam, seems to have been used as a bathing-place for men; and if it had porticos round it for them to undress in, will answer to the description of the pool of Bethesda, John, v. 2. Besides, the situation of

9 And if it bear fruit, *well*: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

10 ¶ And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid his hands on her: and

immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

1 Jer. 18. 21. & 15. 1. & 7. 16. Pf. 21. 8-12. & 69. 21-28. John. 5. 5, 6. II. 65. 1. Mat. 11. 28. Pf. 107. 20. Rom. 4. 17. Ch. 5. 20, 24. & 7. 14. & 6. 10. & 8. 54. & 18. 42. 13. & 6. 19. & 8. 44. Mark. 7. 33. & 8. 25. & 16. 18. Num. 23. 19. Pf. 33. 29. Ch. 18. 43. & 7. 15, 16. Pf. 103. 1-5. & 116. 12. & 115. 1, 3. Mat. 9. 18. Acts, 13. 15. Rom. 10. 2. Gal. 4. 17. Exod. 20. 9. & 23. 12. Lev. 23. 3. Deut. 5. 13. Ezek. 12. 11. Ch. 6. 7. & 14. 3. Mat. 7. 5. & 23. 13-27. If. 29. 13.

\* Ch. 4. 15, 16, 44. Ver. 16. Mat. 15. 22. & 17. 15. Ch. 14. 2. Ch. 5. 20, 24. & 7. 14. & 6. 10. & 8. 54. & 18. 42. Ch. 5. Num. 23. 19. Pf. 33. 29. Ch. 18. 43. & 7. 15, 16. Pf. 103. 1-5. & 116. 12. Gal. 4. 17. Exod. 20. 9. & 23. 12. Lev. 23. 3. Deut. 5. 13. Ezek. 12. Mat. 12. 10, 11. Ch. 14. 3, 5. John, 7. 23. Deut. 22. 4.

of Bethesda, just by the sheep-gate, agrees with this supposition; for that gate had its name from the sheep-market which was kept at it, and to which the sheep were driven, after having been washed in the pool of steeves. The tower of Siloam, therefore, which fell, and slew the eighteen persons here mentioned, may have been one of the porticos of Bethesda. This last instance might seem in some respects more to the purpose than the former, as there was no human interposition attending the death of these men; so that it seemed more immediately providential, than that of the Galileans whom Pilate had massacred.

Ver. 5. *Ye shall all likewise perish.*] That is, "either by the sword, or in the ruins of your city." See on ver. 2, 3.

Ver. 7. *Behold, these three years I come*] See how long I have waited, even three years past, in vain, and still this fig-tree is entirely barren: cut it down; why should it any longer take up the place of better plants, and draw away the fructifying juices of my ground, which might be profitable to other trees? Though this parable was originally meant of the Jews, it may be applied to men in every age; for it exhibits a law observed in the divine administration, which should strike terror into all who enjoy spiritual privileges, without improving them. Every man is allowed a certain time of trial, during which he enjoys the means and helps necessary to holiness. If he continues ignorant of God's visitation, despises the riches of the divine mercy, and goes on obstinately in sin, these advantages are frequently taken away from him, his day of grace ends; the utmost term of God's patience is past forever; the divine spirit being grieved, is provoked to depart, and the man is delivered over to a hardened heart.

Ver. 9. *And if it bear fruit, well:*] Perhaps it may bear fruit; but if not, &c. Heylin and Doddridge. In the original there is something of an abrupt way of speaking this passage, of which the reader will find many examples in Raphelius Annot. ex Xenoph. p. 102. By this our Lord plainly represented to the Jews the divine pleasure against them, for having neglected the many opportunities they had enjoyed, as planted in the vineyard

of God's church; (compare Isaiah, v. 1, 2. xxvii. 2, 3.) and in an awful manner intimated, that though they had hitherto, at his intercession, been spared, yet if they continued unfruitful under the additional cultivation which they were shortly to receive by the descent of the Spirit, and the proposal of the gospel in its full extent and evidence, they must expect nothing but speedy and irresistible ruin. The extraordinary means used to bring them to repentance, after the resurrection of Christ, by the effusion of his Spirit, and the preaching of the apostles, might with great propriety be expressed by digging round the barren tree, and dunging it. As what our Lord threatened in this parable was so remarkably fulfilled, it may be considered also as a prophesy of the destruction of the Jewish state by the Romans, under Vespasian and Titus.

Ver. 11. *There was a woman, &c.*] Jesus happening to preach in one of the synagogues of Perea on a sabbath-day, cast his eyes upon a woman in the congregations, who had not been able to stand upright during the space of eighteen years. Wherefore pitying her affliction, he restored her body to its natural soundness. What the evangelist means by a spirit of infirmity, we learn from our Lord himself, ver. 16.—*a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years.* The last clause of this verse is better rendered by Dr. Heylin, *Could by no means raise herself up; or, was utterly unable to raise herself upright.*

Ver. 13. *And immediately she was made straight,*] The great favour conferred on her so suddenly, filled the woman with admiration and gratitude; inasmuch that she immediately offered up thanksgiving to God. As our blessed Lord undertook this benevolent miracle without any solicitation, it affords us a fine idea of his mercy and loving-kindness. The length of time which her weakness had continued, is a strong proof that there could have been no collusion; and the instantaneous manner in which so inveterate and incurable a disorder was remedied, indicates the divine nature of him who performed it.

Ver. 15. *Doth not each one of you*] Our Lord soon put the hypocritical ruler to silence, by placing the action which he found fault with, in the light of their allowed practice.

16 And ought not this woman, being <sup>a</sup> a daughter of Abraham, whom <sup>y</sup> Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, <sup>z</sup> be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

17 And when he had said these things <sup>a</sup> all his adversaries were ashamed: <sup>b</sup> and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

18 ¶ Then said he, Unto what is the <sup>c</sup> kingdom of God like? <sup>d</sup> and whereunto shall I resemble it?

19 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

20 ¶ And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

21 <sup>e</sup> It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three <sup>f</sup> measures of meal till the whole was leavened.

22 <sup>g</sup> And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying towards Jerusalem.

23 ¶ Then said one unto him, Lord, <sup>h</sup> are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

24 <sup>i</sup> Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, <sup>k</sup> will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

25 <sup>l</sup> When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 19. 9. & 3. 8. Gen. 17. 7. <sup>y</sup> John, 8. 44. Eph. 2. 2. Mark, 9. 17, 18, 21, 22, 26. <sup>z</sup> If. 49. 24—26. Mark, 2. 27. & 3. 4. Mat. 12. 11, 12. <sup>b</sup> Ch. 14. 6. Pf. 40. 14. <sup>c</sup> Ch. 7. 16. Mat. 9. 33. Acts, 3. 5—11. <sup>d</sup> Acts, 1. 3. Ch. 17. 20, 21. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 13. 31, 32. Mark, 4. 30—32. Job, 8. 7. If. 60. 22. & 2. 2—4. & xlix. liv. lx. Ezek. 47. 1—12. Dan. 2. 44. Zech. 2. 11. & 8. 20—23. & xiv. Acts, i—xix. Pf. 80. 8—11. Prov. 4. 18. Job, 17. 9. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 13. 33. Rom. 1. 14, 16. 1 Cor. 9. 22, 23. Pf. 72. 16—19. & 119. 11. 1 Theff. 5. 23. <sup>g</sup> See Mat. 13. 33. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 9. 35. Ch. 4. 43, 44. Acts, 10. 38. Mark, 6. 6. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 20. 16. & 22. 14. & 19. 23. & 7. 14. <sup>j</sup> Gr. *Strive as in agony.* <sup>k</sup> Mat. 7. 13, 14. & 11. 12. John, 3. 3, 5. 1 Cor. 6. 1, 2. Heb. 2. 3. <sup>l</sup> John, 8. 21. & 7. 34. & 13. 33. Rom. 9. 31. & 10. 2, 3. <sup>m</sup> If. 55. 6. Mat. 25. 10, 12. & 7. 21—23. Ch. 6. 46. Pf. 32. 6.

practice. They loosed and led their cattle on the sabbath day to water, and thought the mercy of the work justified them in so doing. He, by uttering a word, had loosed a woman, a reasonable creature; nay, and what heightens the colouring, a daughter of Abraham, who had been bound with an incurable distemper, not for a single day, but for eighteen years! Without doubt, the far greater mercy of this and the other God-like works which Jesus did, justified his performing them on the sabbath, as the ruler might easily have seen, had he not been wholly blinded by his superstition. It is not improbable, that this ruler might that very day have been performing such an office for one of his cattle with his own hands, as is here spoken of; for it was by no means necessary to his being a ruler of the synagogue, that he should be a person of wealth or dignity in common life. Critics have collected passages from rabbinical writers, in which they allow it to be lawful to feed or water a beast on the sabbath-day. See Lightfoot's Hor. Heb. on the text, where he shews that they were expressly allowed even to draw water for their beasts, a more laborious work than leading them to it. We may remark, that the folly even of the men of learning among the Jews, conspicuous in this and some other instances mentioned in the Gospels, shews the malignant nature of superstition. It is capable of extinguishing reason, of banishing compassion, and of eradicating the most essential principles and feelings of the human mind.

Ver. 19. *A great tree;* A great plant, or shrub; another of the evangelists calls it λαχάνθη, the greatest among herbs. See Matth. xiii. 32.

Ver. 23, 24. *Lord, are there few that be saved?* &c.] Our

Lord was now travelling by slow journies towards Jerusalem, being on his way to Jordan, from the north-east parts of Judea. Somewhere on the road, probably soon after he had described the success of the gospel by the parables of the mustard-seed and the leaven, his opinion was asked concerning the number of those who should be saved. The person who proposed the question, seems to have heard the parables above mentioned; if he had, his notions of the kingdom of God, being such as the Jews at that time entertained, he perhaps meant a temporal salvation, by admission into the Messiah's kingdom: but as no secular kingdom was to be erected by their great deliverer, Jesus answered the question in its spiritual meaning. Or we may suppose that this Jew inquired concerning the eternal salvation of men; for though he could easily believe that all his brethren were to be saved, yet he could not so easily bring himself to believe that salvation was not confined to his own nation: wherefore, having a high opinion of Jesus as a teacher, he proposed his doubts to him. But, in whatever sense we understand this question, our Lord's answer contains an exhortation, which implies that only a small number of the Jews of that generation would be saved. *He said, strive to enter in at the straight gate.* By inquiring thus curiously into the state of others, you seem to be at ease with respect to your own salvation; I must therefore tell you, that, though as Jews you have great advantages, the gate to life is still strait; and that if you would be saved, you must exert yourselves to the utmost. Of this you will be the more convinced, when I assure you, that many of your brethren, who, because they trusted to their privileges as Jews, lived all along securely, shall

26 Then shall ye begin to say, " We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are ; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

29 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and

from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

31 ¶ The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, ' Get thee out, and depart hence : for Herod will kill thee.

32 And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

11. 58. 2. Heb. 6. 4. 5. 2 Tim. 3. 5. Tit. 1. 16. Mat. 7. 23. & 25. 12. 41. Pf. 1. 6. & 5. 6. & 6. 8. Hof. 11. 12. Hab. 1. 13. with 1 Cor. 8. 2. Gal. 4. 9. 2 Tim. 2. 19. Mat. 8. 11, 12. & 13. 42. & 22. 13. & 24. 5. Ch. 16. 23. Rev. 21. 8. & 22. 15. Gen. 28. 14. Pf. 22. 27—31. & lxxii. 11. 2. 2—4. & 11. 10. & 42. 6. & 43. 6. & 49. 6. & liv. lx. Mal. i. ii. Rom. 15. 9—19. & 11. 11, 12. Acts, x—ix. & 12. 21. & 26. 17—23. & 28. 28. Eph. 3. 6—8. Col. 1. 6, 23. Mark, 13. 27. 1 Neb. 6. 10. Amos, 7. 13. Song, 2. 15. Ezek. 13. 4. Mic. 3. 1—3. Zeph. 3. 3. Mat. 19. 30. & 20. 16. & 3. 9, 10. & 8. 11, 12. Pf. 93. 4. John, 10. 32. Heb. 2. 10. & 3. 3. John, 17. 4. & 19. 30.

shall be for ever excluded from heaven : For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able ; that is to say, shall seek to enter in at an improper season, namely by importunate intreaties, after the period of their trial is concluded, and their state finally and irreversibly determined—as is evident from the next verse. The word *ἀγωνίζομαι*, rendered *strive*, imports the act of *contending*, in the most ardent and resolute manner, with *antagonists in games*, or in war, and may well intimate, that the strait gate is beset with a variety of enemies, through which, if we aspire to a crown of eternal glory, we must, through grace, break and force our way ; a representation equally just and awakening ! See 1 Cor. ix. 25—27. Col. i. 29. 1 Tim. vi. 12. 2 Tim. iv. 7. and the *Inferences and Reflections*.

Ver. 26. *We have eaten and drunk in thy presence,*] " Over and above the privileges which you have enjoyed by the Mosaic dispensation, you shall plead on that occasion the peculiar favour which I shewed you in the days of my flesh, by exercising my ministry among you, and by conversing familiarly with you." Perhaps some of the thousand whom Jesus had fed by miracle, may at last in this miserable number. Compare John, vi. 26. *Annias* refers it to their having eaten the sacrifices presented to God according to the Mosaic constitution ; but *gent persons* may use this plea in different senses. The phrase of *Erasmus* on this verse deserves attention : therefore, Lord, dost thou not know us, or acknowledge us to be thine ; whereas thou wast born among us, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets ; nay, we are thy disciples, and have more than once healed the sick, and cast out devils in thy name ?"—Upon this the Master of the hall answer, " All those things which ye have done, are insufficient to prove you my true disciples. He that walks in my steps, shall be acknowledged for my disciple. But if you have not followed my example, it will avail you nothing to have known me, to have heard me, to have been my countrymen, or to have wrought miracles in my

name ; for whoever has impudently lived in the neglect of internal piety and the social virtues, him I will never own to belong to me. Go your ways therefore, and receive your due reward from him whom you have obeyed and served."

Ver. 29. *They shall come,* &c.] This part of the answer was levelled directly against the Jewish prejudice, and is a plain declaration that the salvation of God shall be extended to people of all parts of the world ; and that many who thought themselves alone entitled to God's favour, in virtue of their peculiar privileges, shall, for their misconduct, be finally excluded from his presence. See on Matth. iii. 9. viii. 11, 12.

Ver. 31. *There came certain of the Pharisees,*] From the known disposition of the Pharisees, who were always the professed enemies of Christ, as well as from his answer, it is more than probable that their concern for his safety was feigned, and that their real design was to intimidate him, and make him flee into Judea, not doubting that the haughty priests would fall upon some method of putting him to death. Herod too seems to have been in the plot ; he now began to take umbrage at Christ's fame and authority, fearing that it might occasion him some embarrassment, either with his people or with the Romans ; but he dreaded to make an attempt on his life, remembering the agonies of mind that he had suffered on account of the Baptist's murder. Probably, therefore, he insidiously sent the Pharisees to him, with the message in the present verse, *Get thee out, and depart hence, for Herod is determined to kill thee*. Such is the force of the original ; and in this view there is a peculiar propriety in our Lord's reply, and in his calling Herod a fox, rather than a lion, wolf, or bear. See the note on Matth. iii. 7.

Ver. 32. *I do cures to-day and to-morrow,*] Some apply this to the years of Christ's ministry, supposing that a day is put for a year ; but the explication is improper, because if the three days here mentioned were intended to comprehend the whole time of our Lord's ministry, this conversation must have happened in the first year thereof, contrary to St. Luke himself, who tells us, Ch. ix. 51.

33 Nevertheless, <sup>2</sup> I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and the *day* following: <sup>7</sup> for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Pl. 31. 15. John, 9. 4. & 5. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Mat. 20. 18. Acts, 2. 23. & 4. 27, 28.

that *the time was come that he should be received up*. Besides, according to this interpretation, Christ's being *perfected* on the third-day, will imply that he was to suffer in the third year of his ministry, which is far from being a certain point. The real meaning of the words seems to be as follows: "I shall not be very long with you on earth; yet, while I am here, I will perform the duties of my ministry, without being afraid of any man; because my life cannot be taken from me, but in the place and at the time appointed by my Father." The word *τελειωμα*, rendered *I shall be perfected*, may refer to Christ's finishing the great work of atonement, and being by death consecrated to his office, as our great High Priest:—as the word is used, Heb. ii. 10. v. 8, 9. x. 7.

*Ver. 33. Nevertheless, I must walk, &c.] I must continue my course.* "I know all that is to befall me; I know who are my enemies, what their intentions are, and how far they will be able to accomplish them; for which reason you need give yourselves no trouble about me. I must continue my course to-day and to-morrow; no malice or power of men can hinder me from accomplishing my ministry; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." As the court of priests, whose prerogative it was to judge prophets, had its seat in Jerusalem, our Lord, by putting the Pharisees in mind that a prophet could not perish out of Jerusalem, insinuated that he knew their intentions too well to pay any regard to their advice: or in making this observation, his design may have been to display the wickedness of that city, the inhabitants of which had been, in every age, the chief enemies of the messengers of God, insomuch that none of them were put to death any where else: and with this agrees what our Lord says of Jerusalem, in the prophetic lamentation which he now uttered concerning it, on account of its crimes, its obstinacy and its punishment. See the next verses, and on Matth. xxiii. 37. *For it cannot be*—would be rendered more properly, *for it cannot be supposed*.

*Inferences drawn from the question proposed, ver. 23. of this chapter, and our Lord's reply.*—Amongst all the stratagems whereby the great enemy of mankind plots and contrives their ruin, few are more unhappily successful, than the fond persuasion with which he has inspired them, that heaven and everlasting happiness are easily attainable. The doors of the Christian church are now expanded very wide, and men indeed have access to them upon easy terms. The most sacred ordinances of our religion are common to all, save those whom gross ignorance or notorious crimes exclude. There are no marks on the foreheads of men, whereby we can judge of their future condition. They die and are laid in their graves; none cometh back to tell us how it fares with them, and we desire to think the best of every particular.

But, whatever charity be in this, there is little prudence in the inference which many draw from it, who think that they may live as their neighbours do, and die as hap-

pily as they; and "since the greatest part of men are such as themselves, heaven must be a very empty place, if all of them be debarred." In short, interest and self-love do so strongly blind the minds of men, that they can hardly be wrested from the belief of that which they very vainly would have to be true: and hence it is, that, notwithstanding all we are told to the contrary, the opinion of the *broadness of the way that leads to heaven*, and the *easy access unto it*, is still the most epidemical, and, I fear, the most dangerous heresy.

Now, to obviate this certain but lamentable error, it may be useful to propose here some considerations, for the better understanding what great things are required in those who look for eternal happiness; and then to reflect upon the actions and ways of men, that, comparing the one with the other, we may see how little ground of hope there remains for the greatest part to build on.

And if, first, we consider the nature of that divine Majesty, whose presence and enjoyment make heaven so desirable, we must be led to think, how inconsistent it is with his infinite holiness to admit impenitent sinners into the habitation of his glory. (See Psalm v. 4, 5.) It is strange, what conceptions foolish men entertain of Almighty God, who imagine that those who have been all their days wallowing in sin, shall be admitted into everlasting friendship with him! for sooner shall light and darkness dwell together, and heat and cold in their greatest violence combine, and all the contrarieties of nature be reconciled. Men are accustomed to frame a notion of God suitable to their wishes; and this is the common shelter against every convincing reproof; but this temerity shall at length sufficiently confute itself, and feel that justice hereafter which it will not now believe.

But, if, secondly, we consider that happiness which every one is so confidently found to promise himself, it seems not very likely that it should be so easily attained. Glorious things are every where spoken of that heavenly Jerusalem; and all that is excellent or desirable in the world is borrowed to shadow it forth in the Holy Scriptures; but all these metaphors and allegories do not suffice to convey any full idea of the happiness that we expect; they only tend to assist our minds a little, and to give us some confused idea of those *unseen, unheard, and inconceivable things, which God hath prepared for those who love him*.

And can we then expect that so glorious a prize shall be gained without any labour? That such a recompence shall be bestowed on those who never were at any pains to procure it?—What toil and anxiety does it cost a man, to amass together that white and yellow earth which men call money! With what care and pains do others ascend to any degree of preferment! What industry and study do men employ to reach a little knowledge, and be reckoned among the learned!—And shall heaven and everlasting happiness slide into our arms, while we sleep? No, certainly: God will never disparage the glories of that *place, to bestow them*

34 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; ' how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather

\* Neh. 9. 16. Mat. 23. 37—39. Luke, 19. 42. Chr. 21. 35, 36. & 22. 6. 2 Chr. 36. 15, 16. & 24. 21, 22. Acts, 7. 59. \* Deut. 4. 29. & 32. 29. Pf. 81. 10. & 50. 7. with Deut. 32. 11, 12. Pf. 17. 8. & 91. 4.

them upon those who have not thought them worthy of their most serious endeavours.

Again, the joys of that place are pure and spiritual, and no unclean thing shall enter there. The felicity of the blessed spirits consists in beholding and admiring the divine perfections, and finding the image of them shining in themselves; in a perfect conformity to the will and nature of God, and in an intimate and delightful society and communion with him:—and shall such souls then be blessed in seeing and partaking of the divine likeness hereafter, who never loved it, and who would choose any thing rather than converse with him here?

If, once more, we reflect on the endeavours of those who have gone to heaven before us, how they fought and strove, how they wrestled and ran, to obtain that glorious prize, we shall see how improbable it is that the greatest part of men should reach it, with so little pains as they are willing to exert. Consider the patriarchs and saints of old; consider the holy violence wherewith the first Christians forced open the gates of heaven, and took possession of its joys. The ardent affection, wherewith these blessed souls were inflamed towards their Maker and Redeemer, made them willingly give up their bodies to the fire, for the glory of God, and the propagation of the Christian faith. Their constancy in their sufferings amazed their bloody persecutors, and outwearied the cruelty of their tormentors; nay, they rejoiced in nothing more than that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. And what shall we say of their universal charity and love, which reached their greatest enemies? of their mildness and meekness, their justice and temperance, and those other virtues which many of the heathens themselves observed and admired?

Which were the primitive Christians, our spiritual ancestors;—and tell me now, I pray you, what are we to do of these men? Did they supererogate and go beyond their duty; or were they fools in doing these things, when half the pains might have served the turn? Did they, and eternal happiness cost them so much labour, shall we think to be carried thither fast asleep, or while bending all our forces quite another way?

How come you yet nearer to the present purpose,—a consideration of the laws and precepts of the gospel to convince us of the straitness of the gate, and narrowness of the way, that leads to eternal life. Look through the prophet's sermon on the mount, and see what our Saviour's exhortations to his followers: there you will find him exhorting us to a profound humility, as shall make us think of ourselves, and be content that others think of us; a meekness which no injuries can overcome, which does not exasperate; a chastity, which restraineth the wandering eyes, and the wandering of the desires; and a universal charity, as shall make us tender to others as to our own, and never take any revenge against our most bitter enemies, but to wish them well,

and to do them all the good we can, whether they shall do the same by us or no.

Thus then we see by what strict rules he must square his actions, who can with any reason hope to be saved. It is now time to turn our view from these necessary qualifications for obtaining an entrance into heaven, and cast our eyes upon the world, to see how the tempers and actions of men agree with them. If we look back upon the old world, we shall see how soon wickedness overspread the earth; and of all the multitudes then in the world, only Noah and his family were found worthy to escape the general deluge; and after that, what was the state of the heathen world, and in general of the visible church of God itself, which was chiefly confined to Palestine?

But leaving those times, let us consider the present;—let us view our cotemporaries, our fellow-Christians so called, those who live in communion with ourselves, and see what is to be thought of their state in general. How many of them shall we find so grossly ignorant, that they even know not the way that leads to life. But besides those, how great is the number of vicious and scandalous persons? Remove but our gluttons and drunkards, our thieves and deceivers, our oppressors and extortioners, our scorners and revilers, our fornicators and adulterers, our blasphemers, our false swearers, and that horrid crew, especially, of common swearers; how should we thin the nations? To what a few comparatively should we quickly be reduced! What shall we say of our other frequent enormities? Alas! virtue and vice seem to have shifted places; evil and good to have changed their names. It is accounted a gallant thing to despise all laws, human and divine; no man is reckoned generous, unless he be extremely ambitious; and it is deemed want of courage to forgive an injury. O Religion, whither art thou fled? In what corner of the world shall we find thee? Shall we search after thee in courts, and the palaces of great men?—but pride and luxury have driven thee thence; and they are too much engaged in the business and pleasures of this world to mind those of another. Shall we seek thee in the cottages of the poor?—but envy and discontent too much lodge there; their outward wants in general take up all their thoughts, and they have little regard for those of their immortal souls.

But religion stands not in negatives. Nothing but the love of God, and its attendant graces, can qualify us for celestial enjoyments—that love of God, which every one readily pretends to; but oh how few are there, comparatively, that understand its meaning, or feel its renovating power!

I am fully convinced, indeed, that when we have said all we can say upon this tremendous subject, there are many who will never be persuaded of the truth of what has been here advanced. "They cannot think it consistent with the goodness and mercy of God, that so great a part of mankind should be eternally miserable." But

her brood under *her* wings, and ye would not!

35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, <sup>a</sup>Ye

<sup>b</sup> Pf. 69. 26. If. 1. 7. Mic. 3. 12. Pf. 81. 11. Hof. 11. 2, 7. Prov. 1. 24, 25. Act. 3. 14, 15.

<sup>c</sup> Ch. 21. 5, 6, 24. & 19. 44. Mic. 3.

12. If. 1. 7. <sup>d</sup> Prov. 1. 26—30. John, 8. 21, 24. & 7. 34. Hof. 3. 4, 5.

Oh what folly and madness is this, for sinful men to set rules for the divine goodness, and draw conclusions from it, so contrary to what himself has revealed.

There are thousands of angels continually in the presence of God, and ten thousand times ten thousand that stand about his throne: the glorified who were and shall be saved in infancy, will make perhaps one half of mankind: millions innumerable will be saved during the great millennium: and a glorious multitude of the present and past ages, will be found in the day of judgment accepted in the Beloved, and with his image stamped upon their hearts; though these latter, it is to be feared, will be but a small number in comparison of the adults at large of their respective generations; for *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* See John, iii. 3.

Sad and lamentable as is the doctrine here insisted on, yet may the consideration of it be very useful to thinking minds. It must needs touch every serious person with grief and trouble, to behold a multitude of people convened together on this globe, and to think that ere thirty or forty years,—or a little more,—or a great deal less, be passed—these all shall go down to the dark and silent grave—and the greater,—far greater part of their souls, be plunged into endless and unspeakable torments! But shall not this then stir us up to the greatest diligence and care for the prevention of so horrible an event? Were the sense of this deeply engraven on all our minds, with what seriousness, with what zeal, would ministers deal with the people committed to their charge; if that by any means they might save some! How would parents, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, friends, employ their diligence, and make use of every method for reclaiming their near relations, and the companions of their most pleasing hours, and for plucking them from the road and brink of hell! Lastly, with what holy violence would each of us apply, through the power of Almighty grace, for saving ourselves from this common ruin, for making our calling and election sure, and thus happily adding to the number of *the few that shall be saved.*

This is the use to be derived from what we have been here considering. May God Almighty accompany it with his blessing and power to every reader, and render it effectual to so excellent and glorious a purpose.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have,

1. A tragical story reported to our Lord by some who were present. Probably, the Galileans mentioned in this chapter had been followers of Judas of Galilee, Acts, v. 37. of whom Pilate having got information, fell upon them when they came up to the temple to worship, and mingled their blood with their sacrifices. Perhaps, what our Lord had been speaking of the necessity of always watching, and the importance of securing peace with God, gave occasion to the remark: or, as it seems from the sequel, they meant to insinuate, that these must cer-

tainly have been very wicked persons who were given up to so dreadful a judgment.

2. Jesus seeks to turn this event to their profit, and to ground thereon an exhortation to repentance. He reproves the uncharitable censure which they seemed to cast on these unhappy men; as such afflictive visitations were no proof of guilt. Nor may we judge of God's love or hatred to any man by the outward dispensations of his Providence. If they meant to reflect on them as Galileans, and thereby to throw some reproach on Christ and his disciples, who were their countrymen, Christ instances a recent calamity of as melancholy a nature that lately happened at Jerusalem, when eighteen persons were suddenly crushed to death by the fall of a tower in Siloam; so that these calamities were not singular, or confined to persons in one place more than another; nor were they to conclude that these men perished, because they were greater sinners than others in Galilee or Jerusalem. But he solemnly warns them, that a heavier doom hung over their heads, except they repented, when their blood too should be shed by the Roman swords in the midst of their sacred solemnities, and they be buried, as the men in the tower of Siloam, under the ruins of their city, and perish temporally and eternally; and this is applicable to every sinner. (1.) His desert is to perish under the wrath of God. (2.) Nothing but repentance can prevent his ruin. (3.) The judgments of God on others are loud warnings to us. (4.) Consciousness of our own sinfulness and provocations should make us very careful how we censure others. (5.) They who are severe in judging, may expect judgment without mercy.

2dly, The parable of the barren fig-tree is designed to enforce the foregoing admonition. It seems primarily to be applicable to the Jewish people, blessed with peculiar advantages, but disappointing God's expectations; yet spared a little longer at the Redeemer's intercession, till having tried them another space, and used in vain the most powerful means for their conversion in the mission of his apostles, at last he devotes them to utter ruin for their unbelief and impenitence, cutting them down as a barren tree, and casting them into the fire. But whatever reference the parable has to them, it is of more extensive use, as containing a warning to all who enjoy the means of grace; and who, if they are not converted by them, will fall under heavier wrath and condemnation.

1. Great was the advantage that this fig-tree enjoyed. It was planted *in a vineyard*, in the best soil, and under the owner's peculiar care and culture. The church is the vineyard of God; every visible member has a place there, sitting under the rain of gospel doctrine, and blest with the ministerial labours of Christ's faithful servants.

2. The owner justly expected to find fruit on this tree, as the Lord does especially from all who have a place in the church, of whom he requires the fruits of grace and holiness, as well as the leaves of profession.

3. Great

shall not see me, until *the time* come when ye shall say, \* Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD.

\* Pf. 118. 26. Mat. 21. 9.

3. Great indeed was his disappointment: *he found none*, and therefore complains to the vine-dresser how long he had waited, and how useless was this tree, which impoverished the ground, and occupied the room of one that might be profitable. With much more reason may the Lord complain of many professors, who bring him no honour, and continue barren and unfruitful. He comes from year to year, for three, for thirty, yea, sometimes for threescore years together; so wonderful is his patience and forbearance; and finds them still *cumberers of the ground*, whose ill example is more extensively pernicious, the longer they are permitted to stand.

4. He dooms it to fall: *cut it down*; since the tree bore no fruit, it was only fit for the flames. Such is the awful sentence of God against the impenitent sinner; *cut it down*, and death is ready to lift the axe! How awful, how alarming the thought!

5. The vine-dresser begs another year; if it be spared he will take fresh pains, it may yet bear, and then all will be well; but if not, he consents to leave the tree to its just doom. Christ is this vine-dresser; at his intercession are sinners spared, and every minister under him fails not in like manner to be an advocate for those among whom he labours. But, (1.) If through the intercession of Jesus our lives be prolonged, and we have another year granted, we should know and improve the day of our visitation. The time is short, reprieves are not pardons; though we are spared never so long, if we continue in our sins, we must perish at the last. (2.) While the Lord spares the sinner, ministers must never be weary of labouring, and should try every method; digging up the heart by the terrors of the law, and seeking to manure it with the quickening influences of the gospel. (3.) It is never too late to amend; the most barren and unfruitful, who through grace at last turn to God, will find mercy with him; the past transgressions shall be forgiven, and the present services accepted. (4.) God's patience, though it bear long, will not bear always; they who provoke and grieve his Holy Spirit by their obstinate impenitence, will at last be left to the destruction they have chosen; and every day of his forbearance which they have abused, shall add a treasure of wrath against the day of wrath.

3dly, Christ was an unwearied preacher; and, as usual, was now in the synagogue on the sabbath day. To confirm the doctrine that he taught, we are told,

1. The notable miracle which he wrought on an infirm woman who was present. Her case was very pitiable: under the power of Satan, her body was so convulsed and contracted, that she was bent double, and could not stand erect; and as the disorder had been of so long standing as eighteen years, all hope of a cure was despaired of. Yet she crawled to the synagogue, and did not, as many might have done, make her weakness, or deformity, a plea for absenting from God's worship. There the compassionate eye of Jesus remarked her unhappy situation; and, unsolicited, he called and cured her, loosing her from Satan's bonds, and

enabling her instantly to stand upright; for which she most heartily expressed her gratitude, glorifying and praising God for this extraordinary and unexpected mercy. *Note*; (1.) So weak and infirm are our souls by nature, unable to lift up their affections to high and heavenly things, and ever bowed down to earthly and sensual objects. (2.) Christ first seeks us, not we him, and is pleased to call to us in the gospel word, or by the secret influences of his Spirit, that coming to him we might be cured. (3.) The powerful hand of his grace effectually relieves the soul, that uses the power afforded to it to come to him, and saves it from the bondage of guilt and corruption; and when at any time we are afterwards bowed down with fear, and go heavily through manifold temptations, he offers ample strength to the weak. (4.) It is the delight and duty of all who experience his healing power, to glorify him in their lips and in their lives, walking uprightly before him.

2. The envious and malicious ruler of the synagogue, instead of glorifying God for the miracle, hardened with bigotry and prejudice, sharply reprimanded the people, as if the sabbath was violated by their coming to be healed on that day. *Note*; They who resolve to find fault, and not to be convinced, will cavil against the most glaring evidence.

3. Our Lord justifies his own conduct, and upbraids him with his hypocrisy. The zeal that he pretended for the sabbath, was a mere pretence to hide that enmity which raged in his heart against Christ and his gospel. His own daily practice condemned and confuted his unreasonable and uncharitable censures. None of those who most rigidly observed the sabbath, thought it any breach of the sacred rest, to loose their beast from the stall, and lead him to water. And if an ox or an ass might have such pains bestowed on it upon the sabbath, with how much greater reason did mercy and charity plead, that a human creature, a daughter of Abraham, bound by Satan's power, and so long and so grievously afflicted, should be relieved, when without the least labour it could be done by a single word?

4. The argument was most conclusive, and confusion covered his adversaries; whilst all the people, who were struck with wonder at his miracles, and the force of his reasoning, rejoiced at these glorious works of power and grace which they beheld. *Note*; Sooner or later all the foes of Christ and his people shall be confounded, and all his faithful triumph in his great salvation.

4thly, We have,

1. Two parables which were before recorded, Mat. xiii. 31, &c. representing the gradual increase of Christ's church, and the secret spreading of the gospel leaven. Though the beginnings were small, as the grain of mustard seed when sown; yet, in process of time, like a fair spreading tree, the kingdom of the Messiah would be erected throughout all the world; and Gentiles, as well as Jews, flock into it. And like leaven, though no external force be employed,

## C H A P. XIV.

*Christ healeth the dropsy on the sabbath: teacheth humility: to feast the poor: under the parable of the great supper, sheweth how worldly-minded men, who contemn the word of God, shall be shut out of heaven. Those who will be his disciples, to bear their cross, must make their accounts beforehand, lest with shame they revolt from him afterward, and become altogether unprofitable, like salt that hath lost its savour.*

[Anno Domini 31.]

**A**ND it came to pass, <sup>a</sup> as he went into the house of one of the <sup>b</sup> chief Pharisees

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 7. 34, 36. & 11. 37. 1 Cor. 9. 19, 20. <sup>b</sup> John, 3. 1. <sup>c</sup> Ch. 11. 53, 54. Mark, 3. 2. Pf. 37. 32. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 11. 39, 46. Mat. 23. 4. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 12. 10. Ch. 13. 14. Mat. 2. 24. & 3. 4. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 21. 25-27. & 22. 22, 34, 46. <sup>g</sup> Exod. 23. 5. Deut. 22. 4. Ch. 13. 15. Mat. 12. 11, 12.

<sup>b</sup> John, 3. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Ch. 11. 53, 54. Mark, 3. 2. Pf. 37. 32.

<sup>d</sup> Ch. 11. 39, 46. Mat. 23. 4. Ch. 13. 15. Mat. 12. 11, 12.

employed, the doctrines of truth would insensibly, but powerfully work, till their influence was diffused through all the earth.

2. Our Lord continued his course towards Jerusalem, preaching and teaching in all the cities and villages as he journeyed. Wherever Providence directs our way, we should be glad to improve every opportunity to speak a word for the good of immortal souls.

5thly, We have,

1. The question put to our Lord, *Are there few that shall be saved?* Perhaps the design of it was captious, to represent him as rigid and uncharitable, or it might be mere curiosity; many being more inquisitive who shall be saved, and who not, than about what they must do to secure their own salvation.

2. Our Lord answers the question in a way which seemed most profitable for the inquirer, directing him at least to give diligence to ensure the salvation of his own soul.

(1.) His exhortation is, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate; the way to heaven is difficult; ten thousand obstructions, both without and within, straiten the passage; great diligence and incessant prayer, therefore, are needful; that, strengthened by power from on high, we may be able to hold on, and to hold out, and so to run as to obtain the prize.*

(2.) He enforces his exhortation by various motives, [1.] *Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, willing indeed to go to heaven, but unwilling to use the necessary means; resting in cold formality, or lazy endeavours; bound with the fetters of sloth, or blinded with pride and self-righteousness, and so mistaking the way, or coming short of the kingdom.* [2.] *If the present moment be neglected, it will shortly be too late. The door of mercy through the gospel, which is now open, will soon be shut, when Jesus, the Master of the house, in death or judgment, will require the sinner's soul; and then the most important cries will be unavailing: it is now or never that prayer can profit us.* [3.] *Many who entertained the most confident hopes of heaven, will be found to have a lie in their right hand. They will knock as if they had a right to admission, plead relation to Christ as their Lord, that they were constant attendants on his word, and commu-*

to eat bread on the sabbath-day, that they watched him.

2 And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

3 And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, 'Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day?'

4 And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go;

5 And answered them, saying, 'Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a

nicants at his table; yet will Christ utterly disown them in that day, and drive them with indignation from his presence, as *workers of iniquity*: whatever pretences to religion they made, their hearts were not whole with him; their professions were hypocritical, and secret sins were harboured, delighted in, and gratified. Doomed therefore to be thrust into outer darkness, with every dreadful expression of horror and despair, with weeping and gnashing of teeth, in vain shall they bewail their folly; and, pining with envy and vexation, shall behold the patriarchs, prophets, and saints of God in glory exalted, and enjoying those unutterable delights of the heavenly kingdom, from which themselves must be eternally excluded; the sight of which will aggravate every pang that they feel. How awful a scene! what diligence, what carefulness should it beget in us, that we come not into this place of torment. How jealous need we be over our hearts, that we rest not in outward privileges, and deceive not ourselves with vain hopes: thousands have gone out of this world dreaming of heaven, and have awaked in hell.

6thly, Christ's inveterate enemies are ceaseless in their malice, seeking to distress and destroy him.

1. Certain Pharisees, pretending regard for his safety, brought him information that his life was in danger from Herod: either this was a contrivance of their own, who wanted to get rid of Christ, whose preaching and practice so reproved and cut them to the heart; or it may be, Herod employed them to drive Christ out of his dominions, being willing enough to have done him a mischief, but fearing the consequences of attempting to seize him, because of his interest in the people. *Note*; It is no unusual artifice with wicked men to seek, by suggestions of danger, to deter the faithful from their duty.

2. Christ defies Herod's menaces. *Go, says he, tell that fox, whose craft, treachery, and rapine were notorious, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow; not desisting from his work, not intimidated with these threatenings; and the third day I shall be perfected, shortly my sufferings will be finished, and by my death I shall complete the great work of atonement: and till then, it is neither in the power of Herod, or any of the emissaries of hell, to stop me in my work, and take away my life. Nevertheless, as my hour is not yet come, I must walk to-day*

pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day?

6 <sup>b</sup> And they could not answer him again to these things.

7 ¶ And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how <sup>i</sup> they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

8 When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;

9 And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

10 <sup>k</sup> But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

11 <sup>l</sup> For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

12 ¶ Then said he also to him that bade him, <sup>m</sup> When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor *thy* rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.

<sup>b</sup> Ch. 13. 17. Acts, 6. 10. Mat. 22. 46. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 23. 6. Ch. 20. 46. & 11. 43. Mark, 12. 38. <sup>3</sup> John, 9. <sup>k</sup> Prov. 25. 6, 7. <sup>l</sup> Pet. 5. 5. <sup>m</sup> Prov. 15. 33. & 18. 12. Prov. 15. 33. James, 4. 6. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 23. 12. Ch. 18. 14. & 1. 51. Job, 22. 29. Pf. 18. 27. Prov. 15. 33. Ver. 10. & 29. 23. James, 4. 6, 10. <sup>1</sup> Pet. 5. 5.

day and to-morrow, and the day following, continuing his ministry in Galilee, without fear of interruption: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem, where alone the great council sat, to whom it belonged to judge those who laid claim to the gift of prophesy, and to put to death those whom they counted impostors.

3. On this occasion, at the mention of Jerusalem, Christ laments over her by reason of her wickedness, and foretells the wrath ready to descend on that devoted city. Through wilful ignorance, not knowing the day of her visitation, she was abandoned to ruin; and too late would be convinced of his divine mission, and wish for a part in his salvation, when he should come, in the great day, to pour the vials of his eternal wrath on those who had rejected him.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. One of the chief Pharisees] A member of the great council, or sanhedrim, who had a country-seat in Perea. The higher courts among the Jews allowed some recess to their members. This person's invitation to our Lord was insidious; for we are told that they watched him.

Ver. 2. There was a certain man before him] He was either set before him by way of a snare, or had conveyed himself thither in hopes of a cure, which is the most probable; for it appears from ver. 4. that he was not one of the family, because Christ dismissed or let him go.

Ver. 4. And he took him,] The original *ειραλαβενος*, signifies either his taking hold of him, or laying his hand upon him. Doubtless our Lord could have accomplished this cure as well by a secret volition, and so might have cut off all manner of cavilling; but he chose rather to produce it by an action in which there was the very least degree of bodily labour that could be, because thus he had an opportunity of reproving the reigning superstition of the times.

Ver. 7. Chief rooms;] Chief places:—*πρωτοκλισιας*, chief

seats, and so where the word *room* occurs: from this circumstance, and from what is said ver. 12. it appears that this was a great entertainment, to which many were invited. Very probably therefore the meeting was concerted, and the company chosen, with a view to ensnare Jesus,—as we observed on ver. 1. So that his being invited was a matter, not of accident, but of design.

Ver. 10. Go, and sit down in the lowest room;] It is most probable that Christ himself, as illustrious a person as he was, had done thus, and sat down among them in the lowest place at the table.

Ver. 12. When thou makest a dinner, &c.] "By no means confine thy hospitality to thy rich relations, acquaintances and neighbours, or to them chiefly, lest the whole of thy reward be an invitation from them to a like entertainment;" for that the text here, as in some other instances, implies the addition of the particle *only*, appears from this, that our Lord cannot be supposed to exclude entirely from the entertainments of the rich, all those who are not objects of charity; or to forbid every sort of expence, which has not the poor for its immediate object. His going to entertainments frequently, as well as his suffering himself to be anointed with precious ointments, shews plainly that the obligations we are under of being charitable to the poor, does not hinder us from doing honour to those whom we esteem, though it should be attended with some expence. It is very apparent that the word *rich* refers not merely to neighbours, but also to the kindred, and other persons who are mentioned with them. For if these were in low circumstances, their being related to them was an argument why they should be regarded, rather than neglected. It is probable, that our Lord observed in the Pharisees a habit of making magnificent feasts, and of treating the great as well as their equals out of pride, ambition, and ostentation; which might render this advice peculiarly proper, especially if he who now gave the entertainment was, as many of his brethren certainly were, very deficient in works of charity.

Ver.

13 But when thou makest a feast, <sup>a</sup> call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind :

14 And thou shalt be blessed ; for they cannot recompense thee : <sup>o</sup> for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

15 ¶ And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, <sup>p</sup> Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16 <sup>q</sup> Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many :

17 <sup>r</sup> And sent his servant at supper-time to

say to them that were bidden, Come ; for all things are now ready.

18 And <sup>s</sup> they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it : I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them : I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

21 So that servant came, and shewed his

<sup>a</sup> Neh. 8. 12. Job, 31. 17. Prov. 3. 9, 28. <sup>o</sup> Prov. 19. 17. Mat. 25. 36. John, 5. 29. Acts, 24. 15. Dan. 12. 2, 3. <sup>p</sup> Rev. 19. 9. Ch. 13. 29. John, 6. 34. <sup>q</sup> Mat. 22. 2—10. If. 25. 6. Mark, 16. 15. Rev. 19. 9. If. 55. 1—7. <sup>r</sup> Mat. iii. x. Mark, i. iii. Luke, i. iii. ix. x. Acts, i. ix. Prov. 1. 20—24. & 9. 7—5. <sup>s</sup> Mat. 22. 3, 5, 6. John, 1. 11. & 5. 40. Mat. 13. 22. Ch. 8. 14. & 21. 34. If. 29. 5—12. & 49—53. & 5. 5, 6. 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. 2 Tim. 4. 10. Phil. 3. 19. Pf. 17. 14.

*Ver. 13. The maimed,]* Ἀναπήρους, the disabled ; the word takes in both the lame and the blind ; and may also include those whom the infirmities of age have rendered helpless. See a fine parallel passage in Pliny's Epistles, lib. ix. epist. 30.

*Ver. 14. At the resurrection of the just.]* These words afford a strong and awakening intimation, that none who neglect works of charity, if they have ability to do them, shall have their final lot among the righteous ; which is evident from the many hundred scriptures, indispensably requiring mercy as well as justice.

*Ver. 15. Blessed is he that shall eat bread, &c.]* The phrase to eat bread, signifies making a meal, and this not only at a common table, but sometimes at a feast. See 2 Sam. ix. 7, 10. xii. 17, 20. Prov. ix. 5. The Jews were accustomed to think of the felicity of good men in the life to come under the notion of a sumptuous entertainment ; and therefore our Lord frequently accommodates himself to their habit of thinking. See Matth. viii. 11. Wherefore, when Jesus mentioned the resurrection of the just, one of the guests, ravished with the delightful prospect, cried out, "Blessed is he, who, being admitted into heaven, shall enjoy the conversation of the inhabitants of that glorious place ; for these spiritual repasts must regale and invigorate his mind beyond expression !" Perhaps in this exclamation, the Pharisee meant both to congratulate the felicity of his countrymen, who looked upon themselves as the children of the kingdom ; and to console the lot of the heathen, who, as he imagined, were all to be excluded from heaven. Considered in this light, the subsequent parable appears with the greatest propriety and beauty, as the best reply to such an error, and the fittest method to correct and explode it.

*Ver. 16—20. Then said he unto him, &c.]* "What you say is very true ; my kingdom is full of blessings, though many despise and reject them ; as may be represented in the following parable : A certain man made a great feast, which, as usual in those countries and times, was at supper ; and invited many guests. So Christ, now in the end of the world, has made plentiful provisions of gospel-grace for spiritual refreshment and per-

fect happiness, that sinners may be holy here, and blessed for ever ; and he freely invites all that hear the gospel, beginning with the Jewish nation, to accept those rich provisions for their present relief and comfort, and for their eternal salvation. And when the feast was fully prepared, and but few of the guests were come in, the master sent his servant again to them who had been invited, to let them know that all things were now ready for their entertainment, and to bid them come without any further delay. So Christ, having called the Jews by his personal ministry, and by the preaching of his servants, whom he sent to the cities of Judea, with little success, he commissioned the apostles and evangelists after his resurrection, to renew his gracious invitation, and to assure them that now all things were thoroughly prepared, that the great work of atonement was actually finished, that the Spirit was poured out from on high to bear witness and give efficacy to it, and that he was still willing to receive every one who should come by faith to him. And this is the language of the gospel, wherever it is preached. And yet the invited guests, as it were by common consent, put off their coming upon various pretences : one alleged that he had bought a piece of ground, and must needs go to see how the bargain was like to prove ; and therefore begged to be excused : another pleaded that he had just bought five yoke of oxen, and must go to try whether they were fit for his business ; and therefore desired that he might be excused : and another insisted, that he was lately married, and therefore peremptorily declared he could not come. So the Jews in general, and the scribes and Pharisees in particular, and many others that sit under the gospel, reject its gracious invitations on frivolous and carnal pretences ; some preferring their worldly gains and advantages, and others their sensual ease and pleasure, to Christ and the blessings of eternal life ; and all the impenitent are for shifting off a present attention to his calls, which carries in it a real denial, though they are ashamed to avow it in plain terms." See the notes on Matth. xxii. 1, &c.

*Ver. 18. With one consent]* The phrase, ἅπασαν, is all that

lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22 And the servant said, Lord, \* it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23 And the Lord said unto the servant, ' Go out into the highways and hedges, and ' compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 For I say unto you, that \* none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

25 ¶ And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

26 <sup>b</sup> If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

27 <sup>c</sup> And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

\* Mat. 22. 7, 8. & 21. 41, 42. & 8. 11, 12. See ver. 24. Rev. 22. 17. If. 42. 6, 7. & 45. 22. with John, 7. 48, 49. Zech. 11. 7, 11. James, 2. 5. <sup>a</sup> Act, i—ix. <sup>y</sup> Mat. 22. 9, 10. & 28. 18, 19. & 26. 13. Mark, 16. 15, 16. Eph. 2. 17—22. & 3. 6—8. Rom. 10. 18. Col. 1. 23. Act, x. <sup>z</sup> Prov. 1. 20—23. & 9. 4, 5. 2 Cor. 5. 20. & 10. 3—5. Col. 1. 21, 28, 29. 2 Tim. 4. 2. Pl. 110. 3. <sup>a</sup> See Mat. 21. 41, 43. & 8. 11, 12. & 23. 38, 39. & 22. 8. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 10. 37. & 16. 25. & 19. 29. Deut. 33. 9. & 13. 6. John, 21. 17. Pl. 73. 25, 26. & 142. 4, 5. Rev. 12. 11. <sup>c</sup> Mark, 8. 34. Mat. 10. 38. & 16. 24. & 11. 29. Ch. 9. 23. 2 Tim. 3. 12.

that is in the original. It seems the most natural to supply the ellipsis by the word *consent*, as our translators have done.

Ver. 23. *Compel them*] *Press them*. "Use the most earnest intreaties with those who shew any unwillingness." The word *αναγκασω*, rendered *compel*, does not imply that any external violence was to be used with these persons; a single servant was sent out to them, who surely was not capable of forcing so great a multitude to come in, as was necessary to fill his lord's house. The proper meaning of the expression is, "Use the most powerful persuasion with them;" and so it fitly denotes the great efficacy of the apostle's preaching to the idolatrous Gentiles, whereby vast numbers of them were prevailed with through divine grace to embrace the gospel. See Prov. vii. 21. in the LXX. for the same word, only used in a bad sense; and Luke, xxiv. 29. Indeed, force has no manner of influence to enlighten men's consciences; so that though one should pretend to believe, and should actually practise a worship contrary to his opinion, it could never please God, being mere hypocrisy; wherefore St. Austin and others, who suppose that this passage of the parable justifies the use of external violence in matters of religion, are grossly mistaken. The author of the *Observations*, describing the hospitality maintained in the Arab villages, tells us, from La Roque, that as soon as the *cheikh*,—who is as the lord of the village,—is informed that strangers are coming, he goes to meet them, and, having saluted them, marches at their head to the place set apart for their reception, if they are disposed to dine or lodge in the village: but La Roque gives us to understand, that frequently those travellers only just stop to take a bit and then go on; in which case they are generally inclined to stay out of the village, *under some tree*. Upon this the *cheikh* goes or sends his people to the village to bring them a collation; which, as there is not time to dress meat for them, consists of eggs, butter, curds, honey, olives and other fruit. After they have eaten, they thankfully take leave of the *cheikh*, who commonly eats with them; and then pursue their journey. This may serve to explain the passage before us. Those in the *highways* were strangers passing on without any intention

of stopping; and these under the *hedges*, where travellers frequently sat down, were such as had declared themselves averse to stay, and only just sat down to take a little refreshment. The sheltering themselves under *trees and hedges*, does not import, as some eminent commentators have imagined, their being the poorest and most helpless of travellers, which does not at all agree with the *pressing them to come in*, for such must be supposed ready enough to come;—but it points out their being strangers, by no means inclined to receive such a favour, as it would so retard them, as to break in upon their measures. See *Observat.* p. 220.

Ver. 24. *I say unto you, that none, &c.*] See the interpretation of the parable, Matth. xxii. to which nothing need be added, except the explication of a circumstance mentioned here, which is not in the parable as it was then delivered, namely, the two distinct calls; *first*, to those in the streets and lanes of the city, and then to those in the highways and hedges: the former are supposed to be the Gentile proselytes, to whom the gospel was preached after it was rejected by the Jews; the latter are the idolatrous Gentiles, who had the gospel offered to them last of all. The circumstance too, in the present verse, is wanting in the repetition of the parable, Matth. xxii. The thing signified by it is, that because the Jews rejected Jesus and his apostles, they were given over by God to a hardened and reprobate mind: only the reader must remember, that not the condition of individuals, but the general state of the nation is here described; in which view the parabolical representation is perfectly just, notwithstanding many individual Jews believed in Jesus, and obtained eternal life.

Ver. 26. *And hate not his father, &c.*] Strictly speaking, to hate our nearest relations, and our own lives, would be unnatural wickedness, and equally contrary to the dictates of humanity, and the genius of the gospel. But it is well known, that one thing is said to be loved and another hated in scripture, when the former is much preferred; and especially when out of regard to it, the latter is neglected or forsaken. Compare Gen. xxix. 31. Deut. xxi. 15—17. Mal. i. 3. Rom. ix. 13. Matth. vi. 24. *Father* and

28 <sup>d</sup> For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish it?

29 Left haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

30 Saying, <sup>e</sup> This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

<sup>d</sup> Prov. 24. 27. 1 Kings, 5. 15. 1 Pet. 2. 5. Jude, 20. These parables teach us that we must resolve to lose all, and suffer all, for Christ, when we set out in religion. <sup>e</sup> Gal. 3. 3, 4. Heb. 6. 4—8. & 10. 26, 27. with 2 Peter, 1. 4—12. & 3. 12. Col. 2. 6, 7. Titus, 2. 11—13. 2 John, 8. 18. <sup>f</sup> Prov. 26. 18. Men had better never profess to serve Christ, than apostatize from him. 2 Peter, 2. 20—22. Rev. 3. 15, 16. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 5. 25. Ch. 12. 58. H. b. 12. 14. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 16, 24, 25. & 19. 27—29. Ver. 26, 27. Phil. 3. 7—9. Ps. 73. 25, 26.

and *mother*, and other relations were particularly mentioned by our Lord, because, as affairs then stood, the profession of the gospel was apt to set a man at variance with his nearest relations.

*Ver. 28. To build a tower,]* We learn from eastern writers, that besides fortified towns and cities, they used to have *towers* for the people of open towns to fly to in time of danger, as well as magnificent towers for pleasure in their gardens. Our Lord probably refers to a tower of this latter kind; for one can hardly think, with some commentators, that he is speaking of the slight and unexpensive buildings in a vineyard, which indeed are sometimes so slight, as to consist only of four poles, with a floor on the top of them, to which they ascend by a ladder; but rather of those elegant turrets erected in gardens, where the eastern people of fortune spend a considerable part of their time.

*Ver. 31, 32. Or, what king, &c.]* According to Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology, these words were spoken at our Lord's last passover, and might possibly refer to Herod's leading his army through Judea against Aretas king of Arabia. The phrase representing the feeble person as begging a peace, supplies us with a proper emblem of the humility and resignation with which peace is to be sought from an offended God, who is possessed of a strength, not as in the case literally supposed here, but infinitely superior to ours.

*Ver. 33. So likewise,]* "Whoever engages to be my disciple without counting the cost, and resolving to part with all that he hath, will certainly be disheartened by the unexpected difficulties which he shall meet with; and, abandoning my service, will expose himself to utter shame and loss." It would be very foolish to urge the letter of this precept strictly, and maintain that a man cannot be Christ's disciple, unless he throws all his goods into the sea, divorces his wife, and bids farewell to his children and relations. None more truly renounces all that he hath in the gospel sense, than the man who preserves himself ready every moment to do so, and follows his business free and disentangled. Such a person through grace will cheerfully part with life, and every thing dear in life, when called thereto. It was in this sense that the apostles understood their Master; for though they are said to have *forsaken all and followed him*, they still retained the property of their goods, as is evident from the mention of

31 Or, what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he <sup>e</sup> sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33 So likewise, <sup>h</sup> whosoever he be of you

St. John's house, into which he took our Lord's mother after the crucifixion; and from St. Peter and the other disciples following their old trade of fishing, with their own boat and nets, after their Master's resurrection. Besides, we find St. Peter paying the tribute in Capernaum, as an inhabitant of the town; and it was in *his house* that our Lord resided, when he was at Capernaum. Nevertheless, though the apostles thus retained the dominion and use of their property, they had truly *forsaken all*, in the highest sense of their Master's precept, being ready, at his call, to leave their families, occupations, and possessions, as often and as long as he thought fit to employ them in the work of the gospel. Upon the whole then it appears, that the renunciation and self-denial which Christ requires, does not consist in actually parting with all before he calls us to do so; but in being so disposed to part with all, that, when he calls, we may do it. See on Matth. xix. 29.

*Inferences drawn from ver. 23. on the absurdity and iniquity of persecution for religion.*—In explaining this verse, it has been shewn, that no possible countenance is or can be given by it to persecution, on the score of religion, or for conscience' sake. Indeed nothing is more absurd and iniquitous; as will appear from the following considerations.

1. Persecution for conscience' sake, that is, inflicting penalties upon men merely for their religious principles or worship, is plainly founded on a supposition that one man has a right to *judge for another* in matters of religion; which is manifestly absurd, and has been fully proved to be so by many excellent writers.

2. Persecution is most evidently inconsistent with that fundamental principle of morality, That we should do to others, as we would reasonably wish they should do to us.—A rule, which carries its own demonstration with it, and was intended to take off that bias of self-love, which would divert us from the straight line of equity, and render us partial judges between our neighbours and ourselves. I would ask the advocate of *wholesome severities*, How he would relish his own arguments, if turned upon himself? What if he were to go abroad into the world,—among Roman Catholics, if he be a Protestant? among Mahometans, if he be a Christian? Supposing he was to behave like an honest man, a good neighbour, a peaceful subject, avoiding every injury, and taking all opportunities to serve and oblige

that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

34 ¶ *Salt is good: but if the salt have lost its flavour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?*

<sup>1</sup> Col. 4. 6. Mat. 6. 17. Mark, 9. 49. 50. Ver. 28, 29. with Gal. 5, 6. & 6. 15. Heb. 10. 26, 28. & 6. 4—8. Titus, 1. 16. 1c. 66. 3. 24. & 1. 11—15. Christ's doctrines, graces, and ministers, are useful for reforming and preserving; but if once professors and ministers turn erroneous and carnal, they are most useless, contemptible, and ripe for misery.

oblige those about him,—would he think that merely because he refused to follow his neighbours to their altars, or their mosques, he ought to be seized and imprisoned, his goods confiscated,—his person condemned to tortures or death? Undoubtedly, he would complain of this as a very great hardship, and soon see the absurdity and injustice of such a treatment, when it fell upon himself, and when such *measure* as he would *mete* to others, was measured to him again.

3. Persecution is absurd, as being by no means calculated to answer the end which its patrons profess to intend by it; namely, the glory of God, and the salvation of men: now, if it do any good to men at all, it must be by making them truly religious: but religion is not a mere name, or a ceremony: true religion imports an entire change of heart; and it must be founded in the inward conviction of the mind, or it is impossible it should be, what yet it must be, a *reasonable service*. Let it only be considered, what violence and persecution can do towards producing such an inward conviction: a man might as reasonably expect to bind an immaterial spirit with a cord, or to beat down a wall by an argument, as to convince the understanding by threats or tortures. Persecution is much more likely to make men hypocrites, than sincere converts. They may, perhaps, if they have not a firm and heroic courage, change their profession, while they retain their sentiments; and, supposing them before to have been unwarily in the wrong, they may learn to add falsehood and villainy to error. How glorious a prize! especially when one considers at what an expence it is gained. But,

4. Persecution tends to produce much mischief and confusion in the world: it is mischievous to those on whom it falls; and in its consequences so mischievous to others, that one would wonder any wise princes should ever have admitted it into their dominions, or that they should not have immediately banished it thence: for, even where it succeeds so far, as to produce a change in men's *forms* of worship, it generally makes them no more than hypocritical professors of what they do not believe, which must undoubtedly debauch their minds; so that, having been villains in one respect, it is very probable that they will be so in another; and, having brought deceit and falsehood into their religion, that they will easily bring it into their conversation and commerce. This will be the effect of persecution, where it is yielded to; and where it is opposed (as it must often be by upright and conscientious men, who have the greater claim upon the protection and favour of governments), the mischievous consequences of its fury will be more flagrant and shocking. Nay, perhaps, where there is no true religion, a native sense of honour in a generous mind may stimulate it to endure some hardships for the cause of truth: "Obstinacy," as one well observes, "may rise, as the understanding is oppressed, and continue its opposition for a

"while, merely to avenge the cause of its injured liberty."

Nay, 5. the cause of truth itself must, humanly speaking, be not only obstructed, but destroyed, should persecuting principles universally prevail. For even upon the supposition, that in some countries it might tend to promote and establish the *purity* of the gospel, yet it must surely be a great impediment to its *progress*. What wise heathen or Mahometan prince would ever admit Christian preachers into his dominions, if he knew it was a principle of their religion, that as soon as the majority of the people were converted by arguments, the rest, and himself with them, if he continued obstinate, must be profelyted, or extirpated by fire and sword?

If it be, as the advocates for persecution have generally supposed, a dictate of the law of nature, to propagate the true religion by the sword; then certainly a Mahometan or an idolater, with the same notions, supposing himself to have truth on his side, must think himself obliged in conscience to arm his powers for the extirpation of Christianity: and thus a holy war must cover the face of the whole earth, in which nothing but a miracle could render Christianity successful, against so vast a disproportion in numbers. Now it seems hard to believe that to be a *truth*, which would naturally lead to the extirpation of truth in the world; or that a divine religion should carry in its bowels the principles of its own destruction.

But, 6. This point is clearly determined by the lip of truth itself; and persecution is so far from being encouraged by the gospel, that it is most directly contrary to many of its precepts, and indeed to the whole genius of it. It is condemned by the example of Christ, *who went about doing good; who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them; who waved the exercise of his miraculous power against his enemies, even when they most unjustly and cruelly assaulted him; and never exerted it to the corporal punishment even of those who had most justly deserved it: and his doctrine also, as well as his example, has taught us, to be harmless as doves; to love our enemies; to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us.* Such are the principal arguments against persecution for religious matters; from the consideration whereof the following short reflections naturally arise.

Let us bless God, that we are free from the guilt of persecuting others, and from the misery of being persecuted ourselves. Had we been born in Spain or Portugal, education and example might have corrupted our judgments so much, that without further inquiry we might have taken it up as a first principle, that heretics are to be punished with death. And on this foundation we might have practised or applauded the greatest inhumanities, perhaps towards the best of men. We might have been presenting to God, even murder for a burnt-offering;

35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; *but* men cast it out. <sup>k</sup> He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

<sup>k</sup> Ch. 9. 44. & 8. 8. Mat. 11. 15. & 13. 9. Rev. 2. 7, 11, 17, 29. & 3. 6, 13, 22.

and trusting in that for the expiation of our offences, which is in itself one of the greatest enormities that human nature can commit: let us also thankfully acknowledge it as an instance of the divine goodness, that we are not suffering by persecution; that we are not plundered or banished, imprisoned or tortured for conscience' sake, and thus brought under a formidable temptation to make shipwreck both of that and of faith. Let us envy none that liberty of conscience which they enjoy upon such equitable principles. While we rejoice in a toleration ourselves, it were inexcusable to be dissatisfied that many who most widely differ from us share in the same common benefit. Let us not indulge even a secret wish, that there were a sword in our hand to slay, or a chain to bind them; but if fair argument and love will not fix conviction in their minds, in favour of what we apprehend to be right, let us leave them to worship God in their own way, without peremptorily insisting that they do it in ours. In short, let us act upon the great principles of virtue and benevolence, which, blessed be God, are not confined nor peculiar to any distinguishing forms of religious profession among us; always remembering, *that the servant who knoweth his master's will, and prepareth not himself to act accordingly, will be beaten with many stripes: that the freest profession of the purest religion upon earth, will signify nothing, if it be no more than a profession; and that all zeal for liberty, which can consist with being the slave of sin at the same time, is only a natural haughtiness of spirit, which will aggravate a man's guilt, rather than extenuate it.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Christ refused not the invitations even of those who, he knew, were his enemies; and, though he was well aware of their malicious intentions, he behaved to them with all kindness and courtesy.

1. He dined with a chief Pharisee on the sabbath-day; and there being present a pitiable object who was swollen with a dropsy, they *watched* whether he would heal him; intending, if he did, to accuse him as a sabbath-breaker.

2. Christ, who knew their thoughts, interrogates them on the subject, *Whether it was lawful to heal on the sabbath-day?* But they observed a fullen silence, unwilling to preclude the accusation which they meditated, by admitting it to be lawful, and yet not knowing how to maintain the unlawfulness of so good a deed.

3. *He took the man aside, and healed him,* reducing in a moment his distended body, and sending him away perfectly cured. And in his own justification, and to their conviction and confusion, urges their own practice, to prove the lawfulness of such a work of charity. If they admitted that an ox or an ass fallen into a pit, should be lifted out on the sabbath-day, lest it should perish there, how much more forcible was the argument for the cure of a diseased person whose life was in danger? And how evident did it appear, that their zeal for the sabbath was

mere hypocrisy, designed only to cover their malignity against him?

4. *They could not answer him again to these things,* their own conduct spoke their condemnation. *Note;* At Christ's bar every mouth shall be stopped.

2dly, Though our Lord was courteous, he was far above the flattery of compliment. When he saw occasion for rebuke, he would not, even in the company of persons most distinguished, refrain from faithful admonition.

1. He rebukes the guests for that affectation of pre-eminence which he observed among them, each coveting the most honourable seat at the table. Such pride would expose them to contempt, while humility was the way to honour: for they who should assumingly thrust themselves into the seat of precedence which did not belong to them, might expect to be degraded, when a more honourable personage coming in, the master of the house would say, *Give this man place,* and this could not fail of covering with confusion the conceited intruder, who must go down lower, and expose himself to the contempt of the company. Much more to their honour would it be, humbly to take the lowest place, as ready to give the preference to others; for then the master, attentive to place his guests according to their rank, would respectively desire them to come up higher, and their modesty and humility would gain the regard and esteem of all that sat at table. And as this is the case among men, so is it also before God; *whosoever exalteth himself,* in a proud conceit of his own excellence above all other men, *shall be abased,* treated with contempt and abhorrence by him who trieth the heart, and knows the true characters of men; *and he that humbleth himself,* under the deepest sense of his vileness and unworthiness, *shall be exalted* to the favour of God on earth, and, if faithful, to the enjoyment of his glory in heaven. *Note;* (1.) Pride is a sin alike odious in the sight of God and man. (2.) Modest diffidence gives a brighter lustre to real worth.

2. He rebukes the master of the house for his inviting the rich and neglecting the poor. It bespeaks the pride, selfishness, and luxury of the heart, to make profuse entertainments, and invite only the wealthy, at whose tables we expect to be entertained in return. Such feasting is evil; it is an abuse of the creatures of God, and robbery of the poor: not that we are forbid welcoming our friends, or returning their visits: it is the profusion which would render us incapable of relieving the indigent, the vain affectation of show, the ambition of keeping grand company, and the expectation of a recompence in kind, which our Lord condemns. He bids us, on the contrary, with charitable hospitality feed the poor; not sturdy beggars, for that is no charity, but an encouragement to idleness; *but the maimed, the lame, the blind;* these cannot indeed return the favour; but we shall be no losers; God will remember and reward these labours of love at *the resurrection of the just.*

3dly, Affected by the discourse of Christ, which breathed such humility and charity, one of the guests broke forth

C H A P. XV.

The parable of the lost sheep : of the piece of silver : and of the prodigal son.

[Anno Domini 31.]

THEN drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

3 ¶ And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

4 What man of you, having an hundred

1 Ch. 14. 21. & 5. 29-32. & 7. 29. Mat. 21. 31, 32. & 0. 10, 13. Mark. 2. 15, 16. Ezek. 18. 23. 1 Tim. 1. 15. 2 Mat. 9. 11. & 20. 15. Ch. 1. 30. & 19. 7. Acts, 11. 3. Ch. 19. 7, 10. Gal. 2. 12. 3 Mat. 18. 12, 13. Jer. 50. 6. Ezek. 34. 6, 8, 16, 23. It. 53. 6, 10-12. John, 10. 11, 16. 1 Peter, 2. 25. Pl. 119. 176. If. 63. 1, 4. & 27. 12, 13. & 45. 22, 24. Ezek. 34. 16. Phil. 1. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 13-16. Ca. 9. 10.

forth as in a transport, looking forward to the days of the Messiah, when they expected that all plenty, piety, and happiness would universally abound, and said, *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.* Christ immediately replied to this observation by a parable, drawn from the feast before them, and containing intimations which they would be very backward to receive; insinuating to them, that however great or happy the Messiah's kingdom might be, the Jews in general would reject it, and the despised Gentiles chiefly partake of the privileges of the gospel.

1. A certain man made a great supper, and bade many. Christ is the master of the feast; all the riches of gospel-grace are provided by him for the entertainment of miserable sinners; and his invitation is free and gracious. He bids his servants say, *whosoever will, let him come, for all things are now ready*; the present moment is the accepted time; there must be no delay; and if we feel our want of pardon, peace, grace and glory, we shall make none, but press eagerly to be fed with these heavenly provisions.

2. The guests gave the servants a cold reception, and pretended other engagements. The Jewish people in general rejected the gospel, and turned a deaf ear to the apostles and evangelists; and too many in every age resemble them, and find some frivolous excuse for their conduct. One had purchased a farm, and he must needs go and see it; another had bought five yoke of oxen, and he wanted to try them; and a third is just married, and therefore pleads, *I cannot come.* But the truth is, *I will not*; his wife would have found a welcome too; that need not have hindered him. Note; (1.) Any thing will serve for a hindrance to those who want an excuse; and the devil will take care that they shall not be at a loss, who have no inclination to duty. (2.) Hearts full of worldly cares, and set on amassing wealth, must needs be deaf to the gospel calls. (3.) The folly of the men of the world is as great as their sin: for what trifles do they barter heaven! (4.) Inordinate affection to lawful comforts, even to our dearest relatives, may prove a dangerous stumbling-block in our way to glory.

3. The servants, returning with grief to their master, reported the repulse that they had met with; and just indignation kindled in the master's bosom at the ingratitude and contempt shewn to his gracious invitation. Note; Abused mercy turns to fiercest wrath; rejection of the calls of grace must needs issue in ruin.

4. Though they who were invited refused to come, the feast shall not be lost. The master bids his servants *go into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, the*

*maimed, the halt, and the blind*; since the scribes and Pharisees, with all the rich and noble among the Jews, rejected his salvation, the gospel was to be preached to the lowest of the people, many of whom were brought to the obedience of faith. And when the servants, having executed their commission, reported that yet there was room, their Lord sends them *into the highways and hedges, even to the Gentile world, to call the vilest sinners, and urge them to come in, assuring them of a hearty welcome.* Note; (1.) The unbelief of the impenitent will not prevent the promise of God from taking effect. Christ will have a church and people in the world, though the wise, mighty, and noble reject him. (2.) The gospel has usually most success among those whom the proud, the wise, and self-righteous, despise,—even the ignorant, the poor, the publicans, and open sinners; nor must the servants think it any disparagement to themselves or their Master, that of such is chiefly the kingdom of heaven. (3.) The compulsion which Christ's ministers must use, is the force of argument and persuasion, not violence or the civil power, which can only make men hypocrites. (4.) None are excluded from Christ, who do not exclude themselves; there is room, and we are welcome: if we refuse to come, our ruin lieth at our own door.

5. He seals up the despisers of the gospel under wrath and reprobacy *I say unto you, that none of these men who were bidden shall taste of my supper.* The unbelieving Jews, to whom the gospel was first preached, and all who hear and reject the counsel of God against their own souls, are justly abandoned to the delusions which they have chosen, and left to perish in their sins.

4thly, Multitudes followed Christ, probably in hopes to share in that temporal kingdom which they expected the Messiah would set up. To undeceive them he lets them know,

1. The terms of discipleship. They will not find that ease, affluence, and honour, with which they flattered themselves, but the very reverse; they must be ready to forsake their nearest and dearest relations, when Christ's service calls for them; must be content to leave all behind, and to be banished from their best friends: if the commands of parents come in competition with our duty to him, we must not hesitate whom we shall obey: nay, our own lives must not be dear to us, when his glory requires us to lay them down. The love of him must constrain us stronger than death; every cross which he is pleased to lay upon us, should we cheerfully take up; content to be nailed to it, if he so willed. And if without such entire surrender of ourselves to him, we cannot be his

sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

5 And when he hath found it, <sup>d</sup> he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

6 And when he cometh home, he calleth

<sup>d</sup> 11. 40. 11. & 46. 3, 4. & 63. 9. & 53. 10. Ch. 19. 9. & 23. 43. & 7. 36—50. John, iv. Acts, ix. 1 Tim. 1. 13—16.

his disciples, much less may we think that we belong to him, if we are afraid to disoblige a friend or a relation for his sake, if we cannot bear a name of infamy or a badge of reproach. Such as shrink from these lesser trials, and are ashamed to make profession of him, will certainly never go with him to prison, or to death.

2. He exhorts his followers seriously and deliberately to weigh the difficulties and dangers, before they embark in his cause; lest, after making a profession, they should expose themselves to contempt, and bring heavier ruin upon their souls, by drawing back unto perdition; and this he illustrates by two comparisons. (1.) By a man sitting down to build a tower, who makes an estimate of the charge before he begins the fabric; lest otherwise, rashly embarking in a work for which his abilities are not sufficient, the unfinished ruins should expose him to contempt. We have this tower to salvation to build on Jesus, the sure foundation; it will cost us much labour, prayer, self-denial, reproach, loss, perhaps of life itself, ere it be finished. Before, therefore, we commence professed disciples, we should well weigh the consequences, whether we have really power from on high, divine faith, and a vital principle of grace, to carry us through. Many have begun, and failed, and thereby exposed themselves to just contempt; for even the wicked world to whom they return, will ridicule and despise those who draw back from their holy profession. (2.) By one king going to war against another. Before he takes the field, he will weigh the danger, and consider whether he is a match for his antagonist; and if he find his strength utterly unequal, it is wisest before matters are driven to extremities, to send ambassadors, and seek peace. Such is our case: a Christian is a soldier, who must expect and prepare to endure hardships. The powers of earth, corruption, and hell, under Satan, their king, are the *twenty thousand* with whom we have to conflict. Clothed, therefore, in the panoply of God, and supported with his might in the inner man, we should go forth; and the sword, once drawn, we must never sheath it till death. But if deterred by difficulties, persecutions and sufferings, we seek an ignominious peace with the world *which lieth in wickedness*, under the government of that wicked one; and, instead of *forsaking all*, stagger in the hour of trial; the case is desperate, we shall be enslaved by sin, and cannot be Christ's disciples.

3. He warns them against apostacy, whether ministers or people. *Salt is good*; my gospel, and they who dispense it, are the salt of the earth; *but if the salt hath lost its savour*, and those who profess to spread the lively truths of God, adulterate the word, and grow degenerate in their tempers and manners, *wherewith shall it be seasoned?* The case appears desperate, where such rooted departure from the truth in practice and principle prevails; *it is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill*; such persons are not only useless, but noxious, and therefore *men cast it out*; all good men abandon such faithless professors; and they

should be cast out of the church, as they will infallibly be separated eternally from the communion of the faithful in heaven. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*; and let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

## CHAP. XV.

*Ver. 1, 2. Then drew near—all the publicans, &c.]* To do good unto all sorts of men, was the employment and highest pleasure of the Son of God; accordingly, when the tax-gatherers and sinners came to hear him, he rejoiced at the opportunity, received them courteously, and, though they were persons of infamous characters, went with them to their houses, that he might scatter the seeds of wisdom among them, and, if possible, bring them to a right temper of mind. Some suppose that these publicans and sinners came by a particular appointment from all the neighbouring parts; but, as St. Luke goes on with the history without any intimation of a change, either in the time, or the scene of it, it is most probable that these discourses were delivered the same day that Christ dined with the Pharisee; which being the sabbath-day, would give the publicans, who on other days were employed in their office, a more convenient opportunity of attending him. The Pharisees, whose pride was intolerable, thinking our Lord's behaviour inconsistent with the sanctity of a prophet, were much displeas'd with him for it, and murmured at his charitable condescension, which ought rather to have given them joy. Wherefore, that he might justify his conversing familiarly with sinners, in order to convert them, he delivered the parable of the *lost sheep*, which he had spoken once before, (see Matth. xviii. 12, 13.) together with the parables of the *lost money* and *prodigal son*. From men's conduct in the common affairs of life, described in the parable of the *lost sheep* and *lost money*, Christ proved that every sinner should be sought after by the teachers of religion: for as men are so moved by the loss of any part of their property, that they seem to neglect what remains, while they are employed in recovering that which happens to be missing; and when they have found it, are so overjoyed, that they cannot contain themselves; but,—calling their friends to whom they had given an account of their misfortune,—tell the good news, that they may partake in their joy; so the servants of God should labour with the greatest solicitude to recover whatever part of his property is lost; such of his reasonable creatures as, having strayed from him, are in danger of perishing: and they have powerful encouragement to do so, as the conversion of a single sinner occasions more joy in heaven, than the steadfastness of ninety-nine just persons, who need no *repentance*; that is to say, *conversion*; for so the word signifies, as it should be translated, *ver. 7.*—unless by the *just persons* here mentioned, we understand the glorified saints. By this circumstance likewise our Lord insinuated, that the Pharisees, who pretended to more holiness than others, instead of repining at his conversing with,

together *his* friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

8 ¶ Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10 Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

11 ¶ And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods

\* Ver. 7. 9. 10. Rev. 11. 15. & 12. 10. & 13. 20. & 3. 21. Ch. 2. 11, 14. 1 Thess. 2. 19. † Ch. 5. 32. Prov. 30. 12. Mat. 13. 13.  
 ‡ Drachma was seven-pence three farthings, i. e. equal to the Roman penny. Mat. 18. 28. § Mat. 18. 17. Ch. 19. 10. Ezek. 34. 12. ¶ Tim. 4. 2.  
 ¶ See Ver. 6, 7. \* Mat. 21. 28. i. e. Jews and Gentiles, or moralists and profane persons. † Mal. 2. 10. ‡ Il. 64. 8. Numb. 16. 22. § Heb. 12. 9.

with, and instructing sinners, ought to have imitated the example of the heavenly beings, and to have rejoiced to find these men delighted with his company and discourses; as he enjoined them a much stricter and holier life than they hitherto had been used to; and since this was a good token of their repentance, and seemed to promise a speedy and thorough conversion. The drift of both parables is to shew, that the conversion of sinners is a thing highly acceptable to God; and consequently, that whatever is necessary thereto, is so far from being inconsistent with goodness, that it is the very perfection and excellence of it. See Dan. xii. 3.

Ver. 4. In the wilderness,] Uncultivated ground, used merely as common pasture, was called wilderness, or desert, by the Jews, in distinction from arable, or inclosed land, as we have had occasion more than once to observe. Some would read, *Doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go into the wilderness after that which was lost?*

Ver. 7. Likewise joy shall be in heaven] Greater joy will be in heaven over one converted sinner, than over, &c. The design of this parable being to represent divine things by images taken from the manners of men, what is here said of God and of the angels, (see ver. 10.) must be understood suitably to the nature of human passions, which are much more sensibly affected with the obtaining of what they have long vehemently desired, or with the saving of that which was looked upon as lost, than they are with the continuance of goods long enjoyed. However, it is clear from ver. 10. that the angels are, either during their ministrations here below for the children of God, or by immediate revelation or otherwise, informed of the conversion of sinners, which must, to those benevolent spirits, be an occasion of great joy; nor could any thing have been suggested more proper to encourage the humble penitent, to expose the repining Pharisee, or to animate all to zeal in so good a work as endeavouring to promote the repentance and conversion of others. Indeed, this part of the present and the following parable is beautifully drawn up. The angels, though high in nature, and perfect in blessedness, are represented as bearing a friendly regard to their kindred essences, and as having a knowledge of things done here below. It may be necessary to observe, that it cannot be our Lord's meaning here, that God esteems one pe-

nitent or newly-converted sinner more than ninety and nine confirmed and established believers, who are, as it appears to me, the persons spoken of as *needing no conversion*,—no μετανοια, or *universal change of heart and life*; for it would be inconsistent with the divine wisdom, goodness, and holiness, to suppose this: but it is plainly as if he had said, "As a father peculiarly rejoices, when an extravagant child is reduced to a sense of his duty, and when one whom he had considered as utterly ruined by his follies, and perhaps as *dead*, returns with remorse and submission; or, as any other person who has recovered what he had given up for lost, has a more sensible satisfaction in it, than in several things equally valuable, but not in such danger; so do the holy inhabitants of heaven rejoice in the conversion of the most abandoned sinners; and the great Father of all so readily forgives and receives them, that he may be represented as having part in the joy." Though, by the way, when human passions are ascribed to God, it is certain they are to be taken in a figurative sense, entirely excluded from those sensations which result from the commotions of animal nature in ourselves. Some have supposed that our Saviour, by the word *just persons*, meant to glance at the Pharisees, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous.

Ver. 9. She calleth her friends, &c.] Her female friends, — τας φίλας. It might seem hardly worth while to ask the congratulation of her friends on so small an occasion as finding a *drachma*; (for that is the piece of coin here mentioned, in value not above nine-pence;) but it is represented as the *tenth part* of her little stock; and the impressible and social temper of the sex may perhaps be thought of, as adding some propriety to the representation.

Ver. 11. A certain man had two sons:] Our Lord next delivered the parable of the lost or prodigal son, which of all his parables is perhaps the most delightful; not only as it enforces a doctrine full of inexpressible comfort, but because it abounds with the tender passions, is finely painted with the most beautiful images, and is to the mind what a charming diversified landscape is to the eye.

Ver. 12. And the younger of them, &c.] Our Lord with great propriety makes use of the youngest son as an example

that falleth *to me*. And he divided unto them *his* living.

13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a <sup>m</sup> far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; <sup>n</sup> and he began

to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to <sup>o</sup> feed swine.

16 <sup>p</sup> And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and <sup>q</sup> no man gave unto him.

17 And when <sup>r</sup> he came to himself, he said,

<sup>m</sup> Eph. 2. 13, 17. Pf. 73. 27. If. 57. 19. Rom. 1. 21—22. Tit. 3. 3. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. If. 1. 4. Jer. 2. 13, 17. <sup>n</sup> Prov. 5. 11. Hof. 2. 14. Amos, 8. 11. <sup>o</sup> Pf. 4. 6. Tit. 3. 3. Eph. 2. 1—3. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. <sup>p</sup> Job, 15. 16. & 20. 12—16. If. 55. 2. Ezek. 7. 19. Hof. 2. 1. <sup>q</sup> Rev. 3. 17. Pf. 142. 4. <sup>r</sup> Eccl. 9. 3. Acts, 26. 11.

ample of a depraved mind, youth being naturally impotent in self-government, not only through natural depravity, but through want of experience; hurried away by the impetuosity of the passions; not only deaf, but even too often rude, to the interpositions of advice, and too frequently totally abandoned to the pleasures of sense. It had been usual, in commercial states, to assign some portion to children when of age; and as the proportion was generally settled by law, the propriety of this circumstance, and of the expression, *Give me that portion which falls to me*, will appear in a strong and beautiful light. It seems to me, that no significant sense can be put upon the last circumstance mentioned in this verse, as referring to the dispensations of God to his creatures: it is one of those ornamental circumstances, which are frequently found in parables, and which it would be frivolous to endeavour to accommodate too scrupulously to the general design.

*Ver. 13. With riotous living.*] The phrase *ζῶν ασώτως* implies, that he lived in every degree of luxury and sensuality. The account before us is short.—The interesting and affecting passages with which such a transaction would necessarily be connected, are left to be supplied by the heart. The story is silent,—but nature is not. Much kind advice, and many a tender exhortation would fall from the father's lips, no doubt, upon this occasion. He would dissuade his son from the folly of so rash an enterprise, by shewing him the dangers of the journey, the inexperience of his age, the hazards that his life, his fortune, his virtue would run, without a guide, without a friend: he would tell him of the many snares and temptations which he had to avoid or encounter, at every step; the pleasures which would solicit him; the little knowledge he could gain, except that of evil: he would speak of the seductions of women, their charms, their poisons; what hapless indulgencies he might give way to, when far from restraint, and the check of giving his father pain.—The dissuasion would but inflame his desire.—He *gathers all together*. I see the picture of his departure; the camels and asses laden with his substance, detached on one side of the piece, and already on their way,—the prodigal son standing on the fore-ground, with a forced sedateness, struggling against the fluttering movement of joy upon his deliverance from restraint:—the elder brother holding his hand, as if unwilling to let it go:—the father,—sad moment! with a firm look covering a prophetic sentiment, that “all would not go well with his child,”—approaching to embrace him, and bid him adieu.—Poor incon-

siderate youth! from whose arms art thou flying? From what a shelter art thou going forth into the storm? art thou weary of a father's affection, or a father's care? or hopest thou to find a warmer interest, or truer counsellor, or kinder friend, in a land of strangers,—where youth are made a prey, and so many thousands are confederated to deceive them, and live by their spoils?

*Ver. 15. He went and joined himself, &c.*] *So he put himself into the service of one of the inhabitants, who sent him to his farm to keep swine.* Heylin. It is true, that among the ancient Greeks, the chief swine-herd was looked upon as an officer of no inconsiderable rank, as evidently appears from the figure which Eumæus makes in the *Odyssy*;—but this was an age of greater refinement; the unhappy youth was obliged to tend the swine himself; and if considered as a *Jew*, the aversion of that nation to this unclean animal must render the employment peculiarly odious to him: and probably this circumstance was chosen by our Lord, to represent him as reduced to the most mean and servile state, from a life of the greatest luxury and extravagance.

*Ver. 16. He would fain have filled his belly with the husks*] The version of 1729 renders the word *καραύω*, by *Carruways*, or the fruit of the *Carub* tree, which bore a mean, though sweetish kind of fruit, in long crooked pods, which by some is called *St. John's bread*. But if the account which Saubert (who is a great favourer of this interpretation) gives of this plant be true, swine would hardly have been fed with any thing but the husky part of this in a time of extreme famine: possibly these were the husks of a fruit, something of the wild chestnut kind. The last clause signifies *For no man gave him meat*, the word *φαγῶν*, or *εσθίων*, being understood; as is plain from hence, that the clause contains a reason for his desiring to fill his belly with the husks, and not for his abstaining from them. His abstaining from the husks was owing to their being the food of beasts, and not to his wanting permission to eat them; for this debauched youth cannot be supposed to have possessed such a principle of honesty, that he would rather die with famine, than without his master's leave take so small a matter as a few *husks*, which the swine seem to have had in great plenty.

*Ver. 17—19. When he came to himself, &c.*] That is, to a true sense, through grace, of his present state, and the right use of his reason, which had before been dethroned and extinguished by the mad intoxications of sensual pleasure. When he says, *I have sinned against heaven, and*

How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father.

But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

\* Hof. 2. 7. Mat. 11. 28. Lam. 3. 40. Jer. 31. 18, 19. Ch. 18. 13. Dan. 4. 26. Prov. 5. 21. Pf. 51. 4. Gen. 32. 10. Jer. 3. 5, 19. Ch. 5. 8. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Tit. 3. 7. Eph. 2. 1-3, 12. 1 Tim. 1. 13. John, 6. 23. Acts, 2. 37. & 16. 30. Rom. 10. 3. & 9. 31. Pf. 84. 10. Jer. 31. 18, 19. Ch. 18. 13. Acts, 2. 39. Rom. 4. 5. Eph. 2. 12, 13, 17. Ezek. 16. 6-8. Mic. 7. 18, 19. If. 49. 15. Hof. 11. 8. Ver. 18, 19. Ch. 18. 13. Joth. 7. 9. Jer. 3. 13. Rom. 7. 8-14. Gen. 32. 10. Mat. 22. 11. Rom. 13. 14. Rev. 19. 8. Ezek. 16. 10-12. If. 61. 10. Gal. 3. 27. Ezek. 36. 27. 2 Cor. 1. 22. Eph. 1. 13, 14. Acts, 10. 44-47. Song, 7. 1. Eph. 6. 13. Prov. 9. 2. If. 25. 6. Mat. 22. 4. & xxvi. xxvii. John, 6. 51-58. Zeph. 3. 17. If. 42. 21. & 53. 10. & 52. 5. Rom. 9. 11. Eph. 2. 1-8, 10, 12, 13, 19-22. & 5. 14. Col. 1. 13. Acts, 26. 17, 18. Tit. 3. 3-7. 1 Cor. 6. 9-11. 1 Tim. 1. 13. If. 62. 4, 5. & 61. 7, 10. & 35. 10.

before thee, means, that God was, (speaking after the manner of men) injured or insulted by his sins; and injured also in the person of his earthly father; and certainly the common sentiment of mankind teaches this, that whoever is insolent or disrespectful to his parents, rebels against God, who, by making them the instruments of communicating life to their children, has imparted to them some of his own paternal honour. Dr. Goodman observes, This was an acknowledgement, that his father's yoke had been so easy, that his throwing it off had been an act of rebellion against God; and it shewed also, that his heart was touched with a sense, not only of the folly, but of the guilt of his conduct; and that the fear of God began to take hold of him. Having the idea of his undutiful behaviour strongly impressed on his mind, he was sensible that he had no title to be treated at home as a Son; at the same time he knew, that it would never be well with him, till he was in his father's family again; so with joy he entertained the thought of occupying the meanest station in it;—Make me, or treat me, as one of thy hired servants; which he mentions, not because such servants fared worse than slaves, but because himself had been a hired servant; and therefore he naturally compared his own condition with those of that rank in his father's family.—Thus while the liberality of the great parent of men is so grossly abused that they run away from his family, the miseries in which they involve themselves, often, through the grace and spirit of God, prevail upon them to return. By the natural consequences of sin, God in his pity and love frequently makes sinners feel that there is no felicity to be found any where but in himself.

Ver. 20. When he was yet a great way off,] But he keeping yet at a distance. When he came within sight of home, his nakedness, and the consciousness of his folly, made him ashamed to go in; he skulked about, therefore, keeping at a distance, till his father spied him, and shewed the most affecting paternal kindness towards him. But see on ver. 24.

Ver. 22. Bring forth the best robe,] It is observed by Ferrarius, that the *στολή*, or long robe, was a garment which servants never wore; so that his father's ordering any such garment, and especially the best, to be brought, was declaring in the most moving manner that can be imagined, how far he was from intending to treat him like a servant. His mentioning the shoes and the ring (which were worn not only as signs of freedom, but of dignity and honour) speaks the same language. See Gen. xli. 42. James, ii. 2.

Ver. 23. Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it;] And sacrifice it. Elfner.

Ver. 24. This my son was dead, and is alive, &c.] It is by a very common and beautiful emblem, that vicious persons are represented as dead, both by sacred and profane authors; (Compare 1 Tim. v. 6. Ephes. ii. 1. v. 14.) and the natural death of their children would certainly be less grievous to pious parents, than to see them abandoned to such a course as this young sinner took. Nothing so powerfully calls home the mind as distress; (see ver. 17.) the tense fibre then relaxes,—the soul retires into itself,—fits pensive, and susceptible, through grace, of right impressions: if we have a friend, it is then that we think of him; if a benefactor, at that moment all his kindnesses press upon our mind.—Gracious and bountiful God! is it not for this, through thy grace and blessing, that they who in their prosperity forget thee, do yet remember and return to thee in the hour of their sorrow? When our heart is in heaviness, upon whom can we think but thee?—who knowest our necessities afar off, puttest all our tears in thy bottle, feelest every careful thought, hearest every sigh and melancholy groan that we utter?—Strange!—that we should only begin to think of God with comfort, (if we do then,) when with joy and comfort we can think of nothing else.—Man is surely a compound of riddles and contradictions: by the law of his nature he avoids pain; and yet, unless he suffer in the flesh, he will not cease from sin, though it is sure to bring pain and misery upon his head for ever. Whilst all

25 <sup>a</sup> Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard <sup>b</sup> music and dancing.

26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27 And he said unto him, <sup>c</sup> Thy brother is come; and <sup>k</sup> thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

28 <sup>l</sup> And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him.

29 And he answering said to *his* father,

<sup>m</sup> Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and <sup>n</sup> yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30 <sup>o</sup> But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31 And he said unto him, Son, <sup>p</sup> thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32 <sup>q</sup> It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this <sup>r</sup> thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

<sup>a</sup> Phil. 3. 4—6. Mat. 20. 10—12. <sup>b</sup> Acts, 8. 39. Rom. 5. 1, 11. Eph. 2. 17—20. & 3. 6—8. Col. 1. 6, 23. <sup>c</sup> Ver. 23. Eph. 3. 8. & 22. 21, 22. Rom. 9. 30—33. & 11. 12. <sup>d</sup> Theff. 2. 16. Gal. 2. 12. 3. 17. If. 29. 13. <sup>e</sup> If. 58. 3. Mat. 20. 11, 12. <sup>f</sup> Ver. 13, 22, 23. 13. 12. & 25. 29. <sup>g</sup> Rom. 15. 9—13. If. liv. 1x—lxiii. <sup>h</sup> Song, 8. 8, 9. Eph. 2. 1—10. Acts, 26. 17, 18. see ver. 24. <sup>i</sup> Cor. 6. 9—11. Tit. 3. 3—7. Hof. 13. 9. Ch. 19. 10. Pf. 22. 27—30. <sup>j</sup> Acts, 13. 46—48. & 11. 17. & 28. 28. <sup>k</sup> Acts, 11. 2, 3. & 13. 45, 50. & 14. 2, 19. & 17. 13. & 18. 5. 6. <sup>l</sup> John, 8. 33, 41. Ch. 16. 15. & 18. 11, 12. If. 58. 2. & 1. 15. Rev. <sup>m</sup> Exod. 19. 4—6. Deut. 32. 9. Pf. 147. 19, 20. Rom. 9. 4, 5. Mat. <sup>n</sup> P Exod. 19. 4—6. Deut. 32. 9. Pf. 147. 19, 20. Rom. 9. 4, 5. Mat. <sup>o</sup> Song, 8. 8, 9. Eph. 2. 1—10. Acts, 26. 17, 18. see ver. 24. <sup>p</sup> 1 Cor. 6. 9—11.

went pleausurably on with the prodigal, we hear not one word concerning his father; no pang of remorse for the sufferings in which he had left him, or resolution of returning to make up the account of his folly: his first hour of distress, through the gracious Spirit of God, seemed to be his first hour of wisdom: *When he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, whilst I perish!* Of all the terrors of nature, that of dying by hunger surely is the greatest; and it is wisely woven into our frame, to awaken men to industry, and call forth their talents.—It had this effect, through Divine grace, with the prodigal: he arose, to go unto his father—Alas! how shall he tell his story?—ye who have had this round, tell me in what words he shall give in to his father the items of his extravagance and folly?—Yet leave the story, it will be told more concisely: *when he was yet a great way off, (ver. 20.) his father saw him.—Compassion told it in few words:—he fell upon his neck, and kissed him.—The idea of a son so ruined as this was, and yet returning, would double the father's caresses; every effusion of his tenderness would add bitterness to his son's remorse.—“Gracious heaven! what a father have I rendered miserable!” Ver. 21. And he said, I have sinned,—and am no more worthy to be called thy son.—But the father said,—Bring hither the best robe.—O ye affections! how fondly do you play at cross-purposes with each other?—It is the natural dialogue of true transport; joy is not methodical; and when an offender—beloved—seems, if it were possible, to overcharge himself in the offence, words are too cold, and a conciliated heart replies by tokens of esteem. And he said,—Bring forth the best robe, &c.—and let us eat, and be merry.—When the affections so kindly and graciously break loose, joy is another name for religion: we look up, as we taste it. The cold stoic without, may ask suddenly, (with the elder brother, ver. 26, 28.) “what it means?” and refuse to enter; but the pious and compassionate fly impetuously to the banquet, given for a son who was dead, and is alive again; who was lost and is*

found. Was it not for this, that God gave man music to strike upon the kindly passions? but we must never forget, that no distress or sorrow is effectual to the salvation of the soul, but that which brings us, in brokenness of heart and genuine contrition for our sins, to our heavenly Father through Jesus Christ, by whose grace and merit alone salvation can be obtained.

Ver. 28. *Therefore came his father out,*] This act of condescension gives a great heightening to the character of the father, and adds an inexpressible beauty and elegance to the parable; and when we consider it as referring to the love and condescension of our Almighty Father, it must certainly diffuse the highest consolation through our souls, if we have a real desire to be reconciled to him.

Ver. 29. *Lo, these many years do I serve thee, &c.*] This is the young man's own testimony concerning his dutifulness: in which respect it fully represented the self-righteous Pharisees. It is his testimony also concerning the returns which his father had made to him for his services; nevertheless his behaviour on this occasion, as well as that of his father, seems to fix on him the lie in both particulars. Indeed, this branch of the parable is finely contrived to express the high opinion which the Pharisees (here represented by the elder brother) entertained of their own merit.

Ver. 31, 32. *And he said unto him, &c.*] “But the father replied, Son, what cause is there for all this discontent, and all these murmuring complaints? you have constantly eaten at my table, which has been supplied with rich provisions every day, and have continually lived under the peculiar tokens of my favour; and I have still enough for you: but here is a fit occasion for expressing more than ordinary joy, in that your brother, whom I love, and you ought to love too, and who was given up for dead and lost, is now returned alive and well, deeply sensible of, humbled for, and reclaimed from, his extravagant wickedness and folly, and is now a dutiful son to me. So God vindicates the free dis-

“penitence”

C H A P. XVI.

*The parable of the unjust steward. Christ reproveth the hypocrisy of the covetous Pharisees. The rich glutton, and Lazarus the beggar.*

[Anno Domini 31.]

**A**ND he said also unto his disciples,  
 \* There was a certain rich man, which

had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he <sup>b</sup> had wasted his goods.

2 And he called him, and said unto him, ' How is it that I hear this of thee? <sup>d</sup> give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3 Then the steward said within himself,

\* Pl. 24. 1. & 50. 10, 11. & 115. 16. If. 66. 1. <sup>b</sup> Deut. 32. 14, 15. Ezek. 16. 15—21. Hosea, 2. 8, 9. Ch. 15. 13, 30. James, 4. 3. <sup>c</sup> Gen. 3. 11. & 4. 10. & 18. 20. If. 1. 2. <sup>d</sup> Eccl. 11. 9. & 12. 11. Mat. 12. 36. Rom. 14. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 10. 1 Peter, 4. 5. Rev. 20. 12.

“pensions of his grace to the Gentiles, and to the most infamous sinners, against all the dissatisfaction and murmurings of its enemies: he had been exceedingly liberal to the Jews, confining his peculiar covenant-mercies for many ages to them, among whom he had pitched his tabernacle with the special tokens of his presence; (see Rom. ix. 4, 5.) and if they would not cut themselves off by unbelief, all would still be theirs, he having enough for them and others too: but the conversion of the Gentiles, and of remarkable sinners, is the quickening of those who were most evidently dead in trespasses and sins: and this cannot but be a just occasion of exceeding great joy, in the account of God and angels, and all good men.”

There is a lively opposition between the 30th and 32d verses. In the former the eldest son had indecently said, *This thy son*; the father in his reply tenderly says, *This thy brother*: “Though he has devoured my living with harlots, <sup>a</sup> still he is thy brother, as well as now my reconciled son; wherefore thou shouldst not be angry, because he has repented and is returned, after we thought him entirely lost.” Thus the goodness with which the father bore the unseemly peevishness of his elder son, was little inferior to the mercy shewed in the pardon which he granted to the younger: and we have herein a moving intimation, that the best of men ought to remember the relation of *brother* even towards the most abandoned of sinners, when there appears any inclination in such sinners to return.

Although this parable has a peculiar reference to the Jews and Gentiles; and though the murmurs of the Jews against the apostles for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles (which was so common an objection at the beginning of Christianity) are represented by the conduct of the elder brother; our Lord had undoubtedly something more in his intention: he meant to shew, that had the Pharisees been as eminently good, as they themselves pretended to be, yet it would have been very unworthy their character to take offence at the kind treatment which any sincere penitent might receive. Thus does he here, and in many parallel texts, condemn their conduct on their own principles; though elsewhere, on proper occasions, he shews the falsehood of those principles, and plainly exposes their hypocrisy and guilt. But to conclude these annotations on the parable, we would just observe, that in the inimitable composition of the character of the prodigal, and the wondrous compassion and tenderness of the father, the amazing mercy of God is painted with cap-

titivating colours; and in all the three parables, the joys occasioned among heavenly beings by the conversion of a single sinner, are represented; joys even of God himself, than which a nobler and sweeter thought never was held forth to the mind of man.—Thus high do the souls of men stand in the estimation of God; for which cause they should not cast themselves away in that trifling manner, wherein multitudes destroy themselves; nor should any think the salvation of others a small matter, as many who are intrusted with their recovery seem to do. Had the Pharisees understood the parable, and experimentally felt its truth, how criminal must they have appeared in their own eyes, when they saw themselves truly described in the character of the elder son, angry that his brother had repented! how bitter ought their remorse to have been; on finding themselves, not only repining at that which gave joy to God—the conversion of sinners, but exceedingly displeased with the methods of his providence in this matter, and maliciously opposing them. If these parables had been omitted by St. Luke, as they have been by the other three historians, the world would certainly have sustained a loss unspeakable.

*Inferences drawn from the parable of the prodigal son, ver. 11, &c.*—The son in the parable who made the rash request to his father, was young. Youth is a dangerous season; but young persons have seldom sense enough to know their danger. Their reason is weak, and their passions strong: they have in general great presumption, but little capacity: they are too proud to be directed by others, and too ignorant to direct themselves.

In this season of folly, our young prodigal desires his father to give him his portion. *Give me (he said) the portion of goods that falleth to me.* He was tired of submitting to the order and regularity of his father's family: he longed to be master of himself, and live without controul or subjection.

The prophet *Jeremiah* has pronounced, that *it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth*; but few in their youth are sensible of that benefit. While they are kept in awe and under discipline, they are indeed often restrained from mischief, and in some degree hindered from hurting themselves; but that restraint is too often grievous to them; they repine at it, they strive against it, and are eager for a state of independence as their only happiness, though it often proves their certain ruin.

While we blame this rash youth for his impatience after liberty, only in order to abuse it to licentiousness, I must

What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

\* Titus, 1. 12. If. 56. 16. 2 Theff. 3. 11.

f Jer. 4. 22. James, 3. 15. If. 29. 15.

put the reader in mind that this parable is but too just a representation of our behaviour towards Almighty God, the common Father of us all. He has placed us here in the world as children in his family; he has allotted each person respectively his proper office and business; he has prescribed most wise rules for our behaviour; and with a paternal authority and love requires that we submit to his appointments, perform his commands, and do his will, as dutiful and obedient children; promising to requite our faithful filial service here, with an eternal inheritance in the heavens.

But we, like the headstrong prodigal, affect an independent state. The narrow bounds of duty we account an irksome confinement. We would fulfil the devices and desires of our own hearts; and without any regard to our eternal inheritance, we choose *our portion in this world*, that now *in this our lifetime we may receive our good things*, wealth, and reputation, and pleasure and success, and our own will in every thing: and when we have got this our portion, we think only how to enjoy it; we forget our Father, we slight his love, and disown his authority.

This our Lord represents to us in the parable of this foolish youth; who, when he had got his portion, would no longer depend upon his father, but went away into a far country.

It was doubtless very grievous to his aged father, thus to be deserted by a son whom he loved so tenderly; a son that he had so lately and signally obliged, by giving him his estate in his lifetime; a son from whom he had probably promised himself (as parents are too apt to promise themselves,) great comfort, support, and satisfaction in his declining years: but the unnatural youth had no regard to his father's grief, no compassion for his grey hairs, which, for aught he knew, his undutifulness might bring with sorrow to the grave. He had received life from him; he had ever since been maintained by him, and had now got an estate from him; what further need of a father? his father had now nothing more to give him but *advice*; a gift which he was too proud to accept. He apprehended that even his father's presence might be a silent reproach to his extravagance; and therefore, getting over all sense of gratitude, all obligations of duty, and all ties of natural affection, away he went *into a far country*.

All men must blame and detest this wicked disobedience of the prodigal son; yet most men, in prosperity, behave after the same manner towards our heavenly Father. When they are at ease in the free enjoyment of the good things which he has bestowed on them, they forget that God is their *Benefactor*, from whom they received them; and their Lord, to whom they are accountable for the use they make of them. They neither love God, nor fear him. They retain no sense of his goodness, no apprehension of his power. Such is the twofold stupidity of the sinner: neither hopes nor fears affect him. His case is exceedingly

dangerous. There is but one mean left to reclaim him, and that is affliction, which through grace may incline him to own God for a *Benefactor*, when he finds what it is to *want* his goodness; and to own God for his *Master*, when he finds that he cannot escape his power.

For a lively illustration of this, let us follow our prodigal into that *far country*, that country far from God, where holiness and virtue were strangers. See him roving from one vanity to another, as appetite, or passion, or capricious fancy led him. He forgot his father and his father's house: he confided in his wealth, as an inexhaustible fund for pleasure and entertainment: and while that fund lasted, his indifference for his father lasted, and would have lasted for ever, could it have been so supported. He never thought of his native home, but with joy and complacency in his deliverance from it, with censure or ridicule of his father's cares and austerities, and with pity or scoffing of his elder brother's domestic regularity and confinement.

Thus this rebellious son, having cast off the yoke of paternal authority, became, as the prophet expresses it, like *a wild ass traversing the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; in her occasion who can turn her away?* Wild and wanton, stubborn and violent, wilful and untractable as that *ass of the wilderness*, he gave a full scope to his appetites and passions, indulged every lust, fulfilled every desire, and, in a word, became a perfect *libertine*, or, in Scripture language, a *son of Belial*:—for *Belial* signifies *without yoke*, and is one of the names of the devil, used to express the impiety of that arch-rebel, in renouncing his dependence upon his Almighty God: and they are called *sons of Belial*, who live like him, without any dependence upon God, in an open violation of his laws, and a prophane contempt of his authority.

How many such sons of *Belial* are there now among us, who live whole years, yea, many years, in an open and almost professed defiance of the laws of God; who never think of him or mention his name, but to prophane or blaspheme it; who despise his revelations, ridicule his servants, and give themselves up to work all manner of uncleanness with greediness! What way is there to reclaim these unhappy men, these thoughtless wretches? To admonish them of their duty, and expose to them the great truths of religion, is to cast *pearls before swine, who will trample them under foot, and turn again and rend you*. Is their case then quite desperate? Is there no mean left to reclaim them? Yes, *affliction* may perhaps, through the grace of God; which seems the last resort of divine mercy to reduce these wanton prodigals. For I have observed of many of them, (I mean chiefly young persons of plentiful fortunes,) that they are intoxicated with such a redundancy of animal spirits, arising from a good constitution, high diet and little labour, as renders them incapable of reason: their life is a continual phrenzy, like that

5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him; and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

6 And he said, An hundred \* measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

\* A *batb* contained a little more than three pecks and three pints English.

that of a fever or drunkenness; and there must be some great change wrought in it, before they can be capable of good advice. Mortifications seem absolutely necessary to bring them to, through grace, and keep them in their right senses. While their prosperity continues, their vice will continue, and exclude all possibility of amendment.—Strike then, O Lord, in thy mercy, and make them sensible of their folly by their punishment. Make them know experimentally, that it is an *evil thing and bitter, that they have forsaken thee their God*. Thy goodness has provided this remedy by natural means, even in the ordinary course of things. Vice soon wastes the stock of mercies bestowed on them; their wealth, health, ease, and cheerfulness of spirits, are soon exhausted by extravagance, lewdness and riot. Strike then, but accompany thy strokes with thy grace, without which all will be unavailable.

So faced it with this rambling prodigal. Thus does the providence of God often strike in to heighten the mischievous consequences of a vicious course. His expensive riotous living did naturally and of itself bring him to want: but the providence of God likewise concurred to make him miserable. At the same time *there arose a mighty famine in that land*; so that he not only wanted wherewithal to supply himself, but was also cut off from all hopes of being relieved by the superfluity of others.

What should he now do in his distress; whither betake himself in his sad condition? Why, immediately *return to his father*, beg his forgiveness, and humble himself before him. The shortest follies are the best. Repentance is never too soon; the earliest is ever the most seasonable. But pride and shame forbid to acknowledge his offences. Accursed shame!—he was not ashamed, when he left his father: he was not ashamed of his lewdness, riot, and extravagance; but to own them he is ashamed: and therefore chooses rather to continue in his errors, than confess them. He prefers the vilest office in life to the painful confusion of seeing his father's face.

He was distressed to a strange degree. Where poverty is not our own fault, it is no disgrace to be poor. Honest poverty is a commendable, and perhaps, to an abstracted habit of mind, the most eligible state. But poverty, the fruit of vice,—poverty, the effect of wasteful riot and intemperance, is truly vile and contemptible. This our prodigal had now brought upon *himself*. He had nobody to blame but *himself*; it was his own doing, the natural effect of his extravagance, as well as the just punishment of his disobedience.

This poverty pinched him sorely;—for he had known the luscious sweets of plenty, he had been used to superfluity and excess. How does he now regret them! how does he now repent of every lavish expence, every little sum, which in the insolence of his wealth he had squandered away!

His business of tending swine in the field, gave him

leisure enough for such reflections. Here he was left a prey to his own thoughts, which were continually at work in making grating comparisons between his past and present circumstances. Though he was not yet converted, he was fully convinced of many truths, which in his prosperity he had disbelieved or derided. He had made great improvements in that costly, dangerous science, the knowledge of the world. He had found experimentally that its enjoyments were vanity, and the end of them vexation of spirit. Riot and debauchery now appear to him stripped of their pleasures, and retaining only their guilt. He knew that it was folly all.

The heat and ardour of youth now no longer animated his courage, and inflamed his passions;—that fire had been made to burn too violently to last long. It had been wasted in voluptuousness; and the poor remains were now quite extinguished by the damps of chilling poverty. It is now no longer the gay, the bold and sprightly adventurer, full of hopes, and confiding in his abundance; no longer that self-willed, opinionative fool, who preferred his own conceits to the solid counsels of age and experience. He is no longer that unnatural son, who despised his father, who thought him useless or troublesome; nor the heedless rover, who preferred the fatigues of a long journey, and the inconveniences of a foreign land, to the odious presence of his parent. He now, through the awakening influences of the Spirit of God accompanying his reflections, regrets the distance from him; for he was without friends, an alien, a poor, hungry, naked vagabond.

At length,—so instructive is misery, when grace accompanies it, and is yielded to, —he *came to himself*, says the scripture. He became *compas mentis*,—of a right mind; he thought reasonably; for before he was mad, as wild and mad as great plenty, high health, and unbounded liberty could make him; which, as I observed, are very apt to turn young heads: but pain and hunger tame the wildest natures; and that effect they soon had, through grace, and in a spiritual manner too, upon our young *swine-herd*. They brought him to himself, and to a sober sense of things.

His serious thoughts began, you see, with comparing his present troubles with the happiness of a regular life. This reflection is common; and, I am persuaded, that there are few old offenders, who have not often made it, who have not often compared the slavery of sin, its meanness, its drudgery, its maladies, with the peace and joy of piety and virtue. But the misfortune is, they do not pursue these thoughts to a consequence. They do not pray; they do not look to Jesus Christ, the only refuge of sinners: they rail at the world, but do not renounce it; they censure its vanities, but do not forsake them. They see nothing, they say, in this world to be fond of; they are weary of it, and heartily disgusted with the bad usage

7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred \* measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

\* A cor contained ten baths, or eight bushels.

usage they have met there.—It is very true, that the world gives occasion enough for such complaints: but those who make them most, are often very worldly-minded men. They rail at the world, only because they cannot enjoy it. Their condemning it is the voice of disappointed lust, of baffled concupiscence, and not of aspiring charity. Those who exult in the possession of riches, or repine for want of them, are both alike covetous. Those who love the world, because they enjoy it; and those who hate the world, because they want it, are equally slaves to it. These latter sometimes talk the language of morality, and say, as they have cause enough, how vain and vexatious they have found it; but they will not do themselves the violence necessary for a hearty and effectual renouncing of it. They will not rise from the mire of sloth and sensuality; they will not burst the bands of evil habits, and break through the snares in which they have involved themselves; but after some feeble struggles sink down again;—their good purposes vanish, and all their conversions end in wishing that they were converted. But this is not the fault of grace: for though nothing can be done without it, an ample sufficiency of it would be given, if it were accepted and used.

Not so our exemplary penitent. *He arose, he went to his father*, though the journey was long, and as tedious and painful, as poverty, nakedness, and famine could make it. But it was better thus to suffer than to sin, to return than to stay. So, through the blessing of heaven, he arose and went to his father.

We have before considered largely the sequel of the parable, which is full of comfort and encouragement for all repentant prodigals; as it gives them the most convincing assurances of a kind reception, and of the remission of their former extravagance, and of all their sins, if they return in prayer and faith to their heavenly Father through the Redeemer. And I beseech Almighty God, that all we, who have gone astray like this prodigal, may like him return penitent to our heavenly Father, in a full assurance of forgiveness and favour through *Jesus Christ our Lord*.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Offended, perhaps, with the hard sayings recorded in the former chapter, many of Christ's attendants withdrew, and made way for another set of hearers.

1. *The publicans and sinners drew near to hear him*. The publicans were usually persons of the most infamous character; and the sinners were either public and notorious offenders, or, it may be, some of the heathen; as from the multitude of strangers who dwell there, the country was called *Galilee of the Gentiles*; these assembled around him; they needed such a gracious Saviour.

2. The proud Pharisees and scribes hereupon expressed their displeasure; offended, that one who professed himself a prophet, should deign to permit such wretches to approach him, receive them with kindness, and sit with

them at the same table. Their insolent self-conceit would have said to them, *Come not near me*; but he, who came to be the sinner's friend, did not disdain their company; they were the lost that he came to save. Note; The censure of the self-righteous falls heaviest usually on the most excellent persons, in their noblest exercises of charity.

3. Christ vindicates himself from their reproaches in two parables; and shews, that the highest glory would redound to God from the conversion of these sinners, and joy fill the celestial hosts on that occasion. We have,

(1.) The parable of the lost sheep; wherein we may observe, [1.] The case of the sinner; he is *lost*, gone astray from God's fold; wandering endlessly in the mazes of ignorance and error; a stranger to all spiritual comfort and happiness; running headlong to destruction, and ready to perish everlastingly. [2.] The peculiar tenderness of the Saviour towards sinners in their lost estate: like a shepherd who leaves his flock in the wilderness to seek one straying sheep, so does the Lord pursue the wanderers; he takes them up in the arms of grace, and brings them to his fold with tender pity. [3.] There is greater joy in heaven over one such converted sinner, than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance: which seems to be spoken with a peculiar reference to the Pharisees, who trusted that they were righteous, and needed no repentance. These our Lord *left in the wilderness* of unregeneracy, to perish in their pride; the conversion of one poor Gentile sinner, the recovery of the most notorious offender, was a matter of greater rejoicing in heaven, and brought more glory to God, than that form of godliness in which they boasted. See the Annotations.

(2.) The parable of the lost piece of money, which is nearly of the same import as the foregoing. The woman represents the Lord, the possessor of all; the silver, the souls of men, infinitely more precious; the nine pieces design the scribes and Pharisees, and all self-righteous persons; the one lost piece, the heathen, or any poor perishing sinner, sunk in the dregs of pollution, or lost in the dirt of worldly-mindedness and sensuality. The candle is the blessed gospel which shines in this dark place the world, where the sinner lies buried in corruption: *the sweeping the house* represents the diligence of the faithful ministers of Christ, whose instrumentality he uses to seek after lost souls, and great is the joy arising from the conversion of a sinner. The angels of God rejoice at this happy event. To see the chief of sinners brought to repentance, raises their loudest songs of praise. Those therefore, who made such objections to his receiving sinners, evidently shewed themselves destitute of a heavenly mind, and unlike the angels of God.

2dly, Yet farther, to shew how little cause the scribes and Pharisees had to murmur at the favour shewn to the publicans and sinners, he added a third beautiful parable, that of the returning prodigal, wherein miserable and wicked sinners may ever read the compassions of a par-

8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done <sup>a</sup> wisely: <sup>b</sup> for the

children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

<sup>a</sup> Prov. 6. 6—8. 1 Tim. 6. 19. See ver. 4. 3. 3, 5.

<sup>b</sup> Pf. 17. 14. Phil. 3. 19.

<sup>c</sup> 1 John, 3. 10. Eph. 5. 8. 1 Thess. 5. 5, 8. John, 12. 36. &

doing God, and be engaged by the riches of his grace to return to the arms of his mercy.

The certain man spoken of in this parable, is God, the common Father of all: the two sons are the Jews and the Gentiles; the elder brother represented by the Jews, the younger by the Gentiles. The character of the miserable sinner is here drawn under the figure of the younger son. We have,

1. His departure from home, and the miseries into which his extravagance brought him.

(1.) He was impatient of restraint, as young men too often are; wanted to escape from his father's eye: conceited himself able to manage better for himself than his aged parent for him, and therefore forwardly demands, Give me the portion of goods which falleth to me. Just such are we all by nature: (1.) Discontented under God's government, and affecting independency. (2.) Desirous to fly from him, and foolishly flattering ourselves that we can be hid. (3.) Puffed up with high imaginations of our own abilities and excellence. (4.) Looking upon God's gifts as our own property, for the use of which we are accountable to none. (5.) Coveting a present portion, and seeking all our happiness from the world, careless and unconcerned about our future state.

(2.) The father graciously divided his substance, and gave the younger son his share; evidently shewing, that he was not that morose and harsh parent, which this headstrong youth probably represented him. Thus God bestows liberally the bounties of his providence even upon the evil and unthankful.

(3.) No sooner had he received his share, than in haste to be gone, he stayed but a few days, and took his journey into a far country, where he apprehended no rebuke from his watchful father; and there giving a loose to every appetite, he soon dissipated his fortune among women, wine, and riotous living. How exact the representation! (1.) Such wanderers are we; as soon as we are born, we go astray. (2.) In this alienation from God the sinner habitually continues, fulfilling the desires of the mind, till he returns to Christ. (3.) We are naturally enslaved by vile affections, and devoted to those youthful lusts which war against the soul. (4.) Present gratification usually weighs with us more than any considerations about futurity. (5.) As extravagance and lewdness have the most direct tendency to rob us of our substance, much more will these, and the like sins, infallibly ruin our souls.

(4.) Great were the miseries in which this prodigal now felt himself involved. When he had spent all, which could not last long in such bad company as he kept, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and as those on whom he had lavished his money, now dropped off from his acquaintance as the leaves in autumn, he began to be in want, without a morsel of bread to appease the cravings of hunger. Reduced now to the greatest distress, without any means of support, without a friend to assist him, necessity

drives him to court the meanest drudgery for the preservation of life; he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine; yet even there he could not earn enough to satisfy his hunger; he envied the very swine their husks, and would fain have filled his belly with them; but no man had the least compassion for his case, or gave unto him the least morsel of sustenance: such is the misery of the sinner by nature: (1.) He is in want of all true comfort, and destitute of all grace; the favour of God, as the dew of heaven, he experiences not; his hard heart produces nothing good, and he pines away in his iniquities. (2.) He is the vilest slave in nature; the devil is the citizen, in whose hard service he is employed; he is like the swine, wallowing in the lusts of uncleanness, or grovelling in worldly-mindedness. (3.) His soul is harassed with raging desires, which none of his pursuits can gratify; for they who are without God in the world, or who depart from God to seek satisfaction in the creature, must feel the curse of incessant hunger, and find nothing but husks before them. The world and all the things therein, can provide no solid food for an immortal soul.

Some give a different interpretation of the words. They suppose the citizen of that country to be a Pharisaical legal preacher, to whom the awakened sinner flies under his distress. He sets him to work in his fields; directs him to moral duties, to the law, to the conditions of the Adamic covenant, in order to obtain peace with God; but the husks of self-righteousness are unsatisfactory; conscience is unappeased; guilt unatoned for; corruption unmortified; and he continues a companion of swine.

2. Distress at last brought him to consider the unspeakable misery of his state, and what possibility there was yet of preventing his dying for want in that strange land. When he came to himself (for hitherto he had acted as a madman, or one possessed), he began to reflect on the plenty which reigned in his father's family, where there was not a hired servant, but had bread enough and to spare; and I, says he, perish with hunger. He resolves therefore to return, and to cast himself on his father's mercy, acknowledging his sin against heaven and against him, owning it his just desert to be disowned for a son, and begging it, as the highest favour he dare ask, to be admitted among the hired servants. And what he resolved upon, he immediately executed; his urgent want admitted not of delay: happy the soul in whom such a gracious purpose is stirred up! Note; (1.) Every impenitent sinner is beside himself; all his thoughts, words, and ways, bespeak the madman, fancying himself wise, great, happy, when infatuated, poor, and miserable; and putting a value upon the straws of his cell, the gain and pleasures of this world, as if they were sterling gold; while he is insensible to all the eternal glories that are above. (2.) In our most desperate estate, while there is hope, it is never too late to return to God; the vilest sinner may find mercy, the most abominable

9 And I say unto you, <sup>\*</sup> Make to yourselves that, when ye fail, they may receive you into friends of the <sup>1</sup> mammon of unrighteousness; everlasting habitations.

<sup>\*</sup> Dan. 4. 27. Prov. 19. 17. Mat. 6. 19. & 19. 21. Ch. 14. 14. & 11. 47. & 19. 8. Acts, 10. 4. 1 Tim. 6. 17—19. Mat. 25. 34—40. <sup>10</sup> *vic. u.* Mat. 6. 24.

abominable be converted and changed. (3.) Afflictions are often made the blessed means of driving our souls to God: softened by the rod of correction, the heart is made tender and disposed to listen to the words of wisdom, which were before despised and rejected. (4.) Though the conversion of the soul to God, is effected by the power of divine grace; yet the Lord works in such a way, as that it is truly our own choice, and the result of reason, consideration, and conviction. (5.) None need perish who will return unto God right humbly; there is with him grace abounding, *bread enough, and to spare.* (6.) In our returns to God, we must adopt the prodigal's spirit and language: *we have sinned* more than we can express or conceive; we should reflect upon all the aggravations of our sins, how ungratefully we have behaved towards the Father of mercies, how impiously affronted the Most High, whose throne is in the heavens; that so we may truly loath ourselves for all our abominations. (7.) We are never truly humbled for sin, till we feel and own our unworthiness of the least mercy, and our just desert of being utterly abandoned and rejected of God; so that if the least favour be shewn us, we shall acknowledge it with deepest gratitude. (8.) Vile and wicked as we may have been, we must not forget that endearing name of *Father*, to encourage our hopes, to awaken genuine and godly sorrow, and to embolden our faith to approach him. (9.) When God is working with our hearts, all depends upon our immediate obedience to his calls and warnings. To-day, whilst it is called to-day, harden not your hearts.

3. His reception was unspeakably beyond his expectations. *He came to his Father*, and was welcomed with open arms. Let offended parents learn such compassions toward their returning prodigals. *When he was yet a great way off*, as if the Father's longing eyes had been looking out for his coming, *he saw him*; and though in rags and nakedness, emaciated and changed, so that another could scarcely have known him, he discerned the long-lost child. Melted with compassion at his piteous case, yet overjoyed once more to see him, *he ran* with eagerness, *and fell on his neck*, embracing him with the warmest emotions of parental tenderness, *and kissed him*, the token of welcome, the seal of pardon. Such are the tender mercies of our God towards poor returning sinners; he sees, well pleased, the first rising desire in our hearts towards him; he pities our misery, though we have brought it upon ourselves, and have so highly dishonoured him; his arms of grace are open to receive us; he will not upbraid our folly, but is ready instantly to pardon our sin, and through Christ Jesus to forgive all that is past, sealing our pardon, and speaking peace to our souls. The prodigal, deeply affected with his own vileness, and now more deeply struck with his ingratitude than ever, under the resentment of such amazing tenderness as his father shewed him, with grief and shame unfeigned, cries, *Father, I have sinned, &c.* The sense of God's pardoning love,

instead of making the sinner proud, abases him to the dust, and makes him abhor himself, for having ever offended a God so gracious. The son would have proceeded, but the father's heart is so overjoyed that he prevents him with blessings and loving-kindness, commanding the most splendid dress and the noblest entertainment to be provided for him. So far is the Lord from upbraiding poor returning penitents, that their iniquities, like a cloud, are blotted out, and glory and honour are put upon them.

[1.] The father commands his servants to bring forth *the best robe*, to put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, that his nakedness may not only be covered, and his filthy garments taken away, but that he may be adorned as became a dear child of that noble family: and how much more glorious the provision which Jesus has made for his returning prodigals! Their filthy garments of sin are taken away; and clothed and beautiful in holiness, they all are seen to be the children of a king. *The ring*, the seal of reconciliation and union, the Spirit of Jesus gives; and, shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, they run the ways of God's commandments with delight.

[2.] The noblest entertainment is ordered: *Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry.* Hungry and faint, he had long been a stranger to such rich provision; and pining in want and wretchedness, was a stranger also to joy: but now he shall be fed to the full, and partake of the general gladness which his return occasions. *Note*; (1.) In the gospel the richest provision is made for the hungry; Christ with all his fulness is provided, and faith feeds upon him, to the strengthening and refreshing of the soul. (2.) They who are brought by grace to taste of the sweetness of God's love, will truly say, that every thing compared with that, is but as husks. (3.) There is joy among all the household of God, when one poor sinner returns to join the happy family.

[3.] The cause of the father's joy is this, *My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found*; he was as bad as dead, yea, worse than dead, while living in riot and excess; lost to his family, undone himself; but his return is life from the dead. *Note*; Every impenitent sinner in the midst of life is in death; spiritually dead to God, and ready to suffer the wages of eternal death in hell.

4. The family readily joined the master of the house, rejoicing with him on the present happy occasion. The elder son alone appeared discontented; he was in the field when his brother returned, and heard with surprize, as he drew near to the house, the music and dancing. Inquiring of one of the servants, he soon learns the occasion, and expresses his disgust and discontent at his father's behaviour, as if the kindness shewn to his brother was an injury done to himself; who, he conceives, had deserved so much better at his father's hands. This character properly belonged to the Pharisees, and is applicable to all who are influenced by the same spirit of pride and self-righteousness.

10 <sup>m</sup> He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much : and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous \* mammon, who will commit to your trust the <sup>n</sup> true riches ?

<sup>m</sup> Mat. 25. 21. Ch. 19. 17.  
7-14. Rev. 3. 18.

\* Or riches.

<sup>n</sup> Mat. 6. 20, 33. Ch. 12. 33. & 18. 22. Prov. 8. 18. Eph. 3. 8. 1 Pet. 1. 4. Phil. 3.

righteousness. They are in the field of this world, in a state of unregeneracy ; the slaves of earth, minding worldly things. They draw nigh to the house, the church of God, in profession, but never enter it by a spiritual union with the head of the church, Christ Jesus. They hear the music and dancing, the sweet sound of the great and precious promises, which makes the hearts of the miserable and guilty dance for joy ; and, strangers to this divine consolation themselves, they are vexed that any others should partake of it, and angry that those should be admitted to the enjoyment of all the riches of grace who have behaved so profligately, and be put on a level with themselves who have, as they conceit, deserved so well at God's hands. They will not go in, not submitting to the righteousness of God which is by faith in Christ Jesus, nor content to receive the salvation of God freely, as lost or undone as much as the vilest of mankind. In vain the Lord, by the ministry of the word, remonstrates with them on their perverseness, and urges upon them the necessity of a new birth unto righteousness. They vaunt their own meritorious services, and in their own conceit fancy they never transgressed at any time the commandments, and therefore have a claim to the divine favour. They cannot regard publicans as their brethren ; but think the kindness of God to perishing sinners is injustice to them, and unbecoming him ; and that these, instead of being received into his arms, should smart under his rod ; and at farthest only be received into a lower place, after having done long penance for their offences.

Some suppose that the elder brother represents a gracious man, who, having himself escaped from the grosser pollutions that are in the world, is in danger of entertaining high thoughts of himself, and too little compassion towards such as have more grossly offended. To avoid which, we should learn, (1.) To entertain the lowest thoughts of ourselves, and especially to watch against spiritual pride. (2.) Never to complain of God as unjust to us, but acknowledge ourselves unworthy of the least of all his mercies. (3.) Not to harbour unkindness against, and treat with unjust severity, those who may have dishonoured their profession by their unfaithfulness, but to be happy to give them again the right hand of fellowship, whenever they return to God. (4.) To rejoice in the gifts and graces of those saints who have been most eminent sinners, and not to envy them their mercies, though they may now far outshine and eclipse ourselves.

5. The father silences and rebukes the unreasonable murmurs of the elder brother : Son, thou art ever with me ; the scribes and Pharisees, or the Jewish people, enjoyed peculiar privileges, the ordinances of worship, and the special presence of God in the midst of them ; and all that I have is thine, if by their unbelief they did not cut themselves off, the mercy shewn to Gentiles, to the chief of sinners, would prove no diminution of the favours which they

should enjoy. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad : for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again ; and was lost, and is found ; the conversion of the Gentiles and other notorious sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, and ready to perish for ever, so far from being a ground of discontent, should be to all matter of rejoicing. Note ; (1.) The abounding grace of God is never exhausted by the myriads who partake of it : the happiness of others is no diminution of our own, but rather should increase our delight. (2.) Whatever God does, is well done ; every murmur must be silenced before him ; and in all the dispensations of his providence and grace, he is ever to be acknowledged as righteous, just, and good.

C H A P. XVI.

Ver. 1. And he said also unto his disciples,] The maliciousness of the Pharisees, and the obstinacy with which they opposed every thing that was good, led our Saviour to expose their evil hearts and vile practices to public view. Wherefore, he did not content himself barely with justifying his receiving sinners, in order to convert them ; but, while the scribes and Pharisees were present, he turned to his disciples, and spake the parable of the crafty steward, whom he proposed as an example of the dextrous improvement which worldly men make of such opportunities and advantages as fall in their way for advancing their interest. By this parable Jesus designed to excite his disciples to improve in like manner the advantages which they might enjoy, for advancing their own spiritual welfare ; and particularly, to spend both their time and their money in promoting the conversion of sinners ; which, of all the offices in their power, was the most acceptable to God, and the most beneficial to mankind.

Ver. 3. I cannot dig ;] Commentators have shewn that the word σκαπτείν, which we render to dig, signifies in general to cultivate the land, and especially to prepare it for seed, which was one of the most laborious parts of the husbandman's work ; in which day-labourers were employed ; and consequently most fit to be mentioned by this steward, who, having been used to a delicate and luxurious way of living, would naturally think of such a change of life in the most discouraging view. The expression εὐκισσῶ, I am not able, or strong enough to do it, has also a peculiar beauty in this view, which is lost in our translation, and in most others.

Ver. 4. I am resolved] Anciently, stewards, besides taking care of their master's domestic affairs, gave leases of their lands, and settled the rent which each tenant was to pay ; which is not an unusual mode in these days. Accordingly, the steward in the parable made use of this branch of his power to purchase the good-will of his lord's tenants. Having racked their rents in the leases which he had lately given, he now determined that they should have their possessions on the same terms as formerly.

12 And if ye have not been faithful in  
 ° that which is another man's, who shall give  
 you that ° which is your own?

13 ° No servant can serve two masters:  
 for either he will hate the one, and love  
 the other; or else he will hold to the one,

° Job, 1. 21. Ezek. 16. 15—21. Hosea, 2. 8, 9. Pl. 115. 16. Ezek. 46. 17. Mat. 25. 14—29. Ch. 19. 12—26. ° Ch. 10. 42. Ezek. 45. 16. If. 55. 3. 1 Cor. 1. 30. 1 Peter, 1. 4. ° Mat. 6. 24. Rom. 8. 5—8. Phil. 3. 18, 19. Ch. 9. 50. & 11. 23. Titus, 1. 16. 2 Tim. 3. 5.

This interpretation of the parable may be gathered, not only from the nature of the thing, but from the proper sense of the words *χορηγεύετης* and *γράμμα*, the one signifying any kind of debtor, and among the rest a *tenant*; and the other, any kind of obligatory writing, and among the rest a *lease*: besides, in this light, the favour which was done to the tenants was substantial, and laid them under lasting obligations: whereas, according to the common interpretation, the steward could not propose to reap so much benefit from any requital which the debtors would make to him for the sums forgiven them, as these sums were worth to himself; and therefore he might rather have exacted them, and put them in his own pocket.

*Ver. 5, 6. So he called—his lord's debtors*] Calling the tenants, he intimated his purpose; and whereas one by his bargain bound himself to pay yearly a hundred *βάται*, [from the Hebrew *בתים*, *batim*] *baths of oil*, each bath equal to seven gallons, four pints, and a half, English measure—he let him have the land for *fifty*: and whereas another was to pay an hundred *κῆρας*, *ver. 7.* [from the Hebrew *כור* *kur*] *homers of wheat*, yearly, each homer being equal to eight bushels and a half, Winchester measure—he gave him his lease at *eighty*; and altered the obligatory writings accordingly. As this homer contained *ten ephabs*, or *baths*, (Ezek. xlv. 11, 14.) and each of these latter *ten homers*, (Exod. xvi. 36.)—twenty *homers*, which the steward allowed the tenant to deduct, would on this computation contain a hundred and seventy bushels of wheat, and might be as valuable as fifty baths, or about three hundred and seventy-eight gallons of oil; so that the obligation conferred on both these debtors might be equal. Dr. Doddridge is rather of a different opinion: he supposes that *the bill* here mentioned, was something equivalent to a note of hand, acknowledging the receipt of so much oil, and promising payment of it; the alteration of which plainly shews how much they are mistaken, who suppose that the steward did no wrong to his master in this affair, but only gave the debtors the value of what he set off out of his own stock: for, not to say how improbable it is that this bankrupt should be able or willing to make such a considerable present, it is plain that if he had intended it, he would have let the account remain unaltered; but by the exchange of bills, he craftily made each of the debtors an accomplice with himself in defrauding his lord, and thereby provided against a discovery.

*Ver. 8. And the lord*] *αυτου*, *his lord*, is implied; for it is Jesus, and not the evangelist, who speaks this, as is plain both from the structure of the parable itself, and from the application which Jesus makes of it in the next verse. By mentioning the commendation which the rich man bestowed upon his steward, our Lord does not mean to approve of the man's knavery, which is sufficiently branded by the epithet of *unjust* here given him by Jesus himself; neither was it designed to give countenance to

the fraud of any person on any account whatever; nor to the conduct of those who are liberal out of other persons' goods. The *wisdom* of the steward in *making himself friends*, is that alone which is commended by his lord, and proposed by Jesus as worthy the imitation of his disciples,—not the *method* by which he made them: or if that be commended, it is commended only as *wise*, in relation to the plan that he had laid down; there being nothing more common among men than to commend the ingenuity shewn in a fraud, while they condemn the fraud itself. Sir D. Dalrymple observes, that “these debtors seem to have been *coloni partiarum*, who paid a portion of the fruits of the ground to the master. By lessening the charge of this proportion of fruits, the debtors were relieved. Or we may suppose, that the steward discharged the tenants of one half of the rent without receiving payment, and of consequence charged himself with it. Being bankrupt himself, he might be indifferent what charge was against him; while, by discharging the tenants, he did a friendly office to them. There is no reason for supposing that the master discovered this fraud; because the phrase *he acted wisely, or prudently*, may signify ‘because he accounted well;’ or that the master commended his accounts, because he had acted cautiously, so as to conceal his frauds.” Upon the whole, the calumnies which Julian and Porphyry have thrown out against our Lord on account of this parable, are altogether groundless; its true scope being to teach those who have their views extended to eternity, to be as active and prudent in their schemes for the life to come, as the children of this world are for the present; and particularly to do to others all the good offices founded on gospel principles in their power—a duty highly incumbent on those whose business it is to reclaim sinners, not only because sinners are in themselves fit objects of charity as well as saints, but because charitable offices done to them, may have a happy tendency to promote their conversion: but we are to do good especially to those who are of the household of faith:—that this was the lesson which Jesus intended to inculcate by the parable, is evident from his application of it.

*Ver. 9. And I say unto you, &c.*] Our Lord's advice is worthy of the most serious attention; the best use that we can make of our riches being to employ them in promoting the salvation of others. For, if we use our abilities and interest in bringing sinners to God, if we spend our money in this excellent service, we shall conciliate the good-will of all heavenly beings, who greatly rejoice at the conversion of sinners, as was represented in the preceding parables; so that with open arms they will receive us into the mansions of felicity. And therefore while self-seekers shall have their possessions, and honours, and estates, torn from them with the utmost reluctance at death, they who have devoted themselves, and all that they have, perseveringly

and despise the other. ' Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

14 ¶ And the Pharisees also, ' who were

covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

15 And he said unto them, Ye are they

† Josh. 24. 14. Mat. 4. 10. James, 4. 4. † John, 2. 15, 16. Titus, 2. 12. & 69. 9, 19, 20.

† Mat. 23. 14. & 13. 22. Ezek. 33. 31. Ch. 20. 47. † Pl. 22.

to the service of God, shall find their consumed estates to be greatly increased, and their neglected honours abundantly repaired, in the love and friendship of the inhabitants of heaven, and in the happiness of the world to come; and shall rejoice in having disposed of their wealth to such an advantage. Dr Heylin, instead of *the mammon of unrighteousness*, reads *the false mammon*; and so in ver. 11. And he observes, that it is literally *mammon of injustice*: so in the preceding verse, *the steward of injustice*; and in ch. xviii. 6. *judge of injustice*; all which may be rightly rendered, *the unjust, or false judge,—false steward, and false mammon*; for truth and justice, with their derivatives, are often convertible terms in scripture, and sometimes in modern language. That our Lord does not mean *unrighteous*, or *ill-gotten*, but *false and uncertain riches*, is plain from ver. 11. where *unrighteous mammon* is not opposed to *righteous* but to *true*. Nothing can be more contrary to the whole genius of the Christian religion, than to imagine that our Lord would exhort men to lay out their ill-gotten goods in works of charity, when justice so evidently required that they should make restitution to the utmost of their abilities. *When ye fail*, means *when ye die*; and it is with apparent propriety that our Lord suggests the thought of death, as an antidote against covetousness. Strange it is that so many, on the very borders of the grave, should be so wretchedly enslaved to that unreasonable passion! Mr. Henry observes on the expression *Make to yourselves friends*, that parables must not be forced beyond their primary intention; and therefore we must not hence infer, that any one can *befriend us*, if we lie under the *displeasure of our Lord*: but that in the general, we must so lay out what we have in works of piety and charity, as that we may meet it again with comfort on the other side of the grave. Instead of *that they may receive you*, some read, *that they may make you be received*.

Ver. 10. *He that is faithful, &c.*] “ If you make that use of your riches which I have been recommending, (which of course implies *living faith*, the grand principle of all good works) you shall be received into those everlasting habitations, where all the friends of goodness dwell; because by your fidelity in managing the small trust of temporal advantages committed to your care, you shew that you are capable of the much greater trust of heavenly honours and employments. Whereas, if you do not use your riches or temporal advantages for the glory of God, and the good of mankind, you shall be banished for ever from the abodes of the blessed; because, by behaving unfaithfully in the small trust committed to you, you render yourselves both unworthy and incapable of a share in the everlasting inheritance.”

Ver. 11. *The true riches?*] The word *riches* is substituted by our translators, instead of *mammon*, which was the word that Christ intended, and which, for that reason, should find its place in the translation of this verse. Dr. Heylin renders

it, *If you have not been faithful in the false mammon, who will trust you with the true?* See on Matth. vi. 24.

Ver. 12. *That which is another man's,*] Here, as in many of our Lord's discourses, the expression is so simple, and the sense so profound, that we need not wonder at its being overlooked. Our translation has supplied the word *man* without reason; for it is not man, but God, who is intended; to whom the riches and other advantages in our possession do properly belong; who has committed them to us only as stewards, to be laid out for the good of his family, and who may every moment call us to give an account of our management. The words *that which is your own*, do not signify that which is *already our own*, but that which is *to be so*: that, which, when it is conferred upon us, shall be wholly in our power, and perpetually in our possession; shall be so fully our own, that we shall never be called to account for the management of it. Our Lord's meaning therefore is, “ If you have dared to be unfaithful in that which was only a trust committed to you by God for a short time, and of which you knew you were to give him an account; it is evident, that you are not fit to be entrusted by him with the riches of heaven,—these being treasures, which, if he bestowed them on you, would be so fully your own, that you would have them perpetually in your possession, and never be called to an account for your management of them.” This verse is well expressed, though not exactly rendered in the version of 1729; *If you have embezzled what another gave you in trust, how can he give you an estate in perpetuity?* Probably our Lord may allude to a custom of rewarding faithful stewards, by giving them some part of the estates which they had managed.

Ver. 13. *No servant can serve, &c.*] “ Beware of indulging even the least degree of covetousness, for it is absolutely inconsistent with piety; inasmuch that a man may as well undertake at one and the same time to serve two masters of contrary dispositions and opposite interests, as pretend to please God, while he is anxiously pursuing the world for its own sake.” In this manner did our Lord recommend the true use of riches, power, knowledge, and the other advantages of the present life, from the consideration that they are not our own, but God's; that they are only committed to us, as stewards, to be employed for the honour of God, and the good of mankind; that we are accountable to the proprietor for the use we make of them, who will reward or punish us accordingly; and that every degree of covetousness is such a *servicing of mammon*, as is really idolatry, and altogether inconsistent with the duty that we owe to God.

Ver. 14. *And they derided him.*] The original word is very emphatical; ἐξευωχῆσαν: “ They mocked him by a scornful motion of the mouth and nose,”—as well as by what they spake to him. The word might be rendered *they sneered*. There was a gravity and dignity in our Lord's discourse,

which "justify yourselves before men; but \* God knoweth your hearts: ' for that which is highly esteemed amongst men is abomination in the sight of God.

16 " The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

17 " And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

18 <sup>b</sup> Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and

whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband committeth adultery.

19 ¶ <sup>c</sup> There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

20 <sup>d</sup> And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate <sup>e</sup> full of sores.

21 <sup>f</sup> And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover <sup>g</sup> the dogs came and licked his sores.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 6. 2. Ch. 18. 11, 12. & 10. 29. & 20. 20. <sup>b</sup> Pf. 7. 9. Jer. 17. 10. Rev. 2. 23. John, 21. 17. <sup>c</sup> 1 Sam. 16. 7. Mat. 23. 13—30. Ch. 11. 39. James, 4. 4. <sup>d</sup> Mal. 4. 4. Ch. 1. 16, 76. John, 1. 17. Mat. 11. 12, 13. Mark, 1. 14, 15, 33, 45. Mat. iii. Luke, iii. The gospel-dispensation hath been published, and both Jews and Gentiles have seemed earnestly desirous of its blessings. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 5. 18. 1 Peter, 1. 25. If. 40. 8. & 51. 6. Pf. 102. 26, 27. Josh. 23. 14. 1 Sam. 3. 19. & 15. 29. Rom. 9. 6. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 5. 32. & 19. 9. 1 Cor. 7. 10—12. Rom. 7. 3—3. <sup>g</sup> Job, 21. 7—15. Pf. 17. 14. & 73. 3—9. & 119. 70. James, 5. 5. Job, 15. 27. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 11. 5. James, 2. 5. 1 Cor. 1. 26, 27. Prov. 1. 7. <sup>i</sup> Job, 2. 7, 8. Pf. 73. 14. & 34. 19. <sup>j</sup> Pf. 107. 5. & 142. 4. 1 Cor. 4. 11. Heb. 11. 37, 38. <sup>k</sup> Rom. 8. 28. Hosea, 2. 18.

discourse, which, insolent as they were, would not permit them to laugh out; but by some scornful air they hinted to each other their mutual contempt.

Ver. 16—18. *The law and the prophets were until John:*] Our Lord having in the preceding verse developed the specious and hypocritical pretences of the Pharisees, observes to them, with respect to his own conduct, which they blamed so much, that the law and the prophets, the dispensation which made a distinction between men, accounting some clean and others unclean, continued till John came; and that from the commencement of his ministry, *the kingdom of heaven*, or gospel dispensation, was in some degree preached, which admitted all persons upon repentance, without distinction:—*every man presseth into it*, harlots, publicans, and sinners. Yet lest they might have imagined that in speaking thus, he lessened the authority of the law, (by which the distinction between clean and unclean things had been established,) he added, ver. 17. *It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail.* "The ceremonial and typical law must be fulfilled in me, as well as the law of innocence; and the moral in the righteousness of my followers (Matth. v. 17.): and to shew how far I am from allowing the least breach of the law, or countenancing impurity of life in my followers, I do absolutely condemn a practical tenet very common among you, and teach in contradiction to it, that *whosoever putteth away his wife, &c.*" ver. 18. These hypocrites, while they feigned a high veneration for the law, by their exact observation of lesser duties, violated on many occasions its greatest and most sacred precepts. For example, they defiled themselves with the pollutions of lust; though they were so scrupulous of touching things unclean, that they would not go into the company of publicans, lest they might have been polluted by them. Nor was this an accusation without grounds; for their lust discovered itself by their frequent divorces. They put away their wives as often as they took any disgust at them, or liked other women better.

Ver. 19. *There was a certain rich man,*] The reasoning made use of by our Lord in the preceding verses was clear and unanswerable; but the Pharisees, stupified with the

intoxication of sensual pleasures, were deaf to every argument, how cogent soever, if it was levelled against their lusts. As an illustration therefore and confirmation of his assertion, and that he might rouse them out of their lethargy, he made the thunder of the divine judgments to found in their ears, by this very strong and affecting parable of the rich man and the beggar; very similar whereto is a parable which the Jews have in their Gemara. The original, which we render *fared sumptuously every day*, is very expressive, "He delighted himself, and cheered his heart with sumptuous splendour and luxury every day." It is remarked by Archbishop Tillotson on this parable, that our Saviour calls the poor man by his proper name, but only speaks of the rich man under a general appellation:—"I cannot but take notice," says he, "of the decorum which our Saviour uses. He would not name any rich man, because that was invidious: he endeavours to make all men sensible of their duty, but he would provoke none by any peevish reflection: for nothing is more improper than to provoke those whom we intend to persuade. While a man's reason is calm and undisturbed, it is capable of truth fairly propounded; but if once we stir up men's passions, it is like muddying of the water;—they can discern nothing clearly afterwards."

Ver. 20, 21. *A certain beggar, named Lazarus,*] An exceedingly emphatic name; for it seems to be derived from *לָאָזֶר* *Laozer*, which signifies a *helpless person*. Some have imagined, from the name of Lazarus and the particular detail of circumstances, that this was a history: but this must be a groundless supposition, as the incidents are plainly parabolical; and some ancient manuscripts, particularly that of Beza at Cambridge, have at the beginning,—*and he spake unto them another parable.* Some versions after the words, *from the rich man's table*, add *and no man gave unto him*; which Grotius thinks is intimated in his *wisping* to be fed with the crumbs which the dogs used to gather. If so, it was with singular propriety that he who denied a crumb, is represented as unable to obtain a drop.—But I should rather think that this gloss is ill-placed, since it appears more probable that the beggar used

22 And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

23 And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things:

but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

<sup>a</sup> Heb. 1. 14. Pf. 91. 11, 12. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 8. 31. Ch. 13. 28. & 23. 43. Pf. 73. 24. Phil. 1. 21, 23. i. e. at the heavenly feast of fellowship with God, along with, and as a true child of, Abraham. <sup>\*</sup> If. 14. 18. Gen. 50. 9, 10. <sup>1</sup> Ch. 13. 28. Mat. 8. 11, 12. <sup>m</sup> Ch. 3. 7. John, 8. 33, 39. Mat. 3. 9. <sup>n</sup> James, 2. 13. Ch. 19. 42—44. Rev. 22. 11. Jer. 22. 23. <sup>o</sup> Zech. 14. 12. If. 33. 14. & 66. 24. Mark, 9. 44—48. Rev. 14. 10, 11. <sup>p</sup> Job, 12. 6. & 21. 13. Pf. 37. 35—37. If. 57. 2, 20, 21. Rev. 14. 13. & 20. 15. & 21. 8. Ch. 6. 24. <sup>q</sup> Pf. 50. 28. John, 3. 36. <sup>2</sup> Theff. 1. 9. <sup>r</sup> If. 8. 20. & 34. 16. Mal. 4. 4. John, 5. 39, 45. Acts, 15. 21. & 17. 11. 2 Tim. 3. 15—17.

to lie at the rich man's door, as receiving alms from thence. The word *moreover*, at the end of ver. 21. should rather be rendered *yea*; for it is undoubtedly mentioned as an aggravating circumstance of the poor man's distress. "He lay at the rich man's gate," says St. Chrysostom, "that he might have no excuse, saying, 'I saw him not.'" "He was full of sores, that he might be to the rich man a spectacle of his own mortality, seeing, in the body of Lazarus, to what he himself was subject: and he is set forth as requesting food, not as complaining of his sores,—to shew the greatness of that poverty which so exceedingly pressed him, that he forgot his bodily pains."

Ver. 22. *Carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom*:] The Jews assigned this office to angels, and no doubt with the utmost propriety; considering how suitable it is to their benevolent nature, and to the circumstances of a departed spirit. The Greeks assigned guides to the souls of the dead, to conduct them to their respective seats. The expression *Abraham's bosom* alludes to the way of representing the entertainments of heaven, by sharing a magnificent banquet with Abraham and the other patriarchs. Compare ch. xxii. 30. and Matth. viii. 11. Nothing can better describe the honour and happiness of Lazarus, who had been in so wretched a condition before at the rich man's gate, than telling us that he was placed next to Abraham the friend of God, and so lay in his bosom. See John, xiii. 23.

Ver. 23. *In hell, &c.*] *In the unseen world*, as we have frequently observed is the meaning of the Greek word *Edes*. Both the rich man and Lazarus were in *hades*, though in different regions of it.

Ver. 24. *Dip the tip of his finger, &c.*] The Hebrews drank their wine mixed with water; and large quantities of water, on one occasion or other, were used at their feasts. See John, ii. 6. There seems therefore, in this

petition, a proper allusion to that custom. It is observable, that the rich man speaks as knowing Lazarus, and as supposing, ver. 28. that his brethren also might know him, on his appearing to them.—And shall not Abraham's children, when they are in paradise, know each other?

Ver. 25. *Son, remember that thou, &c.*] Is it not worthy of observation, that Abraham will not revile even a damned soul?—shall then living men revile one another?—He tells the rich man, that *in his life-time he received his good things, &c.* Now, fully to understand this, we should consider that our Saviour's principal view in this discourse evidently was, to warn men of the danger of that *worldly-mindedness*, neglect of religion, and intemperance upon pleasure and profit, which is not so much any one vice, as it is the foundation of all vices. It is that which makes men regardless of futurity, and not to have God in their thoughts. It is that deceitfulness of riches, ambition, and voluptuousness, and that care of things temporal, which stifle all notions of religion, choke the word, and render it unfruitful. It is that temper which exposes a man to every temptation, and makes him ready to sacrifice the interests of truth, holiness, and virtue, whenever they come in competition with the good things of this life, on which his heart is entirely set. But see this matter fully set forth in the Inferences at the end of the notes on chap. xii.

Ver. 26—29. *And besides all this, &c.*] "Ah poor creature! the time of mercy and hope is now over: God has fixed such a vast and unpassable distance between the happy and the miserable by an irreversible decree and sentence, that if any of us were ever so desirous to go and relieve you, it would be absolutely impossible to do it; and it is as impossible for any of your distressed company to come to us, and share in our joys, though they were ever so earnest in attempting it." So the state of every soul at death is unalterably fixed. Then the rich man, despairing of any comfort for himself, said to Abraham,

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: they will repent.  
 but if one went unto them from the dead, 31 And he said unto him, If they hear

ham, " I entreat thee, by all the tenderness of a father, to  
 " shew me, at least, so much favour, as to dispatch La-  
 " zarus to my father's house, where I have five brethren  
 " still living, who are your offspring too, that he may  
 " acquaint them with the true state of things in the  
 " eternal world: let him tell them what a dreadful con-  
 " dition my sins have brought me into; and let him warn  
 " them of the danger of treading in my steps, lest they  
 " share with me in my plagues, and increase my guilt  
 " and torment for having drawn them into ruin by my  
 " example." So, though there is no compassion or charity  
 among the damned, yet they are in fearful expectation of  
 growing miseries from the reproaches of their companions  
 in iniquity who are still upon earth; and as their punish-  
 ment is already more than they know how to bear, they  
 would fain have every thing prevented, that might add still  
 further to their distresses. To this Abraham replied, " No  
 " request can be granted to you, who are under an irre-  
 " vocable sentence of damnation: and as to what you  
 " ask for your brethren, it is unreasonable: God will not  
 " go out of his appointed and settled way, to humour you  
 " or them: they have sufficient notices and warnings in  
 " the writings of Moses and the prophets, which they may  
 " read as often as they please, and which are read and  
 " preached in the synagogues every sabbath-day: if there-  
 " fore they would escape the torments of the damned,  
 " and obtain the blessedness of the righteous, let them at-  
 " tend to those instructions which God has already af-  
 " farded them." So sinners in a state of eternal damna-  
 tion will find no expedient to prevent their increasing  
 calamities; and sinners under the means of grace upon  
 earth must stand or fall according to their use or abuse of  
 those means, having no room to expect that God will con-  
 vert them by visions from or into the other world, or go  
 out of his ordinary and instituted way to save them.

*Ver. 30, 31. But if one went unto them, &c.]* It is un-  
 certain whether the rich man by " one from the dead,"  
 meant an apparition or a resurrection. His words are ca-  
 pable of either sense; yet the quality of the persons to  
 whom this message was to be sent makes it more probable  
 that he meant an apparition: for, without doubt, the cha-  
 racter which Josephus gives us of the Jews in high life,  
 namely, that they were generally *Sadducees*, was applicable  
 to those brethren: so that, disbelieving the existence of  
 souls in a separate state, nothing more was necessary, in  
 the opinion of their brother, to convince them, than that  
 they should see an apparition, or spirit, from the invisible  
 world. But Abraham tells the rich man, that if they  
 hearkened not to Moses and the prophets, neither would  
 they be persuaded to a thorough repentance and conversion,  
 though one should arise from the dead to visit them; that  
 is, if they be so immersed in vice as to be careless of a  
 future state, and inattentive to the evidences of it, which  
 God has already afforded them by the ministration of  
 Moses and the prophets, they would, for the same reason,  
 reject all other means whatsoever, which God should make  
 use of for their conviction and conversion; even though  
 he should send one from the dead to preach to them. Bishop

Atterbury has fully and excellently shewn the justice of  
 Abraham's assertion here, in his Discourse on this text,  
 which deserves an attentive perusal, and to which we refer  
 our readers with great pleasure. See Atterb. vol. ii. Sermon 2.  
 The impenitence of many who saw another Lazarus raised  
 from the dead, John, xi. 46. and the wickedness of the  
 soldiers who were eye-witnesses to the resurrection of  
 Christ, and who yet that very day suffered themselves to be  
 hired to bear a false testimony against it, Matth. xxviii.  
 14, 15. are most affecting and astonishing illustrations of  
 this truth; for each of those miracles was far more con-  
 vincing, than such an apparition as is here referred to,  
 would have been.

*Inferences drawn from the parable of the rich man and  
 Lazarus, ver. 19—31.* From this parable we are taught  
 several important lessons, as,

1. That one may be great and renowned, and highly  
 esteemed among men, who is entirely obscure and vulgar  
 in the sight of God, nay, and an *abomination unto him*; (see  
 ver. 15.) for what can be greater or better in the eyes of  
 men, than to live adorned with all the splendour of wealth,  
 luxury, and honours;—and more disgraceful in the sight  
 of God, than to be polluted with sin, and fit only for the  
 flames of hell? On the other hand, the parable teaches,  
 that some who appear mean and despicable to the eyes of  
 their fellows, are men of great worth, and highly beloved  
 of God. Wealth, therefore, and power, and grandeur, are  
 not to be coveted, neither is poverty to be dreaded; since  
 that honour which is the chief charm of the one, and that  
 reproach which is the bitterest sting of the other, are in  
 the aggregate of things without foundation.

2. We are taught, secondly, from this parable, that the  
 souls of men are immortal; that they subsist in a separate  
 state after the dissolution of the body, and that they are  
 rewarded or punished according to our actions in this life;  
 —doctrines very necessary to be asserted in those days, as  
 well as the present; when it was fashionable, as now, to  
 believe the mortality of the soul, and to argue in defence  
 of that pernicious error. It farther teaches, that the mi-  
 series of the poor who have lived righteously, and the  
 happiness of the rich who have lived wickedly, end with  
 this life; that the several stations in which they have lived,  
 together with the past occurrences and actions of their  
 lives are distinctly remembered and reflected on by them;  
 that the remembrance of past pains and pleasures will not  
 lessen, but rather increase the joys of the one, and the  
 sorrows of the other; and consequently, that we make  
 a very false judgment of each other's condition, when we  
 think any man happy because he is rich, or miserable be-  
 cause he is poor.

3. We are also informed, that men shall be punished  
 hereafter for their worldly-mindedness, and heedlessness  
 with respect to religious matter; for being immersed in  
 pleasures, and for not using their riches aright, as well as  
 for crimes of a grosser nature. In which view, it affords  
 a fit caution to all the great and rich, to beware of the  
 rocks on which they are most apt to split. This great man,  
 who

not Moses and the prophets, neither will the dead. they be persuaded, though one rose from

John, 12. 10, 11.

who fell into the flames of hell, is not charged with murder, adultery, injustice, oppression, or lying; he is not even charged with being remarkably uncharitable. Lazarus lay commonly at his gate, and got his maintenance there, such as it was, or he would not have been laid there daily; nor would the rich man have desired Abraham to send him with a drop of water to cool his tongue, had he not imagined that gratitude would prompt him to undertake the office with cheerfulness. The rich man's sin, therefore, was his living in luxury and pleasure: which made him, on the one hand, neglect religion, for the cultivating of which he had the best opportunities; and, on the other, cherish atheistical principles, particularly such as flow from believing the mortality of the soul. If so, all who resemble this person in his character, should take warning by his punishment; nor delude themselves with the thought, that because they live free from the more scandalous vices, they shall escape damnation.

But in particular, all who make it their chief business to procure the pleasures of sense, neglecting to form their minds by all the means of grace to a relish of spiritual and divine pleasures, may in this parable see their sad, but certain end. They shall be excluded for ever from the presence of God, as incapable of his joys, although they may have pursued their pleasures with no visible injury to any person. But if men not accused of injustice in getting riches, are thus punished for the bad use that they have made of them, what must be their misery, who both acquire them unjustly, and use them sinfully!—And as this parable admonishes the rich, so is it profitable for the instruction and comfort of the poor; for it teaches them the proper method of bringing their afflictions to a happy issue, and shews them that God will distribute the rewards and punishments of the life to come impartially, and without respect of persons.

4. This parable teaches us the greatness of the punishment of the damned, ver. 23. *And in hell he lifted up his eyes, &c.* In what manner the flames of hell operate upon the damned, ever tormenting without annihilating, we are not able at present to explain. Additionally to these will be the *never-dying worm*. If wicked men retain the passions, appetites, and desires which were predominant in them upon earth, as it is highly probable they will, (see Gal. vi. 7.)—these desires being for ever deprived of their objects, it must occasion a misery, which they only can conceive, who have felt what it is to lose, without hope of recovery, that which they are most passionately fond of; and to be racked with the violence of desires, which, they are sensible, can never be gratified. Or, although the passions themselves should perish with their objects, a direful, eternal melancholy must necessarily ensue from the want of all desire and enjoyment, the misery of which is not to be conceived. In such a state, the bitter reflections which the damned will make on the happiness that they have lost, must raise in them a dreadful storm of self-condemnation, envy, and despair. Besides, their consciences, pro-

voked by the evil actions of their lives, and now, as it were, let loose upon them, will prove more inexorable than ravening wolves; and the torment which they shall occasion, will, in respect of its perpetuity, be as if a *never-dying worm* was always consuming them. And this latter torment will probably be far more terrible than the other; for the misery arising from those agonizing reflections must be of the most intense kind: and as there is not any thing in that state to divert the thoughts of the damned from them, they must be uninterrupted also, not admitting of the least alleviation or refreshment!

5. It appears likewise from the parable before us, that men's states are unalterably fixed after death; so that it is in vain to hope for any end of their misery who are miserable, and unreasonable to fear any change of their prosperity who are happy.

Lastly, we may observe from this parable, that if the evidences of a future state already proposed, do not persuade men, they will not be persuaded by any extraordinary evidences which can be afforded, consistently with the freedom requisite to render them accountable for their actions. The truth is, we do not call the reality of a future state in question, either because it is not demonstrated by sufficient arguments, or because we are not able to comprehend them. Every man has within his own breast that which leadeth him to the acknowledgment of this grand, this fundamental doctrine of religion;—a certain foreboding of immortality, which it is not in his power ever to banish. But, being addicted to sin, on account of the present pleasures attending it, we vehemently wish that there were no future state; and in consequence of these wishes, we will not allow ourselves to weigh the arguments offered on its behalf; and so at length come to work ourselves into an actual disbelief of it. Or, if the truth proving too hard for us, should constrain our assent, the habit of yielding to our passions which we labour under, has influence sufficient to make us act contrary to our convictions. Wherefore, though the evidence of a future state was more clear and forcible than it is, men might hinder themselves from seeing it, just as they hinder themselves from seeing the evidence by which it is at present supported. In a word, the proofs of the soul's immortality have always, through the grace of God, been sufficient to persuade those who have any candour or desire after goodness; and to demand more is unreasonable, because, though it were given, it might prove ineffectual. *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* Accordingly, Abraham's assertion is verified by daily experience: for they who look on all that the eternal Son of God (who actually rose from the dead) has said concerning the punishments of the damned, as so many idle tales, would pay little regard to any thing that could be told them, even by a person risen from the dead.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, To direct us in the right improvement of worldly wealth, we have,

D. The

## C H A P. XVII.

*Christ teacheth to avoid occasions of offence: to forgive one another: the power of faith: how we are bound to God, and not he to us. He healeth ten lepers. Of the kingdom of God, and the coming of the Son of man.*

[Anno Domini 31.]

**T**HEN said he unto the disciples, <sup>a</sup> It is impossible but that offences will come:

but woe *unto him* through whom they come!

<sup>2</sup> <sup>b</sup> It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

<sup>3</sup> ¶ <sup>c</sup> Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 18. 6—9. & 5. 29, 30. 1 Cor. 11. 19. 1 John, 2. 19. 2 Theff. 2. 11, 12. Mat. 26. 24. Mark, 9. 42—48. <sup>b</sup> Mark, 9. 42. Mat. 18. 6. & 25. 41—45. & 26. 24. 2 Theff. 1. 6—9. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 18. 10, 15—17. Lev. 19. 17. Prov. 17. 10. & 27. 5. Jam. 5. 19. Prov. 9. 8, 9.

1. The parable of the unjust steward. God is our master and lord: all who are entrusted with any of his gifts, are his stewards, and should improve them to his glory. This man was accused of wasting his master's goods; and how justly liable are we to the same charge? How often have we abused the substance that we have enjoyed, and the abilities we have been blest with, to God's dishonour? In consequence of his ill management, he is called to an account, and ordered to leave the service; and a terrible reckoning will that be for us, if, hurried away by death, we are called to God's bar, cut off in the midst of our sins, and banished for ever from his presence. Too lazy to dig for his maintenance, and too proud to beg, he resolves, by deeper frauds, to secure for himself a maintenance; and calling privately his lord's debtors, whose accounts were in his hands, he agreed with them to draw a new state of their debts, abating twenty measures of wheat to one, and fifty of oil to another; thus endeavouring to make them his friends, that, when he was dismissed from his lord's service, he might have their houses to receive him. See the Annotations for another explanation. *Note*; (1.) One step in sin always tends to lead on to farther abominations. (2.) Pride and laziness often drive men to the most wicked methods to supply their wants, unable to bear the labours of honest industry for a subsistence, or to submit to ask relief. (3.) They who trust too much to stewards, and seldom inspect their own accounts, will usually suffer for it.

2. The lord commended the unjust steward's conduct; not as truly laudable in itself, but as an instance of foresight, care, and contrivance, worthy of imitation in a better way; for the children of this world, such as this man was, who place their happiness in earth and a portion here below, are in their generation wiser, act more prudently, and shew greater industry to secure worldly advantages, than the children of light do to obtain the infinitely more momentous acquisitions of grace and glory. Let us go to them, therefore, to learn, and be ashamed to see ourselves outdone in diligence by those who pursue a perishing world, when we have at stake the interest of an immortal soul and an awful eternity.

3. Christ applies the parable to his disciples. *I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, employ your worldly goods in such a way, as shall be to your own advantage in the day of judgment; that when ye fail, and at death this perishing world is left behind with all its enjoyments they may receive you into everlasting habitations, they who have received the comfort of your bounty,*

God's poor saints, or God himself, who will reward such works of faith and labours of love to the faithful, with everlasting glory. *Note*; (1.) This world's wealth is called *the mammon of unrighteousness, or of deceit*, because usually it is abused to the vilest purposes, and too often gotten by unjust and deceitful means. (2.) The only way of turning those riches to our advantage, which others abuse to their ruin, is by employing them for the glory of God, and the good of our fellow-creatures; and then they will be blessings. (3.) At death all things here below fail us, nothing of our earthly affluence can go down with us to the grave: unless we have sent our treasures before us, they can then afford us no satisfaction. (4.) Our one great business here below, is to secure for ourselves the everlasting habitations; and though no money can purchase a mansion in glory, yet will they, who have laid out their talents in God's blessed service, find themselves hereafter repaid with the richest interest.

4. Our Lord enforces his exhortation by the following arguments, (1.) That a constant misimprovement of the gifts of God's providence must effectually exclude us from the treasures of his grace and glory; for as a servant who is faithful in a little matter gains our confidence to be entrusted with more; so where he is unjust in trifles, no prudent master would care to employ him in matters of greater importance. If therefore we be unfaithful in the abuse of worldly things, it cannot be thought we should make a better improvement of the nobler talents, the means of divine wisdom and grace; and therefore these *true riches* he will justly withhold from us; and if we have behaved as dishonest stewards in that which God has entrusted us with, and which is not our own but his, how can it be expected that we should possess that *good part*, the riches of glory, which most properly may be called *our own*, if once possessed, as being bestowed, not as a talent to be improved, but as an eternal inheritance? (2.) It is impossible to serve two masters, God and mammon, because, their demands being opposite and contradictory, so far as we love and serve the world, we must hate and disobey God: and, on the other hand, if we love and serve him, we must be dead to the world, and ready to forego all its honours, interests, pleasures, and esteem, whenever they stand in competition with his glory. God requires the heart; he cannot suffer a rival, nor will admit of an allowed partition: to attempt to reconcile the inconsistent services of God and mammon, is all that the devil asks to ensure our ruin.

5. The Pharisees were highly offended with truths which touched

4 <sup>d</sup> And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

<sup>d</sup> Mat. 18. 21, 22. 1 Cor. 13. 4, 5, 7. Eph. 4. 31, 32. Col. 3. 12, 13. Rom. 12. 19, 20.

touched them so nearly. Their character was drawn in this unjust steward; and their covetous, worldly-minded hearts, under all their most plausible guise of religion, were the slaves of mammon: they treated him therefore with the greatest disdain and contempt. *Note*; (1.) The inordinate love of this world is the bane of many a fair professor. (2.) When the word of God presses the conscience hard, the obstinate sinner often affects to despise, and turn off with a laugh, what he feels himself unable to answer. (3.) If we be treated with insult and derision by those to whom we minister the Gospel, let us remember that Jesus our Master endured the like treatment before us.

6. Christ sharply rebukes their hypocrisy and worldly-mindedness. He despised their reviling, yet warns them of their ruin, that they might yet repent of their sins, before it was too late. *Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, pretending the strictest piety and most scrupulous devotion; but God knoweth your hearts, that they are full of deadly poison, of pride, envy, covetousness, falsehood, and oppression: for that which is highly esteemed amongst men, these pompous shows of exterior sanctity, is abomination in the sight of God, who sees the odious principles which actuate your whole conduct, and abhors all your pretended services.* *Note*; (1.) The most rigid services of mere formal religion, instead of justifying men before God, render them only the more abhorred. (2.) The opinion of the world is a very fallacious rule of judgment: usually the most admired characters in the eyes of men, are in the Divine regards an abomination; and they who are set up as patterns of piety, will be found in fact a sink of iniquity.

7. He turns to the poor publicans and sinners, whom the Pharisees despised, encouraging them to press into that kingdom which his grace had opened to them. The Old Testament dispensation was now at its close; the prophecies concerning the Messiah were about to receive their accomplishment; and the free grace of the gospel to be universally published through the world; when the distinction of Jew and Gentile should cease. Every sinner therefore, without exclusion of any, is welcome to the Saviour, and sure to find mercy, if he come to him. And these glad tidings engaged the hearts of many, whom the self-righteous Pharisees despised, to press into the Messiah's kingdom amidst all opposition. *Note*; They must strive against the world, who would enter into heaven.

8. He precludes an objection which his self-righteous enemies would be ready to start; that he meant to invalidate the authority of the divine law. No. The frame of heaven and earth shall sooner be dissolved, than one tittle of the law can fail; all the prophecies, types, and figures, must receive their accomplishment; the precepts, in their true spiritual meaning, were now more than ever explained by Christ's preaching, and magnified by his own obedience to them: and, far from admitting a laxer system of moral duty, this holy law must abide as the un-

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changeable rule of righteousness; and conformity to it would now be enforced by the strongest motives: as for instance, in the article of marriage: divorce, under the law of Moses, was permitted, to prevent greater evils; but under the gospel it is entirely prohibited, and marriage restored to its primitive institution, nothing being admitted as a plea for its dissolution, but unfaithfulness to the marriage-bed. Whoever therefore for any other cause putteth away his wife, and marries again, is an adulterer; as he is also, who shall marry her that is divorced. The gospel, wherever it is truly received, strikes at the root of corrupt affections, and engages us to walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

2dly, The parable given us by our Lord, ver. 19, &c. seems to be particularly designed to rebuke the pride of the Jews, who, enriched with outward privileges, treated the poor Gentiles with disdain, as unworthy a place among the dogs of their flock; and yet there was grace in store for the poor diseased sinners whom they despised, while they themselves, through their unbelief and impenitence, would be rejected and ruined. It is also more generally applicable to what we see sadly verified every day, that rich epicures wallow in luxury, while God's dear children pine under want and hunger; whose end will be as it is here represented; where the veil is taken off from the world to come; and we behold the glories of the one, and the unutterable miseries of the other.

1. The state of a rich wicked man is set before us. *There was a certain rich man, whose fortune enabled him to gratify every appetite: he appeared in the most splendid robes, equalling the majesty of princes, clothed in purple and fine linen, and his table was spread with every delicacy, he fared sumptuously every day.* It may be said, where is the harm of this? he was born to his estate, and the expence was no more than he could afford. Admit the fact. The harm was not in the use, but the abuse, of the creature of God. He lived a life of sensuality, and sat unconcerned about the miseries of others. And it is designed to teach us, (1.) That this world's riches are often given to those who know not God; and that his love and favour are never to be judged of by outward things. (2.) That wealth and affluence are dangerous to the soul, and, affording the means to gratify men's bestial appetites, often plunge them in perdition and destruction.

2. The state of a poor godly man. He is called *Lazarus*; and to the miseries of poverty was added the more afflicting portion of a nauseous disease: wanting a morsel of bread, overspread with ulcers, without even rags to cover them, unable to walk, he is carried to the rich man's gate, and laid on the cold ground, desiring to be fed, if but with the crumbs which fell from the table. We hear no complaints from him, no murmuring at his condition. Behold here the condition of a dear saint of God; and learn of him, (1.) Not to estimate a man's spiritual state by his afflictions: for it is often seen, that those whom the Lord most loveth, he is pleased most se-

4 P

verely

5 ¶ And the apostles said unto the Lord,  
Increase our faith.

• Mark, 9. 24.

† Mat. 17. 20. & 21. 21. & 13. 37. Mark, 9. 23. & 11. 23. 1 Cor. 13. 2.

6 † And the Lord said, If ye had faith as  
a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto

verely to exercise. (2.) Patient submission to God's providential chastisements is a gracious proof of our adoption.

3. Death at last came with a friendly hand to remove at once all the poor beggar's miseries. Emaciated with hunger and disease, worn down with pain and misery, he closed his eyes, and bid adieu to human wretchedness; seeking a refuge in the grave, where the wicked cease from troubling. We hear of no burial given him: perhaps some hole was dug to remove the nuisance out of the way; and, buried with the burial of an ass, not a friend perhaps followed the bier, not a tear was dropped over the grave: but he rests in peace; and now his eternal triumphs begin: attending angels, who minister for the heirs of salvation, and hover round their dying beds, received the departing spirit, and, on their wings mounting to the skies, shouted aloud, Lift up your heads, ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that an heir of glory may come in. Led to his seat on high, admitted to the richest entertainments of that blest world, he is placed next to Abraham, and receives that distinguished honour of leaning on the patriarch's bosom. What a glorious prospect does this present! amidst all our present evils, how should such a hope support and comfort us! Death must be the farthest limits of the sufferings of a faithful soul; beyond the grave, all is happiness eternal, and bliss uninterrupted.

4. *The rich man also died, and was buried.* Probably his funeral was pompous, as his living was grand. A noble tomb received the corpse, and spices and perfumes made the clods of the valley sweet unto him; while perhaps charity wept on the monument, and the flattering marble proclaimed his munificence, liberality, and all the virtues that ever yet adorned man. How vain this pageantry! to which the body is now insensible: and the soul, alas! whither is it fled? *In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments,* the just punishment of his abused affluence: and now how changed are circumstances! He seeth with astonishment *Abraham afar off,* and *Lazarus,* the poor despised Lazarus, *in his bosom,* admitted to this state of high honour and dignity. *Note;* (1.) The misery of the wicked, and the happiness of the just, immediately commence at their death. (2.) Every sight which the damned behold, is aggravating; even the prospects of heaven can only torment them with the views of that glory, into which they must never enter.

5. In this fearful situation we have the rich man's request. *He cried with eagerness and importunity, extorted by the pangs that he felt.* How different from the songs of riot, that before echoed through his palace! *Father Abraham, have mercy on me:* perhaps in his cups he had ridiculed the old story of Abraham; or, it may be, he had depended upon his outward privileges as descended from him, but now found how vain were his expectations. *Note;* Many, who have never prayed before, may pray loud enough in hell, but pray in vain. His request seems small; *Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water,*

*and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame:* how is his proud crest fallen? He little thought once that he should be so reduced. Observe, (1.) His complaint. *I am tormented in this flame.* Damned sinners have nothing but wrath before them, which preys like fire upon their souls, as much as their bodies shall be tortured by the everlasting burnings. They who will not hear and fear, and do no more wickedly in this day of mercy, will then feel, when every pang will be embittered with despair. (2.) The day is near, when they who despised the people of God, will be glad to receive from them the least favours.

6. Abraham's answer is most confounding and upbraiding: for in the state of the damned no requests are granted, not even a drop of water to cool a flaming tongue. They who neglect the day of grace, have nothing before them but misery, without abatement, and without end. *Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* (1.) He addresses him as a *son,* the remembrance of which relation aggravated the guilt of his degenerate conduct. Our abused privileges will increase the measure of our guilt. (2.) He bids him *remember;* for conscience then will be awake, and self-tormenting reflections embitter every pang. The sinner will remember every means of grace that he has trifled with, every call of God that he has slighted, every affliction which he has misimproved, every blessing that he has abused. (3.) He reminds him of the *good things* which he had received, and misapplied; unthankful for them; placing his happiness in them; and, as he reckoned these during life his chief good, he had his all in hand, and nothing to expect after death but wrath to the uttermost. (4.) He leads him to reflect on the *evil things* that Lazarus had received; which he had patiently borne. (5.) He bids him now observe how the tables are turned: *he is comforted;* the miseries of a faithful child of God, however sharp, are, comparatively speaking, light afflictions, which are but for a moment: death will put an end to every sorrow, and instantly his everlasting bliss will commence. *But thou art tormented:* the triumphing of the wicked is but for a moment; they can carry nothing with them into the grave; and the joys and delights, in which they placed all their happiness before, will only make the change more terrible, when they are driven into the everlasting burnings, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. (6.) He leaves him without hope of mercy, or prospect of the least relief: for, *besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, impassable on either side; so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot:* if a glorified saint wished to afford the least relief to damned sinners, it would be in vain: not that he will ever feel such a desire, but will approve and applaud the justice of God in their eternal torments. *Neither can they pass to us that would come from thence:* when once the soul enters into the state of damnation, despair seals up the door of mercy; no gleam

this sycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

7 But which of you, having a servant

plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go, and sit down to meat?

8 And will not rather say unto him, Make

gleam of hope is ever again afforded: the decree once gone forth, is irreversible; as the tree falleth, it must lie. How awful! how awakening the thought! Sinner, hear, and tremble. The door of mercy is not yet shut against thee. Oh flee quickly thither. Cry mightily to God, if yet there may be hope; in a moment it will be too late to knock, when the door shall be shut.

7. Again he prefers another request, but meets with a second repulse. Since he is doomed in despair to suffer himself, he cannot, without increasing horror, reflect on meeting his brethren in that place of torment, whom he probably had been greatly instrumental to ruin by his bad example and influence, and whose upbraidings he wished to prevent: for not love of their souls, but desire to prevent an increase of his own misery, seems to have dictated the request. Earnestly therefore does he intreat, that if Lazarus may not come to him, he may go to them, and prevent their eternal ruin, if he may not alleviate his torment. *Note*; They who have been tempters to others, and companions in sin, will shortly become mutual tormentors. Abraham denies the request: it is unnecessary. *They have Moses and the prophets; let them bear them.* They wanted not the means of conviction and conversion, if they did not obstinately harden their hearts. *Note*; The scriptures are the ordinary means that God employs to turn men's hearts. They who neglect to attend to these sacred oracles, are left to their own devices, and sealed up under wrath.

8. Once more he redoubles his plea, yet meets with no more success. In the state of the damned no prayers are answered; it is here alone that prayers can profit us. He replied, *Nay, father Abraham*; though they may pay no regard to Moses and the prophets, (too long, it may be, accustomed to treat all revelation with contempt) yet, if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent: such a messenger must needs carry conviction along with him, and compel them to turn from the error of their ways. So ready are foolish men to be requiring evidence which God is not pleased to give, and which, should he comply with their request, would still be utterly ineffectual: for, as Abraham declares, *if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.* Indeed it is impossible that they should. One from the dead could not speak with more authority and certainty than the scriptures. We should have much more reason there to suspect a delusion, than in the oracles of truth. And though we might perhaps be terrified with the apparition, our hearts could never be changed thereby, since the power of God alone can effect that. We should by degrees recover from the fright, or be laughed out of our fears, and our corruptions would soon get the better of our convictions. The word of God therefore is ordinarily the only and sufficient means that he is pleased to use: it is presumption in us to prescribe, and folly to desire any other. If we harden our hearts against the warnings therein contained, visits from the dead, yea, being dragged through

the belly of hell itself, and sent back again to earth, would be utterly ineffectual to convert our souls. *To the law, therefore, and the testimony.* Isa. viii. 19, 20.

C H A P. XVII.

*Ver. 1. Then said he unto the disciples,*] Having been derided by the Pharisees as a visionary, and insulted on account of his doctrine concerning the pernicious influence of the love of money, our Lord took occasion to speak of affronts and offences,—*Σκάνδαλα, stumbling-blocks*, provocations to sin; and though he represented such things as highly useful in respect of the exercise and improvement which they afford to holiness and virtue; and unavoidable by reason of the pride, anger, revenge, malice, and other jarring passions of men, he did not fail to set forth their evil nature in their dreadful punishment. To understand our Lord in the passage before us, it is necessary that we attend to an obvious distinction. All offences or temptations are not of the same nature; some of them are things in themselves sinful; others of them are things innocent: Jesus speaks of the first sort; nor has he denounced against the authors of them a greater punishment than they deserve; because to their own intrinsic malignity such things have this added, that they prove stumbling-blocks to others; and so are of the most atrocious nature. When the other sort of offences happen to be mentioned, they are spoken of in milder terms: if the offence be given to a fellow-Christian, the person guilty of it is peculiarly blamed for wanting that love towards his brother, which the Christian religion enjoins. If it be given to a heathen, he is charged with being deficient in due concern for the glory of God: in the mean time, it must be observed on this head, that though the weakness of well-meaning persons,—who, by relying on our example, may be led to imitate us in things which they think sinful,—is a strong reason in point of charity, why we should forbear those actions, however innocent, (unless we are under the greatest necessity of doing them;) yet the perverseness of malicious minds, that are apt to misrepresent things, does by no means lay any obligations on a good man to forbear what he finds convenient for him, provided he himself knows it to be innocent; for the difference of the persons, who are apt to be affected by our example, greatly alters the case of offences, and our behaviour with relation to them. See the note on Matth. xviii. 5, 6.

*Ver. 3, 4. Take heed to yourselves*:] Our Lord speaks here concerning a quarrelsome temper in his servants, but especially in the ministers and teachers of religion; insinuating, that many grievous temptations to sin arise thence; temptations both to the persons who are injured by that temper, because injuries beget injuries; and to those who are witnesses of the injury, as encouraging them to venture on the like evils. But he prescribes a reasonable and prudent reprehension of the fault, accompanied with forgiveness on the part of the person injured, as the best means of dis-

ready wherewith I may sup, <sup>e</sup> and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10 So likewise ye, <sup>h</sup> when ye shall have

done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

11 ¶ And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he <sup>i</sup> passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 And as he entered into a certain village,

<sup>e</sup> Ch. 12. 37. <sup>h</sup> Job. 9. 2, 3. & 22. 3. & 35. 7. Pf. 16. 2. & 130. 3. & 143. 2. Rom. 11. 35. 1 Cor. 9. 16. with Mat. 25. 30. Rom. 3. 11. Phil. 3. 8, 9. 1f. 6. 5. & 64. 6. <sup>i</sup> John, 4. 4. Ch. 9. 51.

arming the temptations which may arise from such a disposition. Sentiments of this kind, delivered immediately after our Lord had been insulted by the falsest teachers, for inculcating the purest doctrine, proved how truly he forgave them all the personal injuries which they had committed against him, throw a beautiful light on the severe things which he had said of them in the course of his ministry, and are powerful recommendations of that most amiable of virtues, the forgiveness of injuries. See the note on Matth. v. 44.

*Ver. 5. The apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.]* Our Lord's discourse in the preceding verses, being very opposite to the common notions concerning the Messiah and his followers, seems to have staggered the faith of the disciples a little. They began possibly to fear, that Jesus, who talked in such a manner, was not the person they had hitherto taken him for. They prayed him therefore to increase their faith; meaning, perhaps, that he should put an end to their doubts, by erecting his kingdom speedily, and distributing the rewards which they were expecting for their services. Or we may take the word *faith*, in its ordinary sense, for the true principle of holiness and virtue, which the disciples desired their Master to strengthen in them, because the duty that he had recommended was extremely difficult. Wontzenogenius himself acknowledges, that the disciples applying to Christ to *strengthen their faith*, shews that they believed him to have a divine influence over the spirits of men.

*Ver. 6. Ye might say unto this sycamine-tree, &c.]* "If you had but a small measure of faith, it would overcome all temptations; even those, the conquering of which may be compared to the plucking up of trees, and planting them in the ocean." Some, taking this example, by which the efficacy of faith is illustrated, in a literal sense, have supposed that the apostles desired Jesus to increase their faith of working miracles; but the expression is proverbial, signifying not the working of miracles, but the doing of things extremely difficult. See another proverb of the same kind, Matth. xvii. 20.

*Ver. 7. Go, and sit down.]* Come in, and sit down. See Raphaelius, and ch. xii. 37. Our Lord here returns to his subject, telling the apostles, that after they had done their utmost to discharge the whole duty incumbent on them, as God's servants sent forth to seek and save lost souls, they were not to imagine that they merited any thing thereby: and to make them sensible of the justness of his doctrine, he bade them consider in what manner they received the services of their own dependants. They

reckoned themselves under no obligation to a servant, for doing the duty which his station bound him to perform. In like manner he, their Master, did not reckon himself indebted to them for their services; and therefore, instead of valuing themselves upon what they had done, it became them, after having performed all that was commanded them, to acknowledge that they had done nothing but their duty, ver. 10. Our Lord in this manner concluded his discourse concerning the true use of riches, and the right manner of discharging their duty as God's servants, sent forth to seek and save lost sinners, knowing the frame of mind which his disciples were in. He saw their faith begin to stagger, because the expected rewards were deferred, and little encouragement was given them to think that they would ever be blessed. Perhaps, likewise, he knew that they were at that time in some degree infected with the leaven of the Pharisees, who, having a high opinion of their own righteousness, zealously maintained the doctrine of the merit of good works, together with a possibility of a man's performing more than was commanded him; that is, the possibility of performing works of supererogation. Or, though the disciples were free from these errors, Jesus, on this occasion, might think it fit to condemn them, because he foresaw that in his own church they would creep in, spread widely, and be productive of the most baneful consequences. See on ver. 10.

*Ver. 8. Gird thyself,]* Servants at that time used to be girded while waiting on their masters. See chap. xii. 37.

*Ver. 10. Unprofitable servants:]* Ἀχρεῖοί, mean, and inconsiderable, who cannot pretend to have merit in any thing. It deserves remarking, that our Saviour applies this, not to the servants in the parable, but to his disciples,—to all men: for it cannot, I conceive, in strictness be said, that he is an unprofitable servant to his earthly master, who does all things whatsoever his master commands; but of men, as the servants of God, it may very justly be said. The Hebrew word שפיל *shepel*, which the LXX render by the word ἀχρεῖος, 2 Sam. vi. 22. seems truly to express the meaning of this place:—base, vile, inconsiderable, humble. "We are but unprofitable servants," says venerable Bede; "servants, because bought with a price, unprofitable because our service cannot profit the Lord, or because we are not worthy of the future glory: therefore this is the perfection of faith in men, if, all precepts being fulfilled to the utmost of their power, they acknowledge themselves imperfect." Dr. Waterland, in a sermon on the subject, explaining the phrase, observes, that, upon the whole, when any, even the best of fallen men, profess themselves to be

unprofitable

there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood <sup>k</sup> afar off:

13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, ' Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, <sup>m</sup> Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, <sup>n</sup> they were cleansed.

15 And <sup>o</sup> one of them, <sup>p</sup> when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 And <sup>q</sup> fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a <sup>r</sup> Samaritan.

17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? <sup>s</sup> but where *are* the nine?

18 <sup>t</sup> There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, <sup>u</sup> Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

20 ¶ And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not <sup>v</sup> with observation:

21 Neither shall they say, <sup>w</sup> Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is <sup>x</sup> within you.

22 ¶ And he said unto the disciples, <sup>y</sup> The

<sup>k</sup> Lev. 13. 45, 46. Num. 5. 2. 2 Kings, 7. 3. & 5. 27. 2 Chr. 26. 20, 21. Ch. 18. 13. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 15. 22. & 8. 2. & 20. 30, 31. Mark, 9. 22. Ch. 18. 13, 30, 30. <sup>m</sup> Lev. xiii. xiv. Ch. 5. 14. <sup>n</sup> Pf. 19. 11. & 33. 9. & 107. 20. Mat. 8. 3. & 11. 5. <sup>o</sup> Exod. 23. 2. R m. 12. 7. <sup>p</sup> Pf. ciii. cxvi. cxlv. cv. cviii. xviii. xcv. <sup>q</sup> Gen. 32. 10. Pf. 116. 12. & 75. 1, 2. & 115. 1, 2. <sup>r</sup> John, 4. 9. & 8. 48. 2 Kings, 17. 24—41. Ezra, iv. v. Neh. iv. vi. Ch. 9. 51, 52. <sup>s</sup> 2 Chr. 32. 25. Pf. 106. 13. Rom. 1. 21. Mat. 7. 14. <sup>t</sup> Mat. 8. 10. & 15. 28. John, 4. 29. 11. 11. 10. Gen. 49. 10. Mar. 8. 11, 12. & 21. 41, 43. & 20. 16. <sup>u</sup> Mat. 9. 22. Mark, 5. 34. & 10. 52. Ch. 7. 50. & 8. 48. & 18. 42. Eph. 2. 8. <sup>v</sup> Or *with outward shew*. Zech. 4. 6. Dan. 2. 44. John, 18. 36. Rom. 14. 17. & 12. 2. <sup>w</sup> Mat. 24. 23. Ch. 2. 8. Mark, 13. 21. <sup>x</sup> Or *among*. John, 1. 26. <sup>y</sup> Mat. 12. 28. & 21. 43. Rom. 2. 29. & 14. 17. Col. 1. 27. John, 3. 3, 5. Gal. 6. 15. 2 Cor. 5. 17. 1 Sam. 16. 7. <sup>z</sup> Mat. 9. 15. John, 7. 33, 34. & 8. 21. & 12. 35.

unprofitable servants of God, they may reasonably be supposed to mean, that they are creatures who can make no beneficial returns, no proper requitals, to their Creator; that they are mortal creatures, who neither can nor will do any thing without the aids of divine grace: and further, that they are also sinners, who, instead of meriting a reward, or claiming it as a debt, cannot so much as claim from any right in themselves impunity in God's fight, but must be content to sue to him, in the humble petitionary form, for reward, for grace, and even for impunity; referring all to God's mercy and goodness, and that also purchased for them by the alone merits of Jesus Christ.

Ver. 12. *There met him ten men*] As lepers were banished from the towns, they were likewise obliged to keep at a distance from the roads which led to them. Curiosity, however, to see the travellers who passed, or an inclination to beg, or perhaps a pre-concerted plan to find out Jesus, having brought these ten as nigh to the public road as they could, they espied our Lord, and cried to him, beseeching him to take pity on them, and cure them. It seems they knew him personally, having seen him before, or guessed that it might be he from the crowds which followed him. If it be asked how so many lepers came together, the answer is, that being secluded from the society of other men on account of their disease, they sought the comforts of society in the company of each other.

Ver. 17. *But where are the nine?*] The ingratitude of these Jews will appear monstrous, if we consider that the leprosy, the malady from which they were delivered, is itself one of the most loathsome diseases incident to human nature; and a disease which by the law, of Moses subjected them to greater hardships than any other distemper whatever. But though the cure of this dreadful disorder was produced without the smallest pain, or even trouble to the lepers, and so speedily that it was completed

by the time they had got at a small distance from him, (as appears by the Samaritan's finding Jesus, where they left him) the Jews would not give themselves the trouble of returning to glorify God, by making the miracle public, nor to honour Jesus by acknowledging the favour. Such were the people who gloried in their being holy, and who insolently called the men of all other nations dogs: but their hypocrisy and presumption received a severe reprimand on this occasion; for our Lord, in his observation on their behaviour, plainly declared, that the outward profession of any religion, however true and excellent that religion may be in itself, is of no value before God, in comparison of piety and inward holy dispositions:—and in this view we should not be too forward to condemn the Jews;—for have we not too much reason to doubt whether, of the multitudes who are indebted to the divine goodness, one in ten has a becoming sense of it. We should labour to impress our hearts deeply with such a sense, always remembering what it is that God expects of us, and considering that as the exercise of gratitude towards such a benefactor is most reasonable, so it is also proportionably delightful to the soul. It is indeed like the incense of the Jewish priests, which, while it did an honour to God, did likewise regale with its own fragrancy the person by whom it was offered.

Ver. 18. *There are not, &c.*] *Has there none been observed returning to give glory to God, except this stranger?* Heylin. Wynne, instead of the word stranger, renders it alien, ἀλλογενής,—an alien to the commonwealth of Israel: for as Jesus was now in Samaria, this man could not properly be called a stranger.

Ver. 20, 21. *The kingdom of God cometh not, &c.*] While Jesus was in Ephraim, (John, xi. 54.) the Pharisees asked him, when the kingdom of God, by which they meant the Messiah's kingdom, was to commence? They had very grand

days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

23 <sup>c</sup> And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after *them*, nor follow *them*.

24 <sup>d</sup> For as the lightning, that lightneth out of the one *part* under heaven, shineth unto the other *part* under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be <sup>e</sup> in his day.

25 But <sup>f</sup> first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

26 <sup>g</sup> And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married

wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

28 <sup>h</sup> Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

29 <sup>i</sup> But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed *them* all:

30 <sup>k</sup> Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

31 <sup>l</sup> In that day, he which shall be upon the house top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

32 <sup>m</sup> Remember Lot's wife.

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 24. 23. Mark, 13. 21. Ch. 21. 8. 1 John, 4. 1. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 24. 27. If. 30. 13, 14. & 24. 1—6. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 24. 30. & 25. 31. & 26. 64. Rev. 11. 15. 1 Tim. 6. 15. Acts. 17. 31. 1 Peter, 4. 7. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 16. 21. & 17. 22, 23. & 20. 18, 19. Ch. 9. 22. & 18. 31. & 24. 7, 26. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 24. 37—41. Gen. vi. vii. Job, 22. 16. 1 Peter, 3. 19, 20. 2 Peter, 2. 5. & 3. 6. Heb. 11. 7. Phil. 2. 21. Ch. 13. 8. 1 Theff. 5. 2, 3. If. 30. 13, 14. <sup>h</sup> Gen. 13. 13. & 18. 20. Ezek. 16. 49, 50. Gen. 19. 4—4. If. 22. 12, 13. Phil. 2. 21. James, 4. 3, 4 & 5. 5. <sup>i</sup> Gen. 19. 24. Deut. 29. 23. Job, 18. 15. If. 13. 19. Jer. 50. 40. Hof. 11. 8. Amos, 4. 11. Zeph. 2. 9. 2 Peter, 2. 6. Jude, 7. <sup>k</sup> Ver. 24. Mat. 26. 64. & 24. 30. & 25. 31. Rev. 11. 10, 15. & 20. 11, 12. 1 Theff. 5. 2, 3. Ch. 18. 8. 2 Theff. 1. 7. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 24. 16, 17, 18. Mark, 13. 14—16. Job, 2. 4. Mat. 6. 25. Jer. 45. 5. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 24. 30. & 25. 31. & 26. 64.

grand notions of the extent of the Messiah's kingdom, the number of his subjects, the strength of his armies, the pomp and *eclat* of his court; and were eager to have that glorious empire speedily erected; or, being inveterate enemies of our Lord, they might ask the question in derision, because every thing about Jesus was so unlike to the Messiah whom they expected. To correct their mistaken notions, our Lord tells them, that the Messiah's kingdom does not consist in any pompous outward form of government, to be erected in this or that particular country with the terror of arms and the confusion of war; but that it consists in the subjection of men's wills, and in the conformity of their minds, to the law of God, to be effected by a new dispensation of religion which was already begun: accordingly, they were not to seek for it in this or that place, saying, *Lo here!* or *Lo there!* for the kingdom of God, the new dispensation of religion, productive of the dominion of righteousness in men's minds, was already begun among them, being preached by Christ and his apostles, and confirmed by innumerable miracles. The phrase *ἐν τῷ ὑμῶν*, signifies more properly among you, than within you, as we render it; for it is certain that our Lord could not properly say, that the kingdom of God was in the Pharisees, to whom he spoke, whose temper was entirely alienated from the nature and design of it.

Ver. 23. *And they shall say to you, &c.*] *They*, that is, the Jews, who, after having rejected me, shall long for the appearance of the Messiah, (ver. 22.) and eagerly listen to every pretender who shall assume that character."

Ver. 32. *Remember Lot's wife.*] This unfortunate woman had been informed by angels of the destruction of Sodom, and promised deliverance; but was expressly forbidden to look back, on any account, in the time of her flight; be-

cause it was proper that they should flee speedily, in the faith of this divine declaration, and perfectly contented, or at least endeavouring to be so, that they had escaped with their lives. Nevertheless, she presumed to entertain doubts concerning the destruction of her wicked acquaintance, because she did not fully believe the angels' message. Moreover, being inwardly sorry for the loss of her relations and goods, and at the same time not sufficiently valuing the kindness of God who had sent his angels to preserve her, she lingered behind her husband, discontented and vexed, allowing him and his two daughters to enter into Zoar before her, and thereby laying a temptation in Lot's way to look back upon her, on account of the danger to which she was exposing herself. But no sooner had Lot with his children entered the place of their refuge, than God poured out the fulness of his wrath upon the offending cities. The thunder, the shrieking of the inhabitants, the crashing of the houses falling, were heard at a distance. Lot's wife, not yet in Zoar, was at length convinced that all was lost; and being exceedingly displeased, she despised the gift of her life; for, in contradiction to the angels' command, she turned about, and looked round at the dreadful devastation; probably also bewailed her perishing kindred and wealth, (Gen. xix. 14.) But her infidelity, her disobedience, her ingratitude, and her love of the world, received a just, though severe rebuke. In an instant she was turned into a pillar of salt, being burned up by the flames, out of whose reach she could not fly; and so was made a perpetual monument of God's displeasure to all posterity. Her looking back, though in itself a thing indifferent, yet as it was done contrary to the divine prohibition, and expressed such a complication of evil dispositions, was so far from being a small sin,

33<sup>a</sup> Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

34<sup>a</sup> I tell you, in that<sup>b</sup> night there shall be<sup>c</sup> two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

35 Two women shall be grinding together;

the one shall be taken, and the other left.

36<sup>\*</sup> Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

37 And they answered and said unto him, 'Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will † the eagles be gathered together.

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 19. 26. Ch. 13. 3, 5. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 16. 25. & 10. 39. Mark, 8. 35. Ch. 9. 24. John, 12. 25. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 24. 40, 41. <sup>d</sup> Joel. 2. 37. Zeph. 1. 14, 15. Amos, 8. 9, 10. & 5. 30. & 8. 22. & 13. 9, 10. <sup>e</sup> 1 Cor. 4. 7. 1 Thess. 4. 17. Pf. 20. 8. Job, 22. 20. Pf. 26. 9. & 28. 3. <sup>f</sup> This verse is wanting in many Greek copies. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 24. 28. Job, 39. 29. Dan. 9. 26, 27. Amos, 9. 1-4. 1 Thess. 2. 16. Ch. 19. 43. <sup>h</sup> The Romish armies shall hunt out and destroy the corrupt Jews, wherever they are.

sin, that it fully deserved the punishment inflicted on it. See on Gen. xix. 26.

Ver. 33. *Whosoever shall seek to save his life, &c.*] As in the whole of this discourse our Lord is speaking of the temporal calamities which were to befall the Jewish nation, his words in this verse must be interpreted accordingly in their primary meaning: "Whoever, in order to save his life, shall flee into the city, because it is strongly fortified and garrisoned, shall meet with the destruction from which he is flying; whereas they shall be safe who flee into the open towns, and defenceless villages, which, in the opinion of many, may be thought equal to throwing away their lives." At the same time the words may undoubtedly be considered as of general interpretation, and be profitably applied to every private Christian.

Ver. 35, 36. *Left.*] *Dismissed.* Elfner.

Ver. 37. *Wheresoever the body is, &c.*] "As eagles find out, and gather round a carcase; so wherever wicked men are, the judgments of God will pursue them; and particularly in whatever part of the land any number of the unbelieving Jews are, there will the Romans, the executioners of the divine vengeance upon this nation, be gathered together to destroy them." The expression is proverbial, and will appear to have been beautifully applied, when it is remembered that the Romans bore in their standards the figure of an eagle, and that a certain kind of eagle mentioned by Aristotle is found to feed on carcases. Dr. Clarke explains our Lord's answer thus: "Your question is of no moment; no matter where or when the same thing comes to pass; wherever the case and circumstances are alike, there also will the event be proportionably the same; as wheresoever the prey is, thither will the birds of prey resort: so wherever the doctrine of Christ is received, there is the kingdom of Christ; and wherever the persons to be judged shall be found endued with the like diversity of qualifications, there also shall the impartial judgment of God, the searcher of hearts, distinguish them with the like distinctions."

*Inferences* drawn from the cure, &c. of the ten lepers, ver. 11-19. The Jews and Samaritans could not abide each other; yet here in the leprosy they became social: here was one Samaritan leper with the Jewish lepers: community of sufferings had made them friends, whom even religion had disjoined. What virtue there is in misery, that can unite even the most estranged hearts!

These ten are met together, and they meet Christ; not casually, but upon due deliberation: no wonder if they thought no attendance too long to be delivered from so loathsome, so miserable a disease. We are all sensible enough of our bodily infirmities; O that we could be equally weary of our spiritual maladies and deformities, which are no less mortal, if they be not healed; and they cannot be healed by any human means. These men had died lepers, if they had not met with Christ. O Saviour, give us grace to seek, and patience to wait for thee, and then we know *thou wilt find us, and we shall find a remedy.*

Though these men came to seek Christ; yet, finding him, they stand afar off, whether for reverence, or for security, God had enacted this distance: it was their charge, if they had occasion to pass through the streets, to cry out, *I am unclean*; it was no less than duty to proclaim their own infectiousness; there was not danger only, but sin in their approach; and yet these lepers, though *far off* in the distance of place, are near in respect of the acceptance of their prayer. *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him in truth.*

He that stands near, may whisper; he that is afar off, must cry aloud: so did these lepers, (ver. 13.) yet did not so much the distance as the ardour of desire strain their voices: that which can give voice to the dumb, can give loudness to the vocal.

All cried together, uniting their ten voices in one sound, that their conjoined forces might besiege that gracious ear. All affected with one common disease, all lift up their voices together; and *Jews* and *Samaritan* agree in joint supplication. When we would obtain universal favours, we must not content ourselves with solitary devotions, but join our spiritual forces together, and supplicate the Almighty in full assembly. *Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour.* O holy, happy violence, which is thus offered to Heaven: how can we want blessings, when so many cords draw them down upon our heads!

Too much like these lepers in our condition, why do we not imitate them in their conduct? Whither should we fly, but to our Jesus? How should we stand aloof in regard to our own wretchedness? How should we also lift up with them the voice of supplication, and sue for favour in those well-adapted terms, *Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!*

Jesus,

## CHAP. XVIII.

*Of the importunate widow. Of the Pharisee and the publican. Children brought to Christ. A ruler that would follow Christ, but is hindered by his riches. The reward of them who leave all for his sake: he forebaweth his death, and restoreth the blind man to sight.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**A**ND he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought <sup>a</sup> always to pray, and not to faint;

<sup>a</sup> 1 Thess. 5. 17. Ch. 11. 5—8. & 21. 36. Rom. 12. 12. Eph. 6. 18. Col. 4. 2. Gen. 32. 26.

1—3.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 83. 3, 4.

Deut. 27. 19.

Is. 1. 17, 23.

<sup>c</sup> See ver. 7.

Ch. 11. 8.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Sam. 2. 12. Job, 21. 14, 15. Micah 3.

Jesus, when he saw them, said, *Go, shew yourselves unto the priests* (ver. 14.): the disease is cured ere it can be complained of; for their shewing to the priest, presupposes them to be whole.

The original command in this case runs, “either to Aaron or to one of his Sons.” But why to them? The leprosy was a bodily sickness; what is this to spiritual persons?—But this affection of the body is joined with a legal uncleanness, and it must come under their cognizance, not as a sickness, but as an impurity. Nor was it only the peculiar judgment of the priest that was here intended, but the thankfulness of the patient too; that, by the sacrifice which he should bring with him, he might render to God the glory of his cure. O God, whomsoever thou curest of their spiritual leprosy, are bound to present thee with the true evangelical sacrifices, not of their praises only, but of themselves, which is their reasonable service.

<sup>e</sup> The lepers did not, would not, go of themselves, but are sent by Christ (ver. 14.); Christ, who was above the law, would not transgress it: he knew that this was his charge by Moses. Justly might he have dispensed with his own injunction; but he would not: though the law does not bind the divine Legislator, yet will he voluntarily bind himself. This was but a branch of the ceremonial law; yet would he not slight it, but in his own person sets the example of a studious observance. How carefully should we submit ourselves to the royal laws of our Creator, and to the wholesome laws of our superiors, when the Son of God would not omit this punctuality in a ceremony.

Had this duty been neglected, what clamours had perhaps been raised by his envious adversaries! what scandals diffused!—though the fault had been that of the patients, not of the physician. They that watched Christ so narrowly, and were apt to take such miserable exceptions at his sabbath cures, at his disciples’ unwashen hands, &c.—how much more might they have calumniated him, if by his neglect the law of leprosy had been palpably transgressed? Not only *evil* must be avoided, but *offence* also (see ver. 1.): that offence is ours, which we did not prevent when we might. But neither offence to others, nor torment or death in respect to ourselves, should prevent our fulfilling the clear will of God.

What a noble, what an irrefragable testimony was this to the power and truth of the Messiah! How can this Jewish nation but believe, or be made inexcusable in not

2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, <sup>b</sup> which feared not God, neither regarded man:

3 And there was a <sup>c</sup> widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5 Yet <sup>d</sup> because this widow troubleth me,

believing? When they shall see so many lepers come at once to the temple, all cured by a secret volition, without word or touch; how can they choose but say, “This work is supernatural; no limited power could do this; how is he not God, if his power be infinite?”—Their own eyes shall be witnesses and judges of their own conviction.

This act of shewing to the priest, was not more required by the law, than pre-required of these lepers by our Saviour, for the trial of their obedience. It has ever been God’s custom, by small precepts, to prove men’s dispositions: obedience is as well tried in a trifle, as in the most important charge; yea, so much the more, as the thing required is less. What command soever we receive from God, or from our human superiors agreeably to the will of God, let us not scan the weight of the injunction, but the authority of the enjoiner. Difficulty or ease in the execution of the command, are equally vain pretences for disobedience.

These lepers are wiser: they obeyed, and went. What was the issue? *As they went, they were healed*, (ver. 14.) Lo! had they stood still, they had still been lepers: now they went, they are whole.—What haste the blessing makes to overtake their ready obedience.

Yet besides this recompence, O Saviour! thou wouldst herein have respect to thine own just glory. Had not these lepers been cured in the way, but in the end of their walk, upon their shewing themselves to the priests, how much light had the miracle lost! Perhaps the priests would have challenged it to themselves, and attributed it to their prayers: perhaps the lepers might have thought it was thy purpose to honour the priests as the instrument of their marvellous cure. As it is, there can be no colour of any other participation: as thy power, so thy praise admits of no partners.

And now, methinks, I see what astonishing joy revels among these lepers, as they perceive this instantaneous cure. Each tells the other what a change he feels; each comforts the other with the assurance of his outward cleanness; each congratulates the other’s happiness, and thinks and says, how joyful this news will be to their friends, to their families! Their society now serves them well to applaud, and to heighten their own felicity.

The miracle, wrought indifferently upon all, is differently received. *One* only was thankful (ver. 15.). Where the ox finds grass, the viper sucks in poison. O my God! if

I will avenge her, left by her continual coming the weary me.

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

\* Mat. 7. 11. Ch. 11. 13. & 16. 8.

we look not up to thee, we may come, and not be healed; we may be healed, and not be thankful.

This one man breaks away from his fellows to seek Christ, and pour forth the fulness of a grateful heart. It is a base and unworthy thing for a man so to subject himself to the examples of others, as not sometimes to resolve to be an example to others. When either evil is to be done, or good neglected, how much better is it to retire and go the right way alone, than to err in company!

O noble pattern of thankfulness! What diligent officiousness is here! What a hearty recognition of the blessing! What a humble reverence of his Benefactor! He falls down at his feet, giving him thanks, as acknowledging at once Christ's beneficence and his own unworthiness. Happy were it for all *Israel*, if they would but learn of this Samaritan.

It is not for nothing, that note is taken of the country of this thankful leper;—*He was a Samaritan*. The place is known and branded with the infamy of paganism: outward disadvantage of place or parentage cannot block up the way of God's grace towards the penitent sinner, whatever be his country; as, on the other hand, the privileges of birth and nature avail us nothing without repentance.

How sensible wert thou, O Saviour, of thy own beneficence; (ver. 17.) *were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?* The favours of God are universal; not a creature but tastes of his bounty: his sun and rain are for others besides his friends. But none of his gracious dealings escape either his knowledge or record. Why should not we, O God, keep a book of our receipts from thee, which, agreeing with thine, may at once declare thee bounteous and us grateful!

Our Saviour did not ask this by way of doubt, but of exprobation. Full well did he count the steps of those absent lepers; but he upbraids their ingratitude, that they were not where they should have been. *There are not found that return to give glory to God, save this stranger*. Had they been all Samaritans, this had been criminal: but now they were *Israelites*, their ingratitude was more foul than their leprosy: the more we are bound to God, the more shameful is our unthankfulness. There is scarce one in ten that is careful to give God his own: this neglect is not more general than displeasing; and Christ had never missed their presence, had not their absence been hateful and injurious.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The discourse given us, ver. 1—10. is particularly addressed to the disciples, and contains,

1. A warning against giving offence. It must needs be, considering the natural corruption of our nature, the craft of Satan, and the temptations of the world, that offences come; but woe to persecutors, who discourage and oppose the work of God; woe to seducers, who corrupt the truth, and deceive the souls of men with pernicious heresies; woe to faithless professors, whose carnal lives stumble the weak and harden the wicked: better were it for them to die

with the vilest of malefactors, than live to increase their everlasting misery.

2. A command to forgive all injuries. *Take heed to yourselves*, as not to give offence, so also not to take it. When others are provoking, hold in your own spirit, and in patience possess your souls; let no angry thought, no passionate word or wish, no violence, break forth or be indulged. Mildly endeavour to convince an offending brother; and the moment he expresses his repentance, let the arms of forgiveness and reconciliation be open to him. If he, through carelessness, forgetfulness, or imprudence, seven times in a day repeat the offence, and turn again, professing his sorrow, and promising greater watchfulness, we must still forgive, and neither upbraid him, nor keep in mind his repeated provocations.

3. In the next place, instruction is given, how we can alone discharge this difficult duty. *Lord, say the apostles, Increase our faith*. This is the root whence all other graces flow; as this strengthens, they increase and manifest themselves. The apostles themselves were conscious of the weakness of their faith; they knew that his grace alone could supply their wants; therefore in prayer to him they make their application. We must go to the same Saviour, and he will not send us empty away. To their request the Lord replied, *If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you; such being the mighty efficacy of divine faith; and every duty, under its influence, becomes practicable*.

4. Christ enjoins upon them humility in all their services. Whatever works they were enabled to perform, whatever difficulties they might be called to encounter, they must regard themselves as his servants, and fulfil the duties of their station; nor think they had merited any thing by their labours: for, as a servant, when he returns from his work in the field, does not expect to be attended, but is required first to wait on his master before he sups himself, nor is thanked for so doing, because it is his duty; in like manner must Christ's ministers and servants, when they have done their best, acknowledge that they are unprofitable servants; and if they had indeed performed all things commanded them, they would have done no more than was their duty to do, and would have no merit to plead; *our goodness extendeth not to God*, we can never make him our debtor for duty, while we must daily own ourselves his debtors for pardoning and sanctifying grace.

2dly, The leprosy was a disorder not only incurable, and most noxious, but which rendered the unhappy patient ceremonially defiled, and excluded him from the comforts of human society. We have the miraculous cure of ten men afflicted with that miserable disease.

1. They met Christ on his journey, hearing it may be of his coming that way; and assembled to move his compassion, and unite their supplications to him. Keeping at a humble distance, they lifted up their voice and cried aloud for mercy to him, whom fame had proclaimed the

Saviour

7 <sup>f</sup> And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them ?

8 I tell you that <sup>e</sup> he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless <sup>h</sup> when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth ?

<sup>f</sup> Ch. 11. 8. Pf. 9. 18. & 13. 1. & 22. 1, 2. & 103. 9. John, 17. 1. <sup>a</sup> Theff. 1. 6, 7. Rev. 6. 10, 11. Hab. 2. 3. Heb. 10. 35—37. <sup>e</sup> 2 Pet. 3. 8, 9. Pf. 26. 5. Heb. 10. 37. Rev. 18. 8. <sup>h</sup> 2 Tim. 3. 1. & 4. 3. <sup>i</sup> 1 Tim. 4. 1. <sup>2</sup> Theff. 2. 3. When Christ comes to destroy the Jews and judge the world, he will find little real religion among them.

Saviour of the miserable. *Note*; (1.) A humble sense of our own vileness should deeply affect our souls in all our approaches to God. (2.) Joint sufferers should unite their prayers, and thus more powerfully besiege the throne of grace.

2. Christ sent them to the priests for inspection, whom the law had made the judges of leprosy. And herein he intimated his design to cleanse them, if they in faith obeyed his direction; and withal hereby his power and glory would be made evident to those in the sanctuary, who, pronouncing these persons clean, might learn by what means the wondrous cure was wrought.

3. *As they went, they were healed.* They did not hesitate about the journey, or say, To what purpose should we go? but went in faith, and were accordingly healed: for in the way of duty we may expect Christ's powerful hand of grace to work effectually for us, where we are utterly unable to help ourselves.

4. One of the poor lepers no sooner received his cure, than he immediately returned, *with a loud voice glorifying God*, adoring the power and grace which he had so richly experienced; and fell at *the feet of Jesus*, with warmest gratitude expressing his acknowledgments of the mercy which he had received. *Note*; The least we can render to God for his goodness towards us, is praise; and therein we are bound to be speedy and hearty, deeply sensible that we are less than the least of all his mercies.

5. Christ expresses his approbation of his conduct, and encourages his faith. Nine out of the ten went on; but this man, though a Samaritan, a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, evinced deeper gratitude and more unfeigned religion than those who professed themselves of the peculiar people of God. Our Lord therefore dismisses him with an assurance of a present internal salvation. His faith had not only obtained his cure in common with the rest, but had brought salvation into his soul. *Note*; (1.) Ingratitude is a common sin. How many more receive mercies from God than are thankful for them? (2.) We often meet with the greatest gratitude where we least expected it: while sometimes they who make profession of religion, most grievously disappoint us.

3dly, We have our Lord's answer to the Pharisees' question, *when the kingdom of God should come*; that glorious temporal kingdom of the Messiah which their prejudices taught them to expect.

1. He informs them that it will come with none of that outward show which they imagined, nor occasion any such observation as they looked for; as when a prince makes his progress through his kingdom, every mouth is full of it, *Lo here he comes, or lo there he resides: for behold the kingdom of God is within you*; the heart is the seat of the Messiah's kingdom; there he sets up his throne, bringing the soul, with all its faculties, into obedience to his blessed

Self. *Note*; (1.) Christianity knows no sect or party; Christ is not confined here or there; but all, who believe in him and love him in sincerity, are subjects of his happy government. (2.) We must look into our hearts whether Christ be formed in us. All true religion is internal and experimental, and without this the form and shew of godliness avail nothing.

2. He directs his discourse to his disciples, with a view to warn them of the difficulties that they must encounter. Far from becoming great men in this world, esteemed and honoured as they flattered themselves, they would meet with such seasons of distress and persecution, as would make them look back with desire and regret upon one of these days, when they enjoyed Christ's personal presence with them, and wish for it in vain.

3. He foretells them of his speedy and unexpected appearance to destroy Jerusalem and the Jewish people; when driven to extremities, they would be ready to hearken to every impostor who pretended that Christ was here or there, ready to rescue them from the power of the Romans; but, like lightning, he would appear and utterly consume that devoted city and nation. Or, this may represent also the mighty efficacy of his gospel, which, with irresistible power and rapidity, should spread to the ends of the earth, notwithstanding all opposition.

4. He informs them that the Messiah *must suffer many things, and be rejected of that generation*: but when, by death, he has completed the great work of atonement, then all his enemies and theirs must fall before him.

5. His coming to destroy Jerusalem would be sudden and terrible, as the flood which consumed the old world, and the fire that devoured the cities of Sodom; while the sensuality and carnal security of the Jewish people would be like that which prevailed in the days of Lot and Noah, whose warnings were despised and disbelieved, till the threatened ruin came, and, too late, brought the dire conviction of their truth. So would the unbelieving Jews reject the warnings of Christ and his apostles, and perish as these despisers of old. *Note*; (1.) The inordinate pursuit of this world's gratifications is apt to lull the soul into a fatal security. (2.) It is common for sinners to go fast asleep into eternal misery, and not to be apprehensive of their danger till they lift up their eyes in torments.

6. He admonishes his disciples, as soon as they saw the danger approach, and the Roman army advancing to Jerusalem, to flee without delay; nor to regard what they left behind in the city, nor stop to cast a look thitherwards, lest, as Lot's wife was made a monument of divine vengeance, a like destruction should overtake them, if, solicitous about what they left, they should look back, or go back to save it. In these days of persecution, when tempted to save their lives by base compliances, they must remember that this would be the sure way to perish everlastingly;

9 ¶ And he spake this parable unto certain which <sup>1</sup> trusted in themselves \* that they were righteous, and despised others :

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray ; <sup>k</sup> the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 10. 29. & 16. 15. Phil. 3. 4-6. Rom. 9. 31, 32. & 10. 2, 3. If 65. 5.

\* Or as being righteous.

<sup>k</sup> Mat. 21. 31, 32. Ch. 7. 29, 30. & 15. 1, 2.

ingly ; while readines to meet death itself, in the way of duty, would most effectually secure their eternal life and glory. *Note* ; (1.) We should often remember Lot's wife, and tremble at the thought of drawing back. (2.) If we would make a right estimation of our gain and loss, we must look forward to eternity, and take that into the reckoning.

7. God's distinguishing providence will in that day take care of his believing people, who, though exposed to the same dangers as others, shall be then singularly preserved, and escape from the general desolation.

8. In answer to his disciples, who inquired, *Where, Lord? what will become of those who are left, and where shall the judgment light, he informs them, Where the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together* : wherever the Jews are, the Romans, as eagles, will pursue them, seize them in their fastnesses, and utterly root them out of the land. And this may be applied to Christ himself, to whom all his believing people eagerly flock and feed on him, to the great strengthening and comfort of their souls.

C H A P. XVIII.

*Ver. 1. And he spake a parable, &c.]* But, [*δὲ,*] he taught them by a parable, that men ought to persevere in prayer, and not to be discouraged. Heylin. The particle *δὲ*, but, plainly implies, that this parable has a relation to the discourse in the preceding chapter, and was delivered at the same time. The evangelist says it was designed to shew, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint ; that is, ought frequently to pray ; for so the word *πρῶτον* signifies, John, xviii. 20. The figure is carried still higher in the epithet given to the morning and evening sacrifices ; which, because of their frequency, are called, a continual burnt-offering : and, in allusion to this, men are directed to pray without ceasing, 1 Thess. v. 17. See on Luke, ii. 37. It is plain, therefore, that the parable was spoken to recommend continual praying, not in the strict sense of the words, but frequency, earnestness, and perseverance in the duty, not only for blessings on ourselves, but also for blessings on the church of God militant on earth ; and being delivered on this occasion, it is designed to inspire the disciples with earnestness and perseverance in their prayers, particularly for the coming of the Son of man, to put an end to the Jewish polity, notwithstanding God should long defer the accomplishment of their desires. The coming of Christ to destroy the Jewish polity, is in this and other passages of scripture, spoken of as a thing exceedingly to be wished for by the disciples in those days ; the reason was, the Jews in every country, being their bitter persecutors, were the chief opposers of the Christian religion. Our Lord often in the course of his ministry recommended frequency, earnestness, and perseverance in prayer ; not because the Divine Being is tired out by our importunity, but because it is both an expression and exercise of our firm belief

and confidence in his goodness, without which it would not be fit for God to bestow his blessings upon us, nor should we be capable of receiving and using them. See Matth. vii. 11. Luke, xi. 8. The word *ἐκκλινῶν*, rendered to faint, is expressive, and signifies, "to faint under pressures and persecutions,—to yield to evils, and despond under them,—to be so wholly wearied out with them, as to give place to them,—and to cease from prayer as unavailing to procure relief." See Ephes. iii. 13. 2 Thess. iii. 13. Heb. xii. 3.

*Ver. 3. Avenge me, &c.]* Do me justice upon mine adversary. Heylin, Doddridge, &c. This is the undoubted import of the original phrase ; and care should be taken in every version of it to express it so, as not to suggest the idea of revenge.

*Ver. 5. She weary me.]* Ἰπποκρίστημι : the word properly signifies to beat on the face, and particularly under the eye ; so as to make the parts black and blue. Hence it signifies to beat in general : see on 1 Cor. ix. 27. In the present passage it has a metaphorical meaning, as all the translators acknowledge, though they seem to have missed the exact propriety of the metaphor ; for the word Ἰπποκρίστημι here signifies to give great pain, such as arises from a severe beating. The meaning therefore is, that the uneasy feelings which this widow raised in the judge's breast, by the moving representations that she gave him of her distress, affected him to such a degree, that he could not bear it : and therefore, to be rid of these feelings, he resolved to do her justice. The passage understood in this sense has a peculiar advantage, as it throws a beautiful light on our Lord's argument, (ver. 6, 7.) and lays a proper foundation for the conclusions which it contains.

*Ver. 7. Though he bear long with them?]* "Though he seem to refrain himself for a while, to hold his peace, and afflict them very sore." Elser would render this, Shall he not avenge his own elect, who cry to him and wait patiently for it? that is, for his appearance in their favour. Some understand this as referring to the wicked ; "though God bear long with the wicked who oppress his people, and seem deaf to the cries which they send up to his throne, the just view which he has of their afflictions, will in due time move him to punish severely their enemies." The sentiment painted in this parable is very beautiful ; namely, that, "if the repeated importunate cries of the afflicted, at length make an impression on the hearts even of men so wicked, as to glory in their impiety, injustice, and barbarity, they will much more be answered by God most gracious, who is ever ready to bestow his choicest blessings, when he sees his creatures fit to receive them." Arguments of this kind, taken from the feeble goodness, or even from the imperfections of men, to illustrate the superior and infinite perfections of God, were often made use of by our Lord, and with great success, in working the convictions de-

11 'The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 \* And the publican, <sup>m</sup> standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto

<sup>1</sup> Mat. 6. 2, 5, 16. & 23. 14. & 9. 14. If. 1. 11—15. & 58. 2. Rev. 3. 17. 1 Sam. 15. 13. Mat. 23. 23. Phil. 3. 4—5. Gal. 1. 14. Rom. 10. 2, 3. <sup>2</sup> Or *But*. <sup>3</sup> Ezra, 9. 5, 6, 15. Jer. 31. 18, 19. & 3. 13, 25. Ezek. 16. 63. Ch. 23. 48. Acts, 2. 37. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Pf. 40. 12. Job, 40. 4. Rom. 7. 24.

signed. Such appeals where grace is yielded to, force their way directly to men's hearts, bear down all opposition, and make a lasting impression.

*Ver. 8. He will avenge them speedily.*] Rather *suddenly*; for so the original is τὰχιστα, may signify. Besides, scripture and experience teach, that in most cases punishment is not speedily executed against the evil works of evil men; but that when the divine patience ends, oftentimes *destruction overtaketh the wicked as a whirlwind*; Pf. lxxiii. 18—20. and by its suddenness becomes the more heavy. The question at the end of the verse implies, that at the coming of Christ to avenge and deliver his faithful people, the faith of his coming should in a great measure be lost; accordingly it appears, from 2 Pet. iii. 4. that many infidels and apostates scoffed at the expectation of Christ's coming, which the godly in those days cherished. Instead of *on the earth*, the Greek would be more properly rendered *in the land*; for so the word Γῆ very frequently signifies in the New Testament. See Acts, vii. 3, 4. 11. Some commentators read this and the foregoing verse thus; *which cry day and night unto him? Though he may be slack towards them.* *Ver. 8. I tell you, he will avenge them presently. But when, &c.*

*Ver. 9. And he spake this parable*] Our Saviour, having encouraged and enforced the duty of importunity and perseverance in prayer, proceeded, in another instance, to caution against a self-righteous Pharisaical spirit, which must be renounced, and to recommend humility and self-abasement, which must have a place in the heart, if ever we find acceptance of our persons and prayers: and he directed this discourse to a set of people, who had high confidence in their own merit, and made this their great plea with God for acceptance, and who looked with contempt and disdain upon others, as not worthy to be compared with themselves, or regarded of God.

*Ver. 11. The Pharisee stood, and prayed thus*] The Pharisee, having a very high opinion of his own sanctity, would not mingle with the crowd of worshippers in the temple, lest he should have been defiled by them. See Isai. lxxv. 5. But he stood on a place by himself alone; this is plainly expressed in the Greek, which should be rendered, *the Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed these things*. He spoke them aloud in the hearing of those who were in the temple at their devotions. He shewed his pride and self-conceit by standing as near the sanctuary, the place of the divine habitation, as he could, that the priests might hear him also, and that he might be at as great a distance as possible from the profane publican, who, he observed, was praying at the same time with himself. This circumstance of his standing near the sanctuary, is not indeed directly mentioned; but it is implied in that which is told of the publican, (ver. 13.) namely, that *he stood afar off*.

Here therefore the Pharisee prayed, whose thanksgiving favoured of the rankest pride, being a praising of himself rather than God, and such a praising of himself, as implied the highest contempt of others, and particularly of his fellow-worshipper: for he did not simply thank God that he was possessed of this or that virtue, but truly that *he was not like other men*, and particularly like the *publican*, who was then addressing God. Moreover, he took care to do himself all manner of honour, by an exact detail of the sins to which other men, particularly the publicans, were prone, from which, in his own opinion, he was perfectly free; and of the *duties*, which *they* neglected, but which *he* failed not to perform. See the next verse. *Or even as this publican*, expresses a kind of contemptuous pointing at him as it were with the finger.

*Ver. 12. I fast twice, &c.*] The *sins* which the Pharisee mentioned, being such as were severally charged on the publicans, and the *duties* such as that sort of men were supposed to neglect, it shewed to what an intolerable pitch his vanity was grown, and proved that he possessed none of those virtues, for which he so vainly returned God his solemn thanksgiving. Besides, his *fasting twice a week* was a duty not prescribed by the law, no more than his paying tythes of all, according to the opinion of most casuists at that time, if, as is probable, he meant *tythes of mint, anise, and cummin*, a preciseness by which men of his sect made themselves remarkable. See ch. xi. 42. Wherefore the language of this part of his prayer was, "I not only far excel other men in point of holiness, but I am more righteous than the law requires." Thus did the proud Pharisee arrogantly insinuate, that he had laid God under an obligation to him. It has been observed by most commentators, that the Jews, especially the Pharisees, used generally to keep private fasts on *Mondays* and *Thursdays*, as the primitive Christians did on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*. But our Lord had formally removed the *ostentatious* manner of doing it for the direction of Christians. See Matth. vi. 16.

*Ver. 13. And the publican, standing afar off,*] Impressed with a deep sense of his sins, the publican appeared so vile in his own sight, that he would not go up among the people of God, but stood afar off, in the *court of the Gentiles*, perhaps without the stone-wall, called by the apostle *the middle wall of partition*, which the Gentiles and unclean Israelites were not permitted to pass. Here, with eyes fixed on the ground, smiting on his breast, he by that action made a public acknowledgment of his great transgressions before all who were in sight of him, and, in the bitterness of his soul, earnestly cried for mercy. He too, as well as the Pharisee, pronounced his devotions aloud; but in regard that his prayer was a confession of his sin, his speaking it aloud proceeded not from vanity, but from the anguish of his soul:

heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

15 ¶ And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

16 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

18 ¶ And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

20 \* Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

¶ Rom. 3. 20. Gal. 2. 16. Mat. 23. 12. Ch. 14. 11. & 1. 52. Job, 22. 29. Prov. 3. 34. & 15. 33. & 18. 12. & 29. 23. James, 4. 6, 10. 1 Peter, 5. 5, 6. Mat. 19. 13-15. Mark, 10. 13-16. Gen. 48. 14, 15. 1 Sam. 1. 24. Jer. 49. 11. Mat. 15. 23. & 16. 22. & 20. 31. Heb. 2. 17. If. 65. 1, 2. Pf. 34. 11. & 45. 10, 11. Prov. 8. 17. & 4. 1. & 23. 26. Mat. 18. 3, 4. John, 3. 3, 5. 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Gal. 6. 15. 1 Cor. 14. 20. Pf. 131. 2. Mat. 19. 16-20. Mark, 10. 27-26. Ch. 10. 25-29. John, 6. 28. Acts, 2. 37. Rom. 9. 31, 32. & 10. 2, 3. 1 Sam. 2. 2. Exod. 34. 6, 7. Pf. 119. 68. James, 1. 17. Ch. 10. 26-28. Exod. 20. 12-17. Rom. 13. 9. Gal. 4. 21. & 3. 10. 12. & 5. 15. James, 2. 8. Deut. 5. 16-21. Col. 3. 20. Ver. 12. 12. Gal. 1. 14. Phil. 3. 6. Rom. 10. 2, 3. 2 Ch. 32. 33. & 16. 9. 1 Tim. 6. 18, 19. Mat. 6. 19, 20. Acts, 4. 34.

soul: for instead of doing him honour, this prayer tended to abase him greatly, as he mentioned no mixture of good to palliate the evils of his past life; but openly acknowledged that he was a sinner, and sought refuge in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ, the great propitiation, and the alone foundation of his hope. And that he did not act the hypocrite, was evident from the place which he chose for his devotions, where there were few to behold him, from the melancholy of his countenance, and from his whole deportment. The word ἀμαρτωλός, as here, often signifies an abandoned profligate, a grievous sinner. See Matth. ix. 10, 11. Luke, vi. 32, 33, &c.

Ver. 14. Justified rather than the other:] Justified, and not the other. Heylin. The original δειχθαι αἰσιν, ἢ κείνους is a peculiar idiom of the Greek language, and will not admit of a literal construction in English. The following passage will serve to shew, that its true import is as above given. In John, xiii. 10. our Saviour says, He that is washed, need not to wash, save his feet; & χρεῖαν ἔχει ἢ τοὺς πόδας, νησθῆναι, where the phrase is exactly the same as here, and excludes all washing but that of the feet. The reader will observe, that there is nothing for rather in the original, and therefore it is printed in Italics in our Bibles. Besides, it is manifest from the least observation, that the Pharisee could not at all be acceptable in the sight of him, who has declared, that he abaseth all who exalt themselves. This appears to have been a very favourite maxim with our Lord. See on Matth. xxiii. 12.

From the present parable we learn several important lessons; as,—that the generality of men are great strangers to themselves, and ignorant of their own characters;—that they oftentimes thank God in words for his benefits,

while their hearts are by no means penetrated with any just sense of them;—that it is difficult for men in general to think of the sins from which they themselves are free, without censuring the persons who in their opinion are guilty of them;—that a man may be very ready to censure others, without a single thought of reforming himself—and that in a certain sense, we may be clear of open and scandalous sins, while we are full of inward spiritual wickedness, pride, envy, malice, hypocrisy, and voluptuousness. We may farther observe, that by propounding this parable immediately after that of the importunate widow, our Lord has taught us, that although our prayers must be very earnest and frequent, they should always be accompanied with the deepest humility; because no disposition of mind is more proper for such weak and frail beings as men to appear with before the great God, than an absolute self-abasement. See the Inferences and Reflections.

Ver. 22. Yet lackest thou one thing:] Namely, to love God more than mammon. Our Saviour knew his heart, and presently put him upon a trial, which laid it open to the ruler himself; and to cure his love of the world, which could not in him be cured otherwise, Christ commanded him to sell all that he had. But he does not command us to do this; but to use all to the glory of God. See on Mark, x. 20. For the remainder of this chapter we refer the reader to the parallel passages.

Inferences drawn from the parable of the Pharisee and publican. Ver. 9—14. The generality of the world make so little pretension to religion, that it is great pity there should be any pretensions made which are false and groundless. The greatest part of the world quite neglect all religion.

23 And when he heard this, he <sup>a</sup> was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

24 ¶ And, when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, <sup>b</sup> How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they that heard *it* said, <sup>c</sup> Who then can be saved?

27 And he said, <sup>d</sup> The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

28 ¶ <sup>e</sup> Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

29 And he said unto them, <sup>f</sup> Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,

30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 8. 7, 14. & 21. 34. Judges, 18. 23, 24. Pf. 17. 14. Phil. 3. 19. 2 Cor. 7. 10. <sup>b</sup> See ver. 23. Job, 31. 24. Pf. 62. 11. Prov. 11. 28. 1 Cor. 1. 26, 27. 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. James, 2. 5. & 4. 4. Mat. 19. 23—29. Mark, 10. 23—27. <sup>c</sup> Ch. 13. 23. & 1. 14. <sup>d</sup> Job, 10. 13. & 42. 2. Jer. 32. 17. Gen. 18. 14. Zech. 8. 6. Ch. 1. 37. <sup>e</sup> Mat. 19. 27—29. Mark, 10. 28—31. Ch. 5. 11. Phil. 3. 7—9. Deut. 33. 9. <sup>f</sup> Ch. 14. 26, 27. & 9. 23, 24. Phil. 3. 7—14. Pf. 19. 11. 1 Cor. 15. 58. 1 Tim. 4. 7, 8. Rom. 6. 23. Rev. 2. 17. & 3. 21.

religion. They neither have it, nor seem to have it, nor desire to be thought to have it: and of the remainder who concern themselves about it, many mistake its nature, and having discharged its facile offices, they pride themselves in their vain performances, and treat the rest of the world with contempt and aversion. They christen their ill-nature by the name of zeal; and whoever attempts to undeceive them, is likely to incur the worst effects of it. This our Lord found by sad experience from the *Pharisees*, who, upon this account, long persecuted, and at last murdered him.

So pernicious a principle is this Pharisaical righteousness: such reason have we all to guard against it: which every reader will be better enabled to do, who considers its nature as represented in the above parable, with the beautiful illustration of it by the opposite character of the humble publican.

We are told that *the Pharisee stood, and prayed thus within himself, God I thank thee, &c.* It may be asked, “What is the fault of this prayer? If the Pharisee did mention his own good qualities, yet he seemed to do it with thankfulness, as ascribing them and the glory of them to God; thankfulness, which implies a humble confession of our own inabilities, and a grateful acknowledgment of the divine favour.”

But see the deceitfulness of the heart of man! this Pharisee's giving God thanks, was but a pretence, a mere artifice to introduce his own praise; to authorise, and as it were sanctify his vain-glorious boasting. It was a kind of sacrilege thus to abuse the name of God to screen his pride, and to serve only as a plausible introduction of his arrogant commendations of himself, and his uncharitable censures and insolent contempt of others. *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men, &c.—or even as this publican.* See how he seasons his private panegyric with public satire; and tramples upon the rest of the world, to extol his own merit upon their ruin. All inordinate self-love is necessarily attended with a proportionable want of charity; so that pride and ill-nature are inseparable. But what alliance have they with religion? What fellowship have light and darkness? What connection, is there between calumny and devotion?

And yet, many men, pretendedly religious, have been so remarkable for these two diabolical qualities of pride and ill-nature; have been so notoriously arrogant, supercilious, and morose, so full of malicious censoriousness, and contempt of the rest of the world, and all this with such hypocritical pretences of zeal for virtue and religion; that they have given a handle to wicked men to charge religion itself as accessory to such criminal affections, though the tenor of all its precepts tends to their utter extirpation.

How ill this Pharisee performed these duties, is not here specified; but we may make a just estimate of them from his devotion, which is represented to us as exceedingly corrupt and profane. It is said, *He went up to the temple to pray*: but when he came to the temple, he did no such thing. He indulged his pride, he vented his malice; he boasted, he railed, but he did not offer up one petition. No; he was so full of his own praises, that he forgot his prayers.

The wicked practice of concealing the true purpose of the heart under mere specious pretensions, is very common: men are intimately conscious that pride is an odious quality, odious to God and man; and therefore they disguise it with false colours.

Whoever has kept a due watch over his own heart, must have often observed these mean contrivances. Sometimes we pretend to blame ourselves for somewhat we are less careful to excel in, that we may make ourselves amends in assuming some other qualities which we have more at heart. Sometimes, we will cover our pride with an affected humility, and discommend ourselves, in hopes to be kindly contradicted, and that our talents may be displayed with greater lustre, when we seem less conscious of them. Sometimes we take occasion to commend others for some excellence, which we account conspicuous in our own character; hoping thereby to make our own to be taken notice of; and at other times, with the same base design, but by a more ungenerous method, we inveigh against such faults in others as we judge ourselves most exempt from, that our innocence may be the more advantageously remarked, with the benefit of such foils. But, not to mention any more of these vile disguises of vanity, this before us, of the Pharisee *giving God thanks,*

31 ¶ Then he took *unto him* the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

32 For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on;

33 And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.

34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

35 ¶ And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:

36 And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

37 And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

\* Mat. 20. 17—19. Mark. 10. 32—34. Pf. 22. 1—21. & 69. 1—21. If. 53. 2—10. Ch. 9. 22—44. & 13. 33. & 12. 50. & xxii—xxiv. Mat. xvi—xviii. Mark. xiv. xv. xvi. John. xviii. xix. xx. <sup>h</sup> Pf. xxii. lxix. Il. 50. 6. & liii. Dan. 9. 24—26. Micah. 5. 1. Zech. 13. 7. <sup>1</sup> Ch. 9. 45. & 24. 25. John. 16. 17, 19. & 12. 16. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 20. 29—34. Mark. 10. 46—52. Mat. 9. 27. & 12. 22. & 11. 5. Mark. 8. 22—25. John. 9. 1—7. 39. If. 59. 10. <sup>l</sup> Ch. 1. 26, 27. & 2. 4, 39, 51. & 4. 16. John. 1. 45. Mat. 2. 23.

is a very common and a very base one; and our Lord has singled it out for rebuke, that he might cure us, if possible, of a similar conduct.

So fallacious, and of such dangerous consequence, is the sophistry of pride! He was in the presence of his all-seeing Judge;—and yet, so far was he from owning his guilt and imploring mercy, that he affronted the divine omniscience with lying boasts of his innocence. Or, to set this absurdity in the light wherein St. Augustine has very elegantly placed it, “He was before his physician, and boasted of his health, instead of discovering his distemper.”

But let us see, if he was not mistaken even in what he took for the sound part, that *needed no physician*,—in his boasted virtues, for which he pretended such devout thankfulness. *God, I thank thee*, &c. there was no ground perhaps for this thanksgiving. He might be a *very bad man*, though he was *not as other men were*. Singularity is not always attached to virtue: it is sometimes a vice. Error is various, sin is of all modes and professions; but is then most abominable, when it is most concealed, and wears the mask of virtue. So that the Pharisee might be *not as other men were*, to his greater condemnation. But, supposing his sense of the words,—that many were worse than himself; yet hell, as well as heaven, has *diverse mansions*; and not to deserve the lowest place in it, is small matter of praise or consolation.

This general expression of his own goodness being thus considered, let us now view the *particulars* which he chose to specify. For we read that he was *not an extortioner*, &c. but that he *fasted twice a week, and gave tythes of all that he possessed*.

Here he commends himself both *negatively* and *positively*; for his merits lying in a narrow compass, he was glad to make the most of them. Such *negative* commendations as he urges, are but a wretched kind of praise; yet we see vanity often have recourse to them. You shall hear an extravagant spendthrift boasting that he is not covetous, and the covetous extortioner glorying that he is not extravagant: all the moral virtues stand between two vicious extremes; and the man who is far gone in one, is generally exempt from the other. Our Pharisee was *no extor-*

tioner, nor adulterer, nor unjust, as he says; but he was proud, and hypocritical, and malicious, and censorious to a heinous degree. Witness his insolent mention of the humble penitent beside him,—*nor even as this publican!*—But he that saw the heart of both, has told us the difference, and that he *was not indeed as that publican*, in a contrary sense to that which he intended.

Thus much for his negative. Speak we now of his positive merits,—his *fasting* and *almsgiving*. These are two *externals* of religion very edifying, when animated by the proper inward disposition of the heart. *Fasting* is a means, which, under the influence of divine grace, much conduces to mortify the appetites and passions; and when we fast with this intention, we shall grow in holiness and virtue, and promote the great work of salvation. But there are some who, as Isaiah speaks, (ch. lviii. 3, 4.) *fast through self-will, for strife and debate*, and grow thereby more wilful, peevish, and contentious. This man gave, as he says himself, the *tenth part* of his substance; but, according to St. Paul, he might have *given all his goods to feed the poor, yea, and his own body to be burned*,—yet *have wanted love*; and then his alms and his martyrdom would have profited him nothing.

But enough of this Pharisee: look now, on the other hand, and behold the reverse of his character in the poor *publican!* Very probably this man had been guilty of those crimes which were incident to his profession. He had no merits to plead, no fasting, no alms, or other good works, wherewith to justify himself: he was a sinner, indeed; probably a great sinner; but he knew it, and was ashamed; he was sorry for it, and confessed it. The Pharisee had *despised him*; but he despised none but himself. He *stood afar off*,—far from the sanctuary, in the entrance, perhaps, of the temple; as it were *excommunicated* by his own voice, and fully conscious of his own unworthiness to appear there. *He would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast*, filled with a pious indignation against himself, and said, “*God be merciful to me, a sinner!*”

And yet our Lord has declared, in this sinner's favour,—that he returned *justified rather than the other*. And the only reason was, “because he did not justify himself.” He adds, *For every one that exalteth himself, shall be abused;*

and

38 And he cried, saying, " Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

39 And they which went before " rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but ° he cried so much the more, *Thou son of David, have mercy on me.*

40 And <sup>p</sup> Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and, when he was come near, he asked him,

41 Saying, <sup>q</sup> What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my fight.

<sup>m</sup> If. 9. 6, 7. & 11. 1. Jer. 23. 5, 6. Ezk. 34. 23. Rom. 1. 3, 4. <sup>n</sup> Ver. 15. Ch. 11. 52. & 19. 39. <sup>o</sup> Mat. 15. 22—28. Ch. 11. 8. <sup>p</sup> Heb. 1. 17. & 5. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Gen. 32. 27. & 3. 9. John, 20. 13. Mat. 7. 7. Rev. 3. 20. with If. 35. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Tim. 2. 8. Rev. 22. 16. Mat. 1. 1. & 9. 27. & 12. 23. & 15. 22. Gen. 32. 26. Pf. 22. 2. Mat. 7. 7. Ver. 1.

*and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.* Such is the moral wherewith our Lord concludes this most beautiful parable: and what better influence or application can we make or derive from his divine remark, than by repeating and recommending it to the serious meditation of his sincere disciples? *Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The intention of the parable given us, ver. 1—8. as we are informed in the first verse, is to encourage us in persevering prayer, even though we may not always find the immediate answer of our requests. We have,

1. The parable of the importunate widow and unjust judge. He was a man of abandoned principles, destitute of religion and honesty, *neither fearing God nor regarding man*: and miserable is that country, where such magistrates are in office. A poor oppressed widow appealed to him for redress: some crafty or covetous wretch, cruelly taking advantage of her weakness, had defrauded or injured her; and with ceaseless importunity, at the judge's gate, she cried for justice to be done her. Deaf for a while to her intreaties, he paid no regard to her cause, till, wearied out with her perpetual clamour, merely to get rid of it, he granted her suit, and redressed her wrongs.

2. Christ applies the case, for the encouragement of his praying people. If the unjust judge was thus prevailed upon by importunity, how much more shall God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? *I tell you that he will avenge them speedily?* Note; (1.) Dear as God's believing people are to him, they meet with many a severe trial, and much oppression in this world; and to him they carry all their complaints. (2.) We must not be weary, though our requests do not immediately succeed, but patiently persevere in calling upon God day and night. (3.) God bears long with his enemies, to see if they will yet repent and turn to him; and sometimes he defers long, comparatively speaking, the prayers of his people, to exercise their graces; but he will speedily avenge them, punishing their enemies, and rescuing them from their sufferings.

3. He foretels his disciples, how little faith would be found among the Jewish people, when he came to judge them: an awful intimation! Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall, and redouble his prayers that he may never faint nor fail under any trials.

2dly, The purport of the parable delivered to us in ver. 9—14. is intimated in the opening of it, *He spake this*

*parable unto certain, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.* They were puffed up with a vain conceit of their excellence above other men; they presumed that their own doings and duties would ensure their acceptance with God; and, high in self-opinion, looked down with contempt on the herd of vulgar sinners, as far beneath them: though in God's sight they were far more vile and abominable than those whom they despised. We have,

1. The account of two men of very different characters, who went up to the temple to pray.—The one a Pharisee, proud, self-righteous, who, confident of his own goodness, expected the admiration of men, and counted even God his debtor.—The other a publican, a poor broken-hearted, self-condemned sinner, who, feeling his misery, fled to God for mercy. Note; (1.) Prayer is every man's duty. They must be inexcusable, who live in the neglect of it. (2.) The temple was the type of the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom alone our prayers can come up before God with any prospect of acceptance.

2. The Pharisee's address to God bespoke the abominable arrogance of his heart. *He stood and prayed thus with himself, in some conspicuous place where others might admire his devotion and piety, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.* He pretends to thank God, but in fact all he said was merely a compliment on himself. Much evil he had avoided, much good he had done; not only abstaining from grosser vices, from extortion, adultery, injustice, but also he was often in fastings, and scrupulous in paying tithes of all that he possessed; and with much self-complacence congratulates himself, that he was so much superior to other men; and boasts to God, how far he exceeded in goodness that vile publican, whom he passed in the outer-court of the temple. Thus spoke this swelling worm: what he called his prayers, breathed nothing but the language of pride, uncharitableness, and censure. Yet, detestable as this character appears, how many who hope for heaven, come short of it in many things, and live in the indulgence of those vices from which even this Pharisee was free.

3. The publican's prayer was just the very reverse. In humility, self-abhorrence, and earnest desire after mercy, he bows into the dust before God. *He stood afar off, keeping a humble distance from the Pharisee, whom he counted so much his superior; or in the outer-court of the Gentiles, as unworthy a place among true Israelites; and would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven; with downcast looks, which bespoke the deep dejection of his soul, as if*

42 And Jesus said unto him, ' Receive thy fight : thy faith hath saved thee.

43 ' And immediately he received his fight,

and followed him, glorifying God : and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

† Pf. 107. 20. & 33. 9. Ch. 7. 50. & 8. 48. & 17. 19. Mat. 15. 28. & ciii—cxviii. cxliii—cxviii. cxxiv—cxxxvi. cxlv—cl. Ch. 1. 46—55, 64—79.

† Mar. 9. 22. & 17. 15. & 7. 16. Pf. 103. 1—3. & 116. 12. & 115. 1.

he was unworthy to turn even his eyes towards God's holy habitation; but smote upon his breast, where that vile heart lodged in which so much evil had dwelt, and against which he would express a holy indignation: then, raising, as it were, a deep sigh from his inmost soul, in one short ejaculation he breathed forth the desires of his sinful heart, *God be merciful to me a sinner!* he owns his guilt, by nature, by practice, ill-deserving, hell-deserving; he disclaims all hope and dependence upon himself, and trusts alone upon the promised mercy of God through the Blood of Atonement, assured that he must otherwise eternally perish: and therefore he casts his soul down before the throne of God's grace, earnestly begging that mercy which he so greatly needed. —A pattern which every poor sinner must imitate; and in this way alone may the miserable hope to find mercy. We are all sinners; and if ever we would be saved, we must learn the spirit and adopt the prayer of this penitent publican.

4. Very different was the acceptance which these men's prayers met at the throne of grace. However to outward view the specious Pharisee might be generally among men preferred to this despised publican, God seeth not as man seeth: *this poor, self-abased, and penitent sinner went down to his house justified*, his sins pardoned, his person accepted, his prayer granted, and peace spoken to his soul; *and not the other*; the proud self-justifier was left to his native guilt and sin, abhorred of God, his very prayers an abomination; and all his boasts were but delusion, and must prove his destruction. And the reason of this is added, which contains also an axiom that will be for ever proved true; *every one that exalteth himself*, in the vain imagination of his own self-sufficiency and self-righteousness before God, looking down with disdain upon others, as so much his inferiors in goodness, *he shall be abased*; his pride will be mortified, his sins will take hold of him, and the wrath of God in hell for ever abide upon him: while *he that humbleth himself*, taking shame for his sinfulness and baseness before God, confessing his guilt, and acknowledging his unworthiness of the least mercy, *shall be exalted* to the favour of God in this world, and, continuing faithful, to his eternal glory in a better.

3dly, The passage of sacred history contained in ver. 15—17. has before been twice recorded; and a third time it is profitable to consider it:

1. As an encouragement to parents early to bring their infants to Jesus, in prayer committing them to his benediction, by baptism offering them to become visible members of his church, and engaging to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

2. We must not be disheartened in our applications, if we find those discountenance us, from whom we hoped for encouragement; the Master himself will treat us more kindly.

3. The longest day we live, we need still to set before

us a little child for our pattern. In the school of teachableness, humility, and simplicity, the best and wisest have yet many lessons to learn.

4thly, We have,

1. Our Lord's discourse with the young ruler, who inquired after the way to eternal life. The inquiry was important, and what the greatest of men need seriously to consider; for they are dying worms as well as others. Could man keep the commandments with immaculate obedience, this would be still the road to glory; but since the fall, that door of paradise is barred, and none can any longer hope to enter heaven by the merit of personal obedience, since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. To flatter ourselves we have thus kept the commandments, would prove our ignorance of the spirituality of God's law, and of the corruption of our own hearts by nature. Thus deceived was this young ruler; and the delusion was evident the moment he was called upon to part with all for Christ; when, unable to bear that hard saying, he departed sorrowful. *Note*; Worldly things are usually dire hindrances in the way to glory: for the sake of some one darling lust, how many make shipwreck of their souls.

2. Our Lord took occasion hence to warn his disciples, whose hearts were too full of the hopes of temporal grandeur, how difficult, and next to impossible, it was for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And when they expressed their astonishment thereat, he refers them to that almighty grace which can effect that for all who sincerely and humbly come to God through Christ, which we could never do by our own native powers. *Note*; Instead of grasping at abundance, we should tremble at the perils of our situation, if God in his providence gives us much: we have so many more hindrances in our way to heaven, unless by prayer and faith we obtain proportionable grace to improve our talents to his glory.

3. In answer to St. Peter's question, what they should have who leave all to follow him, Christ replies, that they should be abundant gainers thereby, receiving *manifest more in this present time*, if not in kind, yet in comfort, in the present graces and gifts of God's Spirit, and in the enjoyment of his love and favour; *and in the world to come life everlasting*, which will infinitely overpay all our present losses.

5thly, We have,

1. The warning that Christ gave his disciples of the sufferings which he must endure, to arm them against that dire event. He was about to suffer every indignity, and at last death itself. Nor ought this to surprize them, since the scriptures had foretold that thus it must be; and not one jot or tittle of the divine word can fail. But as these sacred oracles declared his sufferings, they had insured his resurrection also; and therefore his disciples need not despond, having this glorious event in their view.

## C H A P. XIX.

*Of Zaccheus a publican. The ten pieces of money. Christ rideth into Jerusalem with triumph: weepeth over it: driveth the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and teacheth daily in it. The rulers would have destroyed him, but for fear of the people.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**A**ND Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

2 And, behold, *there was* a man named Zaccheus, <sup>b</sup> which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

<sup>a</sup> Josh. 2. 1. & 6. 1, 26. 1 Kings, 16. 34. 2 Kings, 2. 18—27. <sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. 1. 26. Ch. 18. 24, 25. with 2 Chr. 17. 5, 6. <sup>c</sup> Ch. 23. 8. & 9. 7. <sup>d</sup> 1 Kings, 10. 27. Amos, 7. 14. If. 9. 10. <sup>e</sup> Ezek. 16. 6, 8. John, 1. 48. <sup>f</sup> Eccl. 9. 10. Prov. 27. 1. Mat. 11. 28. 2 Cor. 6. 1, 2. If. 55. 1—7. <sup>g</sup> Eph. 3. 20. John, 4. 4. & 10. 16. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Ver. 10. <sup>h</sup> Pl. 119. 59, 60. Gal. 1. 15, 16. 1 Tim. 1. 13—17.

2. So strong were the unhappy prejudices which the apostles had imbibed, that they understood none of these things. The prophecies which spoke of the Messiah's sufferings and reproaches, were hidden from them; they could not reconcile the glorious things spoken of his kingdom, to such a scene of indignities and humiliation: and having their eyes dazzled with the temporal grandeur of the Messiah's kingdom, they overlooked all beside. But we should never forget, that the way to glory, both for the Head and the members, lies through much tribulation; and *no cross, no crown.*

6thly, It was prophesied of the Messiah, that he should open the eyes of the blind: in this chapter, as elsewhere, we find him fulfilling the prophetic word. And he who gave light to the darkened body, shines still with brighter beams as the Sun of righteousness into the benighted soul, and communicates also through faith the faculty of spiritual vision to those whose souls the god of this world had blinded.

1. The patient here was blind and poor; and such beggars have a claim upon our charity.

2. He sat by the way-side, where he hoped for relief; and there he found more than his most sanguine wishes expected: for while we are waiting upon God in his ways, he is pleased often to give us more than we can ask or think. He heard from the multitude that Jesus was passing by, and he now resolved to seize the happy moment to prefer his request; nor would be silenced by any rebukes of those who were near him, crying with loud and ceaseless importunity, *Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.*

3. Christ, in his wonted compassion, calls the poor man, bids him prefer his petition, and grants his request, giving him sight according to his desire. The tender-hearted Saviour feels for human wretchedness, and will not send the poor and humble supplicant away without an answer of peace. If we have faith to trust him, he has power and willingness to heal all our infirmities, and to supply all our wants.

4. The poor beggar, now restored to sight, with delight followed Jesus in the way, glorifying God for the mercy that

3 And he <sup>c</sup> sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran before, and climbed up into <sup>d</sup> a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

5 And when Jesus came to the place, he <sup>e</sup> looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, <sup>f</sup> make haste, and come down; for to-day <sup>g</sup> I must abide at thy house.

6 <sup>h</sup> And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

he had experienced; and all the people joined in his praises. *Note;* (1.) If we enjoy spiritual sight, we shall follow Jesus without delay in all his holy ways. (2.) The mercies of others demand our thankfulness, as well as our own; for we are members one of another.

## C H A P. XIX.

*Ver. 1—4. And Jesus entered, &c.]* After conferring sight on the beggars, (see Matth. ix. 27, &c.) Jesus entered Jericho attended by them, by his disciples, and by the multitude: he made no stay however in this town, because he hastened to be at Jerusalem eight or ten days before the passover, intending to preach and work miracles in the most public manner, under the eye of all the people, and of the grandees; whose repentment should influence him no longer, because his ministry had continued the determined time, and he was resolved to die at this passover. A man, belonging to this town, one of the principal tax-gatherers, having heard of our Lord's miracles, had a great curiosity to see what sort of a person he was; *but he could not for the crowd;* for, the passover being at hand, the roads to Jerusalem were full of people; and many of them happening to meet with our Lord, chose to travel in his company, that they might behold his miracles. Zaccheus, therefore, *ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore-tree to see him.* It seems he was in Jericho, when Jesus passed through: this accounts for his running before the multitude on this occasion; for by the 5th verse it appears that his house was further on, in the way to Jerusalem. His desire to see Jesus was increased, no doubt, by the account which he had received in Jericho, of the miracles performed on the blind beggars; for the news of so extraordinary a transaction would be quickly spread abroad. The words, *and he was rich,* at the end of ver. 2. seem to refer to the discourse in the last chapter, ver. 24, &c. particularly to ver. 27. Zaccheus is a proof that it is possible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

*Ver. 5. Zaccheus, make haste.]* Jesus had never seen him before; yet he called him by his name, and by what he said insinuated, that he knew his house to be further on the road. What a strange mixture of passions must Zacc<sup>h</sup> have

7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

8 And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he

also is a son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for

1 Mat. 9. 11. Ch. 5. 30. & 7. 39. & 15. 2. Job. 5. 2. Eccl. 4. 4. 1 Tim. 1. 6. 2 Cor. 7. 11. Ch. 12. 13. & 16. 9. & 18. 22 & 3. 14. Exod. 22. 1. 1 Ch. 2. 50. Pl. 6. 3. If. 48. 17, 22. & 49. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Ver. 10. Ch. 13. 16. Rom. 4. 17. 2, 16. & 9. 8. Gal. 6. 16. & 3. 7, 26. Mat. 18. 11. & 1. 21. & 20. 28. & 10. 6. & 15. 24. & 9. 13. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Ezek. 34. 16. If. 63. 1. Hof. 13. 9. Heb. 7. 25. Acts, 13. 47. Ch. 17. 20. Acts, 1. 6. 2 Thess. 2. 2, 3. Mat. 29. 14-30. Mark, 13. 34. If. 9. 6, 7. & 51. 13. Mark, 16. 19. Ch. 24. 51. Acts, 3. 21. Ch. 20. 9. Mar. 28. 18. Phil. 2. 9-11. Eph. 7. 14. Acts, 1. 11. & 17. 31. Heb. 9. 28. Rev. 1. 7. Rom. 12. 6-8. Eph. 4. 11-13. 1 Cor. 12. 7, 11; 28, 29. Mat. 21. 33. 2 Cor. 3. 5.

have felt, upon hearing one speak, as knowing both his heart and life!

Ver. 7. *Gone to be guest with a man*] Or, *To a man*. The phrase καταλυσαι παρα τιμ, properly signifies, "to bait at a person's house on a journey;" referring to the laying down their own burdens, or loosening them from their beasts, at such times and places.

Ver. 8. *And Zaccheus stood,*] *Stood forth*;—in order to make the noble declaration following. *By the half of his goods*, he probably meant *his income*. Εσοκοφαντισμα, which we render *taken by false accusation*, properly signifies any kind of oppression, especially under any pretence of law, and therefore would be more properly rendered, "If I have taken any thing wrongfully, by injurious charge, or oppressive claims in my office." See Eccles. iv. 1. v. 8.

LXX. One great reason of the odium which followed the occupation of a publican, was the injustice which many of that denomination practised in their office. This verse may be either considered as a declaration of what Zaccheus had been accustomed to do, agreeably to the force of his expressions which run in the present tense, *I give, I restore*, not in the future, *I will give, I will restore*; and likewise agreeably to the testimony with which Jesus honoured Zaccheus, that he was a son of Abraham;—or, we may take it as a declaration of his resolution, with respect to his future conduct. That *Zaccheus* was a Jew, appears from his name, which is the same with *Zaccai*, Ezra, ii. 9. *Fourfold* was the utmost which the Jewish law required, even in cases of a fraudulent concealment and conviction; (unless where an ox had been killed or sold, and so its labour lost to the owner, and its discovery rendered more difficult, Exod. xxii. 1.) for the phrase of *restoring sevenfold*, Prov. vi. 31. seems only proverbial, to express making abundant satisfaction: but if a man, not being legally convicted or accused, voluntarily discovered the fraud he had committed, besides his trespass-offering he was to add to the principal only a fifth part, Lev. vi. 5. Zaccheus therefore shews the sincerity of his repentance by such an offer. Some commentators have remarked, that oppressive publicans were by the Roman law required to restore fourfold; but this was only after judgment obtained, where they had been guilty of extortion by force; whereas, before conviction, it was enough to make restitution of what had

been taken; and even after it, in common cases, all that the law required was restoring twice as much. Archbishop Tillotson justly observes, that, "had more than an eighth part of Zaccheus's possessions been unjustly gotten, he could not have been able to make such restitution, after having given away half of what he now had to the poor, even though he had stripped himself of all."

Ver. 9. *And Jesus said unto him,*] *And Jesus spake concerning him*, that is, to the guests; as is evident from the speech itself. The proposition προς is used in this sense, ch. xx. 19. Heb. i. 7. iv. 13.

Ver. 10. *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save, &c.*] Farther to convince the people that our Lord acted agreeably to his character, in keeping company with publicans and sinners, he told them, that the great design of his coming into the world was to *save such*; alluding to the parables of the *lost sheep*, *lost money*, and *lost son*, which he had lately delivered, to prove how agreeable it was to reason, to the duties of his mission, and to the will of God, that he should keep company with the worst of sinners, in order to recover them unto God their rightful owner. And therefore, though Zaccheus had been as bad a man as the multitude supposed him, and his vocation bespoke him to be, Jesus was in the exercise of his duty when he went to his house.

Ver. 11. *He—spake a parable, &c.*] Because his followers were accompanying him to the royal city, in expectation that the *kingdom of God would immediately appear*, and with a resolution to assist him in erecting it; he spake a parable, wherein he shewed them their duty, describing the true nature of the kingdom of God, and taught them that it was *not immediately to appear*: considered in this view, as suited to the circumstance of time, and to the case of those to whom it was delivered, this parable will appear a most wise and seasonable admonition; and by neglecting the instruction which it was designed to give them, the Jews deservedly brought ruin on themselves. The evangelist says, that *as they heard these things*, namely, that *salvation was come to Zaccheus's family, he added, and spake a parable*; whence we gather that he spake the parable in Zaccheus's house.

Ver. 12. *A certain nobleman, &c.*] A certain noble lord took a long journey into another country, to be vested with

himself a kingdom, and <sup>a</sup> to return.

13 And he called his ten servants, and <sup>b</sup> delivered them ten <sup>\*</sup> pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

14 But <sup>c</sup> his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, <sup>d</sup> then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, <sup>e</sup> thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17 And he said unto him, <sup>f</sup> Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, <sup>g</sup> thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19 And he said likewise to him, <sup>h</sup> Be thou also over five cities.

20 And another came, saying, <sup>i</sup> Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

21 For I <sup>j</sup> feared thee, <sup>k</sup> because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

<sup>\*</sup> A mina contains 50 shekels, or 5l. 14s. <sup>a</sup> John, 1. 11. 1 Sam. 8. 7. Mat. 22. 5, 6. The Jews obstinately refused the offers of his grace. <sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. 5. 10. 1 Cor. 3. 12—15. & 4. 5. Rom. 14. 12. Eccl. 12. 14. Ch. 16. 2. <sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. 15. 10. Col. 1. 28, 29. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. Rom. 12. 3. 6—8. 1 Thess. 2. 19, 20. Prov. 16. 37. & 11. 30. James, 2. 18. <sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. 4. 5. Rom. 2. 29. Mat. 25. 21. & 24. 47. Pf. 49. 14. Rev. 2. 26, 27. Ch. 16. 10 & 22. 30. 2 Tim. 2. 12. Gen. 39. 4. <sup>e</sup> 2 Cor. 8. 12. Rom. 12. 3, 6, 7, 8. 1 Peter, 4. 10, 11. 2 Tim. 4. 2. & 2. 15. 1 Cor. 4. 2. 1 Tim. 4. 16. <sup>f</sup> See ver. 17. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 7. 21. Ch. 6. 46. 2 Tim. 3. 5. Tit. 1. 16. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 25. 25. Rev. 21. 8. 1 John, 4. 18. Pf. 53. 5. <sup>i</sup> Pf. 50. 21. <sup>j</sup> Jer. 17. 15. Ezek. 18. 25, 29.

with and confirmed in his kingdom, and then to return, with all his honour and authority, to distribute proper rewards to his subjects: so Christ is of high and noble birth, as the Lord from heaven; and being King of Israel, and of the whole church of God, he ascended up on high, to be invested with his spiritual and glorious kingdom. In short, the meaning of this part of the parable is, that before Jesus set up his kingdom, he was to die, and to ascend into heaven. See on Matth. xxv. 14.

*Ver. 13. And he called his ten servants,*] By the *ten servants* we may understand the apostles and first preachers of the gospel; to whom Jesus gave endowments, fitting them for their work, and from whom he expected a due improvement of those endowments, in the propagation of the gospel. This was their particular duty in the erection of the kingdom of God, about which they were now so solicitous. Instead of *occupy*, Dr. Doddridge reads *trade*.

*Ver. 14. But his citizens hated him,*] His natural subjects hated him without a cause, as appears from the message or embassy which they sent after him to the potentate, from whom he sought, what in the latter times has been called *investiture*. For, in that message they alleged no crime against him, but only expressed their ill-will towards him, by declaring that they would not have him to reign over them. This is a fit representation of the causeless opposition which the Jewish great men made to Jesus. But the embassy had no effect; the prince received the kingdom, and returned with full authority, which he exercised in calling his servants to account, and in punishing his rebellious subjects. So the opposition which the Jews made to our Lord's spiritual kingdom proved ineffectual: having *all power in heaven and earth* given unto him after his death, as mediator, he will return to reckon with his apostles, and ministers, and rebellious subjects; nay, he has returned already, and punished the Jews with a most

exemplary punishment, for resisting his government. See ver. 15.

*Ver. 16. Thy pound \* hath gained ten pounds.*] The modesty of these servants is remarkable: they do not say, that, *they themselves* have gained the *ten* or *five* pounds, but *Thy pound hath gained*, &c. attributing their success, not to themselves, but to the gifts of his grace. It is observable, that in Matth. xxv. 20, &c. where the servants are represented as doubling the different sums intrusted to each, the reward is spoken of as the same: but here the sum intrusted being the same, and the improvement described as different, there is a proportionate difference in the reward; which as it is a beautiful circumstance, was, no doubt, intended for our instruction. See ver. 20, 21.

*Ver. 20, 21. Lord, behold here is thy pound, &c.*] We have in these verses a proverbial description of an unjust rigorous character. The slothful servant, by applying it to his lord, aggravated his crime not a little: he imprudently told him, that, knowing his severe and gripping disposition, he thought it prudent not to risk his money in trade, for fear he should have lost it: that he had hid it in a napkin, in order to deliver it to him at his return; and that this was the true reason why he had not increased his talent, as others had done theirs. Thus slothful ministers of religion, and pretended servants of Christ, will be ever ready to throw the blame of their unfaithfulness on God himself. See on Matth. xxv. 24. "This negligent and slothful servant," says Quesnelle, "ought to make all pastors and clergymen tremble; who imagine that they lead an innocent life, if they do but avoid the grosser sins, and

\* The original word *μνᾶ*, here translated *a pound*, signifies a quantity of silver weighing twelve ounces and a half, which, according to five shillings the ounce, is three pounds, two shillings, and sixpence.

22 And he saith unto him, ' Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow :

23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have received mine own with usury ?

24 And he said unto them that stood by,

' Take from him the pound and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

25 (And they said unto him, Lord, <sup>a</sup> he hath ten pounds.)

26 For I say unto you, <sup>i</sup> That unto every one which shall be given; <sup>k</sup> and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

27 <sup>l</sup> But those mine enemies, which would

<sup>a</sup> Job, 15. 5, 6. <sup>2</sup> Sam. 1. 5—16. Mat. 12. 17. & 25. 26, 27. Tit. 3. 11. <sup>5</sup> Mat. 25. 28. & 13. 12. Ezek. 46. 17. 1 Sam. 16. 14. Zech. 11. 17. Ch. 8. 13. <sup>b</sup> Ver. 16. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 13. 12. & 25. 26. Mark, 4. 25. Ch. 8. 18. John, 15. 2—4. Rev. 22. 11. Pl. 27. 14. <sup>1</sup> Cer. 15. 10. <sup>k</sup> Ezek. 33. 13. & 46. 17. <sup>2</sup> John, 8. Gal. 3. 4. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 22. 7. Ver. 42. 43, 44. & 21. 20—24. Prov. 1. 24—32. Pl. 21. 3—12. & 69. 22—23. 1 Thess. 2. 15, 16. 1 Sam. 15. 38. Num. 14. 36, 37. The Jews shall be fearfully destroyed.

“ only lead an easy and quiet life, in idleness and indolence: in a priest it is a great evil, not to do any good: not to use the gifts of God, is to abuse them: he loses them, who does not make them serviceable to the church. Rest is a crime in one who is called to a laborious life; and we cannot live to ourselves alone, when we belong to the church of Christ.”

Ver. 22, 23. *Thou knewest that I was an austere man,] Didst thou know, &c.?* “Thou hast been slothful in the highest degree;—for, to argue with thee, on thine own base principles,—if thou really hadst believed me to be the rigorous person thou sayest I am, thou wouldst certainly have been at the pains to lend out my money;—a method of improving thy talent which would have occasioned thee no trouble at all. Thy excuse therefore is a mere pretence.” In like manner, all the excuses which wicked ministers offer in their own behalf, will stand them in no stead at the bar of God; whether they be drawn from the character which they affix to God, or from their own inability, or from the difficulty of his service, or from any other consideration whatever.

Ver. 25. *Lord, he hath ten pounds.]* So far as this seems to express any thing of envy in the fellow-servants, it is not, I think, to be regarded as a significant circumstance, but only as an incidental one, to intimate to us, that his lord gave to the diligent servant what he had gained, for himself.

Ver. 26. *I say unto you,] I assure you;* as much as to say, “You may take it on my authority.”

Ver. 27. *But those mine enemies,]* “Those who are guilty of rebellion against me, by doing all in their power to hinder my obtaining the kingdom, bring hither, and put them to death this instant.” *Καταδαξάτε,* is literally, *slay them with the sword;* and it properly expresses the dreadful slaughter of the impenitent Jews, by the sword of each other, and of the Romans. That does not seem, however, the only design of the passage; for it plainly relates to the far more terrible execution which shall be done on all impenitent sinners in the great day, when the faithful servants of Christ shall be rewarded.

Thus Jesus taught his disciples, that though they might imagine his kingdom was speedily to be erected, and that they were soon to partake of its joys; yet he was to go away, or die, before he obtained it; and that they were to perform a long course of laborious services before they

received their reward. That, having obtained the kingdom at his resurrection, he would return, and reckon with his servants, to whom he had given ability and opportunity for his work; and would treat them according to the fidelity which they shewed in the trust committed unto them. Particularly, that he would execute vengeance on those, who, for his conversing familiarly with sinners, or for the difficulty or disagreeableness of his laws, or any other cause whatever, had refused to let him reign over them, or hindered the erection of his kingdom among others. This Jesus did, in some measure, when he destroyed the Jewish nation by the Roman armies; and still continues to do, by the extraordinary judgments with which he sometimes visits mankind: but he will do it more eminently at the end of the world, when he shall come with millions of angels, finally to reward his faithful servants, and to punish his enemies. The kingdom of Christ, spoken of in this parable, is his mediatorial kingdom; in which he rules men by his word and Spirit, and exercises the highest acts of kingly power; calls all his subjects without distinction to his tribunal, judges them, and rewards or punishes them according as he knows they deserve. They who affix a more general meaning to the parable, suppose that the character and end of three sorts of persons are described in it. 1. The character of those who profess themselves the servants of Christ, and who act in a manner suitable to their profession. 2. The character of those who take upon them the title, but do not act up to it. 3. The character of those, who, though they be in some sense Christ's subjects, neither profess themselves his servants, nor yield him obedience, but endeavour to shake off his yoke, and oppose him with all their might. The first sort are the true disciples of Christ. The second sort are hypocrites. The third are the openly profane. The judgment which the servants met with from their lord, represents the judgment and end of the different sorts of Christians just now mentioned: *True and faithful disciples shall be magnificently rewarded with the honours and pleasures of immortality; hypocrites shall be spoiled of all the advantages on which they relied, and stripped of those false virtues for which they valued themselves; so that, being shewed to all the world in their proper colours, their pride shall be utterly mortified, and they themselves loaded with eternal infamy. Lastly, the detection and punishment of hypocrites shall add to the honours of the truly holy and pious,*

not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

28 ¶ And when he had thus spoken, <sup>a</sup> he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

29 <sup>b</sup> And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount of Olives*, he sent two of his disciples,

30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against *you*; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring *him thither*.

31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose *him*? thus shall ye say unto him, Because <sup>c</sup> the Lord hath need of him.

32 And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.

33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

34 And they said, The Lord <sup>d</sup> hath need of *him*.

35 And they brought him to Jesus: and

<sup>e</sup> they cast their garments upon the colt, and they <sup>f</sup> set Jesus thereon.

36 And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the <sup>g</sup> mount of Olives, <sup>h</sup> the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;

38 Saying, <sup>i</sup> Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39 <sup>j</sup> And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you, that, if these should hold their peace, <sup>k</sup> the stones would immediately cry out.

41 ¶ And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and <sup>l</sup> wept over it,

42 Saying, <sup>m</sup> If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in <sup>n</sup> this thy day, <sup>o</sup> the things which belong unto thy peace! but now <sup>p</sup> they are hid from thine eyes.

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 12. 4. & 13. 33. & 18. 31. Pf. 40. 8. John, 18. 11. Ch. 12. 50. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 21. 1—11. Mark, 11. 1—15. Jo<sup>h</sup>n, 12. 12—16. <sup>c</sup> Pf. 24. 1. & 50. 10, 11. Act., 10. 36. Heb. 1. 2, 3. John, 3. 35. & 17. 2 & 16. 15. <sup>d</sup> 2 Cor. 8. 9. Zech. 9. 9. <sup>e</sup> 2 Kings, 9. 13. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 21. 7. John, 12. 13. <sup>g</sup> 1 Kings, 11. 7. 2 Kings, 23. 13. Zech. 11. 4. Mark, 13. 3. & 14. 26. Act., 1. 11, 12. <sup>h</sup> Pf. 8. 1, 2. & 118. 22—26. Ch. 7. 16. & 17. 15. & 18. 48. John, 12. 12, 13. <sup>i</sup> Pf. 118. 26. & 72. 17—19. Zech. 9. 9. Ch. 2. 10—14. Col. 1. 20. Eph. 1. 10. & 2. 14. & 3. 21. 1 Tim. 1. 17. Rev. 5. 9—13. <sup>j</sup> If. 26. 11. Act., 4. 3. & 13. 45. Job, 5. 2. Eccl. 4. 4. Mat. 23. 13. James, 4. 5. <sup>k</sup> Hab. 2. 11. Mat. 27. 19, 24, 51, 54. <sup>l</sup> Jer. 9. 1. Hof. 11. 8. Mark, 3. 5. John, 11. 33. <sup>m</sup> Deut. 4. 29. & 32. 29. Lam. 1. 9. If. 26. 11. <sup>n</sup> Pf. 32. 6. If. 55. 6. Ch. 3. 9. & 21. 30, 31. <sup>o</sup> Ch. 2. 12, 14. Heb. 2. 1, 3. & 4. 1. Act., 13. 26, 46. <sup>p</sup> 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. Rom. 11. 7—12, 25. If. 6. 9, 10. & 29. 10, 14. & 42. 19. & 44. 18. Rom. 11. 8.

pious, whose glory will thus shine more conspicuously: for, as the *houses* and *lands* which our Lord promised to those who followed him in the regeneration, Mark, x. 30. signify not the things themselves, but the satisfaction arising from them; so the *pound* in the parable, given to him that had the *ten pounds*, signifies, that holy persons in heaven shall have satisfactions infinitely greater than any which the hypocrites could possess here below, from their false presumption on the favour of God. Thus shall the men who possess true goodness be rewarded: having in their own eyes always appeared as nothing, they shall be raised, by the approbation of God, through the Blood of his eternal Son, to a becoming sense of the excellent qualities with which they are adorned by his grace. And as for the *open enemies* of Jesus they shall be punished with exemplary punishment, severe in proportion to the degrees of their guilt.

Ver. 28. *When he had thus spoken, he went before,*] Or, *He went forward.* Having finished the parable, our Lord left the house of Zaccheus, and proceeded onward to Jerusalem, shewing by his alacrity in the journey, how willing he was to undergo those heavy sufferings, which he knew were to befall him at Jerusalem. See on Mark, x. 32.

Ver. 33. *The owners thereof said*] Perhaps had not the owners of the beasts happened to be by, and had not St. Luke expressly mentioned them, the malice of ancient or modern infidels would have found some occasion for raising an outcry on the ambiguity of the words, *The Lord hath need of him.* Its being a weak and contemptible cavil would not have prevented their use of it, as we learn from abundant experience. If the people here spoken of, were not, as they possibly might be, the acquaintances of Christ, they might easily meet with him at Jerusalem, if they had a mind to inquire after the ass and colt. Or, they might be left, agreeably to the owner's direction, at some house in the city, or be sent back by some of our Lord's attendants, though the evangelists do not descend to such minute particulars.

Ver. 40. *The stones would immediately cry out.*] This may signify either that God would by miracle raise up others to glorify his name, rather than silence should be kept on this occasion; or that it was a thing altogether impossible, without the exercise of irresistible power, to make the multitude hold their peace. See on Matth. iii. 9.

Ver. 42. *If thou hadst known.*] *O that thou hadst known!* It is certain, as we have before observed, that the particle

43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

45 ¶ And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and

them that bought;

46 Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

47 ¶ And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him,

48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

<sup>a</sup> Pl. 37. 13. Deut. 28. 47—52. If. 29. 3. Jer. 6. 3, 6. Ch. 21. 20—24. Mat. 24. 2, 15—22. 1 Kings, 9. 7, 8. Mic. 3. 12. Pl. 21. 8—12. Jan. 9. 27. Prov. 1. 24—32. 1 Thess. 2. 15, 16. 1 Pet. 2. 12. & 4. 17, 18. All this was fulfilled when Titus and his Roman army besieged and destroyed Jerusalem. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 21. 12, 13. Mark, 11. 15—17. John, 2. 13—16. with Deut. 14. 25, 26. <sup>c</sup> If. 46. 7. & 60. 7. Pl. 23. 5. Ezek. 43. 12. with Jer. 7. 11. Hof. 12. 7. Mark, 11. 17. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 21. 14, 15, 45, 46. Mark, 11. 18. & 12. 12. & 14. 1. John, 7. 19. & 8. 37. <sup>e</sup> Obedient to him. Neh. 8. 3. Acts, 16. 14.

is sometimes used to express an ardent wish; and the connection here will very well bear it. But if our translation be retained, it must be acknowledged that the broken manner of speaking is very emphatical: our Lord will then seem to pause, in a silent reflection on the happy consequences which would have attended their obedient regard to his invitations and addresses. See on ver. 44.

Ver. 43. *Shall cast a trench about thee,*] Jesus here foretold particularly the principal circumstances of the siege of Jerusalem, and with his prophecy the event corresponded most exactly; for when Titus attacked the city, the Jews defended themselves so obstinately, that he found there was no way to gain his purpose, but to encompass the city with a fence and a mound. By this means he kept the besieged in on every side, cut off from them all hope of safety by flight, and consumed them by famine. The work which he undertook was indeed a matter of extreme difficulty; for the wall measured thirty-nine furlongs, or almost five miles; nevertheless, the whole was finished in three days; for, to use the expression of Josephus, “the soldiers, in performing this work, were animated by a divine impulse.” See his Jewish War, book vi. chap. 13. and for the other circumstances, the notes on Matth. xxiv.

Ver. 44. *Because thou knewest not the time, &c.*] Our Lord here assigns the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem, and her children; it was because that when God visited them by his Son,—the Seed of Abraham and David,—the Messiah,—they did not know it, but rejected and crucified him, being blinded through the hardness of their hearts. The destruction of the city, and of her inhabitants, clearly foreseen by our Lord in all its circumstances, was a scene so affecting, that it moved his tender soul, and made him weep. The miseries of his bitterest enemies had more influence to afflict and melt his soul, than the admiration, the acclamations, and hosannas of his friends, to elate him with joy. His weeping was a wonderful instance of his humanity, and is so far from lessening the dignity of his character, that it beautifully illustrates it. Were it worth while, the reader might be put in mind that the historians of Greece and Rome, to aggrandize their heroes, have been at pains to relate oc-

currences at which they shed tears;—but this would be to fall egregiously below the greatness of the subject. Is it possible to have the least selfish for goodness, and not be enraptured with the conduct of our Lord in the present instance, and that inexpressibly tender spirit which he now discovered;—especially if we consider, that the objects moving his compassion were enemies; and his fortitude was such, as to enable him to look without perturbation on the greatest disasters ready to fall on himself? See Matth. xx. 18, 19. Let wondering mortals then behold in this an example of compassion and generosity, infinitely superior to any thing that the heathen world can furnish;—an example highly worthy of their admiration and imitation.

Ver. 48. *All the people were very attentive to hear him.*] *They hung as it were on his lips while he spake,* is the literal import of the original.

Inferences drawn from the history of Zaccheus, ver. 1—10.—In this pleasing narrative Zaccheus the publican sets an example particularly of two great and important Christian duties, namely, restitution, and almsgiving; which calls upon us to consider how far we are obliged to follow it.

As to the first we may observe, that Zaccheus, by a conduct more than strictly just, made what was prescribed by the Levitical law in one particular case, (Exod. xxii. 1.) the general rule of his practice.—We need not however propose the ample reparation that he made, as a standard which we are strictly bound to come up to. It will be sufficient to shew that we are indispensably obliged to, and to insist barely on, the usual and single restitution; only that when we have wronged any person, we return him strictly as much as we have wronged him of, and fully repair the damage that he has sustained: We may only except the case of an absolute incapacity, which is indeed an universal dispensation; but, with this one reserve, in all other cases, we are indispensably obliged to make an equivalent reparation for the injuries that we have done.

Now, as God is the author, so he is the guardian of human society, and has taken the properties of men under his protection. To secure these, and preserve the world in

## C H A P. XX.

*Christ voucheth his authority, by a question concerning John's baptism. The parable of the vineyard. Of giving tribute to Caesar. He confutes the Sadducees who denied the resurrection. How Christ is the son of David. He warneth his disciples to beware of the scribes.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**A**ND <sup>a</sup> it came to pass, *that* on one of those days, as he taught the people in

the temple, and preached the gospel, <sup>b</sup> the chief priests and the scribes came upon *him* with the elders,

2 And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, <sup>c</sup> by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?

3 And he answered and said unto them, <sup>d</sup> I will also ask you one thing; and answer me:

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 21. 23—32. Mark. 2. 11, 27—31.

Act. 7. 2. & 4. 7. Mat. 7. 29.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Chron. xxiv. Exod. 19. 7. Numb. 11. 16. Ruth. 4. 4. 1 Sam. 15. 30. <sup>c</sup> Exod. 2. 14.

<sup>d</sup> Mat. 10. 16, 17. Eph. 5. 15. Job. 5. 12, 13.

in peaceable order, he fences the possessions of every man with a strict command to the rest, not to *covet* or desire them. When that fundamental law is violated, and inordinate desires break loose, then, to prevent our putting them in execution, other commands are opposed, to secure property in its several branches. When we transgress *these commandments* too, and actually invade the rights of our neighbour, then the sin is completed, and woeful is our condition. Yet God, whose mercy is over all his works, as a supplement to the former laws, has added this now under consideration,—*viz.* That after we have wickedly *coveted*, after we have unjustly *taken* the goods of our neighbour, we shall restore them to him again, and re-establish the order that we had violated. There is no room for farther precepts on this head: if we continue to transgress this last, this merciful commandment, no shadow of excuse remains; *we shall die in our sins.* The Almighty Legislator will proceed to judgment, and sad will be his sentence against the transgressors; see 1 Theff. iv. 1, 2, 6. where St. Paul expressly declares, that *the Lord is the avenger, of all such, as defraud or oppress their brother in any matter.*

But although no inspired writer had thus forewarned us; yet the mere common sense of mankind would be sufficient to discover this truth to us, though utterly unable to fulfil it in the least degree, from pure motives, from the mere light and powers of nature. Who can deny, or doubt, that we are obliged to be just, that we are obliged not to do wrong? If we ought not wrongfully to *take* the goods of our neighbours, then certainly we ought not to *keep* them. The theft or fraud was a transient act, a *sin*; indeed;—but the deliberate keeping the unjust gain, is a permanent habit of injustice; and as long as that lasts, we can have no reasonable hopes of God's mercy; we render ourselves incapable of it.

All sins may be *forgiven on repentance.* But without restitution, where that is possible; there can be no true *repentance.* An effectual repentance ever includes these two necessary parts;—a sorrow for sin, and a determined resolution to forsake it; and both these necessarily imply *restitution*, as will appear when we consider them severally.

*Sorrow for sin*, where it is sincere, must beget earnest wishes that we had not committed it. Lamenting the past folly with contrite pangs, we wish that we had never done it. We would give the world to undo it, if that were possible. Now this is the immediate tendency of *restitution*; as it relates to man, it undoes the deed. He therefore who

does not endeavour to make restitution, has no real contrition. For if he be truly grieved that he has gotten another man's goods; why does he keep them? if he wishes he had not done so, why does he persist in it? These things are inconsistent, and destroy each other.

The second material of repentance is a *resolution* not to repeat the crime. As long as we wilfully detain what belongs to another, we repeat the crime, or, what is equivalent, we continue and persevere in it. Now is it reasonable to hope that God will forgive a sin which we obstinately persist in? If we die without making restitution, do we not die in our sin? And can we then have any hopes of mercy?—the holy scriptures assure us, that we cannot.

The Church of England, in the warning which its ministers are ordered to give for the celebration of the Lord's supper, has been particularly careful to remind all its members of this, among other conditions requisite in a worthy communicant. “My duty (says the minister,) is to exhort you, &c.—that ye may come holy and clean to such a heavenly feast.—The way and means thereto is, first, to examine your lives and conversations by the rule of God's commandments,—and if ye shall perceive your offences to be such, as are not only against God, but also against your neighbours, then you shall reconcile yourselves to them, being ready to make restitution and satisfaction according to the uttermost of your powers, for all injuries and wrongs done by you to any other:—for otherwise the receiving of the holy communion doth nothing else but increase your damnation.” And then follows a charge to all such, that at their peril they come not to the holy table.

The same injunction is implied in those words of our Lord, Matth. v. 23. *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* Without this, our oblations will be ineffectual, and our prayers rejected; *our brother must first be reconciled* by doing him justice; for *justice* must be satisfied before there is room for *charity.* God will not accept the one for the other; and indeed it seems impious to think that he should. In all other cases, the satisfaction is made to the person wronged; how else indeed is it *satisfaction*? In the example of Zaccheus, you see, that notwithstanding he gave half his substance to the poor, yet he was ready to make four-fold satisfaction for the damages he might have done.

4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

5 And they reasoned with themselves, ' say-

ing, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not?

6 But and if we say, Of men; ' all the

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 3. 1—20. & 7. 29, 30. Mark, 1. 1—11. Mat. iii. John, 1. 6—36. & 5. 32—35. Prov. 15. 28. & 26. 4, 5. <sup>f</sup> Mark, 11. 31. Mat. 21. 25, 31, 32. Ch. 7. 29, 30. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 21. 26, 46. & 14. 5. Mark, 11. 31. & 12. 12.

done. He was not liberal at the expence of others; he did not confound charity with restitution, his alms with his debts; but he discharged each obligation separately.

We shall not be answerable for the injustice we suffer, but for that which we do; it concerns us much more not to cheat, than to be cheated. This therefore should be our principal care; here lies our greatest danger, and all degrees of men are liable to it. Almost every state in life has its peculiar temptations to fraud and oppression; and to be aware of them is one necessary step towards escaping them.

In all cases where we have committed injury, restitution must be made, as far as possible, or there can be no remission of sin. This thought therefore should be a perpetual check upon us, to restrain all acts of fraud or violence; because it represents the unprofitableness of them, and takes away the force of temptation, which consists only in the supposed advantage that they may bring. All unjust gain is a bait, a specious bait, covering a cruel hook; which, when swallowed, must be painfully disgorged; or, if retained, will drag us to sure perdition. To this purpose may well be applied those words in the book of Job, (xx. 15.) *He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again.*—A painful operation!—but there is no other remedy.

With respect to *almsgiving*, the second subject of our present reflection, the example of Zaccheus is highly instructive. The first thing to be remarked in it, is, that he set aside a certain portion of his income for charitable uses; and this every man should do, who is in a condition to give alms. He who never thinks of giving alms, but when some *pressing occasion* calls upon him,—is in danger of losing the heavenly reward in the worldly motives which solicit, and perhaps *extort* his contributions. A regard to the opinion of men, fear of censure, or desire of applause, may have a great share in such unpremeditated accidental bounties. But when in religious privacy, with a heart raised in devotion, we have *prepared our offering to the Lord*, the future distribution of it upon proper occasions will be purer, and consequently more agreeable to the divine will.

In this therefore we ought to follow the example of Zaccheus, and consecrate some certain portion of our gains, or annual income: but what that proportion is, is nowhere determined. We can only say in general, that all who are not poor themselves, must give some part of their substance to the poor: the proportion is and must be left to their own determination.

If it be asked, what other men have done? it may be replied, " Many have been known to give *all that they had*; others, as Zaccheus, have given *half* their goods; but the common proportion, whereof we have many instances in ecclesiastical history, is the *tenth part*. The best rule, however, seems to be that laid down by the apostle,

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and of which we desire to admonish every reader: *he who soweth little, shall reap little; and he that soweth plentifully, shall reap plenteously. Let every man do according as he is disposed in his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver. And when such a fund of charity is once settled, it will be very easy to make a right distribution of it.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, While the conversion of every sinner's heart bespeaks the great power of God, the change wrought on some appears still more worthy to be remembered and admired; as in the case of Zaccheus.

1. He was a publican, yea, *chief among the publicans*, and rich; two great obstructions to the salvation of his soul: but the chief of sinners who comes humbly to Christ, may become one of the chief of saints.

2. He took great pains to get a sight of Christ, and to satisfy a curiosity, which the great fame of him had raised: being short, and unable to overlook the crowd of people that usually attended Jesus in his travels, he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore-tree, that he might see him as he passed by. *Note*; They who would gain a sight of Jesus, must break through every obstacle in their way.

3. There the eye of Jesus discovered him; and now he surprises him with the calls of his grace, and, by name addressing him, desires him to come down quickly, intending to be that day his guest. With joy the publican obeyed, little expecting such a favour, and received him with heartiest welcome. *Note*; (1.) Many who have come merely through curiosity to hear and see some minister, whose fame has been spread abroad, have been graciously surprised with the call of God, and from that hour converted unto him. (2.) There is a wondrous providential disposition of our affairs to lead us to God, or to render us utterly inexcusable, which, if we be converted, we can reflect upon with amazement. (3.) When Christ calls, we should gladly run; his word applied in faith, will open for him a welcome into our house and our hearts, and make us with delight reply, *Come in, dear Lord, to me.* (4.) *Come down* is the gospel call; we must sink low in our own eyes, to rise high in God's favour.

4. Many, who were present, were exceedingly offended, that one, who professed himself a prophet of such distinguished sanctity, should go to eat with a person who was so notorious a sinner. His profession made him odious as a publican, and his riches might be regarded as the fruit of extortion: but it did not follow, because he had been bad, that he was so now, as their censure implied; nor was Jesus to be blamed for visiting those, who, the more desperate their case seemed, so much the more needed his healing grace.

5. Whatever Zaccheus had been, he now gives the most undoubted proofs of genuine and unfeigned repentance.

4 S

ance.

people will stone us: ' for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.

7 And they answered, ' that they could not tell whence *it was*.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 14. 5. Mark, 6. 20. John, 5. 35. Ch. 7. 26—29.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 1. 18, 21, 22, 28. <sup>2</sup> Cor. 2. 15. & 4. 3, 4. <sup>2</sup> Theff. 2. 9, 10.

ance. The grace of Jesus had powerfully wrought upon his heart, and the effects of it appeared visible in his words and actions. However grasping he had been of wealth, and intent on gain, now at a stroke half his goods he gives to the poor; and if any man had ought to lay against him of fraud or extortion, he was ready to make the utmost restitution which the law demanded. See the Annotations. *Note*; (1.) One of the best symptoms of real conversion to God, is deadness to the world. (2.) There can be no true repentance without restitution, at least without the desire and endeavour to make it to the utmost of our power. (3.) They who would shew the spirit of true charity, should not leave it merely to their wills to bequeath their wealth to pious uses, but employ it during their lives.

6. Christ testified his approbation of Zaccheus's conduct, and comforted him with a present salvation both for himself and his family, forasmuch as he also was a son of Abraham. He now shewed himself a genuine descendant of this father of the faithful: his sins therefore were pardoned, and his person accepted; whilst all his family also shared his mercy. And what Christ had done in this case, was in direct conformity with the great design of his coming into the world, *to seek and save that which was lost*. *Note*; (1.) Every sinner is a lost creature; lost in error and sin, unable to recover himself, and ready to perish eternally: and a great point is gained, when we begin to be deeply convinced of this alarming truth. (2.) Christ is the Saviour of the desperate: none are so far gone as to be past his recovery.

2dly, What Christ had said to Zaccheus, gave occasion to some, who heard him, to conclude, that the temporal kingdom of the Messiah was about to be set up in the world, and that, on his arrival at Jerusalem, he would declare himself openly. To rectify such a mistake, therefore, he spake the following parable, intimating to them therein, that the generality of the Jewish people would not submit to the kingdom of his grace, and that the kingdom of his glory was more distant than they imagined.

1. *A certain nobleman, of high birth, went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom; to be invested with sovereign authority, as the governors of Judah were by the Roman emperors; and to return, with full power and authority to reward or punish his subjects.* Thus the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven, to receive the mediatorial kingdom, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; being quickly to return thence, in the mission of his Spirit, to spread his gospel through the earth, and in the destruction of the Jewish people and nation; and finally at the day of judgment. And as surely as he once came into the world, so surely will he return again, and will not tarry.

2. He committed to his servants a certain sum of money, that during his absence they might trade, (*ἠρξασμὰ ἐποιεῖν*) and improve their capital, in order that at his return he might receive the fruits of their industry. The ministers

of Christ in particular, and all his people in general, are those servants; each has his portion of gifts, natural or providential, which he is required to employ for his Master's honour and interest. All that we have is derived from him, and should be devoted to him. Till he comes, we are called upon to use all diligence. Every soul won by us, will prove our own unspeakable gain; and whatever be the success of our labours, whether more or less, if we approve ourselves faithful to him till death, we are sure not to lose our reward.

3. Two of the servants, on their master's return, with satisfaction appeared before him, and rendered him a faithful account of the trust committed to them. The one had gained more, the other less; but both had been diligent, received his commendation, and were preferred according to the advantages which they had made. Whence we are taught, (1.) That we must one day be called upon to give a solemn account to our great Lord and Master of all the means and mercies, gifts and graces, which we have enjoyed, and our profiting thereby. (2.) They who are found faithful, will receive the approbation of the Chief Shepherd, and be rewarded by him. (3.) Whatever success we have, we must, to the glory of our Lord, own, that it is *thy pound* hath gained it; for not to our endeavours, but to his grace, are we indebted for the effect of our ministry. (4.) If we have the Saviour's commendation of our diligence, we need not care who may find fault with us. (5.) They who are most zealous in their labours for Christ, will receive the greater reward, exalted, as one star differeth from another star, in glory.

4. The third, sunk in sloth and carelessness, began to seek excuses; and, having produced the pound committed to his charge, pretended his fear of his master's austerity, as if he would cast on him the blame of his own idleness. But out of his own mouth was this wicked servant condemned; since that apprehension which he pleaded of his master's austerity, should at least have led him to place the money at the banker's, where, with lawful interest, he might have received his own. Justly therefore he commands the pound to be taken from him, and given to him who had gained the ten pounds; for his having so much is so far from being an objection, as some present seemed to intimate, that it was a reason why he should have more, having made so good a use of the former trust; while he, who made no use, or so bad a one, of the pound delivered to him, justly deserved to have it taken from him. *Note*; (1.) Not only the abuse of our gifts, but our negligence to improve and employ them for Christ's honour and the good of men's souls, will be esteemed highly criminal. (2.) The pleas of slothful professors, in the day of judgment, shall turn to their everlasting confusion and condemnation. (3.) Idle servants are wicked servants. Ministers who are not active in Christ's service, effectually serve the interests of Satan. (4.) Hard thoughts of God are at the bottom of every unhumiliated sinner's heart. (5.) Diligence to improve the gifts and graces which the Lord

8 And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

9 ¶ Then began he to speak to the people this parable: A certain man planted a vine-

\* Prov. 26. 4. Job, 5. 13. † Mat. 21. 33—46. Mark, 12. 1—12. If. 5. 1—4. Song, 8. 11, 12. Jer. 2. 21. Pl. 80. 8—14. 1 Cor. 3. 6—9.

has bestowed on us, is the sure way to have both abundantly increased under his blessing; while sloth makes all our attainments wither and decay.

5. He foretels the ruin of the Jewish people in general. They were the *citizens* who sent after him in his absence, refusing to submit to his government: they paid no regard to his apostles and ministers, when he was ascended into heaven: and therefore, when they had filled up the measure of their iniquities by rejecting his gospel, he seized the rebels with his arm of judgment, and the Roman sword miserably massacred innumerable multitudes of this devoted people, and ruined their country. And such will be the case with all impenitent sinners. They say, in the pride and rebellion of their hearts, *We will not have this man to reign over us*, rejecting the government of his laws and the warnings of his servants: but their terrible destruction approaches: the King, their Judge, clothed with vengeance, is ready to be revealed from heaven, when wrath to the uttermost will come upon them; and they who refused to bow to the sceptre of his grace, shall be broken with the rod of his judgments. They who will not be ruled, must be eternally ruined.

3dly, Eager to accomplish his great work of atonement, the blessed Jesus hatches to the scene of his sufferings, not intimidated by all the dreadful events that he foresaw. Was he fo willing to die for us, and shall we be cowards in his service? We have here what we met with twice before:

1. The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem amid the acclamations of the multitude. He was mounted, not as a conqueror on a triumphal car, but, as Zion's lowly King, on an ass's colt; and that not his own. He sent to borrow it for this occasion; and, having the dominion over all creatures, and in his hands the hearts of all men, the owners readily sent it at the Saviour's bidding. Mounted thereon, the garments of his poor disciples were the trappings, and served as carpets spread to adorn his entry: while, filled with wonder and praise at all the miracles they had seen, the multitude cried, *Blessed be the king, Messiah: may all happiness and prosperity attend him that cometh in the name of the Lord*, invested with divine authority and power: *peace in heaven*; let the God of heaven bless his undertaking, and crown it with success, appearing now a reconciled God to us; *and glory in the highest*; let the greatest honour, praise, and adoration redound to him for this salvation, and be ascribed to him by men on earth and angels in heaven.

2. Christ vindicates his disciples from the envious cavils of the Pharisees, who could not bear to hear such acclamations, and would insinuate that it was the highest pride to permit such incense to be offered to him. But, though he came in great humility, the present occasion demanded these praises; and, if the multitude had been silent, he assured these cavillers that the very stones would cry out, reproaching their stupidity, and ascribing to God the glory due unto his name.

4thly, We have,

1. The tears of Jesus shed over the devoted city, Jerusalem. Being now in full view of that rejected place, and foreseeing the impending miseries ready to overwhelm the inhabitants, *he wept over it*, as man, feeling the tenderest compassion towards them; saying, *If thou hadst known, or, O that thou hadst known! even thou, a wicked and bloody city as thou hast been, at least in this thy day, when the most abundant means of grace have been vouchsafed to thee, the things which belong unto thy peace, temporal and eternal; but now they are hid from thine eyes; thou art abandoned to judicial blindness, to an utter reprobacy, the consequence of which will shortly be utter ruin; when thy enemies shall besiege thee, and enter into thee, massacre thy inhabitants, and leave not one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation; rejecting the light of my gospel, the warnings of my ministers, and the overtures of mercy, which were offered to thee.* Note; (1.) A Christian's heart, like his Master's, feels the tenderest compassion towards perishing sinners, and grieves to behold their approaching miseries: (2.) There is a time of visitation, when the Lord is pleased to set before us the things which belong to our pardon, peace, and salvation, and to urge them upon us by his providence, his word, his Spirit: to abuse or neglect this day of grace, is to be undone. (3.) Justly are they given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart, who reject the counsel of God against their own souls. (4.) All the threatenings of Jesus will be as surely fulfilled, as we have seen this against Jerusalem accomplished in the total overthrow of that city and people. Let every sinful city, every sinful soul, take warning by her fall.

2. Being come to Jerusalem, he goes immediately to the temple, cleanses it from the profanations there practiced; casting out the *buyers and sellers*, who had made that *house of prayer a den of thieves*; testifying his zeal for his Father's honour; and when he had thus purged this holy place from such gross abuses, he preached there to the people the doctrines of his rich grace. Note; The preaching of the gospel is the great glory of every temple devoted to the Saviour's honour.

3. The chief priests, scribes, and rulers, were highly exasperated at his discourses and conduct, which so deeply reflected on their corruptions, and therefore sought how to murder him immediately; but they could not just then contrive any scheme for the execution of their bloody purposes, the people in general being very attentive to his discourses; (*εξερρίματο*) they *hung upon* his lips, eagerly catching every word that dropped; for he spoke with such power, energy, and conviction, as they had never heard from their own scribes.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 3—8. *And he answered, &c.*] The great *sanbedrim* seems to have been established after the failure of prophecy; and concerning the members of this body the rabbies tell us there was a tradition, that they were bound

yard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

10 And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.

11 And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty.

12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out.

13 Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved Son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him.

14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be our's.

15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?

18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

19 ¶ And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

20 And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

21 And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly:

22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no?

23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?

24 Shew me a penny. Whose image and

1. Numb. iii. iv. viii. Deut. 1. 15. & 16. 18. & 17. 9-15. 2 Kings, 17. 13, 14. 2 Chron. 36. 15, 16. Neh. 9. 29, 30. Jer. 44. 4, 5. Hosea, 6. 5. 1 Kings, 22. 24. 2 Chron. 16. 10. & 23. 19, 21. & 36. 16. Jer. 22. xxvi. xxxvi-xxxviii. 1 Thess. 2. 15. Neh. 9. 26. Heb. 11. 35-37. Mat. 23. 31-37. Acts, 7. 42. 9. If. 7. 14. & 9. 6, 7. & 21. 1. Jer. 23. 5, 6. Ezek. 34. 23, 29. John, 3. 16. & 1. 14. Rom. 8. 3. Gal. 4. 4. Heb. 1. 6. Ch. i-iv, &c. Mat. i. ii. iv, &c. Pf. 2. 12. Heb. 1. 2. Pf. 89. 27. Mat. ii. xxvi. xxvii. Mark, xiv. xv. Ch. xxii. xxiii. John, v. vii. viii. x. xvii. xix. Acts, 3. 15. 1 Cor. 2. 8. Heb. 13. 12. 1 Thess. 2. 15. Gen. 37. 18. John, 11. 50. 53. See Mat. 21. 41, 43. & 8. 11, 12. Pf. 21. 8-12. & 69. 22-28. Prov. 1. 24-32. Rom. 11. 7-25. Acts, 13. 46. & 18. 6. Mark, 16. 15, 16. Pf. 118. 22. Acts, 4. 11. Mark, 12. 10. Mat. 21. 42. If. 28. 17. Mat. 16. 18. Eph. 2. 14-22. & 1. 20-23. Phil. 2. 9-11. 1 Peter, 2. 7. If. 8. 11, 15. Rom. 9. 31. 1 Peter, 2. 7. Mat. 21. 44. Zech. 12. 3. Pf. 2. 9. 1 Thess. 2. 16. 2 Cor. 3. 14. & 4. 3, 4. Dan. 2. 34, 35, 44. 2 Tim. 4. 3. Ch. 11. 45, 51, 54. Mark, 12. 12. Mat. 21. 45, 46. Ver. 6. Mat. 22. 15-26. Mark, 12. 13-17. Pf. 38. 12. Jer. 18. 18, 21. 1 Tim. 4. 2, 3. Mat. 20. 19. & 17. 1, 2. John, 18. 28-32. & 11. 50. Mat. 21. 16. Mark, 12. 15. Pf. 12. 2. & 55. 21. Mat. 26. 49, 50. 2 Cor. 2. 17. 1 Thess. 2. 4. Gal. 1. 10. Acts, 10. 34, 35. If. 11. 4. Or of a truth. Mat. 22. 17-21. Ezra, 4. 13. Acts, 5. 37. Jer. 42. 2, 3. Ch. 5. 22. & 6. 8. & 11. 17. Ver. 20. Ch. 11. 16, 53, 54. Mat. 12. 38. & 16. 1. & 19. 3. Pf. 90. 9. See Mat. 18. 28. & 20. 1. & 22. 19, 20.

bound to be skilled in the sciences. So far is certain, that they extended their jurisdiction to the judging of doctrines and opinions. (See on Matth. xxi. 23.) as appears by their deputation to Jesus, to know by what authority he did his works. We are not to suppose the answer of Christ to this deputation, to be a captious evasion of the question made by those whose authority he did not acknowledge; on the contrary, it was a direct reply to an acknowledged institution, (as Jesus was obedient to all the institutions of his country,) convincing them, that the question needed not any precise answer, even on the principles of that jurisdiction. They sent to him to know his authority: he asked them, whether they had yet determined of John's? They acknowledged that they had not. "Then, (replies Jesus) I need not tell you of my authority, since the sanhedrim's not having determined

" of John's, shews such a determination unnecessary: or, " at least, since both by John's account and mine he is " represented as the forerunner of my mission, it is fit " to begin with his pretensions first." The address and reason of this reply are truly divine.

Ver. 13. It may be they will] Numberless predictions in the Old and New Testament, as well as the nature of Deity, plainly shew, that the Divine Nature foresaw Christ's death as a certain event: this therefore like many others is merely an ornamental circumstance, which cannot, without absurdity, be applied in the interpretation of the parable. The reader will refer to Matth. xxi. 33, &c.

Ver. 16. He shall come] He will come.  
Ver. 20. Which should feign themselves just men,] See the note on Matth. xxii. 16.

Pa.

superfcription hath it? They answered and said, <sup>a</sup> Cæsar's.

25 And he said unto them, <sup>1</sup> Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's.

26 And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they <sup>k</sup> marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

27 ¶ Then came to *him* certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him,

28 Saying, Master, <sup>m</sup> Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

29 There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children.

30 And the second took her to wife, and he died childless.

31 And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also. And they left no children, and died.

32 Last of all the woman died also.

33 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.

34 And Jesus answering said unto them,

<sup>a</sup> The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

35 But they which <sup>o</sup> shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

36 <sup>p</sup> Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

37 Now that the dead are raised, <sup>q</sup> even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

38 <sup>r</sup> For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

39 Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said.

40 And after that <sup>s</sup> they durst not ask him any *question at all*.

41 ¶ And he said unto them, <sup>t</sup> How say they that Christ is David's son?

42 And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, <sup>u</sup> The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

43 Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

44 David therefore calleth him Lord, <sup>x</sup> how is he then his son?

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 2. 1. & 3. 1. & 23. 1. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 22. 21. & 17. 25. Rom. 13. 7. Prov. 24. 21. 1 Peter, 2. 17. <sup>2</sup> Mat. 22. 21, 33, 46. 1 Cor. 15. 19, 20. Job, 5. 12, 13. Ver. 39, 40. <sup>3</sup> Mat. 22. 23—33. Mark, 12. 18—27. Acts, 23. 6, 8. 1 Cor. 15. 12. 2 Tim. 2. 17. <sup>4</sup> Deut. 25. 5, 6. Gen. 38. 8, 26. with Job, 1. 2. & 42. 13. They imagined, that in the future state men must have their wives, &c. as in this world. <sup>5</sup> Ch. 17. 27. 1 Cor. vii. 1 Tim. 4. 3. & 5. 14. Heb. 13. 4. <sup>6</sup> 2 Thess. 1. 5. Rev. 3. 4. James, 2. 5. 1 Cor. 7. 29. <sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. 15. 53—55, 42, 49. 1 John, 3. 2. Rom. 8. 23. Col. 3. 4. Pf. 17. 15. & 16. 10, 11. 2 Tim. 2. 12. <sup>8</sup> Exod. 3. 6. Gen. 17. 7. & 28. 21. & 32. 9. Lev. 25. 12. Acts, 7. 32. Heb. 11. 16. Mark, 12. 26. Mat. 22. 32. <sup>9</sup> Rom. 4. 17. Col. 3. 3, 4. If. 26. 19. John, 11. 25. & 4. 14. & 6. 40, 51. & 14. 19. Eccl. 12. 7. <sup>10</sup> Mat. 22. 33, 34, 36. Mark, 12. 34. <sup>11</sup> Mat. 22. 41—46. Mark, 12. 35—37. <sup>12</sup> Pf. 110. 1. Acts, 2. 34. 1 Cor. 15. 25. Heb. 1. 3, 13. & 2. 1. & 10. 13. Eph. 1. 20—23. 1 Peter, 3. 22. Pf. 21. 8—12. & 110. 5, 6. & 92. 9. & 69. 22—28. <sup>13</sup> If. 7. 14. & 9. 6. John, 1. 14. Rom. 1. 3, 4. & 9. 5. Rev. 22. 16. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Gal. 4. 4. 2 Tim. 2. 8. Ch. 1. 35.

Ver. 36. *And are the children of God, &c.*] Our Lord is here speaking of the resurrection of the just, who are called *God's children*, on account of the inheritance bestowed on them at the resurrection, and particularly on account of their being dignified with *immortality*, as well as for many other reasons. See Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 7. 1 John, iii. 2.

Ver. 37. *Moses shewed at the bush,*] *Moses shewed, where he speaks of the Lord in the bush being the God of Abraham, &c.*

Ver. 38. *For all live unto him.*] It is evident that *γάρ*, for, must here have the force of an illative particle, and may be rendered *therefore*, or *so that*; for what it introduces is plainly the main proposition to be proved, and not an argument for what immediately went before. In this connection the consequence is apparently just: for, as all the faithful saints of God are the children of Abraham, and

the divine promise of being a God to him and his seed is entailed upon such, it would prove their continual existence and happiness in a future state, as much as Abraham's: and as the body as well as the soul makes an essential part of man, it will prove both his resurrection and theirs, and entirely overthrow the whole Sadducean doctrine on this head. See the note on Matth. xxii. 31, &c.

Ver. 40. *They durst not ask him*] It is plain that this is meant of the *Sadducees*, and must be understood as limited to them, because in Matth. xxii. 35. we read of a question which one of the *Pharisaic scribes* afterwards put to him.

Ver. 44. *David therefore calleth him Lord, &c.*] This implies both the existence of David in a future state, and the authority of the Messiah over that invisible world, into which this prince was removed by death. Else, how great a monarch soever the Messiah might have been, he could not have been properly called *David's Lord*, any more than

45 ¶ Then <sup>7</sup> in the audience of all the people, he said unto his disciples,

<sup>7</sup> Mat. 23. 1. 1 Tim. 5. 20. If 5<sup>8</sup>. 1. Pf. 40. 9, 10. Ch. 12. 4. 16. 18. & 18. 12. & 29. 23. Hab. 2. 4.

46 <sup>2</sup> Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the

<sup>2</sup> Mat. 23. 3, 5—7. Mark, 12. 38—40. Ch. 14. 7. 3 John, 9. Prov.

Julius Cæsar could have been called *the Lord of Romulus*, because he reigned in Rome 700 years after his death, and vastly extended the bounds of that empire which Romulus founded. See on Matth. xxii. 42, &c.

*Inferences drawn from the parable of the vineyard and husbandmen.* Ver. 9—18. When we read the parable before us, and consider it as levelled at the Jews, we applaud the righteous judgment of God, in revenging so severely upon them the quarrel of his covenant, and the Blood of his Son. But let us take heed to ourselves, lest we also fall, after the same example of unbelief.

We learn from this parable,—and what part of the blessed scripture, nay, what part of universal nature does not bear witness to the same delightful truth?—that our God is a God of love, of forbearance, and long-suffering kindness; like a father pitying his own children; like a benevolent master willing and wishing the welfare of all his servants. Had any tenants of ours used the messengers whom we sent, as these husbandmen used the messengers of our God, which of us would not have been moved in such a case? Which of us would have proceeded to such lengths of loving-kindness, as to send our *only and beloved son* to reclaim and bring them to a better mind? Alas! a very small indignity presently swells us with angry resentments,—poor, imperfect, sinful mortals! and were our God like us, *extreme to mark what is done amiss*, who of us could stand one moment before him? But St. John tells us, that *he is Love*; not merely *Loving*, but perfect *Love* itself—an unbiassed Will to benevolence and the happiness of his creatures.

Nothing can magnify his love so much, (would to God we were so wise as duly to consider it!) as the sending his *only beloved Son*, in the likeness of our sinful flesh, to live and die afflicted and despised: we do not enough contemplate this astonishing instance of the divine philanthropy. We should doubtless be very sensibly affected, were but any thing of the like nature with this parable to happen in our sight,—even though a father should send a son solely for his own interest; and yet we are but too insensible as to that which faith teaches us, concerning the only Son of God, sent into the world and infinitely humbled, purely for our salvation. This ought to convince us, that our faith is in general very weak, and that our salvation is but little regarded by us: would we increase the one, and be happy in a greater anxiety for the other, we can fix our thoughts on nothing so likely to attain that end, as the great object of divine love, the Son sent into the world, and thus humbled for our salvation.

Which of our hearts feels not a just indignation against these wicked husbandmen, who, after their Lord had favoured them with so choice a vineyard, yet ungratefully refused him the fruits; and not only so, but abused and killed his servants, and, adding iniquity to iniquity, at length rose up against the son and heir himself, slew him, and

cast him out of the vineyard?—Let us ask our own hearts, could any of us have acted thus basely, thus cruelly? or, to speak of the facts which this parable presents, could any of us have had a hand in *shedding the innocent blood of the prophets*? or have joined the horrid cry at Jerusalem, *Crucify him! crucify him!*—his blood be upon us and our children!—I doubt not, but every reader shudders at the thought, and trembles even at the most distant apprehension of being an accessory in such atrocious deeds.

Take we heed, therefore, that, while we condemn the Jews, we condemn not ourselves. The *vineyard* is now with us; the church of Christ is taken from the Jews, and planted among us; *fruits* are required of us; the only acceptable fruits of repentance, faith, and living works. The  *sacred scriptures* are as the messengers demanding them, and the  *ministers* unfolding these scriptures, are as the servants of God sent to receive the fruits in their season. If we despise and reject those  *scriptures*, disregard their holy instructions, and the rule of faith and life which they propose; if we neglect to hear the  *ministers* of our God, the servants of the heavenly King, demanding fruit in their Master's name, and throw contempt upon the Son by evil lives,—then, like these  *husbandmen*, do we prove ungrateful to our Supreme Benefactor, and shall be esteemed in his sight but as those  *wicked tenants* who withheld the fruits, abused the servants, and murdered the heir. See Heb. x. 29—31.

Awed by the dread of these things, may we unite our utmost efforts through divine grace to bring forth unto God the fruits of his holy love; and in obedience to his commands, do honour to his  *Son*, and strictly conform to all the holy and pure precepts of his divine gospel. This is the only way to secure our souls from that eternal destruction, which will certainly fall on the ungrateful and obdinate sinner, as was figured out by the destruction of the Jews: and this is the only way, as to secure our personal happiness, so also to secure the happiness of the state, and to discharge our duty, not only to ourselves, but to our country, on which inevitable ruin must indisputably fall, if the servants of the Lord of heaven, his messengers, and his word, be reviled, despised, and scorned; if his Son himself be mocked, cast out, and crucified afresh.

And all wilful sins are so many murders of Jesus Christ. It seems as if sinners had conspired to kill him by innumerable deaths: the  *Jews* killed him while he was mortal, in respect to his human nature;  *wicked Christians* crucify him afresh, now that he is become immortal and all-glorious. Wicked Christians  *kill and cast him out of the vineyard*, when they cast him out of their hearts, or deny him an entrance into them. How many hearts are guilty of this murder in the sight of God! And if so great destruction overwhelmed the Jewish state and nation for that one crime, what may we imagine will overwhelm those persons, and that place, who live in a continual act of murdering of their Saviour, by living in continual sin! May the

markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

47 Which devour widows' houses, and for

a shew make long prayers: <sup>b</sup> the same shall receive greater damnation.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 23. 14. Mark, 12. 40. Ch. 11. 43. 2 Tim. 3. 5, 6. Gal. 4. 17. & 12. 47, 48.

<sup>1</sup> Theff. 2. 5. Ezek. 20. 25.

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 17. 22, 24. Ch. 10. 15, 14.

the gracious Father of mercy give us all a due sense of this important truth; and may we, who profess his faith and love, increase in our zeal towards him, as we find the presumption of sinners increase! May we, by their negligence, be stirred up to more watchfulness; by their contempt of the things of God, be more filled with thankfulness with regard to them; and by their reviling be animated to more fervent prayers; that ere it be too late, they may know and pursue the things, which belong to their everlasting peace!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, While Jesus was engaged in the blessed work of preaching to the people the glad tidings of salvation, the chief priests, scribes, and elders came upon him, to interrupt him in these labours of love. *Note*; We may not wonder, if in the service of the gospel we meet with many interruptions from the great enemy of souls, and his emissaries.

They demanded his authority for what he said and did; insinuating, that as it belonged to them to judge of the pretensions of those who assumed the prophetic character, unless he produced his commission, they must proceed against him as a deceiver. He answers their question by another, respecting the baptism of John; but they not choosing to answer for fear of the people, and unwilling to own the divine mission of the Baptist, pretended ignorance, and gave him a just reason to refuse them a farther account of himself, seeing they had already rejected the plainest evidence. *Note*; It is but lost labour to endeavour to persuade those, who are before resolved not to be convinced.

2dly, The parable contained in ver. 9—18. is designed for a warning to the priests and rulers, of the ruin coming upon them and their nation, for their persecutions of the messengers of God, and their rejection of the Messiah.

1. The vineyard was the Jewish people, who had been taken under God's peculiar care; and he having instituted a magistracy and ministry among them, expected suitable returns of love and duty from them; but instead of that, they treated with the greatest cruelty those divinely-appointed messengers, whom he sent to remind them of his just expectations, and now were about to murder the Son, who was come on the same errand; the consequence of which would be, the ruin of the nation, and the eternal destruction of these miscreants. *Note*; (1.) The best of men have often met with the cruellest usage from those, whose good alone was the object of their labours. (2.) The end of obstinate transgressors is to be rooted out at the last.

2. Struck with the denunciation of vengeance, they could not but deprecate the wrath threatened, and express their abhorrence of such a crime as the murder of the Messiah; but Christ with deepest concern beheld them, assured of their determined obstinacy, and approaching

ruin.—Though their efforts would all be fruitless; for that stone which these Jewish builders rejected, would, notwithstanding, become the head of the corner. This Jesus, whom they despised, would be exalted to the right hand of Majesty on high, and invested with all power and authority in heaven and in earth; and his enemies, who were offended at him, and on whom his vengeance would light, must terribly perish.

3. The chief priests plainly perceived the design of the parable, and rage boiled in their bosoms. They would gladly have seized and murdered him on the spot, but were deterred through fear of the people, and forced reluctantly to defer their bloody purpose to a more convenient opportunity. So little effect have the fairest warnings upon those who harden their hearts against conviction.

3dly, Resolved, if possible, to destroy him, and not having the power in their own hands, they determined to try if they could not ensnare him, and render him obnoxious to the Roman government, as a seditious person; for which purpose we have,

1. The insidious question proposed to him by certain of the Pharisees and Herodians, who, under the guise of conscientious regard to their duty, pretended a great concern to know whether it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, and thereby acknowledge themselves the subjects of a foreign power. They suggest their fullest confidence in the rectitude of his decisions, their opinion of his integrity, unawed by the fear of men, and their confidence in that divine commission under which he acted; and thus they endeavoured to flatter him into an unguarded freedom, which either must embroil him with the civil powers, or render him odious to the people. *Note*; (1.) The garb of piety has often served to cover the vilest designs. We need be on our guard against some who feign themselves just men, and not credulously trust to every specious professor. To be wise as serpents is our duty, as well as to be harmless as doves. (2.) It has been the common artifice of persecutors, to endeavour to represent the faithful as enemies to the state, and thus to gain the civil powers to oppress them.

2. His answer confounds and silences his enemies. *He perceived their craftiness*; for from him nothing is hid, nothing is secret; and out of their own mouth draws a decision of the question, to which they cannot object. As they own that their money bore Cæsar's image and superscription, he had certainly a right to his own; though this interfered not with God's demands, to whose worship and service their hearts and lives must be devoted. Unable to object, in fullen silence they held their peace, marvelling at his wisdom, yet obstinate in their infidelity.

4thly, The confutation of the Sadducean objection to the resurrection of the dead, was considered before, Mat. xxii. 23, &c. Mark, xii. 18, &c. But our Lord here enlarges a little concerning that awful state which after death

## C H A P. XXI.

*Christ commendeth the poor widow: he foretelleth the destruction of the temple, and of the city of Jerusalem; and the signs also which shall be before the last day: he exhorteth them to be watchful.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**A**ND he looked up, <sup>a</sup> and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

<sup>2</sup> And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither <sup>b</sup> two mites.

<sup>3</sup> And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, <sup>c</sup> that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:

<sup>4</sup> For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

<sup>5</sup> ¶ <sup>d</sup> And as some spake of the temple,

how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said,

<sup>6</sup> *As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which <sup>e</sup> there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.*

<sup>7</sup> ¶ And they asked him, saying, Master, <sup>f</sup> but when shall these things be? and what sign *will there be* when these things shall come to pass?

<sup>8</sup> And he said, <sup>g</sup> Take heed that ye be not deceived: for <sup>h</sup> many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

<sup>9</sup> But <sup>i</sup> when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but <sup>k</sup> the end is not by and by.

<sup>a</sup> Mark, 12. 41—44. <sup>2</sup> Kings, 10. 9. Mark, 7. 11. <sup>b</sup> Sec Mark, 12. 42. *i. e.* a 5<sup>th</sup> part of a farthing. <sup>c</sup> 2 Cor. 8. 2, 3, 12. & 9. 6, 7. Prov. 11. 24, 25. & 3. 9. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 21. 1—8. Mark, 13. 1—8. <sup>e</sup> Ch. 19. 44. Mat. 23. 33. Jer. 5. 10. & 26. 18. Micah, 3. 12. 1 Kings, 9. 7. Ezek. 7. 20—22. <sup>f</sup> Mark, 13. 3. 4. Mat. 24. 5. Daniel, 12. 4, 6, 8. John, 21. 21. Pt. 111. 2. <sup>g</sup> Jer. 29. 8. 1 Cor. 6. 9. & 15. 33. & 3. 18. Eph. 5. 6. Col. 2. 8, 18. 2 Thess. 2. 3. Gal. 6. 7. 1 John, 3. 7. & 4. 1. <sup>h</sup> Jer. 23. 21, 25. & 14. 14. John, 5. 43. Mat. 24. 5, 23, 24. Mark, 13. 6, 21—23. with Acts, 5. 36, 37. <sup>i</sup> Jer. 4. 19. & 5. 10, 11. Ps. 46. 2, 3. & 27. 1—3. & 112. 7. 1 Cor. 12. & 51. 12, 13. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 24. 6, 14, 15. Jer. 4. 27. & 5. 10, 18. & 46. 28.

death succeeds. *The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage*: necessary it is that the world should thus be supplied with inhabitants, and the ravages of death be repaired by the rising generation: *but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead*, have higher joys than the marriage-state can afford, and need not to increase, where death is swallowed up in victory. They are said to *be accounted worthy*, not that in and of ourselves we have any merit; our worthiness consists in being found in Christ, justified by his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit. In that unseen world to which the blessed go, [1.] *They neither marry, nor are given in marriage*; their holiness and happiness are complete without it: the delights of sense are swallowed up in the infinitely surpassing ecstasies of the soul. [2.] *Neither can they die any more*: that world needs not to be replenished with new inhabitants, where life eternal reigns, and death never enters, [3.] *They are equal to the angels*; partaking in their service, enjoying the same bliss; glorious and immortal as those seraphic spirits. [4.] *They are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection*; they are initiated in full possession of the purchased inheritance.

5thly, The scribes, the established expositors of the law, expressed their high approbation of his answer to their Sadducean opponents, whom our Lord had entirely silenced. But though they had done with him, Christ has not done with them.

1. He proposes to them a question, which seemed of easy solution, but which quite disconcerted them for an answer. Ignorant of the mystery of the person of the Messiah, in whom the divine and human natures were united, they could not account how David's Son should be David's

Lord. To us this mystery is unfolded: we behold God and man in one Christ.

2. He condemns the hypocrisy and covetousness of the scribes, and cautions his disciples against them. They made a vast parade of profession, and with flowing robes in solemn stateliness as they passed, expected homage as due to their superiority; delighted in hearing the incense offered to their vanity; proudly affected precedency; and while by their long prayers they insinuated themselves into the confidence of widows, they basely and wickedly abused the trust reposed in them, and devoured their substance. *These shall receive greater damnation*: wickedness committed under such a veil of piety, brings the most aggravated guilt on the conscience, and must be attended with the most terrible vengeance of God.

## C H A P. XXI.

*Ver. 4. For all these*] See the notes on Mark, xii. 41, &c. Both the poor and rich may learn something from this passage of the gospel; the *poor*, who seem to have the means of doing charitable offices in a great measure denied them, are encouraged by it to do what they can, because, although it may be little, God, who looks into the heart, values it not according to what it is in itself, but according to the disposition with which it is given. On the other hand, it shews the *rich*, that it is not enough that they exceed the poor in the quantity of their charity; a little given, where but a little is left behind, often appears in the eye of God a much nobler offering, and discovers a far greater strength of good dispositions, than sums vastly larger bellowed out of a plentiful abundance. See the *Inferences* at the end of the Annotations on Mark, xii.

Some

10 <sup>1</sup> Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom :

11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences ; and fearful fights, and great signs shall there be from heaven.

12 But before all these, <sup>m</sup> they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.

13 And <sup>n</sup> it shall turn to you for a testimony.

14 <sup>o</sup> Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer :

15 <sup>p</sup> For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

16 <sup>q</sup> And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends ; and *some* of you shall they cause to be put to death.

17 And ye shall be hated of all *men* <sup>r</sup> for my name's sake.

<sup>1</sup> Hag. 2. 22. Heb. 12. 27. Daniel, 2. 34, 35, 44. Zech. 14. 13. Acts, 11. 28. Joel, 2. 30. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 10. 17—22. & 24. 9—14. Mark, 13. 9—13. John, 15. 20. & 16. 2. <sup>n</sup> Theff. 2. 15, 16. Ch. 13. 34. & 19. 14. Acts, iv—xxvi. Rev. 2. 10. <sup>o</sup> Peter, 4. 12, 14. <sup>p</sup> Phil. 1. 28. <sup>q</sup> Theff. 1. 5. <sup>r</sup> Mat. 10. 19. Mark, 13. 11. Ch. 12. 12. Phil. 4. 6. <sup>s</sup> Peter, 5. 7. <sup>t</sup> Deut. 33. 25. <sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. 10. 13. Exod. 4. 12. <sup>v</sup> If. 54. 17. Ch. 12. 12. Jer. 1. 6, 9, 19. Acts, 2. 4, 37. & 4. 1, 17, 32. & 5. 15. & 6. 12. <sup>w</sup> Micah, 7. 5, 6. Jer. 9. 4. Mat. 10. 21, 22. John, 16. 2. & 15. 20. Acts, 7. 59. & 12. 2. <sup>x</sup> Col. 1. 24. <sup>y</sup> 2 Tim. 3. 12. & 2. 12. & 4. 7. Rev. 2. 3, 13. & 3. 10.

Some read the last clause of the verse, *But she, out of what she wants for herself, hath cast in all she had to live upon.*

Ver. 11. *Fearful fights, &c.*] Josephus, in his relation of the signs and prodigies which preceded the taking of Jerusalem, mentions that a star hung over the city like a sword, and [an appearance like] a comet continued for a whole year; that the people being assembled to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread, at the ninth hour of the night, there shone so great a light about the altar and the temple, that it seemed to be bright day, and this continued for half an hour; that the eastern gate of the temple, which was of solid brass, and was scarcely to be shut by twenty men, was seen, at the sixth hour of the night, to open of its own accord, though fastened by strong bars and bolts, and could hardly be shut again; that, before the setting of the sun, there were seen, all over the country, chariots and armies fighting in the clouds; and that at the feast of Pentecost, the priests perceived, first a motion and noise, and then heard the voice as of a multitude, saying, "Let us depart hence." It may add some weight to this relation of Josephus, that Tacitus, the Roman, confirms every one of these particulars in his History. If Christ had not expressly foretold this, many who give little heed to portents, and who know that historians have been too credulous in that point, would have suspected that Josephus exaggerated, and that Tacitus was misinformed. But as the testimonies of Josephus and Tacitus serve in some measure to confirm the predictions of Christ, so the predictions of Christ confirm the wonders recorded by those historians. Yet, even allowing all that incredulity can urge,—that in the great calamities of war, and famine, and pestilence, the people always grow superstitious,—that they see nothing but prodigies and portents;—that some of these seem to be formed in imitation of the Greek and Roman historians; that armies fighting in the clouds are nothing more than meteors,—such as the aurora borealis, or northern lights:—in short, allowing that some of these prodigies were feigned, and others were exaggerated, yet the prediction of them is not the less divine on that account. Whether they were super-

natural, or fictions only of disordered imaginations; yet they were believed as realities, had all the effects of realities, and were equally worthy to be made the objects of prophecy. *Fearful fights and great signs from heaven* they certainly were, as much as if they had been created on purpose to astonish the earth. We should observe concerning this prophecy, which is expressed in terms so very plain and circumstantial,—that St. Matthew and St. Mark were incontestably dead before the event, as St. Luke also probably might be; and as for St. John, the only evangelist who survived it, it is remarkable that he mentions nothing of it, lest any should say that the prophecy was forged after the event happened. See, for a full explanation of the particulars of this chapter, the notes on Matth. xxiv.

Ver. 13. *It shall turn, &c.*] See the note on Matth. x. 18.

Ver. 15. *Which all your adversaries shall not, &c.*] "I will suggest to you such sentiments, and enable you to deliver them with such eloquence, that your defences shall be unanswerable; and your adversaries shall be struck with them, especially when they find by your manner that you have spoken them without premeditation." Of the completion of this promise we have evident examples in the defences made by the proto-martyr St. Stephen, and by St. Paul, especially before king Agrippa, and the Roman governors. But there is no need to insist upon particulars; the prevalency of the gospel, wherever it reached, demonstrates, beyond all doubt, that the defences made by the preachers thereof were unanswerable. See on Matth. x. 19, 20.

Ver. 17. *And ye shall be hated of all men*] See on Matth. x. 22.—That not only the apostles, but all the primitive Christians, were in general more hated and persecuted than any other body of people, is most notorious to all who are acquainted with ecclesiastical history; a fact which might seem unaccountable, when we consider how inoffensive and benevolent their temper and conduct were, and how friendly an aspect their tenets had on the security of any government under which they lived. One grand reason

18 ' But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

19 ' In your patience possess ye your souls.

20 " And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

21 \* Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

22 ' For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

23 \* But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! \* for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down

\* Mat. 10. 30. Jc. 41. 10 & 46. 4. Pf. 122. 3, 8. 1 Sam. 14. 45. & 25. 29. 2 Sam. 14. 11. Heb. 6. 11, 12. & 10. 35, 36. James, 5. 8. Pf. 27. 14. \* Mat. 24. 15—28. Mark, 13. 14—23. Ch. 19. 43. Daniel, 9. 27. \* Gen. 19. 15, 16. Job, 2. 4. Mat. 6. 25. Prov. 23. 3. \* Mat. 24. 21. Mark, 13. 19. Lev. 26. 14—36. Deut. 28. 15—68. & 29. 18—28 & 32. 21—31. Pf. 21. 8—12. & 69. 21—28. Prov. 1. 24—32. Jc. 65. 12—15. Zech. 11. 1. Mat. 4. 1. Daniel, 9. 27. & 12. 1. \* Mark, 13. 17. Ch. 23. 29. Hosea, 13. 16. Deut. 28. 56, 57. Lam. 4. 10. \* See ver. 22. 1 Thess. 2. 16. Heb. 6. 8. & 10. 26—31. 1 Peter, 4. 17, 18. Ch. 19. 27, 43, 44. Mat. 21. 41, 44. & 22. 7. & 3. 7, 10, 12. Rom. 11. 25. Rev. xix. Daniel, 9. 27. & 12. 7.

of this opposition was, that while the different pagan religions, like the confederate demons honoured by them, sociably agreed with each other, and were linked together by the principle of intercommunity, the gospel taught Christians not only, like the Jews, to bear their testimony to the falsity of them, but also, with the most fervent zeal, to urge the renunciation of them as a point of absolute necessity, requiring all men, on the most tremendous penalties, to embrace the gospel, to believe in Christ, and in all things to submit themselves to his authority; a demand which bore so hard, especially on the pride and licentiousness of the princes, and the secular interests of their priests, that there is no wonder it brought upon them the bloody storms which followed, and occasioned Christians to be branded with the epithets of unsocial and unfriendly, and to be universally misrepresented by the heathens as having a hatred and aversion to all mankind. And as they preached that the law of Moses was abrogated, this enraged the Jews also, who united with the heathens in their hatred of the Christians, and stimulated them greatly to the persecution of them.

Ver. 18. *There shall not an hair of your head perish.*] A proverbial expression, denoting an absolute safety. Our Lord had foretold but just before, ver. 16. that several of them should be put to death; he must therefore here intend to assure them, that when they came, on the whole, to balance their accounts, they should find that they had not been losers in any the least instance; but that whatever damage they had sustained, it should be amply made up, and they at length placed in a state of entire security. See 1 Sam. xiv. 45. 2 Sam. xiv. 11. 1 Kings, i. 52. and Acts, xvii. 34.

Ver. 19. *In your patience possess ye your souls.*] "Keep the government of your own spirits through grace in these awful scenes, which will bear down so many others; and you will secure the most valuable self-enjoyment, as well as be able most prudently to guard against the dangers which will surround you." See the *Inferences.*

Ver. 22. *For these be the days of vengeance,*] "These are the days of vengeance, wherein the calamities foretold by Moses, Joel, Daniel, and other prophets, as well as those

"predicted by our Saviour, shall meet in one common centre, and be fulfilled with aggravated wrath on this nation." *These are the days of vengeance too, in another sense; as if God's vengeance towards an obstinately impenitent nation had certain periods and revolutions, and the same days were fatal to the impenitent Jews.* For it is very memorable, and matter of just admiration, according to Josephus, that the temple was burned by the Romans in the same month, and on the same day of the month, as it was before by the Babylonians.

Ver. 24. *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, &c.*] There are three particulars denounced in this verse, and all of them were remarkably fulfilled. I. That they should fall by the edge of the sword; and the number of those who so fell was indeed very great. Of those who perished during the whole siege, there were 1,100,000; many were likewise slain at other times, and in other places, of every age, sex, and condition, the number of whom, according to Josephus, amounts to 1,357,666; which would appear almost incredible, if their own historian had not so particularly enumerated them. See on Matth. xxiv. 28. II. That they should be led away captive into all nations. Now considering the number of the slain, the number of the captives was very great; generally estimated, in the whole war, at 97,000. The tallest and handsomest young men Titus reserved for his triumph: of the rest, those above seventeen years of age were partly sent to the works in Egypt; but most of them were distributed through the Roman provinces, to be destroyed in their theatres by the sword, or by wild beasts. Those under seventeen were sold for slaves: of these captives, many underwent a hard fate; eleven thousand of them perished for want. Titus exhibited all sorts of shows and spectacles at Cæsarea; and many of the captives were there destroyed, some being exposed to the wild beasts, and others compelled to fight in troops against one another. At Cæsarea too, in honour of his brother's birth-day, 2500 Jews were slain; and a great number likewise at Berytus, in honour of his father's; the like was done in other cities of Syria. Those whom he reserved for his triumph were Simon and John, the generals of the captives, and seven hundred others of remarkable stature and beauty. Thus were the

of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

25 ¶ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon

• Mat. 24. 29. 35. Mark, 13. 25—31. Joel, 2. 30, 31. Acts, 2. 19, 20. Zeph. 1. 14—18. Amos, 5. 20. & 8. 9, 10. with If. 8. 21, 22. & 5. 30. & 13. 10. Ezek. 30. 7. Rev. 6. 12—17. • Peter, 3. 10.

captive Jews miserably tormented, and distributed over the Roman provinces; and are they not still distressed, and in general despised over the face of the whole earth?—III. Our Lord foretels that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, &c. And the accomplishment of this part of the prophecy, as indeed of every article of it, is wonderful: for, after the Jews were almost utterly destroyed by death and captivity, Vespasian commanded the whole land of Judea to be sold. “At that time,” says Josephus, (Bell. lib. vii. ch. 26.) “Cæsar wrote to Bassus, and to Librius Maximus the procurator, to sell the whole land of the Jews; for he did not build any city there, but appropriated their country to himself, leaving there only eight hundred soldiers, and giving them a place to dwell in called *Ennmaus*, thirty stadia from Jerusalem: and he imposed a tribute upon all the Jews wherever they lived, commanding every one of them to bring two drachms into the capitol, according as in former times they were wont to pay unto the temple of Jerusalem. And this was the state of the Jews at this time.” Thus was Jerusalem in particular, with its territory, possessed by the Gentiles, becoming Vespasian’s property, who sold it to such Gentiles as chose to settle there. That Jerusalem continued in this desolate state we learn from Dio; for he tells us, that the emperor Adrian rebuilt it, sent a colony there to inhabit it, and called it *Ælia*; but he altered its situation, leaving out Zion and Bezetha, and enlarging it so, as to comprehend Calvary, where our Lord was crucified. Moreover, Eusebius informs us, that Adrian made a law, that no Jews should come into the region round Jerusalem, (Hist. xxi. 6.) So that the Jews being banished, such a number of aliens came into Jerusalem, that it became a city and colony of the Romans. In later times, when Julian apostatized to heathenism, being sensible that the evident accomplishment of our Lord’s prophecies concerning the Jewish nation made a strong impression upon the Gentiles, and was a principal means of their conversion, he resolved to deprive Christianity of this support, by bringing the Jews to occupy their own land, and by allowing them the exercise of their religion and a form of civil government. For this purpose, he resolved to rebuild Jerusalem, to people it with Jews, and to rear up the temple on its ancient foundations, because there only he knew they would offer prayers and sacrifices. In the prosecution of this design, he wrote to the community of the Jews a letter, which is still extant among his other works, inviting them to return to their native country; and for their encouragement, he says to them, among other things, “The holy city Jerusalem, which for many years ye have desired to see inhabited, I will rebuild by my own labour, and will inhabit it.” And now the emperor, having made great preparations, began the execution of his scheme with rebuilding the temple; but his workmen were soon obliged to desist by an immediate and evident interposition of God.

Take an account of this matter in the words of Ammianus Marcellinus, a heathen historian, and therefore an author of unsuspected credit, who says, (lib. 23.) “He resolved to build, at an immense expence, a certain lofty temple at Jerusalem; and gave it in charge to Alypius of Antioch, who had formerly governed in Britain, to hasten the work. When therefore Alypius, with great earnestness, applied himself to the execution of this business, and the governor of the province assisted him in it, terrible balls of fire, bursting forth near the foundations, with frequent explosions, and divers times burning the workmen, rendered the place inaccessible; and thus the fire continually driving them away, the work ceased.” This fact is attested likewise by Zemuth David, a Jew, who honestly confesses that Julian was hindered by God in this attempt. It is also attested by Nazianzen and Chrysostome among the Greeks; by Ambrose and Rufin among the Latins, who lived at the very time when the thing happened; by Theodoret and Sozomen of the orthodox persuasion; by Philostorgius, an Arian, in the extracts of his history made by Photis, lib. vii. numb. 9. and by Socrates, a favourer of the Novatians, who wrote his history within the space of fifty years after the thing happened, and while the eye-witnesses thereof were yet alive. I shall only relate the testimonies of Sozomen and Chrysostome. The former, in his Ecclesiastical History, lib. v. c. 22. says, “This wonder is believed, and freely spoken of by all; nor is it denied by any: or if it should seem incredible to any, let them believe those who have heard it from the mouths of the eye-witnesses, who are yet alive: let them likewise believe the Jews and the Gentiles, who have left the work unfinished; or, to speak more properly, who have not been able to begin it.” Chrysostome, *advers. Judeos*, speaking of the same subject, says, “And now, if you go to Jerusalem, you will see the foundations lying still bare; and if you inquire the cause of this, [namely, in Jerusalem, the scene of the miracle] you will hear no other than that which I have mentioned; and of this all we Christians are witnesses, the thing being done not long since, and in our own time.” *Orat. 2.* Thus while Jews and heathens, under the direction of a Roman emperor, united their whole force to baffle our Lord’s prediction, they did but still more conspicuously accomplish his saying, that *Jerusalem should be trodden of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles should be fulfilled.* How exactly this passage of the prophecy has been fulfilled, we learn also from Benjamin of Tudela, a celebrated Spanish Jew of the twelfth century, who travelled into all parts to visit those of his own nation, and to learn an exact state of their affairs. In his Itinerary he tells us, that in Jerusalem he found only two hundred Jews. Sandys says, that the Holy Land “is for the most part inhabited now by Moors and Arabians, those possessing the vallies, and these the mountains. Turks there be few; but many

the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ;  
the sea and the waves roaring ;

26 <sup>c</sup> Men's hearts failing them for fear, and  
for looking after those things which are com-  
ing on the earth : for the powers of heaven  
shall be shaken.

27 <sup>d</sup> And then shall they see the Son of  
man coming in a cloud with power and great  
glory.

28 And when these things begin to come

to pass, then <sup>e</sup> look up, and lift up your heads ;  
for your redemption draweth nigh.

29 And he spake to them a parable ; <sup>f</sup> Be-  
hold the fig tree, and all the trees ;

30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and  
know of your ownelves that summer is now  
nigh at hand.

31 So likewise ye, <sup>g</sup> when ye see these  
things come to pass, know ye that the king-  
dom of God is nigh at hand.

<sup>c</sup> Lev. 26. 36. Deut. 28. 32, 34, 65. Heb. 10. 26, 27. If. 24. 4.  
Act. 1. 11. 1 Theff. 4. 16. 2 Theff. 1. 8—10. Matt. 25. 10, 31.  
<sup>f</sup> Mat. 24. 32—35. Mark, 13. 28—31. <sup>g</sup> James, 5. 9. 1 Peter, 4. 17, 18. Heb. 10. 37. Mat. 11. 16. & 16. 28. & 23. 36. Eeck. 7. 2—13. & 12. 22—28.

<sup>d</sup> Daniel, 7. 10, 13. Zech. 14. 5. Mat. 16. 27, 28. & 26. 64. Rev. 1. 7.  
<sup>e</sup> Pl. 50. 1—6. & 96. 11—13. & 98. 5—9. If. 25. 8, 9. Rom. 8. 23.  
<sup>f</sup> Mat. 24. 32—35. Mark, 13. 28—31. <sup>g</sup> James, 5. 9. 1 Peter, 4. 17, 18. Heb. 10. 37. Mat. 11. 16. & 16. 28. & 23. 36. Eeck. 7. 2—13. & 12. 22—28.

“ Greeks, with other Christians, of all sects and nations,  
“ such as impute to the place an adherent holiness. Here  
“ be also some Jews ; yet inherit they no part of the  
“ land ; but in their own country do live as aliens.”  
Travels, b. iii. p. 114. 7th edit. The divinity of our Lord's  
prediction still more clearly appears, if to the above we  
add the fact known throughout all Europe and Asia at  
this day ; namely, that the Jews are still exiles from their  
own country, and have continued to be so ever since Titus  
dispersed them. In former times, the Jews, after being led  
away captive, were re-established : why then should this  
captivity have lasted now so long ? Why should the effects  
of Titus's fury be indelible ? God decreed that it should  
be so. “ Jerusalem is to be trodden of the Gentiles, until  
“ the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled ;” and no power  
in the universe can frustrate his decree. For this reason  
likewise, though the Jews are at present, and have been  
through the whole period of their dispersion, vastly more  
numerous than they ever were in the most happy times of  
their commonwealth, none of the efforts which they have  
made to recover their own country, have proved suc-  
cessful. Moreover, while every dispersed people men-  
tioned in history has been swallowed up of the nations  
among whom they were dispersed, without leaving the  
smallest trace of their ever having existed, the Jews con-  
tinue, after so many ages, a distinct people in their dis-  
persion. The universal contempt into which they are  
fallen, one should think, ought to have made them conceal  
whatever served to distinguish them, and have prompted  
them to mix with the rest of mankind : but in fact it has  
not done so. The Jews, in all countries, by openly sepa-  
rating from the nations who rule them, subject themselves  
to hatred and derision ; nay, in several places, they have  
exposed themselves to death, by bearing about with them  
the outward marks of their descent. By this unexampled  
constancy they have preserved themselves everywhere a  
distinct people. But of this constancy, can any better  
account be given than that it is the means by which God  
verifies the prediction of his Son ? He has declared, that  
*when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*, the Jews shall  
be converted ; and, therefore, through the whole course  
of their dispersion, they continue a distinct people. If the  
hand of Providence be not visible in these things, I can-

not tell where it is to be found. See Newton on the  
Prophecies\*.

*Ver. 25. And there shall be signs.]* See on Matth. xxiv. 29.  
To what has been said there, we may add, that the cir-  
cumstances of the light of the sun and moon being ob-  
scured, and of the stars falling from heaven, are not de-  
scriptive of the last day of judgment, but of *the great and  
terrible day of the Lord*, which in scripture language means  
the destruction of Jerusalem. For when the prophet  
Joel speaks of that day, and describes the *locusts*, one of the  
four plagues, under a most beautiful allegory, he repre-  
sents the earth as *quaking before them ;—the heavens shall  
tremble*, says he, *the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the  
stars shall withdraw their shining*, Joel, ii. 10. And, to  
remove all possibility of doubt concerning the meaning  
of these words in St. Matthew's gospel, our Saviour closes  
his predictions in this remarkable manner, *Verily I say  
unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be  
fulfilled*. Nothing surely can be more explicit, more cer-  
tain, more convincing to any unprejudiced mind, than this  
evidence for Christ and Christianity from prophecy. Here  
is no ambiguity, no conjecture, no accommodation ; all is  
plain and evident : and with regard to the last destruction  
of Jerusalem, the words of our Lord himself in the gospels  
exactly correspond with those of the ancient prophets.  
Bowyer, in his *Greek Testament*, proposes to render the last  
clause, *Through distress, as of the roaring sea*.

*Ver. 26. Failing them for fear,] Expiring with fear, is  
the literal rendering of the original.*

*Ver. 28. Then look up,] “ Look upwards, and lift up  
“ your heads with joy and assurance ; for as soon as you  
“ see the first appearance of these signs, you may com-  
“ fortably conclude that your redemption draweth nigh.”*  
As the resurrection is the time when we shall in fact be  
fully redeemed, or delivered from all the sad consequences  
of sin,—and therefore is called, *The redemption of our bodies* ;  
(Rom. viii. 23. compare Hosea, xiii. 14.) so, in a less  
proper sense, the deliverance from the toils and sorrows,

\* The reader will, I am sure, excuse my entering so largely  
and repeatedly into this subject, when he considers that it affords  
us one of the most striking external evidences of the truth of  
Christianity.

32 Verily I say unto you, <sup>b</sup> This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

33 <sup>c</sup> Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

34 ¶ <sup>k</sup> And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you un-

awares.

35 <sup>l</sup> For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 <sup>m</sup> Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be <sup>n</sup> accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 24. 34. & 16. 28. & 23. 36. Ch. 11. 50, 51. <sup>c</sup> 1 Pet. 102. 27. If. 51. 6. & 40. 8. Mat. 5. 18. & 24. 35. <sup>d</sup> 2 Peter, 3. 7, 10. <sup>e</sup> 2 Peter, 1. 25. <sup>f</sup> Rom. 13. 11—13. <sup>g</sup> 1 Theff. 5. 6. <sup>h</sup> 1 Peter, 4. 7. <sup>i</sup> Phil. 4. 5. <sup>j</sup> If. 24. 17. <sup>k</sup> Eccl. 9. 12. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 24. 42—44. <sup>m</sup> 1 Theff. 5. 2. <sup>n</sup> 2 Peter, 3. 10. <sup>o</sup> Rev. 3. 3. & 16. 15. <sup>p</sup> Mark, 13. 33—37. & 14. 34, 38. <sup>q</sup> Mat. 24. 42—44, 46. & 25. 13. <sup>r</sup> Ch. 11. 40. & 18. 1. <sup>s</sup> Eph. 6. 18, 19. <sup>t</sup> 1 Theff. 5. 6, 17. <sup>u</sup> Ch. 20. 35. <sup>v</sup> Rev. 3. 4. <sup>w</sup> 1 John, 2. 28. <sup>x</sup> Prov. 22. 29. <sup>y</sup> Pl. 1. 5. <sup>z</sup> Eph. 1. 6. & 5. 27.

temptations and infirmities of this sinful and calamitous life, may on the like principles be called *redemption*: and if we may judge of the length of the apostles' lives by the extent of their labours, though we know not the time when many of them died, there is reason to conjecture, that it was not till about this period; which, by the way, would be an argument, that they were now most of them young men. The expression, *Look up*, in this verse, admirably suits the load of labour and sufferings, under which the apostles would be depressed in this afflicted state.

*Ver. 32. Verily I say unto you, &c.*] A late writer, whose criticism is at least ingenious, observes, that "this clause of the prediction has not merely been generally misapprehended, but moreover falsely translated; and this is the opinion of men who hold the first rank in scriptural criticism, namely, of Mede, Wolfius, Brenius, Markius, Sykes, &c. A Mr. Hayne had applied this part of our Lord's prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem: Mr. Mede replies to him, 'I answer, first, while you endeavour in this manner to establish a ground for the first coming of Christ, you bereave the church of those principal passages of the scripture, whereon she hath always grounded her faith of the second coming. Secondly, you ground all this upon the ambiguity of the word *generation*; whereas the word *γενεα* signifies not only an age, but a people, a nation, a progeny, and so ought to be here taken; viz.—the nation of the Jews should not *perish*, till all these things were fulfilled. —Chrysostome among the ancients\*, and Flaccius Illyricus (a man well skilled in the style of scripture) among the moderns, and those who follow them, might have admonished others to take the word *γενεα* in this acceptance, rather than, by turning it into an age or *generation*, to put this prophecy in little-ease, and the whole harmony of scripture out of frame, by I know not what confused interpretation.' I only add, that Dr. Sykes declares himself the more confirmed in this translation, 'from the remarkable, and, indeed, unparalleled, preservation of the Jews in the midst of hatred and continual persecutions.' The meaning then is, The

" Jewish nation shall assuredly subsist as a distinct people, till all that has been previously mentioned shall have been fulfilled, not only during the most corrupt period of the church, but until the antichristian governments of the world shall have been dissolved, and the religion of Jesus shall have begun to shine with its perfect brightness. And what is there in the existing circumstances of the world, or of the Jews, which contradicts this assertion, or renders it incapable of being verified?"

" The language of Christ is expressed with all possible strength. *Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away*; that is, says Bishop Newton, 'Heaven and earth shall sooner or more easily pass away; the frame of the universe shall sooner or more easily be dissolved, than my words not be fulfilled.' And surely the prediction of the Jews remaining as a separate people was a fact of sufficient importance, and sufficiently interesting to the persons whom our Lord was addressing, to account why he annexed it to an affirmation thus striking and solemn."

*Ver. 34. Your hearts be overcharged*] The word *εαυθησων* properly signifies, *burdened*, or *pressed down*; and elegantly and strongly expresses the hateful consequences of intemperance; and the load that it brings on those rational faculties which peculiarly distinguish us from the beasts of the field. See Horat. Sat. ii. lib. ii. line 77. The reader will observe that St. Luke's account of this discourse is very short, in comparison with that of St. Matthew and St. Mark; for this obvious reason, that he had given the chief heads of it before, partly in a discourse of our Lord's last coming, which was delivered to a very numerous assembly in Galilee, (ch. xii. 35, &c.) and partly in another discourse, relating only to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was delivered in his journey thither at the feast of dedication, ch. xvii. 20, &c. Here therefore he chooses to omit what had been inserted upon those occasions; as St. John, who probably wrote after the accomplishment of this prophecy, entirely omits it; and certainly, considering the circumstance of time, it came with infinitely greater strength from the other evangelists, than it could afterwards have done from him. See on ver. 11.

*Ver. 35. As a snare*] *As a net*. Heylin. The exhortations which are connected with this verse, limit the extent of the word *all* to a considerable number; for, were it to be taken otherwise, there could have been no room to offer them. Instead of *earth*, some read *land*.

*Ver. 36. To stand before the Son of man.*] This does not seem

\* " Indeed by the Fathers in general, who may be admitted to have been competent judges of the meaning of the word, *γενεα* was not understood as signifying the generation then living. Some persons, however, there were, who held this opinion; but, says Maldonatus, Origen entitles them *simplices*."

37 \* And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, <sup>p</sup> and abode in the mount that is called *the* <sup>q</sup> mount of Olives.

\* John, 8. 1, 2. & 4. 34. & 9. 4.  
3. 1. Hag. 2. 7. Gen. 49. 10. If. 52. 13, 15.

<sup>p</sup> Mark, 11. 17, 12. & 14. 3. Mat. 21. 17. John, 12. 1. Ch. 22. 39.

<sup>q</sup> See ch. 19. 37.

<sup>r</sup> Mal.

seem to be merely the counter-part of *escaping the things* spoken of before: there were thousands of the Jews, that, by one providence or another, escaped temporal destruction, who could with no propriety be said to *stand before the Son of man* at his coming. This latter clause therefore, which seems to be an advance upon the former, is an allusion to the expression in Ps. i. 5. Nahum, i. 6. (see also Wisd. v. 1.) and, in that sense, gives the context a greater connection and juster distinction, than the signification in which it is taken by most commentators.

*Ver. 37. And in the day-time he was teaching*] Our Lord's custom at this, and, it may be, at other passovers, was, to spend the day in the city, most commonly in the temple, where he always found a great concourse of hearers;—and in the evening to retire to the mount of Olives, where he lodged in the villages, or in the gardens, or in the open air among the trees. He chose to lodge at night in such places as these, not solely for the sake of prayer,—being desirous to secure that only season of solitude, that he might prepare himself for his approaching sufferings by a proper series of extraordinary devotions, and exemplify his own precept, ver. 36.—but also, that he might avoid falling into the hands of his enemies:—for though they durst not attack him in the midst of his followers by day, they probably would have apprehended him during the silence and darkness of the night, had he lodged any where within the walls of the town, and not exercised his omnipotence. Accordingly they did not venture to lay hands on him, till Judas betrayed him to them, in the absence of the multitude, by conducting an armed band to the place of his retirement.

*Ver. 38. And all the people came early*] St. Luke does not mean to say, that the people came and heard Jesus preach in the temple after this; for Jesus himself had declared, that he never was, to preach to them any more. Matth. xxiii. 38, 39. But, having described in what manner our Lord spent his time at this Passover, the evangelist adds, that his ministry sustained no damage by his leaving the city at night, because he did not fail to return every morning very early to the temple; thus exemplifying his precept of *watching*, as well as that of prayer, ver. 36.

Having already enlarged so much on the subject of the destruction of Jerusalem, I shall only subjoin in the way of *Inference* a few remarks on the grace of *patience*, drawn from ver. 19. of this chapter, making a few cursory observations on the other subject in my *Reflections*.

*Inferences.*—We learn from history, observation, and experience, that the life of man in the general is full of misery: all histories are little more than continual registers of the evils incident to humanity; and what we read of past times, we find repeated in the present. Yet, notwithstanding these concurrent advertisements, how apt are we

38 <sup>r</sup> And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

still to promise ourselves a lasting felicity in the enjoyments of this world! And though the *past* life of the generality has been vexatious, and the *present* is perplexed with daily evils, how do they feed themselves with vain hopes in the remainder yet unscen.

The scriptures give a different view of things, teaching us that this life is a state of probation and exercise, wherein God leads us through many wants and difficulties, to humble, to rectify, and to improve us, through his grace. They promise us no outward calm, but inward serenity and peace of mind in the midst of the storm; not peace with the world, but successful war; not to escape evil, but overcome it; so *enduring for a season*, as thereby, through almighty grace, to fit ourselves for heaven, where only is perfect happiness.

The art of rightly enduring the evils of this life is very remarkably taught us by our Lord in the verse now under notice. *In your patience*, says he, *possess ye your souls*:—to *possess* is the common desire of mankind; but they do not rightly consider what those things are, the possession of which can make us happy. They look for happiness out of themselves, in the possessions of this world; but true happiness must arise from within,—from a rectified frame of mind; and the only rule to attain it, adjoined to prayer and faith, is that which our Lord prescribes.

We cannot *think* as we ought, or *act* in consequence as rational creatures, till our soul, that *thinking faculty*, be fully *possessed* by us,—till we have it, through grace, in our power, and use that power to the proper end; and this cannot be done, while passions disturb the mind, and put us, as it were, beside ourselves. Anger, for instance, or grief, when they are excessive, obstruct the use of reason; and the proper office of patience is to repress and hold them down, so that the soul may under the divine blessing be maintained in vigour to bear, and to extricate itself from the evils which invade it. As long as we can preserve an inward calm and composure, the cross accidents of life make but slight impressions upon us; but when we lose our temper, then they break in with violence, they overbear the judgment, they captivate the will, and fill the soul with darkness and confusion. The soul may, in this respect, be compared to a water, which, whilst it stands serene, is within its own substance clear, transparent, and delightful; and from its surface, as from a polished mirror, reflects the images of all things that surround it, in their proper forms and just proportions: but, when it is ruffled with the wind, its clearness and brightness ceases; and though it should not be so much obscured as to lose all reflection, yet does the wrinkled surface, at best give false and mishapen forms, fallacious images, and monstrous representations of things.

Thus it is with the soul, whose inward tranquillity can only be preserved by *patience*. While that, through grace, is duly

CHAP. XXII.

*The Jews conspire against Christ: Satan by his temptations prepareth Judas to betray him. The apostles sent to prepare the passover. Christ instituteth his holy supper: covertly foretelleth of the traitor: deborteth the rest of his apostles from ambition: assureth Peter that he should deny him thrice. He prayeth in the mount, and sweateth blood: is betrayed with a kiss: he healeth Malchus's ear: he is thrice denied of Peter, shamefully abused, and confesseth himself to be the Son of God.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**N**OW <sup>a</sup> the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the passover.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 26. 1—5. Mark. 14. 1, 2. John. 11. 55—57. Exod. 12. 15. Pf. 2. 1—5. & 22. 1, 16. Ch. 19. 47, 48. & 20. 19. Acts, 4. 27. <sup>b</sup> See ch. 20. 6, 21. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 16. 14—16. Mark. 11. 10, 11. Pf. 41. 9. & 55. 12—14. & 9. 6. John. 6. 70, 71. & 13. 2. 18, 21—30. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 26. 15. Prov. 1. 6. & 4. 16. Rom. 3. 10—18. Micah, 7. 5, 6. Jer. 9. 4. <sup>e</sup> Zech. 11. 12, 13. Exod. 21. 32. Mark. 14. 11. 1 Tim. 6. 10. <sup>f</sup> Or without tumult.

duly exercised, all is calm and serene; a man has the free use of his reason, and can hear and follow its dictates. But when the soul is ruffled through impatience, evil passions darken and obscure it; they dethrone reason, unhinge the mind, and discompose all its faculties.

Hence we may collect the force of that expression, *Possess ye your souls*; which to do under any notable provocation, is the proper act of patience through the Spirit of God,—a grace or virtue which prevents many evils, and mitigates all; which is found so necessary, in order to make life tolerable, that even those who have no religion, and reject many of the virtues, are forced to extol the excellence of this. They cannot but agree with Solomon, that the triumphs of patience are more estimable than those of valour; that the *patient man is better than the mighty*; and *he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city*: nay, they must confess too, with him, the danger and misery of the contrary practice; who observes, that *he who hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls*. These are acknowledged truths, even with bad men, who, though void of religious principles, which can alone produce a *genuine patience*, yet forge to themselves some spurious kinds of it, which may well be termed, the *political* and the *stoical*.

The *political* patience is much studied and practised by men of business. Wise as they are in their generation, they hold, as a secure maxim, that “good policy has no “passions;” and therefore they heedfully suppress their own, and strive to excite those of others, that they may dexterously play them off to their own advantage. This is a cruel cunning, an antichristian self-denial, *which will one day have its proper reward*.

The *stoical* patience is chiefly in vogue with men of letters and speculation, who, confiding in the force of their own minds, endeavour to harden themselves against misfortune, and, by forcibly diverting their thoughts to other objects, may sometimes maintain a certain serenity of self-possession in the article of distress. But as this firmness of temper depends much upon constitution, and a flow of animal spirits, it will not be more permanent, though

2 And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; <sup>b</sup> for they feared the people.

3 ¶ Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

4 And he went his way, and <sup>d</sup> communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

5 And they were glad, and <sup>e</sup> covenanted to give him money.

6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them <sup>\*</sup> in the absence

it is but a miserable and specious virtue at the best; and it is happy for such men that it does not endure long: for as all the dispensations of God tend to the good of his creatures, and misfortunes in particular are graciously sent to reclaim them to a sense of their duty, and of their dependance on him; to humble them under his almighty arm, and oblige them to have recourse to him for deliverance;—if these men could support themselves by their own philosophy, and deaden the sense of their sufferings, so as not to be affected by them, they would perhaps in every instance frustrate the merciful designs of the Creator, who never corrects his creatures but for their amendment: and, alas! how few are there of these who are thus *wise after the flesh*, who will be prevailed upon by afflictions or any other means, to stoop so low as to embrace the gospel of Christ!

Such are the *spurious* kinds of patience; they are void of religion, and therefore want the essence of true virtue. Not so the *genuine patience*, which is a pious submission to the will of God: her first lesson is, *to see his hand in all our sufferings*; and from that view she receives, not only consolation and support under the present evil, but also gradually engages us, through grace, to extirpate the cause of all evil, even the *root of all inordinate passions*.

All the passions are *desires differently modified*. If the desire be just in its nature, and reasonable in its degree, the passion, in whatever form it appears, will be equally just and reasonable; but all excess in the desire will be felt in the passion which it produces; and therefore the *patience* assuaging passion is never a solitary virtue that acts alone, but must have with it some of that specific virtue, which answers to the original excess. When *pride* is the cause of anger, patience cannot calm that anger, if *humility* does not concur with it. It might be dangerous, if we could do it, to stop a symptom, while the disease remains in its full vigour; yet the symptom may be of great service in directing where to apply the remedy.

When therefore an *ambitious* man, for instance, is perplexed with passions which destroy his peace; when he is enraged with anger, or oppressed with grief, at the dis-

of the multitude.

7 ¶ Then came the day of unleavened

bread, when the passover must be \* killed.

8 And he sent Peter and John, saying,

† Mat. 26. 17—19. Mark, 14. 12—16. John, 18. 28. Exod. 12. 6—28. & 13. 3. Lev. 23. 5, 6. Numb. 9. 3. & 28. 16, 17. Deut. 16. 1—4.  
 • Or sacrificed. † Mark, 14. 13. Mat. 26. 17, 18.

appointment of his aspiring projects, he should consider such grief, or anger, as the painful symptom of a depraved heart; a heart estranged from God, and idolizing worldly grandeurs. If he desire the relief of patience, he must first, through grace, *turn from these vanities to the living God*. This is the cardinal point, the hinge on which all that deserves the name of *virtue* depends and moves. He must in prayer obtain some lively knowledge of God, some pious sense of the divine Majesty, who made, who governs all things, and who graciously interposes those obstacles of his ambitious pursuits, on purpose to divert him from them. He will then discern the hand of God in the cross accidents which caused his distress, and he will bear it with patience, seeing that he ought to be thankful for it.

What has been said of *ambition* is equally applicable to *covetousness*, *sensuality*, and every other evil propensity, which bring with them their own punishment in the painful affections which accompany them. The crime is ours, but the punishment comes from God, and is executed within by the fixed laws of our nature, against which it is in vain to strive. As mercy predominates in all the ways and works of God, so those pains which he has annexed to every inordinate desire, are intended as means, through his grace, for its cure. He *hedges up our way with thorns*, as his prophet speaks, (Hosea, ii. 6.) to hinder our advancing in it; and patience can give no redress, until we change our course, and, under his blessing, return to him in a dutiful submission.

Men want a patience whereby they may sin at ease; whereby they may indulge their evil desires with impunity; but by the goodness of God, that is not possible; for solid patience can never be attained but in the practice of religion.

The true art of patience, under any kind of trouble, consists in a devout recollection, whereby we withdraw our attention as much as possible from the painful ideas excited in us, that so the mind may ascend in pious meditations to the throne of grace, and there find shelter from the anguish and tumult of the passions. There it will feel divine influence, and recover an inward peace, which will soon diffuse itself through the lower passions. Such was the advice of Eliphaz to Job, (Ch. xxii. 21, &c.) “ Acquaint thyself now with God, and be at peace; receive the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up; and thou shalt put away iniquity far from thee. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence; thou shalt have thy delight in him, and the light shall shine upon thy ways.”

Such is the true practice of patience, and such is its reward. By *patience we possess our souls*; and by the means of patience, springing from a living faith, through the grace of God, and the Blood of the Covenant, we may save them for eternity; where patience will be a needless virtue, and all our duty, joy.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The commendation of the poor widow's offering we considered, Mark, xii. 41., &c. We may observe, (1.) That it is the duty of all, according to their ability, to contribute to the service of the sanctuary, the maintenance of a gospel ministry, the education of youth, and the relief of the necessitous. (2.) The least mite which is given to the offerings of God from a heart zealous for his glory, and breathing fervent charity, shall be remembered, and infinitely recompensed to the faithful in the great day.

2dly, The disciples, vastly pleased with the magnificence of the temple, and the gifts with which it was enriched, could not but grieve at the thoughts that it should be utterly destroyed, and fain would move the Saviour's compassion to reverse the sentence that he had pronounced; but he confirms the doom of that devoted place, and in answer to their request informs them of the signs preceding the threatened desolation.

1. False Christs would arise, making great profession of delivering the Jews from the Roman yoke, and affirming that the time fixed in the ancient prophecies was near, when the temporal kingdom of the Messiah should be set up. But they are to beware of such deceivers, and neither follow nor be led by them. His kingdom, as they had been often advised, was not of this world, nor must they look for any other Messiah but himself.

2. Terrible commotions and awakening judgments would precede the day of his coming to destroy the Jewish nation. Bloody wars and tumults would ravage the country; earthquakes rock the ground; famines and pestilence desolate the land; and fearful sights in the heavens terrify the beholders, and portend the approaching dire calamities. But they must not be *terrified* at the signs, nor apprehensive of the consequences; for they shall be under the peculiar care of the divine Providence, though greater evils are still behind.

3. They must expect fiery persecutions, and will find their nearest and dearest relations, filled with enmity against the gospel, their bitterest enemies. They will be scourged in the synagogues by their own countrymen; cast into prison; brought before heathen magistrates and kings; hated of all men; and called to resist unto blood, sealing the truth which they professed with martyrdom. But to support and encourage them herein, Christ assures them, [1.] That their sufferings and persecutions shall tend to make the gospel word to be more diffused, and be a testimony against those who maliciously and cruelly persecuted them. [2.] He promises them extraordinary aids in times of extraordinary trials. They need not be solicitous about the answer that they should make when cited before the tribunals of magistrates and kings; nor must they depend upon their own prudence for their defence, but expect divine assistance. *I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.* The Holy Ghost should furnish them with *matter and words*; fill their

Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

their mouths with such arguments, and give such energy to their discourse, as should quite confound and silence their persecutors, if it did not convince them. And all God's faithful ministers and people, when suffering for the truth's sake, and called in defence of the gospel to answer before the rulers, may still depend on the same divine help, (See Acts, iv. v. vi.) [3.] Out of all their severest trials God will save them harmless. *Not an hair of your head shall perish*: either literally he would strangely deliver them from the most imminent perils, as he saved them out of Jerusalem when the Romans came to besiege the city; or, figuratively, it expresses his singular care of them; so that though they should be delivered to prison, or to death, his eye should be upon them for good, and give their faithful souls at least a happy issue out of all their afflictions; bringing them through these tribulations to eternal life and glory; so that they should be infinite gainers by all their sufferings. [4.] He exhorts them to bear up patiently under every temptation, and not be buffed or discomposed, but with holy serenity and calm resignation to cast their care upon God, and quietly wait for his salvation. *Note*; (1.) In trying times the hardest conflict is within, to preserve the tranquillity of our own souls by humble confidence in God. (2.) A little patience will bring us to the end of every human woe.

3dly, Having exhorted them to bear up in these dangerous days that should precede the final destruction of Jerusalem, he passes on to describe her utter overthrow.

1. After a variety of fearful signs, at last the destroying army of the Romans shall approach—the signal for the faithful to leave the devoted place, and fly for their lives, as history informs us every Christian did, so that not one perished in Jerusalem. The days of vengeance then shall come upon the Jewish nation for all their wickedness, and especially for that blood of the Messiah, the curse of which they imprecated upon their own heads, and now shall terribly seize them. Great indeed would be the distress of those who fled, especially of such as were with child, or who gave suck, because this must retard their speed, and add to their other afflictions; yet greater far would be the misery of those who remained, on whom the full vials of wrath would be poured out; the sword making the most fearful ravages among them, and the few who remained alive after the siege being led captives, and dispersed into all nations; while their once glorious city, razed from the foundations, should long lie in ruins, and never be restored to its former grandeur, but continue under the power of the Gentiles, *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*; when the fulness of them in the last days being come in, Israel shall again be gathered, and Jerusalem, most probably, be again restored, and inhabited by the Jewish converts. This desolation of Judea would be terrible, as if the very elements were dissolving around them: their whole civil and ecclesiastical polity would be utterly destroyed; and, half-dead with terror and dismay, the wretched inhabitants would sink under the load of complicated evils. Such fearful signs shall also

precede the final dissolution of all things, when the judge of quick and dead shall at last be revealed from heaven, taking vengeance on all that know not God, and obey not his gospel.

2. Christ encourages his disciples, when these calamities begin, to lift up their heads in joyful hope, knowing that their *redemption draweth nigh*. The destruction of the Jewish people, who were the most inveterate persecutors of the first Christians, would be to them a great deliverance, and afford matter for their thankfulness to God, who had avenged them of these bitter enemies.

4thly, Those signs of the times which Christ had set before them, if duly remarked, would as clearly point out to them the approach of the threatened judgments, as the summer is known to be at hand, when the buds and flowers of spring appear. The time for the fulfilment of this prophecy was near, and the accomplishment of it sure: therefore,

1. He cautions them to beware of sensuality and security, lest the day of his coming should surprise them unprepared to meet him. *Note*; (1.) We are in jeopardy every hour: the day of death and judgment is uncertain; we need be every moment on our guard: they who are immersed in the cares and pleasures of the world, will be terribly surprised by it; and woe to those on whom it shall come as a snare, and seize them in their sins. (2.) If we would meet our judge with comfort, and be found of him in peace, we must keep a strict rein on inordinate appetites, and learn to die daily to the world, and sit loose to all its cares and inticements. They who are dead to the world while they are in it, will be the readiest to go out of it at the most sudden summons. (3.) Surfeiting and drunkenness must necessarily unqualify us to meet our God. A glutton! a drunkard! what a fearful reckoning must he make in the day of judgment! (4.) The cares of this world as effectually stupify the conscience, as the fumes of liquor do the body; and though men are apt to think sober worldlings decent characters, compared with notorious drunkards; yet is their state equally dangerous, and perhaps the former the most difficult to be wrought upon. The drunkard sleeps, and is sober; but the worldly-minded rises up as he lay down, *overcharged* with the same load of worldly anxiety and carking solicitude.

2. He exhorts them to *watch and pray always, that they may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man*, with comfort, and confidence of his favour and regard. Not that our watchfulness and prayers confer any proper merit; we must in this sense be counted *worthy and accepted in the Beloved*; but these are the means that God has appointed, in the use of which he has promised his grace and blessing to us: and if we be awake, and expect our Lord's arrival, and look up to him for strength continually, he will bring us safe through every temptation, and give us to partake at last of his final salvation.

3. During the few days between his triumph and his sufferings, he continued indefatigable in his labours, preach-

10 And he said unto them, <sup>h</sup> Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

11 And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, <sup>i</sup> The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

12 And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

13 And they went, and <sup>k</sup> found as he had said unto them: <sup>l</sup> and they made ready the passover.

14 <sup>m</sup> And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

15 And he said unto them, <sup>n</sup> With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

16 For I say unto you, <sup>o</sup> I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

<sup>h</sup> Lk. 41. 22. & 42. 9. & 44. 8. & 45. 21. & 46. 10. John, 16. 4. Acts, 15. 18. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 8. 25. & 21. 3. & 23. 8-10. & 26. 18. John, 21. 16. & 11. 8, 28. Acts, 10. 36. Col. 1. 15-18. & 2. 10, 9. <sup>k</sup> Pf. 33. 9. Numb. 23. 19. <sup>l</sup> 1 Sam. 15. 22. Exod. 23. 21. John, 14. 15 & 15. 14. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 26. 20-25. Mark, 14. 17-21. Exod. 12. 6. Lev. 23. 5. Deut. 16. 1. <sup>n</sup> Or I have heartily desired. Ch. 12. 50. <sup>o</sup> Ch. 14. 15. Ver. 18. Acts, 1. 3. Mat. 3. 2. & 4. 17. Daniel, 2. 44. Rev. 11. 15. & 19. 7, 9.

ing daily in the temple; and when the evening came, he retired to the Mount of Olives for prayer and meditation, returning in the morning to his delightful work in the temple, where an attentive auditory waited eager to hear his divine discourses.

#### C H A P. XXII.

Ver. 4. *And captains*] The *captains* with whom Judas communed, are here and elsewhere called *captains of the temple*, (see ver. 52.) and are joined with the priests as their companions; a circumstance, which proves that they were Jews, and not heathens. See Acts, iv. 1. From David's time the priests and Levites kept watch, first in the tabernacle, and then in the temple, night and day, as appears from 2 Chron. viii. 14. The guards of priests were stationed at three places; but those of the Levites at one and-twenty. The Levites, while they performed this office according to their courses, under the first temple, were called *porters*, 2 Chron. viii. 14. and each of the watches had a *chief* or *captain*,—*παρμύτης*; and over them all was one called, by way of eminence, *αρχηγός*, the *chief leader* or *captain*. That these names of military men should have been given to the priests and Levites, who were no soldiers, neither had soldiers under them, will not seem strange, when it is remembered, that the attendance of the Levites is called *the warfare of the service*; (see Numb. viii. 24, 25. in the original;) and that they performed all the offices of soldiers in garrisons. They kept guard at the gates of the temple, preserved the peace within its precincts, and brought such as were disorderly before the high-priests and council. But besides the Levite porters, there was another guard belonging to the temple, namely, the Roman garrison, in the tower or castle of Antonia, which was built very near the temple. Of this castle or garrison there is mention made, Acts, xxi. 31-34. St. Matthew calls a detachment from it, appointed to guard our Lord's sepulchre, by the word *μαρτύριον*, which was the proper name of such a body of Roman soldiers. But it was not with the captains of the garrison of Antonia that Judas bargained to deliver up his Master; neither were they the persons to whom Jesus spake, when he addressed them who came to apprehend him, ver. 52. In

both passages these captains are called by the name *παρμύτης*, whereas the captains of garrisons are termed by Josephus *πορπαρχοί*, and by St. Luke, Acts, xxi. and xxii. *χωμαρχοί*. Besides, no heathens were ever admitted into the supreme ecclesiastical court of the Jews; not to mention that the latter shunned the company of the former as much as possible. It is plain therefore that the persons with whom Judas communed, and who are called *the captains*, and *captains of the temple*, were the priests who commanded the temple guard, and who were at the devotion of the high-priest and council, to execute whatever orders they thought fit to give them.

Ver. 12. *There make ready.*] See the note on Mark, xiv. 13.

Ver. 15. *With desire I have desired*] This is a Hebraism, signifying a very fervent and longing desire: "I have longed greatly," said he, "to eat this passover with you before I suffer, because it is the last I shall ever celebrate with you, and because I desire, before my death, to give you the strongest proofs of my love." The proofs that he had in view were, his setting them a pattern of humility and love, by washing their feet;—his instructing them in the nature of his death, as a propitiatory sacrifice;—his instituting the sacrament of the supper, in commemoration of his sufferings;—his comforting them by the tender discourses recorded by St. John, ch. xiv. xv. xvi. in which he gave them a variety of excellent advice, and many gracious promises;—last of all, his recommending them solemnly by prayer to the protection and guidance of his heavenly Father. The magnanimity which our Lord discovers in the expression before us, is beyond conception: it implies, that although he knew this supper would be the last he should celebrate with his disciples, and that he should rise from it but a few hours before he suffered the most cruel insults and torments, which would end in his death; yet such was his love to his faithful people, such his desire to glorify his heavenly Father, that no passover was ever so welcome to him as this.

Ver. 16. *Until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.*] That is, "until the deliverance of all the faithful saints from the bondage of sin, is accomplished in the gospel dispensation; a deliverance typified by that of our fathers  
" from

17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves :

18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

19 ¶ And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you : this do in remembrance of me.

20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

21 ¶ But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

22 \* And truly the Son of man goeth, as

it was determined : but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed !

23 <sup>b</sup> And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

24 ¶ And there was also a strife among them which of them should be accounted the greatest.

25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them ; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

26 But ye shall not be so : but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth

<sup>p</sup> Dent. 8. 10. Exod. 23. 25. <sup>1</sup> Tim. 4. 5. Ch. 9. 16. Mat. 24. 19. & 15. 36. <sup>q</sup> See Mark, 14. 25. Mat. 26. 29. Ver. 16. <sup>r</sup> Mat. 26. 26-28. Mark, 14. 22-24. <sup>1</sup> Cor. 11. 23-29. & 10. 16, 17. with Rom. 14. 6. <sup>1</sup> Tim. 4. 4, 5. <sup>1</sup> Cor. 11. 24-26. <sup>1</sup> Cor. 2. 2. & 13. 24. Mat. 20. 28. & 1. 21. Titus, 2. 14. <sup>u</sup> Mat. 26. 28. Exod. 24. 8. Zech. 9. 14-17. Rom. 5. 6-11, 15-21. 2 Cor. 1. 20. <sup>v</sup> i. e. Signifies. Gen. 41. 26, 27. <sup>1</sup> Cor. 10. 4. Exod. 12. 11, 12. Ver. 19. <sup>y</sup> Mark, 14. 18-22. Mat. 26. 20-25. John, 13. 18, 28-30. Pf. 41. 9. & 55. 13. John, 6. 71. <sup>z</sup> Gen. 3. 15. Pf. 22. 1-21. & 69. 1-21. Is. 53. 14. & 53. 2-12. & 50. 5, 6. Daniel, 9. 24, 26. Zech. 13. 7. Acts, 4. 27, 28. & 2. 23. <sup>a</sup> Pf. 55. 15-23. & 109. 1-20. Mat. 27. 3-5. Acts, 1. 16-20. Is. 3. 11. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 26. 22. John, 13. 21-25. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 20. 24-28. Mark, 10. 41-45. & 9. 34-37. Ch. 9. 46, 48. Hab. 2. 4. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 20. 26, 27. & 18. 3, 4. & 23. 8-12. Ch. 14. 11. & 18. 14. John, 13. 12-17. <sup>1</sup> Cor. 9. 19-23. James, 4. 6, 10. <sup>1</sup> Peter, 5. 3, 5. <sup>e</sup> Ch. 17. 7-9. & 12. 37.

“ from the Egyptian bondage, to keep up the memory of which the passover was instituted.” The particle *until*, used here and ver. 18. does not imply, that after the accomplishment of the salvation of the faithful, our Lord was to eat the passover; it was a Hebrew form of expression, signifying that the thing mentioned was no more to be done for ever. See on Matth. i. 25. and Mark, xiv. 25.

Ver. 19. *This do, &c.*] From our Lord's words here recorded, and from those wherewith the apostle has concluded his account of the sacrament, 1 Cor. xi. 26. (*—for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come,—καταγγελλετε, ye preach,—ye declare the Lord's death, ye assure the world of the truth of it,*)—it appears that the sacrament of the supper was instituted, not only to bring Christ's sufferings, and the happy consequences thereof, to the remembrance of his disciples, but to demonstrate the truth of these things to the world in all ages. In this view the sacrament of the last supper is a most strong proof of our Lord's integrity, and of the truth of his mission. For if he had been an impostor, and was to have suffered death on account of his deluding the people, is it to be imagined that he would have instituted any rite with a view to preserve the memory of his having suffered punishment for the worst of crimes. This is beyond all human belief; and therefore, since by this institution he has perpetuated the memory of his own sufferings, it is a strong proof (though such proofs are not wanted) that he was conscious of his own innocence; that his character was really what the evangelists have represented it to be; and that our faith in him, as the Son of God, is well founded.

Ver. 20. *The new testament]* *The new covenant.*

Ver. 21, 22. *The hand of him that betrayeth me, &c.*] Our Lord, after delivering the sacramental cup, and telling them that his blood was shed for them, mentions the treachery of Judas a second time; and this second declaration came in with peculiar propriety after the institution of the sacrament, which exhibits the highest instance of love to mankind,—his dying to obtain a remission of their sins; for it shewed that the person who could deliberately do so great an injury to so kind a friend, must have been a monster, the foulness of whose ingratitude cannot be reached by the force of language. See the *Inferences* on Matth. xxvi.

Ver. 23. *And they began to inquire, &c.*] Upon Christ's giving so plain and moving a hint concerning his betrayer, all the disciples, except Judas, were shocked and grieved to think that any one among them should ever commit so base a villainy against their Lord; they were humbly jealous of their own hearts, lest they should deceive them; and were exceedingly solicitous to clear themselves, and to know who it was that should be guilty of this horrible wickedness.

Ver. 24. *And there was]* *Now, &c.*

Ver. 25, 26. *The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship, &c.*] “ Among the Gentiles, they are reckoned the greatest men who have the greatest power, and who exercise it in the most absolute manner. Such, however, have at times affected the pompous title of *Benefactors*, *Εὐεργέταις*, (a surname, which some of the kings of Egypt and of Syria assumed) and thereby have tacitly acknowledged that true greatness consists in goodness. But your greatness shall not be like theirs, shall not consist in the exercise of tyrannical power, though it should be joined with an affectation of titles, which denote qualities truly honourable.

at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.

29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

31 ¶ And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

32 \* But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death.

34 \* And he said, I tell thee, Peter; the cock shall not crow this day before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

35 ¶ And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

<sup>†</sup> Phil. 2. 7, 8. John, 13. 5, 14. Mat. 20. 28. Heb. 5. 8. 2 Cor. 8. 9. <sup>‡</sup> Mat. 19. 28, 29. Heb. 4. 15. & 2. 18. <sup>§</sup> Ch. 12. 32. 2 Cor. 3. 7. 2 Tim. 2. 13. Rev. 3. 21. & 2. 26, 27. Mat. 19. 28. & 24. 47. & 8. 11. Rev. 19. 9. Ch. 14. 15. 1 Cor. 6. 2, 3. Pf. 49. 14. <sup>¶</sup> 1 Pet. 5. 8. Job, 1. 11. & 2. 5. Rev. 12. 10. Zech. 3. 1. Amos, 9. 9. <sup>‡</sup> Mat. 16. 18. John, 17. 9, 11, 15, 20. & 21. 15-17. <sup>¶</sup> Jer. 31. 18. Pf. 94. 17, 18. & 51. 12, 13. John, 21. 15-17. 1f. 35. 3. Heb. 12. 13. 2 Cor. 1. 4. <sup>¶</sup> Jer. 10. 23. & 17. 9. Mat. 26. 31, 35. Mark, 14. 29, 31. John, 13. 37. Pf. 30. 6. <sup>‡</sup> Mat. 26. 3. Mark, 14. 30. John, 13. 38. <sup>¶</sup> Mat. 10. 9, 10. Ch. 9. 3. & 10. 4. Mark, 6. 8, 9.

Whoever desires to be great or chief among you, let him be so by humility, and by his serviceableness to the rest; in imitation of me your Master, whose greatness consists in this,—that I am become the servant of you all.” Instead of *greatest*, ver. 26. the original word might be rendered more properly *eldest*, as it is opposed to the *youngest*. Comp. Rom. ix. 12. According to the manners of the Jews, the aged expected great service and submission from the younger. See the notes on Matth. xx. 25, &c.

Ver. 28. *Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, &c.*] In my trials, or afflictions.

Ver. 29, 30. *And I appoint unto you, &c.*] The kingdom which the Father bestowed on Jesus, as the reward of his humiliations, was his mediatorial kingdom, Philip. ii. 9. not the happiness of heaven, which he enjoyed from eternity; wherefore, the kingdom which he bestowed on his apostles as the peculiar reward of their services, being of the same nature with his own, was the authority which they enjoyed next to him in the gospel dispensation. *That ye may eat and drink at my table, &c.* is evidently metaphorical, and signifies, that they were to share with him in the honours and pleasures of his high dignity; and *sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* We may just observe, that it is well known that the word *διατίθειαι*, used ver. 29. and rendered *appoint*, properly signifies to *covenant*, or “to bestow in virtue of a covenant;” and therefore the last clause of this verse may properly allude to what divines commonly call, “the covenant of redemption,” to which there are so many references in scripture, and concerning the reality of which we could have no doubt, if the references were not so express; considering, on the one hand, the great importance of that undertaking of our Lord’s to which it refers; and, on the other, the plain declarations of those prophecies which his spirit suggested; and the confidence wherewith he has promised those blessings, which as Mediator it empowers him to bestow on all his faithful saints.

Ver. 31, 32. *Simon! Simon!*] This repetition of the name of Simon, shews much earnestness in our Saviour,

and intimates the great danger to which Peter was exposed. Our Lord speaks here in the plural,—*οὐμεις*; “You, my apostles in general.”—*That he may sift you as wheat*, is an expression denoting the violent agitations, the formidable temptations, and numerous artifices, which the enemy of mankind would make use of to try their integrity. See Amos, ix. 9. “*But*, continues our Lord, *I have prayed for thee*,—Peter, in particular,—foreseeing the danger “to which thou wilt be peculiarly exposed; and when thou art returned back to thy duty, [*επιστρέψαι*], from those wanderings into which I foresee thou wilt fall;—strengthen thy brethren, by setting them an example of eminent faith and fortitude; and do thine utmost through all the remainder of thy days, to engage all, over whom thou hast any influence, steadily to adhere to my cause, in the midst of the greatest difficulties.” There can be no objection against taking the charge in this comprehensive sense; and as there can be no question but that Peter, after he had *went* his fall so *bitterly* as we know he did, applied himself to rally his dispersed brethren, and to prevent their fleeing from Jerusalem till the third day was over,—in the morning of which he was up betimes, and early at the sepulchre of our Lord; (See John, xx. 3.)—so, indeed, the strain of his *epistles* shews his long and affectionate remembrance of this solemn charge. Many passages of the *first* are peculiarly intended to animate his Christian brethren to a courageous adherence to Christ amid the greatest dangers; and the *second* has several cautions to guard them against the seductions of error; in some instances more to be dreaded than the terrors of the severest persecution. See Acts, ix. 35. xi. 2., &c.

Ver. 34. *The cock shall not crow this day, &c.*] As it is plain from this passage, and from the event, that the cock actually crew before Peter’s *third* denial, we must certainly take the words of St. Luke and St. John for the common time of cock-crowing, which probably did not arrive till after the cock, which Peter had heard, had crewed the second time, and perhaps oftener; for it is well

36 Then said he unto them, ' But now he that hath a purse, let him take *it*, and likewise *his scrip*: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, ' And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

38 And they said, Lord, behold, here *are two swords*. And he said unto them, ' It is enough.

39 ¶ ' And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

40 ' And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

41 ' And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

43 ' And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

44 ' And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Act. 14. 22. John, 16. 33. 1 Cor. 4. 11—13. 2 Cor. 11. 25—27. Heb. 10. 34, 35. & 11. 36, 37. 2 Tim. 2. 3, 4. & 3. 12. Ye have need of preparation against the approaching dangers. 1 If. 53. 12. Mark, 15. 27, 28. Ch. 23. 32. Mat. 27. 38. John, 10. 18. Heb. 9. 28. 2 Cor. 5. 21. John, 18. 36. 2 Cor. 10. 4. & 6. 4—7. Eph. 6. 10—18. 1 Peter, 5. 9. Mat. 26. 36—46. Mark, 14. 26, 32—42. John, 18. 1. Ver. 28. Mat. 26. 41. & 6. 13. Mark, 14. 38. Ch. 11. 4. Eph. 6. 18, 19. Ver. 46. 1 Peter 5. 8, 9. Mat. 26. 39, 39, 42, 44. Mark, 14. 35, 36. Heb. 5. 7. John, 18. 11. & 5. 30. & 6. 38. & 12. 27. Pf. 40. 8. Pf. 91. 11, 12. Mat. 4. 11. & 26. 51. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Heb. 1. 14. John, 12. 27. Gal. 3. 13. Heb. 5. 7. Jonah, 2. 3. Mat. 26. 37, 78. Pf. 22. 1, 2, 14, 15. & 69. 1, 2. & 18. 5, 6. & 116. 3.

well known, that those vigilant animals, on any little disturbance, often crow at midnight, or before it, though they do not quit their roost till about three in the morning, which was usually called *the cock-crowing*. See on Mark, xiii. 35. and the *Inferences* on Mark, xiv.

Ver. 36. *But now he that hath a purse*.] Our Lord, having finished what he had to say to Peter in particular, turned to the other disciples, and put them in mind how they had been prohibited when they were first sent out, to make any provision for their journey, and directed to rely wholly on God; and that though they had gone away without purse, scrip, and shoes, they had never wanted any thing: but he told them that matters were now altered, they were to be violently assailed by their enemies; were to meet with the strongest temptations, and to be so hotly persecuted by their countrymen, that they could no longer expect any succour at their hands; for which reason, he ordered them, in their future journeys, to provide money, and clothes, and a sword, for themselves: that is to say, besides relying on the divine Providence as formerly, they were to use prudent precautions in fortifying themselves against the trials which were coming on them; and our Lord tells them they were thus to arm themselves, because he was to be treated as a malefactor, condemned and crucified, agreeably to the predictions of the prophets. See Isaiah, liii. 12. He added too, that these misfortunes were not at a distance, but just at hand; *for the things concerning me have an end*; "They are just ready to be accomplished,—now you may easily guess at the reception you are likely to meet with, as my messengers and ministers, when you come to preach in the name and authority of one who has suffered as a malefactor, and yet demands faith and obedience as an Almighty Saviour."

Ver. 38. *Lord, behold, here are two swords*.] Our Lord's disciples, mistaking his meaning about the *swords*, replied,

they had *two*: the reason why they had any at all, probably, was, that they might defend themselves against robbers in their journey from Galilee and Perea, and from the beasts of prey which in those parts were very frequent and dangerous in the night time: it afterwards appears, that one of these swords was Peter's. See John, xviii. 10. Our Lord replies to the disciples, "*It is enough* for weapons of this sort; my chief intent is, to direct you to another kind of defence; even that which arises from piety and faith." This is strongly intimated by our Lord's saying that *two swords* were sufficient; which, it is evident, they could not have been for so many men, had our Lord meant what he said in a *literal* sense.

Ver. 42. *If thou be willing, remove this cup, &c.*] *Oh that thou wouldst*,—or, *that thou wert willing to remove this cup from me!* &c. Blackwall. Our Lord spoke this, not as desirous to be excused from sufferings and death, but in reference to the terror and severity of the combat in which he was now actually engaged. See on Matth. xxvii. 39.

Ver. 43. *And there appeared an angel, &c.*] As the sins of the world were laid upon Christ, and it pleased the Lord himself to bruise him, and to awaken the sword of justice against him (see Isaiah, liii. 5—12. Zech. xiii. 7.); so, unless our great Lord had a present view and sensation of this, it is to me unaccountable, that he should be in such terrible distress before his external sufferings came upon him; especially considering, that, at this very time, an angel was sent from heaven to strengthen him, and that so many martyrs have thought of, and gone through as great corporal sufferings, with undaunted bravery and triumph.

Ver. 44. *And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood*] Some commentators have taken this expression in the metaphorical sense; fancying that as those who weep bitterly are said to *weep blood*, so they may be said to *sweat blood*,

45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,

46 And said unto them, <sup>2</sup> Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

47 ¶ And while he yet spake, <sup>3</sup> behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus <sup>b</sup> to kiss him.

48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

49 When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord,

shall we smite with the sword?

50 ¶ And one of them smote a servant of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear.

51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

52 <sup>d</sup> Then Jesus said unto the chief-priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?

53 When I was <sup>e</sup> daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is <sup>f</sup> your hour, and the power of darkness.

<sup>a</sup> Jonah, 1. 6. Prov. 6. 9. See ver. 40. Ch. 21. 34, 36. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 26. 47—57. Mark, 14. 43—52. John, 18. 2—11. Acts, 1. 16. Pl. 2. 1. & 3. 1. & 22. 16. <sup>c</sup> Ezek. 33. 31. Pl. 12. 2. & 55. 21. <sup>d</sup> Sam. 20. 9. <sup>e</sup> John, 18. 10. Mat. 26. 51, 52. Mark, 14. 47. <sup>f</sup> Cor. 10. 4. Rom. 12. 19. <sup>g</sup> Mark, 14. 43, 49. Mat. 26. 55. John, 18. 3, 20. Pl. 22. 12, 16. & 2. 12. & 3. 1. & 69. 19. <sup>h</sup> Ch. 20. 47, 48. Mat. 21. 14, 15, 45, 46. John, 7. 19. & 8. 37. <sup>i</sup> Acts, 2. 23. & 4. 27, 28. Gen. 3. 15. John, 12. 27. & 14. 30. Pl. 22. 11—21. & 69. 1—21. If. liii.

blood, who sweat excessively by reason of hard labour or acute pain. They explain it, "His drops of sweat were large and clammy, like drops of gore:" but others more justly affirm, that our Lord's sweat was really mixed with blood to such a degree, that its colour and consistency was as if it had been wholly blood; for the Greek particle *ὡς*, rendered, *as it were*, does not always denote similitude, but sometimes reality. See John, i. 14. Matth. xiv. 5. Grotius espoused the metaphorical meaning of this passage; but Bartholinus (De Cruce, p. 134.) disputes against him, and gives examples of sweats which have actually been mixed with blood. Dr. Whitby observes, that Aristotle and Diodorus Siculus both mention *bloody sweats*, as attending some extraordinary agony of mind; and Leti, in his life of Pope Sixtus V. p. 200. and Sir John Chardin, in his history of Persia, vol. i. p. 126. mention a like phenomenon: to which Dr. Jackson in his works, vol. ii. p. 819. adds another from Thuanus, lib. 10. However, that which puts this matter beyond all doubt, is a fact well known in history; namely, that Charles the IXth of France died of a malady, in which his blood gushed out of all the pores of his body. Voltaire describes it thus, in his Universal History, chap. 142. "Charles the IXth died in his five-and-twentieth year; the lady that he died of was very extraordinary; the blood gushed out of all his pores. This accident, of which there are some instances, was owing either to excessive fear, to violent passion, or to a warm and melancholy constitution." Many learned writers are of opinion, that our Saviour, during this extreme agony, struggled in a peculiar manner with the spirits of darkness; and that hence an angel appeared to strengthen him.

Ver. 48. *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* "Dost thou betray him, whom thou canst not but know to be the Son of man,—the Messiah, by that which all men use as the symbol either of love or homage,—making it a signal of thy treachery? And dost thou think that he can be imposed upon by this poor artifice, or

"that such baseness and cruelty will not be punished?"—There is great reason to believe that our Lord uses this phrase of *the Son of man* to Judas on this occasion, as he had done the same evening at supper twice in a breath, in the sense here given; see Matth. xxvi. 24. and it adds a great spirit to these words; which the reader will discern to be attended with much greater strength and beauty, than if our Lord had only said *Dost thou betray Me with a kiss?*

Ver. 51. *Suffer ye thus far.*] The sense which has been affixed to this passage is various. Some have understood it as a request from Jesus, that the persons who had apprehended him, would oblige him so far as to let him go to the wounded man; and the context seems to countenance this opinion, representing him as immediately *touching the ear*, and *healing it*. Others, and among them the Syriac, suppose it to be spoken to the disciples, and to contain a prohibition against their offering any more violence; in which sense they paraphrase the words, "It is enough that you have opposed their violence so far; go no farther, but stop here." The circumstance of our Lord's healing Malchus's ear by touching it, seems to imply, that he created a new part in the room of that which was cut off; or if he performed the cure any other way, he equally demonstrated both his goodness and power. No wound or distemper whatever was incurable in the hand of Jesus, neither was any injury so great that he could not forgive it; and as this was an act of great compassion and forgiveness, so likewise was it an act of singular wisdom; for it would effectually prevent those reflections and censures on Jesus, which the rashness of Peter's attack might otherwise have occasioned. See the *Inferences* on Mark, xiv.

Ver. 53. *When I was daily with you in the temple.*] This was a proof of our Saviour's innocence; for had he been conscious of any crime which could render him obnoxious to punishment, he would not have exposed himself in this public manner; and had the Jews either thought him guilty,

54 ¶ Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high-priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were sat down together, Peter sat down among them.

56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

57 And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

59 And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilean.

60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet

spake, the cock crew.

61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice.

62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

63 ¶ And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him.

64 And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?

65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

66 ¶ And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief-priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying,

67 Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:

Mat. 26. 57. Mark, 14. 33. John, 18. 12-14. Acts, 8. 32. If. 53. 7. Lam. 4. 20. Acts, 2. 23. Mat. 26. 58, 69-75. Mark, 14. 54, 66-72. John, 18. 15-18, 25-27. with ver. 33. 34. Prov. 9. 6. & 13. 20. Pf. 1. 1. & 26. 4, 5. & 28. 3. Gen. 3. 13. & 16. 2. Eccl. 7. 26. Ver. 33, 34. Col. 3. 9. Zech. 8. 16. Eph. 4. 25. John, 1. 43, 44. Ch. 13. 1. Judges, 12. 6. Mat. 26. 34. Mark, 14. 30. John, 13. 38. Ver. 34. Mat. 26. 75. Mark, 14. 72. Pf. 119. 59, 60. Ezek. 7. 16. Jer. 31. 18. Zech. 12. 10. 2 Cor. 7. 13. If. 66. 2. Mark, 14. 55-65. Mat. 26. 59-68. John, 18. 19-24. Mat. 26. 67, 68. Mark, 14. 65. 1 Peter, 2. 23. Ch. 7. 16. & 23. 11. Job, 16. 10. Pf. 22. 6-21. & 69. 1-21. If. 50. 6. & 52. 14. & liii. Micah, 5. 1. Mat. 27. 1. Mark, 15. 1. If. 53. 3. Pf. 22. 12, 16, 21. & 2. 1. & 3. 1. Acts, 4. 16. Mat. 11. 4, 5. & 16. 16. John, 1. 20, 49. If. 52. 13. Mat. 10. 16. Eph. 5. 15. Job, 5. 12, 13.

guilty, or been able to bring any accusation against him, it is evident that they wanted neither will nor power to have apprehended him. But the reason why they continued so long inactive, is intimated in the close of the verse. They were kept under restraint, till the time predicted for his sufferings was accomplished; and that being now come, power was allowed to the prince of darkness to infligate them to this crime, and opportunity was permitted them to perpetrate it. See on Matth. xxvi. 56.

Ver. 54. *And Peter followed afar off.*] His love to his Master was not extinguished, yet it was exceedingly weakened; he followed, but *afar off*: he was here beginning to stagger; he had said that he would follow Christ, and he persuades himself that he is fulfilling his promise by thus following him *afar off*. St. John informs us with his usual modesty, that another disciple followed Jesus, John, xviii. 15. who appears to have been himself; whence we may infer, that Peter and John returned quickly after their flight, or else they could not have followed at some distance, and yet be so near as to be ready to go into Caiaphas's house with him.

Ver. 63, 64. *And the men that held Jesus, &c.*] *And the men who had Jesus in custody.* Wynne. "Though St. Luke has told us how Jesus was insulted, before he denied his trial, contrary in appearance to the order observed by the other evangelists, who mention those insults as succeeding his being condemned, it does not follow that he meant to say, he was insulted before his trial. I acknowledge, indeed, that his judges and their

retinue were abundantly capable of being thus unjust and barbarous towards him, even before they made a show of condemning him; nevertheless, what St. Luke has said here does not necessarily oblige us to suppose this. He might conclude his account of Peter's denials with relating what followed upon our Lord's being condemned, because it happened immediately after the last denial, and to shew what a load of indignity was laid at once on the Son of God;—while the most zealous of all his disciples was denying his Lord with oaths and imprecations, the servants and others insulted him in the most barbarous manner." See the notes on Matth. xxvi. 67, &c. for a fuller view of this part of the gospel history.

Ver. 65. *Many other things blasphemously spake they.*] There is something very remarkable in this expression. They charged him with blasphemy, Matth. xxvi. 65. in asserting himself to be the Son of God; but the evangelist here fixes that charge on them, because he really was so.

Ver. 66. *As soon as it was day,*] When the band of soldiers arrived at the high-priest's with Jesus, they found many of the chief-priests, and scribes, and elders assembled there. Some persons of distinction however may have been absent, for whose coming they would wait; wherefore, although the soldiers brought Jesus to the high-priest's a little after midnight, his trial did not begin till about three in the morning; for if the passover this year fell late in April, the sun must at that season have arisen to the inhabitants of Jerusalem about twenty-three minutes after

68 And if I also ask *you*, ye will not answer me, nor let *me* go.

69 Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

70 Then said they all, Art thou then the

Son of God? And he said unto them, 'Ye say that I am.

71 And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

\* Pf. 110. 1. Daniel, 7. 13, 14. Mark, 16. 10. Acts, 1. 11. & 3. 21. Heb. 1. 3. & 8. 1. Ch. 21. 27. 1 Thess. 4. 16. Rev. 1. 7. & 20. 11, 12.  
 † Mark, 14. 62—64. Mat. 26. 64—66. John, 5. 17. & 10. 30. i. e. ye truly say, that I am.

after five, and the day have dawned about fifteen minutes after three: wherefore, since St. Luke fixes the appearance of Jesus before the council to the dawn, his trial must have begun about three in the morning. This is confirmed by the account which St. Matthew gives of the hour when Jesus was led away to the governor, ch. xxvii. 1, 2. The intermediate time between the taking of Jesus and his trial might have passed in procuring witnesses, in sending for the absent members, in gathering the clerks and officers of the court, and in fitting up an apartment for the trial; for that Jesus was tried by the council, not in the temple, as many suppose, but in the high-priest's palace, is evident from John, xviii. 28. where we are told expressly that they led Jesus from Caiaphas's house to the *prætorium*.

Ver. 68. *If I also ask you, &c.*] That is, "If I propose the proofs of my mission, and require you to give your opinion of them, you will overbear me with your renewed violence, and neither acquit nor release me." See on Matth. xxvi. 64.

Ver. 70. *Ye say that I am.*] *Ye say true; for I am.* It follows; *we have heard of his own mouth.* See Mark, xiv. 62.

Ver. 71. *We ourselves have heard*] It was customary for the Jews to suppress the word *blasphemy* in their discourses relating to it. St. Luke retains this custom; but St. Matthew and St. Mark have added the word, for the sake of perspicuity.

*Inferences drawn from our Saviour's agony in the garden.* Ver. 39—46. What a preface do we here find to our Saviour's passion! a *hymn*, and an agony! a cheerful hymn, and an agony no less sorrowful. A hymn begins, both to raise and to testify the courageous resolution of his suffering; an agony follows, to shew that he was truly sensible of those extremities wherewith he was resolved to struggle.

All his disciples bore their part in that hymn; it was proper that they should all see his comfortable and divine magnanimity on entering those melancholy lists: only three of them shall be allowed to be the witnesses of his agony; only those three who had been the witnesses of his transfiguration. That sight should have well fore-armed and prepared them for this: how could they be dismayed at seeing his body now sweat, which they had then seen to shine? How could they be affrighted at seeing him now accosted by Judas and his train, whom they saw attended by Moses and Elijah? How could they be discouraged at hearing the reproaches of base men, when they had heard the voice of God to him, *from that excellent glory*,—*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased?*

Now before these eyes the Sun of Righteousness begins

to be overcast with clouds: *He began to be sorrowful and very heavy.* Many sad thoughts for mankind had he secretly indulged, yet smothered in his own breast:—now his grief is too great for restraint: *My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.* O Saviour, what must thou needs feel, when thy tongue uttered such a sentence! Feeble minds are apt to bemoan themselves upon light occasions; the grief must be violent, which causes a strong heart to burst forth into a passionate complaint. O what an expression was that for the Son of God to utter? Where is that Comforter whom thou promisedst to others? Where is that Father of all mercies, and God of all comfort, *in whose presence is the fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore?* Where are those constant, those cheerful resolutions of a fearless walking through the valley of the shadow of death?—Alas! if that *face* were not *hid from thee*, whose essence could not be divided, these pangs could not have been. The sun was withdrawn for a while, that there might be night, as in the world around thee, so in thy breast; withdrawn, in respect not of being, but of sight;—it was the hardest portion of thy sufferings that thou wert thus disconsolate.

But to whom dost thou make this moan, O thou Saviour of men? What issue couldst thou expect? Thy disciples might be astonished with thy grief; but there is neither power in their hands to free thee from thy sorrows, nor efficacy in their compassion to mitigate them. What creature can help, when thou complainest?

What human soul is capable of conceiving the least of those sorrows which called forth this expression? Thou didst not only say, "My soul is troubled;" so it often was,—even to tears; but, *My soul is sorrowful*,—as if it had been before assaulted, but now possessed with grief,—and that not in any moderate way; it is *exceeding sorrowful*;—and yet there are with us degrees in the very extremities of evils: those that are most vehement, may still be capable of a remedy, at least of a relaxation; thine, however, was past all these hopes; *exceeding sorrowful even unto death!*

What was it, what could it be, O Saviour, that lay thus heavy upon thy divine soul?—Was it the fear of death?—Was it the anticipation of the pain, shame, torment of thy ensuing crucifixion?—O poor and base thoughts of the narrow hearts of cowardly and impotent mortals! How many thousands of thy blessed martyrs have welcomed no less tortures with smiles of grätulations? If their weakness was thus undaunted and prevalent, what was thy power? O no; it was the sad weight of the sins of mankind; it was the heavy burden of thy Father's wrath for our sins, which thus pressed down thy soul, and wrung from thee these bitter expressions of sorrow.

What

C H A P. XXIII.

*Jesus is accused before Pilate, and sent to Herod; Herod mocketh him. Herod and Pilate are made friends. Barabbas is desired of the people, and is loosed by Pilate, and Jesus is given to be crucified: he telleth of the destruction of Jerusalem to the women that lament him: and prayeth for his enemies. Two evil-doers are crucified with him: his death: his burial.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**A**ND <sup>a</sup> the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 21. 66. Mat. 27. 2, 11—31. Mark, 15. 1—20. John, 18. 28—40. & 19. 1—16. Pf. 2. 1—4. & 22. 1—21. & 3. 1. & 69. 1—21. Act. 2. 23. & 4. 27, 28. 1 Thess. 2. 15. <sup>b</sup> 1 Kings, 18. 17. Jer. 38. 4. Acts, 17. 6, 7. & 24. 5. John, 18. 30. & 19. 12. with Mat. 27. 25. & 22. 21. Ch. 20. 25, 27. Rom. 13. 7. <sup>c</sup> Mark, 15. 2. Mat. 27. 11. John, 18. 33—37. 1 Tim. 6. 13. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 27. 18, 19, 24. Mark, 15. 10, 14. John, 18. 38. & 19. 4, 6. 2 Cor. 5. 21. 1 Peter, 2. 22, 24. & 3. 18.

2 And they began to accuse him, saying, <sup>b</sup> We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a king.

3 And Pilate asked him, saying, <sup>c</sup> Art thou the king of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.

4 Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, <sup>d</sup> I find no fault in this man.

5 And they were the more fierce, saying,

What can it avail thee, O Saviour, to tell thy grief to men?—Who can ease thee as man, but thy heavenly Father? Lo, to him thou turnest;—*Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!*

Was not this that prayer, O blessed Lord, which in the days of thy flesh thou offeredst up with strong crying and tears, to him that was able to save thee from death?—Never was cry so strong; never was God thus solicited. How could heaven but shake at such a prayer from the power that made it? How can my heart but tremble to hear this suit from the Captain of our salvation?

But, O thou that saidst, *I and my Father are one*,—dost thou suffer aught from thy Father, but what thou wouldst? Was this cup of thine or forced or casual? Far hence be these misraided thoughts of ignorance and frailty; thou camest to suffer, and thou wouldst do what thou camest for; yet since thou wouldst be a man, thou wouldst take all of man, but sin. Within this *veil* of thine thou wouldst exhibit what that nature of ours which thou hadst assumed, could incline to wish; but in thy resolution thou wouldst shew us what thy victorious thoughts, raised and assisted by thy divine power, had voluntarily submitted to;—*nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt*. As man, thou hadst a will of thine own. No human mind can be perfect without that main faculty, that *will*, which naturally inclines towards an exemption from miseries. Those pains which in themselves are grievous, thou embracest as agreeable to the divine will; so that thy fear gives place to thy love and obedience. How should we have known those evils to be so formidable, if thou hadst not in half a thought inclined to deprecate them? How could we have avoided evils so dreadful and deadly, hadst thou not willingly undergone them?

While the mind was in this fearful agitation, no wonder if thy feet were not fixed. One while thou walkest to thy drowsy attendants, and stirrest up their vigilancy; then thou returnest to thy passionate devotions. *Thou fallest again upon thy face*; thy prayers are so much more vehement than thy pangs, as thy soul is yet lower than thy humble body:—*And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

O my Saviour! what an agony must every heart endure

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which thinks on thine? What pain, what fear, what strife, what horror was in thy sacred breast! How didst thou struggle under the weight of our sins, that thus thou didst sweat, that thus thou didst bleed!—All was peace with thee: thou wert one with thy co-eternal and co-equal Father;—all the angels worshipped thee; all the powers of heaven and earth awefully acknowledge thine infinity. It was our nature that enfeoffed and involved thee in this misery and torment; in that nature thou sustainedst thy Father's wrath, and the curse denounced on man. I wonder not if thou bleedest a sweat, if thou sweatest blood. If the moisture of that sweat be from the body, the tincture of it is from the soul.

But, O thou blessed angel, that camest to comfort the afflicted Saviour, how didst thou look upon this Son of God, when thou sawest him labouring for life under these violent temptations? ver. 43. With what astonishment didst thou behold him bleeding, whom thou didst adore! Oh! the wise and marvellous dispensation of the Almighty! Whom God will afflict, an angel shall relieve. The God of angels droopeth; an angel of God strengthens him!

Blessed Jesu! if, as man, thou wouldst *be made a little lower than the angels*, how can it disparage thee to be attended and cheered by an angel? Thy humiliation would not disdain comfort from meaner hands. How free was it for thy Father to convey seasonable consolations to thy humbled soul, by whatever means! Behold, though *thy cup shall not pass*, yet shall it be sweetened. What though thou see not for a time thy Father's face, yet shalt thou feel his hand. What could that assistant spirit have done without the God of spirits? O Father of mercies, *in the midst of the sorrows of my heart, thy comforts shall refresh my soul*; and whatever be the means of my support, I know, and I adore the Author. Thou *wilt not suffer us to be tried above what we are able; but wilt with the trial also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The awful hour now approaches, when the great Redeemer must offer himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world. We have,

1. The chief priests and scribes consulting how to perpetrate the bloody deed, on which they had resolved. The fear

4 X

He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean.

7 And, as soon as he knew that he belonged

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 4. 12—25. Mark, 1. 14. Luke, 4. 16—44. John, 1. 43. & 2. 1—17. <sup>f</sup> Ch. 13. 1. Acts, 5. 37.

fear of the people restrained them from open violence, and now they plotted how to take him off secretly.

2. Judas the traitor opportunely appeared to further their scheme. Satan now urged him on to the precipice of ruin; and going to the chief priests, in council assembled, who gladly embraced the offer he made, they soon struck up the bargain, and for thirty pieces of silver he engaged to betray his Master; and accordingly he watched for a secret opportunity, when, in the absence of the people, they might seize him without fear of a tumult. *Note*; (1.) All the malice of open enemies does not strike at the cause of Christ so deeply as the perfidy of false disciples. (2.) The devil watches the weak side of professors; and whether it be gold, or wine, or women, &c. he prepares the bait, and apostates readily catch at it.

2dly, The day of the preparation of the passover being come, we have,

1. The solemnization of it according to the law. His disciples, Peter and John, had been sent to make ready, and directed whither to go; and having followed the orders of their Master, and prepared the paschal lamb, at even he came and sat down with the twelve, Judas being still of the number, his treachery not having yet openly appeared. Being seated, with warm affection he addressed them, saying, *With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.* He was happy to have this last meeting with them; he longed for the hour when the great work that he had undertaken should be accomplished, and that was now at hand. He welcomed those approaching sufferings which were to procure the salvation of all the faithful saints of God, and was now about to put a period to all the ceremonial institutions. Therefore, he adds, *I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God*: for when, as the Lamb of God, he should be offered, who was the true passover, this typical ordinance must cease of course. In the gospel kingdom, the supper that he was now about to institute, would supersede the other; and in the great day of his appearing and glory, they, his faithful apostles, should most eminently rejoice together in the final accomplishment of their glorious liberty; when departed from this world, the house of their prison, they should enter with him into the heavenly Canaan of eternal rest. Presenting therefore the passover-cup to the disciples, in which it was usual for the company to pledge the master, he takes a solemn farewell *of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come*; either, when, after his exaltation, his gospel should be spread through the earth, and his presence be manifested in the midst of his church, where his disciples should assemble to partake of his supper; or, when the heavenly kingdom should come, where his faithful people shall be for ever satisfied with the pleasures that are at his right hand.

2. The institution of *the Lord's supper*, which should be continually celebrated in his church, in memory of a greater redemption than that from Egypt, even the de-

liverance which he has obtained for us by the sacrifice of himself, from Satan, sin, death, and hell. The bread is broken in token of his body being broken on the cross; it is given us as spiritual food for our immortal souls, that, by faith feeding upon the great doctrine of his atonement, we may be comforted and strengthened with might in the inner man. And the wine represents to us that Blood which he shed for the remission of our sins, and which seals to us the promises of the gospel covenant, of which we are assured partakers, when faith realizes the signs, and makes Christ's flesh meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.

3dly, Christ, having finished the supper, addresses himself to his disciples.

1. He admonishes them, that, though strange the relation, yet one of them should betray him; and dreadful would be the guilt of that wretch who should perpetrate the horrid deed. Astonished at the information, the disciples, with anxious solicitude, began to inquire which of them he pointed at, shocked with the thought of being guilty of such enormous wickedness. *Note*; (1.) There are in every age traitors, who eat of Christ's bread and yet betray him. (2.) Though God foresees and permits the wickedness of sinners, yet will not this at all exculpate them from their guilt. (3.) Holy jealousy over ourselves, lest we should be faithless, is the surest way to preserve our fidelity inviolable.

2. He rebukes the sinful affectation of precedence, for which his apostles, whose heads were still full of his temporal kingdom, had been disputing among themselves. He corrects their vain imaginations, and assures them, that the kingdom which he was about to erect, was in no wise like the kingdoms of the Gentiles, where the princes and rulers exercised despotic sway over their subjects, affected the title of benefactors, and were flattered with it by their people: but they who bore his commission, must not imitate such examples, nor think of lording it over their brethren. The only way in which his ministers can hope to rise in eminence, is by condescending to every work and labour of love; to serve the meanest and least of his disciples; in honour preferring others to themselves, and being ever little and low in their own eyes. His own example was a powerful argument to enforce humility upon them. Though he was their Master, and they his servants, he submitted even to wash their feet, that they might learn of him. Hitherto they had continued with him, during all his trials and humiliations; they have only to persevere in the same way, expecting nothing on earth but sufferings, and looking for higher honours than the fading ones of this world; either in *the kingdom of grace*, in which they should fill the most important stations, be made eminent instruments of God for good to men's souls, and partake of the rich provision of gospel ordinances: or, in *the kingdom of glory*, where they should reign with their exalted Lord, filled with eternal consolations; and sit

down

unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

8 ¶ And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was <sup>h</sup> desirous to see him of a long *season*, because he had heard

<sup>c</sup> Ch. 3. 1. & 9. 7, 9.

<sup>h</sup> Ch. 9. 7, 9. Mat. 14. 1. Mark, 6. 14.

down on thrones prepared for them at his right hand, assessors with him in the judgment, *judging the twelve tribes of Israel*: as he himself was now about to take the mediatorial throne appointed to him by his Father, and should reign over his faithful people in glory everlasting. *Note*; (1.) In Christ's kingdom humility is the only way to honour; and our ambition must be, not to be admired as *great*, but to lay ourselves out in doing *good*. (2.) They who faithfully adhere to the Saviour in the midst of manifold temptations, shall find, that as their tribulations abound for Christ, their consolations, even in this world, shall abound also, and that they shall, in the world to come, obtain a throne of glory that fadeth not away. (3.) The faints of God are now usually despised and trampled upon; but shortly their revilers and persecutors shall see them exalted to a throne, and assessors with the great Judge, (see 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.) before whose bar his enemies and theirs must stand trembling, and be covered with everlasting shame and contempt.

3. He warns Peter of his approaching fall; but foretels at the same time, that through his grace and intercession he will recover. *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, even all of you: and his purpose is, to sift you as wheat, hoping to destroy them by apostacy: but I have prayed for thee, in particular, against whom the fiercest attack will be made, that thy faith fail not; though it will be grievously shaken. And when thou art converted, recovered from this dreadful temptation and fall, strengthen thy brethren: taught by experience, admonish others of the rock of self-confidence on which thou hast struck, and to beware of temptation.* *Note*; If we have fallen, we must not lie down in despair, but arise, and return with shame and humble confession to a pardoning God, that we may find mercy.

4. He silences Peter's boasts, by expressly foretelling him that he would certainly deny him thrice. Peter resolutely declared, that neither a prison nor death should ever make him be false to his Master, or induce him to forsake him for a moment: but Christ assures him, that that night he would have a dire conviction of the weakness of his resolutions, and the strength of the tempter's power over him, even so far as to make him deny that he ever knew his Master.

5. He appeals to his disciples for his past care over them; and they own, that in all their journeys, when they travelled without money or provisions, they wanted nothing. *Note*; (1.) The more we reflect on the divine Providence in the days that are past, the more we shall be compelled to acknowledge, that in innumerable instances God hath helped us. (2.) Past experience of the Lord's goodness should engage our present confidence in his mercy. (3.) Christ's disciples must be satisfied with a little, and their Master will take care that they shall not be deftitute.

6. He bids them now prepare for and expect more perilous times, and days of greater distress. He was about

to suffer among transgressors, in the greatest torment and ignominy, according to the ancient prophecies concerning him; all which now were ready to be accomplished: and they, for the testimony of his gospel, would be exposed to want and suffering. They must now take all that they have, and employ it in providing those necessaries for themselves which they will want; and must, though at the expence of their garments, purchase a sword, as more needful for their own defence against the perils of robbers, whom they may be called to encounter in their travels. Or, figuratively, this may rather refer to the persecutions and violence of their enemies, against which it would require all their fortitude and courage to bear up. The disciples, supposing him to mean literally, that they should repel force by force, replied, *Lord, here are two swords*, as if they wished to know whether they should procure more; but *he said unto them, It is enough*; these were sufficient to answer the instructive design for which he mentioned them. It was not by those weapons of war that his kingdom was to be spread, or their safety secured; but by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and the left.

4thly, We have Christ's agony in the garden, the account of which the former evangelists had given us in nearly the same words. See Matth. xxvi. 36, &c. Mark, xiv. 32, &c. Three circumstances are particularly taken notice of by St. Luke:

1. That an angel appeared from heaven, strengthening him in his agony; probably suggesting to him, as man, some powerful inducements to encourage and support him under his unutterable distress; that the conflict would be short, the issue glorious, the victory sure, and the eternal salvation of the faithful be the great reward. So low did the Son of God humble himself, as to need their services, who were the work of his own hands: and they who ministered to him, will not fail to perform the like kind offices for all believers. If the Lord lay upon us heavy burdens, he will send us help in the needful time of trouble.

2. That being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly. All the storms and billows of divine wrath were now going over him, and the great enemy of souls, with all his fury, hurled his fiery darts against him. With strong crying and tears he redoubled therefore his supplications, and was heard. *Note*; Prayer is at all times seasonable; but when we are under distress of body, or soul, we are peculiarly called to cry mightily to him, whose strength is made perfect in weakness; and every *wrestling* Jacob will be a *prevailing* Israel.

3. His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. The intenseness of his agony threw the humours of his body into so violent a fermentation, that though it was night, and he lay on the cold ground, the blood transfused with his sweat through the pores, and

many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

9 Then he questioned with him in many words; but <sup>1</sup> he answered him nothing.

<sup>1</sup> If. 5. 3, 7. Pf. 38. 13, 14. & 15. 4. Mat. 7. 6. & 10. 16. Amos, 5. 13. 1 Peter, 2. 23. If. 53. 7. Pf. 39. 9.

the reeking drops, trickling down, dyed the earth on which he lay. With what a bloody baptism was he baptized! My soul, behold, admire, and adore! It was love for thee, that brought thy Saviour thus low.

5thly, The traitor with an armed band now appears; and we have,

1. Christ betrayed. The signal given by Judas was a kiss. Adding hypocrisy to his treachery, he approached him; and Jesus, who well knew his design, with one kind word of exhortation on his baseness, readily surrendered himself into the hands of his enemies. *Note*; The Lord is privy to the secret thoughts of apostates in heart, and sees the traitor under all the specious profession that he makes.

2. The disciples, who instantly would have stood on their defence, and rescued him, asked his leave to unsheath their swords; but Peter, too impatient to wait for an answer, drew, and aiming a blow at one of those who were active in seizing on his Master, a servant of the high priest's, the sword glanced down the side of his head, and took off his right ear. But Christ rebuked Peter for his rashness, and desires his enemies not to resent the blow which Peter had struck, the damage of which he immediately repairs, and on the spot gave them an evidence of his power and grace, by healing the servant, and restoring his lost ear; which, if their hearts had not been hardened as the nether millstone, could not fail to have convinced them both of the wickedness and ingratitude of their conduct. May we learn of our Lord thus ever to render good for evil!

3. He exhortates with the chief priests, and the captains of the temple, and elders; some of whom, even at that unseasonable hour, forgetting their dignity, and infligated by their malice, now mingled with the soldiers, and came to make sure of their prey. Christ reasons with them on the inutility of such a military force, when he never would have attempted resistance, nor ever meant to abscond, since he appeared daily in public at the temple: *But*, says he, *this is your hour, and the power of darkness*. Till that hour came, all the powers of earth and hell could not prevail against him.

6thly, We have,

1. Peter's sad fall. Willing to see what would be the end of his Master's trials, he stole into the palace, and hoped to pass unperceived among the crowd; but his look, his behaviour, his speech, discovered him, and excited repeated charges from the by-standers, which he solemnly disowned, declaring that he did not know the man Jesus whom they spoke of, and confirming the horrid lie with the most profane oaths and perjury. One wilful lie has often led men to the most dreadful lengths. None know where they shall stop, when for a moment they deviate from the path of truth.

2. His gracious recovery. The cock crew to warn him of his guilt, and rung in Peter's ears a peal of loudest thunder; and one look of Jesus broke his heart with an-

guish. *He turned, and looked upon Peter*; and that glance spoke more than words could utter. It shewed him, that, though now on his trial, Christ was apprised of all that passed: it conveyed the deepest conviction, the tenderest exhortation, the kindest compassion, to his heart. Peter's guilt now rose in blackest colours to his view; his baseness, his ingratitude, every aggravating circumstance returned to his memory; and, overwhelmed with grief, anguish, horror, and shame, *he went out, and wept bitterly*.

7thly, Behold with horror and indignation,

1. The insults put on this innocent sufferer by the abjects who gathered themselves against him. The servants who kept Jesus in custody till the council met, mocked him, buffeted him; and blindfolding him, in derision of his prophetic character, struck him on the face, and bid him tell who smote him; with other blasphemies, which he silently and patiently endured. See the Annotations.

2. The injustice and cruel oppression which his judges, the chief priests and scribes, shewed at his trial. Early they arose, at break of day, eager to hasten his condemnation; and having brought him before them, demanded a direct answer whether he were the Messiah, or not. Christ knew that their wicked design was to employ his own words as the ground of his condemnation, and therefore exhortates with them on their unfair and unreasonable proceedings. *If I tell you, ye will not believe*; they were resolved at all events, in hardened obstinacy, to reject his pretensions; *and if I ask you what you can object to the evidences of my divine mission which I have given, ye will not answer me*, unable to refute them, yet determined not to be convinced by them, though reduced to silence: *nor will you let me go*, though not able to prove a single charge against me. Therefore he refers them for conviction to his coming with vengeance on the throne of judgment; when they should know, to their cost, whether he really was possessed of that character which he assumed. With indignation they tumultuously asked, whether he dared arrogate the title of *the Son of God*? he boldly replied in the affirmative—so they said, and so indeed he was. With one voice they instantly condemned him as a blasphemer, counting any farther witness unnecessary; when his own confession proved, as they concluded, the blasphemy of his pretensions. So were they given up to a reprobate mind, and, blind to the clearest evidence of truth, rushed on their eternal ruin, filling up the measure of their iniquities.

#### CHAP. XXIII.

*Ver. 1, 2. And the whole multitude—arose, &c.*] At break of day Christ was brought before Pilate, and charged with three capital crimes,—*perverting the nation,—forbidding to give tribute to Caesar,—and saying that he himself was Christ, a king*. They did not charge him with calling him-

10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and <sup>k</sup>vehemently accused him.

11 <sup>l</sup> And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked *him*, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

12 ¶ And the same day <sup>m</sup> Pilate and Herod

were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

13 ¶ <sup>n</sup> And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,

14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, <sup>o</sup> as one that perverteth the peo-

<sup>k</sup> Ver. 2. 5. Gen. 19. 9. Acts, 6. 12—14. & 18. 13. & 24. c. <sup>l</sup> If. 53. 7. Pf. 22. 6. & 69. 9, 20. Prov. 29. 12. <sup>m</sup> Acts, 4. 27. James, 4. 4. Pf. 83. 5. with Ch. 13. 1. <sup>n</sup> Mat. 27. 23. Mark, 5. 14. John, 18. 38. & 19. 4. <sup>o</sup> Ver. 2. 5.

self *the Son of God*, knowing very well that Pilate would not have concerned himself with such an accusation, which no way affected the state. All the three crimes with which the Jews charge him, were only inferences of theirs from the saying that he was the Son of God; (Ch. xxii. 70.) They themselves drew imaginary consequences from his doctrine, which he had expressly denied; nay, and taught the contrary: they who oppose his followers, still use the same method. Pontius Pilate finding this, (for it is most probable that he examined them as to the precise words which Christ had spoken,) their accusation had no weight with him.

*Ver. 7. He sent him to Herod.*]—Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, who had beheaded St. John the Baptist. Pilate probably sent Christ to Herod, with a design to pay him a compliment, and as the means of reconciliation, which it accordingly proved, ver. 12. Another reason likewise for Pilate's doing this might be to oblige his wife, who had cautioned him by a message *to have nothing to do with that just man*. Matth. xxvii. 19. And he might be further induced to it, in order to ease his own conscience, as being convinced of our Saviour's innocence; and at the same time to gratify the Jews, if Herod had thought fit to comply with their solicitations. The Roman governors indeed were empowered to punish any persons for crimes committed by them within the limits of their respective provinces; even though they belonged to other states and jurisdictions; but yet there appears no irregularity in this procedure of Pilate, nor any thing but what was customary on some occasions, as we learn from the Roman law.

*Ver. 9. But he answered him nothing.*] Herein our Lord followed the rule observed by him as God in the administration of his moral government. He bestows on men means, opportunities, and assistances, particularly his Holy Spirit, such as, if they improve them properly, will lead them to knowledge and happiness; but these being slighted by men, he, after waiting the due time, frequently for wise reasons shuts up from them all the springs of grace, and leaves them hopeless of that salvation which they have so long despised.

*Ver. 11. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought.*] Herod, finding himself disappointed, ver. 9. ordered Christ to be clothed with an old robe, in colour like those which kings used to wear, and permitted his attendants to insult him, perhaps with an intention to provoke him to work a miracle, though it should have been of a hurtful kind. Our Lord's being dressed in this manner by Herod's order, shews that the priests had accused him here also of hav-

ing assumed the titles and honours belonging to the Messiah, the king of the Jews; for the affront put upon him was plainly in derision of that pretension. The other head of accusation,—his having attempted to raise a sedition in Galilee on account of the tribute, they durst not touch upon, because Herod could not fail to know the gross falsehood of it. Herod's usage of our Lord was exceedingly insolent; but perhaps the remorse of conscience which he had felt on account of the murder of John the Baptist, might render him cautious how he joined in any attempt on the life of Jesus, which we do not find that he ever did. The robe in which Herod clothed our Lord, is called *εσθητα λευκραν*, that is, either *rich* or *white clothing*; for the epithet *λευκραν* denotes both the quality of a garment, and its colour, (see James, ii. 2.) in the original. White robes, as well as purple, were worn by kings and great men, especially among the Jews. Hence David, describing the flight of the Canaanites, compares the field of battle, and the adjacent country, to mountains covered with snow, on account of the many white upper garments which their kings and generals threw from them, to render their flight more expeditious; *when the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon*. Psalm lxxviii. 14. Hence also in the *Revelation*, white robes are given to the saints, as the most honourable clothing. For the same reason, in the transfiguration, our Lord's garments became whiter than any thing known in nature. So likewise the angels who appeared at his sepulchre in the human form, were clothed in white robes; John, xx. 12. Probably also it is an allusion to the apparel of the Jewish princes, that God himself is represented as appearing in the clouds, and on his throne, in robes white as snow.

*Ver. 12. For before they were at enmity*] The cause of this enmity can only be conjectured; perhaps it might be the slaughter which Pilate had made of some of the Galileans, who had come up to sacrifice at Jerusalem. See Ch. xiii. 1. M. Saurin observes, “that considering on the one hand the jealousy of the Jews, where any foreign power was concerned, and on the other the oppressive measures generally taken by those who are invested with commissions like this which Pilate bore over conquered countries, and especially the accounts that we have of his own bad character and conduct; their reconciliation is much more wonderful than their enmity.” See his Sermons, vol. x. p. 246.

*Ver. 14. I, having examined him, &c.*] Had there been any the least appearance of truth in the allegations of the Jews, that Jesus had perverted the nation,—forbidden to

ple: and, behold, I, having examined *him* before you, <sup>p</sup> have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:

15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done <sup>\*</sup> unto him.

16 <sup>q</sup> I will therefore chastise him, and release *him*.

17 (<sup>r</sup> For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

18 <sup>s</sup> And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this *man*, and release unto us Barabbas:

19 (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast in prison.)

20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, <sup>t</sup> spake again to them.

21 <sup>u</sup> But they cried, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify him.

22 <sup>v</sup> And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found

no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let *him* go.

23 <sup>w</sup> And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

24 <sup>x</sup> And Pilate <sup>†</sup> gave sentence that it should be as they required.

25 And he released unto them him <sup>y</sup> that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

26 ¶ <sup>z</sup> And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear *it* after Jesus.

27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of <sup>aa</sup> women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

<sup>p</sup> Ver. 4. Dan. 6. 4. Acts, 25. 16. & 26. 31. Pf. 35. 7. <sup>q</sup> Or by *him*. <sup>r</sup> Mat. 27. 26. Mark, 15. 15. John, 19. 1. <sup>s</sup> Mat. 27. 11. with 26. 2, 5. Mark, 15. 6. John, 18. 39. with 2. 13. & 4. 45. <sup>t</sup> John, 18. 40. Mark, 15. 11. Mat. 27. 20. Acts, 3. 14. & 21. 36. & 22. 22. <sup>u</sup> Mark, 15. 12. Mat. 27. 19, 21. John, 19. 12. <sup>v</sup> John, 19. 15. Mat. 27. 22, 23. Mark, 15. 14. Acts, 3. 15. <sup>w</sup> Ver. 20. <sup>x</sup> See ver. 21. Pf. 22. 12, 16. & 3. 1. & 41. 4, 11. <sup>y</sup> Mat. 27. 24—26. Mark, 15. 15. John, 19. 16. <sup>z</sup> Mat. 27. 32. Mark, 15. 21. John, 19. 16, 17. <sup>aa</sup> Ver. 28. <sup>†</sup> Or *affected*. <sup>†</sup> Ver. 55. Ch. 8. 2. & 2. 35. Mark, 15. 40. Mat. 27. 55, 56. That sex which first sinned, now adhered best to the Saviour from sin.

pay tribute to Cæsar,—or drawn the people after him, as their king, Pilate would not so readily have pronounced him innocent; therefore, finding a man of that mean condition and innocent life, no mover of seditions or disturber of the public peace, without a friend or follower, he would have dismissed him as a harmless innocent man, falsely and maliciously accused by the Jews.

Ver. 15. *Nothing worthy of death is done unto him.*] By *him*. Blackwall. *He has not treated him as one that deserves a capital punishment.* Heylin.

Ver. 16. *I will therefore chastise him*] Pilate might imagine that Christ was an enthusiast, though not a seditious person; and this punishment might be designed as an admonition to him in future, not to use such expressions as had given so much umbrage; being persuaded, that if he was set at liberty, he neither would nor could give them any further trouble. He might likewise order Jesus to be scourged, hoping that they might be contented with that lesser punishment, being himself fully satisfied of his innocence. John, xix. 1. It was the custom of the Romans to scourge criminals condemned to crucifixion, after they had received their sentence. See Livy, lib. i. ch. 26. But Christ was scourged by the order of Pilate before sentence was passed on him, for the reasons above mentioned; and therefore it is thought that during the time he underwent that punishment, he was bound to a pillar, and not to his cross, like those criminals who were scourged

after their condemnation; as St. Paul afterwards would also have been treated, had he not prevented it by pleading his privilege as a Roman citizen.

Ver. 17. *For of necessity he must release one*] See on Matth. xxvii. 15. and Mark, xv. 6.

Ver. 18. *Away with this man,*] *Put this man to death!* Heylin. The word *αιρε* properly signifies, *to take away*; and so *to deprive of life*, *to lift up*, or *crucify*.

Ver. 20. *Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus,*] Pilate finding, by this monstrously base and unworthy demand, that their furious outcries against Jesus proceeded from the most bitter malice and envy, was the more desirous to set him at liberty; and expostulated with them again, endeavouring to persuade them to desist from their impetuous clamours, and to be satisfied with his being smartly corrected by scourging.

Ver. 22. *Why, what evil hath he done?*] *Why?*—*What evil hath he done?* “*Why* will ye be so cruel as to insult upon it? *What evil hath he done*, or can you prove against him?”

Ver. 28—30. *Weep not for me, &c.*] “*Though my death affects you, and seems to call for all your tears, yet it is rather a reason for joy than sorrow, as it will be a means of reconciling the world to God: rather reserve your tears for a real calamity which threatens you, and your children, which will terminate in the destruction of this city and nation, and which will be*

“*most*

29 For, <sup>d</sup> behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

32 ¶ And there were also two other malefactors led with him to be put to death.

33 And when they were come to the place,

which is called <sup>a</sup> Calvary, <sup>b</sup> there they crucified him, and the malefactors; one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

34 ¶ Then said Jesus, Father, <sup>c</sup> forgive them; for they know not what they do. <sup>k</sup> And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

35 ¶ And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them <sup>d</sup> derided *him*, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be <sup>m</sup> Christ, the chosen of God.

36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and <sup>n</sup> offering him vinegar,

<sup>d</sup> Ch 21. 23, 24. & 19. 43, 44. Mark, 13. 17, 19. <sup>c</sup> If. 2. 19. Hof. 10. 8. Rev. 6. 16. & 9. 6. <sup>f</sup> Jer. 15. 29. <sup>i</sup> Peter, 4. 17, 18. Prov. 11. 31. Ezek. 20. 47. & 21. 3. Mat. 3. 10. & 12. 33. John, 15. 6. Jude, 12. Heb. 6. 8. <sup>e</sup> Or the place of a skull. Heb. 13. 12. <sup>a</sup> John, 19. 17, 18. Mat. 27. 33, 38. Mark, 15. 22, 27, 28. If. 53. 12. Zech. 12. 10. & 13. 7. <sup>g</sup> Gen. 50. 17. Mat. 5. 44. Acts, 7. 60. <sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. 4. 12. & 2. 8. Ver. 48. Acts, 2. 37, 38. & 3. 17. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 27. 35. Mark, 15. 24. John, 19. 23. Pf. 22. 18. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 27. 39—43. Mark, 15. 29—32. Pf. 22. 6—8. 12—17. & 35. 15. & 69. 7—12. 18—20. <sup>m</sup> If. 42. 1. & 49. 1—3. <sup>n</sup> Pf. 69. 21. Mat. 27. 34, 48. Mark, 15. 23, 36. John, 19. 29.

“most terrible, and call for the bitterest lamentations: for in those days of vengeance, you will vehemently wish that you had not given birth to a generation, whose wickedness has rendered them objects of the divine wrath, to a degree that never was experienced in the world before. The thoughts of those calamities afflict my soul, far more than the feeling of my own sufferings.” These words sufficiently imply that the days of distress and misery were coming, and would fall on them and their children: but at that time there was not any appearance of such an immediate ruin. The wisest politician could not have inferred it from the present state of affairs; nothing less than the divine prescience could have certainly seen and foretold it. The expression in ver. 30. is proverbial, as appears from Hosea, x. 8. Isaiah, ii. 19. and is generally made use of to imply the pressure of some intolerable calamity.

Ver. 31. For if they do these things in a green tree, &c.] If these things are done in green wood. Heylin. “If the Romans are permitted by heaven to inflict such heavy punishments upon me who am innocent, how dreadful must the vengeance be which they shall inflict on the nation, whose sins cry aloud to heaven, hastening the pace of the divine judgments, and rendering the perpetrators as fit for punishment, as dry wood is for burning.” Comp. Ezek. xx. 47. with Ezek. xxi. 3. where God’s burning every green and every dry tree, is explained to be his destroying the righteous and the wicked together. See also Pf. i. 3. where a good man is compared to a green tree full of leaves: and both our Lord and John the Baptist resemble bad men to dry, dead, and barren trees. It is proverbial among the Jews, that “two dry sticks will burn a green one.” that is, the company of two wicked men may corrupt and bring judgments upon a good man. See Prov. xi. 31.

Ver. 32. And there were also two other malefactors,] This should either be stopped in the following manner;—And there were also two others, malefactors, led with him, &c. or, translated, And they led along with him two other men, who

were malefactors. The distinction between Jesus and the malefactors is remarkably preserved in the next verse.

Ver. 34. Father, forgive them;] This is one of the most striking passages in the world. While they were actually crucifying our Lord, he seems to feel the injury which they did to their own souls, more than what they did to him, and to forget his own anguish in a concern for their salvation. Thus did the Lord Jesus Christ, though expiring by the tortures that he felt, give us an example of that benevolence which he has commanded us to practise; and with his last breath, as it were, breathed out at once a prayer and an apology for his executioners. The Roman soldiers, who were the immediate instruments of his death, had indeed but little knowledge of him; and the Jews, who were the authors of it, through their obstinate prejudices, apprehended not who he was: for if they had known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of life and glory. Instead of, They know not what they do, some read, They know not what they are doing.

Ver. 35. He saved others, &c.] They here acknowledge the miracles by which others were saved; referring, it is probable, to his raising the dead; but they imagined, that now they had found the extent of his power, and that he could not save himself. Nothing could be baser than thus to upbraid him with his saving power, which was not a vain pretence, but had produced so many noble and stupendous effects: and it was equally unreasonable to put the credit of his mission on his coming down from the cross; a vigorous spring might possibly have forced the nails from the hands and feet of a crucified person, so that he might have leaped from the cross. What Christ had so lately done before their eyes and in part on themselves in the garden, was a far more convincing display of the divine power, than, surely to have descended now could have been; and though they promise, upon this, to believe in him, there is no room to think that they would have yielded to conviction. All they meant was to insult him by it, as thinking it impossible he should escape out of their hands. For more on this subject, see the note on Matth. xxvii. 41.

37 And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

38 ° And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 ¶ And <sup>p</sup> one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

40 But the other answering <sup>a</sup> rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 <sup>a</sup> And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: <sup>a</sup> but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42 And he said unto Jesus, <sup>c</sup> Lord, remember me when thou comest into <sup>b</sup> thy kingdom.

° John, 19. 19—22. Mat. 27. 37. Mark, 15. 26. with Acts, 4. 12. Jude, 3. Mark, 16. 15. If. 45. 22. <sup>p</sup> Mark, 15. 31. Mat. 27. 44.  
 2 Chr. 28. 22. Jer. 5. 3. <sup>a</sup> Eph. 5. 11. Josh. 7. 19. Lev. 19. 17. <sup>c</sup> Pf. 51. 4. Dan. 9. 7. Jer. 3. 13. Ezek. 16. 63. <sup>a</sup> Rom. 10.  
 10. Ch. 12. 8. 1 Peter, 2. 7. Song, 5. 10. <sup>c</sup> John, 20. 28. Phil. 3. 8, 9. Ch. 13. 13, 38, 39. 2 Tim. 1. 18. & 4. 8. <sup>a</sup> John, 18. 35.  
 & 17. 2. Pf. 110. 1. Heb. 1. 3. & 8. 1. & 10. 13.

*Ver. 37. If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.]* As this claim seemed to the soldiers most derogatory to the Roman authority, it is no wonder that they grounded their insults on this, rather than on his professing himself the Son of God.

*Ver. 38. And a superscription also]* There is no transposition necessary here; for St. Luke does not tell us when the superscription was written, so far was he from saying that it was written after Jesus was mocked. He only observes in general that there was a title placed over him; and by mentioning it together with the insults, insinuates, that it was one of them; and perhaps the Greek may with propriety be so rendered, as to introduce this verse, in explanation of that preceding. *For a superscription was also written over him, &c.* by which, as well as by common report, these soldiers were acquainted with his claim to the kingdom of Israel. St. John has in some measure marked the particular time when the title was written and affixed. See Ch. xix. 19.

*Ver. 39. And one of the malefactors—railed on him,]* The word rendered *malefactor*, *κακοποιός*, does not always denote a *thief*, or a *robber*, but was likewise applied to the Jewish soldiers, who were hurried by their zeal to commit some crime in opposition to the Roman authority. See the note on Matth. xxvii. 44.

*Ver. 40. Dost not thou fear God?]* Have you too no fear of God; that is to say, no more than those others who were insulting Jesus? Heylin.

*Ver. 41. And we indeed justly;]* The faith of the penitent thief has something very remarkable in it; for he had conceived just sentiments both of his own conduct, and of Christ's character. It is a strong proof of a sincere repentance to acknowledge our crimes, and to resign ourselves to the punishment of them. But to this the penitent thief adds the virtues of reproving the other malefactor for his faults, and of defending the innocent. He shews his faith in God—in Christ; his fear of God, and his charity; 1. towards God, in restraining the blasphemies offered him and his Christ; and, 2. to his neighbour, whom he so charitably reprehends, so earnestly requests not to proceed in his reproaches, so lovingly invites to the fear of God, and so earnestly endeavours to amend and reclaim. It has generally been thought that the grace of repentance was begun in the thief, and raised to perfection all on a sudden, and on the present occasion too,

when every circumstance concurred to hinder him from believing; yet it is far from being certain that either his repentance or faith was the fruit of this particular season: he was acquainted with our Lord's character before he came to punishment, as is plain from the testimony he bore of his innocence: *this man hath done nothing amiss.* He might therefore have often heard our Lord preach in the course of his ministry, and might have seen many of his miracles, and from the consideration of both joined together, have been solidly convinced that he was the Messiah. See the *Inferences and Reflections.*

*Ver. 42. Lord, remember me]* This man seems to have entertained a more spiritual, rational, and exalted notion of the Messiah's kingdom, than the disciples themselves at that time: they expected a *secular* empire; he gave strong intimations of his having an idea of Christ's *spiritual* dominion; for at the very time that Jesus was dying on the cross, he begged to be *remembered by him, when he came into his kingdom.* It may be said, indeed, that he hoped Jesus would exert his miraculous power in delivering himself from the cross, and setting up his kingdom immediately; but even on this supposition, his faith, though not clearer and more extensive, must be praised as stronger than that of the disciples, who, because their Master was crucified, had almost universally despaired of his being the Messiah. However, the answer which Jesus made to his request, ver. 43. and his acquiescence in that answer, must be acknowledged as the strongest presumption in favour of the extensiveness and propriety of his faith. His petition certainly discovers great modesty, humility, and consciousness of his own demerits. He begged only for a *remembrance*; he knew himself so sinful, that he durst ask no more. He owned Christ publicly; he pitied him; he hoped in him; and confessed his power and authority in the future world. It must be allowed a striking act of faith in this man, to believe, amid such circumstances, that Jesus was the *Just one, Christ the Lord,* and a king about to enter into his kingdom. By whatever marks he discovered this truth, he excelled the high-priest, and Pharisees and doctors of the law, in his idea of the nature of the Messiah's kingdom; nay, and as we have observed, he excelled the apostles themselves, though they had been for some years instructed by Christ himself in the nature of that kingdom. The Jewish priests had condemned Christ as an impostor; but he owns him to be the *king*

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, <sup>2</sup> To-day shalt thou be with me in <sup>7</sup> paradise.

44 ¶ <sup>2</sup> And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the \* earth until the ninth hour.

45 And the sun was darkened, <sup>2</sup> and the

veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

46 ¶ And <sup>b</sup> when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, <sup>c</sup> Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

47 ¶ Now <sup>d</sup> when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. 5. 8. Phil. 1. 23. <sup>7</sup> 2 Cor. 5. 1. & 12. 2, 4. Rev. 2. 7. i. e. heaven. <sup>2</sup> Amos, 8. 9. Mat. 27. 45—49. Mark, 15. 33—38. <sup>Or land.</sup> <sup>a</sup> Exod. 25. 31. <sup>2</sup> Chr. 3. 14. Mat. 27. 50—53. Mark, 15. 38. Eph. 2. 14—18. Heb. 6. 19. & 10. 19. 2 Cor. 3. 14, 16. John, 14. 6. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 27. 46, 50. Mark, 15. 34, 37. John, 19. 30. <sup>c</sup> Pf. 31. 5. Acts, 7. 59. Heb. 9. 14. Phil. 2. 8. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 27. 54. Mark, 15. 39.

of the Jews. They expected a temporal king; but he ratifies what our Lord had said, and intimates that he knew his kingdom was not of this world. Peter had denied him, when before his judge; but this man, though he sees him hanging on the cross, owns him for his Lord. Though he saw him expiring, he addresses him as the Lord of life. Amid his own sufferings, he regards only the sufferings of Christ; and was raised to entertain hopes of the pardon of his sins, and to a belief of the mission of Jesus; and, no doubt, obtained, on the cross, the full pardon that he longed for. It is but justice to this argument, after what we have said on the preceding verse, to insert what is urged on the contrary, which we shall do in the words of Dr. Doddridge; who observes, that some have inferred from the words *when thou comest into thy kingdom*, that this malefactor had learned something of Christ in prison;—and have urged the possibility of his having exercised perhaps a long and deep repentance there, against the supposition of a sudden change, which has been generally imagined in this case: but Christ's kingdom was now so much the subject of public discourse, that he might, on that day, and indeed in a few minutes, have learned all that was necessary as the foundation of this petition. I cannot therefore but look on this happy man, for such he surely was, amidst all the ignominy and tortures of the cross, as a glorious instance of the power of divine grace; which, as many have observed, perhaps taking the first occasion from the preternatural darkness, wrought so powerfully, as to produce, by a sudden and astonishing growth, in his last moments, all the virtues which could be crowded into so small a space.

Ver. 43. *To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise.*] Bos has shewn that this expression, *thou shalt be with me*, μετ' ἐμοῦ, —was the language used when inviting guests to an entertainment; and the word *paradise* originally signifies a garden of pleasure, such as those in which the Eastern monarchs made their magnificent banquets. Here it means the same as *Abraham's bosom* in the parable of Lazarus; and it was a common expression among the Jews for the mansion of beatified souls in their separate state. Thus the Targum on the 90th Psalm says, "May the pleasures of Paradise, or the garden of Eden, be from the Lord upon us." One of their prayers for a person at the point of death is; "Come ye who keep the treasures of Paradise, open ye the gates of Paradise to him, and favour him with peace." From our Saviour's using this expression of Paradise to him, it appears, that this dying

penitent was a Jew. See the *Inferences* and the *Reflections*.

Ver. 44. *Over all the earth*] *Over all the land.* See Matth. xxvii. 45. and Mark, xv. 33.

Ver. 45. *The veil of the temple was rent*] This being so high a day, it was very probable that Caiaphas himself might now be performing the solemn act of burning incense just before the veil; which if he did, it is inexpressibly astonishing that his obdurate heart should not be impressed with so awful and significant a phenomenon. There is no room to doubt that many of the other priests who had a hand in Christ's death, saw the rent of the veil, which, considering the texture and other circumstances of it, must as fully convince them of the reality of this extraordinary fact, as if they had been present when it was rent. The veil of the temple was rent, the wall of separation was broken down, that the Gentiles might come in; and the use of the temple, with its typical rites, abolished and superseded by the death and resurrection of Christ. See the note on Matth. xxvii. 51.

Ver. 46. *I commend my spirit*] Παράδοσμαι, —I place, as a precious deposit. See on Pf. xxxi. 5. and for the next clause, the note on Matth. xxvii. 50. Dr. Heylin has well and nervously described our Lord's passion in the following manner: "The appointed foldiers dig the hole in which the cross is to be erected,—the nails and the hammer are ready,—the cross is placed on the ground, and Jesus laid down upon that bed of sorrows,—they nail him to it,—they erect it,—his nerves crack,—his blood distils,—he hangs upon his wounds, a spectacle to heaven and earth!" It is not unusual for those who speak in public, to profess that their subject surpasses their utmost efforts; and when they have exhausted their abilities in saying all that they possibly can, to break off in interjections, and abrupt exclamations of wonder and astonishment. Whatever may have given occasion to these passionate figures of speech, it is sure that they can never find their place so properly as here. For what tongue of man or angel can suffice to tell the depth and the height,—the profundity of his sufferings, and the sublimity of perfection to which they raised him?—We must here adore in silence what we cannot comprehend. See his *Lectures*, vol. i. p. 103. and Sir Richard Steele's *Christian Hero*.

Ver. 47. *He glorified God*] That is, by a free confession of his persuasion of the innocence of Jesus: *Certainly this was a righteous man*; δικαιος, — the character given of him before

this was a righteous man.

48 And all the people that came together to that fight, beholding the things which were

done, smote their breasts, and returned.

49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood

\* Ver. 34. Acts, 2. 37. Ch. 18. 13.

† Mat. 27. 55, 56. Mark, 15. 40, 41. Ch. 8. 2. Ver. 27, 55. Job, 19. 13. Pl. 38. 12.

before he was condemned, Matth. xxvii. 19. See Ch. v. 26. Joshua, vii. 19. and the note on Matth. xxvii. 54. where, as well as Mark, xv. 39. the centurion testifies that Jesus is *the Son of God*. "How then is it, say some, that St. Luke declares him only *a righteous man*?" To which it may be replied, that he made use of both these expressions.

Ver. 48. *And all the people—smote their breasts*] The people who came to behold this melancholy spectacle, were wonderfully affected when Jesus gave up the ghost. They had been instant, with loud voices, to have him crucified; but now that they saw the face of the creation darkened with a sullen gloom during his crucifixion, and found his death accompanied with an earthquake, as if nature had been in an agony when he died, they rightly interpreted these prodigies to be so many testimonies from God of his innocence; and their passions, which had been inflamed and exasperated against him, became quite calm, or moved them in his behalf. Some could not forgive themselves for neglecting to accept his life, when the governor offered to release him; others were stung with remorse for having had an active hand, both in his death, and in the insults which were offered to him; others felt the deepest grief at the thought of his lot, which was undeservedly severe; and these various passions appeared in their countenances; for they came away from the cruel execution pensive and silent, with downcast eyes, and hearts ready to burst; or, groaning deeply within themselves, they shed tears, smote their breasts, and bewailed greatly. The grief which they now felt for Jesus, was distinguished from that former rage against him, by this remarkable difference, that their rage was produced intirely by the craft of the priests who had wickedly incensed them; whereas their grief was the genuine feeling of their own hearts, greatly affected with the truth and innocence of him who was the object of their commiseration. Wherefore, as in this mourning flattery had no share, the expressions of their sorrow were such as became a real and unfeigned passion. Nor was this the temper only of a few, who may be thought to be Christ's peculiar friends;—it was the general condition of the people, who had come in great numbers to look on. And the conviction, thus produced in them, undoubtedly made way for the conversion of such a multitude by the preaching of the apostles on the descent of the Spirit, which was but seven weeks after, when these things were fresh in their memories. See Acts, ii. 41.

Ver. 49. *And all his acquaintance, and the women, &c.*] Who these acquaintance were, we learn from Matth. xxvii. 55, &c. and Mark, xv. 40. The three evangelists agree in affirming that these women stood afar off; yet this is not inconsistent with John xix. 25. where our Lord's mother, and her sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene, are said to have stood beside the cross. They were kept at a distance awhile, perhaps by the guards, or they were afraid to approach; but when the greatest part

of the soldiers were drawn off, and the eclipse was begun, they gathered courage, and came so near, that Jesus had an opportunity to speak to them a little before he expired.

When we call to mind the perfect innocence of the Lord Jesus, the uncommon love that he bore to mankind, and the many substantial good offices which he did to multitudes groaning under the burden of their afflictions: when we think of the esteem in which the common people held him all along, how cheerfully they followed him to the remotest corners of the country, and with what pleasure they heard his discourses, it cannot but be matter of the greatest surprize to find them, at the conclusion, rushing all on a sudden into the opposite extremes, and every body as it were combined to treat him with the most barbarous cruelty. When Pilate asked the people, if they inclined to have Jesus released, his disciples, though they were very numerous, and might have made a great appearance in his behalf, remained quite silent. The Roman soldiers, notwithstanding their general had declared him an innocent person, most inhumanly insulted him; the scribes and Pharisees ridiculed him; the common people, who had received him with hosannahs a few days before, wagged their heads at him, as they passed by, and railed on him as a deceiver; nay, the very thief on the cross reviled him. This sudden revolution in the humours of the nation may seem unaccountable; yet if we could assign a proper reason for the silence of the disciples, the principles which influenced the rest might be discovered in their several speeches. Christ's followers had attached themselves to him, too much from an expectation of being raised to great wealth and power in his kingdom; but seeing no appearance at all of what they looked for, they permitted him to be condemned, perhaps because they thought it would have obliged him to break the Roman yoke by miracle. If the reader can trace out a more probable reason for their silence, when Pilate offered thrice to release their Master, and in a manner begged them to ask his life, his pains in such an inquiry will certainly be well bestowed. With respect to the soldiers, they were angry that any one should have pretended to royalty in Judea, where Cæsar had established his authority: hence they insulted him with the title of king, and paid him mock honours. As for the common people, they seem to have lost their opinion of him, probably because he had neither convinced the council, nor rescued himself when they condemned him. They began therefore to look upon the story industriously spread abroad of him, viz. his having boasted that he could destroy and rebuild the temple in three days, as a kind of blasphemy, because it required divine power to execute such an undertaking. Accordingly, in derision, they saluted him by the title of *The destroyer and builder again of the temple in three days*; and with a malicious sneer bade him *save himself, and come down from the cross*; insinuating that the one was a much easier matter than the other.

afar off, beholding these things.

50 ¶ And, behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a counsellor; *and he was* a good man, and a just:

51 (The same <sup>b</sup> had not consented to the counsel and deed of them); *he was* of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: who also himself <sup>i</sup> waited for the kingdom of God.

52 This *man* went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

53 And he took it down, <sup>k</sup> and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that

was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

54 <sup>l</sup> And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

55 ¶ <sup>m</sup> And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

56 And they returned, and prepared <sup>n</sup> spices and ointments; and <sup>o</sup> rested the sabbath-day, according to the commandment.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 27. 57—61. Mark, 16. 42—47. John, 19. 38—42. 1 Cor. 1. 26. Pf. 22. 29. <sup>b</sup> If. 8. 12. 1 Tim. 5. 22. Eph. 5. 11. Prov. 1. 10. <sup>c</sup> Ch. 2. 25. 38. If. 8. 17. & 25. 9. Gen. 49. 18. Pf. 130. 5, 6. Lam. 2. 25. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 12. 40. & 27. 59, 60. Mark, 15. 46. John, 19. 38—41. If. 53. 9. with 2 Kings, 13. 21. <sup>e</sup> Mar. 26. 62. & 15. 42. <sup>f</sup> Ch. 8. 2. Ver. 40. Mat. 27. 61. Mark, 15. 45. Ch. 24. 10. <sup>g</sup> John, 19. 39. 2 Chr. 16. 14. Mark, 16. 1. Ch. 24. 1. <sup>h</sup> Exod. 20. 8—10. & 31. 12. & 35. 2. If. 56. 2, 4, 6. & 58. 13, 14. Jer. 17. 24, 25.

other. The priests and scribes were filled with the most implacable and diabolical hatred of him, because he had torn off their masks, and shewed them to the people in their true colours; wherefore they ridiculed his miracles whence he drew his reputation, by pretending to acknowledge them; but at the same time adding a reflection, which they thought entirely confuted them, *He saved others, himself he cannot save.* To conclude, the impenitent thief also fancied that he must have delivered both himself and them, if he had been the Messiah. But as no sign of such a deliverance appeared, he upbraided him for making pretensions to that high character, by saying, *If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us.*

Ver. 50. *A good man* Αγαθός. He united in his character the two great principles of morality, justice and benevolence. See Rom. v. 7.

Ver. 55. *And how his body was laid.*] The word *we*, rendered *how*, signifies no more than *that*;—and the sentence may be rendered *they came to the sepulchre, and saw that the body was placed or buried there.* St. Mark has it, Ch. xv. 47. *beheld where he was laid.*

Ver. 56. *And they—prepared spices and ointments, and rested, &c.*] Some commentators connect this verse with the first of the following chapter, thus;—*ointments: and they rested, &c. commandment; But upon the first day, &c.* As the women were not present when Joseph and Nicodemus bound up the body with spices; (See John, xix. 39, 40.) as it does not appear that they saw the body after it was bound up; or, if they did, they could not see the spices, which were hid by the linen winding-sheet; as they were without, watching, while the body was preparing; and when it was carried out to be buried, went after, to see where it was laid; they may be supposed to have been ignorant of its having been wound up with spices, and consequently were guilty of no impropriety in preparing ingredients for that purpose themselves. But even allowing that they knew what had been done to the body, they could not but know that all was done in great haste. It cannot be said, that as much had been done by Joseph and Nicodemus as was usual; and that the whole

ceremony was already completed; this is more than in the nature of the thing is possible to be true. No nation was more careful of their dead than the Jews: the body was first to be washed all over, and cleaned with much care, and afterwards to be anointed; but in regard to Christ's body, there was not time before the sabbath to perform even thus much of the ceremony. When the body was taken down from the cross, the evening was coming on, and it was not yet dark when it was left in the sepulchre. The funeral ceremony therefore, it is plain, was not, could not, be already completed. Offices of this solemn kind, especially to persons of distinction, were not used to be performed the moment they were dead; nor to be huddled up in so hasty and negligent a manner. Moses informs us, that when Jacob was embalmed, no less than *forty days* were employed in the operation; and among the Egyptians, from whom the Jews borrowed this ceremony, no less than *seventy days* were required to complete it. Joseph and Nicodemus intended, no doubt, to inter the body of Christ agreeable to the notion that they had of his dignity and character, no less than *one hundred pounds weight* of spices and perfumes being provided for this purpose. The funeral ceremonies were probably reserved to be performed after the sabbath, had not the divine power prevented it by a more wonderful event. Indeed, whether the women were acquainted with the little which had already been done to the body or not, is immaterial: they knew where it had been deposited, and came therefore early in the morning to pay their last respects to it, by anointing and perfuming it; a common method of shewing respect to persons of dignity and distinction, both living and dead. See the note on Mark, xvi. 1.

*Inferences* drawn from the conduct of the two thieves, ver. 39—43.—What different effects the judgments of God have upon the minds of men, may be learned from the examples now before us. Here are two thieves crucified with our blessed Saviour. But mark their end: one died reproaching and blaspheming Christ, and breathed out his soul in the agonies of guilt and despair; the other saw,

## CHAP. XXIV.

*Christ's resurrection is declared by two angels to the women that came to the sepulchre: these report it to others. Christ himself appeareth to the two disciples that went to Emmaus. Afterward he appeareth to the apostles, and reproveth their unbelief: giveth them a charge: promiseth the Holy Ghost: and ascendeth into heaven.*

[Anno Domini 33.]

**N**OW<sup>a</sup> upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 28. 1-8. Mark, 16. 1-8. John, 20. 1-10. Ch. 24. 56.  
<sup>c</sup> John, 20. 2, 6, 7.

<sup>d</sup> Mark, 16. 5-7. Mat. 28. 5-7. Gen. 18. 2.

they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

2 And they found<sup>b</sup> the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3 And they entered in, and<sup>c</sup> found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold,<sup>d</sup> two men stood by them in shining garments:

5 And as they were afraid, and bowed

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 27. 60, 66. & 28. 2. Mark, 15. 46. & 16. 4. John, 20. 2.  
<sup>e</sup> John, 19. 15. Jos. 5. 13. Act., 1. 10. Dan. vii. viii. x. Zech. i-vi.

acknowledged, and openly confessed his Redeemer, and expired with the sound of those blessed words in his ears, *This day shall thou be with me in paradise.* How adorable is the wisdom of God, who has thus instructed us; and by setting the examples of his justice and mercy so near together, has taught us to fear without despair, and to hope without presumption!

Who would not tremble for himself, when he sees the man perish in his sins who died by the Saviour's side, within reach of that Blood which was poured out for his redemption; within reach of that hand which alone is able to save?—Yet he who had all these advantages, enjoyed none of them; but died in his sins, void of hope and comfort.

Must the sinner then despair?—No; cast your eyes to the other side of the cross, and see the mercy of God displayed in the brightest colours. There hangs the penitent, surrounded with all the terrors of approaching death—yet in the midst of all, calm and serene, confessing his sins, glorifying the justice of God in his own punishment, rebuking the blasphemy of his companion, justifying the innocence of his Saviour, and adoring him even in the lowest state of misery; and at last receiving the certain promise of a glorious immortality.

Thus the case stands, with all the allowances made to it, which seem most to favour a death-bed repentance: and yet, as if the scriptures had said nothing of the wretch who died blaspheming Christ, nor given us any cause to fear that a wicked life may end in an obdurate death; the case of the penitent only is drawn into example, and such hopes are built upon it, as are neither consistent with the laws of God, nor the terms of man's salvation.

But allowing the case of the penitent thief to be what it is generally supposed, yet, after we have briefly considered the circumstances which distinguish it from that of the dying Christian, it will seem not very difficult to shew how little hope the present example affords.

Perhaps in all this relation before us, there may be nothing resembling a death-bed repentance. It is no uncommon thing for malefactors to lie in prison a long time before they are brought to trial and execution; and if that be the present case, there is room enough for the conversion of this criminal before he came to suffer. The circumstances incline this way. How came he to be so well acquainted with the innocency of Christ? How came it into

his head to address him in the manner that he does; *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom?* ver. 42. What were the marks of royalty discoverable on the cross? What the signs of dignity and power? What could lead him to think that his Fellow-sufferer had a title to any kingdom? What to imagine that he was Lord of the world to come? These circumstances make it probable, that he had elsewhere learned the character and dignity of Christ, and came persuaded of the truth of his mission:—but what is this to them, who have no desire to lie down *Christians* upon their death-bed, though they would willingly go off penitents?

Besides, suppose this great work were begun and finished on the cross, yet it cannot be drawn into example by *Christian* sinners; because the conversion of a Jew or a heathen, is one thing, and the conversion of a Christian is another, in several respects: for the Christian, so called, sins under the full use of all the means which the gospel has provided.

Again, he that sins in hopes of repenting at last, may sin so far as to grow obdurate, and incapable of repentance when the time comes. Look upon the impenitent thief in this view; who, though he had certainly all the outward advantages which the penitent had, yet made no advances towards repentance, but died reproaching Christ; and joining with his crucifiers in that bitter jeer, *If thou be the Christ, come down from the cross—if thou be Christ, save thyself and us,* ver. 39. Now to what can this, and numerous circumstances like this, be attributed, but to the desertion of God's Holy Spirit, which will not always strive with sinners, but at last leaves the obdurate to perish in the hardness of their hearts.

And hence it comes to pass, that when these sinners lie down upon a sick-bed, they often want both the will and the power to ask forgiveness of God; and by an habitual neglect of all parts of religion, become unable to perform any; even that, in which all their hopes centred, and are concluded,—to repent of, and ask pardon for their sins through the blood of the covenant.

Nor is it in the power of any man to sin to what degree he pleases, or to preserve the sense of religion amid the pleasures of iniquity. Habits grow insensibly: there is a kind of mechanism in it; and he that gives himself up to sin, can no more resolve how great a sinner he will be, than he that is born a man can resolve how tall or how

down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

\* Or him that speaketh. Rev. 1. 18. Heb. 7. 8. 1 Tim. 1. 17. 34. Ch. 9. 22. & 18. 33. Mat. 12. 40.

f Mat. 16. 21. & 17. 22, 23. & 20. 18, 19. Mark, 8. 31. & 9. 31. & 10, 33.

how short of stature he will be. To the truth of this, experience daily witnesses: happy those who want this fatal experience! upon the whole, there is much more reason to fear that sin, if once indulged, should get the better of, and destroy every resolution of repentance, than that the resolutions to repent should ever conquer and destroy the confirmed powers and habits of sin. I wish those who have not yet put it out of their own power to reason calmly upon these things, would enter into this debate with their own hearts, and consider what danger they are in. A few moments cannot be too much to spend in so weighty an affair; and whenever we retire to these cool thoughts, may the Father of Mercies influence those moments of our life, upon which all ETERNITY depends, under the grace of God.

But could you preserve your resolutions of repentance, yet still it is not in your own power to secure an opportunity to execute them. The penitent thief upon the cross died a violent death by the hands of justice; he had no pretence to defer his repentance in prospect of a future opportunity; nor was his heart to be allured by the soft pleasures of life, when life itself was so near expiring. From the like death God defend us all! And yet without it, which of us can hope for such favourable circumstances for a death-bed repentance? Whenever the sinner thinks of repenting, he will find that he has a work of great sorrow and trouble upon his hands; and this makes him unwilling to set about it. No man is so old, but that he thinks he may last out one year more; and then, why will not to-morrow serve for repentance as well as to-day? The years to come which men rejoice in, serve only to make them negligent and thoughtless of the great concerns of immortality: and whether men are not deluded by these hopes, let any one judge; and hence it comes to pass that such vast numbers who sin with resolutions of repentance, never think of it till confined to a sick-bed: because, as long as they are in health, they have always a ready answer, "It will be time enough hereafter." So that the unfortunate end to which justice brought this penitent on the cross, was, with respect to his conversion, an advantage which few will give themselves: the certainty of his death permitted him no delays, no vain excuses, no flattering hopes of better opportunities hereafter.

But, considering that nominal Christians who propose to themselves the example before us, seldom endeavour to repent till warned by sickness to prepare for death; they will evidently want another advantage which this penitent had. His death not being the effect of any bodily pain or distemper, but of the judge's sentence—he brought with him to the cross, (which, if you please, you may call his *death-bed*;) a sound body and mind. He had his senses perfect, his reason fresh and undisturbed; and might be capable, through grace, of performing such acts of faith

and devotion, as were necessary to his repentance and conversion.

But, how different often is the case of the sick and languishing sinner! Perhaps he labours under such acute pains, as will give him no respite for thought or reflection; or perhaps he dozes, and lies stupid, without knowing his friends and relations, or even himself; or perhaps the distemper seizes his head, —and he raves, and is distracted; —loses his reason, and every thing of the man, but the outward shape, before his death! —And are not these hopeful circumstances for repentance? —Is a man likely to know, and find out his Saviour, when he knows not even his own brother who stands by his bed-side? —These are very common circumstances, and such as render repentance impracticable.

But should the sinner escape all these incidents, and go off gently, without being forsaken by his sense or reason; yet still it may happen, and often it does,—that his promised repentance produces nothing but horror and despair! In his lifetime he flattered himself with unreasonable hopes of mercy, and now,—he begins to see how unreasonable they were. Now he can think of nothing, but that he is going to appear before his judge, to receive the just reward of his wickedness. He sees him already, clothed with wrath and majesty; and forms within his own tormented breast the whole progress of the last day. If he sleeps, he dreams of judgment and misery; and when he wakes, believes his dreams forebode his fate. Thus restless and uneasy, thus void of comfort and hope, without confidence to ask pardon, without faith to receive it, does the wretched sinner expire, and has the misfortune to see his hopes die before him! In a word then, put all the favourable circumstances together that you can imagine; bring the sinner by the gentlest decays to his latter end; give him the fairest and longest warning; yet still you give him no security. And whether those who live under the continual calls of grace to faith and holiness, and reject the counsel of God while they have health and strength to serve him, will be likely to have such extraordinary mercy shewn them at the last, as to have then an offer of salvation, let such persons judge themselves from the few instances that we have of death-bed penitents.

Christ came to destroy sin, and the works of the devil; but if men were promised forgiveness upon the account of a few sighs and tears at last, this would effectually establish and confirm the kingdom of Satan. Though God has promised to pardon penitent sinners through the Son of his love, yet his promise must be expounded so, as to be consistent with his designs in sending Christ into the world: In a word, we have the promises of the gospel set before us, we have the mercies of God in Christ offered to us; if we will accept them, happy are we; but if we are for finding out new ways to salvation, if we seek to reconcile

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7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.  
8 <sup>s</sup> And they remembered his words,

<sup>s</sup> John, 2. 22. & 12. 16. & 14. 26.

the pleasures and profits of sin with the hopes of the gospel, we do but deceive ourselves; for *God is not mocked*, nor will he regard those who make such perverse use of his mercy.

What then remains, but that all who love their own souls, *seek the Lord whilst haply he may be found*, and while they have the light; *for the night cometh, when no man can work*. The night cometh on apace, and brings with it a change, which every mortal must undergo. Then shall we be forsaken of all our pleasures and enjoyments, and deserted by those gay thoughts which now support our foolish hearts against the fears of religion. The time cometh,—and who, O Lord, may abide its coming!—when we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; when the highest and the lowest shall be placed on the same level, expecting a new distribution of rewards and punishments. In that day, the stoutest heart will tremble, and the countenance of the proudest man will fall, in the presence of his injured Lord. I speak not to you the suggestions of superstition or fear, but the words of soberness, of spiritual joy and comfort here, and of glory and immortality hereafter, to all the faithful, and to them alone!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Though they had condemned our Lord as worthy to die as a blasphemer; yet not having the power of life and death in their hands, and this pretended crime not being of such a nature as the Roman government might deem capital,—in order to execute their bloody purposes, the chief priests are obliged to have recourse to some other charge. Therefore,

1. They accuse him to Pilate, as a fomentor of sedition, setting up himself for king, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar; though he had so expressly enjoined it, when they meant to ensnare him; and, so far from affecting royalty, had opposed the mistaken zeal of his followers, who would have set him up for their king, John, vi. 15. but the purest innocence is no defence against the blackest calumny. Nay, in the present case, they knew themselves in their hearts to be the rebels; they abhorred the Roman government, and, so far from thinking it a crime to oppose it, would gladly have embraced the first favourable occasion to revolt. And, by the just judgment of God, that *pretended crime*, on account of which they demanded the condemnation of Jesus, shortly after *the real crime*, as far as man was concerned, for which themselves and the whole Jewish nation were destroyed by the Romans. *Note*; The poisoned chalice will return to him who mingled it.

2. Christ plainly and directly answers Pilate's interrogatories, and confesses himself indeed *King of the Jews*; but not in opposition to Cæsar, with whose government he never interfered. His kingdom was of a quite different nature, not of *this world*, but purely spiritual over the hearts of men.

3. Pilate, convinced of the innocence of Jesus, declares

that he can find no fault in him: whatever religious doctrines he taught, they came not under his cognizance, and therefore he would have released him: but the chief priests, exasperated even to fury at the thought of his being discharged, insisted upon it that they could prove him guilty of many seditious discourses and attempts to raise insurrections through Galilee, the chief scene of his preaching, and in all Judea.

4. Pilate, on the mention of Galilee, having found that he was of that country, would very gladly have rid himself of this disagreeable affair; and Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, being then at Jerusalem, to whose jurisdiction he belonged, he referred them to him: and thus was the scripture fulfilled, Ps. ii. 2. Acts, iv. 26, 27.

5. Herod was highly pleased at the sight of Jesus. The fame of his mighty works had long excited a desire to see him; and he hoped that his curiosity would be gratified by seeing some miracle now performed by him. But he was mistaken: as Christ knew the spirit with which he put the several questions to him relative to his miracles, he deigned not to make the least reply. The poorest beggar that came with his diseased body, would have met the kindest words and speediest relief; but he will not prostitute his power to gratify the curiosity of the proudest potentate.

6. While Jesus held his peace, his accusers, with open mouths, belched out their malice, endeavouring to exasperate Herod against him, and to awaken his jealousy by charges of his seditious conduct in Galilee: but Herod thought him an object rather to be despised than feared; and, after treating him as a weak silly wretch, and suffering his soldiers to make sport of him, in derision of the pretences which Jesus was said to form, he decked him in a robe of mock majesty, and sent him back to Pilate, desirous that he should determine concerning him as he thought fit. *Note*; If we are set at nought, insulted, despised, and treated as fools or madmen, let it not be grievous to us: we are used but like our Lord.

7. Pilate and Herod were on this occasion reconciled. They had been at enmity one with the other; but the mutual civilities which passed on this occasion, healed the breach, and made them friends again.

2dly, Jesus, being brought again from Herod to Pilate,

1. Pilate called the chief priests and rulers, and the people; and, convinced of the innocence of the prisoner, he declares, after the strictest examination, that he can find no shadow of a crime: nor had Herod testified the least mark of his displeasure against Jesus as a criminal, or as one deserving capital punishment. He offers, therefore, to *chastise* him, as if he were a criminal, to gratify them, and cover their prosecution from the suspicion of malice: and, since he must release one to them at the feast, he proposes Christ as the person; who, though his life was spared, would be thus stigmatized as a malefactor. Thus does this corrupt judge desire to trim between his conscience and the people, unwilling to imbrue his hands in innocent blood,

9 <sup>a</sup> And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

10 <sup>i</sup> It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were with them*, which told these things

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 28. 8. Mark, 16. 8. Ver. 22—24.

<sup>i</sup> John, 20. 1. Ch. 8. 2, 3. & 23. 49, 55. Mat. 27. 55, 56. Mark, 15. 40, 41.

blood, yet solicitous to shew his utmost complaisance to them.

2. The proposal was abortive. The people, instigated by their priests and rulers, rejected the offer, demanding the release of Barabbas, whose notorious crimes of murder and insurrection called for the severest punishment; and cried out for the immediate execution of Jesus. In vain Pilate, again and again, remonstrated against the injustice and cruelty of such a demand: they only grew more outrageous at his opposition; and, not satisfied with the chastisement which he offered to inflict upon Jesus, demanded his crucifixion with such clamour, noise, and violence, as quite terrified Pilate into a compliance. He feared men more than God, and dared not disoblige the rulers and a lawless multitude, though at the expence of innocent blood.

3. Pilate, though reluctantly, at last pronounces the sentence of execution upon the innocent Saviour; and, having released that infamous criminal Barabbas, as preferred before him, *delivers Jesus to their will*; and the enmity which they had shewn against him plainly foretold, *that their tender mercies would be cruelty*.

3dly, Behold the lamb of God led to the slaughter, amid the tears of Jerusalem's daughters.

1. His executioners seized on Simon, a Cyrenian, compelling him to bear the cross under which Christ was ready to expire; and not out of pity, but lest by death he should elude their malice, they released him from it for a moment, *that they might shortly bind him faster to it with iron*.

2. A multitude followed him, and among them many women bewailing his unhappy fate, and touched with tenderest sympathy at his innocent sufferings. *Note*; A sight of the cross-bearing Saviour may well excite our deepest grief. For he bore our sins, and carried our sorrows.

3. He addresses the mourners, and kindly bids them direct their tears into another channel; *weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children*; deep as his agonies were, he freely submitted to them; his sufferings were voluntary, and the issue of them would be glorious; but the judgments coming upon their people and nation, would be embittered with the wrath of God, and end in their utter destruction. Then barrenness would be accounted a blessing: for better were it to be destitute of children, than to see them devoured by famine and the sword. A refuge then under falling rocks and mountains would be welcome, rather than to meet the fearful executioners of God's vengeance; *for if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* If these wicked men have inflicted such sufferings on me, who am innocent, what shall be done to them who, by their sins, are as fuel prepared for the devouring flames? and if the Romans, whom they have instigated, are permitted to exercise such cruelty on me who have never given them provoca-

tion, what vengeance will they wreak on the Jewish people, when, exasperated to the utmost, they consume them as fire does the dry wood? *Note*; (1.) Though barrenness is often counted a misery, the days may come, when not to have children may be reckoned among our mercies. (2.) They who will not fly to the arms of Jesus for mercy, will cry in vain to rocks and mountains to shelter them from the frowns of his wrath. (3.) Every view of the sufferings of Jesus should fill us with horror at the dreadful evil and danger of sin; if the wrath of God fell so heavy upon him for sins *not his own*, with what an intolerable load must the impenitent sinner be overwhelmed, when all the wrath of God due for *his own sins* shall light down on his devoted head. If Christ's sufferings were so great, what must be the torment of the damned?

4thly, We have,

1. The crucifixion of the Son of God between two malefactors; who, to increase the ignominy of his sufferings, were led with him to Calvary, the place of execution, and crucified on each side of him. There, amid the taunts and insults of his enemies, he was hung up, to expire in torments: and over his head his pretended crime was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, **THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS**. While they are mocking, let us bow down with adoration, and wonder at that love which fastened him to the accursed tree. If, as they challenged him to do, he refused to *save himself*, it was because he could not then have *saved us*; it was needful that he should die, that we might not eternally perish under the wrath of God.

2. His prayer for his murderers. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*; they were blinded by prejudice and ignorance; and he became, as Mediator, their advocate with his Father, that they might still have an offer of salvation. Some of those who nailed him to the tree probably experienced, at least after his resurrection, the glorious efficacy of that atoning blood with which their hands were stained. *Note*; (1.) There are no crimes so great, but the blood of Jesus can cleanse us from them; even murder itself is not unpardonable. (2.) The persecutors of God's people know not what they do; and that should be an argument with us, after our Lord's example, to bear with, forgive, pity, and pray for them.

3. The conversion of the thief upon the cross; wherein we behold a most glorious evidence of the mighty efficacy of the Saviour's grace, even in the lowest step of his humiliation, and a striking display of the great design of his sufferings, to save that which was lost. One indeed continued hardened to the last, railing on him, and challenging him, if he was the Christ, to save himself and them. Thus afflictive providences too often serve only to harden and exasperate, instead of humbling the impenitent. The other, snatched as a brand from the burning, is here held up an illustrious monument of the salvation of Jesus, even to the

unto the apostles.

11 <sup>k</sup> And their words seemed to them as

idle tales, and they believed them not.

12 ¶ <sup>l</sup> Then arose Peter, and ran unto the

<sup>k</sup> Ver. 25. Acts, 12. 15. Numb. 11. 22, 23. Pf. 73. 22. & 126. 1.

Gen. 18. 12. & 19. 14. 2 Kings, 7. 2.

<sup>l</sup> John, 20. 2, 6—10.

the uttermost; an object which stains the pride of human glory, and renders all mere self-wrought righteousness contemptible; when such a wretch, now penitent, enters the eternal kingdom, from which the most apparently devout, decent, and orderly Pharisee must be for ever excluded. *Note*; It is enough that the Saviour was pleased to exercise a signal act of favour towards one desperate but returning sinner, as an encouragement to the most miserable sinner to trust in his mercy. See the Annotations and Inferences.

[1.] The behaviour of this malefactor evinced the blessed influence which a sense of redeeming love instantly wrought on his heart. (1.) He sharply rebukes his companion, *Dost not thou fear God?* When ready to appear at his tremendous bar, how unsuitable is such reviling in thy lips, *seeing thou art in the same condemnation*, suffering the same kind of punishment; and therefore humanity dictated mutual compassion? (2.) He reminds him of the justness of their punishment, and takes shame to himself for his crimes. *We indeed suffer justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds*; and that should have covered them both with confusion, and sealed up their lips in silence. Thus every real penitent justifies God in his judgments, and owns all he suffers to be no more than his sins deserve. (3.) He bears testimony to the innocence of Jesus, *this man hath done nothing amiss*; he was fully convinced that his sufferings were for sins not his own, and his confession seems to intimate that he was well acquainted with the Saviour's character; and what he had seen of Christ's behaviour on the cross, his meekness, patience, and charity towards his murderers, were striking evidences of his innocence. (4.) He addresses himself to the dying Redeemer, as a dying sinner commending himself to his mercy, *Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom*. His faith staggered not at the ignominious circumstances in which he beheld the Son of God; he pays him the divine honours due to him as the Lord of life and glory; he professes unshaken dependance on his all-sufficiency to save, even at the latest gasp, the vilest of sinners. Humbly he presents his request; one kind remembrance only he asks, unworthy the least regard; but if the Lord will think of him in that glorious kingdom, to which he is now assured he is about to be advanced, then he knows that he himself shall be a member of it. *Lord, give me like faith in thy power and love!* Thus dying, may I be able to commend my spirit unto thy hands, founding all my hopes on thy rich grace alone!

[2.] Christ is pleased most graciously to answer his requests, and to give him even more than he asks. *Verily I say unto thee, and my word is truth, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise*; thy soul, as soon as it departs from the body, shall join the assembly of the blessed in that state of happiness and glory, which God hath prepared for his faithful people. *Note*; (1.) The prayer of faith is sure of an answer of peace; the chief of sinners, if they return to God, and cleave to the Saviour in persevering faith, shall be placed among his saints in glory everlasting.

(2.) There is a state of blessedness immediately prepared for the souls of the faithful, where they are in joy and felicity before the resurrection-day, when in body and soul their happiness will be complete. (3.) Where Christ is, there is heaven; to be with him in glory, is to be eternally blessed.

5thly, We are told,

1. The prodigies which happened, while Jesus hung on the tree. The sun was eclipsed from twelve o'clock at noon till three, and the veil of the temple rent, signifying the state of judicial blindness, to which the Jewish people were abandoned; the abolition of all the typical institutions, the one great Sacrifice being now offered which they represented; and the free access which all, whether Jews or Gentiles, now have to a throne of grace, *through this new and living way consecrated through the veil, that is to say, his flesh*. Heb. x. 19, 20.

2. The last dying words of Jesus, which he uttered aloud, not as one exhausted, but as having still his full strength, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost*. He borrows the Psalmist's words, for scripture language is ever most expressive in our addresses to God. He testifies, as the High-priest and Sacrifice, the fullest confidence in the favour of God his Father; he, by the Eternal Spirit, offers himself for the sins of the world; and now, by his death, pays down the ransom in full to divine justice; he commits his human body and soul, which now were to be separated, to his Father's care, and waits in hope until the third day, when they should be re-united, and he should rise again. And thus must the dying saints of God, by faith, cheerfully commend their departing souls to their Father's keeping, until the happy resurrection-morn; when, fashioned like to Christ's glorious body, our sleeping ashes shall be re-animated, and we shall be taken to dwell with him in his eternal kingdom.

3. The centurion's confession. Deeply affected with what he saw and heard, he could not refrain from expressing his fullest conviction of the innocence of Jesus; and, to the glory of God, acknowledges the righteousness of his eternal Son.

4. The spectators, many of them at least, perhaps some also who had cried *Crucify him*, now full of anguish and remorse, returned smiting on their breasts. The prodigies which they beheld startled their consciences, and terrified them with the apprehension of what would be the consequence of this atrocious deed, at which even the heavens above, and the earth under their feet, testified their indignation.

5. A considerable number of his disciples, and particularly the women who followed Jesus from Galilee, stood at a distance, overwhelmed with grief at what they saw, and under the deepest dejection, as if the cross of Jesus was the death of all their hopes; when, in fact, by these sufferings his victories were to be obtained, and his kingdom established.

sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed,

wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

6thly, The corpse of Jesus was now in danger of being cast, with those of the malefactors, into a common grave; but when none of his other disciples had courage to appear, or ability to give him an honourable interment, God is pleased to raise up one to discharge this last kind office.

1. His name and character are here given us. He was called Joseph, a man of signal piety and probity; a counsellor, probably one of the great Sanhedrim, who consented not to the counsel and deed of them; either he entered his protest against their proceedings, or, seeing opposition in vain, withdrew. He was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who also himself waited for the kingdom of God, expecting, according to the prophecies, that it would shortly appear.

2. He went unto Pilate, and having obtained permission to take down the body from the cross, he wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a new tomb, where never man before lay, in haste to finish the funeral, because the sabbath drew on. The women, the constant attendants of Jesus, followed the corpse to the grave; and, returning, prepared spices and ointments that they might come and embalm him, as soon as the sabbath was past; during which they observed the rest enjoined on that holy day. *Note*: The Lord's day now, as the sabbath of old, is sacred; all our affairs must be so ordered, as not to break in upon the hours expressly set apart for the immediate service of God.

#### C H A P. XXIV.

*Ver. 1. And certain others with them.*] By these *other women* must be meant some besides those who had followed Jesus from Galilee; of whom alone St. Luke speaks in the former part of this verse, and the latter part of the preceding chapter. By these, therefore, as contra-distinguished from the Galilean women, he probably means the women of Jerusalem, a great number of whom followed Jesus as he was going to his crucifixion, ch. xxiii. 27. But what number of them went upon this occasion out of Galilee, is not any where said: nor of these are any other named, than *Joanna, Mary Magdalene, Mary* the mother of James, and *Salome*, though many others followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, and were present at his crucifixion. See *Matth. xxvii. 55. Mark, xv. 41.* It is therefore probable, that most, if not all who were accustomed to minister to him in Galilee, who attended him to Jerusalem, and accompanied him to mount Calvary, contributed to this pious office of embalming their Master's body, either by buying and preparing the spices, or by going to assist their companions in embalming the body, and rolling away the stone; for which purpose principally we may suppose the women of Jerusalem attended, since none of them seem to have made any purchase of spices for the embalming: and for this last purpose, it is further probable, they thought their number sufficient. To distinguish those women who made the report to the disciples, from the others who came with them, St. Luke adds the words in *ver. 10.* It is observable, that St. Mark, chap. xvi. 1. says of the women mentioned by him, no more than that they had bought spices

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to anoint the body; enough to shew with what intent they went to the tomb; that they had any spices with them, he does not say: but St. Luke says, that they actually brought the spices with them; and not only so, but that they had prepared them, that is to say, made them fit for the use intended. The several drugs were bought singly, each by itself, at the shop, and therefore it was necessary to mix them or melt them together for use; and we may imagine, that though all the women joined in buying the spices, yet the care of getting and preparing them was left particularly to the women first mentioned by St. Luke; but as they were Galileans, and not at home at Jerusalem, and probably unacquainted with the method of embalming bodies, it is most likely that they employed some inhabitants of the place to buy and prepare the spices, and to go with them to apply them to the body; and these are the *others with them* here mentioned. This will account for St. Matthew saying nothing of the spices, ch. xxviii. 1. for the women there spoken of had none with them: they set out before those who were to bring the spices, to see what condition the sepulchre was in; and this is properly expressed by the words to see, or take a view of the sepulchre. We may observe further, that it was a circumstance of decency, considering the office which they intended to perform, that the men and the women should perform their respective parts in it by themselves, which accordingly the evangelists plainly intimate they did intend to do. Their setting out alone was a remarkable instance of their zeal and courage; perhaps some appointment might be made with Peter and John, (who were early up on this occasion) either to meet them, or come after them, to assist in removing the stone, though not in embalming the body. See on *Matth. xxviii. 1.*

*Ver. 4. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, &c.] This threw them into a great perplexity, when on a sudden two men stood, &c.* It hence seems probable, that the angels disappeared at certain times; for the words intimate, that the women did not see them at their first entrance into the sepulchre, and that their appearance was sudden, and occasioned a surprize. The evangelist here calls them *men*; but *ver. 23.* he calls them *angels*. The truth is, angels are sometimes called *men*, because they appeared in the human form. See *Gen. xviii. 2.—Mark, xvi. 5.* where *one angel* only is mentioned under the appellation of a *young man*; whence some have inferred, that the transaction there mentioned was different from this before us: but be that as it may, it is easy to account for the presence of *two angels*, though only one of them might be seen by some of those who came to view the sepulchre. If the reader will attend to the supposed form of the sepulchre, and to the position of our Lord's body therein, he will find this method of reconciling the evangelists easy, natural, and probable. The sepulchre seems to have been a square room, hewn out of a rock, partly above ground, its roof being as high as the top of the door which formed its entrance. The door opened upon a stair, which ran down straight to the bottom of the sepulchre, along the side of the left wall. Having therefore carried the body down with its feet foremost, they

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would

13 ¶ And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs.

14 And they <sup>a</sup> talked together of <sup>o</sup> all these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, that, while they

<sup>a</sup> Mark, 16. 12, 13. Ver. 18.

<sup>o</sup> Deut. 6. 7. Acts, 8. 28. Mal. 3. 16.

<sup>o</sup> Mat. 27. 45—53. & 28. 1—8. Mark, 15. 32—39.

would naturally place it lengthwise by the right side wall of the sepulchre, in such a manner, that its head lay pointing towards what might be called the front, had the sepulchre been wholly above-ground, and its feet to the back wall. They laid the body on the floor, close to the right side wall of the sepulchre, because in that position it was most out of the way of those who might come down. This description is agreeable to the accounts which travellers give us of the Jewish sepulchres; particularly Mr. Maundrell, who was on the spot, and saw several of them. They were generally caves, hewn out of rocks; and as the Jews did not make use of coffins, they placed their dead separately in *niches* or little cells cut in the sides of these caves or rooms. But Joseph's sepulchre, being a new one, was in all probability unfinished; and particularly it might have no niches cut into the sides where they could deposit the dead; for which reason they laid Jesus on the floor, (see John, xx. 12.) in the manner described; intending very probably, when the sabbath was past, to remove him to some finished burial-place. See John, xix. 42. Admitting these suppositions,—most of which are founded on some authority, and all of them perfectly natural,—the women, intending to search the sepulchre a second time, might, as soon as they came upon the threshold, see the angel, who sat on the right side, where the feet of Jesus had been; that is, who sat in the furthest right corner of the sepulchre: and though his companion, who sat on the same side at the head, or in the hithermost right corner, had been then visible, they would not have observed him; so that, at the first, they must have seen *one angel* only, as St. Matthew and St. Mark tell us: but stepping down the stairs upon the invitation of the angel who appeared, they got the whole cavity of the sepulchre under their eye, and discovered the other heavenly messenger. Thus they saw two angels, as St. Luke affirms. Besides, the brilliant appearance of him who spake to them, might so fix their eyes, as to hinder them from taking notice of his companion, till, landing at the bottom of the stairs, they turned themselves about upon the floor. Their fear and confusion also might have some influence upon them.—The word *επισταξεν*, which we render *stood by*, does not imply that the angels at their first appearance were close by the women; this is proved from Genesis, xviii. 2.—LXX: where, though it is said, that *Abraham lift up his eyes, and looked, and lo three men, εστησαν ενωπιον αυτου*,—*stood by him*, it is added, that *when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent-door*, which shews that they were at some distance from him; wherefore the words *επισταξεν αυτοις* in St. Luke, answering to the words *εστησαν ενωπιον αυτου* in Genesis, signify simply *they appeared unto them*: if so, we may suppose that both the angels were in a *sitting posture* when they shewed themselves to the women, because St. Mark expressly affirms it of *one* whom he mentions ch. xvi. 5. and because they shewed them-

selves in this posture afterwards to Mary Magdalene, John, xx. 12. However, if the reader be not satisfied with this solution, the evangelists may easily be reconciled, by supposing that the angel, of whom St. Mark speaks, arose when the women went down into the sepulchre.—It may be proper, and perhaps agreeable to the reader, to observe, that it cannot be objected to the description of our Lord's sepulchre given above, that what is shewn at this day as his sepulchre is of a different form; for the real sepulchre, being originally a matter of private property, must have passed from one owner to another, and of course have undergone various changes; especially as it does not appear that the first Christians were led to preserve it, from that veneration for places and things which in latter ages engrossed the attention of the world. Besides, it should be considered, that though superstition taught Christians, very early, to venerate and perpetuate things of this kind; yet their enemies, on the other hand, would do what they could to destroy them, as having an apparent tendency to confirm the followers of the new religion in their opinions; and therefore, if our Lord's sepulchre was visited by Christians before they obtained the protection of the civil government in Judea, the rulers would certainly destroy it. Nor is this supposition rendered improbable by the accounts which are given of the sepulchre, as subsisting in later times; for when the Roman empire became Christian, and superstition grew apace, the monks would repair the repository of our Lord's body; or if it was entirely destroyed, would make a new one to supply its place. Farther, it ought to be considered, that although the sepulchre had actually subsisted safe till it came into the possession of the monks, it was liable to many accidents after that period: for during the wars which the Mahometans waged with the Christians about the possession of the Holy Land, it is natural to suppose, that when the former carried their victorious arms into Judea, they would destroy every monument of Christianity, as well as of learning. After they were driven out indeed, the Christians would be equally assiduous to repair the devastations occasioned by the Mahometans; and, in particular, they would take care not to be without the holy places, so necessary to the superstition of the times. What confirms this conjecture is, that in the description given of those places, as they now subsist, things evidently and grossly fictitious are found. For example, before our Lord's sepulchre there lies a great marble stone, on which they affirm his body was anointed; and near at hand is another sepulchre, in which Joseph of Arimathea is said to have been buried: nay, they even shew the room where the Virgin Mary was saluted by the angel; with many other things, the knowledge of which could not possibly have been preserved during the course of so many ages, without such a series of miracles as we cannot by any means suppose, on account of things of so trifling a nature. Farther, it is certain, that the sepulchre in Bede's time

communed together and reasoned, <sup>p</sup> Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

16 <sup>q</sup> But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

<sup>p</sup> Ver. 36. Acts, 8. 30. Mat. 18. 20. Exod. 20. 14.

<sup>q</sup> John, 20. 14. & 21. 4. Mark, 16. 12. Ver. 31.

time was different, not only from what it is at present, but from that which the evangelists have described: for he tells us, that the travellers of those days affirmed it had a niche, into which our Lord's body was put; whereas from John, xx. 11, 12. it appears that his body was laid on the floor.

*Ver. 5—7. And bowed down their faces*] These words do not intimate their prostrating themselves before the angels, but a respectful and reverential declining of their heads, and looking downward, that they might not appear to gaze, which is well known to have been forbidden to the Jews upon the sight of a celestial vision. See Exod. xix. 21. Judges, xiii. 20.—Because the women were exceedingly afraid when the first angel appeared, he spake to them with the most condescending mildness. See Matth. xxviii. 5. but now that their terror was a little abated, and they were come down into the sepulchre, he chid them gently, for *seeking the living among the dead*. By which we are not to understand their coming down to the sepulchre, in obedience to his invitation; but their having brought spices to the sepulchre with an intention to do their Master an office, which belonged only to the dead; for this is a clear proof of their not entertaining the least thought of his resurrection. Accordingly, he found fault with them also for not believing the things which Jesus had spoken to them in Galilee concerning his rising from the dead on the third day: (see ch. xviii. 31—33.) or rather for not remembering them, so as to have had some hopes of his reviving again. Remember how he spake, &c. This familiar manner in which the angel speaks of what passed between them and Jesus in Galilee, seems to intimate, that he had then been present, though invisible, and heard what Jesus said. The hint suggests many agreeable reflections, which the pious reader will dwell upon at pleasure. See the note on Mark, xvi. 7. St. Luke, having no intention to tell which of the angels spake, attributes to them both words which in the nature of the thing could be spoken only by one of them, perhaps the one mentioned by St. Matthew and St. Mark. See on Matth. xxvii. 44. Further, as it is the custom of the sacred historians to mention one person or thing only, even in cases where more were concerned, the difficulty arising from St. Luke's speaking of two angels, and the rest but of one, would have been nothing; because we might have supposed that all the women went into the sepulchre together, as St. Luke tells us; and that when they did not find the body, they dispatched Mary Magdalene immediately into the city with an account of the matter; and that when she was gone, the angels appeared unto the rest, while they were yet in the sepulchre. But as St. Luke affirms, that they had searched the sepulchre, and were in perplexity on account of the body's being away, before the angels appeared; and as St. Matthew intimates that they were out of the sepulchre when they saw the vision that he speaks of, we are obliged to make the supposition, that the women, after missing the body, came out of the sepulchre, and searched for it up and down the

garden; then went a second time, and discovered the angels as they entered; for they were still in perplexity when the heavenly messengers spoke to them, which is all that St. Luke affirms; and as there is nothing in his narration forbidding us to make this supposition, so the circumstance taken notice of by St. John, ch. xx. 2. that Mary Magdalene told the apostles that they had taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, obliges us to make it: for if, when she entered into the sepulchre with her companions, the angel had appeared to them, and told them, that Jesus was risen, she could not have spoken in this manner to the apostles. St. Luke indeed joins the appearance of the two angels with the account which he gives of the perplexity of the women, occasioned by their not finding the body; because he did not judge it worth while to distinguish the appearance of the one angel while the women were on the top of the stairs, from the appearance of both the angels after they were come down, as they happened in close succession. St. Matthew and St. Mark have supplied this defect, by informing us, that immediately upon their entering, the women saw an angel, who told them that Jesus was risen, and desired them to come down, and see the place where the Lord lay. Instead of *Why seek ye the living among the dead*, ver. 5. Dr. Heylin reads, *Why seek ye, among the dead, Him, who is alive?*

*Ver. 9—11. And returned from the sepulchre, &c.*] These words may be rendered, *And returning back from the sepulchre, they told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest; ver. 9. Now they who related these things to the apostles, were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the rest with them*, that is to say, of their company. As the account of the Galilean women begins in the foregoing chapter, and is carried on without any interruption to the 9th verse of the present, so that the several verbs occurring in this and the preceding verses are all governed by the same nominative case, namely *the women*, (ch. xxiii. 55.) it is evident that the words *all these things* must be taken to extend to all the particulars mentioned in that account, and cannot be confined to the transactions of the sepulchre only; and the same observation holds equally with the expression *these things*, ver. 9. The utmost therefore that can be inferred from St. Luke's naming Mary Magdalene and the other Mary is, that they were concerned in some or other of these transactions, and joined in relating some of these things to the apostles; which is true: for they sat over-against the sepulchre, when Joseph laid in it the body of the Lord; they also brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him; and they were the first who came to the sepulchre that morning, and brought the first account of the body's being missing; and though by comparing the accounts given by the other evangelists with this of St. Luke, it appears that neither of these women went with Joanna and her company to the sepulchre; yet as they were Galilean women, and bore a part, and a principal part too, in what the women of Galilee were then chiefly employed about, namely, the care of embalming

17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications *are* these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not

\* Or *Alpheus*. Mat. 10. 3. Mark, 3. 18. Ch. 6. 15. John, 19. 25.

ing the body of Jesus; there is certainly no impropriety in St. Luke's naming them with Joanna and the rest, as he does in the end of the general collective account which he gives of what was reported and done by the Galilean women: neither does his naming them appropriate to them any particular part of that general account, any more than his not naming them would have excluded them from their share in those transactions, and the report then made to the apostles. In this case they would have been included in the general term of *the Galilean women*; as by being named they are distinguished and marked as the most eminent persons and leaders of that company who followed Jesus out of Galilee. See the note on John, xx. 4, &c.

*Ver. 11. Their words seemed to them as idle tales,*] Their Master's crucifixion gave such a severe blow to their faith, that they laid aside all the thoughts which they had entertained of his being the Messiah, and therefore they had not the least expectation of his resurrection, notwithstanding he had often predicted it to them; nay, they looked upon the account which the women told them about it, as a mere chimera, the delusion of a disordered imagination. It may seem strange, that in the accounts which the evangelists have given of our Lord's resurrection, there is not the least mention made of the disciples meeting one another by the way, although they went several times backwards and forwards in separate companies, between their lodging in the city and the sepulchre. On the contrary, the circumstances of the history oblige us to suppose that they did not meet one another. But there is nothing improbable in this; for as Jerusalem was a great city, the apostles' lodgings might be at the distance of a mile or two from that extremity of it which was nearest to the sepulchre, and therefore from their lodging to the sepulchre there might be several different ways through the city, all equally convenient. Further, *Calvary*, where our Lord was crucified, is said to have been *nigh to the city*; John, xix. 20. but it would be *nigh*, though it were at the distance of *half a mile*. Suppose it, however, to have been only a little more than a quarter of a mile.—In this place, or *nigh to it*, ἐν τειχεῖ, was the garden where our Lord was buried; (John, xix. 41.) Yet the garden might be on the side of Calvary which was furthest from Jerusalem; wherefore, as it was a spacious garden, the sepulchre could not well be nearer to the city than half a mile. It may, however, have been at the distance of a whole mile, consistently enough with the description which St. John has given of its situation. On either supposition, there may have been different roads from Joseph's villa and garden to the city. Besides, as Jerusalem was walled round, the apostles' lodgings might be so situated, that persons going thence to Joseph's garden, could come out of the city by two different gates. To conclude, the garden where the sepulchre was, might have more doors than one, and several shady walks in it, leading to the sepul-

chre. On these suppositions, it is easy to imagine, that the disciples, and the women who went to and from the sepulchre, may have missed each other, by taking their route through different streets in the city, or different roads in the field; or they may have been hid from each other by the shady walks of the garden in which the sepulchre stood.

*Ver. 12. Then arose Peter,*] *But Peter arose.* On this transaction we shall enlarge, when we come to John, xx.

*Ver. 13—15. And behold, two of them went—to—Emmaus,*] The same day on which our Lord arose, one of his disciples, named *Cleopas* or *Alpheus*, the husband of *Mary*, who was sister of our Lord's mother, and who, in the history of his resurrection, is called *Mary the mother of James*, was travelling to *Emmaus*, a village about seven miles distant from Jerusalem, in company with another disciple whose name is not mentioned, and who, for that reason, is by some supposed to have been St. Luke himself; see on ver. 34. These two were in the utmost dejection on account of their Master's death; inasmuch that their grief appeared visible in their countenances, ver. 17. Moreover, as they went along, they talked of the things which sat heaviest on their spirits: *they argued the point together*; for the word συζητεῖν, ver. 15. rendered *reasoned*, signifies to *discuss, examine, or inquire together*; and it appears from the connection, that as they were discoursing on the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the scope of their inquiry was, how to reconcile these events with what had been foretold concerning the Messiah; which by the message that the women had but just before brought from the angels, they were particularly called upon to remember. Comp. ver. 6, 7. with ch. xviii. 31—33. Accordingly, when Jesus inquired, ver. 17. *What arguments are these that ye are debating one with another,*—for so it should more properly be rendered,—this is the point which he took occasion to illustrate and explain, ver. 26, 27. by shewing them that it was necessary, in accomplishment of what was foretold, that *Christ should suffer these things, and so should enter into his glory*; and with this view, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Our Lord overtook these two disciples as he seemed to be coming himself from Jerusalem; which shews the propriety of Cleopas's reply, ver. 18. *Art thou a stranger, &c.?* Probably the disciples had just left the city when Jesus came up with them; for on any other supposition, he could not probably have had time to deliver all the things which the evangelist tells us he spake to them. See ver. 27.

*Ver. 16. But their eyes were holden,*] St. Mark says that our Saviour appeared to the two disciples in *another form*, ch. xvi. 12. St. Luke, that *their eyes were holden*: who does not see that both evangelists meant to express the same thing? If Jesus appeared in another form, their eyes of course *were holden that they should not know him*: all that the historians meant to intimate is, that there was an impediment

known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all

this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.

22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre;

23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so, as the women had said: but him they saw not.

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 21. 11. John, 4. 19. & 6. 14. Acts, 3. 22. & 7. 37. & 10. 38. Ch. 7. 16. & 2. 52. & 23. 47. <sup>b</sup> Mat. xxvi. xxvii. Mark, xiv. xv. Ch. xxii. xxiii. John, xviii. xix. Pf. xxii. lxxix. If. liii. <sup>c</sup> Gen. 49. 10. If. 9. 6, 7. Jer. 23. 5, 6. & 30. 21. Ezek. 34. 23, 29. Daniel, 2. 44. & 7. 14. Micah, 5. 2. Ch. 1. 68. & 2. 25. Acts, 1. 6. <sup>d</sup> Ver. 3, 9—12. Mat. 28. 7, 8. John, 20. 1—10. <sup>e</sup> Ver. 12. John, 20. 3, 10.

pediment which prevented their knowing him. That this might happen either in a natural way or a supernatural way, may be proved in a manner agreeable to reason and true philosophy; and such as will correspond exactly with the expressions of both the evangelists. To state the case in a natural way; two men meet an acquaintance whom they thought dead; they converse with him for some time, without suspecting who he is; the very persuasion they were under that he was dead, contributing greatly to their not knowing him: besides, he appeared in a habit and form different from what he used when they conversed with him; the tone of his voice might be altered; he appeared to them on a journey, and walking with them side by side, in which situation no one of the company has a full view of another: moreover, their thoughts were so swallowed up in the depth of their grief, that as they took little notice of any thing without them, so they might not narrowly examine his features: and where then was the impossibility of their not knowing him? Yet as the words may be taken so as to signify some supernatural restraint, doubtless, there might have been some particular agency from above, either to divert their minds from looking steadfastly upon him, or so to affect their memories, as to render them incapable of recollecting who he was. Compare Gen. xxi. 19. Numb. xxii. 31. and 2 Kings, vi. 17, 18.

Ver. 17. *As ye walk, and are sad?* *As ye walk?*—*For ye are sad*: see Bowyer's Greek Testament.

Ver. 18. *Art thou only a stranger, &c.* *Are you the only person that sojourns in Jerusalem, and is unacquainted with the things which, &c.?* Heylin, and Doddridge.

Ver. 22, 23. *Yea, and certain women also, &c.* The smallest attention will shew, that Cleopas and his companion do not here speak of Mary Magdalene's second information, given after she had seen the angels; because Jesus himself having appeared to her before she stirred from the spot, it is by no means probable, that she would relate the lesser, and omit the greater event. Neither do they speak of the information which the women, Mary Magdalene's companions, gave the apostles after they had seen Jesus; because they, in like manner, must have related that, much rather than any thing else: but the report of which they speak, was either made by a company

of women different from that in which *Mary* the mother of James, and *Salome* were, who saw Jesus as they went to tell his disciples concerning the vision of angels; or it was made by that company before they saw the Lord. That it was not made by any company different from that in which *Mary* and *Salome* were, is certain, because *St. Luke* says expressly, that *Mary*, *Joanna*, and the rest, concurred in giving it, ver. 10. Wherefore, it must have been the report which *Mary Magdalene* made alone, after having been with the women at the sepulchre the first time; and which they confirmed before they saw the Lord. According to this account of the matter, the report which *Mary Magdalene* made alone, is not distinguished from that of her companions; yet there seems to be a hint given of it in the 23d verse; for the words, *And when they found not his body*, may refer to *Mary Magdalene's* first information; as the subsequent words, *They came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels*, describe the information given by her companions. In the mean time, though it should be allowed that *Mary Magdalene's* report is not distinguished from that of her companions, either by *St. Luke* in his history of the resurrection, or by the disciples going to *Emmaus*, it will not follow that her report was made at the same time with theirs, or that the evangelist meant to say so: for though they were distinct in point of time; they might be fitly joined together, for four reasons: 1. Because the persons who made them, had gone out in one company to the sepulchre. 2. Because they were made soon after each other. 3. Because the subject of both was the same: *Mary Magdalene* first brought word, that *the stone was rolled back*, that the door was open, and the body gone; the other women came immediately after, and told the same things, adding, *that they had seen a vision of angels*, who affirmed that Jesus was alive. 4. In relating the matter to this supposed stranger, the two disciples would think it needless to make the distinction more particularly. But if the disciples, in their account of these reports, join them together for the reasons mentioned, *St. Luke* might, for the same reasons, speak of them as one in his history of the resurrection, agreeable to the brevity which he has studied throughout the whole of his work. See on ver. 9.

25 Then he said unto them, 'O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

26 'Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 And <sup>b</sup> beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

29 But they <sup>c</sup> constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat

<sup>a</sup> Gal. 3. 1. Heb. 5. 11. <sup>b</sup> If. 50. 6. & 51. 13-15. & III. Pf. xxii. xvi. ii. lxxix. Phil. 2. 6-11. Heb. 2. 8-10. & 1. 3. & 12. 2. 1 Pet. 1. 13. Acts, 17. 3. Ver. 46. <sup>c</sup> Gen. 3. 13. & 22. 18. & 26. 4. & 49. 10. Exod. xxv-xxx. xxxv-xl. Lev. i-xvii. Numb. 21. 9. Deut. 18. 15-18. Pf. ii. viii. xvi. xxii. lxxix. lxxii. xiv. cxxxii. If. 7. 14. & 9. 6, 7. & 35. 3-8. & 31. 1-10. & 42. 1-7. & xlix. l. lii. liii. Jer. 23. 5, 6. & 30. 21. & 31. 22. & 33. 15, 16. Ezek. xxiv. Dan. 2. 44. & c. 24-27. Micah. 3. 2-4. Zech. 3. 8, 9. & 5. 12. 13. & 12. 7. Mal. 3. 1-3. Hag. 2. 7. John, 1. 45. Acts, 10. 43. <sup>d</sup> Gen. 19. 2, 3. 2 Kings, 4. 8. & 5. 16. Act., 16. 15. Heb. 13. 2. Mark, 6. 43. Gen. 32. 26.

Ver. 25. *Then he said,—O fools, &c.] Again he said,—O thoughtless men;—ἀνοήτοι.* The word expresses a want of due attention and consideration. The slowness of Christ's friends to believe his resurrection, is so far from being an argument that the proofs of it were defective; that, on the contrary, their believing afterwards carries the greater weight: for it removes all suspicion of a collusion between Christ and them in his life-time; and also implies an impartial examination of the fact, and the strength of those proofs which vanquished this incredulity. It appears from the reproof which our Saviour gave them, that Cleopas and his companions were of the number of those who gave little credit to the tidings which the women had brought of their Master's resurrection; wherefore, to shew them their error, Jesus reproveth them sharply for not understanding and believing the prophecies; which, said he, declare it to be the will of heaven, that before the Messiah should enter into his glory, that is to say, before he should receive his kingdom, he should suffer such things as you say your Master has suffered.

Ver. 27. *And beginning at Moses, &c.]* That his reproof might appear well founded, that their drooping spirits might be supported, and that they might be prepared for the discovery he was about to make of himself, which he explained all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament which relate to the Messiah's sufferings; such as the Mosaic sacrifices, the lifting up of the brazen serpent, the 22d Psalm, the 53d of Isaiah, &c. &c. It is no way necessary to suppose that Christ's sufferings, resurrection, and exaltation, are each of them distinctly foretold in each of those parts of the sacred writings which are mentioned in this verse. It is enough if Moses gave some intimation concerning him, which succeeding prophets carried on; and if, when all their testimonies are taken together, all these events are expressed by some one or other of them. The design of our Lord's entering into so particular an exposition of the prophets, or the sacred writers, was to shew, that by making a proper use of their understanding, they might from those very scriptures whose authority they allowed, have been convinced that the Messiah ought to have suffered, as they had seen him suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day: that is, Christ chose rather to convince them by reason than by sense, or at least so to prepare their minds, that their assenting afterwards to the testimony of their senses, should be with the concurrence of their reason: he had proceeded

in the same manner with the other disciples at Jerusalem; from all of whom he had hitherto withheld the evidence of sense, having not appeared to any of them, except Peter, till after the return of these two disciples to Jerusalem. This proceeding, at once so becoming the Lord of righteousness and truth, and the moral liberty of man as a reasonable being, must have been prevented, had Christ discovered himself to them at his first appearing. Wonder and astonishment in that case would have taken the place of reason, and have left them, perhaps, when the strong impression was a little worn away, in doubt or scepticism. The point discussed upon the road was, whether it was agreeable to prophecy that Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead? Christ himself undertook to prove this proposition at large from the scriptures of the Old Testament; and the argument, through his grace, seemed to have its intended effect. Suppose now, that he had made himself known, and then entered upon his argument; what would have been the consequence? Plainly this, the surprise of seeing one from the dead, and the authority of Christ reasoning from the scriptures, must have disturbed their judgment, and made them, perhaps, submit to his interpretation of the prophecies, without considering particularly the justness and propriety thereof. The plain reason, therefore, why the discovery was not made sooner, is, that their understandings might be first convinced upon the strength of argument; while their minds were yet free from any impression by the event itself, and the irresistible force of Christ's authority.

Ver. 29. *They constrained him,] They pressed him.* Heylin, &c. See ch. xiv. 23. We are told in the subsequent verses, that the disciples, having returned from Emmaus, were telling their brethren what had happened to them, when *Jesus stood in the midst, and saluted them,* ver. 35, 36. Moreover, it is taken notice of, that this appearance happened on the first day of the week at even; John, xx. 19. These circumstances, together with the departure of the disciples, who went to Emmaus before the news of Christ's resurrection had reached the city, shew plainly that by the evening in this verse, we are to understand *the first evening* of the Jewish day, which began at three o'clock. See Matth. xiv. 15. *It is toward evening,* means, "It is toward three o'clock;" and *the day is far spent,* κενώσκει η̄ ἡμέρα, means, *The day has declined:* for, on any other supposition, the two could not have returned to Jerusalem,

with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked

with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

<sup>d</sup> Ch. 9. 16. 1 Tim. 4. 4, 5. Acts. 27. 35. <sup>e</sup> Ver. 16. Jahn, 20. 16. <sup>f</sup> Or *ceased to be seen.* <sup>g</sup> Jer. 20. 9. & 15. 15. Job, 23. 12.  
John, 6. 63. Pf. 104. 34. <sup>h</sup> John, 20. 19, 26. Acts, 1. 13.

after dining at Emmaus, so as to have been present when Jesus shewed himself to his disciples the first day of the week, which ended at sun-setting.

Ver. 30, 31. *And—as he sat at meat, &c.*] The 31st verse shews that the impediment, or supernatural influence, which hindered their knowing him before, was now removed. Yet granting that no supernatural impediment was then existing, our Saviour's very action of breaking bread, which was the office of the master of the family, plainly implied that he was no stranger, but their Master, though they did not know him. Be this as it may, he had duly prepared them to receive the testimony of their senses, and now discovered himself, and that by an act of devotion in breaking bread, which among the Jews was always attended with thanks to God, the giver of our daily bread. But there seems to have been something still more peculiar in this action, on which account it was introduced by St.

Luke in his narration of this history, and by the two disciples themselves when they related to the apostles at Jerusalem what had happened to them at Emmaus, ver. 35. Undoubtedly the manner of breaking the bread, and probably the form of the words in the thanksgiving, were peculiar to our Saviour: probably, they were the same with those made use of by him in the Lord's supper; at least these two actions are described by St. Luke in the same words. If so, how strongly were the disciples called upon by this action to remember their Lord, who had instituted that form, as a memorial of his own death! and how properly did he accompany that discovery of himself, which he now thought fit to make to them! We are told after this, that he *vanished out of their sight*: the word *vanished* leads the mind to think of the person vanishing as a mere spectre. The original words literally signify, "becoming invisible to, or withdrawing himself from them."

In the margin of our Bibles they are well rendered, *He ceased to be seen of them.* If this passage be thought to be inconsistent with the reality of Christ's body, it may reasonably be asked, whether there is no way for a real body to disappear? If in the night-time we put out the candles, we shall all disappear; if a man fall asleep in the day-time, all things disappear to him, his senses are locked up; and yet all things about continue to be real, and his senses continue perfect; as shutting out all rays of light from any particular body, would make that body disappear. Perhaps something like this was the case; or perhaps something else, of which we know nothing: but be it what it will, it does not follow that a body is not real, because we lose sight of it suddenly. This passage does not therefore infer, that the body of Christ was no real body; if it did, it would prove likewise, that Christ had no real body before

his death; for we read, that when the multitude would have thrown him down a precipice, he went through the midst of them unseen. Now nothing happened after his resurrection more unaccountable than this, which had happened before it; and if the argument be good at all to prove that Christ had no real body, it will be good to prove that there never was such a man as Jesus Christ in the world. Perhaps the adversaries of Christianity may think this a little too much to prove; but if they do, it is to be hoped they will quit the argument in one case, as well as in the other; for difference there is none. Nevertheless, I know not but the immortal resurrection-body of our Lord might have been endued with such properties, unknown to us in this mortal state, as to be able to *vanish* out of the disciples' sight, in such a manner as to be absolutely imperceptible to mortal eyes: nor do I think that there is the least improbability in this supposition.

Ver. 32. *Did not our heart burn, &c.*] Nothing can be more beautiful than this remark: the author of the *Guardian* observes, that this whole narrative is delivered in a style which men of letters call "the great and noble simplicity:" the attention of the disciples when Christ expounded the scriptures concerning himself, his offering to take his leave of them, their fondness of his stay, and the manifestation of the great Guest whom they had entertained while he was yet at meat with them, are all incidents, which wonderfully please the imagination of a Christian reader, and give to him something of that touch of mind which the disciples felt, when they said one to another, *Did not our heart burn within us, &c.*? See *Guardian*, No. 21. Pf. xxxix. 3. Jer. xx. 9.

Ver. 33. *They rose up the same hour,*] As soon as Jesus departed, the two disciples made all the haste they could to Jerusalem, that they might have the pleasure of acquainting their brethren with the agreeable news; but they were in some measure prevented: for immediately on their arrival, the eleven, with the women, accosted them, giving them the news of their Master's resurrection. *The eleven* was the current stile for the whole college of apostles; and after the call of Matthias to the apostleship, they were again called *the twelve*. In virtue of this stile, a general meeting of the apostles is called a meeting of the eleven, or the twelve, though one or more may happen to be absent. This is agreeable to both ancient and modern usage, in the case of senates, councils, and the like. Hence it is that St. Luke says the eleven were gathered together, though it appears that Judas was dead, and that Thomas was absent, John, xx. 24. St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 5. calls it a meeting of the twelve, because he was not converted till after the election of Matthias, when that again came to be the usual stile.

Ver.

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35 <sup>1</sup> And they told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

36 ¶ <sup>2</sup> And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

37 <sup>1</sup> But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, <sup>m</sup> Why are ye

troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

39 <sup>n</sup> Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, 'as ye see me have.

40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his* feet.

41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, ° Have ye here any meat?

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 15. 5. Mark, 16. 7. with ch. 22. 54—62.

<sup>1</sup> Mark, 16. 10—13. John, 20. 10. Mat. 28. 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Mark, 16. 14—18. John, 20.

36—23. Mat. 13. 12. & 23. 9. Ch. 10. 5. 1 Cor. 15. 5, 7.

<sup>1</sup> Mat. 14. 26. Acts, 12. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Pf. 42. 5, 11. & 43. 5. 11. 41. 10, 11. Rev.

2. 17, 18. John, 14. 1.

<sup>n</sup> John, 20. 20, 27. 1 John, 1. 1. Pf. 103. 12, 13.

<sup>o</sup> John, 21. 5, 10, 13. Acts, 10. 41. Ver. 30. 35. with

Gen. 45. 26.

*Ver. 34. The Lord is risen indeed,]* Our Lord appeared to St. Peter the same day as he did to the disciples, in their way to Emmaus; but whether before he conversed with the disciples, or after, is not certain. It was not till after the two disciples had left Jerusalem, and set out for Emmaus; for it appears from the account which they give our Lord of what had come to their knowledge, that they knew nothing of any appearance to St. Peter: and yet it must have been before they returned to Jerusalem; for they found the eleven discoursing of this appearance to Simon. It is doubtful therefore which of these two appearances should be placed first; but they both happened on the day of Christ's resurrection. As neither the time nor the particulars of this appearance are recorded by the evangelists, though St. Paul expressly refers to it, 1 Cor. xv. 5. we shall not pretend to say any thing more about it, than that the apostles seem to have laid greater stress upon that alone, than upon all those related by the women; for upon the two disciples coming into the chamber, they accost them immediately, without waiting to hear their relation, with *the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon*, but make no mention of any of his appearances to the women. Probably Peter was the first man, as Mary Magdalene was the first woman, favoured with a sight of our Saviour after his resurrection. St. Peter's report of his being risen may have been supposed less subject to suspicion, after his having denied him; and therefore our Lord's first appearance to him might have been designed to establish this important circumstance upon the most unexceptionable evidence. Peter had denied his Master; and had his Master shewn himself to any other disciple before he shewed himself to him, might not Peter have thought his repentance ineffectual, his reconciliation impossible, and consequently have been plunged in despair? but what greater consolation could be afforded to this penitent sinner, and through him to all other penitents, than to find that his Lord was entirely reconciled to him, by the peculiar honour paid him; that though he had denied him, he was not rejected by him; and though his fall was attended with inconceivable aggravations, the magnanimity and mercy of his Saviour was still greater. As the faith of the disciples was much strengthened by the

report of St. Peter, so must it have been greatly confirmed by the arrival of these two disciples, who declared that the Lord had appeared to them also. St. Mark, however, represents the reception which their report met with somewhat differently, ch. xvi. 12, 13. *They went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.* But there is no inconsistency between the evangelists; for though the greatest part of the apostles believed that Jesus was risen, as St. Luke affirms, some, who had not given credit either to the women nor to Simon, continued obstinately to disbelieve, in spite of all that the two disciples or the rest could say. This seems to be a better method of reconciling the evangelists, than to suppose that on St. Peter's information the apostles believed Jesus was risen, but did not believe that he had appeared to the two disciples; because, according to their own account of the matter, they did not know him at first, and because at parting he had vanished out of their sight: for surely it is natural to think that the disciples, who, on this occasion, were more than twenty in number, would divide in their opinions upon such a subject as the resurrection of their Master from the dead. We know from St. Luke himself, that a few did not believe after they had seen Jesus with their own eyes. See ver. 41. and compare Matth. xxviii. 17. It is therefore no straining of the text to suppose, that by the eleven saying, *the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon*, St. Luke means only some of the eleven; perhaps the greatest part of them said so. Besides, we must understand the evangelist's words in a limited sense, because St. Peter, of whom he speaks, was himself one of the eleven.

*Ver. 36. And as they thus spake,]* See John, xx. 19.

*Ver. 41. And while they yet believed not, &c.]* The disciples, beholding the infallible proofs of their Master's resurrection specified in the former verses, received him with exultation and rapture; but their joy and wonder wrought upon their minds, that some of them, sensible of the commotion they were in, suspended their belief, till they had considered the matter more calmly. Jesus therefore, knowing their thoughts, to calm their minds, and to establish their conviction, calls for meat, and eats with them; so much compassion did he shew for their infirmity;

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

43 And he took it, and did eat before them.

44 And he said unto them, <sup>P</sup> These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the Psalms, concerning me.

<sup>P</sup> Mat. 16. 21. & 17. 22, 23. & 20. 18, 19. Mark, 8. 31. & 9. 31. & 10. 33. Ver. 6, 7. Ch. 9. 12. & 18. 31, 32. Micah, 5. 2. Haggai, 2. 7. Zech. 9. 9. & 13. 7. Mal. 3. 1—3. & 4. 2. See on ver. 27. John, 16. 1. & 1. 45. <sup>4</sup> Acts, 16. 14. 1 Cor. 2. 13. Mat. 13. 11. 2 Cor. 4. 6. Pf. 119. 105. <sup>1</sup> See ver. 26, 27, 44. Pf. 22. 7—16. & 16. 8—11. Acts, 2. 25. & 13. 35. & 17. 3. <sup>5</sup> Zech. 12. 10. Mat. 9. 13. Acts, 2. 38. & 3. 26. & 13. 38. & 5. 31. 1 John, 2. 21. & 1. 7. Rev. 1. 5, 6. <sup>6</sup> Pf. 2. 6, 8. & 21. 22, 27. & 110. 2. Il. 2. 2—4. & 11. 10. & 23. 16. & 40. 9. & 49. 1, 6, 22. & 53. 12. & 52. 15. & 59. 19, 20. & 60. 9. & 61. 1, 23. Jer. 31. 33, 34. Dan. 7. 14. & 2. 44. Joel, 2. 32. Mal. 2. 11. Mat. 8. 11, 12.

45 Then <sup>3</sup> opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, <sup>1</sup> Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day :

47 <sup>2</sup> And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name <sup>1</sup> among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

so much care did he take, that not even a shadow of a scruple should remain in their minds, upon a point of the utmost importance to the great business for which he came into the world : and perceiving now that every doubt was vanished, and that they were perfectly convinced, he said to them, pursuing the argument begun by the angels, and carried on by himself with the two disciples in the way to Emmaus, *These are the words*, &c. ver. 44—48.

Ver. 44. *In the law of Moses, and in the prophets, &c.*] The Old Testament was in those days divided into three parts ; *first*, the law, which contained the five books of Moses ; *secondly*, the hagiographa, which contained divine hymns and moral instructions, and went under the general title of the *Psalms*, because they were esteemed the most eminent, and were placed at the head of those writings ; and *thirdly*, the prophets, which contained not only the books merely prophetic, but those likewise which were historical, written by prophetic men.

Ver. 45. *Then opened he their understanding,*] That is, he strengthened and enlarged their understandings, so as to make them comprehend the meaning of the inspired writings ; several passages of which he now explained to them, as we may gather from the next verse.

Ver. 47. *Beginning at Jerusalem.*] It was both graciously and wisely appointed by our Lord, that the gospel, which was to be disseminated among all nations, should begin to be preached at Jerusalem : *graciously*, as it encouraged the repentance of the greatest sinners, when they saw that even the murderers of Christ were not exempted from the offer of gospel mercy : and *wisely*, as hereby Christianity was more abundantly attested, the facts being published first on the very spot where they happened, and as the vast concourse of people of various nations present there at the feast of Pentecost would contribute greatly to its speedier propagation. Our Lord commands that his gospel should be preached among all nations, to the whole Gentile world ; an event inconceivable to the Jews, and to human reason almost impossible. Naturally every man is zealous for the religion of his fathers ; and though it may have many absurdities in it, he does not easily perceive them, because he imbibed them in his earliest years. Idolatry had this further advantage, that all the pleasures of the flesh were consistent with this religion. Its worship required no attention of mind ; every part of it was external and pompous, fit to captivate and entertain the

senses : besides, all degrees of men were engaged to defend it :—the *civil powers*, from maxims of policy, every great change in religion portending danger to the state, and every change in religion being prohibited by the laws, unless the consent of the sovereign power was obtained ; the *artists*, because of *gain* ; the *priests*, to preserve their authority and emoluments ; the *people*, out of superstition and misguided devotion. This was the unpromising prospect, when Christ foretold and commanded the setting up of his religion in the room of idolatry ; a religion which taught the denial of man's self, his irregular appetites and passions ; which prescribed an invisible God for the object of adoration, and a spiritual worship and purity of heart suitable to the nature of that object ; which promised nothing desirable in this world, neither riches, dignities, nor grandeur, but often the loss of all these, as their portion who should embrace it.—And what were the means which Christ proposed for so vast an undertaking ? As disproportioned to the work, as the religions were opposite.—A few men, of mean extraction, of no education or experience, without the arts of rhetoric and persuasion, without armies, without force or policy ; of a nation hated by the Gentiles, and hating them from a bigotry to their own customs. What an extravagancy was it to think of extirpating, by such means, a religion deeply rooted in human nature, supported by prejudices, vices, interest, and authority, wherein so many wise men and philosophers formerly miscarried ; and to plant upon its ruins Christianity, which to the Greeks was *folishness*.—How vain the attempt,—had not God declared the success beforehand ! St. Luke tells us, that Christ had had discourses to this purpose with his disciples, and reminded them, after his resurrection, of what he had said upon that subject ; ver. 44—47. These respective events are written in several prophets. See Pf. ii. Hosea, ii. 23. Joel, ii. 32. Mal. i. 11. Dan. vii. 14. But this of *preaching among all nations* seems to be taken particularly from Isai. xlix. 6. as well as from various other prophecies ; whence St. Paul also tells the Jews that salvation ought to be offered to the Gentiles, and that they would hear it, Acts, xxviii. 28. St. Matthew, ch. xii. 17—21. applies another text of the same prophet, Isai. xlii. 1—4. which is direct to his purpose. From these and the like passages in the New Testament there is good ground to affirm, that Christ and his apostles did declare the conversion of the Gentiles to Christianity,

48 <sup>u</sup> And ye are witnesses of these things.

49 ¶ And, behold, I send <sup>x</sup> the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.

50 ¶ And he led them out as far <sup>y</sup> as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and <sup>z</sup> blessed them.

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he <sup>a</sup> was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem <sup>b</sup> with great joy:

53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

<sup>u</sup> John, 15. 27. Acts, 1. 8, 22. & 10. 39, 41. 1 John, 1. 2, 3. & 15. 26. & 16. 7—14. Acts, 1. 4, 8. & 11. Gal. 3. 14. 40. 28. Pf. 72. 17. Eph. 1. 3.

147. 2. John, 14. 31. Mat. 28. 20.

<sup>x</sup> Joel, 2. 28. If. 44. 3. 4. Prov. 1. 23. Ezek. 36. 27. John, 14. 16, 26. Mat. 21. 1. Mark, 11. 1. Acts, 1. 10—12. <sup>y</sup> Gen. 27. 4. & 48. 9. & Heb. 1. 3. Eph. 1. 20, 21. & 4. 10. 1 Pet. 3. 22. <sup>z</sup> Pf. 30. 11. &

as impossible as it seemed to be, upon the authority of the scripture prophecies; and the present and past face of the world demonstrates, that they were not mistaken.

*Ver. 48. And ye are witnesses of these things.]* That this was the grand business of the apostles, is evident; and the ingenious author of *Miscellanea Sacra* has taken great pains to shew how the title of witnesses, and the office of testifying, are, in the sacred writings, appropriated to the apostles. But after all, though it was indeed essential to the apostolical office, that they who bore it should be able to testify the facts as of their own personal knowledge, yet it is certain that a great many others, who were not apostles, were to testify the same; and it was their duty, and no doubt their care to do it, as the providence of God gave them opportunity. The apostles had many other duties incumbent upon them for the edification of the church; and, in order to the performance of them, were furnished with extraordinary gifts and powers.

*Ver. 49. Behold, I send the promise, &c.]* That is, I will shortly send; the present being used for the future tense, as it is frequently in scripture. *Till ye be endued, or invested with power from on high,* means, "Till you are inspired with the Holy Ghost from above."

*Ver. 50. He led them out as far as to Bethany:]* The town of Bethany was about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem; John, xi. 18. whereas the place from which our Lord ascended on mount Olivet, was but a sabbath-day's journey, or about half that distance from Jerusalem; Acts, i. 12. So that to reconcile what St. Luke here tells us in his gospel, with the account that he gives of our Lord's ascension in the Acts, we must conclude, that he conducted his disciples only to the boundaries of Bethany, which came much nearer to Jerusalem, and took in part of the mount of Olives. See on Mat. xxi. 1. It is indeed possible that our Lord might make his last visit on earth to Lazarus and his pious sisters; but it is manifest that he did not ascend from the town of Bethany, where many others must have seen him; but from the mount of Olives, where none beheld him but his own disciples; nor is there any intimation in the words of the evangelists that he came from Bethany to the mount of Olives on the day of his ascension; but rather that he went directly from Jerusalem thither. *Lifting up the hands* was an attitude of blessing, as well as of prayer. See Gen. xxvii. 4. 7. 12. 19. 23. xlviii. 14, 15, &c. It has been observed, that it was much more proper that our Lord should ascend to heaven in the sight of his apostles, than

that he should arise from the dead in their sight; for his resurrection was abundantly proved to them, when they saw him alive after his passion; but they could not see him in heaven while they continued upon earth, unless in vision.

*Ver. 52, 53. And they worshipped him,]* The apostles, having seen their Master ascend into heaven, were fully convinced of his having come down from thence, and of his being the true Messiah. This persuasion they testified by paying him divine honours; *they worshipped him:* and *they returned to Jerusalem, filled with great joy,* not only on account of his resurrection, but because they considered it not as their Master's final parting with them. Separate, however, from this consideration, it must have rejoiced them exceedingly to think, that their Lord, in his glorified humanity, was so singularly honoured by his heavenly Father, and received up into a state of everlasting felicity and glory, in which he would be able to protect all his faithful followers, and to provide, in the most effectual manner, for their present and eternal happiness. See John, xiv. 1—3. Some have imagined, by comparing the 53d verse with Acts, i. 13, 14. that the apostles dwelt for some time afterwards in an upper chamber of the temple; but I doubt whether they had any such interest with the priests as to allow us to suppose that they would permit them to lodge in an apartment of the temple. It is sufficient that they were always there at the proper seasons; for it is well known that by night the temple was shut up. Compare Luke, ii. 37. and John, xviii. 20. See also the note on Mat. xxviii. 20. As we have subjoined *Inferences and Reflections* on the resurrection at the close of the two former evangelists, and propose, at the end of St. John's gospel, to give a summary of this remarkable event, we shall here, though rather forestalling some circumstances in the sacred history, subjoin a few Inferences drawn from our Lord's ascension, making a few cursory remarks on the resurrection in our *Reflections* at the end of this chapter.

*Inferences drawn from the ascension.—*Who can be rigorous in censuring the ignorance of well-meaning Christians, when he sees the domestic followers of Christ, even after his resurrection, mistake the main end of his coming in the flesh? *Lord, said they, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* Acts, i. 6. They saw their Master now out of the reach of all Jewish envy; they saw his power unlimited and irresistible: they saw him stay so long upon

upon earth, that they might imagine he meant to fix his abode there;—and what should he do there but reign?—**O weak thoughts of well-instructed disciples!** What should a heavenly body do on an earthly throne? How should a spiritual life be employed in secular cares? How poor a business is the temporal kingdom of Israel for the king of heaven? and even yet, **O blessed Saviour,** I do not hear thee sharply controut this erroneous conceit of thy mistaken followers; thy mild correction insists rather (Acts, i. 7, 8.) upon the time, than the misconceived substance of that *resurrection*. It was thy gracious purpose, that thy Spirit should by degrees rectify their judgments, and illuminate them with thy divine truths; in the mean time, it was sufficient to elevate their hearts to an expectation of that Holy Ghost, who should shortly lead them into all needful and requisite information:—and now, with a gracious promise of that Spirit of thine, (ver. 49.) with a careful charge renewed to thy disciples for the promulgation of thy gospel; with a heavenly benediction of all thy wondering attendants,—thou takest leave of earth, ver. 51. *And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.*

**O happy parting!** fit for the Saviour of mankind, answerable to that divine conversation, to that succeeding glory! blessed Jesu, let me so far imitate thee, as to depart hence with a blessing in my mouth; and let my soul, when it is stepping over the threshold of heaven, leave behind it a legacy of peace and happiness!

From the mount of Olives thou wouldst take thy rise into heaven; the place whence thou hadst been accustomed to shower down thy heavenly doctrine upon thy hearers; the place whence thou hadst been wont to send up thy prayers to thy heavenly Father. On this very hill was the bloody sweat of thine agony; now is it the mount of thy triumph: from this mount of Olives did flow that oil of gladness, wherewith thy church is constantly refreshed. And even to us, thy unworthy members, **O Saviour,** dost thou give a seasonable proportion of joy for our heaviness, comfort for our mourning, spiritual honour for our contempt and shame. Our agonies shall be answered with *exaltation*.

Whither then, blessed Jesu, whither didst thou ascend, —but home into thine heaven? Thou hast now climbed up that infinite steepness, and left all sublimity below thee: already hast thou approved thyself Lord and Commander of earth, of sea, of hell; the earth confessed thee her Lord, when at thy voice she rendered thee up Lazarus;—when she shook at thy passion, and gave up her deceased saints. The sea acknowledged thee, in that it became a pavement to thy feet, and, at thy command, to the feet of thy disciple; in that it became thy treasury for thy tribute-money. Hell found and acknowledged thee, who conquered all the powers of darkness, even him who had the power of death,—the devil. It now only remained that thou shouldst ascend to thy celestial abode; that so every knee might bow to thee both in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth. Gracious Redeemer, I see now where thou art, even far above all heavens at the right hand of paternal glory. Oh do thou raise up my heart thither to thee; place thou my affections on thee above, and teach me therefore to love heaven, because thou art there.

Now, if ever, my soul, be thou enraptured with the con-

templation of this comfortable, this blessed farewell of thy Lord. Methinks I see it still with their eyes, how thou, my glorious Saviour, dost insensibly rise up from thine Olivet, taking leave of thine astonished disciples now left behind thee, with gracious eyes, with heavenly benedictions. How unwillingly did their attentive eyes in return let go so blessed an object? How unwelcome that cloud which interposed itself betwixt thee and them, and, closing up, left only a glorious splendor behind it, as the bright track of thine ascension! With what piercing regards did these transported beholders follow their ascending Saviour?—as if they would pierce that cloud, and lay open that heaven which hid thee from them.

But, what tongue of the highest archangel in heaven, can express the welcome given thee, the King of Glory, into those blessed regions of immortality? Never, surely, did the empyreal realms resound with such transcendent joy. “God ascended with jubilation, and the Lord with “the sound of the trumpet.” If when the only-begotten Son of God was brought into the world, He said; *Let all the angels worship him*; how much more now that he ascendeth up on high, and leadeth captivity captive! If the holy angels did so carol at his obscure and humble birth; with what boundless triumph must they receive him now, returning from the perfect achievement of the great atonement! If when David his type had vanquished Goliath, and was carrying the head into Jerusalem—if then the damsels came forth to meet him with dances and timbrels; how did those angelic spirits triumph now, on meeting the great conqueror of death and hell: how did they sing, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!*

And why dost not thou, **O Christian,** help to bear thy part with this happy choir of heaven? Why is not thy heart rapt out of thy bosom with an extasy of joy, to see this human nature of ours exalted above all the company of heaven, adored of angels and archangels, and all those illustrious and mighty spirits, and sitting there crowned with infinite glory and majesty?—Alas! little will it avail thee, that our nature is thus honoured, if the benefit of this ascension does not reflect upon thee. How many are there miserable in themselves, notwithstanding all this glory of the human nature in Christ! But how is this?—None but those who are *found in him*, who are partakers of his divine nature, can be happier by him; none but the faithful persevering members can be finally the better for the glory of the head.

**O blessed Jesu!** thou that art the way, hast made the way for thyself and all the faithful: *Thou didst humble thyself, and becamest obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; therefore hath God also highly exalted thee*; and upon the same terms, will he not fail to advance thy true disciples. We see thy track before us of humility and obedience. **O teach us to follow thee in the roughest ways of obedience, in the bloody paths even of death; so we may but at last overtake thee on those high steps of immortality and glory!**

Among those millions of angels who attended this triumphant ascension of our Lord, some are appointed to the lower station of comforting his astonished disciples, in the certain hope of his no less glorious return; Acts, i. 10, 21. *Two men stood by them in white apparel. They stood by them,—they were not of them: though angels, they*

seemed men: two, for more certainty of testimony; in white for joy of their Lord's ascension.

Their errand was calculated for a purpose of consolation and love: they stand not silent, therefore, but, directing their speech to the amazed beholders, say, *Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? What a question was this? Why, O ye blessed angels, did they gaze, but that their love of Christ constrained them? Never could they have gazed so happily as now. If but some great man be advanced to honour over our heads, how apt are we to gaze up, and to eye him as some strange meteor! Let the sun but shine a little upon these transient dials, and how are they looked at by every passenger!—How much more worthy then is the king of glory to command all eyes, now in the highest pitch of his heavenly exaltation, as mediatorial king!*

But it was not the purpose of these angels to check the longing looks of these faithful disciples after their ascended Master: it was only a change of eyes that they intended, of carnal for spiritual; of the eye of sense for the eye of faith: *This same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

“Look not after him, O ye weak disciples, as so departed that ye shall see him no more; though gone, he is not lost; those heavens which received, shall again restore him;—ye have seen him ascend upon the chariot of a bright cloud; and ye shall see him descend again to his last judgment. He is gone; but can it trouble you to know that you have an advocate in heaven? Strive not now so much to exercise your bodily eyes in looking after him, as the eyes of your souls in looking unto him, and looking for him. If it be your sorrow to part with your Saviour; yet to part with him entering into heaven, should be your comfort and felicity; for if his absence could be grievous, his return shall be happy and glorious.”

*Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly! In the mean time, while it is not heaven that can keep thee from us, it is not earth which can keep us from thee. O raise thou up our souls to a life of faith with thee; and let us ever enjoy thy conversation, while we ardently expect and wait for thy return!*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The sabbath being ended, the good women who had prepared the spices to embalm the body, were early up to visit the sepulchre; but, to their surprize, found the stone rolled away from the door: and, to increase their perplexity, on entering the sepulchre, they found not the body. Whereupon we are told,

1. The glorious vision which appeared to them, of two angels, whose presence at first greatly terrified them: and with deep respect they bowed their faces to the ground; but these heavenly messengers soon relieved them from their distress, with words of kindest consolation, *Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen; Jesus, your Master, is no longer the prisoner of the grave; he lives, for ever lives, the conqueror of all his foes; remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee; it need not have surprized them, when he had so repeatedly foretold the sufferings and death that he must undergo from the hands of wicked men, and his resurrection which would follow: and on being reminded of this, they re-*

membered the prediction which the angel mentioned. *Note; We are strangely forgetful of the good things which Jesus has spoken, and need to have our memories often refreshed, that we may not let them slip.*

2. The haste that the women made to apprise the apostles, and the rest of the disciples, of what they had seen and heard. But, though the fact was asserted by the women, so slow of heart were they to believe, that they treated the report as idle tales, and believed them not; they imputed it to the power of imagination, and were so sunk in despair, and so inapprehensive of Christ's resurrection, that they seem to have had hardly any expectation of it, or remembrance of the assurances concerning his rising again, which he had so repeatedly given them.

3. Peter, roused by the report, resolved however to see for himself, and ran immediately to the sepulchre; and stooping down, saw the grave clothes regularly folded up, and laid separate, but the body gone; whereupon he departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. Having very little, if any expectation of his Master's resurrection, he could not account for these strange circumstances. Had he perfectly remembered the words of Jesus, his wonder must have ceased.

2dly, The passage recorded in ver. 13—35. is mentioned by St. Mark, but is here more at large related. We have,

1. The discourse of two of the disciples as they walked to a village called Emmaus, about seven or eight miles from Jerusalem. Their business to that place we are not told. But as they went, the melancholy events which had passed, were the subject of their conversation; together with the report which the women had spread of the resurrection of their Lord, on the probability of which they might be reasoning. *Note; Godly conversation makes a journey very pleasing.*

2. An unknown stranger, to appearance, joins them on the road as they were in deep discourse; and walking with them, kindly inquires what caused their melancholy looks and earnest conversation. They little thought who now was of their company. *Note; (1.) Where two of Christ's disciples meet to talk about the things which appertain to his kingdom and glory, he will be in the midst of them, instructing and comforting them. (2.) When we are sad and dejected, the converse of a gracious friend serves to alleviate our sorrows: and where we are fellow-mourners, by comparing our cases, we should seek to be mutual comforters.*

3. In answer to his question, Cleopas replied, *Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? The city had rung of the horrid execution of Jesus; and Cleopas presumes that no man who came thence, could possibly be unacquainted with the transactions which had passed on that occasion.*

4. When Christ, by only proposing a question, still pretended ignorance of the things to which Cleopas alluded, in order to draw on farther discourse in answer to his question—Cleopas succinctly relates the past and present state of the affair. He begins with an account of his dear Lord and Master *Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, a teacher come from God, who confirmed his divine mission by the heavenly doctrine that he taught, and the miracles he wrought; was evidently approved of the Most High, who en-*

duced him with such mighty powers, and bore witness to him from heaven; and was for a while greatly carested and admired by the people, who in crowds attended his ministry. Him, at the instigation of the chief priests and rulers, the Roman governor had crucified, though confessedly innocent; the remembrance of which grievous scene deeply afflicted them: especially as they acknowledge themselves his disciples, and own their late sanguine hopes, that this *had been he who should have redeemed Israel*; the promised Messiah, the great prophet whom Moses had bid them expect. But, alas! their hopes were now almost buried in their Master's grave: it was true, indeed, he talked about rising on the third day, which was now drawing to a period, and certain strange reports had been spread by some women of their company, who had been that morning at the sepulchre to look after the body, and had astonished them with an account of having seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive; but they gave little credit to the report. Some of their men, however, hereupon ran to the tomb, and found the body gone, as the women had said, but saw nothing of the angels, or their Master, which rendered the matter very suspicious, and made them suppose the women mistaken; since if he was really arisen, they could not but conclude that he would rather have notified it to his apostles than to them; so that on the whole they were deeply dejected, and scarcely entertained the least prospect of ever seeing him again.

5. The unknown traveller hereupon took up the discourse. He begins with a just rebuke of their folly and unbelief; *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!* Had ye duly reflected upon the prophetic writings, you might as soon have entertained suspicions about the rising of the sun, as the resurrection of Jesus: *for ought not Christ to have suffered these things*, according to the express declarations of his prophets, and for the honour of the divine justice, and *to enter into his glory*, the reward of his sufferings and death? So far, therefore, from harbouring doubts because of these things, that he could not be the Messiah, nor would ever rise again, they should have considered what he endured as absolutely a proof of the reality of the character that he assumed; and should have been encouraged to the fullest confidence, that as they had beheld his humiliation on the cross, they should also see his exaltation to the mediatorial throne. Then beginning from the books of Moses, he proceeded through the prophets, expounding to them the types and prophecies which related to himself, and spoke of his sufferings, and the glory which should follow. *Note*; The Old Testament, as well as the New, is full of Christ. We never understand Moses and the prophets aright, unless we see Christ as the great object which they continually hold forth to us.

6. At last Christ discovers himself unto them. Drawing nigh to Emmaus, he made as if he would have parted company and passed on farther; but they were too much charmed with his discourse, to let him go, and therefore, as the evening was advanced, they pressed him to stay; and at their importunate request he went in with them. And sitting down at table, with authority, as the Master of the house, he took bread, according to his usual manner; and asking the divine benediction, brake and gave to them. Immediately their eyes were opened; they looked up, and discovered the well-known features of their

crucified Master; when instantly he became invisible and withdrew, leaving them to reflect on what they had seen and heard. *Note*; (1.) They who wish for Christ's company, must solicit the favour; he loves the importunity of prayer. (2.) If we have tasted the satisfaction of communion with Jesus, like the spouse we shall hold him fast in the arms of faith and love, and desire never to let him go. (3.) Our meals must be sanctified by prayer and thanksgiving, and then they will serve to minister food to our souls as well as our bodies. (4.) In the ways of his ordinances, the Lord opens the eyes of our faith, and enables us to behold his glory; he has often, since this, made himself known to his people *in the breaking of bread* at his table.

7. The disciples could not help hereupon reflecting on the lively impressions which the discourse of Jesus had made upon them in the way. On comparing, they found that both their hearts had glowed with holy fervour as he spoke; such irradiation darted on their minds, while he opened to them the Scripture; such life and energy accompanied his discourse, that they cannot but wonder at their own stupidity, not to have discovered him before; since none could have taught them with such demonstration of the Spirit and power, but he who spake *like as never man spake* before. *Note*; Nothing can warm the heart of the penitent like the preaching of a crucified Jesus; and his delightful name should always make a principal part of our discourses.

8. They immediately resolved to return, and carry the glad tidings to their brethren at Jerusalem. Not a moment was to be lost; they judged, by what themselves had felt, how melancholy and distressed their fellow-disciples were; and now they could bring them news that would warm their hearts, as it had fired their own. Accordingly, though it was evening, they hastened back, and found opportunely the apostles assembled with the rest of the faithful; who, before they had power to speak, eagerly prevented them, saying, *the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon*; so that it is not a report merely, but a certain fact. The two disciples then corroborated the evidence with what had passed in the way, and the discovery which Jesus had made of himself to them, *in breaking of bread*, when they sat down together to take some refreshment. *Note*; (1.) The gracious experiences which the Saviour gives us of his love, we should delight to communicate for the comfort and encouragement of our brethren. (2.) Nothing serves more to confirm the faith, and enliven the hopes of real Christians, than comparing their observations, and the dealings of God with their souls. As iron sharpeneth iron, so does such gracious communication mutually quicken and strengthen the heart.

3dly, The appearance of Jesus recorded in ver. 36—49. is his fifth appearance on the same day that he arose. First he was seen by Mary, John, xx. 14. Then by the women, Matth. xxviii. 9. By Peter alone, 1 Cor. xv. 5. By the two disciples; and now by all who were assembled together.

1. He suddenly appeared in the midst of them, while they were talking over this glorious event, the resurrection of their Lord; and, with most encouraging words of consolation, wishes them all peace and happiness. He mentions not one upbraiding word of their perfidy in forsaking him;

him; of Peter's profaneness and perjury in denying him; they had turned again, and he had sealed their pardon; the past, therefore, is not only forgiven, but forgotten, and he is come to assure them of his love.

2. They were terrified and affrighted at his presence, and supposed at first that it was an apparition, or a spirit, that had assumed the form of Jesus. So surprized were they, that they seem to have forgotten the proofs of his resurrection for a moment, on which they had been just discoursing.

3. He soon convinced them of the groundlessness of their fears, and of their folly to be startled at his appearance; which should have been their greatest joy, *Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Note; We often cause ourselves needless disquiet, brooding over melancholy apprehensions, when perhaps the very distress that we feel is a symptom for good; as the deep convictions of sin shew that the Spirit of God is at work with our hearts, and that they will shortly issue in peace and joy, if we believe. To remove, therefore, their doubts,*

[1.] He bids them examine him, and gain the fullest evidence to their senses. 'There were his hands and his feet, where still the scars of the nails remained; those glorious scars which were the consequences of his victorious conflict with the powers of darkness, their enemies, and his: *handle me and see, satisfy yourselves fully in the certainty of my resurrection, and the identity of my body; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have, but is incorporeal, though it may appear under the resemblance of a human form. Accordingly he shewed his hands, his feet, his side, that they might have the fullest conviction of his being the same Jesus; for bearing testimony to whose resurrection, they would afterwards be exposed to the most furious persecutions; and therefore it was needful that their own assurance of the fact should be put beyond a doubt.*

[2.] He eats and drinks with them, to prove most fully to them that he had really a living body like their own. The astonishment that they were in, and the inexpressible joy they felt, quite overcame them; they were ready to believe, that what they saw and heard was too great and too good news to be true, and could hardly yet credit the testimony of their own senses. To give them time to recover from this extacy, and to confirm their faith, he sat down with them, and ate in their presence some broiled fish, and a piece of a honeycomb, which they gave him: so that hereby they might be assured he was no spectre.

[3.] He not only gave this conviction to their senses, but poured a flood of divine light upon their souls. He refers them to his former discourses with them, concerning the things written in the law, the prophets, and psalms, relative to his sufferings and glory; and by the powerful operations of his spirit he wonderfully brought to their memory all that he had spoken before; and opened the intent and meaning of the Scriptures to their hearts with such evidence, clearness, and certainty, that they perceived the full accomplishment of all in him. *Note; (1.) Our understandings are darkened, till Christ shines upon us as the sun of righteousness. (2.) The most enlightened mind has daily need to cry, open thou mine eyes. (3.) The way in which Christ teaches, is in and by the Scriptures; we must look for no wisdom unto salvation out of the written word, or what is clearly grounded thereupon.*

Though, (4.) The plainest truths of God's revealed will are never to be spiritually discerned, till the Holy Ghost guides us into the spiritual sense and meaning of them.

[4.] He gives them instructions for the work in which they were now about to be employed. (1.) They were to be witnesses of his death and resurrection, proving from the Scriptures the predictions concerning both, which were now accomplished in him; in consequence whereof, *repentance and remission of sins must be preached by them in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem; he being exalted at the right hand of God, in consequence of his sufferings, to bestow those inestimable blessings on as many as believed in his name; not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also: and nothing could so powerfully influence and engage the hearts of sinners to return to God, as this free and full salvation preached to them in his name. They must begin at Jerusalem, which had been the chief scene of his life and sufferings; the oracles of God, to which they appealed, were in the hands of the Jews; there the facts were transacted, to the truth of which they might most confidently appeal; and there his murderers dwelt, who most especially needed to be called to repentance; and to many of whom, returning to him with genuine contrition, he would signalize the riches of his grace, in pardoning and saving them. The gospel is grace abounding to the chief of sinners. (2.) He bids them wait a while at Jerusalem, and in a few days he would pour out upon them the Spirit from on high, which he had promised them, to qualify them for their arduous undertaking, and strengthen them in the discharge of it. His kingdom was to be established, not by human endeavours, but by divine energy; therefore the instruments were poor weak illiterate fishermen, and this the more magnified the effectual working of that mighty power which appeared in them. They were endued with such wisdom as none of their adversaries could resist; with such courage as no danger could dismay; with such miraculous powers as evidently spoke the finger of God; and were blessed with such amazing success, that, in spite of all opposition, they were enabled to lay the foundations of the glorious gospel church, which he died and rose to establish.*

4thly, We have the account of the ascension of Jesus into heaven, after he had forty days conversed with his disciples after his resurrection.

1. He gives them his parting benediction. He led them out as far as to Bethany, whence he had made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem some few days before his death. And lifting up his hands, as the great High-Priest, Lev. ix. 22. he pronounced a blessing upon them.

2. He was parted from them just as he had finished his benediction, as Elijah from Elisha, and carried up into heaven; either by the ministry of angels or by his own divine power; making his triumphant entry into the glorious courts above, and sitting down on the mediatorial throne prepared for him as the reward of his sufferings. *Note; Though dearest friends must now part, yet, if faithful, we shall follow Jesus to that kingdom where we shall part no more.*

3. The disciples bowed down in adoration before him, and worshipped him as the very God, who, though in his human

human nature removed out of sight, yet filled heaven and earth with his presence. *Note*; The incarnate Jesus justly claims the worship and service of all his faithful followers.

4. *They returned to Jerusalem with great joy.* Their sorrows now were banished; bright hope and burning love possessed every bosom, and they waited confidently expecting the fulfilment of the promise which their Lord had given them; *and were continually in the temple,* at the stated

hours of worship, *praising and blessing God,* joining the temple-songs, and offering their joyful acknowledgments for all the wondrous mercies they had received, and for the promises of greater yet in store for them. *Amen*: may we in our blessing and praises seek to emulate these happy disciples, till we come to join the songs of eternity; and in the better temple, among the blessed, day and night for ever celebrate redeeming love.

