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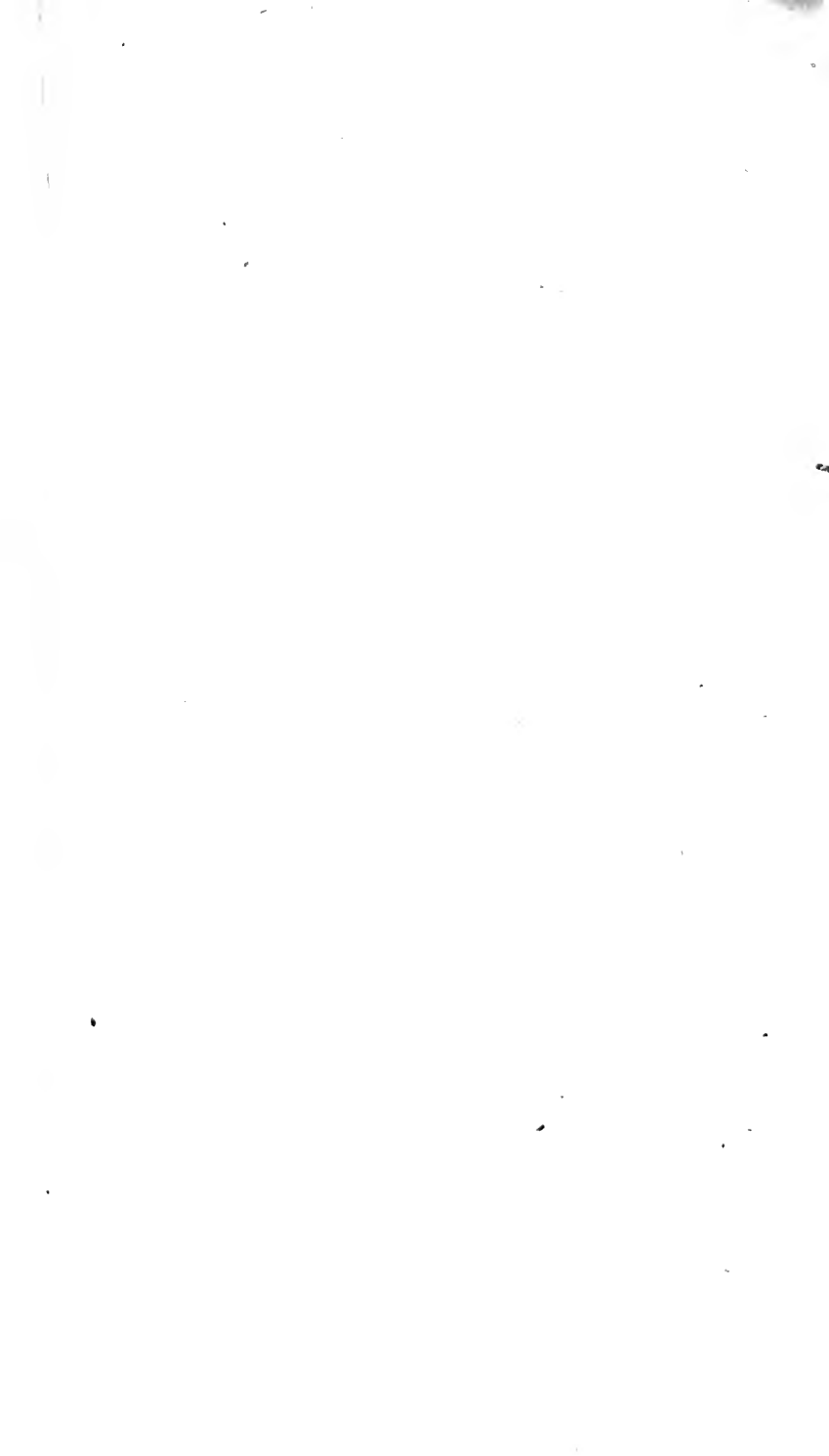
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 \* From the Rev. W. B. SPRAGUE, D.D. Sept. 1839. \*  
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A  
DEVELOPEMENT  
OF  
REMARKABLE EVENTS,  
CALCULATED  
TO RESTORE THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION  
TO ITS  
ORIGINAL PURITY,  
AND TO REPEL  
THE OBJECTIONS OF UNBELIEVERS.

.....  
BY JOHN JONES.  
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There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. *Matt. x. 25.*

Ἡ δὲ δαιμονία τῆ ἀθεοῦ καὶ γενεσθαι παρεσχεν ἀρχὴν, καὶ γεννημένη δίδωσιν ἀπολογίαν, ἐκ ἀληθῆ μὲν, εὐδὲ καλὴν, προφασίως δὲ τινος ἐκ ἀμοιβῶν ἔσαν. *Plutarch. De Superstitione.*

Dissolvat hoc argumentum, si quis potest: ita enim res rem sequitur; ut hæc ultima necesse sit confiteri. Sed ne illud quidem dissolvat aliquis. *Lactantius.*

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VOL. II.

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1800.

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A

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4,	Text, line 4,	Crysostom	Chrysostom
6,	————— 4,	Simpliciorum fratrum	Simpliciores fratres
17,	————— 13,	gospie	gospel
31,	Note, — 2,	adopt	adopted
32,	Text, — 5,	νομιον	νομον
45,	————— 6,	αυτης	αυτην
		ιδιοκτητον	ιδιοκτητον
64,	————— 2,	Bonicastle	Bonnycastle
67,	Note, — 9,	Anathagoras	Athenagoras
84,	Text, — 15,	exhoration	exhortation
87,	Note, — 9,	γυναικος	γυναικος
118,	————— 12,	qui	quia
120,	————— 5,	θαλατταν	θαλατταν
128,	Text, — 18,	incumberance	incumbrance
189,	————— 17,	Demungus	Demiurgus
190,	Note, — 2,	See 45	Sec. 45.
226,	Text, — 15,	have	has
241,	————— 5,	Semo	Semus
287,	————— 4,	capitulated	recapitulated
334,	————— 5,	noble	nobleman
303,	————— 8,	Feter, well new	Peter well kne <sup>w</sup>
405,	————— 18,	praefect	praefectis
409,	————— 1,	edifications	edification

# SERIES OF EVENTS

DEVELOPED.

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HAVING gone through the several branches of the first proposition, I now proceed to the second. The purpose of it is as follows :

*“ Our Lord, being divinely inspired, foresaw the fabrication of the doctrines of his divinity and supernatural birth at Rome, and was led, in certain circumstances, to warn his disciples against them. He also furnished them with striking facts, by recording which they might, on his authority alone, convince the world of the falsehood of those doctrines. Accordingly, the evangelists wrote their respective gospels partly with the view of refuting the Gnostic heresies, and adopted the admirable method, not of opposing their asseveration to prevailing falsehoods, but simply of stating well-authenticated facts,*

*and of leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions. In consequence of the expulsion of the christians from Italy, the impostors propagated their heresies through Greece and Egypt, and introduced them even into the churches established by the apostles. The introduction of the Gnostic heresies into those churches, called forth the epistles of Paul, Peter, John, and Jude. These, and no other, are the heresies, which are opposed in the apostolic writings.*

The discussion of this proposition will form the subject of the present volume, and prove, I trust, the most important part of our enquiry; as it may serve to remove the obscurities, which hang over many parts of the New Testament; and bring to a decision the controversies, which to the scandal of the christian profession, have so long been agitated respecting the divinity and birth of Jesus Christ. It is hoped too, it will furnish withal, many powerful arguments in favour of the divine mission of Jesus, and of the truth of his gospel.

Our Lord, we are led to believe, was enabled by the wisdom of God to foresee those events that awaited his religion and followers in the world. Many things were



predicted by him, which have long since been accomplished ; while some of his predictions remain still to be fulfilled. To the firm believer, then, it cannot seem improbable, that he should have foreseen the events that took place at Rome, and that he should point to the false teachers, who came from thence, and who corrupted the pure and simple system he delivered from God to mankind.

In the seventh chapter of Matthew we thus read, “ Beware of those false teachers, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. Ye may know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? So every good tree beareth good fruit, as a bad tree beareth bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that beareth not good fruit will be hewn down and cast into a fire: So then by their fruits ye may know them.”

“ No man for saying unto me Master, Master, shall come into the kingdom of heaven, but for doing the will of my Father, which is in heaven. Many will say unto

me in that day, Master, Master, have we not taught in thy name, and in thy name cast out dæmons, and in thy name done many miracles? And then will I profess unto them I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.”

This is the first time our Lord has warned his disciples against the false prophets, that would introduce themselves into the christian church. It is, therefore, natural to infer, that those here spoken of, were the first false teachers that assumed the christian name. But the first impostors, we have seen, rose up in the city of Rome. These then must be the very men, whom Jesus has now before his eyes. This conclusion is, it appears to me, unavoidable: And it is confirmed, by the concurrent testimony of the early christian writers, who assert, that the persons noticed on this occasion, were the founders of the Gnostic\* heresies. And it

\* Thus Justin cites these words of our Lord, and applies them to the followers of Marcion and Valentinus. See his *Dialogue with Trypho*, p. 101, 102. Irenæus too refers them to the first heretics. His words are as follow;—*Igitur ne forte, et cum nostro delicto abripiantur quidam, quasi oves a lupis, ignorantes eos propter exterius ovilis pellis superindumentum, a quibus cavere denunciavit nobis Dominus*; p 2, at the bottom. Crisostom, in his Commentary on the place, seems to

receives an additional confirmation from the remarkable agreement between the description, which Christ gave of the first deceivers, and the character of the philologers come from Rome.

Irenæus, in his *Preface*, thus speaks of the original Gnostics: "Some, sent against the truth, introduce lying and vain genealogies which, as the apostle says, afford disputations rather than edification in faith; and by a specious appearance of probability, which they craftily study, they pervert the understanding of the unlettered, and make captives of them, by cunningly using the oracles of the Lord, and basely expounding the fair things said by him. They subvert many, and lead them astray from him, who framed and adjusted the universe, under the pretence of knowing something superior and more exalted than the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and all things therein." Now it is maintained, that these words of Irenæus accord exactly with what Jesus here says of them; since it implies, that they

have considered the impostors of whom Jesus speaks, as having some connection with the traitor Judas, and to place him in the number of them. Ὅμοιος γὰρ ὁ Ἰουδαῖος

were very skilful in the arts of deception; that they wore a fair outside; that they gave a specious appearance to their false doctrines; and by that means deceived the multitude: “Go in at the straight gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: but straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of those false teachers who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves\*.”

While the impostors invested themselves with the fair name of Christ, they indulged in crimes the most atrocious in themselves,

\* “De Hæreticis,” says Jerome, “intelligendum est, qui videntur continentia, castitate, jejunio, quasi quadam pietatis veste se circumdare intrinsecus, vero habentes animum venenatum simpliciorum fratrum decipiunt.” *Com. in loco.* What Tertullian says, is worthy of notice: “Instruit Dominus multos esse venturos sub pellibus ovium rapaces lupos. Quænam istæ sunt pelles ovium? nisi nominis Christiani extrinsecus superficies? Qui lupi rapaces nisi sensus et spiritus subdoli ad infestandum gregem Christi extrinsecus delitescentes? Qui pseudoprophetæ nisi falsi prædicatores? Qui pseudoapostoli nisi adulteri evangelizatores? Qui antichristi, nisi Christi rebelles? Nunc sunt hæreses, non minus doctrinarum perversitate Ecclesiam lacessantes, quam tum antichristus persecutionum atrocitate persequetur; nisi quod persecutio et martyras facit, hæresis apostatas tantum. Tertul. p. 203.

and the most repugnant to the genius of his religion. This remarkable trait in their character, our Lord has not omitted: "Ye may know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles\*?"

From the accounts, which the early fathers give of the Gnostics, we may collect, that they professed to be known, and distinguished from others, as the true believers, by a *faith*, which was the gift of nature, and by some spiritual seed, supernaturally implanted in them †. Seemingly in opposi-

\* The seduction of Paulina, in the temple of Isis, is a striking instance of the enormities of which the deceivers were guilty. After their departure from Rome, they persevered in the same wicked line of conduct. Sad accounts are given of them by the fathers, and the authority of the apostles leaves us no room to call in question the truth of their representations.

† Αυτους δε μη δια πραξεως, αλλα δια το φυσει πνευματικους ειναι παντη τε και παντως δογματιζουσιν σωθισσθαι. Iren. p. 30. *They positively maintain, that they shall altogether, and in every respect, be saved, not by moral duty, but because they are spiritual by nature.* Clement Alexandrinus attests the same thing of them. "The followers of Basilides," says he, "think that *faith* is the gift of nature (*φυσικην natural*). They therefore assign it to the elect, who receive their tenets by means of an intellectual perception, without demonstration;" page 433. *Potter's edition.* This writer holds up to their view the standard, which our Lord had laid down, as a proof that, as long as they indulged in such crimes, they could not be saved. *φαινημεν δ' αν*

tion to this false standard, Jesus lays down a criterion, by which the real and the pretended christian were to be discriminated; a criterion that will remain until the end of time a monument of his superior wisdom, as a teacher come from God.—*So then by their fruits ye may know them.*

The abominable vices of which the impostors of Rome were guilty, ended in the destruction of some, and in the distress of all the Jews and Egyptians, Tiberius having banished them from Italy and put the principal offenders to death. Our divine Master appears to have foreseen this circumstance: And so greatly was he impressed with it, as to insert a general remark, founded upon it, in the midst of his argument: “a good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor a bad tree bear good fruit.—*Every tree that beareth not good fruit, will be hewn down, and cast into a fire*\*.—*So then by their fruits ye may know them.*”.

και προς τουτους; οτι τους ψευδοπροφητας, και τους υσοι της αληθειας υποκρινονται, εξ εγγεν γνωσκεισθαι παρειληφμεν· p. 527, at the top. In page 531, he also says, very prettily, *The tree is known from its fruits, not from its blossoms and leaves.*

\* Mr. Wakefield appears to have considered this clause as spurious, from the seemingly abrupt manner in which it is in-

The Egyptian impostors blended the arts of magic with the new faith, and pretended to perform miracles, and to cast out dæmons in the name of Christ\*. They appear to have imagined, too, that they were sure of his favour for representing him as a superior Being, and conferring upon him honourable titles, though they disgraced him, by their iniquitous practices. To these prominent features, the following language has a pointed reference: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied, in thy name? And in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful things. And

roduced, and which indeed is, an obvious interception of the argument. See *his Commentaries on Matthew*.

\* The words of Tertullian and Irenæus, as they are brief, I shall here set down. More proofs of their addiction to magic will be seen in the sequel. Notata sunt etiam commercia hæreticorum cum Magis quampluribus, cum circulatoribus, cum astrologis, cum philosophis curiositati scilicet deditis; Ter. p. 218. Igitur horum mystici sacerdotes libidinese quidem vivunt, magias autem perficiunt, quemadmodum potest unusquisque ipsorum. Exorcismis et incantationibus utuntur. Amatoria quoque et agogima, et qui dicuntur paredri, et oniropompi, et quæcunque sunt alia perierga apud eos studiose exercentur; Iren. p. 95.

And, then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; Depart from me ye that work iniquity\*.”

The prevalence of the gospel in Rome, awakened the jealousy of the emperor and senate. To check a superstition, which they considered as dangerous to the state, they had recourse to violent, though unusual measures. A decree passed to punish the obstinate by death or banishment; while those, that relinquished their professions, were permitted to stay in Rome †. This is the first persecution that broke out against the followers of Christ. Accordingly Jesus notices it in the next paragraph, and what is remarkable he distinguishes between those

\* The author of the *Recognitions*, ascribed to Clement, alludes to these words of Jesus, and says, that when the devil saw that it was the intention of Christ to establish among mankind the worship of one God, he sent false prophets into the world, who in the name of Christ performed, not indeed the will of God, but the will of the devil. *Festinat continuo emittere in hunc mundum pseudopphetas et pseudoapostolos et falsos doctores, qui sub nomine quidem Christi loquerentur, Dæmonis autem voluntatem facerent.* Lib. iv. 38.

† It may be gathered from the words of Suetonius that some of the impostors gave up the christian profession, when threatened by Tiberius. *He expelled the magicians, but granted pardon to those that recanted.* The passage is cited above; vol. i. p. 147.



that gave up, and those that adhered to the faith, by a comparison, seemingly suggested by the downfall of the temple of Isis, and the throwing of her shrine into the Tyber. "Therefore whoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth those sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell."

These men prided in their knowledge; and while they arrogated superior acquirements to themselves, they branded the humble and sincere disciples, as *foolish*, *carnal*, and *ignorant* \*. The unbounded licence of speculation, in which they indulged, erected upon the christian doctrine a building splendid and lofty in appearance, but unable to

\* See Irenæus, p. 32; Tertullian, p. 250, 487; where the impostors appear to call the genuine believers, *Carnales*, *Simplices*, *Columbe*, *Rudes*, *Infirmi*.

sustain the storms of persecution, or to face the light of truth. This disgustful trait in their character, our Lord anticipated. Hence he compares them to *a foolish man*, that built his house upon the sand; which comparison fixes upon themselves, the charges of folly, and of ignorance, which they urged against the faithful believers. Hence, too, we see the meaning and propriety of the following clause: “The winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell; AND GREAT WAS THE FALL OF IT\*.”

The admonition, which our Saviour deli-

\* The higher a building is above the ground, the greater of course must be its fall, according to the following lines of the poet:

*Sæpius ventis agitatur ingens  
Pinus; et celsæ graviore casu  
Decidunt turres——*

For *Sæpius*, Mr. Wakefield has proposed *Sævius*, which, I think, is the true reading. The words of Crysostom on this verse, are no less just than elegant: “The fall is great, because the danger does not respect ordinary things, but the soul. It is a fall from heaven, and from an immortal crown.” In allusion to those, who had not the honesty nor firmness to withstand persecution, on account of their profession; he adds, “The man devoid of piety flees, even when none pursues. Such as these are afraid of shadows. They suspect their friends, their enemies, their domestics, those who know, and those who do not know them; and before the day of punishment, they suffer in this world, extreme punishment.”

vered to his followers, respecting the above impostors, is thus related by Luke: "Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the straight gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. 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. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not, whence ye are, depart from me all ye workers of iniquity. Then shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." Luke xiii. 23—29.

The first thing here worthy of remark is, that this evangelist has confined himself to that part of Christ's discourses, which respected the *Jewish*, and not the Egyptian impostors, that came from Rome. In this he acted with much propriety and wisdom:

for as he wrote his gospel partly with a view of checking the Egyptian heresy, with which the converts of that country were, as we shall see, in general, much tinctured, he would have only inflamed, or at least alienated, many of them, who were otherwise well-disposed, and worthy, if he had represented their leaders in the strong and odious colours, in which they had been depicted by the tongue of inspiration. The Jewish converts in Rome are charged, we have seen, by the Roman historians, Tacitus and Suetonius, as being guilty of going about to *rob*, to *plunder*, and murder in the night. This charge, though repelled by Josephus, as applied to the body of the Jews, will appear from the writings of the apostles themselves, to be well founded in respect to numbers of them. Such of the Jewish people, as were thus criminal, withdrew on their expulsion from Italy into caverns and desert places, and there supported themselves by nocturnal depredations, notwithstanding their profession of the new faith\*. This remark

\* Jerome, in his Comments on the Seventy-seventh Psalm, tells us, that the heretics inhabited *desert places*; Tom. vii. p. 226. L. Apuleius, in his *Metamorphosis*; and Lucian, in his *Asinus*, represent the followers of Jesus, as bands of robbers, who spent their nights in plunder, and their days in caves and

will account for, and explain the apparently abrupt and irrelevant observation, which Jesus subjoins to the question proposed to him: "When once the Master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door (i. e. hath risen up *to* shut the door, the phrase being a Hebraism), 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," &c. Our divine Master it seems from the habit of looking into futurity, had associated those false teachers, that would delude *the many* from the true faith, with the character of thieves, going about to rob people's houses in the hours of darkness. Hence he represents himself, as rejecting them from his own peculiar favour, or from the church, which his virtuous followers would form after his resurrection, under allusion to a householder rising from his seat to bolt the door against robbers in the night.

The Jewish converts in Rome corrupted the simple institution of the Lord's supper, by blending with it those festivals celebrated in

deserts. The object of these writers in publishing such books will be a matter of future enquiry.

honour of Isis and Osiris, and thus brought upon the innocent followers of Jesus in Judea, and other countries, the imputation of luxury and lewdness. The impostors of whom he here speaks, seem to have prided themselves in their conduct, in that respect, as a thing deserving of praise, THEN YE SHALL BEGIN TO SAY, WE HAVE EATEN AND DRANK IN THY PRESENCE; and thou hast taught in our streets. His answer to them, however, is suitable to their desert, “I know you not whence ye are—depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.”

The evangelist Mark, has not, for a reason presently to be pointed out, recorded what his master had foretold of these impostors; but the beloved disciple represents him as thus speaking of them:—

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door, by me

if any one enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; but the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." Cap. x. 1—13.

This passage requires a few observations :

The deceivers here meant were *thieves*, and *robbers*, a character which, from the above paragraph in Luke, they appear to have deserved.

The enormities of which they were guilty, while yet in Rome, make it manifest, that they did not profess the gosple from principle, but from interested motives; or, in other words, they became christians because the profession of christianity enabled them more successfully to practise the arts of deception, and to gratify their base inclinations; and this is implied in the words of our Lord concerning them: "The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy\*.

\* Lucian has written the life of one *Alexander*, a noted impostor. That man seems to have been one of those Gnostic teachers, who, like Simon Magus, affected to believe the divine

The philologers though they had no commission to preach the gospel, either from Christ or his apostles, yet introduced themselves, as we shall see in the sequel, into the churches as *authorised teachers*. Hence the meaning of the following asseveration, “Ve-

mission of Jesus, in order to enrich themselves by the simplicity and liberality of the christians. Amongst the more ignorant and deluded of them, he seems to have practised his arts of deception with great success, though the enlightened and sincere professors of the gospel held him in detestation, and exposed his artifices. What renders him, in this place, worthy of notice, is the circumstance that Lucian describes his fraud and extortion, under the same image, as is here applied by our Lord, to the other impostors. Speaking of those simple men, that gathered around him to see his wonders, he says, “The city was filled with men, all of whom were shorn (not merely of their wool) of their brains, and their hearts, and who resembled rational creatures only in form, but (in other respects) differed not from sheep.” *Lucian’s Works*, vol. i. p. 757. *Var. Edition*. Not far from the beginning the author thus describes his hero: “I am going to give you the memoirs of a much fiercer thief than Tilliborus; in as much as he stole not merely in woods, and forests, but in cities; did not only over-run with his plunder Minya or Ida, or some of the more solitary parts of Asia, but filled, I may say, the whole Roman empire with his theft.” Permit me here to observe, that the design of Lucian in this book, was to represent, in the character of Alexander, the teachers of christianity, as *magicians* and *impostors*, and the believers of it in general, as a weak and stupid class of people, actuated by that hope and fear, which, as he was pleased to call them, are the greatest tyrants of the life of man. This will account for the ignominious names he often applies to those that were imposed upon by the deceiver; and it will account too for his acting, on this occasion, in co operation with *Celsus*, the great adversary of the christian religion.



rily, Verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, this same is a thief, and a robber.”

Such was their pride, that they hardly condescended to rank among the disciples of the obscure Prophet of Nazareth. Considering themselves as possessing beyond him, the light of human knowledge, they claimed rather to be his competitors, and to unfold doctrines, which even exceeded the discoveries he made. And that they made some pretensions of the kind is manifest from the words of Jesus on this occasion.

It may be inferred, from a passage in Tertullian, that the founders of the Gnostic heresies not only affected to rival our Lord, but also to claim a superiority over him as having taught before him \*. And their

\* Simon Magus, who will presently appear to have had some connection with the impostors from Rome, and who probably was one of those that our Lord had here in view, seems to have set himself up as *the great power of God*, before the baptism of Jesus. In the second *Homily*, ascribed to Clement, Simon is said to have been a disciple of John the Baptist, and to have become renowned at Alexandria for his skill in the arts of magic, at the time he was beheaded by Herod.

pretensions, in this respect, were very specious, as in all probability Jesus, when put to death, was a much younger man than many of those magicians, who received his religion in the court of Tiberius. Now it is a remarkable fact, that in the above passage, the Lord speaks of those deceivers, not as men that would come after him, but as having already come, and as actually employed at that time, in plundering his sheep. AS MANY AS HAVE COME BEFORE ME ARE THIEVES AND ROBBERS\*. There are other

\* The impostors that appeared in the times of Jesus were *robbers of men*, because they used their knowledge to defraud them, and to enrich themselves. They were *robbers of God*, λησται θεοτητος, as Tatian somewhere says, because they pretended to be more than men, and arrogated to themselves divine honours. Nor was this the case only with those deceivers, but with almost all the heathen philosophers, before the age of Christ. Plato had the arrogance to hold himself up as the teacher of a new doctrine, and a messenger sent from heaven; in which, from spite to the christians, Celsus attempts to justify him; see Origen, p. 281. Pythagoras too laid claims to divination, as Cicero informs us; and if credit can be given to his biographer Porphyry, he pretended to have been supernaturally conceived. Even Socrates himself, the most enlightened, and the best-disposed of the gentile philosophers, was not free from the presumption of supposing, that he was under the guidance and direction of a superior being. This circumstance, according to Xenophon, was the principal ground of the accusation against him. The disgusting arrogance and folly of the ancient philosophers in this respect, led Hermes, in his *Derision of the Gentile Philosophy*, to say that it originated with the dæmons, who, from motives of envy and malice, endeavoured, as was supposed, to seduce men from the worship

things deserving of notice in the above passage: but these shall be pointed out presently.

In the tenth chapter of Matthew, we have an account of the commission, which Jesus gave to his apostles, to go and preach his gospel in the world. On this solemn occasion he delivers to them some specific directions, which might regulate their conduct in the execution of their office. Now if we examine the rules, which our Lord

of the true God. Our Lord, however, acted a very different part: He represents the supreme Being as the only proper object of adoration; and of himself he speaks as no other than the *son of man*. It appears to me, therefore, probable, that the clause Παντες υςοι προ εμου ηλθον is intended to mark the difference, which in this respect subsisted between our divine Master and other teachers, whether they were the impostors of his own time, or the pretended instructors of mankind in the ages preceding. What confirms my opinion is, that the verb ηλθον is put in the *indefinite tense*, so as to comprehend those that were past, as well as those that were then present. This interpretation is not far from the sense, which Clement Alexandrinus annexes to the passage, where he says, that our Lord meant those teachers among the gentiles, who, actuated by vain glory, set up, for their own discoveries, those tenets, which they had stolen from the divine philosophy of Moses, Κλεπτας της βαρβαρης Φιλοσοφιας Ελληνους ειναι προσειπεν 'η Γραφη'. This assertion he makes in allusion to the above words of Christ. See page 428. He repeats the same declaration in Strom. i. p. 400. Examine also what he says in page 360.

here prescribes, with the course pursued by the impostors, in the propagation of their principles, we shall find that they are all suggested by a foresight of their conduct, and intended to prevent his disciples from falling into a similar behaviour.

The object of the deceivers in professing and teaching christianity, was to enrich themselves by the liberality of those, whom they deluded. Irenæus tells us that they magnified their doctrines with all the solemnity of deep silence and mystery\*, and then communicated them for large sums to their followers: And we have the authority of the apostles, as well as of Lucian, who, it will hereafter appear, has given us an ample account of those heretics, that they were avaricious and extortionate in the extreme. Accordingly our divine Master delivered it

\* Quæ etiam convenienter videntur mihi non omnes velle in manifesto docere, sed solos illos, qui etiam grandes mercedes pro talibus mysteriis præstare possunt. Non enim jam dicunt similia illis de quibus Dominus noster dixit: *Gratis accepistis, gratis date*: sed separata (semota scilicet a vulgari hominum notitia) et portentuosâ et alta mysteria cum magno labore exquisita falacibus. Iren. p. 21.

Tertullian, speaking of their mysteries, has these emphatic and expressive words:—*Sancta silentio magno, sola taciturnitate cælestia. Their sanctity consists in deep silence, and the divinity of their origin in mere taciturnity.*

in charge to his disciples, not to receive any compensation for the instruction, which they imparted. FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE.

Lucian has written the life of one *Proteus*, or *Peregrinus*. Who is meant by this person, will be a subject of future investigation. But it must appear, at first sight, to any one that will peruse his life, that the author represents him under the character of a *Gnostic impostor*. “He came to the church with a long beard, and he wore a sordid out coat. A purse hung at his side, and a staff was carried in his hand. From thence he went about again to deceive, having plenty of provisions from the *christians*, by whom he was surrounded, as with guards, and among whom he lived in great profusion\*.” Our Lord foresaw that the deceivers would act in this manner; he therefore strictly charges his own disciples to avoid a similar conduct: “Provide not gold for yourselves, nor silver, nor money in your purses, nor tra-

\* Παρελθων εις την εκκλησιαν των Παρισιων, εκομα δ' ηδη, και τριβωνα πινοζον ημπειχιτο, και πηραν παρηρητητο, και το ξυλον εν τη χειρι ην, και ολωσ μαλα τραγικως εσκειυατο—εξηει τοδευτερον πλανησομενος ικανα εφοδια τους Χριστιανους εχων, υφ ων δορυφορουμενος εν απασιν αψθονοις ην. Vol. ii. p. 569, 570.

velling scrip, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff."

What Lucian says of Proteus, was true of the magicians. They went from house to house, for the purpose of eating and drinking. This appears from what the apostle Paul says of them, "They creep into families, and lead captive silly women, laden with sin, led away with divers lusts;" 2 Tim. iii. 6. Hence the propriety of the following injunction, "And into whatsoever house ye enter first, say, Peace be to this house; and if the Son of Peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give (for the labourer is worthy of his hire), GO NOT FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE;" Luke x. 5—8.

The first Egyptian Gnostics, we have seen, paid divine worship to the serpent, the reputed wisdom of which taught them the pernicious maxim, that they might safely tell falsehood to promote the truth\*. Our

\* Irenæus informs us, that the heretics were become so depraved, that the man deemed most perfect among them, was he who best succeeded in deceiving others by falsehood and duplicity. The passage will be cited hereafter.

Lord as he foresaw this, cautioned his apostles against the adoption of it: "Be ye wise as the serpent, and harmless as the dove," which is to the following effect, *Use, indeed, all the skill and prudence of which you are capable, in defending yourselves from the evils by which you will, in the discharge of your ministry, be surrounded. But carefully avoid the prevalent maxim adopted by the votaries of the heathen superstition, that it is lawful to do evil that good may come. While you convince superior wisdom in the prosecution of my cause, let that innocence and simplicity of which the dove is an emblem, characterise your whole behaviour\*.*"

The philologers, while yet in Rome, acted upon the above evil principle. In the spirit of Egyptian duplicity, they deceived the senate and emperor, before whom they were summoned, by certain tales, which they had *previously* contrived, respecting the nature and birth of Jesus. On this circumstance seems to have been founded the precept, which Jesus next subjoins: "Ye will be brought before governors and kings, for

\* Jerome has given the substance of this paraphrase, in a very few words: *Per prudentiam insidias devitent, per simplicitatem malum non faciant.*

my sake, to testify unto them and the gentiles. BUT WHEN THEY DELIVER YOU, BE NOT ANXIOUS HOW OR WHAT YE SHALL SPEAK: FOR IT WILL BE GIVEN YOU IN THAT VERY MOMENT WHAT YE SHOULD SPEAK.

The impostors concealed their doctrines under the dark and suspicious veil of mystery\*: nor were any of their followers admitted into their secrets but those, whose fidelity had been previously ascertained, by long and repeated trials. That the disciples might not fall into this disgraceful practice, their divine Master delivers to them the following glorious admonition: WHAT I SAY UNTO YOU IN SECRET, SPEAK YE, IN THE LIGHT; AND WHAT YE HEAR IN THE EAR, PROCLAIM UPON THE HOUSES †,

\* The mysteries of the Gnostics were formed on the model of the Grecian, Egyptian, and Persian mysteries. Tertullian asserts, that the Valentinians adopted the Eleusinian, and practised in them the same atrocities. Valentiniani Eleusinia fecerunt lenocinia.

† This is attested of them by Irenæus, in a passage quoted above. The knave Basilides did not communicate his doctrines to his disciples, till they had undergone a trial of *five years*.

This he probably took from *Pythagoras*, who, as Laertius



It was not to be expected that men so depraved both in principle, and in practice, as the Gnostics were, should have withstood the test of persecution\*. None could have

informs us, in his life, obliged his scholars not only to pass five years *in Silence*, but not to look at him during that period.

\* Irenæus says of them, Ad tantum temeritatis progressi sunt quidam ut etiam Martyras spernant et vituperent eos qui propter Domini confessionem occiduntur, et sustinent omnia a Domino prædicta et secundum hoc conantur vestigia sequi passionis Domini passibilis (nempe Christi) Martyres facti; p. 247.

Basilides went so far as to say, that those, who underwent persecution, were guilty, and suffered only what they deserved. This account of him, we have from Clement Alexandrinus, See Strom. iv. p. 600. That impostor was from the school of Pythagoras, where he had learned the doctrine of the transmigration of the human soul. According to him, the soul, which suffered for the sake of Christ, was only punished for guilt incurred in a former stage of existence. Sed Basilidis hypothesis dicit animam, quæ prius peccaverat in alia vita, hic pati supplicium; electam quidem, ut puniatur honorifice per martyrrium; aliam autem ut debito purgetur suppliciis.

That the Gnostics refused to suffer for their belief in Jesus, is attested also by Tertullian. Martyria, says he of them, negant esse facienda. This author has written a whole book to show the obligations which christians are under to endure hardships and pain, on account of their Master. To this book he gave the title of *Scorpiace*, in allusion to the Greek name of a serpent; which the impostors extolled as a god; and imitated as their model. Some passages of it we shall notice in the sequel.

Explicit as the words of our Lord are, the Gnostics attempted to evade them, by putting, as they usually did, a mystical

done this but such as had a sound head and a sound heart. Accordingly they denied the obligation of suffering for the christian name, and fled when flight was practicable; or, if overtaken by the zeal of the adversary, they scrupled not to humour the genius of polytheism, by joining in its rites and festivals. Hence the propriety of what our Lord subjoins to the above extract from John: "I am the good Shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is a *hireling*, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth: And the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep." Cap. x. 11—14.

Our Saviour well knew, that the sacrifice of life, and all its endearments, on the part of his apostles, and other early converts, would afford mankind, in distant ages and countries, the most decisive proof of the sincerity of their faith in him, and of the high estima-

interpretation upon them. These evasions Clement very happily calls, *δειλια; σοφισματα*, *sophistical subterfuges*, *resulting from fear or baseness*. See Iten. p. 18. Clem. Alex. p. 57<sup>o</sup>.

tion in which they held his gospel. He therefore, inculcates the obligation of such a sacrifice, with a precision and emphasis incapable of being well misconceived, or fairly evaded. Hear the words, with which he next addresses his apostles: "Every one, who shall confess me before men, I will also confess before my Father, which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father, which is in heaven. He who hath found his life will lose it: and he who hath lost his life for my sake, will find it. A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. Suffice it for the disciple to be as his teacher, and the servant as his master."

*Finally*, The impostors maintained that our Lord had not a *real body*, and consequently denied the *reality* of his sufferings; but supposed that it was not Jesus, but Cimon of Cyrene, who carried his cross after him, that hung upon it\*. Against this falsehood

\* Qua propter neque passum, sed Simonem quendam Cyrenæum angariatum portasse crucem ejus pro eo: et hunc secundum ignorantiam, et errorem crucifixisse, transfiguratum ab eo, ut putaretur, ipse esse Jesus; et ipsum autem Jesum Simonis accepisse formam, et stantem irrisisse eos; Iren. p. 98. See also Epiphanius, p. 70: where the same opinion is ascribed to

the following declaration appears to have been levelled : “ And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”

Since our Saviour was enabled by divine inspiration to foresee that false teachers would rise and corrupt his religion, it may be expected that he should, in a direct manner, notice the origin, the growth, and the extirpation of those corruptions, which would be introduced into it. And this is what he has done.

“ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like a man sowing good seed in his field : and during the time of sleep, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. So when the blade sprang up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the weeds also. Then the servants of the householder came up, and said unto him, Master, didst not thou sow good seed in this field of thine :

the Basilidians. As they pretended that our Lord did not suffer, it followed of course, that they refused to believe in the *man Jesus*. Hunc passum a Judæis non esse, sed vice ejus Simonem crucifixum esse : unde nec in eum credendum esse, qui sit crucifixus ne quis in Simonem credidisset. Tertul. p. 219, at the bottom.

whence then hath it these weeds? And he said unto them, an enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou, then, that we go and pick them all out? But he said, Nay: Lest while ye pick out the weeds, ye root up the wheat also with them. Let both grow together, until the harvest: and in harvest season, I will say to the reapers, Gather together first the weeds, and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but lay up the wheat in my barn\*.”

As this parable contains a prediction that the gospel would be debased by some false doctrines, and a description of the manner,

\* I have here, as I often shall do, when eligible, though I may not notice it, adopt the version of Mr. Wakefield. I do not however approve of the substitution of *weeds* for *tares*, which is, in the common translation. The Hebrew word *Zuzin*, from which ζιζανια is taken, does not signify seeds of a *different* kind from the wheat, but is, as Lightfoot has shown, a species of the *same* grain, which degenerates while in the ground. This, therefore, was a word, which exactly suited the purpose of our Lord; as his object seemingly was to signify that his doctrines, when conveyed into the subterraneous dens of the magicians, and there blended with their mysteries, would lose their original purity, and with their purity, the proper fruit of them. Jerome calls the *Zizania* (*tares*) *dogmata hæreticorum*, *the doctrines of the heretics*, and says, they are the same with what Jesus calls *scandala*, *offences*. *Omnia scandala referuntur ad Zizania*. Ignatius, in his epistle to the Ephesians, in allusion to the heretics, says, ἵνα μη τις βοτανη του διαβολου ευξειθη εν υμιν. *Let no herb of the devil be found among you.*

together with a specification of the time, in which the weeds of error should be first sown among the good seed, it directs our attention to its introduction into Rome, and to the magicians that embraced and corrupted it in that city; or in other words, to the men against whom Jesus had already warned his faithful disciples. Hence we shall perceive much beauty and propriety in the stile and construction of it.

The person that sowed the weeds was an *enemy*, or, as it might be rendered *an hostile man*. That is, a man who while he professed friendship was actuated with enmity towards the householder and his servants. Of this description seem to have been the magicians at Rome, as they received the faith only from base and interested motives\*.

The enemy disappeared after sowing the

\* This is a fact which will be made manifest from the writings of the apostles. In the mean time hear the words of *Pseudo Ignatius*, in his epistle to the Trallians, when speaking of the first heretics:—Λεγουσι Χριστον, ουχ ἵνα Χριστον κηρυξωσιν, αλλα ἵνα Χριστον αδιτησωσι και ου νομιον συστησωσιν, αλλα ινα νομου καταγγελωσιν — *They speak of Christ, not that they might preach him, but that they might supersede him: and they profess the law, not in order to establish, but to undermine it.* Chap. vi.

weeds: and this representation corresponds with the fact. The principal impostors were put to death for the seduction of Paulina, and others of them, as Suetonius attests, recanted.

The weeds were sown by the enemy, *before* the seed appeared above ground, and while the servants *were asleep*: Which means, that christianity became corrupted, before it was yet preached among the gentiles, and before the apostles themselves were awakened from the slumbers of prejudice, in which they indulged against its extension to the world at large.

The servants applied to the householder for leave to pluck up the weeds: But he said, "Nay; lest while ye pluck up the weeds, ye root up the wheat also with them." Which, in reference to the peculiar situation of the apostles, signifies, that they consulted their divine Master, how to act with respect to the falsehoods, blended by the impostors, with the doctrines he had taught; and that in answer, they were instructed to content themselves with asserting facts, which they knew to be true, and

leave those falsehoods to flourish till such a season, as the Divine Wisdom should deem them ripe for extirpation \*. Our Divine Master, as he foresaw that men would rise and adulterate the golden purity of his religion, by blending with it the alloy of heathen theology, furnished the historians of his life, with facts and declarations, which they were to publish in refutation of them.

The Gnostic teachers represented Christ as one of those thirty *Æons*, or *Gods*, which constituted the *Pleroma*, or *Plenitude*. Now our Lord represents himself on most occasions, *as one of the human race*. As a Being possessing the nature and constitution of man: for this is implied in the terms, ὁ υἱοῦ τοῦ

\* The injunction of Jesus, however, if considered, in reference to the professors of christianity in succeeding ages, is a prohibition to persecute for the sake of mere opinion. "This parable," says Mr. Wakefield, "is extremely applicable to the case of religious persecution: and shews that all the iniquitous oppressors of the conscience, and all the accursed tormentors of the bodies of mankind, on account of *religious faith*, not only act in defiance of the plainest principles of equity, and in contempt of the free spirit of the gospel, but in direct opposition also to the example of Almighty God, and usurp that high prerogative, the distribution of justice, which he has reserved for himself, and will finally exercise, on all mankind, by the hands of his Son Jesus, at the day of judgment." *Com. in loco*. See also Remark x, in his *Evidences of Christianity*, where the same prohibition is finely illustrated.



*ανθρωπου*, *the son of man*, under which he usually speaks of himself; the article prefixed to *ανθρωπος*, being used to mark an opposition between *man* and *God*. As this has not been noticed by other critics, it may be necessary to point out a few instances, where it is employed to express a similar opposition. Thus John writes, “Jesus needed not that any should testify of man, *περι του ανθρωπου*, for he knew what was in man, *εν τη ανθρωπω*, Cap. II. 25. In both of these clauses, the article is put before *ανθρωπος*, *man*, though it be obvious, that by *man*, is here meant, *human kind*. But the use of it here, is not improper, on that account, as it serves to distinguish between God and mankind, which distinction the writer had in his mind. His meaning is to this effect:—“Though mankind needed the information, which Jesus came to communicate, *respecting the Deity*, yet he did not, on his part, need the information of any concerning mankind.” Again, “In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine, the commandments of men,” *των ανθρωπων*, Mark vii. 7. That is, the commandments, which men taught in opposition to those of *God*. “Take heed that ye do not your alms *before men*, *εμπροσθεν των ανθρωπων*, Mat. vi. 1.

before those beings, who see only the outside of things; but before *him*, who seeth in secret." The article is employed to mark a similar opposition in verses 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, of this chapter.

"Let your requests," says the apostle, Phil. iv. 6. "be made known unto God," *προς τον θεον*. In this admonition, he glances at that ostentatious custom too prevalent among the Jews, of addressing the Almighty in public places, in order to be seen of men. Taken in this view, it is to the following purpose: "Make not an ostentatious display of praying to God in the presence of men: Rather present your petitions to heaven in private"\* . It were, indeed, a long task to

\* From this example it appears, that the article placed before *θεος*, is used to mark an opposition between *God* and *man*, as it does between *man* and *God*, when placed before *ανθρωπος*. Instances of this use of it frequently occur in the New Testament. Thus the Pharisees commanded the blind man to whom Jesus had restored his sight, to give the praise to *God*, *δοξοδωσαντω θεω*, John ix. 24. That is, "Express your gratitude for the deed, to *the Deity*, and *not to this man*, whom we know to be a sinner; and therefore not entitled to the glory of having come from God." Thus too we read in Acts viii. 20. concerning *Moses*, *αγειος τω θεω*, *he was beautiful with God*; or *in the sight of God*; which means, that he possessed those qualities, which made him fair in the estimation of the Supreme Being, and not merely those, which rendered him so, in the apprehension of men.

point out all the places in the New Testament, where the article is used for the purpose here specified. We return then to the subject. Our Lord stiles himself a human being, and that in opposition to a being of superior order. What could have been his reason for thus describing himself in a manner *so peculiar, and so different from the modes of designation, which other men used when speaking of themselves?* His reason, as appears to me, could be no other than this: He foresaw that certain impostors would represent him, as a being superior to the condition, and different from the nature of man. This representation, however flattering it might appear to an impostor, was rejected by the humble Prophet of Nazareth, as a flagrant violation of the truth, and a daring invasion of the divine prerogative. To convince, therefore, all mankind of its falsehood, he holds himself up to them as one of the same nature with themselves\*. Taken in

\* Though no critic, I believe, has placed the import of this designation in that definite point of light, in which it is here viewed, yet the object which Jesus had, in thus distinguishing himself, has not escaped the attention of some learned men both in modern and in ancient times. The Heresiarch Colorbasus maintained, that Christ, by this title, held himself up as the offspring of *human nature*, or as being born of a *human father*, as

this view, the following passage is highly deserving of our attention :

well as of a human mother. *Δια τουτο υιον ανθρωπου ομολογει 'ωσωνι απογονοι ανθρωπου' ελε (Jesus) confessed himself to be the son of man, as being the offspring of man.*—Irenæus, lib. I. c. vii. p. 55. Epiphanius answers this argument by insinuating, that he was styled Son of man, because he assumed a human body, from his mother. His words are as follow : “ Let us grant, that he named himself the Son of man, because, according to the opinion of the miserable Colobasus, his father was called a man, and not because he was born of the flesh, that is, of the virgin womb of the holy Mary ; what would he say to that which our Lord Jesus Christ told the Jews: *Υου, ποτω seek to kill me a man, who have spoken to you the truth, which I heard of my Father.* Here he means not man his father, but confessing of his real Father, signifies the God of all.”—Epiphanius, p. 260.

Hear next the words of a celebrated modern writer, (*Hayne's Scripture Account*, p. 207), on this subject : “ *Son of man* is a name, title, or character, which Christ has given himself so often in the gospels, that it highly deserves to be well understood. St. Matthew has this title thirty times ; St. Mark fifteen times, St. Luke fifteen times ; St. John ten times. Upon how many more occasions Christ stiled himself Son of man cannot now be known by any other writings now extant ; but it may fairly be supposed to have been his common and ordinary stile, when he mentioned himself. And most certainly he did this for very good reasons. The critics assign many ; but studiously omit the great, and perhaps, the only reason, why Christ so often called himself the Son of man, which was undoubtedly to prevent the idolatrous notions and practices of his followers, in succeeding ages : Well knowing the great proneness of all nations, to deify their heroes ; and being sent from God to reform the Jewish nation and the heathen world, over-run with gross idolatry, he set himself to preach up the necessity of a general repentance, a conversion from all kinds of false worship, to the

“ When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi. He asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ the Son of the living\* God.” Mat. xvi. 13—17.

worship of the one true and living God in spirit and truth; and a hearty and sincere obedience to his laws; which, indeed, were the true and only means of setting up the spiritual kingdom of the most high God amongst all mankind. This was his chief aim, and his glorious scheme, which he pursued with great zeal, diligence, constancy, and self-denial; far from affecting divine honour, and though attended with miracles, yet declaring *he could do nothing of himself—that the Father who dwelt in him did the works—that he sought not his own glory, &c.* John v. 19. iv. 34. xiv. 10. Philip. ii. 7, 9.

\* The epithet *living*, which Peter here uses before *God*, was suggested by the idea of the prophets being *dead*; which idea passed through his mind as their names were mentioned. A similar association may be seen in the following lines of Virgil:

—————At memor ille  
 Marris Acidalike, paullatim abolere Sichæum  
 Incipit, et vivo tentat prævertere amore.  
Æneid I. 724.

Sichæus was now *dead*. This circumstance being in the mind of the poet, gave rise to the epithet *vivo*, *living love*, which Dido was now cherishing towards her new lover.

Here we are presented with the opinions which his own disciples and the body of the Jewish people entertained, respecting the person of our Lord. The former thought him to be the Messiah, whom the Jews expected then to make his appearance: the latter, though they had recourse to suppositions sufficiently absurd to account for his miracles, do not seem to have the most distant idea that he was any other than one of the human race. Now it may be asked, What was the object of Jesus in making the above enquiry? Was it merely to be informed, in what light he was regarded by those around him? Such an information in his case was unnecessary: For had he only the discernment of an ordinary person, he could not but know what his own disciples, at least, thought of him. His only object then, must have been, in thus eliciting their sentiments, to furnish his historians with a fact, which, when recorded, would prove, that in the apprehension of all, who knew him—of all, who saw and heard him, he was but a being merely human. It is worthy of notice, that, while our Lord asked whom the people supposed him to be, he tells them in return, that he was the *Son of man*; that he was only one that had the feel-

ings and constitution, which that name implies.

The parable in which our Lord represents the corruption of his religion, is thus explained by him: "The sower of the good seed is the Son of man. The field is the world: The good seed are the children of the kingdom, and the weeds are the children of the evil one: the enemy, who sowed the seed, is the devil: the harvest is the end of this age, and the reapers are the angels. As, therefore, the weeds are packed up, and burned up in a fire, so also will it be at the end of this age. The Son of man will send forth his messengers; and they will gather together out of his kingdom all the faithless\*, and the workers of iniquity, and will

\* Παντα τα σκαιδαλα, literally rendered *all the offences*; the *abstract*, as they say, being used for the *concrete*. The persons meant are those, who by their bad practices, would bring disgrace upon the gospel, and prevent others from professing it. On this account Clement calls them σκαιδος φιλοσοφικας και παντος του βιου. "O! impiety," says he, "the words of our Lord are turned into falsehood, by these communicants of intemperance, these brethren in lust, who are the reproach not only of philosophy, but of human nature in general. They adulterate the truth, or rather, as much as in them lies, bury it out of sight. Through excessive depravity they consecrate a carnal intercourse as a divine communion, and pretend that this will lead them into the kingdom of God." Strom. III.

east them into the furnace of fire: There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then will the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” In order to see the beauty of this explanation, I shall place before you the representation which the impostors give of what will happen to themselves, at the end of the world. And we shall find, I apprehend, that the above explanation of Jesus is levelled against it.

\* “They call us,” says Irenæus, “animal, and maintain, that we are of the world,

p. 524. The objections that were made against christianity in consequence of the irregularities and divisions of the heretics, may be seen in Origen, as urged by Celsus. See, if you please, p. 118, 271, 272. We shall take more notice of this subject at the close of the volume.

\* Δια τουτο ουν ἡμεις κελους (λερε και ὄλω) ψυχικους ονομαζομεσι· και εκ κοσμου ειναι λεγουσι, και αναγκαιων ἡμιν την εγκρατιαν και αγαθην πραξιν, ἵνα δι αυτης ελθωμεν εις τον της μεσοτητος τοπον· αυτοις δε πνευματικους τε και τελειους καλουμενοις μεδαμωσ· ου γαρ πραξις εις πληρωμα εισαγει, αλλα το σπερμα, το εκειθεν νηπιον εκπεριπαρμιον, ενθαδε τελειομενον· οταν δε παν το σπερμα τελειωθη την μην Αχαμωθ την μητερα αυτων μεταβηται τον της μεσοτητος τοπον λεγουσι, και εντο, πληρωματος εισελθειν και απολαβειν τον νυμφιον αυτης του Σωτηρα, τον εκ παντων γεγοιστα, ἵνα συζυγια γενηται του Σωτηρα και της Σοφειας της Αχαμωθ· και τουτου ειναι νυμφιον και νυμφιον, τους δε πνευματικους αποδυσσαμενους τας ψυχας, και πνευματα νεερα γενομενους, ακρατητως και αερατως εντος πληρωματος· ημελλοντας εμμερας αποδουσεσθαι τοις αγγελιοις· Iren. p. 32.



that temperance, and good works are necessary, on our part, that by these we might ascend, to the intermediate space. But as to themselves, whom they call spiritual, and perfect, they are by no means requisite. For, in their opinion, it is not a virtuous conduct, but some divine seeds, sown in their infancy, and matured in them, that leads to the Plenitude. And when all this seed shall be ripened, they say, that Wisdom, their mother, will remove from the intermediate place, and enter the Plenitude, and receive the Saviour, her bridegroom, who is the common offspring of all the *Æons*, in order that her union with him might be celebrated: That these are the bridegroom and the bride, and the whole Plenitude, the nuptial chamber: That they shall then put off the animal principle, and become intellectual spirits, and be joined as brides to the angels, attendant on the Saviour; having now entered in an incomprehensible and invisible manner into the Plenitude."

The parable of Jesus, and this passage of the Gnostics, refer alike to the consummation of the christian dispensation. Let us then compare them together. They represent the Saviour as one of the *Æons*, or

Gods, commissioned from above to the children of men. But he calls himself the *Son of man*, which means, as we have seen, that he was a mere human being. The impostors, again, speak *of* themselves, as destined to be united in marriage, to those angels that will accompany the Saviour on his second appearance. He, on the contrary, holds them up, as being gathered by his angels not to have the honour of an union with them, but to be burned as noxious weeds in a furnace of fire. The principles and practices of those men, brought disgrace on the christian name, tarnished the sun-like splendor of the new religion, exposed its faithful friends to unjust calumnies, and by that means prevented thousands from embracing it, that otherwise would have done. Now our divine Master represents them as the odious authors of these evils, and insinuates that the time will arrive, when such men shall be excluded from the number of his followers; that his gospel shall be restored to its heavenly purity, which will then impart to its professors, a lustre resembling the sun in the firmament. “The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom ALL THOSE THAT OCCASION SCANDAL, AND DO INIQUITY, THEN

SHALL THE RIGHTEOUS SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER.”

The following paragraph, as it will lead us to the immediate object, to which our Lord applied the instructive parable of the talents, is deserving of our attention: “While they do many odious and impious things, which we avoid to commit, even in thought or word, they rail at us, as vulgar and knowing nothing. They extol themselves beyond measure, calling themselves *perfect*, and *the chosen seed*. They say that we received our talents only *for use*, and therefore it will be taken from us; that they possess theirs as their own inheritance, which descended from on high, with their nuptial union, that cannot be conceived or expressed. And that on this account it shall be added to them\*.” Here is a plain reference to the parable of the talents. Let us then see whe-

\* Και αλλα δε πολλα μυσαρα και αθεα πρρασσοντες, ημων μεν δια του φοβου του θεου φυλλασσομενων και μεχρης εννοιας και λογου αμαρτειν, κατατρεχουσιν ως ιδιωτων, και μηδεν επισημεων εαυτους υπερυψουσι, τελειου αποκαλουντες και σπερματα εκλογης ημας μεν γαρ εν χρεσει την χαριν λαμβανειν λεγουσιν· διο και αφαιρηθησεται αυτης· αυτους δε ιδιοκτητου ανωθεν υπο της αρεητου και ανομοματου συζυγιας συγκατεληλυθειαν εχειν την χαριν· και δια τουτο προσηθησεται αυτοις· Iren, p. 31.

ther our divine Master had any view to the impostors in delivering it. "The Son of man is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to every man according to his several ability, and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them another five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money. After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents, came and brought other five talents; saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents, behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. He also that had received two talents, came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents besides them. His Lord said unto

him, Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Then he which had received the one talent, came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: Lo! there thou hast that is thine. His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I did not scow, and gather where I have not strewed; Thou oughtest, therefore, to have put my money to the exchangers, and then, at my coming, I should have received my own, with usury. Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: But from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."

Now it is maintained, that this beautiful moral fable is delivered by Christ in opposition to the deceivers, whom Irenæus mentions in the preceding paragraph, and that he intended the unprofitable servant to

represent them. The truth of this position will appear from the following reasons :

It seems to me probable, that while Jesus means more immediately his own faithful disciples, by those who made a proper use of their talents, so he characterises by the unprofitable servant, him, who betrayed his Master: And as his thoughts on this, and other occasions, were directed to future things by divine inspiration, he, of course, had before his eyes, those, who, in after times, would profess themselves the followers, and resemble the character of the traitor. But we have already seen, that the Egyptian Gnostics imitated the example of Judas, and acknowledged him as their head.

The servant, who did not improve the talent given him, was not only *unprofitable*, but *wicked*: And this was the character of the false teachers.

It may be concluded, that as he did not turn to a proper advantage, the goods, which his Master lent him, but laid them aside as useless, he had no expectation of his returning and calling him to account for the use he made of them. And this is what those men

did not look for. And against this error which tended to subvert from the foundation the christian system, the words of our Lord in this very parable are directed. "After a long time, THE LORD OF THOSE SERVANTS COMETH AND RECKONETH WITH THEM."

The unprofitable servant arraigns his Master as being *hard*, as reaping where he has not sowed, and gathering where he has not strawed. This circumstance proves to my mind with absolute certainty, that the Gnostics were the persons, whom our Lord immediately had in view. For some of them speak of the divine laws as severe, arbitrary, and unjust. Hence Clement of Alexandria says with justice of them, that they waged war with God himself\*.

\* His words are to this effect: "Both Carpocrates and Epiphanius wage war against God. The latter, in a famous book which he composed, concerning justice, speaks thus: Let us hear the commandment of the Legislator: He speaks ridiculously when he says, *Thou shalt not desire*; and more ridiculously, when he adds, *the things of thy neighbour*: For he who gave the desire as containing in it the seeds of our birth, commands it to be taken away, while it is taken from no other animal. More ridiculous still is the commandment, *Thou shalt not desire thy neighbour's wife*, thus forcing communion (with

The impostors, though wicked and unprofitable, yet had the presumption to say, as is seen in the above paragraph, that to

women) into a private property." Strom. iv. p. 514. The author of the *Clementine Homilies* gives a similar representation of the sentiments of the deceivers respecting the divine commandments: "Some who glory in being thought philosophers, regard those sins (namely violence, murder, adultery, and the like) as indifferent; and brand, as foolish, the men that censure those actions. For they say, that those are not sins by nature, which are prohibited by the ancient sages. These having observed, that men, by a proclivity of mind, are urged to such things, and carry on hostilities against each other, on this account, established laws, and forbade them as sins." Hom. iv. 20. Philo, who it appears to me, often alludes to the notions of the first Gnostic teachers, gives a very different, and far more just, statement of the matter. Speaking of the patriarchs, he writes thus: "These were men, who led an unblameable and fair life, and whose virtues are recorded in the holy scriptures, in order not only to perpetuate their praise, but to encourage those, who peruse their memoirs, and to inspire them with emulation for the same things. For those men were living, and rational laws, whom (Moses) for two reasons has celebrated,—being desirous, first, to show that his appointed decrees are not at variance with nature; and, secondly, that it is not difficult to those, who have the will, to live conformably to the established laws; since the primitive men, when not a specific rule was set down, yet yielded an easy and prompt obedience to an unwritten legislation, so that one may say, the instituted laws are but the memoirs of the life of those ancient men, detailing, from antiquity the actions and words they used." *De Abrahamo*, vol. ii. p. 2. I shall here only remark, that the Gnostics rejected altogether, the Creator of the world, whom they considered as an inferior and malevolent being. Passages expressive of their blasphemous opinions, on this subject, I shall have occasion to produce in the sequel.



them, and not to the faithful believers, abundance would be given. Their arrogance, in this respect, Jesus anticipated, and condemned by the following sentence: "Take, therefore, the talent from this man, and give it to him that hath the ten talents. For to every one that hath much, abundance will be given: but from him who hath little, even that little will be taken away. And cast this unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there will be weeping and gnashing of the teeth."

*Finally,* Those men went so far as to affirm, that the improvement made by the true believer, of the talent, though necessary, will be of no service to him, and that, nevertheless, it shall be taken from him, without securing to him the favour of his Master. In refutation of this, Jesus states, in express and unequivocal terms, that such an improvement, or, in other words, that a just use of the religious privileges, and a proper discharge of the moral duties annexed to the situation of every individual, will alone entitle him to the approbation of his Lord at his second coming. "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful

over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord”\*.

The next beautiful parable, which our Lord delivers, we shall find like the former, to have been called forth by the conduct and sentiments of those impostors, whom the wisdom of heaven enabled him to foresee. I shall, therefore, insert it in this place, though it be long to transcribe.

“ When the Son of man shall come in his

\* When the first Egyptian converts, on their expulsion from Italy by the emperor Tiberius, returned into their own country, they withdrew some of them into solitary places and led a life of torpid inactivity and mystic contemplation, in subterraneous cells, which they called *monasteries*. An interesting history of their institutions and conduct, is given by their great advocate, Philo, who endeavours to apologise for their retirement from the general depravities of the times. His books concerning them will form a subject of the most curious and important investigation that can engage the attention of a rational christian. From him we shall see, that though many of the leaders of the Gnostics were bad men, yet thousands and tens of thousands among those who followed them, and were infected with their notions, were transformed by the influence of their new profession into bright models of temperance, benevolence, and piety. My object, however, in this note, is merely to observe that the seclusion of those men from social scenes, and their leading a life of *inutility* in monastic solitude, are, it appears to me, the precise circumstances, which our Lord had in view, when he represents the wicked servant as *unprofitable*, and *hiding his talent in the ground*.

glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations. And he shall separate one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right-hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right-hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; Naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me: Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done unto me. Then shall he say also to them on the left-hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting

fire, prepared for the devil and his angels : For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or a thirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away unto everlasting punishment, but the righteous unto life eternal." Mat. xxv. 31—46.

The general and important lesson here inculcated is obvious : but the following remarks will, I trust, place it in a more striking point of light than that in which it has hitherto been viewed. It is observable, then, first, that the men placed on the left-hand of the King, are not those that had *never heard*, or *never believed* the gospel, but such as *professed* to believe it. For they acknowledge the sovereignty of Jesus, and address him under the title of *Lord* : And the turn of their answer implies, that had they seen

him, an hungered, or a thirst, or naked, they would have administered unto him. Now, as they were pretended followers of Christ, we cannot reasonably doubt, but that they are the impostors, whom he had before his eyes in the preceding parable; and we are justified in the conclusion, that they were the advocates of the *serpent*, or *satan*, or *devil* (for these are but different names of the same thing) by the sentence which the King passes upon them: "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" \*.

\* Thus we read in the Revelation, chap. xx. 2. "And he laid hold on the *dragon*, that old *serpent*, which is the *devil* and *satan*." Hence Justin says, in this manner: "Apud nos quidam antesignanus malorum dæmonum *serpens* vocatur et *satanas* et *diabolus*, sicut ex scriptis nostris, si inquiratis, cognoscere potestis. Apol. I. p. 56. ed. Grabe. See also his *Dialogue with Trypho*, p. 331.

The author of the *Recognitions*, appears to have considered this parable as originally levelled against the impostors, who worshipped the *serpent*. On this account he puts in the mouth of Peter, while disputing with Simon Magus, the deemed heresiarch of Gnosticism, a passage, which is grounded on the words of Jesus on this occasion. It is a passage, indeed, so just and beautiful, that my English reader will be obliged to me for placing it before him in his own tongue. It is to this effect: "The serpent (in the defence of worshipping images) pours out, by means of others, words of this kind: "We adore visible images in honour of the invisible God." This, replied Peter, is

Hence we may discover the propriety and force of what our Saviour says on the occasion. He represents himself to be *the Son of man*, and *a brother* of the righteous that believe in him; that is, a human being:—a being of the same *nature* and *character* with his virtuous followers, and not as the impostors represent him, an *Æon*, *God*, or *Angel*.

The deceivers are placed on the *left-hand*,

manifestly false. For if ye wish to worship the image of God, ye should do good to man, which is his true image; inasmuch as the image of God exists in every man, though such as bears him true resemblance, subsists only in him who possesses a beneficent mind, and a pure heart. If then ye be desirous to magnify the divine image, we open to you the true way for doing it:—Do good to man, who is formed after the image of God—Pay to him honour and esteem—Administer food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, raiment to the naked—Attend on the sick, hospitably receive the stranger, and furnish the prisoner with necessaries. This is what we deem truly honourable to God. For such actions as these so much redound to the Divine Glory, that he, who does not perform them, is believed by us, to bring disgrace on the character of God. What honour, therefore, do you confer on God, by roving among forms of stone or wood, and venerating as deities, vain and lifeless figures? Nay, you may be assured that he who commits homicide or adultery, or any thing which brings affliction or injury on men, violates thereby the image of God. For injustice to man is a great impiety towards God. Every thing, therefore, which you do not wish to suffer, debases, if done to another, with undue dishonours, the divine image. Be persuaded, then, that the suggestion of the serpent alone, leads you to suppose, that you appear pious in worshipping objects devoid of sense, but that you do not seem impious in hating beings possessed of feelings and reason". Lib. v. 23.

and called *goats*\*; because those animals, being remarkable for their wantonness, filly enough represent men, distinguished by their lusts and impurities. For this reason, those on the right-hand are stiled in opposition to them, *the righteous*.

The heretics, called Valentinians, pretended that they should enter the divine Pleni-

\* Clement calls the impostors by this very name when he is describing the debaucheries of which they were guilty in their *love feasts*. Ad lupanaria ergo deducit hæc communio, et cum eis communicaverint sues et *hirci*, maximaque apud illos in spe fuerint meretrices, quæ in prostibulis presto sunt, et volentes omnes admittunt. Strom. lib. iii. p. 524. The explanation which Jerome gives of the clause is worth notice. Oves in parte justorum stare jubentur ad dexteram; hædi, hoc est, peccatores ad sinistram qui, pro peccato semper in lege offeruntur. Nec dixit *capras*, quæ possunt habere sætus, et tonsæ egrediuntur de lavacro, omnes gemellis sætibus et sterilis nulla inter eas, sed hædos lascivum animal et petulcum et fervens semper ad coitum. *Com. in loco*. It is worthy of remark that our Lord here alludes to the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xxxiv. 17—19. where God is represented as separating the rams and goats from the sheep, and putting the latter under one faithful shepherd. The comment of Origen on the place is very good, and much to my purpose:—The rams and goats which trampled down the pastures and troubled the water, were, according to him, the *heretics*, who rejected the Old Testament, and adulterated the New. These, he says, were not worthy to be placed on the right-hand of the Shepherd. See his *Philocalia*, p. 39. I shall only add, that Chrysostom appears to understand our Lord as meaning by the goats, not unbelievers, but those that professed his gospel, and did not produce the fruits of it. See his *Com. in loco*.

tude, and be united with the angels, in consequence of some spiritual seed implanted in them from above, while the followers of Basilides supposed, that this honour would be conferred upon them because of some predilection of nature in their favour. Our heavenly Teacher anticipated these and such like dangerous opinions, and in the parable of the talents, teaches us in opposition to them, that the proper use of our moral and natural powers is the only condition on which we shall be admitted into the joy of our Lord. In this parable, he further illustrates in what respects and for what purposes we should use them, as his disciples. And this, he tells us, consists in feeding the hungry, in clothing the naked, in visiting the sick, in relieving the prisoner, and hospitably treating the stranger. The men that thus employ the goods given them by the bounty of providence, and not those of any other description, shall enter the kingdom prepared for the righteous. The awful decision here given, well deserves the attention of those christians, in modern days, who rest their hopes of salvation not upon the efficacy of virtue, but upon creeds of human invention;—creeds, which we shall presently see, have been all taken from the heathen and



Jewish Gnostics, and which, therefore, were foreseen and condemned by Christ himself,

The opposition, which the apostles made to the impostors, the zeal and indignation with which they exposed their doctrines, and reprehended their depravities, brought upon them and all the Jewish converts, their hatred and malice. They affected, in return, to treat their virtuous opponents with supercilious contempt, and so far from supplying their wants when stripped of their properties by the arm of violence, or of protecting them when driven from their homes, or confined in prison by the zeal of persecution, that they even joined with their enemies in aggravating their afflictions. Hence we may see the force and justice of the accusation, which Jesus alledges against them: "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not"\*.

\* As the impostors embraced the christian religion, from base and selfish motives, they were total strangers to generosity of temper, and the exercise of compassion. This circumstance, we shall presently see, lead our apostles to insist upon charity as the great end of the gospel, and to condemn the want of philan-

In the last place, As our Lord has delivered this parable in opposition to those bad men, who in that and every subsequent age, corrupted his religion by their own inventions, and disgraced it by their vicious conduct, we may conclude, that by the throne of glory, which he, with his holy angels, will come to sit upon, he means that truly glorious kingdom of peace and righteousness which he will, under God, establish on the earth, when his gospel shall be restored to its original purity, and by that means, recommended to universal reception, as an object of faith and a rule of conduct. Consequently, the separation of the bad from the good, signifies the removal of impostors and hypocrites from the christian church; and their departure into everlasting fire, the total and eternal extirpation of error and vice from the moral government of God. It is worthy of remark, and it is a remark which corroborates the explanation here given, that our Lord, after having unfolded the mean-

thropy as utterly inconsistent with it. The words of *Ignatius* to the Smyrnæans are here worthy of notice:—"Observe those who entertain heretical notions respecting the grace of Jesus Christ which is come unto us, how opposite they are to the will of God. For charity they have no respect; they care not for the widow or for the orphan; not for the bond or free; not for the oppressed, or the hungry, or the thirsty." Chap. vi.

ing of the parable in which he predicts the corruption of his gospel, intimates, that the period will arrive, when, purified from its corruptions, it shall impart to its professors, a splendor similar to that of the sun.

Amidst the vast number of books fabricated by the early Gnostics, there is one, which they ascribed to *Nicodemus*. The ascribing of it to the Jewish teacher is, in all probability, founded upon the conversation which passed between him and our Lord, as recorded by John. Now it might be expected, that as Jesus Christ appears to have had a distinct foresight of the deceivers that would arise and debase his religion, he should, in this very interview, refer to them, and make their conduct and doctrines the subject of animadversion. And this we shall find, upon enquiry, to be an indisputable fact.

From a passage already cited, we have seen, that in the opinion of these men, there were two Christs\*: That the first descended

\* That the heretics entertained such an opinion, is attested by many of the early writers, whose testimony shall hereafter be produced. In the mean time, accept the words of Origen: Ὅθεν θαυμάζειν μοι ἐπισηπὼς δυοὶ θεοὶ; πρῶτος ἀποπέτασεν ἀμφοτέρω;

and invested himself *with a form according to substance*, and then again returned into the Plenitude. After this another Christ came down: He being different, and more fully authorised than his predecessor, invested himself with a form according to knowledge: Which has been shown to mean, that there were two beings, one the author of the *Jewish*, the other of the *christian* dispensation; that these were gods distinct from, and unconnected with each other. Hear, now, what our Lord says to Nicodemus:—“And no man hath ascended up to heaven; but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.” In this verse it is asserted, that the Being who ascended to, was the same with him that descended from heaven. And what is the meaning of this assertion? What but this, That the Christ, who went up, and the Christ who came down again,

τὰς Διαθνήκας ἐκ Ἐτεροδόξου· Com. vol. ii. p. 14. *It is hence to me a matter of wonder how the heretics ascribed the two covenants to two different Gods.* According to the same men, the Christ of the Old Testament was more weak and less perfect than that of the New. Hence the above writer says, in his *Philocalia*, p. 38. at the bottom: “They adopt the New Testament, and reprobate the Old; and say, that some of the scriptures proceeded from a more divine and supreme Being, while other parts of them are from a weaker Power.

were not, as the deceivers maintained, two different, but one and the same Being; that is, the two dispensations had but one author. Those Christs, according to the impostors, were *Æons*, or *Gods*. But our Lord says, that as they were but one Being, so that Being was a *human Being*, meaning himself. But what is understood by the phrase, *Even the Son of man which is in heaven?* Read what is said in the preceding verse: "If I have told you things on earth, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you things in heaven"\*.

\* The terms *ἐπιγεια* and *ἐπουρανα* were in use among the philosophers, the former to express *things on the earth* (such as fire, air, water, and the properties and animals belonging to them), and the latter those *in the heavens*, namely, the sun, moon, or stars, with their respective qualities and relations. They are, therefore, synonymous with *τα ἐπι γης* and *τα ἐν οὐρανοῖς*, which we often meet with in the writings of the ancient philosophers. Our Lord, it appears to me probable, glances at the study of *astrology*, and of the heavenly bodies, which at this time was become prevalent among the Jewish doctors, to the neglect of the moral law, and the pursuit and practice of virtue; and censures them for their affectation of vain and unprofitable knowledge. Socrates, to his immortal honour, exposed and ridiculed the wits of Greece for indulging in fanciful speculations respecting things that were both useless in themselves, and beyond the reach of human comprehension. Read the first book of his memoirs, by Xenophon. *Johnson* has taken occasion from the authority of this great philosopher, to vilify the study of mathematics and natural philosophy. His language, though flowing in a stream of majestic eloquence, is mixed with a plentiful ingredient of that pique which he un-

here spoken of, meant, at least in part, the conversion of the gentiles, the crucifixion, and subsequent resurrection of Jesus, which were so very remote from the ideas of Nicodemus and others, and which were comprehended only by the wisdom of heaven. Our Lord, then, was in heaven in the same sense as his death and his restoration to life, were in heaven; that is, he was the only

fortunately cherished against our great poet. His words are animadverted upon with justice and elegance by *Donicastle*, when speaking of the advantages of astronomy. But to return from this digression. Justin Martyr in addressing the Greeks has grounded a passage on the words of the Athenian Sage. Speaking of the contradictions into which the philosophers had fallen, by the boundless licence of speculation, in which they indulged, he adds, "What cause can be assigned why those, who are reputed wise among you, are at variance, not only with one another, but with themselves? It was their unwillingness to learn from those who knew, and their presumption that they could attain by human discernment alone, the knowledge of things in heaven (*τα εν ουρανοις*) when they were enabled to understand things on the earth (*τα επι της γης*). *Ad Græcos Cohortatio*, p. 59. *Ox. Edition*. See also *Her. Irris*. p. 218. Edit. *Worth*.

The poet *Anacreon* has a line, which well illustrates this phraseology of our Lord: *Νοος εις θεους ανεβη, 790*. *An understanding raised up so as to be among the Gods*. Consult the editor *Barnes* on the piece. *Clement*, paraphrasing the words of Paul, *Phil. iii. 20*. uses terms not foreign to these of Jesus: *βιω νδη, εν σαρκι ων, ως εν ουρανω πολιτευομενος*, *Vol. i. p. 569*. *I live even now, though in the flesh, as if in heaven, of which I am a citizen*.

person, that understood the counsel of God, respecting himself and the rest of mankind. His object, therefore, is merely to say in refutation of the false teachers, that as the Christ was a human being, so his going up to, and coming down from heaven, are not to be taken in a literal but a metaphorical sense. In as much as Jesus in this place is asserting the connection, or rather the unity of the Mosaic system, with his own, he could not but have Moses in his mind on the occasion. Accordingly he mentions him by name in the next verse.

The men of whom we are speaking paid divine honours to the serpent under pretence that it was the same with Jesus Christ. They taught, too, that he did not suffer, but that another suffered for him on the cross. This is what our Lord next adverts to. "As Moses lift up the serpent in the wilderness so it is necessary that the Son of man should be lifted up." Jesus then was not the serpent but a human being; who was ordained to be crucified, and of whose elevation on the cross, the elevation of the serpent by Moses was but a symbol. They believed, moreover, or pretended to believe, that the

Creator was not *good*, and consequently no lover of the world, which he had made; that the Christ was not the Son of the most high God,\* but of the Monogenes, who, of course was distinct from, and prior to, him. These points our Lord proceeds to refute. “God *so loved* the world, that he gave *his own Son*, the Monogenes (*only begotten*) that all, who believe in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Though these men were compelled to

\* The Egyptian Gnostics represented the *Logos*, or the Son of God, as having been born of *Nous*, and not of the supreme *Bathos*; while the Jewish heretics, who will appear to have borrowed their tenets in part from Simon Magus, supposed Jesus to be the offspring of *Sige*. To this notion *Ignatius* in his epistle to the *Magnesians*, has a pointed allusion deserving here to be noticed:—“Be not deceived by heretical and old useless fables. For if we live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received the gospel. For the most divine prophets lived according to Christ Jesus, and on this account were persecuted, being inspired by his grace, so as to satisfy the doubting that there is but one God, who manifested Jesus Christ his Son, who is the eternal *Logos*; who proceeded not from *Sige*, and did, in all things, the will of him that sent him.” Chap. viii.

Irenæus has written several chapters in opposition to these notions. I shall have occasion to notice them hereafter. The Carpocratians maintained that Jesus did not descend from the Creator of the world, but from the supreme unknown God. See Epiphan. Hær. xxvii. p. 102.



assent to the truth of christianity yet they did not take upon them, the name of *Christ*. Their reason for not calling themselves *christians*, as all the true believers did, was that it excited much hatred in the breasts of its enemies, and brought down upon its friends great sufferings\*. By this inconsis-

\* Our divine Lord, while yet with his disciples, foretold that they should be hated for his *name sake*. This extraordinary prediction received its completion soon after his departure from the earth. Free as his life was from every crime; innocent as was his character, and without a stain, yet his enemies associated with his name every idea of vice and ignominy. This ignominy indeed was so great, that to be accused as a christian was to be pronounced guilty of death. In the apologies of Justin, Anathagoras and Tertullian, this fact is abundantly attested: These men repeatedly and indignantly complain that they were hated and dragged to execution, not because they were guilty of any crime, but because they professed the christian name; and we meet with an allusion to the same iniquitous and cruel conduct in the first Epistle of Peter, chap. iv. 14—17. The malignity of Tacitus, however, led him to insinuate that the christians were held in detestation on account of their *flagitiousness*, though with the same breath he pronounces them innocent of the heinous crime for which they were punished by the sanguinary Nero.—Nero subdidit reos et quæsitissimis pœnis affecit, quos per flagitia invisos; i. e. invisos *per flagitia*, non *per nomen*. *An.* xv. 44. It is remarkable that, while the catholic apologists say they were hated on account of *their name*, Tatian complains only that the followers of Jesus were deemed execrable, without adding that it was for this reason. I cannot assign any cause for this, but that he did not, in common with thousands of other men of eminence, especially those that favoured the Gnostic heresies, assume to himself the christian

tence, which was the effect not of a mistaken judgment, but of a depraved heart, they stood self-condemned. Accordingly our divine Master says of them, in the next verse. "He who believeth not *in him*, (that is in *the Son of man*, and not in the Christ as taught by the Gnostics) IS ALREADY CONDEMNED, because he hath not believed IN THE NAME, of the only begotten Son of God."

While they pretended to be the followers of Jesus, they indulged in crimes the most repugnant to the genius of his religion. Avoiding the light of day, they went about in the night, to steal and to murder, or to revel in nocturnal orgies. And it is remarkable that for their baseness in this respect and not for their want of faith in him, he denounces upon them the above condemnation. "This is the condemnation that the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, for their deeds are evil" \*.

appellation. "Do not," says he to the Greeks, "act contrary to justice in unjustly hating us." P. 39.

\* So little can in justice be alleged against our Lord or his doctrines, that, whenever the adversaries of the christian faith attempt to vilify the one, or refute the other, they prove nothing

The arts of magic to which they were devoted, and for which they were famous,

in reality but their own ignorance. The truth of this assertion might be illustrated by a variety of instances: I shall now content myself with the following, taken from the *Enquirer*, p. 322. "There is nothing perhaps that has contributed more to the introduction and perpetuating of bigotry in the world, than the doctrine of the christian religion. It caused the spirit of intolerance to strike a deep root; and it has intailed that spirit upon many, who have shaken off the directer influence of its tenets. The short and comprehensive description bestowed upon the refractory to the end of time, appears to be this; They have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Now it is unfortunate for this writer, that our Lord does not censure those he has here in view for their want of *faith*, but for their being *evil*, and for their having recourse to darkness to conceal their evil deeds; since they were not unbelievers, but nominal converts, who endeavoured to keep men in ignorance by falsehoods and magical deceptions. Had the luminous author of *Political Justice* been aware that the refractory here meant were Simon Magus, Basilides, Cerinthus, and the like, he would not have been so forward to place himself in the number; though I cannot help suspecting that the majority of his infidel brethren, had they lived in those times, would have been well qualified to adorn the school of the Samaritan impostor. With respect to the charge of intolerance against the founder of christianity, it is an evident and malicious falsehood. No character either in modern or in ancient times was so exempt from every species of bigotry and illiberality, or so happily illustrated the opposite spirit of candour, and of meekness. On many occasions, and in a great variety of forms, he has described his religion as consisting in piety to God and love to man; and though he lays much stress on faith as a mean to a higher and more important end, he resolves his whole system into the simple rule of doing to others as we wish that others should do to us; Mat. vii. 12. He has gone even farther, and given us a deline-

could nevertheless, succeed only in places secluded from the light of day. Observe

ation of the character of those, who shall receive from their final Judge, the sentence of approbation; and these are men distinguished, not by sound faith, but by the exercise of compassion and generosity in their several situations; Mat. xxv. Nor is this all: He has expressly commanded his followers not to sit in judgment on the conduct or on the principles of their neighbours, (Mat. vii. 1—4) and prohibited them to use violence and force, either in the promotion of truth, or in the eradication of error; Mat. xiii. 23. And this injunction he has faithfully exemplified in his own conduct. He constantly invited the earnest and unbiassed attention of his hearers, delivered his discourses, and performed his miracles, in the light of day, and in the presence of the multitude; and in order to excite the vigilance, and quicken the investigation of his enemies, he often said such things that had he not justified them by subsequent miraculous acts, he would have been liable to be executed on the spot. Permit me, finally, to refer you, as decisive proofs of his meekness and liberality, to the gentle rebuke which he passed on the intemperate zeal of his disciples, in wishing that fire should come down from heaven, and consume the inhospitable Samaritans—to his own modest declaration that he himself judged no man; John xii. 47—and to his solemn affectionate assurance to Nicodemus, that he did not come to condemn the world, but to save the world; John iii. 17. It is true, indeed, that he denounced heavy woes on the scribes and Pharisees, But it was not on account of their unbelief, but of those flagrant vices, which they attempted to conceal under the veil of superior sanctity. And it is worthy of remark, that on the Sadducees, who surpassed the Pharisees in the enmity, which they bore to his character, and in the opposition they made to his claims, but who did not add to their other immoralities the guilt of hypocrisy, he was by no means so severe. Had Jesus been a bigot the former would have been the subject of his keenest reprehensions; nor would he ever have expressed his satisfaction towards such of the latter as could conscientiously say that they kept the moral law. See Mark x. 21.

now what Jesus remarks in reference to their pretended miracles. "Every one that practiseth base things, hateth the light, nor cometh to the light, lest his works should be detected. But he that performeth the reality \*, cometh to the light that his works

\* The original word is *αληθεια*, which is generally rendered *truth*; but which often signifies, as I have translated it, *reality*, meaning a *real miracle*, in opposition to a magical deception, or the mere *appearance* of a miracle; and thus stands opposed to *ψευδος*, a *lie*, or *false miracle*. The following instances will justify this use of the term: The apostle speaking in the abstract of these impostors, who opposed the artifices of magic to the real miracles of Christ, adds, "And the Lord will consume him with the breath of his mouth, and with the manifestation of his presence will destroy him, whose coming is according to the operation of Satan, with all imposture (*ψευδους*, *lie*,) of miracles, and signs, and wonders, and with every wicked seduction among them that are lost, because they received not the love of the *truth* (*αληθειας*) for their preservation. And for this cause will God send them such effectual delusion in believing this lying power, (*τη ψευδει*) that all who believed not *the truth* (*τη αληθεια*) but took pleasure in such deceit may be brought to punishment;" 2 Thess. ii. 8-13. Lucian writes thus, concerning the impostor *Alexander*: Ασπονδος και ακηρυκτος αυτω ο πολεμος προς Επικουρον ην' μαλα εικωται; τμη γαρ αλλη δικαιοτερον προσεπολεμει γους ανθρωπος, και τερατεικ φιλος, ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ δε εχθιστος, η Επικουρη ανδρι την φυσιν των πραγματος καθαρακοτι και μονη την εν αυτοις; ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑΝ ειδοτι, Vol. i. p. 763. The early Fathers when speaking of the impostors, often use the term *αληθεια* to express the *truth*, in opposition to their magical practices, no less than to their erroneous opinions. See Epiphanius in particular, vol. i. p. 75. The word *veritas* in latin has frequently the same signification annexed to it: Thus the author of the *Recognitions* says of the magicians, who

might be made manifest; because they are done in God." Which may be paraphrased thus: Those, who practise the base arts of magic, as well as evil doers in general, ever have recourse to the covert of darkness; since they know that their deceptions would be discovered, if exposed to the light of day; whereas he, who performs a real miracle, does it in the most open manner, and, so far from avoiding, seeks inspection and publicity; being conscious that it was done by the interposition of the Almighty, and not the supposed assistance of demons."

opposed Moses in the court of Pharaoh: *Non esse operarios veritatis*; lib. iii. 55. And here it may be remarked, that though modern critics do not seem to have understood our Lord as referring, on this occasion, to the *artifices* of the Gnostic impostors, he appears to have been thus understood by the author of the spurious gospel ascribed to Nicodemus. For in that gospel the Jewish teacher is represented as thus speaking of Christ: *Homo iste multa signa facit bona et gloriosa, qualia nullus fecit in terra homo nec faciet—Signa que fecerunt Magi non erant ex Deo*; chap. v. Apud Jones, vol. ii. p. 336. Here the forger seems to allude to the words of Nicodemus in the genuine gospel, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." By a reader of the original it will be observed, that the historian has inserted the pronoun *ου*, as the use of it signifies, that the Jewish ruler intended a comparison between the real signs of Jesus and those pretended ones of the magicians. This intimation our Lord readily understood, and was perhaps the principle circumstance that led him in his interview with Nicodemus to advert to the works of those among the Gnostics that were devoted to magic.

It is worthy of observation that our Lord seems in this place to refer to the confession which Nicodemus made to him on his first introduction : “ Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God : for no man can do these miracles, that thou doest except God be with him.” Observe the Jewish ruler does not speak in his own person only but in that of some of his brethren, the Pharisees : — “ *We know*, that thou art a teacher come from God.” These, whoever they were, had no doubt of the divine mission of Jesus, though they, like Nicodemus, did not at the time acknowledge it. Now it appears to me probable, that some of these, in after days, declared their faith, and favoured the Gnostic heresy, as was the case, we shall presently see, with many others of the Jewish converts. If this supposition be just our Saviour must have foreseen it. And hence the language, which he used respecting the future impostors, applied with equal pertinence to Nicodemus and his associates\*.

\* Thus when our Lord says, That he came not to destroy, but to save the world, he probably refers to the expectation fondly cherished by Nicodemus and the Jewish people at large, that the Messiah would triumph over the nations of the world, and bring them under subjection to the Jewish yoke. And when again it is added, *He that believeth not is condemned already*, the words have a reference to Nicodemus’s own acknow-

The Jewish Gnostics, like their brethren among the gentiles, did not take upon them, the christian name: And hence it is probable that the men in whose name Nicodemus here speaks, are the very same with those upon whom the beloved disciple has passed the following censure: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him: but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of man more than the praise of God;" John cap. xii. 43.

Let us for the present omit this part of my subject, and next enquire what notice is taken by the four evangelists of the impostors and their tenets. As they recorded the predictions, which their divine Master had delivered in reference to them, and as they saw those predictions, exactly corresponding to, and completely fulfilled in their character and conduct, they must often have had them in view, while composing their several narratives. We are not, however, to expect that the historians of our Lord, should

ledge, that Jesus came from God, while he did not openly profess his belief in him, or conform to his precepts, as the Messenger of Heaven.



directly notice or formally refute the errors of those men, or any other popular errors. For the direction, which he seems to have given them, as well as their own sober reflection, taught them the necessity of being satisfied with the mere recital of those works which he had done, and of those discourses, which he had delivered, and even of suppressing altogether, or at least, of advancing with studied accommodation, such things as the prepossessions of their respective readers disqualified them to receive. The truth and justice of this remark, as it is of importance to this branch of my subject, I shall endeavour to illustrate by an instance, or two, from the gospel of Matthew,

The Jewish converts appear at first to have been weak enough to suppose that the external institutions of Moses, carried the same necessary and invariable obligation as that love to God and man, which, it was their object to produce. In consequence of which they conclude that the Levitical code would be equally permanent with the moral part of the law. Of this mistake as our Saviour was sensible, he endeavoured to remove it. But this, he did with so much caution, as seemingly to assert the *perpetuity*,

while he predicted the abolition of that code; "Think not says he, that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am come not to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled\*." This

\* The strong and beautiful figure of the original is lost in this translation. The following would be a more faithful version of it: *Think not that I came to demolish the law or the prophets. I came not to demolish but to finish (them).* Here and elsewhere our divine Master and his disciples represent the law under the image of a magnificent building, founded by Moses, and erected to a considerable height by the succeeding prophets, but which he himself was to carry into completion. The rites and ceremonies, which formed the levitical code, were, according to this representation but temporary expedients for the accommodation of the chosen people, until the grand edifice was ready for their reception; or were instrumental like so many scaffolds in raising it to perfection. Now when our Lord asserts that one jot or tittle shall not be pulled down of the law until its accomplishment, we are not to understand him as asserting the *perpetuity* of its external ordinances, but that these ordinances, even the minutest of them, as it had some specific object to answer, would not be done away before they had accomplished that object. The law itself Christ undoubtedly represents as permanent and immutable, but then he takes care to say, that he did not mean by it merely external rites and ceremonies, but on the contrary, that principle of moral conduct which requires us to do to others as we wish that others in similar circumstances should do to us. It was not indeed to be expected that his hearers should have clearly perceived this to be the drift of his discourse; especially as there is an ambiguity in his language, occasioned by a judicious regard to their prejudices. Accordingly we find that some of the Jewish converts not only maintained the permanence of the Mosaic institutions, but pleaded

declaration was well adapted to soften the animosity of the Jews, who appear to have

the necessity of conforming to them from the conduct and language of Christ himself. See Epiphanius. *Hær.* xxviii. p. 113. The words of Philo, however, imply that the followers of Jesus in Judea discarded all rites and ceremonies as not being the most acceptable means of worshipping God. "They are the most holy worshippers of the Deity; and the homage they deem agreeable to him consists not in the sacrifice of animals, but in the inward cultivation of becoming reverential sentiments." Vol. ii. p. 457. This be it here observed was a doctrine taught them by our Lord himself. The beloved disciple has recorded it in words of exactly similar import with those of the Jewish writer: *The hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth*, John iv. 23. I cannot help quoting here another passage of Philo, in which he inculcates the same just principle. "It becomes him indeed, who is about to offer sacrifice, to examine not whether the victim be spotless, but whether his heart be pure and perfect." Vol. ii. p. 269. These and such like expressions, which occur in the works of this great man, show that when he, and Josephus after him, assert that the law of Moses will continue for ever, they meant the Mosaic law, purified from its external and grosser parts, which they considered as the same thing with christianity itself. See the former *in his life of Moses*; Lib. ii. p. 136. and the latter in his *Antiquities of the Jews*; Lib. iii. p. 169. I shall conclude this note with observing that if Mr. Evanson had been aware that in the estimation of Jesus and his early followers in Judea, the gospel was nothing but the wisdom of the law developed, or the law consummated, he would not have been so rash, as to make the following assertion. "In the seventeenth verse of the fifth chapter our Lord is represented as saying, Think not I am come to destroy the law: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. An assertion which flatly contradicts the prophets of the Old Testament, St. Luke, St. Paul and the whole scope, and intent, of the gospel covenant;" Disson. p. 141. He then with equal temerity draws the following inference. p.

been apprehensive from the tendency of our Lord's discourse, that it was his aim to supersede the law, and to abrogate its ordinances. It implies however if examined to the bottom, that such parts of it, as had any moral end to answer, should, after its fulfilment, be abolished. Now this incident is recorded only by the evangelist Matthew. The reason was he alone addressed his gospel to the Jewish believers. And we see that he has, without apprising his reader what his object was, done this, in words, which though they seem, at first sight, calculated to strengthen the prejudices, were well fitted to enlarge the views, of his countrymen.

Again the converts from Judaism were exceedingly jealous of the high privileges, which they had hitherto exclusively enjoyed: and so unsociable was the spirit, in which they indulged, that they were very reluctant to admit the gentile believers to a participation of them. It is even said of them, not without some colour of truth, that they held

146. "So gross a contradiction of the uniform doctrine of the best authenticated scripture, both of the Old Testament and the New can never be justly nor reasonably attributed to an apostle of Jesus Christ, but must be the composition of a much later writer, who himself did not understand either the genius or the doctrines of the religion he hath presumed to teach."

the apostle Paul in abhorrence for receiving heathen converts, into the christian church, without imposing upon them the necessity of conforming to the Mosaic ritual. Accordingly we may discover, on minute examination, in the gospel before us, some traces of this selfish and intolerant disposition.

When Jesus first commissioned his disciples to go and preach the gospel, he confined their mission to the land of Judea; saying, "Go not into the way of the gentiles, and into the city of the Samaritans enter ye not." The evangelists Mark and Luke have not noticed this prohibition, because the circumstances, in which they wrote, rendered it unnecessary in them to pay any regard to Jewish prejudices. But as Jesus delivered it in accommodation to the Jews, Matthew took care to record it.

To the same cause, it seems to be owing that this evangelist has omitted the clause *for all nations*, which is contained in the prophecy of Isaiah, (lvi. 1.) cited by Christ when he drove the Scribes and Pharisees out of the temple. Compare Mat. xxi. 13. with Mark xi.

So little were the Jewish christians, at least, on their first conversion, purified from the unsocial spirit, which had hitherto distinguished them as the disciples of Moses, that they were averse to see any foreigner receiving benefit from the miraculous power of their Master. This aversion, illiberal as it was, Matthew felt the necessity of humouring: And this seems to have led him to relate some transactions, in a manner different from his brother historians. He places for instance, the hesitation of Jesus to heal the daughter of the woman of Canaan, in a much stronger point of view, than what Mark has done. The former, too, leaves his reader uncertain whether or not, she was a Jewess, by extraction; whereas the latter, tells us plainly that she was *a Syro-phenician by nation*. Mat. xv. 24. Mark vii. 26.

A Roman officer had heard the fame and perhaps seen some of the miracles of Jesus: And, as he had no doubt of his supernatural endowments, he was induced to apply to this generous benefactor of mankind in behalf of a valued servant, who had, for some time, laboured under the supposed influence of a demon. But imagining that he was actua-

ted by the prejudices of his country men, he made his application through the medium of some Jewish elders, who recommended him as a friend to their nation. Our Lord perceiving the faith of the Centurion, and being desirous to convince him that he was superior to the petty jealousies, which marked the rest of the Jews, *anticipated* the request, by saying, "I will come and heal him." The manner, in which Matthew has related this incident is very remarkable. Wishing out of regard to his Jewish readers, to suppress the idea, that the officer was a gentile, he was, for this reason, obliged to pass over in silence the interposition of the elders, and to represent the application as made in his own person. In doing which, however, he is chargeable with no misrepresentation, as the substance of the transaction is not materially changed. For as the philosopher is sanctioned, by reason, in ascribing an effect not to the immediate instrument by which it is done, but to the primary mover, as its true cause, so the historian is justified in passing over the *secondary* agent, and in imputing to the principal one any speech or business, which he may have occasion to record. And this

is what our evangelist chose to do\*. But though the sacred penman is thus compel-

\* The following words, which some of the disciples of John addressed to him, respecting Jesus, afford an illustration of this circumstance, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold the same baptiseth and all men come to him;" John iii. 26. But we are assured in Chap. iv. 2. that Christ did not perform that ceremony, and it was his disciples that baptised. And are we then to charge these men with a falsehood, when they say, that he himself baptised? By no means. His followers administered the ceremony of baptism with his concurrence, or perhaps at his request, and, in as much as they did it with his sanction, it might not improperly be said that *he* administered it. I shall produce another instance from *Homer*.

————— Εγω δε κ' αγω Βρῆσθιδαι Καλλιπαρθον  
 Αυτος ἰων κλισιηνιδε, το σον γερας. Iliad i. 184.

Here Agamemnon is represented as threatening Achilles that he himself would go into his tent, and lead away his mistress Briseis, as a compensation for his own, which he was forced to deliver up; and when she was actually taken from him, the latter in relating his grievances to his mother, ascribes the deed to the sole agency of the former.

————— ελωρ γαρ εχει γερας ΑΥΤΟΣ ΑΠΟΥΡΑΣ·

In verse 392, however, we are expressly informed, that it was not the Grecian chief but his heralds, that conveyed her away.

Την δε νεον κλισιηνιδεν εβαν κηρυκες αγοντες  
 Κουρην Βρῆσθης, την μοι δασαν υἱες Αχαιων·

Now would a critic in his sober senses think of accusing the poet of an inconsistency for merely thus adopting a latitude of representation, which is allowed in daily conversation, and in every species of composition? And yet were another Zoilus to do this, he would do only what Mr. Evanson has really done in the case of Matthew, which is exactly similar to that in question,



led to yield as it were, to the bigotry of his countrymen, yet he endeavours *by frequent insinuations*, to bring them to a right understanding, respecting the comprehensive genius of the new faith. Thus, he states, on the authority of John, that the Jews should be cut off from the stem of Abraham, and the gentiles ingrafted in their place; Chap. iii. 9; and, on the authority of Jesus himself, that the apostles were to be summoned in the execution of their ministry, before kings and governors for a testimony *unto the gentiles*; x. 18. In the parable of the seed sown *in the world*, and in that of the grain of mustard seed, which became a great tree, so that the birds of the air came and lodged in its branches, he insinuates that the christian doctrine was to be extended to, and received by the heathens at large; xiii. 38. 31. The admission

from the Grecian bard. "In the eighth chapter," says he, "this writer records the story of the healing the Centurion's servant, but with circumstances, which give the lie to St. Luke's account of the same miracle; for he tells us that the centurion came to our Lord himself and conversed with him in person, whereas St. Luke informs us, that he only sent a députation to him of the elders of the Jews, and declared that he did not think himself worthy to come to him, and for that reason did not come himself. Here again one of these historians must relate a falsehood." Disson. 149.

of the gentiles to the christian church, and the trust they should repose in Jesus, as their Saviour, are clearly taught in chapters viii. 11. 12. xii. 21. Matthew, moreover, inculcates the same lesson, in the parable of the labourers, invited into the vineyard at the eleventh hour; xix. 6. in the assertion of Christ that publicans and harlots, should enter the kingdom of heaven before the Scribes and Pharisees; xxi. 31. and more particularly in the comparison of the christian dispensation to a marriage-feast, into which all, even those on the high ways, are invited to enter; xxii. 9.; and finally in the last solemn exhortation, which Jesus gave his apostles to go and baptize all nations: in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

From the view here taken of the conduct of Matthew we may draw the following conclusion, *That the evangelists in composing their several gospels opposed certain parts of them to those errors, which prevailed among the people whom they addressed; and that they selected and arranged their respective facts in a manner the most likely to answer this purpose, without apprising the reader of their design in so doing.*

Now in respect to the falsehoods propagated by the Gnostics we are not to expect that Matthew should take any pains to refute them, as he addressed a people, who, at the time, were not affected by them, and of all others the least likely to be so. The admonitions indeed and parables, which Jesus had delivered in reference to them, it was his duty, as his historian to record. And this is what he has done with even greater fidelity than any of the others. There is one passage, however, deserving of particular notice, as the occasion, in which it is recorded, evidently shows that it was intended, by the author, to refute the divinity and supernatural birth of Jesus. "And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, in so much that they were astonished and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the Carpenter's Son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren James and Joses and Simon and Judas? And his sisters are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? Chap. xiii. 53. —Here the author holds up the testimony of the people of Nazareth in support of the

following facts, That Jesus was the Son of the Carpenter; that Mary was, in reality, his mother, and that she was called by no other than her own simple name; that he had many brothers and sisters by the same parents, and that they all sprang from the city of Nazareth\*. The direct opposi-

\* According to the first Gnostic teachers Jesus, as being born in appearance only, was no more the Son of *Mary*, than he was of *Joseph*. It may be proper here to produce some authorities for this assertion: Theodoret in a passage, alluded to above, thus writes respecting the Samaritan impostor and his followers. *Simon quidem et Menander, Cerdon et Marcion penitus negant incarnationem, nativitatemque ex Virgine fabulam vocant. Valentinus autem, et Basilides, et Bardesanes et Harmonius, et qui ejusdem sunt notæ, Virginis quidem conceptionem et partum admittunt; sed nihil ex Virgine assumpsisse Deum Verbum dicunt: per eam quasi per canalem quendam trajecisse, hominibusque apparuisse, cum speciem solum haberet, atque homo esse videretur, quemadmodum visus est Abrahamo et aliis quibusdam antiquis: See Iren. p. 33. note. Tertullian in his book *De Carne Christi* thus speaks of the same men; Quoties de nativitate contendimus, omnes, qui respuunt eam ut præjudicantem de carnis Christi veritate, volunt negare esse natum. p. 312. They indeed attempted to prove from the New Testament that our Lord had neither a mother nor brothers and sisters: The words which he delivered in answer to the question, *Who is my mother and who are my brethren*; Mat. xii. 48. they in particular laid great stress upon, and urged as a proof of their opinion. Hence Jerome in his Commentary on that place says, *Non juxta Marcionem et Manichæum, matrem negavit, ut natus de phantasmate putaretur, sed Apostolos cognationi prætulit.* Permit me here to anticipate one passage, in the writings of Paul, which we shall hereafter more fully consider. The false teachers, whom, throughout his Epistles, he opposes, denied the reality of Jesus's birth, or that he*

tion of these assertions to the tenets of the first Gnostics leaves me no room to doubt, as to the design of the historian: Since *they* maintained that our Lord was not the offspring of Joseph; that Mary was his mother only *in appearance*, to whose name after the deification of her Son they prefixed the epithet *divine*; and, finally, that he was

was born of a woman. But hear what he says in reference to this notion. *When the full time was come God sent his Son BORN OF A WOMAN*; Gal. iv. 4. Those of the impostors, that admitted his birth at all, maintained that he sprang not *from human seed*, but passed through the womb of his virgin mother in the same manner as water does through a pipe. But observe the words of our apostle, "God sent his Son *begotten or generated* γεννωμενον, and begotten not of a *virgin*, εκ παρθενου, but of a *married woman*, εκ γυναικος." I cannot here help expressing my surprise at the ignorance and folly of those, who insist upon this paragraph as a proof of the miraculous birth of Jesus. Had the writer, indeed, intended to say, that he was conceived without the instrumentality of a man, he would have said, γεννωμενον εκ παρθενου, *born of a virgin*, and not εκ γυναικος, *of a married woman*. The advocates of the story, from the beginning until this day, have used the former and not the latter expression to characterise the mother of Jesus; nor, I will be bold to say, can a single instance be produced of their saying that he was born *of a woman*; they always say, that he was born *of a virgin*. We may therefore fairly conclude, that had the apostle intended to convey the same idea, he would, without doubt, have employed the same language with them. But this argument must appear to be decisive, when it will be seen, that Paul adopted the term εκ γυναικος, in opposition to those, who represented our Lord as not born at all, or as being born unlike other men.

born in the city of Bethlehem. In this opinion I feel confirmed by the *place*, which Matthew has assigned to the above narrative. We have the authority of Luke, for supposing that the incident, which it conveys, happened the first time our Lord visited Nazareth, just after the commencement of his ministry : The proper opportunity for relating it, therefore, was in the fourth chapter, where this historian, transiently mentions his departure from that city \*. Why then did he not relate it

\* If we attentively consider the contents of the fourth chapter, we shall find it contains a very summary and general account of the ministry of Jesus, from the period of his temptation to the time when he delivered his celebrated sermon on the mount. Accordingly he has brought within the compass of a few verses, a series of events, which if minutely detailed, would have occupied so many pages. This singular brevity compelled the writer to bring events together so as to appear to a reader, ignorant of the evangelical style, to have immediately succeeded each other ; which events, however, were separated by other intervening occurrences, too minute, or too irrelevant for the narrator to state. Take the following clause as an example : "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee : And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum ;" ver. 12, 13. Now a person inattentive to the manner of the author, might hence conclude, that our Lord, after having retired into Galilee, went to Nazareth, which he straightway left, and withdrew into Capernaum ; and that all this he did without any loss of time, and without performing any public or private act : Or, if he was actuated by a strong prejudice against the historian, he would discover in him a want of acquaintance with the geography of Pa-

on that occasion? And why did he insert it here, in preference, to any other place? The

Iestine, and with the circumstance that Nazareth, as well as Capernaum, was situated in Galilee. Either of these conclusions, however, would be exceedingly erroneous; as it was the sole intention of the evangelist to give his reader a mere sketch of Jesus's progress, without specifying any of the concomitant incidents. To avoid the anger of Herod, he represents him as withdrawing from Judea into Galilee. There he performed such miracles; see Luke iv. 14. that his fame *went out through all the region round about*. This fame reached Nazareth his own city, where he next went, and where he performed the things recorded of him by Luke; but which Matthew thought proper in this place to omit: And as he judged it right not to mention, on the present occasion, the transactions at Nazareth, so he had no reason to state the cause he had for leaving his native town and dwelling at Capernaum. These observations will shew how groundless and unjust are the following objections made to the authenticity of this gospel by Mr. Evanson: "In the fourth chapter, verses 13, 14, 15, we have another remarkable instance of the author's very imperfect knowledge of the geography of Palestine, which cannot be supposed of any native of the country; as well as another direct contradiction to the much more probable account given us by Luke. As if he imagined the city Nazareth was not as properly in Galilee as Capernaum was, he informs us, that after John's imprisonment our Saviour departed into Galilee and leaving Nazareth came and dwelt at Capernaum in order to fulfil a saying of Isaiah's respecting the country beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the gentiles. Now to Isaiah, or any inhabitant of Judea, the country *beyond*, must be the country east of the Jordan, as Gaulonites or Galilee of the gentiles is well known to have been, whereas Capernaum was a city on the western side of the lake Genesareth through which the Jordan flows. This whole story of the removal of Jesus from Nazareth to dwell at Capernaum is also in direct opposition to the history of Luke; for he assures us Chap iv. that the reason of our Lord's leaving Nazareth was, because the in-

reason seems to me to be this:—By subjoining it, as soon as the thread of the subject permitted, to the parable, which predicts the corruption of christianity, Matthew intended his readers should see, on the authority of the inhabitants of Nazareth, that the doctrines of our Lord's divinity and miraculous birth, which contributed mostly to that corruption, had no foundation in truth. But this is not all. The story of our Saviour's birth, supposes that he was from the first known to the Herodian family, as the Messiah, which supposition our evangelist next proceeds to contradict in positive terms, AT THAT TIME HEROD THE TETRARCH HEARD OF THE FAME OF JESUS. Which is, as if he had said, "The report propagated by the deceivers from Rome, that Jesus, when born, was made known to Herod, is false, none of that family had ever heard of him until the

habitants, offended with his discourse to them, drove him out of their city, with intent to throw him headlong from an adjoining precipice, but that he escaped through the midst of them, and went down to Capernaum, where he preached to the people for a short time, and wrought many miracles of healing, but was so far from taking up his dwelling there, that though the inhabitants entreated him to stay and not depart from them, he left them saying, he must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for that was the purpose of his mission."



fame of his miracles was carried abroad in the world.”

It is the common opinion, grounded on the testimony of the ancients, that the evangelist Mark published his gospel *in Rome*. By comparing it with the facts now known to have occurred in that city, we shall see this opinion confirmed, and be farther able to discover the reason, and propriety of many things peculiar to his narrative.

The charge repeatedly urged that Jesus was an enemy to Cæsar, and that his followers aimed at raising him to the throne of Judea, must have been more industriously circulated in the seat of the government, than in any other place. Accordingly we find that Mark is more diligent in repelling such an unjust charge than the other evangelical writers. Every circumstance which might countenance the idea that his Master was a temporal prince, he has either suppressed or palliated.

The messenger sent to announce the Messiah, he represents as leading in the wilderness an austere life, quite inconsistent with a desire of interfering in the affairs of the state:

and, so far from being an object of terror or jealousy to Herod, he says that that Prince loved and esteemed him as a good and just man ; Chap. vi. 20.

From the passage which Josephus has written respecting the baptist, it appears that Herod regarded him as a preacher of treason, and that the dread of rebellion, and a jealousy of his popularity, were the real, though not the ostensible motives, which occasioned his murder. From the alarm of Herod, and the idea then generally prevalent, that John or Jesus was to be a temporal prince, a calumny arose that they conspired against the existing government. This is a fact, which may be collected not only from the testimony of Josephus but from the writings of the apostles\* : And

\* In examining the testimony which Josephus has borne to John the Baptist, I have shown that the story of the dancing daughter was a mere contrivance on the part of Herod to put him to death without incurring the resentment of the people. That the Tetrarch was bent upon John's destruction, and that from motives of jealousy and fear, is a fact which might be inferred from Matthew no less than the Jewish historian. For he tells us ; chap. xiv. 5. that Herod *wished to kill him, but feared the people who regarded him as a prophet ; that is, they looked upon him as being himself the Messiah, or one that was arisen to point him out.* It is observable that this Evangelist, makes this observation as he enters upon the narrative of what happened at

admirable is the manner, in which the circumstance of the latter being unknown to the former, till after his baptism, is calculated to repel it. After that solemnity, the spirit seems to have suggested to our Lord, the propriety of avoiding all further intercourse with his forerunner, that no ground might be left to lay against them the charge of conspiracy. Accordingly his immediate departure, as the suggestion of the spirit, Matthew asserts in emphatic terms; and it

the feast; seemingly intending by that to insinuate that the whole transaction was a plot to cover the base design of Herod. Whether or not this was the intention of Matthew, it appears to me absolutely certain that Luke understood the matter in the same light with Josephus, and has so arranged his narrative of that business, as to lead his readers to conclude that the tetrarch was actuated by a dread of John's popularity as well as by personal resentment. For in the first chapter of his own genuine gospel he represents the people, the tax-gatherers, and even the soldiers, as flocking to the baptist under the expectation that he was to be the Messiah, and enquiring what they should do, which undoubtedly implies that they were willing to obey his commands, in proof of their attachment to him, as their expected king. In this connection he mentions the imprisonment of John by Herod, though a regard to order required him to notice it in a much more advanced part of the history. He tells us indeed that that prince was reproved by John for his having violated the laws of equity and chastity; but he does not assign this as the real or the sole cause of his confinement. And what is more remarkable still, he has omitted altogether the relation of the promise, into which Herod was betrayed by his wife and daughter; which alone affords a strong presumption that he thought the whole of it was an artful contrivance unworthy of a place in his narrative.

is asserted still more emphatically by Mark, “AND IMMEDIATELY, coming out of the water, he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him; and there came a voice from heaven, Saying thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: AND IMMEDIATELY THE SPIRIT DRIVETH HIM INTO THE WILDERNESS.” Chap. i. 10—13. While John was yet unconfined, Jesus refrained from any communication with him. But after he was put in prison, he returned, we are told, into Galilee, in order seemingly to escape the hand of violence, and to hasten an event, which would evince, beyond all controversy, that they did not, as they were suspected, act, in concert, against Cæsar, but were both directed by the Spirit of God.

The fame of his miracles soon reached the ears of John now in prison, who thinking in common with the other Jews, to find a temporal prince, in their Messiah, expected a speedy deliverance. His expectation, however, remained unanswered; when at length exhausted by delay, he sends him a formal message, which though not expressive of resentment, betrays some symptoms of pique and disappointment. The words of

the address are short and simple; and are so skilfully selected as to fix the attention of Jesus on the imprisonment of the sufferer, as the consequence of the testimony, which he had borne to him; thus soliciting his miraculous interposition, by an appeal to his sense of justice as well as to his humanity. His intention by this message our Saviour no doubt fully comprehended; but he felt it necessary that John, though righteous, should suffer, in order to seal the truth of his testimony, and also to cut up for ever by the roots, the charge of a pre-concerted treason. He therefore leaves him to fall a victim to the cunning and cruelty of Herod\*.

\*Notwithstanding the wise precaution which Jesus thus took, the charge here alluded to seems to have prevailed, even so late as the age of Celsus: For it is urged by this very man, in his book against christianity. In the person of a Jew he thus addresses our Lord, *Lavanti tibi apud Johannem, ais, advolasse spectrum avis ex aere—Quis hanc visionem vidit testis, qui fide dignus sit? Quis audivit vocem e cœlo adoptantem te Deo filium, præter te unum et alterum quempiam ex sociis tibi sceleris pariter atque supplicii.* By the companion of Jesus in guilt and in punishment, Celsus certainly means John the baptist; and it is equally obvious, that the guilt of which he speaks, was their supposed crime of conspiring against the state. For this, it seems, John was punished by Herod; and this is a confirmation of the testimony of Josephus that jealousy and fear were the motives which induced that cruel prince to behead him. See Origen *Con. Celsum*, p. 31, 32.

The history of the temptation, as recorded by Matthew and Luke, supposes that Christ could, if he thought fit, invest himself not only with the government of Judea, but with all the kingdoms of the world. This was a circumstance, which could not with safety be asserted in the face of the emperor and senate. For this reason, it appears to me, Mark has not, like the other two evangelists, given a detail of it. The petition presented to our Lord by the two sons of Zebedee, supposes, as related by Matthew, he was in their expectation to be literally a king. But Mark has related that incident in such a manner, as not to warrant that inference. Compare Matthew xx. 21, with Mark x. 36.

The Philologers, brought the christian name into disgrace, and by the arts of magic, to which they were devoted, led men very naturally to conclude, that the founder of christianity himself was no other than a magician, or one that derived his power from evil demons. As this conclusion must have prevailed in Rome, more than in any other place, the evangelist Mark was particularly called upon by the peculiarity of his situation, to record such facts as might evince its falsehood. And this is what he

has done; He states the dishonest cavil of those, who ascribed his miracles to the power of Belzebub, and subjoins the refutation of it, by his Master; which, indeed, is also done by Matthew. But Mark, moreover, frequently represents the demons, which he cast out, as confessing that he had a supreme dominion over them; that he was a *holy Being*, that is, a being opposite to them in nature and disposition; that he was the Son of the *most high God*, or in other words, that he did those things by the assistance of his almighty Father alone, and not by the agency of any other subordinate spirit. Nor is this all, that this evangelist has done more than his predecessor. He virtually produces the testimony of the people, who had witnessed his miracles, that the authority, which Jesus displayed, was such as they had never seen displayed before by any other man. “And they were all amazed, insomuch 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\*.

\* See in particular Mark chap. i. 23—29. Chap. v. 7.

The learned among the heathens seem in general to have regarded the works pretended to be done by the devotees of magic, as mere artifices, unfounded in truth. But their inability to deny the reality of our Lord's miracles, induced them to affect a belief in the truth of those arts. They, therefore, classed our Lord with the magicians, and naturally enough copied their ideas of him from the character of those, who practised magic, in Rome and other places, attempting by this means, to evade his claims as the Son of God\*. To this eva-

\* As this is a fact, of which many of my readers may not be prepared to admit the truth, I shall here produce one striking instance in corroboration of it: Celsus addressing Jesus in the character of a Jew, thus allows the reality of his miracles:—*Φερε πισευσωμεν ενωπι σοι ταυτα εηργασμενα, Let us grant that these things were wrought by thee.* After making this concession, however, he proceeds, says Origen, to class them with such miracles as were produced by the influence of magic; though, adds he, this very Celsus, who here seems to allow the truth of the magical arts, wrote several books to prove their falsehood; an assertion, which, though advanced with some hesitation, is abundantly confirmed by Lucian, who, in his *Pseudomantis*, compliments his Epicurean friend, as being the author of very useful and beautiful commentaries against the magicians; *Lucian's Works*, Vol. i. p. 761. Here then we see that Celsus had taken pains to show, that nothing miraculous could be done by the influence of the magical arts, and yet resolves the supernatural works of Christ into those arts, as their proper cause. But how are we to account for an inconsistency so glaring and disingenuous? No solution, I am persuaded, can be given of it but the following: The works of Jesus were too notorious, and too



sion, which had for its object to undermine the general belief of his miracles, by classing them with the tricks of impostors, Mark, without seeming to do it, has opposed the testimony of those very men, who were both subjects and witnesses of his supernatural power: "And 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, and were beyond measure astonished. SAYING, HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL, HE MAKETH BOTH THE DEAF TO HEAR AND THE DUMB TO SPEAK;" Chap vii. 36, 37. : Which is as if they had reasoned in this manner: *It is wonderful that Jesus should prevent us from making public the benefit, which this*

generally believed even in the age of Celsus, to be contradicted with effect. He therefore allows them to be true; but in order to preclude the necessary conclusion that he was the Messenger of heaven, or the Son of God, he admits, what in other circumstances he strenuously denied, that the devotees of magic performed similar things, and then puts this specious question:—*Ἐπει ταυτὰ ποιοῦσιν ἐκεῖνοι, δεήσει ἡμᾶς αὐτοῦς ἠγέσθαι υἱοὺς εἶναι θεοῦ,* *Inasmuch as those (magicians) do the same things, are we to regard them as sons of God?* The conduct of this base and artful enemy of the christian faith may thus be briefly stated: He allowed those artifices to be true, which he himself had demonstrated to be false, in order that he might be thence furnished with a specious plea for rejecting, as false, those miracles, which he well knew to be true. See Origen con. Celsum. p. 53.

*man has received from him. The cure which he has performed was, without doubt, real, and he has performed it too in such a fair manner, and with so disinterested a view, as to leave no room for affirming, that he is a magician, or that he had his power from any being but God himself.*

Our Lord informed the Jews that in consequence of rejecting him as their Messiah, Jerusalem would be taken, and the temple destroyed. The recording of this awful prediction, though a melancholy, was yet a necessary task, imposed on the historians of his life, as the fulfilment of it would prove beyond reasonable contradiction, that he was divinely inspired. Nor could the evangelists deem it an undertaking less dangerous than painful; since it might suggest to those, who were to be the instruments, in the hands of providence, of its accomplishment, the idea of undertaking it, and embolden them with the hope of success. At all events their perverse countrymen, they were well aware, would take occasion from this to vilify them, as enemies to their own country; as a set of men, who in an artful manner, had invited a foreign foe to invade their native land, and to destroy even the

temple of Jehovah\*. The dilemma to which the sacred writers were reduced, by appre-

\* Of the manner, in which this prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, which was delivered by Christ and recorded by his historians, was urged as an accusation against them, we meet with a striking instance in Acts vi. 11—15. *Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him (Stephen) speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council. And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law. For we have heard him say, That this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.* Josephus, however, the Jewish historian, has employed his pen with a skill that has hitherto eluded the sagacity of criticism, in defending the prophet of Nazareth and his followers from such a gross misrepresentation. Speaking of those Jewish leaders, whose obstinacy and cruelty brought the state to ruin, he says, “They trampled upon all the rights of men, derided the divine laws, and scoffed at the oracles of the prophets, as if they were the divinations of jugglers. For these (prophets) have prescribed many rules respecting virtue and vice, which the zealots violated, and thus fulfilled a prophecy (delivered) against our country. For there existed among certain men, an old oracle, which predicted, that the city would then be taken, that the holy place would be burned by the laws of war, when commotions would prevail, and the inhabitants themselves, with their own hands, pollute the sanctuary of God. The zealots, though they knew it, employed themselves as ministers in the accomplishment of these things.”

On this important passage I shall make a few brief remarks: “There existed,” he says, “among certain men, an old oracle (*τις παλαιος λογος ανδρων*), that the city would then be taken,” &c. Now it is maintained, that the oracle here spoken of, is that

hensions of this kind, appear to me perplexing and perilous beyond description :

which Jesus delivered against the Jewish state. The truth of this assertion will appear, I trust, from the following considerations :

1. This oracle was a prophecy delivered against the state, and received its completion from the wickedness of the Jewish leaders. Now read what Matthew has recorded, chap. xxiii. 34—39, and you will there find a denunciation against Jerusalem, and an implication that that denunciation would be executed, in consequence of the stubborn and voluntary guilt of its rulers.

2. Josephus says, that according to this oracle, the city was to be taken at the very time, when commotions would prevail, and when the inhabitants, with their own hands, would pollute the sanctuary of God :—*Ενθα τότε την πολιν αλωσεσθαι, και καταφλεγησεσθαι τα αγια νομω πολεμου, σασις οταν κατασκηνη, και χειρες οικειαι προμικανωσι το του θεου τεμενος*. And this corresponds precisely with the prophecy of our Saviour, for he not only says, that Jerusalem would be taken by war, (See Luke chap. xix. 43.) but that this event would take place in a season distinguished by uncommon disturbances. “When ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not afraid ; for these things must come to pass.—Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences, and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven ;” Luke xxi. 8—11. Our Lord, too, has more than hinted, that at the time, when Jerusalem should be destroyed, the holy place would be polluted by the massacre of his followers. See Matthew xxiii. 34—39.

3. So convinced were the believing Jews, that the prediction of Jesus would be fulfilled, that multitudes of them, warned by him, sold their properties, and after distributing the value among their poor brethren, left the city. And when the appear-

and wonderful is the address with which they extricated themselves;—An address, which

ances, he foretold would precede its demolition, had presented themselves, it was scarcely possible, even for his enemies, not to be convinced, in their hearts, that every thing would take place, as he had prophesied. And this remarkable fact Josephus attests in broad and direct language. “The zealots, though *they knew it*, employed themselves as ministers in the accomplishment of these things:”—Οἱς οὐκ ἀπισήσαντες ἔτι ζήλωται διακονοῦς ἑαυτοῦς ἐπέδοσαν

4. Our Lord foretold, that the calamities, which should then befall the Jews, would be such as were never before equalled, since the beginning of time; Mat. xxiv. 19—22. Accordingly, the Jewish historian prefixes to the prophecy delivered against his country, a summary account of the calamities, which the Jews suffered as the accomplishment of it. The passage is too long to be here transcribed. I must therefore be content to refer my reader to it: See Lib. iv. cap. vi. 3. See also Lib. v. cap. i. 5. In the last section, chap. 10. of this same book, he has these very remarkable words: “In a word, no other city ever suffered such things, nor was any other generation of men so fruitful in wickedness.”

Having now shewn that the prophecy, or oracle, of which Josephus speaks, as existing among certain men, was that delivered by Jesus, recorded by the evangelists, and embraced by the christians; let us in the next place consider, what view he had in describing it as *old*, (παλαιός.) In thus representing it, he had probably an eye to the prophecy of Daniel, chap. ix. His object, it appears to me, was to screen our Lord and his apostles from the odium of having handed to posterity a prophecy, which threatened the ruin and disgrace of their country, by referring the origin of it to an eminent and highly-reputed servant of God in more ancient times. The evangelists themselves, it is my opinion, had a similar design: for two of them,

proves at once, the soundness of their understanding, and the truth of their history.

in recording their Master's prediction, refer to that of the prophet Daniel. Mat. xxiv. 15. Mark xiii. 13. So sensible was our Saviour that the prophecy, he then gave them to record, would be one great means of bringing upon them the hatred and reproaches of their countrymen, that he reminded them, on the occasion, they would be hated by all on his account. But to return again to Josephus: Jerome informs us, that he wrote an exposition of the book of Daniel; to this book Theodoret seems to allude, at the end of his commentaries on that prophet; and he understood him as bearing in it, his testimony to the christian doctrine, though he did not openly avow its truth. From this, we may gather, that the object of the Jewish historian, in publishing such a commentary, was to justify Jesus Christ in foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; and to defend him and his followers from calumny.

I shall here only add, that, at least, this was his design in laying before the public, his History of the Jewish war. The zealous incessantly laboured to throw on Jesus and his followers, the infamy of having occasioned a foreign foe to come and destroy the city and temple. In many parts of that work, he holds them up, on the contrary, as the men, who, by their wickedness, brought this melancholy fate on their country: And thus acts as the advocate of christianity and its first teachers. I cannot, in this place, help expressing my surprise, that Josephus should ever have been regarded as an unbeliever, when he is known to be the author of a history, which virtually exhibits to the world, the founder of the christian faith, as inspired by the wisdom of God. Would a Jew, that rejected the claims of Jesus, transmit to posterity a narrative, which demonstrated his divine inspiration? There is no way to evade the force of this question, but by supposing, that Josephus had never heard any thing about the prophecy, which Christ dictated respecting Jerusalem and the temple. Had any other person however, unknown and obscure, been the author of such a prediction, it could not, from its sin-

Matthew, as he composed his gospel in Judea, intimated, that the army which should besiege and demolish the city and temple, was the *Roman army*, chap. xxiv. 28. But Mark, though he gives a narrative, equally particular and accurate as that of Matthew, has suppressed this intimation,

Another painful event, which the evangelist had to record, was the dispersion of the Jewish people for their wickedness in crucifying the Messiah.

Matthew, it has already been observed,

generality and importance, have failed to become the subject of general conversation. But, delivered as it was, by a man, who had previously commanded universal attention, by a multiplicity of the most stupendous miracles, it must necessarily have spread over every corner of the community, as soon as it was published,

And yet an eminent man, whose industry had explored, and whose memory retained every political event of the age in which he lived, had never heard of it, though he was born on the spot, and just at the time, in which the downfall of his own country and nation was foretold; though it was foretold too by a person, whose fame was carried, in a few years, over all the known world; and though, moreover it was recorded in three distinct histories, which were published in the different quarters of the globe;—Notwithstanding this, such a prophecy never reached the ears of Josephus!!—The supposition is palpably absurd, and savours of nothing less than rank idiotism. And yet it is a supposition that has been made, and made too by men of sense and learning. See Jortin's Remarks, Vol. p. 26.

is very particular in setting down every thing, that had been foretold by our Lord and his forerunner on this subject. One passage, which on account of its obscurity, wants illustration, I shall here notice: “Wherefore I say unto you; Every kind of sin, and of evil-speaking, may be forgiven men: But this evil-speaking against the Spirit, will not be forgiven. Even he, who speaketh against the Son of man may be forgiven; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, will not be forgiven, either in this age, or in that which is to come,” Mat. xii. 31, 32. The general purpose of which seems to be this; *The Jewish nation, in ascribing, through malice and depravity, to an evil spirit, the works, which I do by the power of God, setting aside, by that means, my claims to the Messiahship, incur a guilt which they cannot expiate for ages to come.* The evangelist Mark has stated this subterfuge of the Pharisaic teachers, and the argument, which his Master used to refute it, but he has omitted the prediction, that his countrymen would thus suffer, on that account; nor is there a passage in his gospel, which gives the most distant intimation of the future evils which awaited the Jewish people, for their ill treatment of Jesus



Christ. This is a circumstance, which, in my opinion, does great honour to his heart. The tide of popular prejudices against the Jews, he saw, ran sufficiently high every where, and more especially in Rome, without attempting to swell it, by an anticipation of those calamities, which would overtake them, in their future dispersion among the gentiles.

Having premised these general remarks, which confirm the common opinion, that this historian composed his gospel in that city, I proceed to notice those parts of it, which refer to the impostors and their principles. Now you will naturally expect, that the warnings, which our Lord had delivered to his followers against them; the description he gave of them; the precautions he communicated to his apostles, to prevent them from falling into their errors and vices, together with those parables, which he opposed to their doctrines, should be recorded, by Mark with the same, if not greater fidelity than is done by Matthew. But in this expectation, however reasonable, you will be disappointed: Nor is it difficult to point out the reason of his having omitted them. The strong things, which our Lord

had foretold of the deceivers, if published before their face, which would have been the case, had Mark written them in his gospel, would necessarily have enraged them, and drawn down upon the apostles, their hatred and revenge. Nor would this be the only consequence to be apprehended. Multitudes of Jews and gentiles, infected with the heresies, though not with the vices, of the first Gnostic teachers, would have been alienated from the faith. Of these consequences our evangelist was aware; and as he was more desirous to allay than kindle animosities, to eradicate than foster prejudices, among men, he suppressed such parts as might give offence. He has, however, said enough, as we shall soon see, to prove, that the fictions of the philologers formed no branch of the christian doctrine,

Mark has not, as above observed, related the parable, in which his Master predicted the corruption of his religion, by the priests of Isis. The reason of this omission, is now obvious: As he seems to have thought that that prediction had too pointed an allusion to, and contained too severe an animadversion upon the impostors, to be endured, he has applied to them the parable of the

sower; in which Jesus describes the effect the gospel would produce, and the reception it would meet with, on its first propagation in the world. The words in which Mark relates that parable, are as follows: "Hearken, behold there went out a sower to sow. And it came to pass as he sowed, some fell on the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth, and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up, it was scorched, and because it had no root, it withered away; and some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choaked it, and it yielded no fruit: And others fell on good ground, and did yield fruit, that sprang up and increased, and brought forth, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold;" Mark iv. 3—9.

This parable, applied to the circumstances of christianity and its professors in Rome, though undoubtedly capable of a much wider signification, may be thus interpreted: The seed, fallen by the way, was those representations, carried by passengers or strangers into Rome, of the doctrines,

which Christ taught and of the works, which he did\*. The fowls of the air, which picked it after it had fallen, mean those advocates of the Egyptian or heathen

\* A person professing to be in Rome, at the time in which the fame of Jesus was first carried into that city, gives this remarkable account of it, "While I was distracted by these anxieties, a certain fact, in the reign of Tiberius, and beginning with the commencement of the spring season, gradually grew up in every place, being in truth the good message of God, and unable to keep the divine will in silence, pervaded the world. This fame spread still farther and wider, announcing that a certain man, in Judea, proclaimed the kingdom of the eternal God, which he said, might be obtained by those who lead an upright and pure life; and, in order to prove that he spoke these things by divine inspiration, he performed, by his mere command, as one that had received power from God, many wonderful signs and prodigies." This passage is taken from the *Homilies*, ascribed to Clement of Rome. Hom. 1. p. 6. I shall quote it more at large in the sequel. Permit me here to observe, that the assertion of the writer, that our Lord made his first appearance in the spring, is countenanced by the parable before us. Christ, it is well known, usually copied the subjects of his discourses, and their illustrations, by visible symbols, from the objects that presented themselves. Nothing was more natural than his representing the propagation and growth of his gospel, under the figure of seeds sown in the ground, at a season when the people around him were engaged in such an occupation.

This testimony, it may be observed, agrees with the tradition of the church, that Jesus was baptised, or that he entered on his ministry, in the month of January. See Tillemont, Vol. i. p. 11. It is worthy of observation, that this author calls the gospel, which he describes, as ἀγαθὴ θεοῦ ἀγγελία; *fame*, φημη, the very name which Seneca gives to it. See Vol. ii. p. 187, 188.

system, which was the great enemy of the christian. These came, and took away the word from the hearts of those that received it, or rendered it, unproductive, by planting with it falsehoods of their own invention. Farther, The seed fallen on stony ground, and immediately sprung up, represents the sudden reception of the gospel by the Jews and Egyptians, before they yet understood it in its native purity; while the withering of it away, by the heat of the newly risen sun, signifies the defection from the faith, which took place, on account of the persecution that broke out, at the time, in that city. Finally, the seed fallen on good ground, denotes those, who rejecting the thorny doctrines of the impostors, produced in their conduct the fruits of virtue.

The false teachers appear to have attempted to justify the concealment of their doctrines from the people, by the conduct of Jesus, who taught the multitudes in parables, the meaning of which he explained only to his chosen disciples. Their artifice, in this respect, Mark seems to notice, in what he immediately subjoins to the explanation, given by Christ of the above parable, "And he said, Is a candle brought to be put under

a bushel, or under a bed, and not to be set on a candlestick. For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested : Neither was any thing kept secret but that it should come abroad, If any man hath ears to hear let him hear ;” 21—24. Which is to this purpose, “ I wish that my doctrines should shine abroad, and, like light, illumine all that are in darkness. The reason, why I conceal, at present, my meaning, under the veil of figurative speech is, that the people at large are not yet prepared to receive it. My design is that nothing should be kept secret from them any longer than they are unqualified to hear the voice of truth. When their understanding shall become sufficiently enlarged to comprehend the nature of my character and office, every thing will then be unfolded to them in plain and simple language. Even now I invite all that have ears to hear, also to understand me. My conduct, therefore, is no justification of those false teachers, who coming after me will, from motives of avarice and lust, introduce mysteries and deceptions into my religion.” On commissioning his apostles, our Lord warned them against that *duplicity* of language, in which the impostors would deliver their religious tenets

tēnets ; and moreover commanded them to sift, and thoroughly examine, the meaning of what they should hear. This caution, as it was hardly necessary to the Jewish believer; whose situation and principles placed him in a great measure beyond the reach of Egyptian impostures, Matthew has not inserted in his gospel. But to the converts in Rome, where they originated, and still prevailed, it was highly necessary ; Mark therefore has recorded it in the words, which he next subjoins, ΒΛΗΤΕΤΕ ΤΙ ΑΚΟΥΕΤΕ. LOOK INTO WHAT YOU HEAR.

The corrupters of the new religion, while they continued in the indulgence of the most flagrant vices, had the insolence to say, that they, and not the faithful believers, were represented by the person, to whom the talent, taken from the unprofitable servant, should be given. Their arrogance in this respect, induced our evangelist in the next place, to represent his Master as asserting, that the disciples, who then heard him, and not those, who had not heard him, were signified by that person ; AND UNTO YOU THAT HEAR SHALL MORE BE GIVEN. For he that hath,

to him shall be given : and he that hath not, from him shall be taken, even that which he hath.”

From the above enquiry we have seen, that christianity, in consequence of the notoriety and the undoubted reality of our Saviour's miracles, and resurrection, was carried into Rome, and there met with general reception among the Jews and Egyptians, ere yet the apostles, were awakened from those prejudices, under which, as Jews, they laboured. This important fact, which I shall prove more fully in the sequel, serves to unfold the meaning and pertinence of the parable, which our historian has next recorded. “ And he said, so is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground : And should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” This parable, no doubt, is susceptible of a much wider signification, but its primary application



turns upon the wide spread of the christian doctrine in the West, by the sole impulse of its divine evidence, without, not only *the aid*, but even the *concurrence* of the apostles. It confirms this interpretation, that Mark is the only one, who has related the above parable, which supposes, that there was something in it, that rendered it appropriate to his situation.

The comparison of the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed, which Lightfoot shows to have been a proverbial expression among the Jews, to denote any thing very small, is a representation of the christian dispensation, very opposite to that, given of it by the Gnostics : Since it fixes the attention upon the *smallness of* its beginning, the *simplicity* of its fundamental principles, and the *benignity* of its object in stretching, as it were, its hospitable branches to shelter the poor and forlorn of all descriptions from the maladies and storms of life. This, therefore, forms the next step in the narrative of our evangelist, “ And he said whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God ?—It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, *is less than all the seeds,*

*that be in the earth.* But when it is sown, it 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.”

The works, which our Lord performed, were calculated not only to prove the truth of his divine mission, by the display of supernatural power, but also to convey certain lessons of moral instruction, connected with the history of his religion. And as the events, to which they referred, were yet in futurity, they were *prophetic*, as well as miraculous; that is to say, they are recommended to our notice, as stamped with supernatural wisdom, as well as supernatural power. And this is a circumstance, which widely distinguishes the miracles of Jesus, from all the artifices of imposture, in every age or country. Thus, his walking on the sea presignified the apparently insurmountable difficulties, which his followers would encounter, and that with success, in the propagation of his religion; the legs of a man standing upon the water, being used in the East as the symbol of impossibility. The agitations of the wind and waves denoted farther, the convulsions, which would

be excited in the world, in consequence of the opposition made to it by the advocates of established corruptions; while the great calm, which followed his command, depicted that peace and harmony, that would ensue after its establishment. Now as these symbols met the events, to which they peculiarly corresponded, in the commotions which took place at Rome, on the introduction of the gospel, and in the general tranquillity and prosperity of the christian church, and indeed, as Philo asserts, of the whole Roman world, effected by the decrees of Tiberius, in favour of the christians, Mark thought it right to relate that incident on the present occasion; though we have reason to believe, he violated the order of time, in so doing. "And when they sent away the multitude, they took him, even as he was in the ship, and there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him. And say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be

still, and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm \*.”

In chapter nine, our evangelist has a paragraph to this effect, “ And John answered, saying, Master, we saw one, casting out devils, in thy name, and he followeth not us : And we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, forbid him not, for there is no man, which shall do a miracle, in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me ; For he that is not against us, is on our part.” In this passage, the writer, I conceive, has some of the Egyptian con-

\* The ancient fathers seem, all of them, to have considered this miracle of Jesus, as containing an allegorical, as well as a literal sense. The ship, of which mention is here made, was, according to them, a *type of the christian church*, and the sea, on which, as it were, it floated, was the world ; and the tempest that tossed it, the trials and temptations of life. I shall here set down the words of Jerome. Puppis mortuis pellibus vivos continet, et fluctus arcet et ligno solidatur, id est, cruce, et morte domini ecclesia salvatur. Cervical corpus domini est, cui divinitas sicut caput reclinata est : Puppis initium ecclesie est, in qua dominus dormit morte corporali ; Qui nunquam dormit, qui custodit Israel. Comminatur mari et vento, ut taceat, de quo dicitur : Tu dominaris potestati maris ; ventus et mare demones et persecutores sunt, quibus dicit, tace, quando compescuit regum iniquorum edicta, ut voverit ; quia non est hominis ut dirigat gressus suos. Tranquillitas magna, pax ecclesie est post pressuram, sive theoria post actualem vitam. *Com. in loco.* See also *Origen, 1 Commentaries*, Vol. i. p. 240.

verts, in view, who, though they did not receive Christ, as taught by the apostles, or acknowledge their superior authority, yet pretended to work miracles in his name: And his object, as appears to me, was to check that illiberality and prejudice, which might dispose the faithful believers to deny the claims of those to the character of christians, though they might not think of Christ as he did. This undoubtedly was the design of our Lord, in giving the above advice to his disciples; and, as the peculiar situation of Mark called for the practice of it, he felt the necessity of assigning to it a place in his gospel. Observe the last clause.—*He that is not against us, is on our part.* This is just reversing the maxim of Jesus, as delivered in Matthew xii. 30. and as it here stands it is to this purpose, “Regard, as the supporters of your cause, all those, that are not its enemies, though they may not profess it in its purity, or entertain the same just ideas with you of my person and character.” It is worthy of remark that the apostle Paul acted upon this generous principle, towards the very men, to whom the historian here probably refers. See Phil. chap. i. 14—18. You will recollect that Paul was at Rome

when he was writing the words he there uses.

The Egyptian priests deemed *salt* impure, and abstained from the use of it. The cause of their aversion to it is not certainly known. But it proceeded, perhaps from the affinity, which it bears to the sea\* ; an

\* See Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, edit. Squire, p. 11. The Egyptian philosophers did not allow the sea to have even the honour of being an element ; but supposed it to be the perspiration of the earth, occasioned by the heat of the sun. Ὀλως δὲ καὶ τὴν θαλάσσαν ἐκ πυρὸς ἠγούνται καὶ παρωρισμένην, οὐδὲ μέρος, οὐδὲ στοιχεῖον, ἀλλὰ ἀλλοῖον περιττώμα διεφθόρος καὶ νοσηδὲς, p. 17. The afflictions, which the God of the Jews (or the divinity, whom, as opposed to their own, they deemed evil, and called *Typho*) commissioned Moses to bring on the Egyptians, may be obviously traced in their own mythology ; which is nothing else than a fiction of the priests, levelled against the Mosaic account, and calculated to bring it into discredit. This is a fact, which I hope fully to prove, in my future enquiries. But I cannot help producing in this place, one or two passages, which may enable the reader to judge of my assertion. The twenty-seventh section of this same book is thus rendered by Squire : “ Of this sort, say these persons, are the adventures, which are ascribed to *Typho*, as that being full of malice and envy, he perpetrated the most horrid crimes ; disturbing every where the ordinary course of things, and filling both sea and land with misery and confusion, till he was at length punished ; punished by Isis, in revenge of the injuries, which he had done to her brother and husband Osiris.—An effectual stop being thus put to the fury and madness of *Typho*, Isis herself, say they, in memory of the great contests and difficulties, which she had undergone, and of the wanderings she had been exposed to ; unwilling likewise, that so much wisdom, so much courage and resolution, as had been

element, which the Egyptians seem to have held in abhorrence, ever since the destruction

shown on this occasion, should be lost in perpetual silence, appointed certain rites and mysteries, which were to be as images, representations, or imitations rather, of what was then done and suffered, with this farther view likewise, that the commemoration of these events might serve as incitements to piety, and as a proper consolation to all those, whether men or women, who might, at any time hereafter, be in like circumstances of distress."

Now according to the notion, which I propose hereafter to prove, under the symbol of Typho, perpetrating the most horrid crimes, disturbing every where the ordinary course of things, and filling both sea and land with misery and confusion, are meant those plagues, which the Jehovah of the Jews inflicted on Egypt, by the hands of his servant Moses, with the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red-sea. The contests and difficulties, which Isis is said to have encountered with Typho, signify those pretended miracles, which the Magi, in the Egyptian court, opposed to the wonders of Moses; whence it follows, that the rites and mysteries, which the devotees of the Egyptian divinities instituted, in commemoration of those events, were intended either to conceal or to palliate the calamities, which the hardness of Pharaoh's heart brought on the state. Lest I be thought fanciful, in thus accounting for the origin of the Egyptian mythology, I shall here allege one passage more: It occurs in section 31. p. 71. *Οἱ δὲ λεγοντες εκ μαχης επ ουου τῷ Τυφῶνι την Φυγην ἑπτα ἡμεραις γενεσθαι, και σωθεντα γεννησαι παιδας Ιεροσολυμον και Ιουδαιον, αυτοθεν ειση καταδηλοι τα Ιουδικα παρελκοντες εις τον μυθον.* That is, *Those who say that Typho made his escape on an ass for seven days: and after having saved himself, begot two sons, Hierosolymus and Judæus, manifestly shew from hence, that their object is to turn into fable certain events, respecting the Jews.* Here is the testimony of one of the most renowned advocates, which the Egyptian system ever had, that some of its votaries considered it as a fiction, opposed to the

of Pharaoh, and his host. It is this circumstance, that led Mark to add this remark, which, taken in any other view, appears nugatory and impertinent : *Salt is good* \* :

Mosaic history, and that by *Typho* was intended, the Jewish divinity. I shall pursue this argument no farther at present ; but I cannot help observing that Philo, who wrote in Egypt, and in opposition to the Egyptian priests, has transferred back to their favourite divinity Osiris, the ignominious name of *Typho*. And this is the true explanation of a difficulty, which critics complain of in his works. Wherever he holds up the latter as worshipped by the Egyptians, he only uses this name to mark the former as a *false* and *evil* being, in opposition to the true God. See in particular, vol. ii. p. 181.

\* The circumstance of *salt* being rejected by the Egyptian priests, will account for a peculiarity in the writings of Philo, where he alludes to Levit. xxiv. 7. No mention of salt is made by Moses, and yet this author says, that bread and salt was placed on the table; See vol. ii. 151. p. 240. The dislike which the Egyptians had for salt, must, if it originated in its supposed affinity to the sea, after, it had proved fatal to their prince with his host, have been subsequent to the age of Moses. He had, therefore, no motive for making the use of it, the subject of specific injunction: But, as an aversion to it was prevalent among the Egyptian devotees, in the age of Philo, he, understanding it to be the great object of the Jewish law-giver, to draw away his people from pagan absurdities, thought himself justified in supplying the defect. It was used in the Jewish sacrifices as a symbol of *preservation*.—Οἱ ἀλλεῖς συμβολὴν διαμμενῆς τῆς συμπατηνῶν. In this symbolical sense Mark says of it, *salt is good*. The reference, which the evangelist had to the Egyptian impostors, in making this assertion, is well illustrated by the circumstance, that Philo, after delivering the above observation, immediately animadverts to them : Ridebunt hæc, sat scio, isti, qui nihil tractant præter epulas et convivia, lautarum sæctatores mensarum, misere servientes avibus, pisci-



But if the salt have lost its saltness wherewith will you season it." The dispute, which broke out between the Jewish believers and the Egyptian impostors, who, by their misconduct, brought disgrace upon their profession, seems to have run very high, and to have had a considerable share in the commotions, which occasioned the expulsion of both parties. (See pages 145, 146.) Hence the propriety of what our evangelist next subjoins: **HAVE SALT IN YOURSELVES. AND HAVE PEACE ONE WITH ANOTHER.**

The charge, which he gave to his disciples, "That they should tell no man, that he was Jesus the Christ," Mat. xvi. 20. is thus recorded by Mark: *And he charged them that they should speak to none about him; chap. viii. 30.* According to this statement, our Lord's meaning may be taken in this manner:—"In as much as many will hate me, though without a cause; Do not speak about me before such people. Cherish, indeed, a firm faith in my gospel, and imitate my example, but do not make my name and character the subject of conversation, or of dispute, in circumstances, where no good can be answer-

bus, carnibus, et id genus nugis, qui ne in somnis quidem veram libertatem unquam gustaverunt.

ed, but rather where prejudices will be riveted, and animosities kindled\*." Now as our evangelist wrote his gospel, where the greatest odium prevailed against the christian name, we cannot reasonably doubt, but that some lesson of this kind was his object to inculcate. And upon this wise lesson, be it remarked, the followers of Jesus, at first, acted. As their adversaries had associated ideas of ignominy and malice with the name of *Christ*, they assumed the title of Ἁγιοί, *Saints* or *holy men*, a title which simply implied, that they were free from the *impurities* generally imputed to them †.

\* Our Lord, on another occasion has, in very concise and emphatic terms, conveyed the import of the above paragraph, *Give not that, which is holy, unto the dogs*; Mat. vii. 6.

† "The application of the word *saint* to the evangelists, apostles, and other celebrated men of the christian church, is an ignorant device of some, in later times, who have not been sufficiently aware of the true import of this term. Every christian indiscriminately, was denominated, in the days of the apostles, *a saint*, or *holy person*; and this title was intended merely as a *general and political* appellation, in contradistinction to the word *gentile*, or *heathen*, who was called in a *civil* sense, *unholy* and *unrighteous*; one who was not a professor of christianity;" Wakef. *Com. on Matthew*, p. 2.

This statement, however, I conceive not to be accurate. The term *saint* was not used by the apostles in a *political* sense, to denote a christian, in opposition to a *gentile*. The first christian teachers applied it to themselves and others, in expression of their superior moral purity, as professors of the new faith, and

The Jewish part of the converts, in Rome, followed the conduct of their brethren, in Judea, and took upon themselves the appellation, not of *christians*, but of (*ἁγιοί*.) *Es-senes*, which like the former, signifies *saints*; while the Egyptian believers adhered to the term, which, from high antiquity, had been appropriated to men occupied in the affairs of religion. But none of the early christians carried the above maxim to such extent as was done by Philo. This illustrious ally of the apostles, has written two books in defence of the converts, expelled by Tiberius and the senate, with many other voluminous productions, all turning upon circumstances, relating to the christian faith

of their entire freedom from the gross immoralities alleged against them by their enemies. This is the reason, as we shall see hereafter, why Philo holds up the followers of Jesus under the title of *ἁγιοί*, *holy men*, which has precisely the same import with the word *saint*, and his object, like that of Paul, was to convey, by such an appellation, the idea of men, not given to impurities, as was supposed by some, but of men consecrated to God by distinguished sanctity. Permit me to add, that the supposition of the term being used in a civil sense, is injurious to the disciples of Jesus. They never aimed at making any distinction between men, but such as was marked out by their respective moral character. And, they well knew, that an attempt to introduce and establish a political distinction between them and unbelievers, would countenance the notion, that their profession was of a merely political nature, and hostile to the authority of Cæsar.

and its professors; yet, in no place, has he mentioned our Lord by name, though many passages may be pointed out, in which an allusion is made to him \*. He

\* As the Works of Philo will be a subject of future examination, I shall, in this place, produce only one passage, where reference is made to Jesus Christ. It is as follows: *Εἰσι δὲ καὶ τὸ Βαββαρικὸν ἔθος εἰς Ἰταλίαν ἠγαγον, τὴν προσκυνῆσιν, τὸ εὐγενεῖς τῆς Ρωμαϊκῆς ἐλευθερίας παραχαράττοντες· Ἐν δὲ μόνον ἔθνος ἐξαιρετοῦν τὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὑπόπτον ἢ ἀντιπράξειν, εἰώθως ἐκουσίους ἀναδεχέσθαι θανάτους, ὡσπερ ἀθανάσιαν, ὑπὲρ τοῦ μηδὲν τῶν πατρῶν περιμῆδεν ἀναιρουμένον, εἰ καὶ βραχυτάτον εἴη—Μικρον δὲ οὐκ ἦν τὸ κινουμένον· ἀλλὰ τὸ μεγαίσαν τῶν ὄντων, ἀνδρωποῦ γεννητὴν καὶ φθαρτὴν φύσιν εἰς ἀγενήτων καὶ ἀφθαρτων, ὅσα τῷ δοκεῖν, θεοπλασθῆσαι, ὃ πρὸ ἀσιβημάτων ἐκρίνεν εἶναι χαλεπώτατον· θάττον γὰρ ἂν εἰς ἀνδρωπὸν θεόν, ἢ εἰς θεὸν ἀνδρωπὸν μεταβαλεῖν, Vol. ii. p. 562. *Some persons, abusing the generous principle of Roman liberty, carried into Italy the worship of (a man). Our nation alone was likely to resist that practice, being accustomed to choose a voluntary death, in order, as it were, to become immortal, rather than suffer any of their paternal rights to be taken from them, though that of which they were to be deprived, might be very inconsiderable. But the question agitated was not inconsiderable, but the greatest of all questions, whether the derived and corruptible nature of man is capable of assuming, even in appearance, the underived and incorruptible nature of God—a presumption, which our nation deem the most flagrant: for sooner may a God transform himself into a man, than a man into a God.**

The philologers in the court of Tiberius, we have seen, introduced into Italy, the doctrine, that Christ was a divine being: and the emperor, at their instigation, proposed his deification to the senate, while he refused that honour to be conferred upon himself.

Caligula his successor, however, jealous of the high dignity,

thus sacrificed to popular prejudices, not from indecision, nor timidity, (for a more strenuous, and able advocate of truth, virtue and freedom, scarcely ever appeared on the earth,) but from a conviction, that a more open and direct defence of Christ and his profession, would, in his distressing circumstances, be attended with less advantageous consequences. I cannot help observing in this place, that the apostle James mentions our Saviour only *twice* in the whole of the beautiful epistle, which he addressed to the Jews dispersed among the gentiles.

“And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry, and seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he

which superstition had bestowed upon the Man Jesus, and actuated by the bitterest malice against the whole Jewish nation, as the most determined advocates of virtue and freedom, sought his own deification, and went even so far as to menace the Jews with placing his image in the temple, as an object of their worship. These facts, which will become the subject of future discussion, serve, without any further comment, to unfold the meaning of the above passage. Philo, it is evident, disapproved the introduction of such a doctrine into Italy, as the deification of Jesus; but he insinuates that the supposition of his being a God, in a human form, was less absurd than that such a base, corrupt, and frail creature as Caligula, was capable of assuming the divine nature.

came, if haply he might find any thing thereon; and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered, and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." Mark, chap. xi. 12—15.

The conduct of Jesus on this occasion, has caused much perplexity to the sacred critics. But the difficulty would have vanished, if they had sufficiently reflected, that his sole object in thus causing the tree to wither, was to impress upon his followers an important moral lesson. The instruction which he intended to convey was to this effect: "Whosoever puts forth the profession of my religion, without the fruits of it, will, like this fig-tree, be stript of its foliage, and cut down, as an incumbrance of the ground." This lesson was strikingly illustrated and confirmed in the case of *Judas*, at whom our Lord primarily levelled it. It was illustrated too, with equal force, in the fate of the impostors, who, on account of their guilt, suffered from the hands of Tiberius. As this was the case, and as these were properly enough called the followers of that traitor, our evangelist may have directed it at them. And hence we can

discover the cause of the peculiarity, in his manner of relating it. Matthew says simply that he saw a fig-tree in the way ; but Mark adds, that it was *afar off*, μακροθεν, in allusion, I conceive, to the *distance*, at which the deceivers were from him.

The former again says not a syllable about its not being the time of figs, while the latter gives it as a reason for its having no figs, that it was not the season for them, ου γαρ εν καιροσ συζων. The meaning of the writer, however, appears to me, not that the time of bearing or gathering figs was not yet arrived, but that the situation of the fig-tree, as being by the way side, where its fruits were liable to be prematurely picked by any that passed, was unfriendly to their production and maturity ; and consequently it could never have, at any season, ripe ones upon it. The season here spoken of, respects, therefore, not the *time* of bearing figs, but the *place*, in which the tree stood ; and the clause should accordingly be rendered, “He found nothing but leaves, *for there was no convenience for figs.*” By this, the historian hints, that the want of the fruits of christianity in the men, who were put to death, was but the natural

result of circumstances highly unfavourable to them; and that those, who would adorn themselves with its virtues, should leave such situations, as preclude their growth and perfection.

Josephus assures us, that the calamities, in which the whole Jewish and Egyptian nations were involved, originated with the misconduct of a very few men. Those that were innocent, must have cherished a deep and lasting sense of the injury done them by the guilty in this respect: And as it was an injury that could never be forgotten, on the part of the sufferers, so they could not easily forgive those that had any concern in it. Now this circumstance seems to have led the evangelist, after he had related the above incident, and the subsequent transactions of Jesus in the temple, to subjoin in a manner apparently very unconnected, what our Lord delivered, on another occasion: “And when ye stand praying, *forgive*, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also, which is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do *not forgive*, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”



The story of the miraculous conception, it cannot be denied, is omitted by this writer. Hence Dr. Priestly argues in the following manner: "What shall we say in respect to Mark. If he was an epitomizer of Matthew, as some have supposed, but of which I own, I see no sufficient evidence, how came he to leave out the whole of the two first chapters? And if he was, as I think most probable, an original writer, how came he to give no account at all of the miraculous conception, on the supposition that he really knew of it? He could not tell, that any other person of equal credit, would write the history; and, therefore, as he did undertake it, he would certainly insert in it what he thought of principal importance: Consequently he must never have heard of the story, or thought it of no importance. But it is of such a nature, that no person, believing it to be true, ever did, or ever could, consider it as of no importance. It was a singular and most extraordinary measure, in divine providence, and could not but be considered as having some great object and end, whether we should be able to discover it or not. It was, therefore, such a fact, as no historian could overlook, and it may

therefore be presumed, that Mark had either never heard of it, or that he did not believe it."

Such is the conclusion, which this great man draws from the silence of Mark, respecting the supernatural birth of Jesus. His arguments are such, to say the least of them, as could never be removed by the advocates of the tale. But, not only has this historian omitted the story; he has also contradicted it. His gospel, rendered verbatim from the original, begins thus: "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,—(as it is written in the prophets, behold! I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way in thy presence; a voice crying in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight,)—was John, baptizing in the wilderness, and preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

According to the story of our Lord's miraculous birth, he was pointed out as king of the Jews, at the very time, in which he was *born*. If this were true the Magi, and not the Baptist, were the first, who made him manifest. But Mark here says expressly

that John was *the beginning of the good news*, respecting Christ; that is, John was the person, with whom the first information of his appearance originated. The term he uses to convey this fact, is the most unequivocal he could have chosen. Had he employed *πρωτος* instead of *αρχη*, his meaning would then have been ambiguous\*; as the former is often applied to signify superiority in rank,

\* An instance of the ambiguity, to which the word *πρωτος* is liable, may be seen in Irenæus, p. 49. where he thus characterises *Valentinus*; 'Ο μὲν γὰρ πρωτος, ἀπο τῆς λεγομένης Γνωστικῆς αἰρέσεως, τὰς ἀρχὰς εἰς ἴδιον χαρακτῆρα διδασκαλείου μεθαρμοσίας οὕτως ἐξηραφώρησεν' This last word has occasioned much uncertainty among the critics. It appears to me, however, to be genuine, and to convey a happy idea. Our Lord assured his disciples, that unless a man abideth in him, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, *ἐξηρανώθη*, John, chap. xv. 6. According to this figure, Irenæus represents Valentinus as tearing his doctrines from the stem of Christ, and transplanting them into his own nursery; where, being now deprived of the nutritious sap, communicated to them by the parent tree, they withered and became fit only for the fire. Tertullian has a fine passage against the heretics, founded on the same metaphor. He conceives himself coming into the vineyard of Christ, and discovering Apelles, Marcion, and Valentinus, like thieves in the night, busied in breaking down the trees, stopping up the fountains, and removing the hedges; and then accosts them, *Qui estis? Quando et unde venistis? Quid in meo agitis? Quo denique jure, Marcion, Silvam meam cœdis? Qua licentia, Valentine, fontes meos transvertis? Qua potestate limites meos commoves? Quid hic, cæteri, ad voluntatem vestram, seminatis et pascitis?* p. 215. C.

as well as priority, in respect of time : but as he has employed the latter, his meaning cannot, without the grossest perversion, be evaded or misconstrued.

Our evangelist not only asserts, that the Baptist was the first, who announced the appearance of our Saviour, but he also cites the prediction of a Jewish prophet, to prove, that he was the person appointed to discharge this honourable office. "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ —was John; as it is written, I send my messenger, before thy face, who shall prepare thy way *in thy presence*." The words *εμπροσθεν σου*, which I render, *in thy presence*, or *in thy view*, do not belong to the original prophecy, but are inserted by the historian, as explanatory of the clause *πρὸ προσώπου σου* *before thy face*; intimating that the forerunner of the Messiah, when sent to apprise the Jews of his coming, was, in conformity to ancient prophecy, to proclaim him, at the period of his actual appearance, and not sooner. Thus decisively does the evangelist Mark hold up the story of Jesus being pointed out by the Magi, at his birth, as a falsehood\*.

\* It is but justice to my argument, as well as to the discern-

On the supposition, that the tale was true, Mary must then have understood, that her Son would ascend the throne of David, and that he would hold, as the Messiah, an unlimited empire ; Luke i. 32—36. As this

ment of others, to acknowledge, that I am not the first, who has observed that Mark represents the baptism of John as the *beginning* of the gospel. The Rev. Mr. Pope, of Manchester, in his letters to Mr. Nisbett, has the following observation, p. 138. “ Mark does not merely *omit* the miraculous conception, but expressly calls the event of Christ’s baptism, *the beginning* of the gospel of Jesus Christ ; a phrase which certainly he would not have used, if he had known of any other important event concerning Jesus Christ prior to this.” Theophilact, I remember, to whose comment I have not an immediate access, considered the evangelist as declaring, that John the baptist was the first, who announced our Lord ; and thus places my argument in even stronger light than is done by Mr. Pope. But it is of greater importance to observe, as we learn from Origen, that such of the ancient heresiarchs as rejected the miraculous conception, alleged the testimony, which Mark, in this very place, bore against it. Hence, that learned man put this question, in reference to Simon Magus and his followers : *As John, they imagine, taught (another God) the Creator of the world, how can he be, as they will have it, the beginning of the gospel ? Πως δυναται αρχη ειναι ευγγελιου, ως αυτοι οιονται, Com. vol. ii. p. 14.* It was in reference to the above impostors, who rejected the authority of the Old Testament, that the same writer says, *Our evangelist appeals to the Jewish prophets, as the proper origin of the gospel.* ‘Ο Μαρκος φησιν’ Αρχη του ευαγγελιου ‘ημων Ιησου χριστου, ‘ως γεγραπται εν Ησαια τω προφητη’ Ιδου εγω αποσελλω τον αγγελον μου προ προσωπου σου, ος κατασκευασει τον οδον σου εμπροσθεν σου, δεικνυσι οτι ‘η του ευαγγελιου αρχη των Ιουδαιικων γραμματων ηρηται’ *Contra Celsum, p. 60.*

writer published his gospel where the story first originated, and where no doubt, it most generally prevailed, it was incumbent upon him, to relate some particular fact, which might place, in the clearest light, that his mother had no idea of the kind, till some time after his ministry had commenced. And what could more effectually do this than her supposing, he was out of his mind, for claiming that character? Accordingly we have seen, that Mark has related a paragraph, from which it appears, that she did entertain such an unworthy supposition. See vol. i. page 373.

Mary is represented, in the gospel of his birth, to have been educated in the temple at Jerusalem. According to the impostors too, our Lord, and all his family, were inhabitants of Bethlehem. In contradiction to this, Mark holds up the people of Nazareth as asserting, that they belonged to their town. "Is not this the carpenter, the Son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Judah and Simon, and are not his sisters HERE \*with us." It is remarkable,

\* The clause in Matthew, chap. xiii. 55. *Ὁυχι πάντα πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐστί,* Mr. Wakefield, on the authority of Markland, ren-

however, that no notice is here taken of *Joseph*, which, it was very natural to expect; but Jesus is spoken of as the *Son of Mary only*. We have the authority of Matthew for asserting, that his fellow-inhabitants, did mention the father, on this occasion. And why has Mark omitted him? Did he act thus in compliance with the belief, then prevalent at Rome, that he was, not the Son of Joseph, but born in a supernatural manner? Certainly not. There is, therefore, room to suspect, that the language has been changed by the advocates of the story, in after times, in consequence of some very decisive declaration made by the evangelist, in proof of its falsehood. To this last suspicion I am the more inclined, as *Origen* expressly asserts, that no where, in the genuine gospels is our Lord said to have been a carpenter\*. If this assertion be true

ders, are not they all like unto ourselves. It is demonstrable, however, that this was not the meaning of the evangelist; since Mark introduces the adverb *ὡδε* here, and thus renders the above version absurd and nugatory. What Matthew meant, I have already explained; and the manner in which Mark appears to have understood him, is a confirmation of that explanation; Vol. i. p. 372.

\* There is another circumstance, besides the express authority of *Origen*, which might lead one to mistrust the genuineness of this passage. The term *τεκτων* was formerly far from being

the passage before us has certainly been interpolated, for it evidently represents Jesus to have been of the same occupation with his father.

There are passages in this gospel levelled

confined to the humble idea of a *carpenter*; but was used to convey a more honourable and general sense; namely, that of *skill* or *expertness* in all the arts and sciences. It was, therefore, synonymous with σοφία. (See Clement Alexandrinus, p. 281, 282, where he refers to Homer, and other authors, in support of this fact). I cannot help, therefore, suspecting, that it was intruded by some early forgers, into the genuine gospel, in order to hold up our Lord, in the light of a man, like other philosophers, versed in worldly wisdom. It is worthy of remark, farther, that throughout the Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus, he is described under the denomination of a carpenter; in order, no doubt, to associate with his character the honour and dignity, which that name implied. And from this circumstance one might conclude, that some of the abettors of that gospel were the authors of this forgery. It cannot, however, well be questioned, but that our Lord was, by occupation, an ordinary carpenter: And there is, if I mistake not, one passage in the gospel of John, chap. v. 19, 20. where he is represented as alluding to the trade, which he followed in common with, and had learnt from, his father Joseph: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, No son can do any thing of himself, but what he seeth his father do: for those things, which the father doeth, the son doeth also in like manner. For the father loveth the son, and sheweth him whatsoever he doeth himself." These words, when considered as true in a primary and literal sense, have a beautiful and secondary meaning, when applied to his supreme Father. On this transfer from the simple and obvious to the metaphorical and analogous signification, the whole beauty and propriety of his words depend.



against the doctrine of our Lord's divinity. But of these we shall take notice in the sequel. I proceed now to the examination of Luke's gospel : It has been handed down to us from ancient times, that this evangelist wrote his history with the express design of refuting the gospel of the Egyptians; which gospel we have already shown to have been composed by those deceivers, who first invented the fiction, that he was a supernatural being, and supernaturally conceived.

The truth of this tradition I shall now demonstrate :

The introduction, literally translated, is as follows, " In as much as many have attempted to compose a narrative of those things, that have been fulfilled among us, it seemed good to me also, taking my beginning from above, to write an account of the whole, in a regular succession, as those, who, from the first, were eye witnesses and ministers of the Logos, delivered them to me; in order that thou, most excellent *Theophilus*, mightest know the certainty of the things, in which thou hast been instructed."

Here the writer expresses his intention to commence his history of our Lord *from above*, *ανωθεν*; that is, to begin with the time, when he was announced the Son of God from heaven, and not from his birth, as was done by the Egyptian impostors. Accordingly, after a short account of the Baptist, he thus introduces his narrative of Christ: “Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also, being baptized and praying, the heaven was opened: 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. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age; being as was supposed, the Son of Joseph;” Chap. iii. 21—24. The purport of which is this; *Jesus was about his thirtieth year, when he became the Son of God, and was announced as such by a voice from heaven.* That this was the meaning of Luke is plain, from the use of *αυτου*, *himself*, which marks an opposition between Jesus considered *personally*, and the character he sustained *as a divine commissioner*. Thus, Jesus, as the messenger of heaven, began to exist, after his baptism,

but Jesus *himself*, or, *the man Jesus* was about thirty years old\*.”

\* Since Luke, then, says himself, that he intended to begin with the public ministry of our Saviour; it follows, on his own indisputable authority, that the account of his miraculous birth never came from his hand. Hence we perceive the truth of Marcion's position, that the gospel of Luke, which was in his possession, and which did not contain that fabulous narrative, was so far the genuine gospel; though, I believe, as Tertullian asserts, it was, in other respects, adulterated by that, and other infamous heretics. Hence, too, the charge of forgery, which the orthodox, and the heretics urged against each other, was alike founded in truth. Ego meum dico verum, Marcion suum. Ego Marcionis adfirmo adulteratum; Marcion meum: Tertul. adver. Marcion, Lib. iv. 4. The rule he prescribes for determining between them, is the following very good one: Quis inter nos determinabit? nisi temporis ratio, ei præscribens auctoritatem, quod antiquius reperietur; et ei præjudicans vitiationem, quod posterius revincetur. That Marcion contended that Luke's gospel began with the third chapter, is well known. See Tertullian adver. Marcion, Lib. iv. 7. Epiphanius. p. 231. With respect to the genealogy, inserted in the third, I once thought it to be genuine, as it might have been intended, by the evangelist, to refute some false genealogies in vogue among the heretics: But it does not now seem to me probable, that in doing this, he would have recourse to records, the authenticity of which would be called in question by his opponents. The great point, which the apostles, in opposition to the impostors, maintained, was that he descended from the race of David; and this fact was far more decisively proved by such well attested incidents, (one or two of which will be noticed hereafter) as occurred in the course of his public ministry. If Luke, then, were not the author of the genealogy, it must have been inserted by the fabricators of the introductory chapters. It is some confirmation of this inference, that neither John, nor Mark, nor Matthew inserted in their genuine gospels, any genealogical account of Jesus: It is therefore probable that

It is farther worthy of notice, that the evangelist asserts, that our Lord was the son of Joseph, agreeably to the common opinion entertained of him: “ Being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph.” As if he said *Jesus was universally thought by all that knew him, to be the offspring of Joseph, and this opinion is founded in truth.*

The first fabricators of his supernatural birth, represented him, as being born many years before the death of Herod the great, and that he was advanced in years, when sentenced to die in Jerusalem\*. But this representation they shifted in different situations; So that the time of his public appearance was presently involved in much uncertainty and contradiction, especially in countries remote from Judea †. Luke, be-

Luke did not insert one in his history. It is finally confirmed, by the circumstance, that Tatian excluded it from his Harmony of the four Gospels. His reason for this, no doubt, was his firm conviction of its spuriousness.

\* Irenæus, in a well-known passage asserts, that our Saviour was near fifty years old, when he was put to death; from whence it would follow, that he was born several years before the death of Herod the great; Iren. lib. ii. chap. 39. The author of the Harmony, ascribed to Tatian, represents his continuance in Egypt, to have been seven years. See Lard. vol. ii. p. 423.

† From this we may see, the origin and the justice of a

ing aware of this evil, has, with a precision unexampled, dated the period, in which the first information of him was communicated to John, in the wilderness: "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea; Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis; and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene; Annas and Caiaphas being high-priests\*, the word of

charge, alleged by Celsus against the christians. Μετα ταυτα τινος των πιστευοντων, φησιν, ως εκ μεθης ἠκοντας, εις το εφεσανω αυτοις, μεταχαραττειν, εκ της πρωτης γραφης, το ευαγγελιον τριχην, και τετραχην, και πολλαχην\* και μεταπλαττειν, ἵνα εχοιεν προς τους ελεγχους αρνησθαι. That is, *After these things, he says, that some of the faithful, as if they were drunk, permitted themselves to change the gospel from its original form, and mould it anew, three, four, and even oftentimes, that they might evade, when detected.* Origen understood Celsus as referring to the followers of Marcion and Valentinus. And, he adds, that he knew not of any other, who altered the gospel. But this assertion is false; for he did know that his own party were guilty of the same infamous crime. See p. 77. This passage of Celsus, shews that he possessed much more information, respecting the story of the miraculous conception than christians of modern days do; and that it was not, as is generally supposed, a mere rhetorical flourish, when he elsewhere declares, that he had much more to say than he chose to do. What he was not willing to make manifest, I shall take the liberty to do for him, in the course of this enquiry: And we shall see, that he did a very essential service to the cause he espoused, by suppressing the facts in his possession.

\* The evangelist here uniting Caiaphas and Annas, as if

God came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness." By thus judiciously

they were high-priests at the same time, while it is well known, that there was only one the same year, is a matter, which has occasioned some difficulty to the critics. Many solutions of it are attempted to be given by them; but none, I think, is better than that of Lardner. See vol. i. p. 383. That learned man has shewn, on the authority of Josephus, that a person might retain the title of high-priest, after he had actually been in office! But the object, which the sacred writer had in extending it to Annas, the term of whose priesthood was of course expired, as well as to Caiaphas, has hitherto been a secret. As the supporters of the divine birth of Jesus, referred it to different periods, and, in consequence, to different priesthoods so as, by that means, to render, with some, the ministry of Jesus, and that of his forerunner, uncertain, Luke ascertains it by making it commensurate with two successive priesthoods. From whence it follows, that the whole extent of his public preaching did not much exceed the length of one year; or, in other words, the first appearance of John, and the death of Jesus, were comprised within the limits of two years. And I cannot help here quoting some just remarks of Dr. Priestley: "The conduct of Luke," says he, "upon this occasion, affords almost a demonstration, that the year of Christ's death immediately followed that of his baptism; Luke has given us the date of John the baptist's beginning to preach with a most remarkable precision. There is perhaps no example of any other event, so circumstantially and emphatically dated, in the whole compass of history. Now, can it be supposed, that the same writer would leave an event of infinitely more consequence, namely, that of the death of Christ, with which his history terminates, without any date at all? But this is the case, if he has left no trace, by which the one may be certainly inferred from the other, in consequence of having confounded the events of several years, in such a manner, that no person can pretend to distinguish or number them. Whereas the conduct of this writer, is perfectly reconcileable with itself, upon the supposition, that, in his idea, the year of the death of

connecting the first appearance of Jesus with the names of those, who ruled in the several provinces, every subject, throughout the Roman empire, was enabled to ascertain the true date of it, and all dispute about it was, at once, decided. We shall presently see, that Josephus was led, by the same consideration, to notify the time in which our divine Master lived.

In chapter four we thus read, “ And 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 for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah, and when he had opened the book, he found the place, where it was written, 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,

Christ, immediately followed that of the preaching of John, no other year intervening between them. For then the date of the one, would be abundantly sufficient for the date of the other: And it was certainly more natural to give the date at the beginning than at the end of the work.” *Observations to his Greek Harmony*, p. 45.

to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 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. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. 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? And he said unto them, ye will surely say unto me this proverb, "Physician heal thyself."

In this place we are told, that when our Lord read, and applied to himself, the words of the prophet, the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened upon him, and they were filled with wonder. Now the question is, whether their feelings were those of joy and approbation, or of scorn and aversion? From what follows it is evident, that they were of the latter kind. "And he said, Verily, I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. —And all they, in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of



the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill, that they might cast him down headlong." The 22d verse, then, should be rendered thus, "And all bare him witness, and they felt indignant surprise at the words, though gracious, which proceeded from his mouth." But what witness did they bear to Jesus? The testimony, which they gave, our evangelist has set down, *And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?* Here then, we are presented with a remarkable fact. Luke asserts, that his Master was really the son of Joseph, and not, as was said, miraculously conceived; and he alleges in support of this, the testimony of the very people, who had the best opportunity to know the truth\*.

Farther, according to this doctrine, as

\* The first Gnostics maintained that Jesus was born only *in appearance*; that is, he had neither father nor mother. Luke in this passage shows, on the authority of his own townsmen, that he had both. And the opposition, which the historian here makes to the deceivers, is the cause of their excluding the above paragraph from his gospel. See Lardner, vol. ix. p. 396. We have already demonstrated that the temptation of Jesus implies his simple humanity. Accordingly the Marcionites, who denied his humanity, rejected consistently enough the history of his temptation. This appears from a passage in Epiphanius, Hær. 42. 342.

taught by the first inventors of it, our Lord could not have been brought up at Nazareth; since they represented him to have been born several years before the death of Herod, and to have staid several years also in Egypt. In opposition to this, the sacred penman says, “ And he came to Nazareth, *where he had been brought up.*”

It is worthy of notice, that the object of our Lord, in holding himself up, on this occasion, to his countrymen as the Messiah, contrary to his usual manner, was to call forth their testimony to him, as the son of Joseph, and a native of Nazareth. As this was the first time he came to that town, since he had received his commission, it was natural for him to have, in his mind, a story, which referred his birth to the city of Bethlehem, and consequently to furnish his future historian with a fact, which might refute it.

From the Gospel of the Infancy we have seen, that after Christ was deified, his mother became an object of high veneration. She is there made to say of herself, that none among the daughters of Eve was ever like her. Accordingly the title of *Divine*

was immediately given her ; churches also were dedicated to her honour : And all this, because she was supposed to be the mother of the God Jesus. These were circumstances, which divine inspiration enabled him to foresee ; and accordingly, he took a fine opportunity to furnish the writer of his life with a fact, which might exhibit to all future ages, the honour thus conferred on his mother, as an unwarrantable superstition. “ And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company, lift up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps, which thou hast sucked. But he said, yea, rather blessed are they, that hear the word of God, and keep it ;” Chap. xi. 27, 28. The evident purport of which is this, “ My mother has no claims to any peculiar regard, merely for having given birth to me. She is to be deemed blessed and honourable only, if she receive my doctrine, and act conformably to it. Any other woman, equally virtuous, is deserving of the same praise, and of being held in the same veneration. The conduct, therefore, of those ill-judging men, who shall hereafter extol her, beyond all praise,

as my mother, is contrary both to reason and to my gospel\*.”

“ The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: For Herod will kill thee. And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox †, Behold! I cast out

\* Those who would see to what height the veneration for the mother of the man Christ Jesus was carried, may consult a pænegyric, bestowed upon her, by *Epiphanius*. In one place he tells us, that she is superior to all things, God alone excepted; that she was more beautiful than the cherubian, seraphim, and all the heavenly hosts. The names and titles, by which he distinguishes her, are various and extravagant in the extreme, calling her, ουρανου και γης μυστηριον, μεγαλωνυμος, απειρογαμος, ριζα μακαρια, νοερα Βαλλασσα, αγνη περιετρα, ουρανος νυμφη, παναγια παρθενος, Θεοτοκος, and a great number more of such like absurd appellations. It is from this, and other authors of this age, that the church of Rome borrowed the following titles, which it applied to her, by way of invocation, *O Sacred Mother of God, Daughter of the Eternal Father, Mother of the Eternal Son, Spouse of the Eternal Spirit, Tabernacle of the Glorious Trinity, Mother of the King of Heaven, Mother of our Creator, Vessel of Singular Devotion, Mystical Rose, Gate of Heaven, &c. &c.*

† It cannot be doubted, but that our Lord, in this place, uses the term *fox*, as expressive of the character of Herod; since that vermin was universally considered, in those times, as, indeed, it is now, as the proper symbol of cunning, artifice, duplicity, and fraud. See, if you please, *Epiphanius*, vol. ii. 214. and the notes; and also *Clement Alexan.* p. 557. And this very circumstance proves not only that these qualities were the prominent characteristics of that prince, but that he was actuated by them on the present occasion.

devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless, I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem ;" chap. xiii. 31—34.

In the verses preceding these, our Lord points out, as we have seen, those deceivers, who, after his resurrection, should delude the multitude from the truth of his gospel. The falsehood, which they maintained, that *his parents* fled into Egypt, to avoid the anger of the former Herod, Luke seems to have here before him. Such a flight he, doubtless, considered as very disgraceful, and utterly inconsistent with the character of Jesus. He, therefore, states the above fact, to convince his readers, that he had too much magnanimity to shun Herod, even when he menaced his life.

The jealousy, which prompted this cunning prince to murder the Baptist, induced him to wish the death of our Saviour. In order to accomplish his aim, he had, in this, as in the other case, recourse to artifice. The great feast, at which he suffered,

seemed now to be at hand. Herod intended to be at the time in Jerusalem. He naturally supposed that then would be the proper season for dispatching him, some way or other; and, perhaps, a plan of this kind was contrived between him and his courtiers\*.

\* Herod, we are told by this evangelist, went up to the feast, and, after Jesus was apprehended, interested himself in putting him to death: And it appears to me very probable, that their common jealousy of John and Jesus was the circumstance, which chiefly effected his reconciliation with Pilate. In this opinion I am sanctioned by Origen, who, having occasion to observe on Mat. xvi. 1. that the Pharisees and Sadducees overlooked their mutual animosities in their common enmity towards our Lord, adds, that Herod and Pilate became friends, as Luke relates, in order that they might conspire the more effectually against Jesus; See his Com. vol. i. 264. This supposition, appears to me, to be proved beyond doubt, by the following words, of the same historian: "For, of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together;" Acts iv. 27. This assertion goes, in my opinion, to the full extent of the supposition, that the object of Herod and Pilate, in meeting on this occasion, was the destruction of our Lord.

Hegesippus, in a fragment preserved by Eusebius, has also an allusion to the dread and jealousy, which induced Herod to effect the death of Christ, as well as that of his forerunner:—"At that time, there were yet remaining of the kindred of Christ, the grandsons of Jude, who was called his brother, according to the flesh. Those, some accused, as being of the race of David; and Evocatus brought them before Domitianus Cæsar: For he too, was afraid of the coming of Christ, as well as Herod." I adopt the version of Lardner; vol. ii. p. 142. as it furnishes me with an opportunity to correct his mistake

But how was he to be got there? One step towards attaining this object, was to scare

in thinking, that the writer refers to the second chapter of Matthew. Hegesippus, as himself observes, was an Ebionite, and therefore used a gospel, which began with the third. He could not, then, allude to a story, which was not deemed authentic by him, nor contained in what he supposed to be the genuine gospel of Matthew. And yet, it is remarkable, the Doctor, contrary to his usual good sense, and caution, persists in the above inference. I cannot help noticing, in this place, an incident, which places the duplicity and fraud of Herod in a striking point of light. The fame of our Saviour's miracles, of course, excited the expectation, that he was the promised Messiah. Now, in order to repel the inference, thus drawn, no doubt, by many, he had recourse to a curious hypothesis. In conformity to the doctrine then generally prevalent, in Judea, that the human soul passes through a variety of corporeal forms, he said, that he was John risen from the dead, and then adds, *On this account mighty works are wrought by him; Mat. xv. 1.* As if he had said, "This Jesus exhibits such signs, not because he is commissioned by God to be the Messiah, but because the powerful Spirit, which animated John, is got into him." When others, however, adopted the same superstitious notion, and consequently appeared to him, not to be infected with the dangerous idea, that Jesus was in reality the expected king, he found himself at liberty to discard the subterfuge of superstition, and to express the rational dictate of his understanding. See Luke ix. 7—10.

I cannot conclude this note, without remarking, that the interview, which Christ had with Herod, seems to have furnished the advocates of his miraculous birth and divinity, with an occasion for saying, that Jesus bore testimony to the truth of those doctrines in the presence of that prince; which, being probably recorded in some of their spurious writings, supplied Celsus with the following materials for calumny: Χαλδαιους, φησιν, ὑπο του Ιησου λελεχθαι κληθεντας επι τη γενεσι αυτου εληλυθεναι

him from that country : Accordingly, agents were sent to him, under the mask of

προσκυνησαντας αυτον ετι νηπιον 'ως Θεου' και Ηρωδη τῷ τετραρχῳ  
 τουτο δεδηλωκεναι· τον δ' (Ηρωδη) περιψαντα αποκτειναι τους εν τῷ  
 αυτῷ χρόνῳ γεγεννημενους, οισμενον και τουτον ανελεν συν αυτοις, μη  
 πως τον αυταρχη εκβιωσας χρονον, βασιλευση· Orig. p. 45. That  
 is, He (Celsus) says, it was told by Jesus, that Chaldean Magi  
 were excited, at his birth, to come and worship him, as it were,  
 an infant God (and that he declared this to Herod the tetrarch) ;  
 and that Herod sent and slew those, who, at the time, were born,  
 thinking to slay him in the number ; lest, when grown to matu-  
 rity, he should become a king. Here Celsus asserts, that our  
 Lord declared to Herod the tetrarch, that he was a God, that some  
 Magi came from Chaldea to worship him at his birth, and that Herod  
 (meaning Herod the great) was alarmed, and slew all the children at  
 Bethlehem, in hopes of involving him in the slaughter. It is here  
 observable, that Celsus does not say that the Magi came to Jerusalem,  
 in consequence of seeing his star in the East. And this leads one to  
 discover from whence he had borrowed his information : The Gospel  
 of the Infancy, which was generally in use among these christians,  
 whom Celsus had in view, is silent, respecting the star ; and asserts,  
 that the Magi were led thither by the prophecy of Zoroaster, though  
 the Latin translator, being conscious of this defect, seems to me, to  
 have supplied it, in this manner, when speaking of their return, "And  
 there appeared to them an angel, in the form of that star, which had  
 before been their guide, in their journey, the light of which they  
 followed, until they returned into their own country ;" chap. vii. It  
 is rather remarkable, that a star should have conducted them home,  
 when not a syllable is said, in the previous history, of its having  
 brought them to Jerusalem : and this is to me a sufficient proof,  
 that the clause is the addition of Jerome himself. It is probable,  
 then, that Celsus alludes not, as is supposed, to the introductory  
 chapters, in the genuine gospel of Matthew, but in reality, to the  
 gospel, whence those chapters, as is above shewn, have been copied ;  
 namely, the Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus. Of the



friendship, informing him, that his life was in imminent danger, if he continued there any longer. Our Lord understood their design, and hence addressed them, in these remarkable words :—“ Go, tell this fox, Behold ! I cast out demons, and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and, on the third day, I end my course. But I must go on to-day, and to-morrow, and on the third day, die ; for it cannot be, that a teacher perish out of Jerusalem,” As if he had said, “ There are but three days to the feast, the two first of which, I shall employ in doing such things as evince the divinity of my mission : on the third, I shall terminate my ministry at Jerusalem. There he shall have the opportunity of seeing me, and accomplishing my destruction. I am acquainted, indeed, with his crafty views, and

spuriousness of that gospel, Celsus was well aware ; but so debased were this, and other enemies of the christian faith, that they hesitated not to avail themselves of any expedient, however contrary to truth, honour, and virtue, if it served their purpose, to check the progress of the gospel. This is a horrid feature in their character, which, I pledge myself to substantiate, even from their own writings ; and it is a feature, that will reflect as much honour on christianity and its founders, as disgrace and infamy on its adversaries. It is necessary here to observe, finally, that Dr. Lardner, in animadverting on the above passage from Origen, has fallen into an egregious error, respecting it ; and from that error, has alleged a mistake, for which there is no foundation, against Celsus himself. See vol. viii. p. 21.

am sensible of what will be the event; nevertheless, as my fate is decreed by the wisdom of heaven, I must go there, and suffer, The inhabitants of that city, and not Herod, are to have the guilt of putting me to death. This will complete the measure of their iniquities."

We proceed, in the next place, to consider, what the beloved disciple, in his gospel, has said in reference to the impostors and their tenets. The beginning of it is a subject, which has much exercised the ingenuity, and divided the opinion of learned men, from the most early period. Nor is the dispute about its meaning, yet decided; though it has long since been brought before the tribunal of enlightened criticism. I trust, however, that the facts already developed, will enable every intelligent reader, to form a conclusive judgment, as to its true signification; and to exclude all debate, for ever, respecting the object of the evangelist in the beginning of his gospel.

The first thing necessary to enquiry is, the real sense of the much disputed term *Logos*. This signifies when applied to the Supreme Being, not *reason* or *intelligence*,

simply considered, but combined with *power* and *goodness*, as displayed in the formation, and in the preservation of the universe. It is a word, therefore, which, in its primary sense, denotes the attributes of God, exerted in the government of the *natural* and *moral* world. Accordingly, early christian writers give the Logos very different names, agreeably to the views, in which they were desirous to place it; calling it the *power of God*, the *wisdom of God*, the *goodness of God*, the *righteousness of God*, and the like. Conformable to this, is the description, which *Clement of Alexandria* exhibits of it: “The Logos of the universal Father is wisdom and goodness, most conspicuously displayed from himself. It is power irresistible, and truly divine; nor is his almighty will incomprehensible, even to those, who do not acknowledge him\*.” Origen, in his book

\* Ὁ γὰρ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων Λόγος, ἐνχ' ἑαυτοῦ ὁ προφορικός, σοφία δὲ καὶ χρηστότης φανερωτάτη τοῦ θεοῦ, δύναμις τε αὐτοῦ παγκρατής καὶ πρὸς ὅντι θεῶν· οὐδὲ τοῖς μὴ ὁμολογοῦσιν ἀκταίωτος, θελημα πανταρχατορικόν, p. 547. In another place, the same author thus speaks of the Logos, under the denomination of the Son of God: “The Son is wisdom, and knowledge, and truth, and whatever else is allied to this. All the powers of the Spirit, collected into one subject, constitute this same thing, namely, the Son. It is not simply one, as an unit, nor many, as parts, but one composed of all. Hence he is all things.” See p. 537.

against Celsus, calls the Logos, *reason itself, truth itself, wisdom itself, righteousness itself*; See in particular p. 309.

But the term Logos is applied to express not only those natural and moral excellencies, which are reflected to the eye of reason, from the structure of the things that are seen, but also, *That all perfect intellectual system existing, as the combined effect of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, in the divine mind, and of which the external world is but an imperfect imitation.* In order to explain and justify my meaning, I shall translate one paragraph from Origen, and another from Philo. The former of these, in his Commentaries on John, p. 19, thus writes, “The Logos existed, in the first principle, that all things might be made agreeably to wisdom, and those ideal models, comprehended by him. For, I am of opinion, that as a house is built, or a ship fabricated, according to those archetypes, which the artist has in his mind, so all things are framed, in conformity to those forms, which the Deity pre-ordained as the originals of those to be created.” The latter has a passage to this effect, in his *Treatise De Mundi Opificio*:

“The Deity, as such, foreseeing, that nothing fair could be done without a fair pattern, and that no sensible object would be perfect, unless wrought after some archetypal and ideal form, on having determined to create this visible world, preconcerted an intellectual one, in order, that using this immaterial, and diviner world, he might execute that, which is material as a younger image taken from an elder, comprehending in it the several sensible kinds, contained in the other\*. After illustrating this assertion with great richness of thought and language, in the case of an architect, he presently concludes, with saying, that the being, in whom this perfect ideal system resided, was *the divine Logos*, who gave to external things the beautiful forms of symmetry and proportion, and that it might be deemed no other than the Logos himself †. Now as this intellec-

\* Προλαβὼν ὁ Θεός, ἅτε Θεός, ὅτι μίμημα καλὸν οὐκ ἂν ποτε γένοιτο καλοῦ διχα παραδειγματος, οὐδὲ τι τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀνυπαίτιον, ὃ μὴ πρὸς ἀρχετύπον καὶ νοητὴν ἰδεῶν ἀπεικονισθῆ, βουλευθεὶς τὸν ὄρατον τοῦτον κόσμον δημιουργῆσαι, πρὸς ἐτύπου τὸν νοητόν, ἵνα χρωμένους τῷ ἀσώματι καὶ θεοειδέσῃ παραδειγματι τὸν σωματικόν τοῦτον ἀπεργασθῆι, πρὸς βυτεροῦ νεώτερον ἀπεικονισμα, τοιαῦτα περιέξοντα αἰσθητὰ γενῆ, ὅσα περ ἐν ἐκείνῳ νοητῷ. Vol. i. p. 4.

† Καθαπερ οὖν ἦ ἐν τῷ ἀρχιτεκτονικῷ προδικατυπωθεῖσα πολὺς

tual system, of which the visible creation is a representation, received the title of Logos; it was natural, in a philosophic disciple of Moses, of whom he had learnt the doctrine, to apply it to that *moral dispensation*\*, delivered on mount Sinai, which was designed to raise the rational part of nature to a conformity with the divine model, and to extend the same appellation, when become a convert, to the religion of Jesus, which he necessarily considered as only the development and perfection of the Mosaic Institutions. And this, upon enquiry, we shall find to have been fact. My assertion, however, is not to be admitted, without proof. Permit me, then, to show, by a variety of examples, that the apostolic writers extended the term Logos, expressive of the works of God, as existing in full per-

την χάραν εκτος ουκ ειχεν, αλλα ενεσφραγισο τη του τεχνητου ψυχης, τον αυτον τροπον ουδε ο εκ των ιδεων κοσμος; αλλον ουκ αν εχοι τοπον, η τον θειον λογον τον ταυτα διακοσμησαντα, p. 4.—Δηλοι δε οτι η αρχετυπος σφραγισ; εν φαιμεν ειμαι κοσμον ιστητον, αυτος αν ειη το αρχετυπον παραδειγμα, ιδεα των ιδεων, ο θεου λογος, p. 5.

\* Philo considers the term Logos as synonymous with the law of Moses: and when he speaks of him as a divine messenger, he often calls him by no other name than *θεος λογος*, or *θειος λογος*, or *λογος θεου*. This is particularly the case, when he allegorises the law of Moses.

fection, in his mind, to *the christian system*, it being the appointed instrument of exalting mankind from the corruptions, into which they are sunk, by sin and bad passions, into a resemblance of their high original; and that, when thus extended, they still preserved its former *personification*.

In John, our Lord speaks thus, “If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him, the word (Logos) that I have spoken, the same (Logos) shall judge him in the last day;” chap. xii. 47—49. The term Logos, or word, as our translators render it, means here, beyond dispute, the gospel, or the message, which Jesus communicated from God to the human race. But it is represented, in this place, not merely as a message, but as a *messenger*, and invested not only with the qualities of a man, but with the office and dignity of a judge.

A similar use, and personification of the christian doctrine, occur in the Epistle

to the Hebrews; chap. iv. 12, 13. "The Logos of God is alive and active, and piercing beyond any two-edged sword, and penetrating, so as to separate between life and death, between joints and marrow, and is a judge of the meditations and thoughts of the heart; and there is no creature concealed from him, but all things are bare, and laid open before the eyes of him, with whom we have to do." The meaning of Logos, in this passage, is evidently the same, as in the former; and it exhibits a similar kind of prosopopœia. In both instances, the gospel is described under the figure of him, who shall judge the world and pass upon the different characters of men, a final decision \*. The latter personification, is probably taken from the former.

The apostle thus expresses himself, *Acts x. 36.*

\* Though the term Logos here means the christian doctrine represented under the figure of a judge, yet, it cannot be doubted, but that it is thus employed by our Lord, and his apostle, in reference to its original use, in expressing the supreme wisdom, or intelligence. In this sense, it is applied and personified by Philo, in the following passage: Ὁ Θεὸς Λόγος οὐκ ἔχει ὄρατον, ἔστι ὡς πάντα ἐφόρειν εἶναι ἴκανος, p. 92. *The divine Logos, has that all pervading sight, which is able to behold every object.*



“The Logos, whom God hath sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace, through Jesus Christ this (Logos) is the Lord of all.” Which verse, it is clear, asserts the conviction of the apostle, that the gospel was not to be confined, as he previously supposed, to the Jewish nation, but to be extended to the gentiles, whose assent it was to command, by the evidence of its divine authority, and whose lives it was to regulate, by its precepts and motives. This is the meaning of the word, in the above passage: Its personification is no less obvious; as it is described, under the idea of a man preaching peace, and of a sovereign holding dominion over all others\*.

\* The same observation holds good in this, as in the preceding instance. Logos, in its primary import, signifies those attributes of God, which created, which govern, and preserve the universe. It expresses, therefore, the properties of a being, who, in the strictest sense, is the *Lord of all*. Philo often uses it, to denote the divine attributes; and, what is remarkable, he always uses it in a personified sense. Thus, he says, that the Logos was the illustrious instrument, by which the Supreme Being made the heavens and the earth. Τῷ περιφανεστάτῳ καὶ τελευταίῳ ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ ἀμφοτέρω ἐποίησεν, p. 44. In another place, he says of him, Διὸς ὅντιν ἅπασαν κόσμον ἐδημιουργεῖτο. In page 114, he again calls him, παρθαλιάρχος καὶ κυβερνήτης τοῦ παντός θεός λόγος, and elsewhere, he gives him the emphatic title of

The spread of christianity in the world, is delineated, in these strong terms, by the apostle Paul, 2 Thess. iii. 1. "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Logos of the Lord may run and be glorified." His words convey an allusion to a man, running in the public games, who, if successful, was glorified or signalled by very distinguished honours. The glory, obtained by success in them, was the theme of much encomium, and poetic description, among heathen writers.

In 2Tim. ii. 9, 10. the same author uses this remarkable language: "Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead, in whom I am ill treated, even with chains; but the Logos of God, is not chained;" That is, "Though I am arrested and confined by the hand of violence, the doctrine, revealed by Jesus Christ, cannot be arrested nor confined. It will spread, in spite of human malice, and

*ὑπαρχος μεγάλου βασιλεως*, p. 195. As the Logos, then is, under God, the Creator and preserver of the world, he may properly enough, be said to be the *Lord of all*. It may not be foreign to remark, in this place, that those among the Jews, who favoured the Gnostic system, and who considered the Christ, as a supernatural Being, which descended on Jesus, at his baptism, described him, in a language conformable to that of Peter, as being *κυριος παντων*. See Epiphani. p. 126, 140.

surmount, in the end, every impediment, thrown in its way, by the wickedness of the world.—It will finally run and be glorified.”

A similar prosopopœia is observable, in Acts xx. 32. “And now I recommend, you, brethren, to God and the Logos of his grace, who is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among the saints.” The members of this sentence, correspond to each other, by inversion: Thus, “I recommend you to the Logos, who is able to build you up, and to God, who will give you an inheritance among the saints.” Logos, in this, as in the other passages, denotes the doctrine of Christ, which, by its divine influence, improves and edifies the heart of its sincere professor. The personification of it here is bold and striking; animation and activity being ascribed to it, as well as to God himself.

Another very striking instance, of this kind, occurs in the Epistle of *James*, chap. i. 14. “But every one is tempted of his own lust, being drawn and seduced thereby. Lust, then, conceiveth and begetteth sin; and sin, having grown to maturity, bringeth

forth death. Be not mistaken, beloved brethren, every good gift, every perfect endowment is from above, descending from the Father of light, with whom there is no change, nor the shadow of a change. His will has brought us forth by the Logos of truth, so as to be the first-fruits among his own creatures.

In the first part of this beautiful paragraph, sin and death are evidently invested with the passions of a living being: lust gives birth to sin, and sin becomes the parent of death. The writer carries on the same animated representation to the last clause of the sentence, and describes the Deity, as conceiving by the instrumentality of his Logos, and bringing forth children, which, as being rational and virtuous, were peculiarly his own. The Almighty and his Logos, however, beget their common offspring, for reasons different from those, which actuated lust and sin. Base passions influenced the latter, whereas *counsel* or *decree*, induced the former to conceive. As if he had written, Πατρὴς τῶν Φωτῶν βουλευθεὶς, καὶ οὐχ ἔπο ἐπιθυμίας δειλαζόμενος, ἀπεκύησεν ἡμῶν λόγῳ ἀληθείας.

If you critically examine the following

passages, you will perceive, in them, a similar, though not equally vivid personification of Logos as expressive of the gospel:—"Paul and Barnabas, with greater boldness, said, it is necessary that the Logos of God, should be first spoken of among you: but you *push him off*, ἀπωθείσθε"—"The gentiles attending rejoiced, and glorified the Logos of the Lord." "The Logos of the Lord was carried through all the country;" Acts xiii. 46, 49. So also is it spoken of in Chap. xiv. 12. "And they called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Hermes, because he was the leader, or conductor, (ὁ ἡγουμενος) of the Logos." And likewise verse third, "The apostles were emboldened in the Lord, who bore witness to his gracious Logos, giving signs and wonders to be done by their hands. This representation, be it observed, is borrowed from the forms used in the administration of justice. The Logos is brought to his trial, and his evidence, as a divine commissioner, examined; and to enforce the testimony of his attendants, the Sovereign of nature interferes in his behalf, and demonstrates the truth of his delegation, by signs and wonders.

The evangelist Mark, at the close of his gospel, places before us, a similar view of the matter: "And they went, and every where proclaimed the Logos, the Lord co-operating with them, and confirming him, by means of signs following." That is, the apostles went about to announce the Logos, with miracles, like so many witnesses, attending in their train. *βεβαιουντες* is a legal term, and signifies to confirm by a solemn evidence.

These, and other examples, that might be adduced, are, I trust, sufficient to prove the truth of my assertion; namely, that the apostolic writers extended the term Logos, expressive of the works of God, existing in full perfection in his mind, to the christian system, as being the grand instrument of exalting mankind from the corruptions, into which they are sunk, by sin and bad passions, into a resemblance of their divine model. But this is not all: One step more remains to be taken, which leads to the removal of much obscurity and uncertainty, hanging over many parts of the New Testament.

*The word Logos, thus appropriated to the*

*gospel, is occasionally applied, by the sacred writers, to its illustrious founder, when they speak of him as a divine Messenger, and not as a HUMAN BEING.* This application of it to our Lord, as being no more than calling a person by his *office* or *occupation*, is very natural, and what often occurs in civil life. But in the case of Jesus, it was the more so, in consequence of his office being habitually described, under the character of a person. For when the apostles had once personified his commission, it was scarcely possible for them to preserve it, in their imagination, distinct from the commissioner himself, The imaginary and the real being they insensibly blended together; and attached, by the mere impulse of association, to the latter, the appellation, by which they were in the habit of denominating the former. But we are assured, from their own writings, that whenever they call our Lord, by the title of Logos, their object was, not to assert any thing concerning his *personal nature*, but merely to exalt him, as the messenger of heaven. It is necessary, to confirm the justice of this representation, by a few examples: Luke, in his introduction, uses these words, “It seemed good to me also to write, following all things, in order, from

above, as they have delivered them unto me, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and attendants of the Logos." Here the Logos is made an object of sight, surrounded by ministering servants. The evangelist, therefore, transferred the term, which, taken in its customary acceptation, denoted the christian doctrine, to Christ himself, of whom he is here evidently speaking. But his intention to begin his gospel *from above*, that is, from the period at which he was announced, by a voice from heaven, as the Son of God, leads us to conclude, that he applies to his Master, the name of Logos, only in that character. And, indeed, that his reader might have no room for supposing that he spoke of him, in his personal capacity, he observes, that Jesus *himself* was about thirty years of age,

The apostle Paul, on one occasion, thus addresses the Jews; Acts xiii. 26—29, "Men, my brethren, descendants of the race of Abraham, and these, among you (of any other race) who fear God, to you the Logos of this salvation is sent. For this same Logos, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and their rulers, have, through ignorance, condemned; having, by that means, fulfilled



the warnings of the prophets, which every sabbath are read among you." In this admirable speech, you see, first, that Paul calls, by the title of Logos, that life and immortality, brought to light in the gospel; and secondly, that he immediately applies the very same title to the person of Christ, who fell a victim to the ignorance and cruelty of his countrymen.

The address of our author, on this occasion, is greatly to be admired. In order to exhibit, in the strongest light, the guilt of those, who had crucified their Messiah, he keeps out of sight the personal name of Jesus, with which, prejudice had connected the bitterest odium, and held him up, under the high appellation of his office. By this means, he fixed the attention of his hearers, not on the person of Jesus, as a native of Nazareth, but on his character, as the messenger of Jehovah; having judiciously concealed the man, under the splendor of his heavenly mission, and magnified the barbarity, committed on an innocent sufferer, into a crime committed against God himself.

In the epistle to Titus, chap. i. 3. the

apostle applies the same word to our Lord: "But God, in due times, hath manifested his Logos, through preaching, which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God, our Saviour." The apostle John evidently uses the term, for the same purpose, in the beginning of his epistle: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard; which we have seen with our eyes; which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Logos of life.—That, which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you." Here the writer refers to our blessed Saviour, as seen and heard, and felt by them, on his being announced as the Son of God, and more particularly, after his resurrection from the dead. As the apostle had evidently an eye to him, in this place, it is obvious, that the appropriate name of his gospel, is here extended to himself. Permit me to produce one example more, as it is an example very decisive: "And he was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood, and his name is called the *Logos of God*;" Rev. xix. 13. Now since the word Logos, which, in its original import, expresses the perfections of God, or that complete system, in the divine mind, which is the original model of the

world, and with which coalesces, in his view of it, the sensible moral world, when consummated by means of the christian doctrine, is applied to Christ; we may hence, explain those places in the New Testament, where he is spoken of in such lofty terms, as seem to imply, that he was a supernatural being. Thus, when he says of himself, that he is the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life*, that he is the *bread*, which cometh down from heaven; that he was *glorified with the Father, before the world was*; that he was to return where he *was before*; John xvii. 4. vii. 6. 2. Or, when Paul says of him, that the rock, which Moses struck, *was Christ*, and that in him dwelt the fulness of the divinity bodily; 1 Cor. x. 4. Col. ii. 9.— All these, and similar expressions, are to be taken as synonymous with the idea of him, which is conveyed by the term Logos, and which denotes the Saviour in his *official capacity*, in contradistinction to his personal nature.

Farther, in as much as our Lord is sometimes called by the lofty name of Logos, we are hence enabled to trace the origin of the titles Μονογενής, *only-begotten*, Πρωτοτοκος, *first-born*, which are afterwards given him, in the New

Testament, and in the writings of the fathers: Since these are expressive of the same thing with it, namely, of that all-perfect system in the divine contemplation, from which the actual system of things proceeded, and to which it approximates by continued progression, as the grand object of its consummation. The apostles, however, though they appear to have a view to the original import of those titles, yet extend them to Jesus Christ, as being the first-born from the dead, as being the only one, who, as yet, enjoys that life, of which God alone, without the instrumentality of others, is the giver. See Col. i. 16, 18, John iv. 9.

The reason, moreover, may hence be ascertained, why our Lord is entitled the *Son of God*, this being synonymous with *Logos*; and both being alike applied by those, who comprehended the internal signification, of the law of Moses, to express the *intellectual world*. Hear the words of Philo, whose eyes were illumined by the light, which was reflected to Egypt from the college of fishermen, in Galilee: “ This sensible world, is the *younger son* of God, the elder of which he calls the model, that being the

intellectual son \*". To this son, our author gives the name of Logos, as appears from the following passage : " Earth, water, air, fire, and all things contained in them, whether animate or inanimate, mortal or immortal—these together with the sun, moon, and other stars, which revolve in harmonious courses, in their celestial orbits, are led by their sovereign God, as a flock, by their shepherd, according to an invariable law; he, having placed over them, *his Logos*, his first-born Son, who, like the viceroy of a great king, will superintend the care of this sacred flock †. That by this Logos,

\* Ὁ μὲν γὰρ κόσμος ὕψους ἑσπερος υἱὸς θεοῦ, ἀπὲ ἀισθητῶν ὄντων γὰρ πρεσβυτερόν τουτου ἰδεῖν εἶπε, νοητὸς δὲ ἐκεῖνος, πρεσβειῶν δὲ ἐξίωσας, παρ' ἑαυτῶν καταμενεῖν διενεόθει, p. 298.

† Καθ' ὅτι γὰρ τινὰ ποιμνὴν, γῆν καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ ἀέροι καὶ πυρῶν, καὶ ἴσα ἐν τούτοις φυτὰ τε αὐ καὶ ζῶα, τὰ μὲν θνητὰ τὰ δὲ θεία, ἐπὶ δὲ οὐρανοῦ φύσιν, καὶ ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης περιόδους, καὶ τῶν ἀλλῶν ἀστέρων τροπῶν τε αὐ καὶ χορείας ἐναρμονίους, ὡς ποιμνὴν καὶ βασιλεὺς ὁ θεὸς ἀγεί, κατὰ δίκην καὶ νόμον πρὸς ἡσασμένους τὸν ὄρθον αὐτοῦ λόγον πρῶτογονοῦν υἱόν, ὅς τιν ἐπιμελείαν τῆς ἱεράς ταύτης ἀγγελίας, ὅα τις μεγάλου βασιλεὺς ὑπαρχὸς διαδεξέται. Observe here, that the author does not speak of this sacred flock as what *is*, and *has* from the beginning been committed to the Logos, by the Sovereign of nature, but as what *will* be committed to him. Now this representation conforms precisely to the sentiments of some of the Jewish christians, who thought, that Jesus Christ was, under God, to be invested with the sole government of the future age. Thus Epiphanius, speaking of the Ebionites : Ἄλλοι δ' ἐν

or Son, our author means, our Lord Jesus Christ, is a fact, which cannot be doubted by those, who properly understand his works. But this I shall not seek at present to prove. One passage, however, which now occurs to me, it would be injurious to pass over unnoticed. "It becomes him," says he, "who is devoted to the Father of the world, to employ, as his intercessor, his own Son, who is most perfect in virtue, in order, that he might obtain the forgiveness of his sins, and the supply of every good\*.

αυτοις λεγουσιν ανωθεν μεν οντα, προ παντων πνευμα οντα, και υπερ Αγγελου οντα, παντων δε κυριευοντα, και Χριστον λεγεσθαι, τον εκεισε δε αιωνα κεκληρωσθαι. Hier. 30. chap. 8.

\* Ανάγκαιον γαρ ην του 'εξομνον τω του κοσμου πατρι, παρεκλητω χρησθαι τελειωτατω την αρετην υιω, προς τε σμνησιων αμαρτηματων και χορηγιαν αφθονωτατων αγαθων, p. 637.

Nothing appears to me more certain than that the Son of God, here spoken of, means our Lord Jesus Christ. For who else can answer to such a description, as we see in this place given of him? He is said to be the Son of the universal Father; to be perfect in virtue; to be the Comforter, by whose meditation we may obtain the pardon of our sins, and the richest gifts. Could the author connect such ideas as these with the word, if, as is supposed, he really meant *the world*? What led learned men to this absurd acceptance of Philo's meaning, is their inattention to the circumstance, that he, and the apostles, applied to our divine Lord, as the grand instrument of carrying into completion, the moral government of God, the very term, which designated that government as existing in

Compare with this what is said in chapters fifth and sixth of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and you will perceive the sentiments of the Judaizing christian, equally conspicuous in both instances. Let us however proceed,

full perfection, in the divine mind. Hence we see the grounds, which Celsus had for the following declaration; Speaking of the christian advocates, he says, "They call him (Christ) the Son of God, because the ancients gave that title to the world, which was made by God;" p. 308. This assertion, I maintain, is founded in truth. But the reply, which Origen makes to it, is very unsatisfactory. No analogy can be pointed out, that would justify a person in ancient or in modern times, in applying to Jesus a term, which denotes the sensible system of things: But when we reflect, that the word *Λογος* was used to denote the intellectual all perfect system, of which the visible world is but an imperfect reality, we see no reason to object against this name being transferred to the chief instrument, under God, of raising the imperfect reality to the perfection of the original pattern. This appears to me a sufficient reason for calling him the *Logos*, though not the *Son of God*; but the ground of the latter appellation is to be sought, I conceive, in the declaration of God himself. See Psalm ii. Mat. iii. 17. xvii. 6. And as the terms *λογος* and *υιος*, hence became synonymous, being alike descriptive of our Lord, as the Saviour of the world, the latter began to be applied by a retrograde process to the original signification of the former: and thus *υιος θεου* as well as *λογος*, came to mean the ideal or intellectual world. In confirmation of this, it may be observed, that this appellation was not, I believe, given to the material world, by any philosopher before Philo, who was educated in the christian school; though Plato, indeed, his supposed master, frequently calls it by the names of *εχγονου* and *μονογενη*:

The same illustrious writer thus describes the divine Logos: "It is a super-celestial constellation, the fountain of the visible stars, which one might not improperly call the *universal light*, whence the sun, the moon, the planets, and stars derive their lustre\*." This description is the very same as is given of the Logos, in the New Testament. Thus, for instance, it is described in the following verse: The Logos is that true light, which lighteth every man coming into the world." Here the *true light* ἀληθινὸν φῶς means, what Philo calls the *universal archetypical, or intellectual light*, of which the brightness of sensible light, is but an image, and that a very imperfect one. It is called the *true light*, because it is the light which exists in the divine mind; and, therefore, the most conformable to truth and reality. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, uses the term ἀληθινός *true* in this very sense, as he applies it to express what he calls *heavenly things*,

\* Του δε αορατου και νοητου Θεου λογου, εικονα Θεου λεγει· και ταυτης εικονα το νοητον φως εκεινον, ἐ Θεου λογου γεγονεν εικων του διερχομενου αυτου, και εστιν υπερουρανιος αστης, πηγη των αισθητων αστερων ἢν ουκ απο σκοπου καλεσειεν αν τις παναυγειαν, αφ ἧς ο ἥλιος και ἡ σεληνη και ἑι αλλοι πλανητες τε και απλανεις αστρανται, καθ ὅσον εκαστη δυναμις, τα πρεποντα Φεγγη' p. 7.



or *models*, existing in the mind of God, of which the external ceremonies of the law, were visible and imperfect patterns. Nor should it be here forgotten, that ἀληθεῖα *truth*, denotes 'the same thing with ἰδέα, or the *original pattern*, after which the corresponding sensible object was framed \*. It is farther worthy of observation, that, in the above verse, our Evangelist does not mean by *man* and *world*, the *sensible*, but the *intellectual* man, and the *intellectual* world, or, which is the same thing, the *true* man, and the *true* world. And hence we are able to rescue the passage from that evident absurdity, under which it labours, according to the common acceptance of it. For it is very far from being true, that every man, that comes into this sensible world, is enlightened by the divine Logos. It may be paraphrased thus, "The Logos is that intellectual luminary, which irradiates the *inward* or *true* man, who becomes a member of that divine community, which shall be effected by the christian system, and which corresponds, in perfection, to the

\* Clement Alexandrinus referring to the Phædrus of Plato, p. 1221. thus writes, Περὶ ἀληθείας, ὡς ἰδέας λέγων ὁ Πλάτων δόξαται, Vol ii. 61.

world, as contemplated by the all-seeing eyes of God : Nor is this the only place, where the Logos is represented under the notion of that *original* light, which surpasses, in brightness, the light of the sun. Our Lord, when transfigured, assumed a raiment *white like snow, exceeding white, so that no fuller on earth can whiten*; Mark ix. 3. By this, it was his object, to convey a sublime idea of that lustre, which, in the character of the Logos, he possessed, and which, he was to reflect to the human race. It was the same lesson that he impressed on the mind of Saul, when he appeared to him, on his journey to Damascus, *with a splendor transcending the light of the sun*; Acts xxvi. 13. The following words of John; Rev. xxi. 23. are, in this respect, deserving of particular notice. Speaking of the *new Jerusalem*, which he saw coming down from heaven, he says, “And, the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: For the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Here it is insinuated, that those men, who shall constitute the new world, accomplished by the gospel, will be so far raised above sensible things, as not to need the light of the natural sun, and rendered

so pure and intellectual, as to enjoy that luminary alone, which is the parent of sensible light. By the Lamb, therefore, our author means the Logos, or the intellectual sun; and by the new Jerusalem, he signifies, that complete community, which corresponds to the ideal world, existing in the divine contemplation. I shall here only remark, that, we may hence see the reason, why the gospel is every where described in the New Testament, under the figure of light. It is represented by this pleasing image, because the very title is affixed to it, which, in its original acceptation, expresses light, and that light which is most pure and perfect.

Let us now collect the several senses, which the apostolic writers connected with the term Logos. It is made by them, we have seen, to signify, *the wisdom, power, and goodness of God*, as displayed in the creation and preservation of the world; —*the perfect ideal system of things*, of which the universe is but an imperfect image; —*the christian dispensation*, as being the great instrument, of raising mankind to a similitude with their divine Model; and

lastly, *the founder of christianity himself*, when spoken of, as *the Messenger of heaven*, and not in respect to his *personal nature*. All these significations have an obvious affinity to each other ; and the word may convey either, or all of them, as it might suit the purpose of the writer. With this latitude, as appears to me, it is employed by the evangelist John, in the introduction to his gospel. This we now proceed to examine and explain ; remarking, however, first, that he wrote it in opposition to the Gnostics. This is a fact attested by some of the fathers, and we shall presently see, that it is founded in truth. He has, nevertheless, not confined himself to them, but applied his terms with such comprehension, as not only to expose the tenets of those, who corrupted the purity of christianity, but also to refute the objections made to its truth by unbelievers.

“ In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God : This was in the beginning with God.”

The Gnostics maintained, that *Nous*, or

*Monogenes* \*, and not the *Logos*, was in the beginning, or, as it might be rendered, *in the first principle*; and that *Charis*, *Enneæ*, or *Sige*, alone existed with God. But the Evangelist says, that the *Logos*, was in the first principle †; that the *Logos* was with

\* According to the Valentinians, *Logos* did not proceed from the Supreme God, but from *Monogenes*, whom they stiled *Αρχη*, or *Ριζα παντων*\* *Δισθομενον τε τον Μονογενην τουτον, εφ οις προςβληθη, προςβαλειν και αυτον Λογον και Ζωνν, πατερα παντων των μετα αυτον εσομενων και αρχην*, Iren. p. 3.

† The ancient philosophers often used the term *Αρχη*, not merely to express the beginning of time, but also, the first principle, or the primary cause, of all things. The Pythagoreans employed it as synonymous with *Μοναδς*. Hence Macrobius says of it, *Hæc Monas initium finisque omnium, nec ipsa Principii aut finis sciens ad summum refertur Deum*. From the pagan philosophers, the Gnostics, and other early christians borrowed the word *αρχη* in the same sense. Thus they called the Deity *αρχη αιωνων*, *αναρχη ριζα*, *αρχη αρχων*, and the like. See Irenæus, p. 10. In the same signification, the Evangelist appears to me, to employ the term; and this is the opinion of the ancient commentators. Take, for example, the words of Chrysostom; Hom. ii. on John, p. 563. *Το γαρ εν αρχη ην ουδεν ετερον εστι, αλλα η του ειναι αιε δηλωτικον, και απειρωσ ειναι: ει γαρ θεος εστι ωσπερουν και εστι ουδεν προ αυτου\* ει δημιουργος παντων, πρωτος αυτος\* ει δεσποτης, και κυριος απαντων, παντα μετα αυτον και κτισματα και αιωνες\** Because the impostors supposed the *Logos* to have descended from an inferior Deity, it is said of them, by *Ignatius*, *χρειστον αλλοτριουσι του πατρος\** To these the supposed *Clement* also refers, in the following words, put in the mouth of Peter: *Nolite putare duos ingenitos dicere deos;*

God. The primary Mover, or the original Father of all, was called, by these men, *Bythos*, whom they represent, as invisible, incomprehensible, and eternal, and as having existed, through countless ages, in inaccessible solitude and indolent tranquility without feeling any interest in the welfare of created beings. This idea of the Supreme Deity, they evidently copied from Epicurus, whose followers they were, so that they might still be called Epicureans, far more properly than christians: And it is this unamiable and injurious representation of him, that the sacred penman here opposes: "The Logos was in the first principle, and the Logos was with God."—"That power, wisdom, and goodness, expressed by this term, and so conspicuously displayed in the gospel, are essential to the great Father of all; and so far from leading a life of inactivity, in boundless solitude, unconcerned about his creatures, he every moment employs those attributes in communicating to them life and happiness\*." That John

aut unum divisum esse in duos, vel sicut impii dicunt eundem masculum et feminam sui effectum: Sed Filium Dei unigenitum dicimus, *non ex alio initio* sed ex ipso ineffabiliter natum. *Recog. Lib. i. 6g.*

\* The author of the Recognitions represents Peter, as

had an eye to the deceivers, is manifest from the second verse, in which he enforces the assertion just made in the first: “*This* was in the beginning with God;” that is, the Logos, and not Sige as the impostors pretend, existed with him from the beginning.

The force of this clause, is well illustrated by Irenæus, when speaking against these men: “John proclaiming one omnipotent God, and one Monogenes, *only begotten* Christ Jesus, says *this* is the Son of God; *this* the only begotten; *this* the Maker of all; *this* the true light, lightening every man; *this* came to his own, *this* became flesh, and dwelt among us. But these (heretics) perverting, in a specious manner, the narrative, say, that Monogenes, whom they also call *Arche*, was *one*, that the Saviour was *another*, that the Logos was *another*, and that the Christ sent to complete the Pleroma, was *another* still;” Lib. i. p. 41. These verses of John, moreover, are so worded, as to

making a very proper answer to the Samaritan impostor, when pretending that the Supreme Goodness was known neither to Moses, nor the prophets, nor to any other, but himself: *Quæ Virtus ita bona sit, ut nulli velit innotescere, nisi uni tantum et hoc tibi tali.* Lib. i. 50.

meet two objections, frequently urged by unbelievers ; namely, the *recentness* of our Lord's appearance, and the *novelty* of his religion\*.

Celsus says, that the founder of the christian doctrine, appeared but a very few years before, insinuating that, if he really was the Son of God, as his followers believed, he would have made his appearance from the beginning. See Origen, p. 21. In page 385. he again calls Jesus a *man recently born*. The same objection was made by the apostate *Julian*: and it cannot be doubted, but that it was urged from the very first promulgation of the gospel. Philo indeed, in the book, which he wrote in defence of the Jewish christians, glances at the charge of innovation alleged against them, and endea-

\* Nothing was more general and common than this objection against the christian doctrine: and it was an objection, which applied with the greater force, at the first promulgation of the gospel, than in subsequent times. Eusebius, towards the beginning of his Ecclesiastical History, has, in opposition to it, endeavoured to prove, the antiquity of the christian faith. Justin Martyr, in his greater apology, glances at the same charge, and, in reference to it, delivers this candid remark: "All those, who lead a rational life, though deemed atheists, are *christians*; such as Socrates and Heraclitus, among the Greeks; Abraham, Elias, and others, among the barbarians; chap. 61. The words of Julian may be seen in Cyril the sixth book.



vours to justify them, in their deviation from the broad way of vulgar error, by a maxim of Pythagoras \*. To these objections, the apostle Paul, too, seems to allude, when he writes, that *Christ came in the fulness of time*; Gal. iv. 4. and that he gave his testimony, in his *own proper season*; 1 Tim. ii. 6. The same declaration is also repeated by him in the Epistle to Titus, chap. i. 3.

The words of our Evangelist, considered in reference to the above charges, are beautiful. “In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God.” Which may be thus paraphrased, “The christian doctrine, is not *new*; it existed from the first in the supreme Mind, and it is no other than a complete developement of that power, wisdom, and goodness, which, in the beginning, planned and executed the system of nature.”

By the clause, *And the Logos was God*, he means, probably, to say, that the gospel was *divine* (using θεός, as is often the case, adjectively)—divine in its origin, that is,

\* See the beginning of his book concerning the *Essenes*; vol. ii. p. 445.

it originated, not with *Belzebub*, as the Pharisees say, nor with *men*, as others again pretend—divine in its *duration* \*, that is, It will spread and flourish, in spite of human opposition, and continue for ever exempt from every principle of decay; θεος being a term, which denotes *perpetuity*, or freedom from *corruption*. Thus, Sophocles, asserting the perpetuity of the laws of Jupiter, says, that “the mortal nature of men did not produce them, but that a great God exists in them, which will ever rescue them from decay.” The evangelist may also intend to convey the idea, that the gospel, in being divine, partakes of the divinity, in its nature and object; that is, in *goodness*; for αγαθος, *good*, seems to be taken from αγαυθεος, *very divine* †. And hence, the former is

\* Had the Logos originated with a human being, the natural consequence would be, that, like its author, it would some time or other perish. And this, agreeably to the common maxims, Αρχη θανατου η επι γης γενεσις—υλης εκγονον ουδεν αθανατον, Vid. Orig. Con. Celsum, p. 137. 204. On the contrary, as it came from a Being, free from the corruptibility of matter, it must participate of his own incorruptible nature. And this is implied, and, I think, intended, in the assertion, that the Logos was God or divine. That superiority to, or exemption, from death, is the principle idea, conveyed in the term θεος, I shall have occasion to shew hereafter.

† Nymenius, a perpatetic philosopher, subsequent to the times of Jesus, seems to have had an allusion to this etymology :

often used, as synonymous with the latter. Thus Origen says, το ονομα του Θεου η ονομα του αγαθου\* Contra Celsum, p. 19. John then asserts, that the Logos, or the christian doctrine, like its great Author, was *good*, and not, as its enemies maintained, the occasion of evil. It is the same calumny, which Philo, perhaps designs to repel, when he says of the Logos, that *it is the fountain of what is really good*, \*η πηγη τυγαχει του προς αληθειαν αγαθου\*

“ All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made that was made.” The first Gnostics maintained, that *Nous* or *Monogenes*, was the author of all things ; whilst a different branch of them supposed, that the world was formed by an inferior demon, called *Demurgus*. In opposition to each of these, the Evangelist asserts, that the *Logos* created all things, and

for he stiled a book, in which he enquired, concerning *the immaterial God*, or the God of the Jews, περι του αραθου\* See Orig. Con. Celsum, p. 13. I cannot here help quoting a very pertinent passage from Philostratus in his life of Apollonius, where he is represented, as thus speaking, of the Author of the world, ‘Ο λογος δε της μεν των όλων γενεσεως τε και ουσιας Θεου δημιουργον οιδεν’ του δε ενθυμηθηται ταυτα αιτιον, το αγαθον ειναι αυτον\* επει ταινον συγγενη ταυτα, και φημι τους αγαθους των ανδρω των Θεου τι εχειν The last clause of which means this : Since God and good *are kindred terms*, good men must have something of God in them ; p. 337

no other ; or, in other words, that all things proceeded from the power, wisdom, and goodness of God alone. In order to account for the disorders and miseries, that abound in the divine government, the heathen philosophers, as did the Gnostics after them, had recourse to the supposition, that there existed two distinct principles, one the author of good, the other of evil \*. The fishermen

\* I shall here place before my reader, a section of Plutarch, concerning Isis and Osiris ; See 45 ; “ We are not to imagine, that the mere particles of inanimate matter were the first principles of the origin of the universe, as was the notion of Democritus and Epicurus : Nor must we, with the Stoics, suppose, that it was only one uniform Reason and Providence, that first reduced the formless mass of matter into order, and that still disposes and governs every thing ; seeing it is impossible, that any one cause whatever, be it bad or even good, (for God cannot be the author of any evil) should be the principle of all things. For the harmony of the world, like that of a harp, (to use the expression of Heraclitus) is made up of discords, and consists in a mixture of good and evil ; or, as Euripides has it, good and evil cannot be separated from each other, though they are so tempered, as that beauty and order may be the result. From hence, therefore, arose that very ancient opinion, which has been handed down from theologians and legislators to the poets and philosophers ; an opinion, which, though its first author be unknown, has nevertheless gained so firm and established a credit, every where, as not only to be commonly talked of, both by Greeks and barbarians, but to be even taught by them in their mysteries, and in their sacrifices ; namely, that the world is neither wholly left to its own motions, without some mind, some superior reason to guide and govern it, nor that it is one such mind only, or reason, that, as it were, with a helm or bridle, steers and directs the whole. But as there are

of Galilee, untutored, as they were, in the school of human wisdom, had far juster,

many things wherein the good and evil are so blended together, or rather, as nature produces nothing here below, without such mixture, and, as it cannot be supposed, that one and the same being is the dispenser of these contrarieties, distributing, as it were, from two different vessels, the several distinct portions of good and evil, like a poor retailer, mingling and dashing them together as he pleases. For this reason, I say, was first introduced the opinion, that this mixture, which is observed in the human life—this inequality and variety, which is discerned in the universe, and all those changes, which we see in it, at least, in these sublunary regions, are owing to two contrary principles, to two quite different and distinct powers, one of them always leading us, as it were towards the right-hand, and in a direct line, the other, on the contrary, always endeavouring to turn us aside, and to make us take a contrary direction. For if nothing can come into being without a cause, and if that, which is perfectly good, cannot be the cause of evil, then must there needs be a distinct principle in nature, as well for the production of evil, as of that which is good.—*Squire's Version.*

Such was the opinion of the pagan philosophers, and such was the opinion of a man, of whom it has been falsely and arrogantly said, that his mind was purified *from the prejudices of the popular superstition.* What renders this passage worthy of notice, like the book, from which I have taken it, is the circumstance, that it is levelled against the divine unity, the notion of which was now widely diffused in Greece and Egypt, by the champions of the christian faith. I cannot here refrain from adding, that the opinion of two distinct and contrary principles, concerned in the formation and government of the universe, was soon so very completely defeated by the learned advocates of christianity, that the heathen teachers themselves became ashamed to advance it. And Maximus Tyrius, in his last dissertation, where he enquires into the origin of evil, though he ascribes it in part to the matter, which composes the human

and more comprehensive view of the divine administration. The evils, which prevail amongst the works of God, however grievous in themselves, they considered, in their ultimate consequences, as real good; and hence they speak of them, as the appointment of an all-wise and perfect being. And this is the doctrine, which John establishes in the last clause, *And without him was nothing made that was made*. That he had in view the commonly-received heathen notion of two opposite principles, may be presumed, from the terms,  $\Phi\omega\varsigma$ , *Light*, and  $\Sigma\kappa\omicron\tau\omicron\varsigma$ , *Darkness*, in the subsequent verses;—terms, which were generally used to express the authors of good and evil\*. This doctrine, however,

body, has not ventured to assert that this matter has a distinct author from the supreme Artist.

\* These names were given by the Chaldean sages, from whom the doctrine, at first, appears to have been derived, to their two opposite divinities, *Oromasdes* and *Arimanius*. Ζωροάστης ὁ Μάγος, says Plutarch, προσαπεφάνητο τὸν μὲν εἰκέναι Φῶτι μαλίστα τῶν αἰσθητῶν, τὸν δὲ ἐμπαλιν Σκότῳ, p. 116. In the subsequent page, the same writer adds, *Oromasdes, consisting of the purest light, and Arimanius of the thickest darkness, wage war with each other*. To this opinion, the apostle Paul has, in one place, 2 Cor. vi. 15. an evident allusion. Exhorting his Corinthian brethren to avoid all intercourse in matters of religion with the Pagans, he asks, “What communication hath *light* with *darkness*?” The apostle Peter, in his dispute with Simon, one of the champions of this doctrine, has a

it might evince, that its teachers were divinely instructed, and that they had no communication with flesh and blood, yet could not but expose them to the charge of representing God as the cause of sin and misery\*. Philo, however, stood up as their champion, in this, and indeed, in all other respects †.

reference equally clear to it. Quo modo poterit unus atque idem locus secundum eos, qui diversa de eo (Deo) cogitarunt, et *lumen esse et tenebræ*, Recog. lib. ii. 66. Barnabas, in his Epistle, chap. 18. has an allusion no less conspicuous to the two opposite principles under the titles of *light* and *darkness*. "There are two species of doctrine and authority, the *one* is of *light*, the other of *darkness*." Plutarch has justly remarked, that this notion prevailed from very ancient times: And we find it contradicted by the Evangelical prophet. "I am the Lord, and there is none else; I form the *light* and create *darkness*; Is. xlv. 7. See Bishop Watson's excellent remark upon this verse, in his *Apology for the Bible*, p. 160. Secundus, the successor of Valentinus, added to his pairs *light* and *darkness*; Πρῶστεδεικε Φῶς καὶ σκοτος. Theod. Hær. Fab. Lib. i. 8.

\* In reference to the above doctrine, namely, that the divine Logos created all things, Celsus puts this question, Πως οὐν ὁ θεος κακὰ ἐποίησεν; p. 215.

† Pietatis erga Deum argumenta præ se ferunt plurima; castitatem in tota vita perpetuam, a jurejurando mendacioque abstinendam, et quod ad Deum autorem, omnia bona, malum vero nullum referunt, 878. They supposed, however, that God was not the author of evil, because, in its ultimate consequence, evil itself becomes good. Accordingly, Philo himself

Celsus objects, that the signs, which Jesus exhibited, were *too mean* to prove him to be the Son of God\*. And Julian, after him, says, that “he achieved, in his lifetime, no work worthy of fame; unless one would think it a great work to heal the lame and the blind, and to exorcise demons, in Bethlehem and Bethany, which were mere villages.” Absurd as this objection is, we may well conclude that these men were not the first to urge it. In all probability, it is as ancient as christianity itself. And the language of our Evangelist is well calculated to refute it. “All things were made by him—The Logos, or the divine Commission, which Jesus received, and which enabled him to do such mean things, as healing the lame, the blind and the insane, was no other, than that power, wisdom, and goodness, which created all things.”

expressly asserts, that the Logos is the great Agent, in every action, whether deemed good or otherwise; p. 114.

\* In the person of a Jew, he thus addresses Jesus, *Συ δε τι καλον η θαυμασον εργον η λογον πεποιηκας*: ἡμιν ουδεν επιδειξω και τοι προβαλουμενων εν τω ἕργω σε παρασθεσθαι τι ενεργες γνωρισμα, ὡς ειπης ὁ του Θεου παις; p. 52. No one says he, again, p. 78, *can prove him to be God, or the Son of God, from such signs, and remours, and from such proofs as these*: The words of Julian are in the sixth book of Cyril.



“In him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

According to the impostors, life proceeded from *Monogenes*, and not from the Logos: This John contradicts, and he here asserts, that life was contained in him, and proceeded from him. Life was in the Logos: because it comprehends that divine power, which animates and supports all things. And this life is the light of men, or as it ought to be rendered, *of the human race*; because it enlightens them, respecting subjects of the first magnitude and importance: Such as the existence, the attributes, and providence of God, and the certainty of a future state of retribution.

“And the light shone in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.”

Light shines in the night with greater lustre than in the day; because, in the first case, it is contrasted and heightened by the surrounding gloom; while the superior splendor of the sun, serves only to absorb and eclipse it. Just so was it with the light of the gospel, on its first appearance. It

shone amidst the moral darkness, in which mankind were involved with all the brightness of a great light in a dark place, and yet the darkness did not receive its illumination. By the clause, *and the darkness did not comprehend it*, the author insinuates, that the effulgence, which the gospel diffused, was too dazzling to be perceived by those eyes, which had never before been accustomed to such a light, and which had been rendered dim by gross ignorance and superstition. It is worthy of remark, however, that the use of *κατελαβει*, on this occasion, seems to have been taken from an expression of Jesus addressing the Jews: “And he said unto them, yet a little while, the light is with you. Walk, therefore, while ye have the light, lest the darkness *apprehend you*,” As if he had said, “You are seeking to seize me, and you will soon succeed in your attempt. But as you reject the light, which I communicate, darkness will in its turn, *seize you*” \*. Chap. xii. 35.

\* The word *κατελαβει* is certainly used in this place, as it often is by Philo, and all other succeeding ecclesiastical writers, to signify the perception of that intellectual light, which addresses the mind, in the same manner as the sensible light is perceived by the eye of the body. Thus the same author says, “Vice exists in various forms; and therefore is known to the

The above passage, John, I conceive, has here in his mind; and hence says, "The enemies of Jesus arrested *him*, indeed, but they did not *arrest* \* the divine light, which shone in him."

"And a man was sent of God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness to bear witness of the light; that all through him might believe; that man was not the light but came to bear witness of the light."

By the darkness, which did not arrest the light, our Evangelist meant, in particular, the Jewish rulers, who had rejected and

many; but virtue is rare, and on that account can be *discerned* (καταλαμβάνεσθαι) only by the few," p. 354. This writer constantly employs it in the same signification. Thus also, Irenæus, describing the sentiments of the first Gnostics, says that the mother, because she could not *discern* the invisible God, (Ὅτι οὐ καταλαβέῃ p. 20.) was overwhelmed with various sorrows.

\* Epiphanius furnishes an instance of the word being used in a sense very similar to this. The coming of our Lord (he says p. 47. B.) *seized* the above mentioned heresies, and his power destroyed them Ἡ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν σαρκὶ παρουσία — καταλαβέ τας προειρημένους ἑπτὰ αἵρεσεις ἐν Ἱεροσολυμοῖς. Let Maximus Tyrius supply another pertinent example ἄς (ἡδοναῖς) καταλαβέ οὐδὲ εὐσχημῶν θάνατος. *At the end of the first Dissertation.*

crucified their Messiah. Having said this, he breaks off, and adverts to an opposite error, embraced, at that time, by many among the Jews, that the Baptist was himself the Christ, whom he only came to point out. In opposition to it, the historian asserts that he was sent only to bear his testimony to the true Messiah, that all might believe not in *him*, but in *Jesus*, by means of him. He then adds, "The light was that true light, which lighteth every man coming into the world." The meaning of which, in part, is, "The light, afforded by the Baptist, was comparatively faint, and confined to the Jewish people only; thus resembling an artificial taper, which yields, and that to a few, but a local and transient lustre. But the divine Logos, which appeared in Jesus, is like the sun, eclipsing, by its superior brightness, all other lights, and illuminating the whole face of nature. It is that grand original luminary, from which have emanated the scattered rays of human intelligence, and which being more eminently displayed in the person of Jesus, serves to conduct all the sons of men, up to that ideal perfect world, existing in the supreme Mind."

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

This verse is elliptical, and may thus be filled up: “ The *light* was in the world, and the world through him became *light*, and the world did not know him.” Which is to this effect—“ The light which appeared in Jesus Christ, did not, like the sun, shine at a *distance*, but *in the midst of* the world, so that it became, as it were, a mass of light; yet such was its blindness, as not to discern that great moral luminary.”

“ He came to his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them he gave power to become sons of God, even to them, that believe on his name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

It was a principal objection, made by the gentile unbelievers to the divine mission of Jesus, that he sprang from, and opened his commission among a people, held in contempt and abhorrence by the rest of man-

kind. This objection is urged by Celsus\*, and was, no doubt, urged by other Pagan infidels from the earliest times. It is against this, the Evangelist, it appears to me, directs his language, *He came to his own*—to those, whose dispensation had prepared them for the reception of him, whose inspired penmen had apprised them of his coming, and whose expectation, by the manifest fulfilment of the time appointed, was ripe for his arrival.

*Sons of God* was used in a Jewish sense, to denote that political pre-eminence and dignity, which they hoped to attain over other nations, by conquest under the auspices of their Messiah. Their egregious mistake, in this respect, our Lord himself endeavoured to correct while yet living among them †: And it is the same prejudice, which John attempts to remove, by

\* See Origen against Celsus, p. 329.

† Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called *Sons of God*; Mat. v. 9. This verse was levelled, it appears to me, against some of the Jews present, who, like Nicodemus, thought that the Messiah was to come, and, having made war upon other nations, to bring them under subjection; and that thus they would rise to riches and distinction, under his victorious banners.

saying, that they became *sons of God*, by believing in his messenger ; that is, by assenting to the divine mission, and following the example of Christ, so as to cherish the well-grounded hope of a new and better life, in which God will, in the strictest sense, be their Father. It is generally supposed, that to believe in Christ and to believe *in the name* of Christ, are expressions of the same import. But this is not the case ; since the former signifies a simple belief in him ; whereas the latter implies a public profession of that belief, by assuming, in consequence, the *christian name*. It is here, as it is elsewhere, applied in reference to the Gnostic impostors, who to avoid the ignominy attached to it, did not go by that appellation.

If the inventors of the story of our Lord's miraculous birth had been asked, on what grounds they stiled him the Son of God, they would, some of them, have, probably, answered thus : He was the Son of God ; because he was born of royal ancestors ; because his mother conceived, as Paulina might have done, by administering to the pleasure of a God ; because he was one of the *Æons*, which form the *Pleroma*,

or divine Plenitude, and was deified by the vote of Tiberius. Now the Evangelist appears to have before him some such false grounds as these, and he shows the futility of them in this general observation:—"To them gave he power to become sons of God, —which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Which is to this effect, "Men become sons of God, not by human descent; not by the lust of sensual desires; not by the fiction of men, nor by the decree even of an emperor."

"And the Logos became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of comeliness and truth, and we have seen his brightness—a brightness like that of the only begotten Son of the Father."

The Philologers taught, that Jesus was a man only in *appearance*. In opposition to this doctrine, John, I conceive, asserts, "The Logos *became* flesh;" Which means, that he, who, in whom the wisdom, power, and goodness of God resided, was, in *reality*, as well as in appearance, a *human being*. Others of the Gnostics maintained, on the contrary, that Jesus was really a **man**, inha-



bited indeed by the Christ, which had descended upon him, after his baptism; but that this Christ, or Æon, left him, when condemned to die. This notion also our Evangelist refutes, by the words, *And the Logos dwelt among us*. That is, he did not take his flight from the apostles, but continued in the midst of them, even after the death and resurrection of Jesus; it being the intention of the Almighty, that he should be glorified among men and become the Lord of all.

Again, it was the opinion of some of those impostors, that Christ was *born* the Son of God, or that his divine nature and commission were made known from his miraculous birth. This, too, John denies, and says, that he *became* flesh, σαρκὶ ἐγένετο, and not, σαρκὶ ἐγεννήθη, *he was born flesh*. This distinction is not arbitrary, but is justified by very good authorities: Clement Alexandrinus has, in one place, words much to my purpose, Διττὴ ἡ γενεσις; ἡ μὲν γεννωμένων, ἡ δὲ τῶν γινωμένων, — *Generation is two-fold, one is of those, who ARE BORN; the other of those THAT BECOME, (good) \**. Philo, in a manner very similiar,

\* Clem. p. 535. The author of the Recognitions makes a

distinguishes between *πλασμα* and *γεννημα*. Speaking concerning Adam, he says, that *he became*, after the divine image, when the rational principle, which he calls *the celestial man*, entered into him. And this union of the celestial man, with the corporeal frame, he carefully distinguishes from *natural birth*, or *creation* \*. The passage, to which I allude,

similar distinction between *factus est*, and *natus est*; Believing, as Cerinthus did, of whom he appears to have been a follower, that the Christ descended on Jesus at his baptism; he uses the former word to express his advent among men: *Quoniam quidem cum esset filius Dei, et initium omnium, homo factus est: hunc primum Pater oleo perunxit, &c.* Here he says, that the father anointed Christ, when he became a man, that is, appointed him a king, alluding to the testimony, which God bore him, as his own Son, at his baptism. Tertullian has observed this just distinction between *factus* and *natus*: But according to him, the apostle uses the former, instead of the latter, in order to assert more emphatically, that he was born of a virgin: that is, because he meant to signify that Jesus was really born the Son of God; he declined to use the word *natus*, which expresses *being born*, and adopts the term *factum*, which conveys some thing different from being born. A curious argument indeed! His own words are as follows. *Hoc quidem impressius, quod factum potius dicit, quam natum: Simplicius autem enunciasset natum: Factum autem dicendo, et Verbum caro factum est, consignavit, et carnis veritatem ex Virgine factam adseveravit: p. 522. D.*

\* The whole passage is as follows:—*Διττα ανθρωπων γεννη, ο μεν γαρ εστι ουρανιος ανθρωπος, ο δε γηνιος. Ο μεν ουν ουρανιος, ατε κατ εικονα θεου γεγονως, φθρατης και συνολως γεωδους ουσιας αμετοχος. ο δε γηνιος, εκ σποραδος υλης, ην χουν κεληκεν, επαγη διο τον μεν ουρανιον φησιν ου πεπλασθαι, κατα εικονα δε τετυπωσθαι θεου. τοκ δε γηινων πλασμα, αλλα ου γεννημα ειναι του τεχνιτου, p. 49.*

if properly attended to, would lead us fully to understand the object of our Evangelist : For he represents the Logos descending on Jesus, or, in his own words, *becoming flesh*, in the same manner, as the intellectual principle, was supposed to descend upon Adam, after he had been previously formed into a perfect man. But he not only assures us, that Jesus became flesh; but he refers to the period, when they had an ocular demonstration of this fact : I mean, to his transfiguration on the mount, the object of which was to exhibit, by an external symbol, the *evanescence of the Mosaic institutions*, and the splendor, which he would attain to, after finishing his course \*. Be it farther observed,

\* The object of the transfiguration, in my opinion, was not only to confirm the faith of his disciples in him as the Messiah, but also to give them a sensible representation of the change, which Jesus was to undergo, by his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven; and what they least expected, to teach them that the law of Moses was to be superseded by the gospel. When he was transfigured, we read that his face shone as the sun, and his raiment became white as snow. Then appeared with him Moses and Elias; and immediately a voice was heard, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, HEAR YE HIM. That is, This my son, and not Moses, you are to obey, for the future, as your legislator. The history then adds, And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. On this circumstance rested the application of the scene. The Jewish legislator unexpectedly *disappeared*, and the christian lawgiver, to whom they were

that the historian contradicts, in direct and positive terms, the notion that the Logos was not the same with the Monogenes, and that he did not descend from the supreme God. "And we have seen his brightness—a brightness like that of the Monogenes from the Father \*." You will remark, finally, that God is here represented, under

commanded to yield obedience, *remained*. This scene was to be realized in his resurrection, and in the glorious change, which was then to take place, in his person and condition. And this seems to have been the reason, why they were not to divulge it, till that event had been fulfilled. See Mat. xviii.

\* It is added, *full of grace and truth*, or *reality*, That is, the gracious Logos, or the divine power, wisdom, and goodness of God, as implied in that term, became united with *a real man*, and not a man, *in appearance*, as was maintained by the deceivers: That this is the real meaning of the term *αληθεια* is evident from the circumstance, that it is the very word, which the early writers uniformly employ, when opposing those, who pretended, that Jesus was a *mere Phantasm*, or a spirit, in the form of a man. Thus the author of the spurious letter of *Ignatius to the Trallians*, when speaking in opposition to those, who said, that he was a human being, *δοκῆσει, φαντασμα, απαιτη*, or that he was *ἕσασαυτος ανδρωπος*, annexes the adverb *αληθως truth*, or *αληθινως*, or the noun *αληθεια*, no less than *sixteen times* in the compass of two short chapters. See the *ninth and tenth*. Tertullian, in his book *De Carne Christi*, uses the corresponding term *veritas*, very frequently, in reference to the same notion. See, for instance, chapter sixteen, where it is opposed to *similitudo* or *imago corporis*. The same heretical tenet is refuted by Origen in several places, as in his 14th and 17th Homilies on Luke.

the amiable character of a *Father*. By which he insinuates, that, so far from being unconcerned about the works of his hands, as those Epicurean christians maintained, he exercises *parental affections*, towards his offspring; and, instead of leading an indolent existence in a dark and distant retirement, he resides in the midst of that brightness, which is the fountain of life and happiness to all created things.

“ And out of his fulness we all have received even favour instead of favour. For the law was given by Moses; the favour and the reality of it came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God, at any time, but the Monogenes (the only begotten) who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him.”

The sacrifices and types, which composed the external institutions of Moses, were understood, by our Lord, and his apostles, to contain under them, some hidden truths to be developed, under the christian dispensation. The former, therefore, were considered as constituting *the shadow*, while the latter formed the *reality* of those symbols; and this reality, our Evangelist expresses,

as is usually done, by the term ἀληθεία; *truth*\*. Hence we may discover, in the above paragraph, much beauty and propriety. He asserts, on the one hand, contrary to the opinion of the Egyptian Gnostics, the *unity* of the christian system with the law of Moses; and, on the other, he maintains, in opposition to the Jews, the superiority of the gospel to Judaism.

I shall conclude this explanation, with a few general observations, which may farther confirm and illustrate the truth and justice of it.

First; It is evident, that the description, which the Evangelist gives of the gospel in the introduction, carries an allusion to the account given of the creation by Moses;

\* This use of the term ἀληθεία is as common as that in the preceding note. Thus Plutarch, speaking of the Egyptian mysteries and fables, writes, ἀμυδρὰς ἐμφασεὶς τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ διαφασεὶς ἔχουσιν, *De Isis*, p. 21. Origen says, on this very place, ἀληθείαν ὑπερβαίνειν σκιὰς καὶ τυποὺς; that is, *The reality exceeds the shadows and symbols of it*. Ὅσα, says Chrysostom, on this occasion, p. 611. πῶς μὲν τυπὸς ἐδόθη διὰ Μωυσεως, ἢ δ' ἀληθεία ἐγίνετο διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. On throwing my eye on this commentator, I see, that he understands the clause thus:—*The law (consisting of types and symbols) was given by Moses, but the reality of it was Jesus Christ*. And this, I think, indeed, to be the exact meaning of the Evangelist.

and that he gives the christian doctrine the very name of that divine power, wisdom, and goodness, which originally formed the world. He had, it appears to me, for this, three principal reasons : First, he wished to inculcate on his reader, that the gospel was intended to introduce, and that it would, in the end, introduce, into the *moral* world, that beauty, order, peace, and harmony, which was imparted to the *natural*, when, at the command of the supreme Being, this fair system of nature rose out of darkness and confusion. Nor is this the only place in the New Testament where the same idea is suggested. It is necessarily brought to the mind of every reflecting reader by the following words of the Apostle : “ For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glorious God, in the face of Jesus ; ” 2 Cor. iv. 6 \*. His second object was

\* After having written the above I met with the following observation of *Mons. Abauzit* (some account of whom may be seen in that truly apostolic christian Mr. Lindsey's Sequel, p. 142, whence I copy it.) “ The Greek term, which we have translated *the word*, does also signify *reason, intelligence, wisdom*. This makes much better sense than the other, since it is more suitable to the divine being, to whom speech can be

to assert, the intimate connection, which subsisted between the Jewish dispensation, and the christian; and also, the subserviency of the former, to the latter. For the Egyptian impostors, we have seen, insisted, that the Mosaic system, came from a Christ, which was different from the founder of christianity; or, in their own words, the Christ, that ascended, was not the same with him, who again descended. What more likely method could be adopted, to tear up, by the roots, such an absurd notion, than to describe the gospel by that title, which expresses both the internal wisdom of the Jewish law, and the attributes of that God, who delivered it to Moses? The historian, thirdly, had in view, to anticipate the objections, made by unbelievers, to the resurrection of the body. By giving the gospel a name, which expresses the infinite power, wisdom, and goodness of God, he would lead us to conclude, that however improbable, and contrary to experience and observation,

but improperly applied. This being settled, St. John's design, in my opinion, is to teach us, that the same wisdom, which first formed the world of creatures, with such admirable art, has shined out, no less in the new moral creation. The thought is truly noble, and conveys a grand idea of the gospel.



the resurrection of the human body may appear, it is, by no means, an incredible event, since the very Being, who has pledged himself to accomplish its re-organization, is the same with him, who at first organised and animated it. The Logos, who has promised to restore life to man, when taken away, is no other, than he, who at first gave it. In believing, then, that we shall be raised, into a new state of being, when the present is no more, we believe, the solemn assurance of one, who promised again to do a thing similar to what he hath already proved himself both able and willing to perform\*.

\* It is well known to those, who have any acquaintance with the writings of the fathers, that, in removing the objections of the pagan philosophers to the resurrection, they have recourse to this conclusion, which is inculcated by the Evangelist, as an argument in favour of that event. See, for instance, Justin Martyr's Apology, chap. 25. also Tatian, page 24.

The reasoning of Theodoret, on this subject, is so like what has been said above, that I cannot help annexing some of his words. He speaks in reference to the heretics who denied the resurrection of the body: "They think that, as it was impossible to God, at first to have created, without matter, so he is by no means able to restore the body, into its former structure, after it has been dissolved, consumed by time, and changed into a few ashes. They, indeed, allow that God formed man of one clod of earth: They ought therefore to conclude, that, as the universal author easily changed a piece of clay into a human

Secondly ; The express design of the christian doctrine was to improve us, and make us partakers of a divine nature. This grand design, we have reason to believe, it will finally accomplish. Evil will gradually be diminished, by means of its benign influence, till it shall at length be completely excluded from the divine government ; and every human being, whether living or dead, be rescued at some period or other, from sin and all its penal consequences, so as to be perfectly assimilated to the image of his Maker. Now this is the animating prospect, which the inspired penman places before us, when he exhibits the gospel under that term, which had been used to signify the world as it exists in the all-comprehending mind of God. Viewing natural and moral causes, as terminating in their remotest effects, he boldly ascribes every appearance, denominated good or evil, to the sole agency of the Great Supreme ; and carried away, on the wings of inspiration, beyond the boundaries of sensible things, he fixes

body, and of it wrought the numerous and various members, so it is equally easy for him to fabricate anew, out of its small remains, the frame of the body—For it is extreme folly to discredit (as impracticable.) a thing similar to what we see ; especially when the promise of God is engaged to the performance of it." *Hæret. Fabul. Lib. v. p. 443. Discourse 19.*

his attention on that DIVINE COMMUNITY, which coalesces with the ideas of Him, who seeth the end from the beginning;—a community enlightened by a luminary, of which the splendor of the sun is but a faint image, and of which every man, however debased, at present, by vice and ignorance, is to become a member, after being raised to moral purity and intellection\*.

\* I cannot help here placing before my reader, what Hartley says on this important subject. His ideas, in my opinion, not only coincide, but are the same with those of the Apostles; “As the enlargement of our capacities enables us thus to take off the edge of our pains, by uniting them with the subsequent superior pleasures, so it confers upon us more and more the power of enjoying our future pleasures, by anticipation, by extending the limits of the present time, i. e. of that time, in which we have an interest. For the present time, in a metaphysical sense, is an indivisible moment; but the present time, in a practical sense, is a finite quantity of various magnitudes, according to our capacities, and beginning from an indivisible moment in all, seems to grow on indefinitely in beings, who are ever progressive in their passage to an eternal life.”

“Suppose now, a being of great benevolence, and enlarged intellectual capacities, to look down upon mankind, passing through a mixture of pleasures and pains, in which, however, there is a balance of pleasure, to a greater balance of pleasure perpetually, and at last to a state of pure and exalted pleasure, made so by association: It is evident, that his benevolence to man will be the source of pure pleasure to him, from his power of uniting the opposite sensations, and of great present pleasure from his power of anticipation. And the more we suppose the benevolence and capacities of this being enlarged, the

This glorious representation, indeed, is not communicated in direct and unequivocal

greater and more pure will his sympathetic pleasure be, which arises from the contemplation of man. It follows, therefore, that in the eye of an infinite mind, creatures conducted, as we think, according to the third of the foregoing suppositions, are conducted according to the second, and these according to the first, or in other words, that the first, second, and third, of the foregoing suppositions, are all one and the same (that is, that all men are infinitely happy) in the eye of God. For all time, whether past, present, or future, is present time in the eye of God, and all ideas coalesce into one to him; and this one is infinite happiness, without any mixture of misery, viz. by the infinite prepollence of happiness above misery, so as to annihilate it; and this merely by considering time, as it ought to be considered in strictness, i. e. as a relative thing, belonging to beings of finite capacities, and varying with them, but which is infinitely absorbed in the pure eternity of God. Now the appearance of things to the eye of an infinite being, must be called their real appearances in all propriety. And though it be impossible for us to arrive at this true way of conceiving things perfectly, or directly, yet we shall approach nearer and nearer to it, as our intellectual capacities, benevolence, devotion, and the purity of our happiness, depending thereon, advance: and we seem able, at present, to express the real appearance, in the same way as mathematicians do ultimate ratios, to which quantities ever tend, and never arrive, and in a language, which bears a sufficient analogy to other expressions that are admitted. So that now, we may, in some sort, venture to maintain that, which seemed, at first sight, not only contrary to obvious experience but even impossible, viz. that all individuals are actually and always infinitely happy. And thus all difficulties relating to the divine attributes, will be taken away. God will be infinitely powerful, knowing, and good, in the most absolute sense, if we consider things as they appear to him. And surely, in all vindications of the divine attributes, this ought to be the light, in which we are to consider things. We ought to suppose

cal terms. The reason seems to be, that mankind were not, at the time, prepared to receive it. And it is from their incapacity, in this respect, we are, as it appears to me,

ourselves in the centre of the system, and to try, as far as we are able, to reduce all apparent retrogradations to real progressions." *Observations on Man*, Prop. 103. p. 324, 325.

This sublime and delightful representation, I again assert, is implied in the doctrine of the Logos above explained. The intellectual system of animated and rational things existed, in full perfection, in the divine mind; though the sensible system; formed on the model of it, is yet imperfect, but advances, nevertheless, from one degree of perfection to another, till at length it coalesces with its great original. Does not this imply, that man is capable of continually rising from inferior to superior pleasure, till, by association, or mental enlargement, he attains, in the end, a happiness, unmixed with misery? The grand and principal means of making the moral world, actually to be, what it appears to be, in the eye of God, is the christian dispensation. To this dispensation, therefore, is given the title of Logos, — which denotes the world in its original and archetypical perfection. And are we not hence to infer, that the world, ever present in the divine mind, is that, and no other, which is to be carried to completion by the gospel; and that, consequently, in respect to him, "all individuals are actually and always infinitely happy." I cannot help adding, that the simple transfer of the term, which expresses the system, as present with God, to that system, which is to be accomplished by the christian doctrine, enables us to conceive more clearly, and to describe more accurately, than even ultimate ratios are described by mathematicians, how a system, which seems imperfect to beings of limited views, appears, at all times perfectly complete to the eye of an all-comprehending intelligence.

to account for the darkness and ambiguity, which attend the words of our Lord, when he is speaking of the consummation of the age, and the punishment of the wicked. There are not wanting passages, however, in the apostolical writings, which inculcate the joyful thought, that all the human race shall share together in ultimate and complete felicity. One or two instances that seem to favour this doctrine, I shall here produce :

In Acts, Chap. x. 8—17. we thus read :  
 And on the morrow, whilst they were on the road, and were coming near the city, Peter went upon the house top to pray, about the sixth hour. And he was hungry, and wished to eat ; but while they were making ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a kind of vessel, like a large sheet let down, by strings at the four corners, to the earth. In this was every four-footed creature of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And a voice said unto him, Rise, Peter, slay and eat. But Peter said, not so, Sir : For I have never eaten any thing unclean. And a voice, in answer to this, said, a second time unto him : What God hath purified, esteem not thou unclean. And after this had been

thrice done, the vessel was taken up again into heaven.”

It has been already observed, that *the four-footed creatures of the earth, wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air*, here spoken of, denote the various tribes of men, that were to receive the christian doctrine. Hence we may perceive, the moral instruction, which the vision is intended to convey. It teaches us, that *every human being* came down from heaven, that is, from the hands of God, a fact which was denied by the heretics, who ascribed the creation of man, with other things, to an inferior evil principle. It inculcates, farther, that, however men may have debased themselves by sin, they shall, sometime or other, be made clean by their Creator. Observe, moreover, that none of the creatures, which came from heaven to the earth, was *left there*, but all were taken up again. By which we are to understand I conceive that no man shall finally be left, in a state of debasement and misery, but all will be exalted to the place, where, in a peculiar manner, they may enjoy, the glory and felicity of their Maker.

That the moral world shall, in time, be

made perfect, is a doctrine, which may be inferred, from many passages, in the New Testament. I select the following, as worthy of notice: "I am the beginning and the end;" *Rev.* xxii. 13. As our Lord is here spoken of in the character of the Logos, the beginning, I take to mean, the *archetypical*, or *ideal world*, in the mind of God, while the *end*, signifies the present visible one, carried, by the christian system, to its consummation. But the beginning, and the end, *are one*, that is, the moral world, when consummated, will so approximate, in perfection and resemblance, to its great original, as to become the same with it. The words have an allusion to a circle, where the opposite extremes of the circumference coalesce into, and form but one point \*. The following language, of the apostle Paul, presents us with a similar description of the world, as conducted by the divine power;— "From him, and through him, and unto him, are all things;" *Rom.* xi. 36.

\* This is precisely the idea, which Clement of Alexandria has connected with this verse. His words are the following: Κυκλος γαρ ὁ αὐτός (ὡς καὶ Λόγος) πάντων τῶν δυναμένων εἰς ἐν εἰλωμένων καὶ ἐνούμενων· διὰ τοῦτο Α καὶ Ω ὁ Λόγος εἰρηται· ἐν μονοῦ το τέλος ἀρχὴ γίνεται, καὶ τελευτὰ πάλιν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀνάθευ ἀρχὴν, οὐδαμου διαφασιν λαβὼν p. 537.



In these words the universal system is represented to proceed from the Deity, as from a point, and to be carried forward by means of his unceasing energy, along the boundless round of time, till it terminates its revolution, in the very place, whence its course first commenced.

Thirdly; From the explanation, which I have given of the introduction of John's gospel, we perceive, that the assertion of Julian (See vol. i. page 270.) signifying that John composed his gospel, on account of the deification of Jesus, in the cities of Italy and Greece, is not without foundation in truth. But when he declares, that his object was to countenance that doctrine, he is guilty of a calumny; and that, I will be bold to say, a wilful one.

Fourthly; Epiphanius informs us, that the gospel of John was ascribed by some, in ancient times, to the impostor *Cerintus*\*. This is a curious fact: But it receives an

\* The men, who rejected the writings of John, and assigned them to Cerintus, have the name of *Alogians* given them by Epiphanius. He speaks of them in Heresy 51. See Lardner, vol ix. 515. They were called Alogians, because they rejected the Logos.

easy solution from the interpretation, which we have given of the introduction. Cerinthus, we are told by Irenæus, rejected the story of our Lord's miraculous birth, and maintained, that the Christ became incorporated with him, at his baptism. And these are the very sentiments, which our Evangelist advances in his gospel. He differs, however, from Cerinthus, in one material point. The Logos, which became flesh, according to the former, was a mere poetic personification; while the latter thought him, to be a real substance. The similarity, then, known to subsist between the sentiments of that impostor, and those of John, was perhaps the circumstance, which induced him to forge the *spurious gospel*\* and *revelation*, formerly extant under his name, and to impose them on the public, as the genuine productions of the Apostle. This circumstance may have been the cause of that abhorrence, which John is said to have cherished towards him. To this, too, it might be owing, that the

\* An account of this gospel, and also of his Revelation, is given by Mr. Jones, vol. i. p. 219—228. Let it here be observed, that the gospel of Cerinthus, according to Epiphanius, was in the number of those spurious gospels to which Luke alludes in his introduction.

genuine gospel and revelation of John, fell, with many, into discredit; they being supposed to be the compositions of Cerinthus.

Lastly; From the above account of the Logos it is obvious, that the personification of it, did not, as is generally supposed by the Unitarian critics, originate in the Platonic school. The ideas conveyed by that term had long before been personified, under various names, by the inspired penmen of the Old Testament\*, whence the personification of it was naturally borrowed by our Lord and his disciples; nor is there any doubt, in my mind, that Philo copied it from the same source.

It was from Jesus, then, and his apostles, that the first christian fathers derived the personification of the Logos. But this was

\* "The doctrine of the personification of the Logos, or the divine intellect, consisting of the attributes of wisdom, power, &c. was certainly introduced by the Platonists, and from them it was adopted by the christian fathers." *Priestley's Early Opinions*, Vol. i 320. The doctor, however, candidly confesses that this personification was not done by Plato himself, though the confusion of his ideas gave occasion to it, or something like it, in his followers.

See, in proof of this assertion. Proverbs viii. *Wisdom of Solomon*? chapters vii, ix. Ps. xxxvi, 6. cv. 19. Isaiah ii. 4.

the fatal error, on which they split. Being disposed, by the infection of the Gnostic heresies, to consider Jesus as a supernatural Being, they applied to his person the term, which was intended only to convey a sublime idea of his gospel; and which, the sacred writers have sometimes employed to express the founder himself, in his ministerial capacity. By this mean, the personified being, and the real person of Christ, coalesced into one and the same; and the characters of divinity, which marked the former, were unavoidably transferred to the latter. Hence the origin of the notion, maintained among christians, *of personal plurality in the divine nature*. The deduction of it, I will be free to say, from any other source, is not only unfounded but chimerical\*.

\* The late amiable and learned Dr. Enfield has endeavoured to shew, that this dogma, which still continues to disgrace the christian faith, was originally derived from the sacred books of the *Hindoos*. According to him, it travelled from Hindoostan into Persia, Chaldæa, and other Eastern Countries; and, emigrating thence into Egypt, found a long asylum in the Alexandrian school: and, after the commencement of the christian æra, it was imported by the Gnostics into the college of Nazareth. His own words in part are as follows: "But, though the early propagators and teachers of christianity rejected the Gnostic heresies, they seem not to have been altogether free from the influence of the oriental system of emanation, or

It remains now to notice some other passages in this gospel, which, I conceive,

indeed, to have differed materially from the heretics, in their prime abstract principles, and modes of reasoning. Having imbibed the notion, then spreading in the Jewish, as well as Alexandrian schools, that substantial powers were produced by emanation in the divine nature; and having, many of them, read the writings of Philo and of Plato, under the influence of this notion, they were easily led to believe, that the *Logos*, or divine reason, had received, by the emanative power of the first principle, a substantial personal existence within the divine essence, and that, this *Logos* had united himself to Jesus. This appears evidently to have been the idea of Justin Martyr, who speaks of Christ as a certain rational power, which God begat of himself, before all creatures, and calls him the reason, of which the whole human race partakes. Tatian, Anathagoras, Theophilus, and Tertullian, who all flourished in the second, or at the beginning of the third century, clearly express the same notion. Tertullian, however, takes great pains to assure his readers, that by the reason, or word, sent forth from God, he means, not an act, or quality, but a substance. His argument is curious: "What proceeded from so great a substance, and made such great substances, is not itself void of substance."

"If this be a just representation of the state of opinions on this subject, in the second century, it may be difficult to assign a good reason, why it should not apply to the first. The evangelist John, in particular, whose gospel was probably not written till towards the close of the first century, and who, as we have already seen, was no stranger to the doctrine of emanation, might have been led, in the same way as Justin Martyr, and others, to a belief, that his master had been animated by the first divine emanation, within the essence of Deity, the *Logos*; and this notion might have led him to write (supposing it to be his) the introduction to his gospel, and might have suggested the expression (*Monogenes*) only-begotten, and several others of the same class. Some passages, in the epistolary parts of the

have respect to the impostors. The advocates of the divinity and miraculous birth of Jesus, seem, in every age, to urge the testimony of the Baptist, in favour of those doctrines. Now it is remarkable, that the Evangelist introduces John, as asserting what is utterly inconsistent with both, that is, as declaring, that he, who came after him, was but a *man*, and that he had no knowledge of him until he had received information respecting him in the wilderness. “The next day John saw Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he, of whom I said, After me cometh A MAN\*, which is pre-

New Testament may, perhaps, admit of a similar explanation, on the supposition, that the apostles borrowed terms from the Gnostic system, or Jewish cabbala. The notion and belief of real subsistences, produced by emanation within the divine essence, being, in this manner introduced, it is easy to perceive, by what steps the doctrine of a trinity in unity, might rise into an article of faith, and become, for centuries, a subject of controversy, without supposing it to have been taught by divine revelation.” *Enquirer, No. 14. Monthly Magazine for September, 1797.*

\* The evangelists Matthew and Mark, in citing these words of the Baptist, say simply, “*He* that cometh after me;” and not, as John has it, “After me cometh *a man*.” The object of this last Evangelist, in thus representing the words of John,

ferred before me : For he was before me,  
**AND I KNEW HIM NOT :** but that he

was, undoubtedly, to disprove the falsehood, alleged by some early advocates of the divinity of Jesus, that his forerunner bore testimony to this doctrine. The design of the sacred penman may well be illustrated by the following instance : Some of those, who expected the Baptist to be himself the messiah, supposed, as Cerinthus and Simon did of our Lord, that the Christ descended upon him ; and was consequently of the nature of an angel. In reference to this absurd notion, John, I conceive, and I am supported in this conception by some ancient writers, thus says, “ There was a MAN, sent from God.” Simon Magus, and his followers, were so fully convinced, that the forerunner of Christ bore testimony to his simple humanity, that they had no way of evading it but by asserting, that he was an advocate for the Demiurgus, who was inferior to the Father of Christ ; and that he was unacquainted with the new divinity ; Ὁ τοῦ Δημιουργοῦ ἀνδρῶτος, ἀγνοῶν τὴν κωνὴν θεότητα, Orig. Com. vol. ii. p. 14. From Theophylact I learn, that the ancient Unitarians understood the Baptist, as attesting, on this occasion, the simple humanity of Jesus. This commentator attempts to answer their argument, by observing, that the object of the Baptist, in calling him a man, was to assert his *maturity* or *manhood* ; he being now thirty years old ; vol. ii. p. 576. He is not satisfied, however, with this miserable evasion ; but goes farther and tortures the words of John the baptist into a confession, that the Messiah was born of a virgin. Clement of Alexandria proceeds farther still, and hangs him up as a witness to his divinity, by putting these words in his mouth, “ John, the herald of the Logos, exhorted men to prepare themselves for the arrival of *the God Christ* ; p. 8.

This false representation furnished the apostate Julian with a handle for thus unjustly accusing our Evangelist : “ Having said a few words concerning John the Baptist, he again returns to the Logos proclaimed by him. And the Logos, he

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

says, became flesh, and dwelt among us : he avoids, however, from shame, to inform us in what manner he became so : Nor does he call him Jesus, or Christ, till he had first asserted him to be a God, and the Logos ; and then silently and inadvertently imposing upon our ears, he says, that John the baptist proclaimed this testimony concerning Jesus Christ. This is he whom we should believe to be a God and the Logos ;" Cyril Con. Jul. Lib. x. p. 327.

No candid person can hesitate, after all that has been said, to pronounce that this is a very unjust accusation : and that so far from imposing upon men, by artfully asserting the divinity, the sacred writer, on the contrary, doth, on the authority of John, maintain the humanity of Jesus. This, however, is not the only instance, in which the mistaken zeal of the friends of christianity have materially supported the cause of infidelity.

I cannot conclude this note, before I reconcile an apparent inconsistency between this Evangelist and Matthew, respecting the testimony of the Baptist—an inconsistency, which has occasioned much perplexity to the critics : Since, according to the latter, John well knew our Lord to be the Messiah, when he came to his baptism ; while the former represents him as saying, *I knew him not*. But to what time does he refer, in making this declaration ? Was it his design to signify, that he had no knowledge of Jesus, when he saw him coming to his baptism ? I think not. On the contrary, the meaning, which the Baptist conveys, is, that he had no suspicion of our Lord's being the Messiah, nor even any personal acquaintance with him, till the Spirit informed him in the wilderness, that he was to be the Christ ; and that, in proof of this, the Holy Ghost would soon descend upon him in a visible form from heaven, and openly proclaim him as the Son of God. Being then informed that Jesus of Nazareth was to be the Saviour whom they expected, was it not natural that his forerunner should



And John bare record; saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove,

thus accost him; on seeing him submit to a ceremony, which implied that he was subordinate to him who administered it? "I have need to be baptised of thee and comest thou to me!" *Mat. iii. 14.* Or, having used this language on the present occasion, was he chargeable with contradiction, when he presently adds, that he had no knowledge of him, previously to his appearance in the wilderness? Be it farther remarked, that one chief object, which the Baptist had in saying that he knew him not, was to preclude the suspicion of any contrivance, or plot having been concerted between them. In making this assertion, therefore, he must be understood to mean, that he had no interview with Jesus, nor even any knowledge of him before the time of his withdrawing into the wilderness; and was there commissioned to proclaim him as the Christ, while he remained yet personally unknown to him. Finally it is to be observed that the verb *ᾔδειν*, being used in the *perfect past tense*, not only favours but requires this distinction. It should therefore, be rendered, *I had not known* him, that is, previously to my being informed from heaven that he was to be the Christ. The use of this tense in pointing out an event, not merely past, but previous to an event, that is past and spoken of, is general both in Greek and Latin authors. For instance, the demoniacs, whom Jesus cured, are represented as saying, *they had known him* *ᾔδεισαν αὐτόν*, that is, they were convinced from facts, which they had *before* observed, that he was the coming Messiah. See *Mark i. 34. Luke iv. 41.* Virgil furnishes me with an apt instance in Latin:

Urbem quam dicunt Romam, Meliboeæ, putavi  
 Stultus ego, huic nostræ similem, quo sæpe solemus  
 Pastores ovium teneros depellere fetus :  
 Sic canibus catulos similes, sic matribus hædos  
 Noram——

Here *noveram*, has a reference to *putavi*, and fixes the at-

and it abode upon him, AND I KNEW HIM NOT, &c. Chap. i. 29—34.

The Gnostics forged a multitude of books in support of their own darling tenets. These, in order the more effectually to impose them upon the unlearned, they ascribed to *the apostles*. And there are preserved to this day some extracts of such as were assigned to *Philip, Nathaniel, Andrew, and Simon Peter*. The object of these, as indeed of all their other spurious pieces, seems, in part, to support the story of our Lord's supernatural birth and divine nature. Now it is remarkable, that John, in the next place, relates an event, which shows, that neither of those Apostles were acquainted with Jesus, till he was pointed out by his forerunner; 35—42.

He next shows that Jesus was the son of Joseph; that he was a native of Nazareth; that he was foretold by Moses, and the prophets;—all which were denied by the

tention of the reader on a time *prior* to that, which is marked by it. See also the *Andria* of Terence; Act iii. Scen. 2. where Simo says, he entertained suspicion of Davus, in consequence of having previously known him. *Quia te noram.*

first advocates of his miraculous birth, and superior nature; 43—47. Nathaniel is thought, on probable grounds, to have been the same with *Bartholomew* \*. But

\* It is remarkable that every one of the Apostles here mentioned, had gospels fastened on them, by the ancient Gnostics. An account of them may be seen in the first volume of Jones on the Canon. The high antiquity of many of them is universally allowed. Clement of Alexandria cites the *preaching of Peter*, as the production of that Apostle; p. 390, 635. The original authors of them, were the impostors from Rome, who also, as we have seen, were, the forgers of the first sibylline oracles. They must, therefore, have been extant, at least before John wrote his gospel, though they may have been much changed by *Manes*, and his disciples. An extract, taken by Epiphanius, p. 95. from the gospel of Philip, represents our Lord, in his address to Nathaniel, as saying, that he was a celestial Being. Now it is a singular fact, that Jesus and his historian, have, in this very address, cautioned the reader against that doctrine: “Nathaniel answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God:” 49. Lest any one should infer from this title, that Nathaniel meant to acknowledge Jesus as a supernatural Being, the Evangelist subjoins this explanation of it, *Thou art the king of Israel*. The reply of Christ, in part, is as follows: “Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the SON OF MAN.” Here you see, he holds himself up as a *man*, as a being possessing the nature and constitution which that name implies, and that, in opposition, as has already been shewn, to the supposition of his being an angel or a God. Theophylact, in his comment on the place, thus writes, “Nathaniel, on hearing these things, perceives the greatness of the Lord, and confesses him to be the Son of God. But though he confesses him to be the Son of God; yet he does it not as Peter confessed him—*Thou art the king of Israel*. You see, that he had not yet come to the perfect knowledge of the

a gospel was circulated very early, under the name of the latter, among the heretics. To show that Bartholomew was incapable of uttering such falsehoods, as were contained in it, and that he was not base enough to adopt that stile of *duplicity*, which characterised, in those times, the Gnostic compositions, our Evangelist states a fact, which proves him to be superior to every species of deceit: "Jesus saw Nathaniel coming unto him, and saith of him, Behold! an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." As if he had said, *Nathaniel is an Israelite, not only in name, but in reality: his love of virtue and truth is such, that he is unable to practise deceit, or to tell a falsehood,—a character very unlike that Israelite, who will assume his name.*

According to the authors of Jesus's divine birth, his mother was informed by

true Deity of the only begotten. For he believed him to be, as it were, a friend of God, and the king of Israel. But, if he had believed him to be a God, he would not have called him king of Israel, but king of the universe;" vol. i. p. 582. D. This is very true. But, I appeal to the reader, whether that clause be not inserted by the Evangelist, as explanatory of the words of Nathaniel. Consequently, it follows from this author's concession, that, at the time of publishing his gospel, John entertained the same views respecting the person of Christ, as Nathaniel did, when he was first introduced to the Saviour.

an angel, that he was to be the Messiah; and she is represented not only to have understood, but to have believed his words. To show the falsehood of this account, John relates the following incident: "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And they wanted wine. The mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee; mine hour is not yet come;" chap. ii. 1—3.

The testimony, which the baptist gave to our Lord, the spirit descending upon him in a visible form, accompanied by a voice from heaven attesting him to be the Son of God, were very extraordinary events, and calculated to engage the public attention. The report of them could not but rapidly spread round the country, and meet the anxious, though yet faithless mother. On hearing of it, she rightly concluded, that, if such a report were true, her Son would be able to work miracles. Thinking that the present was a convenient

season to display the divine power, which he was said to have received, she went to him, and in the true spirit of Jewish prejudice, thus accosted him—*They want wine.* The meaning, which she wished to convey by these words, was made sufficiently manifest to a person present on the occasion, by her looks and manners. It was probably to this effect, “People say, that thou hast received from heaven a glorious power. If thou be thus highly favoured, the present hour is the most convenient to manifest thy glory. There is now no more wine in the feast. If thou wilt but furnish the company with some they will doubtless acknowledge thy mission, and glorify thy name.”

This language as it was founded upon the misconception of the Jews, respecting the character of their Messiah, must have necessarily offended our divine Master.

He therefore replies to her, in terms of marked disapprobation \*, “ Woman !

\* *What have I to do with thee.* This is the very language which the demons usually addressed to Jesus, when they acknowledged the purity of his character, in opposition to their own. See Mat. viii. 29. and Mr. Wakefield’s Annotation. It is a phrase, which denotes not only dissimilarity of

what have I to do with thee ; My hour is not yet come—The hour of my glory is not now ; nor am I to be glorified in the manner you apprehend. My glory is not of men, but of God ; and my hour is the hour of my resurrection.”

The purpose, however, of this brief reply, Mary did not, at the time, comprehend, who in all probability understood his words, as if he had said, “ I cannot yet furnish the guests with wine : for the hour, at which I shall be able to do this, is not just come.” Our Lord, it is observable, though he was far from approving the spirit and object of his mother’s address, yet complied in effect with her request : His primary design, by this compliance, was to render his presence at the marriage, *memorable* ; and by that means, furnish his biographer with a fact, which might demonstrate against those

views, but also conveys the idea of an *improper interference*. See Mat. xxvii. 18. and also Lightfoot’s Illustration. The mother, was, perhaps, instigated by the guests, to solicit the interposition of Jesus ; and her compliance, as it favoured dissipation and inebriety, must have been one ground of the rebuke given her by her Son.

that were enemies to marriage \*, that he did not, as they affected to say, discountenance such an institution. By turning water into wine, he also conveyed to the company an important moral lesson; namely, that the drink, he was to administer to them, as their heavenly teacher, would so far exceed what was given them by the scribes and Pharisees, as the juice of the vine surpasses stagnant water.

\* The impostors, whom the sacred penman had in view, denied the lawfulness of marriage. One object of the gospel ascribed to Philip, was to prove the inexpediency of it, on the authority of *our Lord himself*. This fact appears, from an extract in Epiphanius, alluded to above, which I shall, in this place, translate: "They deride the conduct of the ascetic sect, who practise chastity, virginity, and other unnecessary abstinences. They produce a gospel, forged under the name of the holy disciple Philip, where he is made to say, Reveal to me, Lord, what the soul must declare, on her ascent into heaven, and how she must answer each of the heavenly powers. She must say (answers he) I knew myself: I gathered myself on every side, and I did not plant children for Satan; but tore up his seeds by the roots, and I gathered together my scattered members. And he (the Lord) adds, I know thee, who thou art; for I am one of those above." The author of this book believed (as all the first Gnostics affected to do) that the human soul, after passing through a variety of corporeal forms, ascended to the original fountain whence it emanated. And this seems to be the meaning of the clause *συνελεξα εμαυτην πανταχοθεν*, *I collected myself entire from all the different bodies through which I have passed*. This tenet savours of the system of Epicurus, no less than of Pythagoras. I refer to what Horace says in Book i. Od. 16. and Lucretius in his third book.



The deceivers, whom the Evangelist has in view, pretended, that Jesus wrought miracles, while he was yet *a child*, and that he wrought them at Bethlehem. In opposition to this, he next asserts, in effect, that our Lord performed no miracle till after his baptism; and that the place where he performed the *first* was not Bethlehem, but Cana of Galilee: THIS BEGINNING OF MIRACLES DID JESUS IN CANA OF GALILEE.

But, before we proceed any farther, it is necessary to advert to an ancient book, which, though calculated to throw much light on the New Testament, has been much neglected by learned men. The book, to which I refer, consists of *the Recognitions* and *Homilies*, ascribed to Clement of Rome, the friend and companion of the Apostles. It is supposed to be the composition of an *Ebionite*. But, if it be meant by that supposition, that the author was one, who believed in the simple humanity of Jesus, it is a false one: For, it is evident, that he considered Christ as having existence before his appearance on the earth. It is to be remarked, at the same time, that I cannot

discover any Hebraisms, or any pointed allusions to Jewish customs in the whole of the work : And this circumstance might lead one to conclude, that, if he were not a gentile, he must have been an *hellenistic Jew*, less versed in the Jewish rites and language, than in the Grecian. The question, however, who the writer of it may have been, is of little moment : but it is material to remark, that the production itself is of equal antiquity with the writings of the New Testament. And this fact appears to me, to be capable of the strictest proof. The subject of it, in general, is a detail of the dispute, which Peter had with the Samaritan impostor, in an interview, to which we meet with a reference in the Acts of the Apostles : And the object of it is to expose, and by that means to check, the system, which Simon set up in opposition to the gospel. And, as that system expired with its base author, it follows, as a natural consequence, that the book, the end of which was to overthrow it, was published while it yet flourished.

When our Lord appeared as the Messenger of heaven, the works, which he was enabled to perform, for the substantiating of

his claims, necessarily excited the attention not only of his countrymen, but of the surrounding nations : Nor was this the only effect which they produced. The bulk of the people, seeing the possibility, and even the reality of a supernatural agency, thus unquestionably displayed, were, in consequence, strongly disposed to regard, as real miracles, whatever proceeded from the artifices of Magic. This circumstance gave birth to a swarm of impostors in Rome, and in the provinces ; some of whom, by powers pretended to be delegated by Jesus, endeavoured to imitate ; while others, in more favourable circumstances, boldly rivalled the prophet of Nazareth. Among the number of the latter, Simon Magus held a conspicuous rank. Elevated by ambition, and possessing great genius and learning, he, from the first appearance of Jesus, commenced a system of opposition to him, and rivalry.

But what seems chiefly to have emboldened the hopes, and given a temporary success to his impious project, was the circumstance of his belonging to, and of having opened his pretended commission among a nation, who were separated from the Jews :

by religious bigotry, and who disputed with them, the claims of superior privileges. Thus favourably situated the impostor arrogated, as was natural, every qualification, in an equal, or greater degree, which distinguished his divine antagonist. Jesus, as being the only begotten Son, declared, or exhibited in a clear light, his Supreme Father, who, notwithstanding the law, which he delivered by Moses, and the revelation, he made of his will by the prophets, continued still, in many respects, the unknown God \*. Simon made a similar pretension; and, in order if possible to surpass the claims of his rival, maintained that the God, which

\* This is very concisely and emphatically described by the evangelist John, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and the reality (of the law) is come by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time: The only begotten son, who is in the bosom of the Father—he brought him out to public view." *εκεσινος εξηγησατο* i. 17, 18. The allusion is to a king, who, as the manner was with Eastern princes, had not hitherto condescended to shew himself to his subjects, and therefore, was unknown to them. The Son, however, who lived among the people brought out the Supreme Father from his retirement, and exhibited him before their eyes. In another place, it is written, "No one hath known the Father but the Son;" Mat. xi. 27. These representations enabled the impostor to affirm, with some degree of speciousness, that there existed a God, hitherto unknown to the Jews.—*Ita ergo et Jesus vester alium esse Deum incomprehensibilem et omnibus incognitum fatetur; Recogn. Lib. ii. 47.*

he revealed, was not only unknown to the Jews \* ; but superior to him, whom they worshipped. And as our Lord received the title of the *word of God*, the impostor assumed to himself that of the *power of God* †. The former, again, while living, assured his disciples, that he, like a shepherd, would be struck down by the hand of violence ; and the event corresponded with the prediction. This circumstance, which, for a while, appeared fatal to the christian cause, proved equally auspicious to the interests of Simon : And accordingly, he triumphantly held himself up in opposition to the now *prostrated* Son of God ; as the **STANDING POWER OF GOD** ‡. Pretending thus to be

\* Et Simon ait : Ego dico multos esse Deos ; unum tamen esse incomprehensibilem, atque omnibus incognitum, horumque omnium Deorum Deum, Lib ii. 38. In the next section he adds : Ego autem non hunc (i. e. Judæorum Deum,) sed illum qui etiam hujus Deus est, quem ne ipsi quidem Judæi norunt : neque enim ipsorum est Deus, sed eorum qui agnoverint eum.

† He gave it out that he was the highest power of the Supreme God : Se esse Virtutem Summam Dei excelsi, Lib. i. 72. And the accuracy of the representation, which is thus given of him by the author of the Recognitions, is confirmed by the writer of the Acts ; viii. 10.

‡ In the second *Homily*, Sec. 22. it is thus said of him : Intendunt vero se Christum significans, Stantem appellat. Eam autem appellationem usurpavit, quasi qui exstiturus semper sit,

a Divine Being, it was natural in him to set himself forth as an object of divine honours. And these honours, he confidently boasted he should attain. “ I shall be addressed as a God,” says he, “ publicly presented with divine honours, and those, who will set up my images, will worship me, and pray to me ;” See *Recogn. Lib. ii. 9.*

The place where he chiefly hoped to obtain this distinction, was the city of Rome, where, as we shall presently see, he had been before, and where, soon after this, he again directed his steps: To a person who had long been duped by him, but whose eyes were at length opened, he thus says, when attempting to persuade him to accompany him to that place, “ If you will return with me there, I will send you back loaded with riches, and guarded with many attendants :” On his refusing, he adds, “ You will repent, when you hear, how glorious I shall become in the city of Rome ;” See *Recogn. Lib. iii. 63.*

When christianity was first brought into,

*nec habeat corruptionis causam, ut corpore concidat, See also Clem. Alex. p. 233.*

and preached, in that city, a number of the heathen idols seem to have been thrown down, by the mistaken zeal of its friends. Among these was one dedicated to *Semo Sanco*, a Sabine deity. Simon, on his return, seems to have become acquainted with this circumstance, and availing himself of the similarity of that name to his own, pretended that he was the divinity meant by it\*. And as the deep-rooted prejudice, which the Roman senate cherished towards the gospel, and its founder, induced them willingly to favour any impostor, who was likely to check the one, or vilify the other; they caused the same or another statue to be erected with the inscription, not, as before, of *Semoni Sanco*, but of *Simoni Deo Sancto*. And this appears to be the true solution of a difficulty, which the critics have found, in the following passage of Justin Martyr. Addressing the emperor and senate, he says: “Simon a Samaritan

\* His artifice, in this respect, is well illustrated by what he pretended concerning the strumpet he led about with him. As she was called *Helen*, he affected, from the similarity, or rather identity of the two names, that she was the very same with the wife of Menelaus, whose conjugal infidelity occasioned the Trojan war. Irenæus, p. 95. Epiphanius, p. 57.

from the village of Gitton, who, in the reign of Claudius, by means of demons working in him, did many magical things, is, in your royal city Rome deemed a God, and is honoured as such, with a statue from you; which statue had been raised in the river Tyber, between the two bridges, having upon it this inscription in Latin, *Simoni Deo Sancto*\*.”

\* Σίμωνα μὲν τῆς Σαμαρείας, τοῦ ἀπὸ κωμῆς λεγομένου Γίττων, ὃς ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου Καίσαρος, διὰ τῆς τῶν ἐνεργούντων δαιμονίων τῆς δυναμικῆς ποιητικῆς μαγικῆς, ἐν τῇ πόλει Ἰμων βασιλεῖδι Ρώμῃ, Θεὸς ἐνομισθῆναι, καὶ ἀνδριαντὶ παρ' Ἰμων ὡς Θεὸς τιμηταί· ὃς ἀνδρίας ἀνεγχεῖται ἐν τῷ Τιβερὶ ποταμῷ, μετὰ τῶν δύο γέφυρων ἔχων ἐπιγραφήν Ῥωμαϊκὴν ταύτην Σίμωνι Δεῷ Ἁγῶ, Apol. ii. p. 51. chap. 34.

As a specimen of the opinion of modern critics, respecting this passage, I will here cite the words of Dr. Middleton, in his Inquiry, p. 40. “In his Apology, addressed to the emperor and senate of Rome, he charges them with paying divine honours to the heretic and impostor, Simon of Samaria, commonly called the *magician*: and, for the truth of his charge, appeals to a statue then subsisting in Rome, and publicly dedicated to that Simon, in the island of the Tyber, with this inscription; *Simoni Deo Sancto*. But it is manifest, beyond all reasonable doubt, as some learned men have shewn, that Justin was led here into a gross blunder, by his usual want of judgment and knowledge of Roman affairs, and his preconceived belief of certain fabulous stories, which passed current about this Simon, among the first christians: for the statue and inscription, to which he appeals, were not dedicated to his countryman *Simon Magus*, of whose deification there is not the least hint, in any Roman writer, but to a Sabine deity, of ancient worship in Rome, and of similar



As Christ performed a variety of well-attested miracles, which it was in vain, even for his enemies to deny, Simon had no other way to invalidate the inference that he was the Son of God or the messenger of heaven, than by opposing to them a number of pretended miracles of his own: Of his skill in the magical arts, he thus ostentatiously boasts: "I have it in my power to make myself invisible to those, who are desirous of seeing me, and again to become conspicuous, when wishing to be visible. If I have a mind to flee, I can perforate mountains, and pass through rocks, as through clay. If I were precipitated from a high mountain, I shall

name *Semoni Sanco*, frequently mentioned by the old writers, as the inscription itself, dug up, about two centuries ago, from the ruins of that very place, or little island, which Justin describes, has clearly demonstrated." What the writer here asserts, may be very true: And yet, if the explanation above given, be just; and the justice of it, I shall farther confirm hereafter, it does not at all disprove the testimony of Justin.

The statue dug up since was, doubtless, one of the original ones dedicated to the Sabine deity; while that, which was afterwards raised, in imitation of it, for the honour of Simon, must have mouldered away, in the common ruins. The error, therefore lies with Middleton, and other objectors, and not with Justin Martyr, who knew much more about the matter than they did.

be conveyed unhurt to the ground : Being bound, I can loosen myself, and throw in chains those who enchain me ; fastened in prison, I can cause the bolts to open of their own accord. I can give life to dead statues, so as to be thought by those, who see them, to be men. I will make new trees suddenly spring up, and spontaneous shrubs to shoot. Throwing myself into the fire, I shall not burn. I will change my countenance, so as not to be known, and cause myself to be seen with two faces before men. I will become a sheep, or a goat ; make the beards of boys to grow ; convey myself with wings through the air ; produce vast treasures ; create kings, and throw them down ;” Lib. ii. 9, 16. That he opposed these disgusting tricks to the benevolent works of Jesus Christ, is evident, from the circumstance of his alleging them in his dispute with Peter.

But, notwithstanding the address, with which this and other enemies of truth and virtue opposed the progress of christianity, he saw it, with its illustrious founder, rising into notice and esteem, while himself and his system were sinking fast into contempt, even among his own countrymen. Being

unable to check its prevalence by open and direct force, he contrived means calculated to undermine it by secret artifice. He pretended himself a convert; and, after disguising his real sentiments, which were those of Epicurus, by pernicious, absurd, and mysterious fictions, he incorporated them, thus modelled and concealed, with the new faith. But not being content to rank as a disciple, and not able to become the head of the christian church, he maintained, that the power, which enabled our Lord to perform his miracles, was no other than himself. And, in order to throw a veil of speciousness over such a daring and impious pretension, he feigned, that the Christ was a supernatural being, distinct from the man Jesus; that, when the latter was seized, and condemned by the Jews, the former flew off, and came and entered into him, so that it was no longer Jesus, but himself, that was to be deemed the Son of God. Here then we see that heavenly religion, whose glory it is to have brought life and immortality to light, tarnished by a sudden union with a vile and impious imposture; and a wretch placing himself at its

head, whose principles and practice were diametrically opposed to its genius.

The early fathers are, as has been shewn, unanimous in their testimony, that the Samaritan impostor is the original founder of the Gnostic school. This position, nevertheless, I attempted to shew to be ill grounded: But the perusal of the works, ascribed to Clement, has convinced me, that the fathers are in the right, and myself, thus far, in an error. Several passages in these, throw much light on this dark and doubtful subject; and, when carefully compared, lead us to conclude, that the magicians, and the wicked Jew, who occasioned the disturbances in Rome, were but the disciples and associates of Simon Magus; and that he himself was, probably, in the number of those, who were banished from that city.

The author of the *Homilies*, informs us, that Simon was one of John the Baptist's disciples\*: that he went, about the time of his master's apprehension by Herod, to Alex-

\* Johannes quidam exstitit, qui singulis diebus baptizaret, quique Domini nostri Jesus secundum conjugationis rationem, fuit præcursor—Porro horum triginta, Johanni primus ac probatissimus erat Simon: Hom. ii. Sec. 23.

andria, where he became eminent by the practice of magic. In Alexandria, then, it is probable, he contracted an acquaintance with many of the Egyptian philosophers, and with those Gnostic teachers, who, soon after, rose and flourished in Egypt. Nor can it be deemed unlikely, that he, and some of these should have proceeded, some time after, to the capital of the empire, where impostors no less than men of letters, usually resorted, and where they were then particularly invited, by the devotion of Tiberius to the arts of magic and astrology. If this supposition be just, Simon Magus, and his followers, must have composed, in part, those philologers, whose crimes occasioned the molestation of the Jews and Egyptians in Italy.

Orosius, Eusebius, Tertullian, and Philo, concur, we have seen; in attesting, that, at the time of the commotions in the city, the emperor published an edict in favour of the christians, and caused it to be sent to the præfects of the provinces; enjoining them to protect the peaccable, in the exercise of their religious rites, and to punish only the guilty; whom the last of the above writers

asserts to be comparatively very few. Hear now, what the writer of the *Recognitions* says, on this interesting point : The centurion, mentioned in the *Acts*, is thus represented, as informing Peter, “ Cæsar hath given orders, that the magicians should be sought for, and punished, both in the city Rome, and throughout the provinces ; of whom a great number already have been destroyed. I will, therefore, divulge among the friends (of Simon) that I am come to seize that magician ; that I was sent by Cæsar for this purpose, in order, that he also might be punished with others his associates \*.” Here we see the attestation of the above mentioned authors signally confirmed ; and farther perceive, that the edict of Tiberius was levelled against Simon Magus, and that those, who were

\* The passage, more at large, is as follows : *Cumque nulum videremus exitum rei, supervenit Cornelius centurio, missus a Cæsare ad præsidem Cæsareæ, publici negotii gratia : hunc accersimus ad nos solum, causamque ei, qua mæsti essemus exponimus ; ac si quid posset ut juvaret hortamur. Tum ille promptissime repromittit, se eum (Simonem) fugaturum, si tamen consilio ejus etiam nos admitteremur : Cumque nos polliceremur impigre cuncta gesturos, ait ; Cæsar in urbe Roma et per provincias maleficos inquire jussit, ac perimî ; ex quibus plurimi jam perempti sunt. Ego igitur divulgabo per amicos, me, ut hunc magum caperem, venisse, et ob hoc missum a Cæsare, quo etiam hic cum cæteris suis sociis puniatur ; Lib. x. 55.*

punished in Rome, were his friends and companions in guilt.

That the impostor had lately been in Rome, and came from thence, previously to his dispute with the apostle, is a fact, which may be gathered from his own words; for after his defeat, he talked of *returning*\* to Rome. Let me add, that the author of the Acts, who was a competent judge of the matter, appears, from his history, to have associated the impostor with the persecution, that originated with the tumults in Italy.

Lastly, The religious system, fabricated by Simon, is so very like that, which was professed by the other original Gnostics, that their respective authors must have had some intercourse with each other. But the latter, I have already proved, came from Rome: it follows, therefore, that the former was

\* A person, who had long been duped by him, and whom he solicited to go with him to Rome, after his defeat by Peter, thus repeats his words: Rogabat autem me, ut cum ipso proficiscerer, dicens se Romam petere; ibi enim in tantum placitum, ut Deus putetur, et divinis publice donetur honoribus. Tunc, inquit, te omnibus divitiis repletum, si HUC REDIRE placuerit, et pluribus fultum ministeriis mittam; Lib. iii. 63.

in the number of them, or, at least, had some connection with them while in that city.

From the short, but I hope, not uninteresting view, here taken of the original authors of the Gnostic system, we may form an accurate judgment of its nature, and design. Simon, with his immediate successors, Menander, Basilides, and others, were undoubtedly Epicureans no less in principle than in practice: but being desirous, from interested motives, to profess christianity, and by their profession, to undermine it, they were obliged, in some degree, to disguise their real sentiments.

Epicurus excluded the Gods from all concern, not only in the formation, but in the government of the universe, and represented them as indolent, impassive and solitary beings; equally untouched with the joys and sorrows of men. Had the popular superstition rendered it safe or expedient, he doubtless would have gone a step farther, and, at once, denied the very existence of such beings. But he well knew that, if he established his point, so far as to exclude, in the general estimation, the influence of superior intelligences, the transition to an



open and direct denial of their existence would be short and easy. The impostors, having imbibed this notion of Epicurus, adopted his conduct in their mode of supporting it. They did not, indeed, think it prudent openly to maintain, that the world had no intelligent cause, distinct from the matter composing it; but they insisted, that the author of it was a weak and wicked being; while he, who was supreme in power and goodness, lived in indolent tranquillity, unconcerned about human affairs, and known to none but themselves\*.

\* The notion of Epicurus, respecting the divine nature, is thus poetically described by Lucretius:

Omnis enim per se divum natura necesse est  
 Immortali ævo summa cum pace fruatur.  
 Semota ab nostris rebus, sejunctaque longe,  
 Nam, privata dolore omni, privata periclis:  
 Ipsa suis pollens viribus, nihil indiga nostri:  
 Nec bene promeritis capitur nec tangitur ira.

Lib. i. 57—62.

Very similar to this is the language of Velleius, the speaker, who supported the Epicurean system, in the dialogue concerning the Gods, written by Cicero: Et quærere a nobis, Balbe, soletis, quæ vita deorum sit, quæque ab iis degatur ætas. Ea videlicet, qua nihil beatius, nihil omnibus bonis affluentius cogitari potest. Nihil enim agit, nullis occupationibus est implicatus: Nulla opera molitur; sua sapientia et virtute gaudet: habet exploratum fore se semper tum in maximis tum in æternis voluptatibus. Lib. i. chap. 19.

Now, if you compare with this the account which the

The Jewish lawgiver, with the succeeding prophets, taught the existence, and inculcated the worship of an all-wise and perfect Jehovah; boundless in goodness, as well as in power and wisdom; the sole Creator and Governor of the universe; the righteous Lord, loving righteousness; hating iniquity, and rewarding those, who sought and obeyed him. Had the deceivers acknowledged the existence and sovereignty of such a being, the necessity of conforming to his law, and the guilt and danger of disobedience, would follow as necessary consequences: They, therefore, endeavoured to guard against these consequences, not indeed by denying that he existed, but by stripping him of his natural and moral perfections. The motives, which induced them to reject a God of infinite purity, inclined them, on

impostors give of their supreme unknown God, it will evidently appear to have been copied from no other source than the school of Epicurus. *Dicunt esse quendam in invisibilibus, et inerrabilibus altitudinibus perfectum Æonem, qui ante fuit—Hunc autem et Proarchen, et Propatera, et Bythum vocant; esse autem illum et invisibilem, et quem nulla res capere posset. Cum autem a nullo caperetur, et esset invisibilis, sempiternus et ingenitus, in silentio et in quiete multa fuisse in immensis Æonibus;* Iren. p. 7. This inaccessible being was not supposed to be the Creator and Governor of the world. His happiness, conformably to the opinion of Epicurus, consisted in silent ease, indolent tranquillity, and indulgences unruffled by disquietudes, and uninterrupted by cares.

the other hand, to become the advocates of an impure, and unholy being, who, though fictitious, was held up as the symbol of *duplicity*, and *pleasure*, and the enemy of truth and virtue. Accordingly they affected to extol and worship the serpent—a pretended divinity, whom the supporters of it had from the beginning opposed to the God of the Jews.

From thus rejecting the Deity, whom the Jewish people acknowledged and obeyed, the rejection of those scriptures which unfolded the knowledge and enjoined the worship of him, was a matter that followed of course.

The Grecian philosopher made the sensual appetite the only standard of right and wrong, and taught, that no pleasure could exist distinct from the indulgence of the senses\*. This was a doctrine too soothing to be resisted by men, who were exceedingly depraved by animal gratifications,

\* His own words, as recorded by Laertius, in his life, are the following, Ου γαρ εγωγε εχω τι νοκσω ταγαλον, αφαιρων μεν τας δια χιλων ηδονας, αφαιρων δε και τας δι' αφροδισιων, και τας δι' ακροαματων, και τας δια μορφας. Vol. i. p. 606.

and who sought no higher and more refined object than their own immediate interests. The founders of Gnosticism, therefore, conformably to their master, denied all moral obligations, as founded in the nature of things, and impudently maintained, that the distinction of virtue and vice, in conduct, proceeded from the malevolence of the Creator, or from the arbitrary institutions of men \*. Having thus virtually superseded the necessity of maintaining a holy life, they consistently enough, transferred the standard of a true and sound faith, from the outward conduct to some inward emotions; from the fruits of virtue to some spiritual seed implanted in the heart. And it was an obvious inference, which they drew, as a cloak to their depravities, that good actions, being unnecessary to their happiness in this, would not be

\* Nec enim esse naturaliter operationes justas, sed ex accidenti; quemadmodum posuerunt, qui mundum fecerunt, Angeli, per hujusmodi præcepta in servitum deducendos homines. Qua propter et solvi mundum, et liberari eos, qui sunt ejus, ab imperio eorum, qui mundum fecerunt, repromisit: Iren. p. 95. Theodoret tells us that this was also the opinion of Carpocrates. *Opinione*, enim, aiebat, non *veritate*, rerum aliæ bonæ videntur, aliæ malæ; Hær. Fab. Lib. i. g. p. 293.

requisite to their salvation in the next world\*.

The prospect of a future state, and the solemnity of a future judgment, to punish vice and reward virtue, constitute the glory of the christian doctrine, and render it, conformably to the original name of gospel, *good news* to men. An avowed disbelief of these fundamental tenets would have appeared to the most superficial observer, to be utterly inconsistent with the profession of its divine origin. The impostors, therefore, being enemies in their hearts to these animating principles of conduct †, but unable

\* Passages in proof of this assertion have already been produced. But I cannot here help adding what Theodolet says of Simon in this respect. He assured his followers that they would obtain salvation not by *virtuous actions*, but by *grace*. Ου δια πραξεων αγαθων αλλα δια χαριτος τευξεσθαι της σωτηριας, Hær. Fab. Lib. i. 1.

† The truth of this assertion cannot be doubted. Simon in his dispute with Peter openly maintained that the soul dies with the body; and that the body remains dead for ever: And one of the charges, which he urges against the apostle, is that he attempted to restrain the intemperate desires of men by placing before them the hope of a future reward. Tum Simon: Certum est, inquit, non posse te adserere, quod immortalis sit anima, et ob hoc cavillaris, sciens quia si mortalis probetur, radicatus convellatur religionis istius, quam conaris adserere, tota professio; et ideo laudo quidem prudentiam tuam, non tamen

to refute them, as established on the simple; yet solid basis of our Lord's resurrection; sought to render them, at first, inefficient, and in the end, ridiculous, by erecting them on the chimerical ground of some inconceivable and inexpressible union with the angels, that shall accompany the Saviour,

probo persuasionem, multos enim persuades suscipere religionem, et libidinis subire continentiam, sub spe futurorum bonorum: quibus evenit, ut neque presentibus perfruantur, et decipiantur futuris. Simul enim, ut mortui fuerint, etiam pariter anima extinguetur; Recog. Lib. iii. 41. When this impostor, however, became a nominal convert, he no longer thus openly opposed the doctrines of a new life, and future retribution, but pretended that those, who followed him, would attain salvation. But what he, and his disciples taught, respecting a punishment to come, seems still more intended to burlesque that doctrine than to answer any other purpose. Their pretended sentiments on the subject, are stated by Theodoret in the following manner: "Pythagoras taught the fabulous doctrine, that the souls transmigrate not only into the bodies of irrational animals, but also into plants. This fable too was adopted in a certain shape by Plato. And hence Manes, and the impious tribe of those before him, who were called Gnostics, availing themselves of this subterfuge, maintained, that this (transmigration) constituted the punishment (of the souls). But the filthy Carpocrates, and Epiphanes, and Prodicus, and the Cainists, who lead a polluted life, affirm, that the souls are immersed in corporeal forms, in order, that by means of lust and intemperance, each (man) might serve the angels, who created the world. But the church of the pious abominates these, and such like fables; and, following the divine oracles, believes that the bodies shall be raised, and that with them, the souls shall be judged; and that, while those who lead a vicious life, will be punished, they that cultivate virtue, shall attain the promised rewards," Her. Fab. Lib. v. *De Judicio*, p. 449.

even without the previous qualifications of piety and benevolence.

The innumerable instances of contrivance and benignity in the works of nature, form a body of evidence in favour of a supreme intelligent mind, which stubborn scepticism indeed may perplex, and minute philosophy evade; but which no fair and liberal mode of argumentation can refute. Of this circumstance, Epicurus appears to have been aware; and therefore kept out of sight those deductions of reason in favour of an all-perfect intelligence, concerned in the government and formation of the universe; and founded the existence of the gods on some instinctive perception called *προληψις*, or *anticipation*; that is, a natural impression furnished by the senses previously to the exercise of the understanding\*. And this is

\* Cicero represents Velleius, the advocate of the Epicurean system, as thus stating the grounds, on which that philosopher affected to believe in the popular Gods. Solus enim vidit, primum esse deos, quod in omnium animis eorum notionem impressisset ipsa natura. Quæ est enim gens, aut quod genus hominum, quod non habeat, sine doctrina, anticipationem quandam deorum, quam appellat, *προληψις*, Epicurus, et est anteceptam animo quandam rei informationem, sine qua nec intelligi quidquam, nec quæri nec disputari potest. *De Natura Deorum*, Lib. i. 16.

the very foundation on which the impostors of the Samaritan school, sought with no less cunning than baseness, to erect the edifice of the Christian faith; and not on the miracles of Christ, and the inference thence obviously drawn, that he acted with the authority of a being, who controuled the laws of the natural and moral world\*.

So extraordinary and various were the works of Jesus, so fairly and openly were they performed, so numerous and unexceptionable were the witnesses who attested their reality, that not one even of his bitterest adversaries, for the first hundred years ventured to call them in question. The belief of their truth, which the deceivers, who, though pretended friends, were in fact the most determined foes of Christ and his

\* This is evident from the words of Clement Alexandrinus: Ἐνταυθα φυσικῶν ἡγουμέναι τὴν πίσιν ἐν ἀμφὶ τοῦ Βασιλίδου· καθὼ ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκλογῆς ταύτουσιν αὐτὴν, τὰ μαθηματὰ ἀναποδεικτικῶς εὐερισκουσάν καταλαμβάνει νοητικῆ· That is, “*The followers of Basalides think faith to be a mere natural impression (and therefore confine it to their elect) which comprehends their instructions by an intellectual perception WITHOUT PROOF. This natural impression, which was not the result of rational enquiry, they called προληψίς, anticipation. And this is the very definition, which Epicurus gave of faith in the existence of the popular gods. See Strom. lib. ii. sec. 3. p. 363. also sec. 4. p. 365.*



cause, could not resist, they endeavoured artfully to undermine. And the wretched expedient, to which they had recourse to answer this purpose, is a demonstration of the impossibility of openly denying his miraculous endowments, with effect, in those early times. Jesus, they asserted, had a body unlike those of other men, it being composed of a subtle ethereal substance, which made him an object only of sight. Or, in other words, he was, according to them, a man in mere appearance—a ghost, or a phantom\*.

This position being admitted, the conclusion, they well knew, would obviously

\* This idea also they copied from the Epicurean school. For it was the opinion of Epicurus, that the Gods existed in a human shape, though they had no real bodies, but appeared to have bodies. The words of Cotta in his reply to Velleius are so appropriate, that one might have addressed them without any change to the Gnostic impostors. *Mirabile videtur, quod non rideat haruspex, cum haruspicem viderit. Hoc mirabilius quod vos inter vos risum tenere possitis. Non est corpus sed quasi corpus: Hoc intelligerem quale esset, si id in ceris fingeretur, aut fictilibus figuris: In deo quid sit quasi corpus; aut quasi sanguis intelligere non possum—Ne tu quidem, Vellei, sed non vis fateri.* It is material to remark that Cicero considered this opinion of the Epicureans as a mere subterfuge adopted for the purpose of deception, but at which they laughed among themselves. And this was eminently true in respect to the Gnostic impostors.

follow, that his works also were phantoms.— or things done in appearance only : And thus the foundation been withdrawn, the splendid edifice of the christian hope would effectually be demolished. This notion, however, did not sufficiently favour the views of Simon ; since, if true, it left him without any specious plea for saying, that he himself was the Son of God. Living, too, near a people, who had personally known and conversed with Jesus, he could not maintain an opinion so wild, without appearing contemptible and ridiculous to the enemies, as well as to the friends of Christ. He therefore contrived a more plausible fiction ; namely, that Jesus was really a man, but that that man, by no means, constituted the Christ ; this being a God descended upon him at his baptism, and again left him on his apprehension. Accordingly he affected to acknowledge and honour the divinity, which dwelt in the man Jesus, while he anathematised, cursed, or excommunicated Jesus himself. Authorities in proof of the distinction, which he thus made, have already been produced. His followers, being advocates for the Egyptian divinity, of which the serpent was the symbol, were, from this circumstance, sometimes called

*Ophite* or *Ophiani*, while, at other times, they were distinguished by the appellation of *Cainists* \*; because they were actuated by those sentiments of envy and malice towards the true disciples, which prompted Cain to the murder of his brother. Of these Origen thus speaks: “ Celsus

\* The resemblance, which those men were supposed to bear to Cain, and which thus procured them the name of Cainists, has induced the apostle John to use this emphatic language, “ Whosoever hateth his brother is a *man-slayer*, and ye know that no man-slayer hath eternal life abiding in him;” Epis. iii. 15. Epiphanius has a remark concerning them, deserving of notice in this place: *Διδασκουσι δε ταυτα και τα τοιαυτα, τους πονηρους τιμωντες, και τους αγαθους απαγορευοντες*. *These, and such things, they teach, honouring the evil, and repudiating the good*; p. 277. C. And the truth of this assertion is confirmed, in a striking manner, by the language of this Apostle: “ For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another: Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him, BECAUSE HIS OWN WORKS WERE EVIL, AND HIS BROTHER’S RIGHTEOUS; iii. 11, 12. It will appear hereafter, that the whole of this Epistle is levelled against the Cainists; and hence we shall perceive the propriety of those precepts to righteousness and brotherly love, which recur in almost every verse of it. Jude, it is to be farther remarked, refers to the Cainists, when he says, “ Woe to them who have gone in the way of Cain.” verse 11. These impostors appear to have gloried in the name of Cain, given them for the above reason, as the representative of a power superior to that which was typified by Abel; that is, of a God more powerful and perfect than the heavenly Father of the christians, or Jehovah of the Jews. See Epiph. p. 276.

ought to know that there exist those (pretended christians) who espouse the cause of the serpent, and on that account are stiled *Ophitæ*; who outdo the fictions of the Giants and Titans, and, so far from being christians, accuse Jesus no less than Celsus himself: Nor do they admit any one into their society unless he first *curse Jesus* \*. To this fact we meet with many allusions in the writings of the apostles. Take the following passage for an example: “Wherefore I give you to understand, that no one, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus *curst*,” that is, rejecteth Jesus with execrations; 1 Cor. xii. 3. The impostors pre-

\* Ειδειαι δε αυτον εχρην, οτι οι τα οφεις ελομενοι, ως καλως ταις πρωτοις ανθρωποις συμβουλευσαντος, και τιταναις και γιγανταις τους μυθικου; υπερβαλοντες, και Οφιανοι δια τουτο καλουμενοι, τασουτον αποδεουσι του ειναι Χριστιανοι, ωςε ουκ ελαττον Κελσου κατηγορειν αυτου; του Ιησου και μη προτερον προσισθαι τινα επι το συνεδριου εαυτων, εαν μη αρα; θηται κατα του Ιησου, p. 294. They thus rejected, and anathematised Jesus, because they were compelled to acknowledge, that he was a human being. On other occasions, they seem to have receded from this notion, which they had borrowed from the Samaritan leader, and maintained, as was afterwards done by Valentinus, Marcion, and others, that he was a man only in appearance. And this illustrates the justice of the complaint, which Origen immediately subjoins; “See how unreasonably Celsus acts, when, in his publication against the christians, he vilifies as christians, those who are unwilling to hear the name of Jesus, nor allow that he was wise and virtuous, nor even *that he was a man.*”

tended to be divinely inspired, and, on the authority of this affected inspiration, excommunicated, with curses, the man whom Paul proclaimed as the Son of God. At the close of this Epistle, the same illustrious writer says, in reference to the impostors, "If any man love not the Lord *Jesus*, let him be *anathema*." That is, Instead of excommunicating *Jesus*, excommunicate that person, whoever he be, that, pretending to receive the Christ, yet blasphemes and hates the Lord *Jesus*. This circumstance will serve to develop another peculiarity in the stile of the New Testament: The authors of it never use the simple title of Christ to express the person of our Lord, excepting in circumstances where it is obvious they meant a being subject to mortality and other human infirmities, but annex to it the name *Jesus*. And when it was their object to make prominent the idea that the Christ was no other than the man *Jesus*, they place *Jesus*, the last of his names. It is farther to be remarked, that the above notion, propagated by Simon, led the four Evangelists to impress on their respective gospels a feature very characteristic of their compositions; which, though

deserving of notice, has not yet been observed. In conformity to their master's own injunction, they no where directly stile him *Christ* ; nor do they give him the appellation of *Lord*, except on those occasions, as will presently be seen, where they have a reference to the deceivers, who rejected him under that appellation. On the contrary, they usually designate him by the simple title of *Jesus*, and thus affix to him, as the Son of God, the very name, which distinguished him as a human being. These general remarks I shall not stop here to illustrate, as instances attesting their truth and justice, will continually present themselves in our progress,

The title of *Lord*, in its original acceptation, was applied to one, who exercised a right over the persons and properties of those men who lived in subordination to him. When appropriated to *Jesus Christ*, it was used, in the same sense, to signify the claims which, as their legislator, he had to the obedience of his followers. But the Gnostic teachers, too proud to acknowledge a superior, and too depraved to conform to so beautiful a model of christian imitation, openly rejected him as their *Lord* ; though

they affected to embrace and worship him as a supernatural being. Hence Irenæus says of them, they are not willing to stile him Lord \*. And to this peculiarity in their system, we shall perceive many obvious references in the apostolic writings. Take, for example, the latter part of the verse quoted above: "Therefore I make it known to you, that no one, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus cursed: And no one is able to call JESUS LORD, save in the Holy Spirit." The following is a still more remarkable instance; Phil. ii. 5—12. "Let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ JESUS, who, being in a divine (splendid) form, did not contentiously retain it; but emptied himself of it, having taken a mean form, being in the likeness of men, and proved to be in frame as a man. But he humbled himself so as to be obedient unto death, and (that too) a death on the cross. And, on this account, God hath highly exalted him, and bestowed on him a name above every other name, that in the name of JESUS, every knee should bend, in heaven, and upon earth, and beneath the earth, and every tongue should confess JESUS CHRIST to be LORD unto the glory of God the Father."

\* Ουδε Κυριον ονομαζειν αυτον εδελουσι, p. 9.

In the chapter preceding this paragraph, the Apostle openly speaks of the impostors, who, from envy towards him, preached Christ. In this chapter he intreats the christians at Phillippi, to preserve among themselves unanimity and meekness; and then he adverts to the sentiments of the deceivers as the cause of their dissentions.

The transfiguration, it has already been observed, was symbolical of the glorious change, which our Lord should undergo in his person and character, after his death and resurrection. But though he assumed, on that occasion, a divine or very splendid form, yet he presently laid it aside, and took upon him his former humble and mean figure: And so far was he from being anxious to retain the splendor, with which he was then invested, that he commanded his disciples not to divulge it, until the event had explained the nature, and realized the object of the scene. Now, in reference to those men, who, while they disgraced him by their conduct, affected to honour our Lord by turbulently ascribing to him a divine nature; the Apostle observes,—“Jesus being in a divine form, did not contentiously



retain it; but emptied himself of it, having taken a mean form" \*.

The impostors, while they maintained, the divinity of Christ, maintained farther, that he was a man only in the likeness of men. This is what the Apostle next notices: And he asserts virtually, that as Jesus, in form, resembled men, so he was found, on the fullest investigation, to be really a man.—“He was in the likeness of men, and *proved* to be in frame as a man.”—The term

\* Origen appears to have understood the Apostle in this place, as referring to his transfiguration on the mount, for he uses the phrase, which Paul here employs, to express the splendid appearance then assumed by him, in the presence of his three disciples: Ωρθη αυτος εν μορφη Θεου, Com. vol. i. p. 292. On the two opposite, but equally false notions, maintained by the Gnostics and the orthodox, respecting Christ, Celsus has grounded this objection against his divine mission: “Either God really changed himself, as these men say, into a mortal body; and this we have shewn to be impossible; or he did not change himself, but caused those, who saw him, to think so; and thus he deceives and falsifies. But falsehood and deception are always evil, excepting when in the prescription of medicines the physician uses them towards friends diseased and delirious; or towards enemies, when one meditates by means of them to escape danger. But no one, who is a friend of God, can be either diseased or delirious: Nor does God dread any, that he needs deception for avoiding danger.” Now, Origen, in reply to this, quotes the above passage from the apostle Paul to prove, that Jesus was not, in appearance, but really, a man. And this affords a presumption, that Origen was aware, that the apostle levelled it against the deceivers. See pages 171, 172.

εὐαγγελιστῶν seems here, as it is elsewhere, to be used, in a judicial sense, and signifies, that Christ was discovered, by satisfactory evidences, to have in fact been what he visibly appeared—a human being.

The object of the fiction that Jesus existed only in the likeness of men, was to furnish a specious ground for denying the reality of his death, and subsequent resurrection. According to them, Christ continued obedient in the humble figure of a man, no farther than the period of his public apprehension; he then vanished away. This the Apostle contradicts, by declaring, that he humbled himself, and became obedient *unto death*, and that a death on the cross.

Paul, having asserted the real death, proceeds to attest, in opposition to the deceivers, the resurrection and exaltation of our Lord: But he insinuates, that he did not rise by virtue of his own nature, which would be the case on the supposition of his divinity, but by the power of God, who hath bestowed upon him an honoured name, as the reward of his obedience: “And, on this account, God hath raised him up above (us)

and bestowed on him a name above every other name."

The men, who first deified the man Christ Jesus, naturally enough held him up as an object of divine worship. This is the interesting point, on which our illustrious teacher next decides : The glory, he says, is to be ascribed to God, and the name of Jesus, however to be loved and admired, is only a medium through which this glory is to be offered to the Father of the universe. " In the name (*εν τῷ ὀνοματι*) of Jesus, every knee should bend\*—unto the glory of God the Father.

\* The name above every other name, which God has bestowed on Jesus, was that of *my Son*. This is clear from the following passage : " But to which of the angels has he, at any time, said, Thou art *my Son*, this day have I begotten thee ; and again, I will be unto him as a Father, and he will be unto me as a Son : " Heb. i. 5. But if this be the honoured name meant, how came the writer to say that in the name of *Jesus*, and not in the name of *the Son*, every knee should bend ? His reason for the substitution was this : Having asserted, that Christ was a real man, that he suffered, and died, and rose in reality, and thus proved that he was the Son of God, he inculcates, on his readers, that whatever honour is due to him, in this light, was, of course, to be associated with the name *Jesus* ;—that name which distinguished him as a human being, however odious it was rendered by his open enemies, or his false friends.

The obvious reference, which the Apostle here has to the

Lastly, Though they affected to magnify the Christ, they rejected, with execrations, the man Jesus, and refused to acknowledge him as their Lord. And this characteristic feature of their system, Paul has noticed on

Gnostic teachers, unfolds the source whence he has borrowed the terms here used by him :—μορφή—εκενωσε—εν ομοιωματι ανθρωπων—ως ανθρωπος. For all these originated in the Gnostic school, and are thence borrowed by our Apostle. As the two latter are obviously so, I will content myself with a few instances of the two former. Thus, according to Irenæus, they said of the Æons, or Gods, of which Christ was one, μορφη και γωμη ετους κατασταθηναι αιωνος λεγουσι, p. 14. Speaking of the first Christ, or the author of the Jewish dispensation, they said of it, μορφωσαι μορφωσιν την κατ' ουσιαν, and of the author of the gospel, when he first appeared, μορφωσαι μορφωσιν την κατα γωσιν. See p. 19, 23. If you would wish to see with what frequency they used these terms, examine chapter ninth book first: Nor was the application of the word εκενωσε, less frequent among them. See Iren. p. 50. Epiphani. 272, 273. The constant use of these terms, indeed, by the Gnostics, shews, that they were appropriate to their system. And this is fully confirmed, by their primary signification: For, “the term μορφη, forma species, figura, imports the outward form, face, or resemblance of any thing or person, in opposition to its internal nature or constitution.” See the excellent Mr. Lindsey's Sequel, p. 274; and the verb κενουν (taken from κενος, vacuus, void) signifies to make empty, hollow, or unsubstantial. Consequently both of them are words the most expressive of any that could be adopted by the deceivers to convey their peculiar notion that our Lord was a man only in appearance, only an empty form, or a vain shadow. The propriety of εκενωσε, as used by Paul, consists perhaps in this, The transfiguration of Jesus was but a vision. This visionary appearance, this vacant representation, he laid aside, and again resumed his own substantial nature, his own solid figure as Jesus of Nazareth.

this occasion : “ And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD.”

We now return to the subject. From the above enquiry into the nature and object of the first Gnostic system, we may account for some interesting particulars, which cannot otherwise well be accounted for.

1. It appears, that the early adversaries of the gospel, sometimes confounded the followers of Jesus Christ, with those of Epicurus; and, at others, associated them together, as bearing, in the common estimation, some affinity to each other. The impostor Alexander, as is related by Lucian, uses this language; “ If any christian, or Epicurean atheist, come here to inspect my mysteries, let him flee.” On hearing this, the whole multitude of his followers exclaimed, “ Away with the christians; Away with the Epicureans.” Lucian’s Works, vol. i. 770. They are again mentioned in connection with each other in page 760.

Plutarch in his Treatise concerning Isis, sec. 23. has a passage to this effect, “ I fear, says he, that this, (namely, the supposition

that the pagan Gods were but deified men) would be to agitate topics that ought not to be agitated, and to wage war not only with high antiquity, but also with many generations of men, renowned for their piety towards the Gods: Since it would be nothing less than the transferring of such great names from heaven to the earth; the overturning of that faith and reverence, which almost all have cherished from the first generation, and the opening of a wide door for an atheistical people, who turn the divinities into men." By the *atheistical people* here mentioned, the sophist, it appears to me, intended the followers of Jesus, who uniformly maintained, that the popular Gods were no other than dead men deified by ignorance and superstition \*: And this they did, in part, on the authority of *Euhemerus*, whom Plutarch immediately censures for having given a handle to such

\* Quo modo ergo, inquiet aliquis, Dii crediti sunt, nimirum quia reges maximi ac potentissimi fuerunt ob merita virtutum suarum aut munerum, aut artium repertarum, cum Chari fuissent iis, quibus imperitaverint, in memoriam sunt consecrati. Quod si quis dubitet, res eorum gestas, et facta consideret; quæ universa tam poetæ quam historici veteres prodiderunt. Lactantius, page 34. This author cites the authority of Euhemerus, in p. 47. He is cited also by Augustine, Arnobius, Clemens Alexandrinus. See Squire's Note on the place in Plutarch. It is worthy of remark that

an impious doctrine. It will appear, however, when we analyse this book, that the sophist chiefly had in view the Gnostic teachers, who came from the school of Epicurus, and many of whose sentiments they still retained. I cannot help calling your attention to the monstrous depravity of this writer. Plutarch, like every other intelligent heathen, must have well known that the pagan divinities, were but human beings, raised by folly and adulation to the rank of gods; and yet so base he appears to have been, as, contrary to his conviction, to deny this fact, and that from no other motive than to check the progress of the new religion.

The philologers in the court of Tiberius, though nominal converts to the christian faith, were, in reality, rank Epicureans. Accordingly this same writer, in his dialogue concerning the cessation of the heathen oracles, after having noticed the story of the death of Pan, which they had invented

this last, though he affects, from malice against the christians and their cause; to reject the notion that the heathen gods were but deified men, yet tells us that Osiris was no other than an Egyptian king; sec. xiii. p. 32. Thus, equally remote from consistence, and the love of truth, shall we ever find the ancient adversaries of the Christian faith.

in conjunction with the Egyptian Thaumaturgus, puts the following remark in the mouth of Cleombrotus, respecting them: "As to the scoffs and reproaches of the Epicureans, we need not heed them, since they are so barefaced as to deride even providence, calling it a mere fable;" See vol. i. p. 253. This leads me to remark, that, as the author in the context is speaking of the Epicureans, he means, perhaps, by *ειδωλα*, *idols*, those images, which Democritus and Epicurus after him, supposed to fly from the surfaces of things, and to remain entire, when the objects, which give birth to them, are far removed, or long destroyed. The passage, on this probable supposition, should thus be rendered: "If it be fit to scoff in philosophy, we should scoff at those images, dumb, blind, and lifeless, which, after an indefinite revolution of years, re-appear, and every where return, though flown from bodies, some indeed living, others long since burnt or rotted." But, though this be a fair version of the clause, yet I maintain that the translation given in vol. i. p. 241—245. with the criticism annexed, is also admissible: Since the Sophist may have levelled his language against the philologers, both as the followers of Christ, and as those of Epicurus. Nothing was more natural than



that a malignant enemy of the christians should, when a fair opportunity presented itself, have attempted to expose the doctrine of a future resurrection, espoused by them, by blending it with a fabulous hypothesis equally remote from reason and truth. The Epicurean christians, whom Plutarch stigmatizes, did not, it is granted, admit the future re-organisation of the human body. But he well knew, that they had espoused a religion, which inculcates, and classed themselves with a people, who embraced this tenet, however repugnant to the pagan philosophy, as the fundamental article of their faith.

The circumstance of our Lord quelling the storm, as it had a symbolical reference to events, which awaited the progress of his religion in the world, gave rise to the practice, usual among early ecclesiastical writers, of representing the christian church under the figure of a ship floating on the sea. A passage, where this comparison is carried to undue extent, I shall here translate from a spurious letter, said to have been addressed by Clement to the apostle James :

“ The state of the church in general, resembles a large ship, conveying through a

violent tempest, men of different countries, all desirous of becoming citizens of the same good community. The owner of the ship may be compared to God; the governor to Christ; the pilot to the bishops; the masters of the oars to the deacons; the sailors to the catechumens; the whole multitude of brethren to the passengers; the world to the sea; the adverse winds to temptations; persecutions, and dangers, and various afflictions, to the huge waves; the doctrines of false prophets to torrents and gusts of wind, driving from the land; promontories and rugged places to judges, high in authority, and menacing cruelties; narrow and boisterous streights, to those who are not governed by reason, but fluctuate respecting the commandments of truth. Hypocrites may be deemed like pirates: But think sins alone to be the fatal rocks, and devouring gulfs. That we may therefore sail with a prosperous gale, and be conveyed without great danger, into the harbour of the hoped-for city, offer such prayers as are meet to be heard. And prayers become thus worthy by virtuous actions;" Cot. vol. i. p. 609. The perusal of this passage may prepare you for the following representation, given by the philosopher

*Maximus Tyrius* \*. “Since my discourse has adopted the image of the sea, let us not

\* Ἐπει δὲ ὁ λόγος, οὐκ οἶδα ὅπως, εἰκόνος θαλαττίας ἐπελάβετο, μὴ ἀφάμεν αὐτὸν ἀπελθεῖν ἡμῖν, πρὶν ἐξεργασθῆναι σαφῶς τὴν γραφὴν εἰκαζών τὴν Ἐπικούρου φιλοσοφίαν βασιλικῆ ἕλκαδι Λαίτου βασιλείῃς· λέγω δὲ οὐ μῦθον πλαττῶν, ἀλλὰ οὐ πολὺς χρόνος ὅτε ἐξ Αἰγυπτου εἰς Τροίαν ἐπλεῖ βασιλεὺς τῶν ὑπὲρ Φοινικῆς βαρβαρῶν ἐκείνων τῶν ἀνδρῶν, ἵι οὐκ ἰσασι θαλαττῶν, οὐδὲ ἀλεγουσι τοῦ Αἰγιοχοῦ Διός, οὐδὲ θεῶν μακαρῶν· Περσεύευσάτο δὴ μελλῶν πλεῖν ὁ ἀθεός ὅτος· καὶ ἀθαλαττός βασιλεὺς μεγαλὴν καὶ εὐρυχωρὸν ναῦν, ἵνα αὐτῶ πασαι αἱ ἠδοναὶ συμπλεῦσι· τὸ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῆς βασιλεία πῆ ἴα καλλιῆσα, πεισάδες, καὶ εὐναὶ, καὶ δῆρομοι·

Ἐκτοσθεν δ' αὐλῆς μέγας οὐρατος ἀγχι θύραων  
Τετραγῶως

καὶ δένδρα ἐμπεφυκῆσαν, ῥόισι, καὶ οὐχθαί, καὶ μήλαι καὶ ἀμπέλοι· τὸ δ' αὐτῆς λουτρον πῆ, καὶ γυμνασίον· τὸ δὲ οὐφοποῖος χωρᾶ· τὸ δὲ θαλάμος παλλακίσι· τὸ δὲ συμπόσιον· τὸ δὲ ἄλλο τι μέρος τρυφίμης πόλεως· περιεβέβητο δὲ ἡ ναὺς πολλὰς μὲν χρόας ἠδίστας ἰδεῖν, πολὺν δὲ χρυσὸν καὶ ἀργυρὸν· καὶ διεφῆρεν οὐδὲν ἀνδρὸς δειλοῦ κεκοσμημένου ὑπλοῖς χρυσοῖς· Ἐθαυμάζον οἶον τὸ θεῶμα ἵι Αἰγυπτίαι, καὶ τὸν ἐπίδατῆν ἐμακαρίζον, καὶ πού τις εὐξάτο ναυτῆς γενεσθῆναι ἠδίστης νεώς· ἐπει δὲ ἔωρα ἀναγεσθῆναι πῆ, ἐξεπλεῖ μὲν ἡ μεγαλὴ αὐτῆ ναὺς καὶ πολυτελής, καὶ ἀπεσαλεύε τῶν λιμενῶν καθάπερ νησὸς πλατῆ· ἐξεπλεον δὲ καὶ αἱ ἀλλὰ ἕλκαδες αἱ δημοτικαὶ εὐζῶνοι, καὶ πρὸς τὴν χρεῖαν παρεσκευασμέναι· μεχρὶ μὲν πῆ τὸ πνεῦμα πρᾶον, ἐκρατεῖ τὰς ἠδοναὶς ἡ βασιλικῆ ναὺς, καὶ κλισίῃσῃ πῆ πᾶσιτα μεσᾶ

Αὐλῶν, συρρηγῶν ἑνοπῆς, ομάδου τ' ἀνθῆστων

ἐπει δὲ ἐξ αἰθέρας ἀφῶν χειμῶν ἐπεταράξε τὸν αἰθέρα, καὶ πνεῦμα κατεῖσι λαθῶρον συν πολλῶ παταγῶ, ἐγνώσαν τότε τίς μὲν ἠδονῆς χρεῖα, τίς δὲ φεχῆς· Ἄι μὲν γὰρ ἀλλὰ ἕλκαδες συνενεικαμέναι τὰ ἴστια πρὸς τοῦ

dismiss it, till it has distinctly impressed my page, by comparing the philosophy of Epicurus to a royal ship of king Aietes. I am not relating a fiction of my own invention: Not long since sailed from Egypt to Troy, a king of those barbarians, who are unacquainted with the sea, and who have no regard for Jupiter and the blessed gods. This king, an enemy to the gods and to the sea, provided a large and commodious ship, so that with him were embarked all the pleasures. The Egyptians admired the sight, hailed the commander as blessed, and every man in a manner wished to come on board of the delightful

κλυθῶνα ἠμιλλῶντο, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα εἴφερον, καὶ τὴν ἐμβολὴν τοῦ κακοῦ ἀπειμαχοῦτο· ἢ δὲ κακοδαίμων ἐκεῖνη ναὺς περιεφερέτο, καθάπερ ἀνδρῶς σῶμα μέγα κρηβαροῦν καὶ ὑπο μῆθης σφαλλομένου· καὶ οὔτε ὁ κυβερνήτης ο, τί χρησταίτη τῆ τέχῃ εἶχεν, ὅτε ἄβροσ ἐκεῖνος οχλὸς ἐκεῖτο ἐκπλαγεῖς καὶ γενῶν· κατήρειπε δὲ ὁ χεῖμων τὰ θαύματα ἐκεῖνα πάντα·

Πολλὰ δὲ προβελύμνα χαμαὶ βάλει δούρατα μακρὰ

διελύετο καὶ τὰ βασιλεία, καὶ οἱ θαλάμοι, καὶ τὰ λούτρα, καὶ ἐξέπιπτεν εἰς γῆν πολέως ναυαγία

Ἵοι δὲ κορώνησιν ἱκέλοι περὶ νῆα μελαίναν

Κυμασὶν ἐμφόροεντο·

Τούτου τέλος ἀνοήτου ἐπιβατοῦ, καὶ ἀχρηστοῦ νεώς, καὶ ἀκαίρου τρυφῆς,  
Dierse, xxxi. sec. 3.

vessel. When the time for sailing arrived, this great and costly ship departed for the deep, resembling a floating island. In company with it sailed other ordinary ships, well built, and provided for the occasion. While the atmosphere continued tranquil, the royal ship abandoned itself to pleasures, and every place in it was filled with incense, with the accents of instrumental music, and the shouts of men. But when a storm, succeeding the calm, troubled the air, and a hurricane beat upon it with frequent gusts, then they became sensible of the superior advantage of art over pleasure. The other gallies, having contracted their sails, stemmed the waves, sustained the storm, and disengaged themselves from the attack of the destroyer : But this unhappy ship was whirled around, like the body of a huge man, giddy and tottering through drunkenness. The master knew not to use his art; the effeminate crowd lay astonished and groaning. The tempest dissipated the whole of that admired ship. And this was the end of that stupid governor, and of his useless ship, and his unseasonable effeminacy.”

By the royal ship here represented, the author, I conceive, intends the christian

system, modified by Simon Magus and his followers. And this will account for his connecting it with the philosophy of Epicurus. The Gnostic heresy originated, beyond doubt, in Egypt, the foundation of it being laid by the Samaritan impostor while yet in Alexandria. For this reason, Maximus says that the vessel sailed from an Egyptian harbour. Pure as was the gospel in itself, and efficacious as it proved in the hands of its faithful professors, it became, after it was corrupted by the impostors, the instrument of the most flagrant vices, and a pretext for the most impure indulgencies. Hence it is here said of it, with truth, that all the pleasures were embarked with the commander of it. It is farther asserted, that those on board were enemies to the *blessed gods*. This assertion is characteristic of the followers of Jesus; nor was their aversion to engage in maritime affairs less descriptive of their character; since Philo assures us, that they studiously avoided navigation and commerce, as instruments of vice and luxury\*. From this, and other authors, we shall

\* The words of Philo are remarkably strong:—*Εμπορίας η καπηλείας η ναυκλησίας ουδε οναρ ισασι, τας εις πλεονεξίαν αφορμας αποδιοπομπευμενοι*. He is speaking of the *Essene*(christians) p. 877. Tatian was a descendant of the *Essenes*, and his sentiments on this subject seem to have been the same. *Ναυτιλλεσθαι, says he, δια την απληθειαν ουκ επιτηδευω*, p. 44.

hereafter shew, that christianity excited universal attention on its first introduction into Egypt; and that multitudes, not only among the Jews, but among the Egyptians, embraced it, though not in all its purity. And hence we see the meaning of this Sophist (for he does not merit the name of philosopher) when he says, that the Egyptians admired the sight, hailed the commander as blessed, and every one in a manner wished to come on board the delightful vessel. The system of Simon Magus, in consequence of the vigorous opposition made to it by the apostolic teachers, gradually died away; when about the times of Hadrian, its wretched remains were, by a general accommodation between the contending parties, transferred into the sanctuary of the orthodox church; where they were not indeed buried, but embalmed, by blending with them the everlasting oracles of God\*. The disappearance of

\* The accommodation here alluded to is an interesting fact, that will be more fully developed and confirmed hereafter. While the Apostles lived, they firmly rejected all compromise with the teachers of the Gnostic system. But their successors, among the gentiles, shewed a more ductile temper. Being strongly disposed to favour a heresy, which so nearly coincided with their previous pagan prepossessions, they admitted, with the heretics, that Jesus was a supernatural Being; but, at the same time, maintained with the Apostles, that he was a real

the Samaritan imposture in this manner, gave occasion to Maximus for saying, that the royal ship was lost in the storm.

It is worthy of remark, that the apostle Paul speaks of christianity as becoming a wreck in respect to those, who departing from its divine purity, adopted it, as corrupted by Simon. Sec 1 Tim. i. 19.

man. And thus commenced the monstrous doctrine, that he was both God and man. This important modification required, that a correspondent change should be made in the representation of his birth. His humanity implied, that he was really born, and pointed to some human beings as instrumental in giving him existence. On the contrary, his divinity rendered him incompatible with the idea of birth; and it would appear incongruous and absurd even to the most superficial understanding, to suppose that mortal creatures could ever bestow existence on an immortal being. In order, therefore, to avoid this absurdity, and to combine in his character both natures, it was agreed to represent him as born of a mother only. By this happy expedient not only room was left for admitting the doctrine of his divinity, but the admission of it became necessary, in order to account for his supernatural conception.—It should, however, be recollected, that though the gentile converts, now become the predominant party in the christian church, accommodated to the apostolic doctrine the Samaritan system, and thus consecrated such incongruous tenets with the title of orthodoxy, there were many of the Gnostics who refused to accede to the compromise. Accordingly, Valentinus, Marcion, Manes, and others, adhered to the principles of Simon, though purified, indeed, from some of their grosser parts. On this account they have been deemed the founders of new heresies; while the truth is, that they only modified, and that in a slight degree, the tenets of the Samaritan impostor.



Permit me here only to observe, that the object of the Sophist in the above representation, was to vilify the gospel, by holding it up as being the same with that, which was taught by the Gnostic impostors. In this respect Maximus has only done what was universally practised by other enemies of our holy religion. Being superior to all attack, as it was exhibited in the preaching, and in the conduct of its genuine professors, the adversary, however able, had no other means of opposing it with success, but by encountering it as embraced by its base corruptors.

2. From the view, which we have taken of the nature and object of the Gnostic system, we may perceive the justice of the representation given by our Lord and his Apostles, when they exhibit its author as led to embrace the gospel from *sinister motives*; as concealing, under the fair profession of friendship, the most rancorous malice and hatred towards the cause, which they outwardly had espoused. See Mat. vii. 15. xiii. 25. Acts viii. 21, 22. John x. 8. Acts xiii. 10. xx. 29. 2 Cor. xi. 13.

3. Hence also we see that the Apostles were fully justified in holding up those, who

deviated from the standard of faith laid down by them and their divine Master, as men not merely weak, but *wicked*; not only mistaken in judgment, but depraved *in heart*; as men, who had made shipwreck of conscience, as well as of faith\*.

4. Our Lord and his apostles, as well as all succeeding ecclesiastical writers, concur in representing the first corruptors of the christian religion, as men, who had received their commission from the *evil principle*,—from satan, the devil, or serpent, in whose service they were engaged, and whose fate they shall finally share. Thus the Saviour describes them, in opposition to his own faithful disciples, as *the angels of the devil*;

\* The justice of the following paragraph of Whitby, sanctioned by the ever-memorable Jebb, will hence be much illustrated and confirmed: “Heresy, according to the scripture notion, being not a pure mistake of judgment; but an espousing a false doctrine out of disgust, pride, or envy, or from worldly principles, or to avoid persecution, or trouble in the flesh, may well be ranked among carnal lusts.” Hence are such men said, “not to serve Jesus Christ, but their own belly;” Rom. xvi. 18. “To teach what they ought not for filthy lucre’s sake;” Tit. i. 11. “To account gain for godliness;” 1 Tim. vi. 5. “And through covetousness, with feigned words, to make merchandise of others;” 2 Pet. ii. 3. And therefore the Apostle doth not advise us to convince, but only to admonish, and correct the heretic, as knowing that he sins, being convinced of his own conscience;” Jebb’s Works, vol. ii. p. 148.

Mat. xxv. 41. And, speaking of them as the tares, which debased the good seed, he calls them, *sons of the evil one*; Mat. xiii. 38.

Thus too are they delineated by the great apostle of the gentiles: "For such are false apostles, men of deceitful actions: transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder; for satan himself putteth on the appearance of an angel of light; so that it is no great matter, if his ministers also put on the appearance of ministers of righteousness; whose end will be according to their works;" 2 Cor. xi. 13—15. Thus too, writes the author of the interpolated letter to the Trallians: "Avoid the impious heresies; for they are the inventions of the devil, of that serpent, which being the origin of evil, hath, by means of the woman, deceived Adam the founder of our race. Avoid his mischievous shoots, Simon his first born son, Menander, Basilides, and those base crowds, who worship men," Chap. x. Similar to this is the language, which is used by other authors, and there appears much propriety in the use of it. The impostors worshipped the serpent, and opposed it to the Creator and Governor of the universe. They were marked by those

qualities of envy, malice, duplicity, fraud, and falsehood, which distinguished that fancied divinity. By blending falsities of their own invention with the word of God, they exposed it to serious objections, and brought disgrace on the christian profession, by making it a pretext for the most intemperate gratifications. Hostility, concealed under the veil of friendship, is far more detestable in its nature, and dangerous in its consequences, than open and avowed enmity. For this reason, the first preachers of the gospel deemed those heresies, which originated with the Samaritan impostors, as alone constituting what merited the name of *antichrist*.

5. In the last place, the above enquiry discloses the true reason why the first Gnostic teachers rejected the law of Moses, and the predictions of the prophets. The Jewish legislator enjoined the worship of one supreme and benevolent being, in direct opposition to that feigned divinity, whom the Egyptians adored under the symbol of the serpent. The inspired penmen of Judea enforced the same sublime doctrine, and delivered to their countrymen many impressive lessons of justice, mercy, humility, and

truth. Their predictions, too, illustrated and confirmed in a signal manner the divine omniscience. And when it appeared, that Jesus was the person, who corresponded to the representations of ancient prophecy, their inspiration furnished a decisive argument against the falsehoods of the deceivers. We cannot, therefore, wonder, that they should have rejected Moses and the prophets\* : And as their *vices* disposed them

\* The reasons which Simon the heresiarch had for rejecting the Jewish scriptures, are implied in the following paragraph of Theodoret : " He said, that the prophets were the servants of the (evil) angels ; and therefore he commanded those, who believed in him, not to attend to them, nor to dread the threats of the law, but to practise with freedom, whatever they wished. For it was not by virtuous actions, but by *grace*, they were to attain salvation. For this reason, those of his sect abandoned themselves to all manner of lasciviousness ; practised various magical artifices, invented seductive charms, and other sorts of witchcraft, which they frequented as divine mysteries ;" Theod. Fab. Hær. Lib. i. cap. 1. We cannot doubt, from this passage, and the testimony of other writers, but that the rejection of the Old Testament, by the Gnostics, originated in their *depravity*. It is of great consequence to mark this circumstance. For it is of little moment what arguments were urged in support of that opinion by the heretics of subsequent times. But so barren in ingenuity were the impostors, that more than two hundred years elapsed before they could contrive any pretext to cover the baseness of their motives. The objections to the law and the prophets, which are alledged by the disciples of Manes, in the third century, are capitulated with much elegance by Gibbon ; but who, either through great ignorance, or great insidiousness, supposes them to have been employed by the first founders of Gnosticism. I will here set down his own

to this, still less surprising must it appear that they attempted to justify themselves by some specious subterfuges.

words, and I desire my readers to compare them with the above paragraph from Theodoret: " While the orthodox church preserved a just medium between excessive veneration and improper contempt for the law of Moses, the various heretics deviated into equal, but opposite extremes of error, and extravagance. From the acknowledged truth of the Jewish religion, the Ebionites had concluded that it could never be abolished. From its supposed imperfections, the Gnostics as hastily inferred, that it was never instituted by the wisdom of the Deity. There are some objections against the authority of Moses, and the prophets, which too readily present themselves to the sceptical mind; though they can only be derived from our ignorance of remote antiquity, and from our incapacity to form an adequate judgment of the divine œconomy. These objections, were eagerly embraced, and as petulantly urged, by the vain science of the Gnostics. *As those heretics were, for the most part, averse to the pleasures of sense, they morosely arraigned the polygamy of the patriarchs, the gallantries of David, and the Seraglio of Solomon. The conquest of the land of Canaan; and the extirpation of the unsuspecting natives, they were at a loss how to reconcile with the common notions of humanity and justice. But when they recollected the sanguinary list of murders, of executions, and of massacres, which stain almost every page of the Jewish annals, they acknowledged that the barbarians of Palestine had exercised as much compassion for their idolatrous enemies, as they had ever shewn to their friends or countrymen. Passing from the sectaries of the law to the law itself, they asserted that it was impossible that a religion, which consisted only of bloody sacrifices and trifling ceremonies, and whose rewards, as well as punishments, were all of a carnal and temporal nature, could inspire the love of virtue, or restrain the impetuosity of passion. The Mosaic account of the creation and fall of man was treated with profane derision by the Gnostics, who would not listen with patience to the repose of the*

We at length return to the gospel of John. The above investigation will, it is

Deity after six days labour, to the rib of Adam, the garden of Eden, the trees of life and of knowledge, the speaking serpent, the forbidden fruit, and the condemnation pronounced against human kind, for the venal offence of their first progenitors. The God of Israel was impiously represented by the Gnostics, as a being liable to passion and to error, capricious in his favour, implacable in his resentment, meanly jealous of his superstitious worship, and confining his partial providence to a single people, and to this transitory life. In such a character they could discover none of the features of the wise and omnipotent Father of the universe. They allowed that the religion of the Jews was somewhat less criminal than the idolatry of the gentiles; but it was their fundamental doctrine, that the Christ whom they adoréd, as the first and brightest emanation of the Deity, appeared upon earth to rescue mankind from their various errors, and to reveal a *new* system of truth and perfection. The most learned of the fathers, by a very singular condescension, have imprudently admitted the sophistry of the Gnostics. Acknowledging that the literal sense is repugnant to every principle of faith; as well as of reason, they deemed themselves secure and invulnerable, behind the ample veil of allegory, which they carefully spread over every tender part of the Mosaic dispensation;<sup>46</sup> Vol. ii. Chap xv. 282—284. No reader of taste can help admiring the elegance, while he must detest the artifice, with which this passage is penned. The writer has thrown over the dark deformities of the Gnostic system, the splendor of refined eloquence; and put in the mouth of its teachers, not those objections, which they really alledged, but those which he wished them to have alledged against the divine legation of Moses. The assertions, that they were averse to the pleasures of sense; that they could not listen with patience to the speaking serpent; that they objected to the Jewish religion, because its rewards and punishments were of a temporal and carnal nature, yet deemed it less criminal than the idolatry of the Gentiles;

hoped, serve to develop the meaning of many parts of it yet unnoticed. The third chapter contains, you have seen, matter apparently very foreign to the subject of this enquiry.

The remainder of it has an equal claim on our attention: "Then there arose a question, between some of John's disciples and the Jews, about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he

that they objected to Jehovah from a *real conviction* of his imperfections, and that finally they worshipped Christ as the *first* and brightest emanation of the Deity, are palpably false, and demonstrate that the historian did not know, or did not wish to appear to know the real sentiments of the original heretics. The insinuation that the most learned of the fathers had recourse to the allegorising of the law of Moses, in order to evade the objections of the Gnostics, betrays equally ignorance, or artifice. Philo is the person that affords us the first and best specimen of this allegorical interpretation. Origen, Clement and others, have done little more than copying his sentiments: and whatever may be thought of their justice, they certainly originated in circumstances by no means connected with the Gnostic heresies. The truth is that none were more given to this method of explaining the Jewish writings than the Gnostics. They carried it to such a pitch of extravagance as to interpret, in a similar way the simple facts of the Evangelical records. And their only way, of evading the force of those numerous passages, which Christ levelled against them in the course of his ministry, was to put upon them a mystical construction. In proof of this assertion read the fifth and sixth chapters of Irenæus's first book, and compare with it what the apostle Peter remarks at the end of his second epistle.



that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given unto him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom : but the friend of *the bridegroom* which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly, because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above, is above all: He that is of the earth, is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, and no man receiveth his testimony. He that receiveth his testimony, hath set to his seal, that God is true. For he, God whom hath sent, speaketh the words of God ; for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : And he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;" chap. iii. 25—36.

Before I make any remark on this passage, I must produce one from the Homilies, and another from the Recognitions, ascribed to Clement,—“Simon (Magus), in order to usurp the doctrine of piety, acted thus:—There existed one John, who baptized every day, and who, according to the order of the conjugal pairs, was the forerunner of Jesus. And as the Lord had twelve, so he had thirty principal disciples. In the number of these thirty disciples of John Simon was the first and most approved; but on the death of John did not immediately succeed him in his office. For, having gone to Alexandria to practise magic, Dositheus, on the murder of John, assumed the supremacy, and, having falsely announced the death of Simon also, *he* became his successor as the head of the sect\*.” “And

\* My reader may wish to see at large the whole passage. I will, therefore, insert it from the latin translation: Ut autem ipse (Simon) religionis opinionem invaderet, factum est ita: Johannes quidam exstitit, qui singulis diebus baptizaret, quique Domini nostri Jesu secundum conjugationis rationem fuit præcursor; et quemadmodum Dominus habuit duodecim apostolos, duodecim mensium solis gerentes numerum: similiter is triginta viros principes habuit menstruam lunæ rationem implentes. Quo in numero, una quædam erat mulier, dicta Helena: ut ne hoc quidam absque mysterio esset. Cum enim mulier dimidium sit viri, imperfectum tricenarii constituit numerum: sicut et in luna, cujus incessus non perfectum mensis cursum conficit. Porro horum triginta, Johanni primus ac probatissimus erat Simon: qui quidem, quo minus post mortem Johan-

behold one of the disciples of John affirmed that John, and not Jesus was the Christ ;” *Recogn. Lib. i. 90.*

From the first of these paragraphs, we learn that Dositheus was a disciple of the Baptist ; that he aspired at the supremacy, that is, aimed at being deemed the expected Christ, in opposition to both John and Jesus; and after that the death of the former,

nis princeps declaratus sit, hoc in causa fuit. Nam ipso peregre in Ægyptum profecto, propter Magiæ exercitationem : Johanne occiso, Dositheus principatus appetens, cum ipsius Simonis mortem falso annunciasset, factus est sectæ successor. At Simon Paulo post reversus, et cum locum tanquam proprium affectans vehementer, nactus Dositheum, locum quidem non repetiit : sciens, hominem qui contra ipsius voluntatem occupaverat principatum non depositum iri. Quare per simulatam amicitiam, brevi quidem in secundum a Dositheo locum irrepsit. Non multos autem post dies, intra numerum condiscipulorum collocatus, cæpit Dositheo derogare, tanquam non germane doctrinam traderet. Idque eum asserebat non invidia facere sed inscientia. Et aliquando Dositheus, Simonis artificiosam sentiens obtreccionem, eo tendentem ut aboleretur plurimorum opinio, neque amplius ipse putaretur esse stans, furore commotus, cum ad scholam solito convenisset, Virga Simonem inventum verberat : At per corpus Simonis, quasi per fumum, visa est virga transire : super quo obstupefactus Dositheus, ait ad eum. Dic mihi si tu es stans, ut adorem te, Cumque Simon respondisset, Ego sum ; Dositheus videns se non esse stantem, cecidit et adoravit eum—Sic que non multo post Dositheus, illo stante, ipse concidens defunctus est. *Hom., ii. 23. 24. p. 627.*

he actually placed himself at the head of his sect. The arrogance of that impostor, in this respect, was doubtless not endured by the faithful disciples of the Baptist, who it appears from the last of the above passages, maintained that their master was the Messiah in preference even to the Lord Jesus. An altercation of course arose between them, which demanded an appeal to the Baptist himself. Now let us review the above extract of the Evangelist. "Then a dispute arose between the disciples of John AND A CERTAIN JEW about purification\*," Is it not, then, very probable, that the Jew here meant was Dositheus? But let us proceed: The claims of that deceiver, the majority of them must have spurned with contempt. But what confounded their understandings, and filled them with jealousy, were the circumstances of Jesus performing such miracles, and the people flocking to him, having now deserted their former master. Seeing the Baptist thus stripped, by two

\* This appears to be the true reading. *Ιουδαίων* being a corruption of *Ιουδαίου τινος*, which is preserved by the Syriac and Persic versions. And this too is the reading copied by Crysostom in his commentaries on the place. The common reading, says Mr. Wakefield, is universally given up on the best authorities and is absolutely incompatible with the scope of the passage. See the note to his translation.

claimants very different indeed, of the high dignity, with which they were, as his followers, eager to invest him, Was it not natural in them to go and make him acquainted with the state of things? And pray what animadversions might we expect John should make by way of reply? Certainly, that he should hold up our Lord as the Messiah, first, in preference to himself, and then in opposition to Dositheus. And this reasonable expectation, we shall see, he has not disappointed; “John answered, and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. As much as to say; I cannot justly assume the character of the Messiah, because you, my partial disciples and friends, are desirous to bestow that dignity on me. Heaven alone has a right to confer it, and, in as much as heaven has not conferred upon me, I cannot in justice claim, an office so illustrious.” He goes on, “Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.”

The disciples of John were actuated with jealousy and hatred towards Jesus; since they were compelled to consider him as the

successful rival of their Master. The Baptist attempts, with great delicacy, to soothe their prejudices by representing himself as being still THE FRIEND of the bridegroom ; and then adds, “ He must increase, but I must decrease.” That is, *He should be raised,* and I lowered, in your estimation.

Thus far John adverts to the mistaken expectation of his disciples respecting himself. He next, I conceive, refutes the false claims of his apostate followers : “ He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth.” To say of a man, that he *is of the earth*, must, in this connection, mean that he comes in a name, and arrogates an office for which he has not qualifications from heaven ; and that he *speaks of the earth*, signifies that he advances not such doctrines as the wisdom of God inspired, but such as accorded with human views, and flattered human vices.

It is evident, then, that the Baptist is here referring not to *himself*, but to some self-commissioned impostor. John did not come from the earth, but was sent from God. He did not speak the things of the earth, but faithfully announced the message,

which the Spirit delegated to him in the wilderness. But Dositheus was of the earth, and spoke of the earth, and like the earth, of which he was made, he and his doctrines have long since perished. On the contrary, the Baptist adds,—*He that cometh from above is above all*—He is above me—above the prophets, and even above Moses—much more is he above apostates and deceivers.

The Baptist, in the next place, appeals to the testimony, which God himself gave in favour of Jesus at his baptism—to the miraculous endowments, which then descended upon him, in the exercise of which he is subject to no controul but his own discretion. “He that receiveth his testimony, confirmeth by his seal, that God is true. For he, whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God, (that is speaketh not the things of the earth, or the doctrines of human wisdom, but the things from above, or the doctrines of divine wisdom :) For God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him.” The Baptist concludes his testimony by intimating that eternal life was to be obtained not through himself, nor through any other that falsely claimed to be the Messiah, but through

him, whom the Father attested by a voice from heaven to be his *beloved Son*; and that the wrath of God awaited those, who should not acknowledge him as their Lord, or should act in open resistance to his claims. —“The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: But he, that is not obedient to the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God remaineth on him.”

From the supposed Clement we learn, that Simon Magus, on hearing of the death of John, returned from Alexandria, supplanted Dositheus, and soon set up a more successful opposition to the claims of Jesus. The latter being divinely inspired foresaw what was to happen. He therefore took occasion to pass through Samaria, and with admirable address, contrived to make the people of that country acquainted with his divine mission and miraculous endowments. While refreshing himself, after the fatigue of the journey and heat of the day, between him and a woman of the place ensued a conversation, which necessarily fixed their mutual attention on the Samaritan impostors. With that simplicity which ever character-



ises truth, and that modesty which is foreign to imposture, he led her to perceive that he was really inspired, before he declared the nature of his character.

The evangelist John well knew the object of the interview ; and seeing that it was admirably adapted to defeat the artifices of Simon in placing in an advantageous light the real inspiration of Jesus, he makes it, naturally enough, the next important step in his narrative. “ When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptised more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptised not but his disciples.) He left Judea and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey sat thus on the well : And it was about the sixth hour. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water : Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that

thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria, for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: From whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus saith unto her, Thou hast well said I have no husband. For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou hast is not thy husband, in that saidst thou truly. The

woman saithunto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet ;” chap. iv. 1—20.

In early times when a belief in the existence and agency of demons generally prevailed, the performance of such works as deviated from the known course of nature, was not deemed an absolute proof that the author acted with the authority of the Almighty. In consequence of this pernicious opinion, the messenger of heaven was liable to be classed, among the magicians ; and to have the artifices of designing men opposed to his miraculous deeds. This was eminently the case as to Moses, and more eminently still was it the case in respect to Jesus Christ. The impostor of Samaria availing himself of the popular confidence in the arts of magic, and of the general ignorance, that none but God had power to controul the laws of nature, audaciously classed his unmeaning tricks with the miracles of our Saviour. The ignorant were perplexed by his impious pretensions, and many of the prejudiced, especially among his own countrymen, were brought over to his cause. Of the state of the dispute between these, it must be allowed, very unequal

claimants, the Recognitions, ascribed to Clement, afford an interesting and important statement, and enable us, by that means, fully to comprehend the language and design of our Lord, in his interview with the woman of Samaria \*. Peter the champion of the christian faith is represented to lay down a very just and decisive criterion, by which his hearers might ascertain what events should be considered as proceeding from God, and what from the influence of magic. Such signs, he ob-

\* The words to which I allude are to this effect; *Et nunc quoque cum gentes ab idolorum cultu liberari deberent; iterum malitia, quasi ipsa imperans, anticipavit suumque velut serpentem misit in adjutorium, videlicet quem cernitis Simonem, qui mira facit ad stuporem ac deceptionem, non tamen signa salutaria ad conversionem ac salutem. Quocirca vos oportet ex miraculis quæ fiunt, factores attendere, quis cujusnam sit operarius. Si inutilia miracula edit, malitiæ est minister; sin vero utilia boni est præses. Porro inutilia miracula sunt, quæ edidisse Simonem dixistis: quod, inquam, statuas faciat ambulare; quod super carbones ignitos volutet se; quod draco fiat; quod in capram transformetur; quodque in aere volet, ac similia alia, quæ, cum ad sanandos homines non fiant, ad multos fallendos natura comparata sunt. Miracula vero misericordis Veritatis, humanitatis plena sunt: Qualia Dominum fecisse audistis, meque post illum prece edidisse, quibus multi adfuitis: alii multiplicibus morbis, aut Demone liberati; alii vel manibus vel pedibus firmati; alii visu vel auditu donati, et quæcunque alia edere potest vir ad Spiritum hominum amentem pertinens. Hom. ii. 33, 34. See also Recogn. Lib. iii. 59. where much more is said to this purpose.*

served, as were really useful, and calculated to promote repentance and reformation, claimed God for their author: but, if on the other hand they answered no good end, if they were mere prodigies, fitted only to excite wonder and perpetuate fraud, they should be ascribed to no other than the minister of evil. That criterion, however just, Peter, well new would not be allowed by one, who had nothing but contemptible artifices to boast of. He therefore exhibits his Master in another, and, if possible a more decisive point of view—as aided not only by the power, but inspired by the wisdom of heaven. It was admitted, even in those ignorant ages, that none but God could foresee events, that were yet in futurity; and that consequently none but God could enable a human being to foretel them. The prediction, therefore, of things to come, too numerous and definite to be deemed the effect of conjecture, was a quality, which, in the estimation of sober reason raised the founder of christi-  
 anity above the competition of imposture\*.

\* Theophylact has a remark on the last verse of the first chapter of John, p. 582. deserving here to be noticed. “Prophesy” says he, “has greater efficacy than wonders to draw men to the faith: For the demons are able to exhibit the appearance of wonders; but to foreknow and to foretel future events

Accordingly the author of the Recognitions represents him under this unrivalled character, and throughout gives him the name of THE TRUE PROPHET \*.

Now turn your attention to the piece of

with accuracy is what none can do—no not an angel, much less a demon.”

\* The author of the Recognitions not only holds up our Lord in the light of a prophet, but maintains farther that as such he is the only safe teacher of truth and virtue—the only sure guide into the knowledge of God and his will. Hunc ergo qui ad auxilium domus, caligine ignorantiae et vitiorum fumo replète, perquiritur, illum esse dicimus qui appellatur *verus propheta*; qui solus illuminare animas hominum potest, ita ut oculis suis viam salutis evidenter inspiciant. Aliter enim impossibile est de rebus divinis aeternisque cognoscere, nisi quis a vero isto propheta didicerit: quia fides rerum, causarumque sententiae, pro ingeriis magis defendentium ponderantur: unde et eadem causa nunc justa nunc injusta putatur; et quod modo verum videbatur alcerius assertione falsum videtur. Ista de causa, religionis ac pietatis fides, veri prophetæ praesentiam postulavit, ut ipse nobis diceret de singulis, prout se ipsa veritas habet; et doceret quo modo oporteat de singulis credi. Et ideo ante omnia fidem prophetæ omni cum examinatione oportet probari: quem quum cognoveris esse prophetam, de reliquo cuncta ei credas, oportet; nec ultra discutere eum per singula quæ docuerit, sed habere firma et sancta quæ dicit, quæque quamvis fide suscipi videantur, ante habita tamen probatione creduntur. Cum enim semel ex initio prophetæ veritas examinata constiterit, reliqua demum fide audienda sunt et tenenda, qua eum doctorem esse jam constitit. Et sicut certum est cuncta secundum veritatis regulam teneri oportere, quæ divinam ad scientiam spectant, ita indubitatum est a nullo alio, nisi ab ipso solo sciri posse quod verum est. *Recogn. Lib. i. 16.*

history before us ; and you will instantly see that this is the peculiar and prominent character, which our Lord assumed on the present occasion. But did he make to the woman a formal profession that he was a prophet ? No ; In the course of the conversation, he told her such things respecting herself, as necessarily led her to make this confession, —“ Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.” With this conviction she presently departed, and apprized them in the city. *Come, and see a man, which told me all things that ever I did.* This was the very thing which Jesus intended. He was well aware that, if he, or his own disciples, had in a place, where so much prejudice was cherished against them as being Jews, made such a declaration, so far from gaining credit they would be treated with derision. But coming from a person who was one of themselves, and whose previous ignorance of him precluded all reasonable suspicion of collusion, it could not but be believed by many of the unprejudiced. Accordingly we find that this was the case. “ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him, for the saying of the woman which testified, He told me all that ever I did.” It is worthy of observa-

tion that the Evangelist has on this occasion evinced the divine inspiration of his Master by a variety of facts. He represents him as foretelling the abolition of the Samaritan and the Jewish superstitions; as hinting at the future conversion of many in Samaria in consequence of the seeds of repentance and reformation, which by that interview he planted among them\* : And what is remarkable he holds him up as claiming the character of a prophet in the face of his enemies, verse 44. Permit me farther to

\* Herein is that saying true, "One so weth and another reap-eth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour : Other men laboured and ye are entered into their labours." Here our Lord refers to the future conversion of many among the Samaritans, when the apostles Philip, Peter, and John, should preach the gospel to them ; See Acts viii. But he hints that the seeds of their conversion were planted by his passing through the country on this occasion, by the testimony of the woman that he was a prophet, and by the miracles he wrought on some of the inhabitants. See Luke xvii. 16. But as he is in this place referring not to past but future events, he has adopted the usual prophetic stile ; that is, he represents the planting of the word by certain men, and the reaping of the fruits of their labour by the Apostles, as things *already taken place*. Hence we discern the futility and temerity of the following objections urged by Mr. Evanson. " Who were those sowers of the word prior to the disciples ? When were his disciples sent to reap and not to sow ? What did they ever reap about which they had bestowed no labour ? And who were those other men unto whose labours they entered ? Surely a writer," adds he, " So little consistent with the best confirmed



remark, that though the historian makes very prominent the prophetic character of Jesus, he does not represent him as performing any miracles during his stay in Samaria. He probably did none ; and the reason was that the people were so ignorant, and had been so duped by the artifices of Simon as to be utterly disqualified from drawing the proper inference, that the author of such works must have come from God. Before he produced his credentials among a people, who were not able to estimate their value and authority, it was necessary for him to *instruct* them : And this seems to have been the purpose to which he devoted the two days he spent in that place. And accordingly we read, “ And many more believed on him, *because of his own doctrine,*” ver. 41. One of the interesting topics of his instruction was the religious bigotry, which unfortunately divided the Jews and the Samaritans. And this, as he did on another occasion, he endeavoured to eradicate by representing the Messiah as designed to save the latter as well as the former, and indeed

truth and common sense is very unjustly accounted an Apostle of Jesus Christ.” p. 230.

the whole race of man. And hence those, who believed in him, made this joyful declaration: "We have heard him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, *the Saviour of the world*, ver. 42.

But this is not all. It is necessary again to return to the conversation between him and the Samaritan woman. Simon, in order to render his opposition to Jesus the more effectual, availed himself, as was natural, of the superstition of his countrymen. These had been accustomed from ancient times to offer their worship on mount Gerizim, as the place most acceptable to God. This prejudice the interest of the impostor required him to sanction; and he went even so far as to deny the acceptance of the temple worship, and to substitute that mountain for Jerusalem itself. In consequence of this, the dispute between the parties ran so high, at the time when our Lord passed through the country, that the woman, on perceiving he was a prophet, being more anxious to indulge her religious zeal, than to supplicate pardon for her criminal conduct, immediately informed him, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that Jerusalem is the place where

men ought to worship." Jesus made this solemn reply—a reply which demonstrates that his heart was not the seat of vulgar prejudices, but of rational and sublime piety; and that his head was enlightened by sober reflection and divine illumination. "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father." He then reminds her, that both the Jews and the Samaritans, as they did not offer the sacrifice of a penitent and pure heart, did not offer the homage most acceptable to God; and hints, I conceive, at the odious conduct of Simon and his followers, who, in the exercise of the most palpable hypocrisy and falsehood, affected to worship the supreme Being, in a manner more acceptable than was done by others. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: For the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." Verses 23, 24.

Farther; the deceiver rejected the God of the Jews, as an inferior and evil being;

and pretended to reveal another God, which was supreme over all, and which was known only to himself. The worship of this divinity he set up among his countrymen, instead of the Creator and Governor of the universe, who had manifested himself in a special manner to the Jews by their patriarchs and prophets. This distinguishing feature in the system of Simon Magus is thus remarkably recognised by our Lord. YE WORSHIP WHAT YE KNOW NOT; WE WORSHIP WHAT WE KNOW.

From the Recognitions we learn that one of the leading points, which the impostors denied, was, that there will be no life to come, and consequently that the salvation, promised by Jesus to his virtuous followers, can never be attained. In reference to this dangerous notion, our Saviour, in the next place, makes prominent that salvation, which was his great object to reveal and establish. FOR SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS. Which short clause conveys these three important propositions;—that he came to *save* \* mankind;

\* Simon Magus strenuously denied that Christ came to save mankind, or that his object was to procure them salvation in a life to come. Accordingly Peter in his dispute with him maintains this position: nor is he content with having once

that the God of the Jews, so far from being evil, and delighting in the miseries of his creatures, intends, and will finally accomplish, their eternal redemption from vice and misery ; and lastly, that the person sent to execute this benevolent scheme was to be a *Jew*, and not a Samaritan.

Before we proceed any farther permit me to place before you a fiction, which the malice of the Jewish Rabbis has grafted on the event before us. The passage is extracted from Wagenseils Refutation of *Toldos Jeschu*, p. 16. “When king Jannæus slew the masters, Rabbi Josuah, son of Barachiah, and Jesus fled into Alexandria, a city of Egypt. Simon Ben Sheteck writes these words to R. Josuah son of Barachiah. The holy city Jerusalem sendeth greeting to thee, Alexandria of Egypt. O! Sister, My husband liveth in the midst of thee, and shall I sit desolate. R. Josuah, being assured that the persecution was ended, determined to leave Alexandria and repair to Jerusalem.

asserted it, but frequently repeats it in the course of the dispute. My reader will meet with instances where the writer renders prominent that salvation contained in the gospel and denied by the impostor in Lib. ii. 72. ii. 19, 25. iii. 65, 68.

Having therefore departed with Jesus his constant follower and disciple, he was entertained, on the journey, by a certain woman, who treated them with every office of honour and hospitality. Then R. Josuah, delighted with the commodiousness of their entertainment, thus began to praise it. How beautiful is this hospitable place: But Jesus pretending to understand him, as if he spoke of the hostess, said, Master this is truly affirmed by thee; yet the obliquity of her eyes takes somewhat away from her beauty. The Master, being on this enraged, exclaimed, Wretch, art thou bent on such a thing? Dost thou dare to fix looks so intent on women? He instantly called out four hundred trumpets, at the sounding of which, he excommunicated Jesus with all curses."

It is agreed among learned men, that by Jesus here mentioned, the writer intends Jesus Christ. Rabbi Josuah signifies, I conceive, John the Baptist, whose grand-father was called Barachiah; but here for the sake of disguise, is said to be his father. Under the title of *Simon Ben Shetech* is represented, Simon the magician. The Hebrew word שֶׁטֶח *Shetech* signifies to *slay*, and has an affinity with שֶׁחַט *Shechet* to *lay open for slaughter*.

The Samaritan impostor therefore is here denominated *Ben Shetech* or *Ben Shechet*, in reference partly to the frequent murders of which he was guilty, and more particularly to his practice of killing children\* and

\* To Aquila the brother of Clement, when asking him, how he performed his magical wonders, Simon makes this reply. *Pueri incorrupti et violenter necati, animam adjuramentis ineffabilibus adsistere mihi feci, et per ipsam fit omne quod jubeo.* Lib. ii. 13. Notice is taken of this nefarious custom, as practised by Simon and other magicians, in Justin Martyr's Apology; chap 24. p 34. Tertullian's Apology; chap 23, Eusebius, *Histor. Eccles.* Lib. vii. chap. 10. I cannot help subjoining in this connection a passage, with which my reader will be much struck both for its singularity, and those marks of genuineness and truth, which the narrative carries with it. Peter, maintaining against Simon, the immortality of the soul, thus addresses him. "Tell me what incredible thing has most power to persuade, that which is an object of sight or of hearing." Simon replied, that which is seen. Dost thou then wish to learn of me in words a thing, which may ensure thy conviction by its reality and appearance. I do not know, (answered he) in what way thou wilt relate it. Since thou dost not know, (rejoined Peter) Repair to thy house, and having entered the inner chamber thou shalt see there deposited a picture containing the image of a youth, violently slain, and covered with purple.—Ask that, and it will inform thee by its answer or even by its sight. For what need is there to interrogate that picture, whether the soul be immortal, when thou seest it, (as is pretended) standing present with thee. If the soul be not there, it ought not to have the appearance of being there. If thou be ignorant of the picture, to which I allude, let me, with other ten of those that are present, go without delay into thy house. Simon hearing this and touched with the sense of guilt, changed his colour and became pale: And dreading lest, if he denied, his house should be searched, or

laying open their entrails for the purpose of divination. It is on account of his rapa-

lest Peter, through indignation, should make his crimes more known to the people that were present, he thus answered: I beseech thee Peter, by that good God, which is in thee, that thou wouldst overcome the evil within me, and dispose me to repentance. And I will assist thee in thy preaching For I now learn from real facts that thou art a prophet of the true God; and therefore art acquainted with the secrets of men. Then Peter says, You now see, brethren, Simon seeking repentance; soon you will behold him again returning to his former infidelity. Thinking that I am a prophet, because I have made public those evil deeds, which he performed in secret, he promises to repent. But I deem it not right in me to falsify, though it were to effect the salvation of this man. I therefore, call heaven and earth to witness that what I have said, I said not through inspiration, but had learnt it, from those who had been the associates of his crimes, but who are now converted to the faith. I therefore revealed things made known to me by men, and not presignified of God;" *Recogn. Lib. iii. 44, 45.*

The incident here recorded, as it seems to me not easy to be conceived or feigned by the most powerful imagination, was probably founded in truth: And therefore affords in conjunction with many other remarkable occurrences, that might be pointed out in the course of that work, a strong presumption that the writer did not altogether copy his fancy, but relates real and notorious facts. That honesty and love of truth, which restrained Peter from ascribing to divine inspiration, the knowledge of a transaction, imparted to him by some men, are precisely characteristic of the Apostles of our Lord. A parallel case is recorded by the evangelist Mark chap. ix. Nor is there a circumstance in the whole compass of ancient history, which more clearly proves that the pen of the author was governed by the strictest impartiality and that he had not the least intention of imposing upon his readers in recording the miracles of his divine Master.



city and infamy in these respects, that our Lord, as has already been shewn, uses this language : “ The thief cometh not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy ;” John x. 10. It is farther to be observed that the above terms are sometimes used in the Jewish scriptures to signify those, who had apostatised from the law of Moses, and in consequence, were devoted to those enormities, which were practised in the Pagan solemnities \*. Such a designation therefore well suited the character of Simon; nor was it to be expected that a Jewish doctor should give a very favourable representation of one, who, though a bitter enemy of Jesus, was a Samaritan, and an apostate too from their law.

Having thus ascertained who are intended by Jesus, Rabbi Josuah, and Simon Ben Schetech, we shall be able to develope the meaning of the above passage. Sejanus, the minister of Tiberius, caused some of those, who preached the christian faith in Rome, to be put to death ; while at his instigation, all the Jews and Egyptians were banished from Italy. Hence we discover the

\* See Hosea chap. v. 2.

origin of the assertion, that *king Jannæus slew the masters.*

After the banishment of the Jewish and Egyptian nations, many of them, with Simon, perhaps, in the number, repaired to Alexandria: and here we trace the foundation, which the author had for saying, that R. Josuah and Jesus went to that city for the avoiding of persecution. This persecution was soon stopped by an edict, which Tiberius published in favour of the Jewish people, and by other salutary precautions, calculated to restore the public peace. This circumstance appears to have given rise to the fiction that R. Josuah, on finding that the persecution was ended, resolved to leave Alexandria and return into Judea.

The writer of the Clementine Homilies informs us that Simon, on hearing of the death of John hastened home from Egypt with the view of succeeding him in his office: Nor is it improbable, that while yet in the number of his followers, he considered him to be the Messiah, and solicited him to be proclaimed as such. And this seems to have been the fountain whence was derived the following fiction: *The holy city*

*Jerusalem sendeth greeting to thee Alexandria of Egypt. O! sister, my husband liveth in the midst of thee: And shall I sit desolate?"* This husband means their expected Messiah. By this it is evident that the writer of this paragraph would have us believe that John the baptist was really the Christ. And we shall find, from an examination of the *Mishna* and the *Talmuds*, that the Jewish teachers were in their hearts convinced that the Messiah had appeared in the person of Jesus; but too perverse and depraved to acknowledge this conviction, they affected to regard his forerunner as the Christ. Why Jesus and John instead of Simon should be sent to Alexandria is a matter not difficult to be discovered. The miracles which the former performed could not successfully be denied: In order therefore to evade the conclusion to be drawn from them, that he was the Son of God, it was necessary to represent him as having been in Egypt to learn the magical arts: And this is the reason why the Rabbis have been pleased to send him there, not, conformably to the story of his birth, in his infancy, but in his maturer years.

The interview, which Jesus had with

a woman and that a Samaritan woman, who had hitherto led an irregular life, was a circumstance, which could not fail to furnish the active malice of his enemies among the Jews, and especially the Samaritans, with a plausible ground for invidious insinuations, if not an open charge of criminality. Accordingly it appears to have been the very incident, which occasioned the following fabrication : “ R. Josuah, being delighted with the commodiousness of the entertainment, began thus to praise it, How beautiful is this hospitable place. But Jesus, pretending to understand him, as if he had spoken of the hostess, said, Master, this is truly affirmed by thee ; yet the obliquity of her eyes takes away somewhat from her beauty. The Master being on this enraged, exclaimed, Wretch, dost thou dare to fix looks so intent on women ? That some malicious representation of this kind was grafted on the discourse of Jesus with the Samaritan woman, may be inferred from one or two places in the gospel before us. It is for this reason, perhaps, that the Evangelist is so particular in stating that the interview took place *at the sixth hour*, that is, in the middle of the day. It is to be remarked farther, that

the disciples, on their return expressed, their surprize and concern that he should thus converse so familiarly with a Samaritan woman. And this surprize and concern his enemies seem to have magnified into a reprehension of his conduct on the part of his disciples. The contradiction of some such falsehood as this, John appears to have had in view when recording the following words; “And upon this came his disciples and *marvelled* that he talked with the woman. YET NO MAN SAID WHAT SEEKEST THOU? OR WHY TALLEST THOU WITH HER; verse 27.

We now return to the subject. A verse already noticed in part, it is here necessary to review. “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth, and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly, because of the bridegroom’s voice: This my joy is therefore fulfilled;” chap. iii. 29. There are in this verse two circumstances, which shew that John had the impostors Dositheus and Simon before his eyes. The latter, we have seen, described himself *as standing* in opposition to Jesus thrown down by the arm of violence. But it appears that the former had assumed the

same figure, when, on having apostatised from the baptist, he himself claimed the Messiahship. The refusal of John to be proclaimed the Christ at the instigation of his mistaken followers, furnished, it is probable, this impostor with a pretext for saying that he was *thrown down* or *degraded*. The historian represents the Baptist as using a language well calculated to repel such an insinuation. "The friend of the bridegroom, WHICH STANDETH\* and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly, because of the bridegrooms voice." Observe the baptist carefully reminds his disciples that he did not *stand by himself* or rejoice on his *own account*, but by, and on account of, the bridegroom; and therefore,

\* It ought to be observed that by the term ἑστηκως the Baptist appears to signify, that, so far from being the Messiah, he was only one that stood in his presence to wait upon him. See Gen. xli. 46. and Deut. i. 36. where it is used in that sense. It should, however, be remarked that used, as it here is, in the participle perfect, it does not signify so much the circumstance of *standing* as a waiter or servant in the presence of his Master, as the *permanence* or *firmness* of his station in opposition to *sickliness*, *change*, or *degradation*. This idea is implied in it, when the apostle Paul thus speaks of himself, "Having obtained help of God *I have stood* (ἑστηκα) to this day." Acts xxvi. 22. When employed in the perfect tense the corresponding verb *sto* carries the same signification in latin, as in the following line of Virgil:

—————Ilus erat, dum res stetit Ilia regno.

that he received no disappointment, that he incurred no cause of grief or degradation in not being himself ordained the Messiah. His joy consisted in pointing him out, and in hearing his voice ; and this joy received its accomplishment in the appearance of the bridegroom."

The Jews gave their expected Messiah the title of *bridegroom*, or *husband*, and themselves they spoke of, as his *spouse*. But our Lord never appears in a direct manner to have applied this title to himself during his ministry ; as it was his modest policy to inculcate by his works, rather than profess in words, that he was the Christ. It was however a word in vogue among the disciples of John, who, as they supposed him to be the Messiah, appropriated it to their Master. Simon Magus was perhaps the person who imported it into Samaria ; and hence it became a fashionable term, though used in a very different sense, in the Gnostic school. And this seems to have been the reason, why it is never employed in the four gospels, but in circumstances, which have a manifest reference to the disciples of John or the Samaritan impostor.

Let us examine one or two of these. When considered in this light they will appear to have much propriety. "Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, why do we and the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not. And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them; and then shall they fast;" Mat. ix. 14, 15. Here our Lord calls himself *the bridegroom*; and his own disciples the children of the bridegroom. And this he evidently did to correct the erroneous opinions maintained by the followers of the Baptist, who had appropriated these terms to themselves and their Master. But what is principally to be remarked here is that Jesus holds out the violent death, which awaited him, and the grief and despondency, that would overtake his own disciples, on his apprehension and suffering. "The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them (shall be conveyed away by violence, as was the case, when he was seized by the soldiers with Judas at their head) and then shall they fast." The circumstance, which induced him to make this prophetic representation a part of



his reply seems to have been the following : From the questions here proposed by the disciples of John, and more especially from their uniting with the Pharisees, we may infer that they were actuated by sentiments of envy and malice towards our Lord. These unworthy passions carried many of them so far as, from mere spite to Jesus and his followers, to favour the claims of the leading disciple Simon Magus. And we shall find in the sequel, that the Jewish part of those false brethren, who opposed the Apostles, consisted mostly of the disciples of the Baptist, and such of the Pharisees, as were baptised by him. Our inspired Lord then anticipated the conduct and sentiments, which the men now addressing him would adopt ; and the fundamental principle among these was, that Christ did not suffer in reality but in appearance only. He therefore takes an immediate opportunity to furnish his followers with materials against the falsehood of that opinion : And thus by predicting the sudden and violent manner, in which he should be taken away, together with the subsequent distress of his disciples, he gives a decisive proof of his divine commission.

Another and, I believe, the only remaining occasion, where Jesus describes his character as the Messiah, under the figure of a bridegroom, occurs in the twenty fifth of Matthew. But we cannot well come at the meaning of that passage, unless we take a route somewhat circuitous. The apostle Peter writes thus : "I am now, beloved, writing the second of my letters to you, in both which I endeavour to stir up your uncorrupted thoughts to remembrance; that ye should call to mind the words formerly spoken by the holy teachers, and the commandment of our Lord and Saviour, delivered by the Apostles, attending to this especially that in the end of these days scoffers will come, walking after their own wills, and saying where is that promise of his coming;" 2 Epis. iii. 1—5. He then presently adds, "The Lord is not slow with his promise, as some men account it slowness; but is patient for your sakes, being desirous that none should be lost, but all come over to repentance: for that day of the Lord will come as a thief by night;" 9, 10. The scoffers here meant were Simon Magus, and his disciples, now become, as we shall see, very numerous even in Judea and among the dispersed Jews.

The commandment of our Lord and Saviour, to which he calls their attention, is contained in the following words: " Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to have been broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and a wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season! Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily, I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler of all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites;" Mat. xxiv. 42. &c.

These words, the Apostle Peter, we have just seen, understood as referring primarily to Simon Magus. And considered in their relation to him they will appear to have much propriety, as they are descriptive of many characteristic circumstances in the conduct of that impostor. For, though he assumed the profession of christianity, he was a *thief* that went about in the night to steal, to eat and drink with the drunken. In superintending the household of his Lord, it is said of him, that he began to smite his fellow-servants. And this we have reason to believe was a trait in his character. He is represented as being exceedingly cruel to those who were within his power. While he was yet a believer, he did not in his heart expect the second appearance of our Lord to raise the dead and judge the world. These were his own words, we are assured, on the subject: "There will be a judgment; but I do not expect it\*." To

\* Και κρισιν μεν εσσεσθαι λεγει, ου προσδοκα δε· ου γαρ αν ιπο θεου κριθησεσθαι πεπεισμενος, μεχρι αυτου του θεου ασεβειν ετολμα, Hom. ii. 22. The degree of profaneness, and impiety into which, the wretch was sunk, is indeed scarcely credible. He boasted that he had greater power than the Creator of the world; and he gives the following instance as a proof of it: "God created man of the earth; but I, what is more difficult, created one of air, and have turned him into air again; having pre-

his conduct in this respect the following words of Jesus have a pointed allusion : “That evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming.” Finally, Christ predicts that the wicked servant should in the end be cut off, and have his portion appointed with the hypocrites, that is, should be excluded from the christian church, as an enemy in his heart to the gospel, which he professed ; and this prediction was signally accomplished in the case of Simon ; See Acts viii. 21.

Let us now examine the parable of the ten Virgins. The preceding remarks will, I conceive, serve to unfold its pertinence and design. “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten Virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom ; And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they

served indeed his form, and placed it in my inner chamber as a memorial of that deed ;” *Recogn. Lib. ii. 15* The remark which Peter makes on hearing this was worthy of him.

all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold ! the bridegroom cometh, Go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, give us of your oil ; for our lamps are gone out : But the wise answered, saying, not so, lest there be not enough for us and you ; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came ; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage : And the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, Saying, Lord, Lord, open to us : But he answered, and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh ;” Mat. xxv. 1—13.

Simon Magus, or the evil servant spoken of above, denied the doctrine of providence, and future retribution ; or, in the words of the writer of the Homilies, he extended to God, the impiety of not being concerned in the government of the world, and of not making any distinction between virtue and vice in the conduct of his rational creatures.

And we shall presently see that those, who among the Jews espoused his heresy, maintained that the kingdom of Christ, as being of a temporal and earthly nature, would be established for a thousand years upon the earth\*. In opposition to these sentiments, our Lord, after animadverting on the evil servants, holds up the christian dispensation under the terms, *kingdom of heaven*, which, in reference to the impostors, implies that the kingdom, which he came to establish, is spiritual in its nature, and *heavenly* in its origin; that God governs the world, and will hereafter dispense rewards and punishments to his moral subjects. Hence we may gather what it is, which the parable inculcates by *the coming of the bridegroom*. It asserts in the widest extent the great doctrines of providence and distributive justice, and signifies that these constitute

\* The impostor Cerinthus was a disciple of Simon the magician. He was educated in Egypt (Theod. Fab. Hær. Lib. ii 3.) where he probably became first acquainted with the Samaritan impostor. Their religious systems were perfectly the same, excepting that the former received the law of Moses, and tenaciously adhered to its rites and ceremonies, Epiphani. Hær. 23. This man, we shall see, was one of the bitterest enemies which the Apostles ever had; and surprisingly successful were his efforts in seducing the Jewish converts into his own errors, and thus checking the progress of pure christianity.

the gospel, and will, by means of it, be carried to their consummation. Considering his second coming with this latitude, we are to understand it as expressive of those especial manifestations of providence, connected, in subsequent times, with the christian dispensation, and calculated to accomplish its ends. Thus, in conformity to his prediction, the bridegroom presently came in the degradation and rejection of his pretended, but evil servants; and, on the contrary, in the spiritual endowment, and exaltation of his faithful Apostles. At no distant period, too, he came, in a signal manner to punish the Jewish nation, for rejecting him as their Messiah, and treating him as a malefactor. He comes also in the present times—in the destruction of anti-christianism, and the discomfiture of civil and religious tyranny: And he will hereafter come, more especially to crown his gospel with complete success, and every rational being, whether dead or living, with perfect felicity.

The disciples of Simon among the Jews, while perhaps they did not expect our Lord ever again to appear, inculcated upon their followers, that his appearance was near at



hand, hoping by that means to render them more indifferent to their possessions, and, consequently more lavish of them to their teachers; and also to urge the circumstance of his not coming, at the time represented, as an argument that he would not come at all\*. The persons, thus deceived, who ranked with Cerinthus, Nicolaus and others, and who, we shall presently see, were exceedingly numerous among the Jews, compose principally those, whom Christ here characterises as *foolish virgins*. Since one object of the parable was to shew, that, in the hope of his speedy arrival, they would be much disappointed. But he applies to them the epithet *foolish* not only as expressive of their mistake and neglect on the present occasion, but because they prided in their supposed wisdom; while in truth they

\* The attempts of the impostors in misleading the converts, on this head, are thus directly noticed by the apostle Paul, "Now we entreat you, brethren, concerning this coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our assembling unto him, that ye be not hastily moved from your understanding, nor troubled by any declaration of the spirit, nor by any expression, nor by any letter, as from us, as if the day of the Lord were at hand. LET NO ONE DECEIVE YOU BY ANY MEANS: That is, "Do not suffer yourselves to be imposed upon, either by pretended inspiration, or by forged letters coming, as it were, from us, the object of which is to inculcate that the day of the Lord, the coming of the bridegroom is at hand; 2 Thess. ii. 1-4.

were chargeable with the grossest ignorance and folly. The want of oil in their vessels certainly means the neglect of moral duty: and this is a leading feature in their character, which more fully discovers who they were. Simon and his followers not only neglected the cultivation of virtue and piety, but decried the obligations of them, as unfounded in the nature of things, and unnecessary to salvation; and maintained that admission would be given them into the divine plenitude, without any other recommendation than their supposed spiritual privileges. And this is the reason why the door is represented as being shut against them, and the bridegroom as declaring that he did not know or recognise them as his attendants. As they had no oil in their vessels, their lamps went out; which presignified that being destitute of virtuous and pure dispositions, they would put out the lights, at the celebration of their midnight orgies, and abandon themselves to the indulgence of promiscuous desires \*. Finally their going to buy oil of

\* The conduct of the deceivers in putting out the lights, after having inflamed their passions, by eating and drinking fermenting aliments, brought upon the virtuous, as well as the guilty, among the followers of Jesus, the charge of promiscuous indulgences, when they assembled in the night to instruct each

them that sell, means the bestowing of large gifts upon their imposing leaders for imparting to them the knowledge of their mysteries.

Our Lord was aware that his enemies would endeavour to account for his miracles, by ascribing them to the influence of demons or the arts magic. He therefore contrived to perform such works, as claimed, on account of their design and magnitude, an almighty and benevolent being for their author ; and precluded by the manner of performing them the very possibility of magical deception. Of this nature was the following, which the Evangelist has subjoined to the narrative of his progress through Samaria ; and hence leads us to conclude that he intended it in opposition to the artifices of Simon. "So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

other, or to participate in the sacrament. The writer of the Acts has an allusion to this unjust accusation, and repels it in the following manner, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight. AND THERE WERE MANY LIGHTS IN THE UPPER CHAMBER, WHERE THEY WERE GATHERED TOGETHER ;" chap. xx. 78.

When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him, that he would come down, and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.—The noble saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then enquired he of them the hour, when he began to amend. And they said unto him yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him: So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth; and himself believed and his whole house.” John, chap. iv. 46—54.

This was a miracle, which no one, however perverse or ignorant, could seriously assign to any other cause than God himself. It shews the immediate and honoured instrument of it to be endowed not only with divine power, but also with divine wisdom; and thus proved the divinity of his mission, by proving him to be a *prophet* \*.

\* A passage, in the first book of the Recognitions, sec. 52. is

As our Lord in the performance of this extraordinary act, had his eyes on Simon Magus, whose works, if thoroughly examined, would he well knew, prove no other than cunningly devised tricks, and as the rich and the great, in the number of whom ranked the person, whose son was the object of his kind exertion, were prone to favour the system of his impious rival, he gave him this glorious admonition, **UNLESS YOU SEE**

here worthy of notice: "One of the Scribes exclaiming in the midst of the people, said, this your Jesus hath performed signs and wonders *as a magician*, not *as a prophet*. To this Philip with great earnestness replied; shewing how the same objection might be alleged against Moses. For as Moses performed signs and wonders in Egypt, so did Jesus in Judea: Nor can it be doubted that whatever might be said of Jesus, seems also capable of being said of Moses."

This passage contains an important hint, that may serve to unfold the nature of those wonders, which the magicians, in the court of Pharaoh, performed in imitation of those of Moses. The Jewish lawgiver, it is insinuated, did his miracles *as a prophet*; while his rivals performed theirs *as magicians*. Now if you look back to the history of those transactions (Exod. viii. ix. x.) you will find that the prodigies, which he wrought, and in which he was imitated by the magicians, he *also foretold*; whereas the magicians, so far from being able to do this, could only perform *some* of those things, which they saw performed *before* them. Consequently we may infer that, as their performances were *imitations*, they were merely the effects of artifice. In other words, we may reasonably conclude, that they fraudulently exhibited, as the result of their own power, those materials with which they were plentifully supplied by the preceding miracles of Moses.

SIGNS AND WONDERS, YOU SHOULD NOT BELIEVE\*. Which is as if he said. “ However general and irresistible is the belief of my miracles, yet you should not credit them as true, till yourselves have seen, and investigated them to the bottom. And the investigation, which I challenge of my works, you should exercise with equal rigour and impartiality towards the magical artifices of those self-commissioned impostors who oppose my claims.”

“ After this there was a feast of the Jews ; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep-market a pool, which is called, in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the

\* This is a literal translation of the original. *Λαν μη σημεια και τερατα ιδητε, ου μη πιστευσητε.* Observe our Lord does not caution the nobleman not to believe, unless he should see signs *only*, or wonders *only*, but unless he should see signs *and* wonders, which is perhaps an *henchades* for *wonderful signs*, that is, signs, unequivocally demonstrative of the finger of God. The common acceptation of the words is that Jesus upbraids the man for not believing without a visible proof of his divine power. But this is flatly contradicted by the Evangelist himself: for he adds, “ And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way ; ” ver. 50.

moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water: Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked. And on the same day was the sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day: It is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that hath made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk: Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk. And he that was healed wist not, who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that

place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold thou art made whole : Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed and told the Jews, that it was Jesus which had made him whole. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day ;” chap v. 16.

Our Lord being fully aware that his open enemies, on the one hand, would class his works with the artifices of magic ; and that impostors, on the other, would boast of similar wonders, for these reasons, not only performed his miracles in the most public manner ; not only connected with them the idea of an all-powerful benevolent Being, by making them the means of relieving suffering humanity, but also sometimes combined with the performance of them such circumstances as were calculated to awaken the prejudices of his adversaries, to excite them to an investigation of their nature, and in some cases, to cause the preservation of his own life to depend upon their reality. That he has acted with these precautions, the above narrative, when



properly examined, affords one out of many proofs that might be adduced.

The healing of the infirm man of a disease, so hopeless and inveterate could not, he well knew, but excite general attention, and render the authority, with which he acted, unquestionable. But this was not sufficient. It was farther necessary to attach some circumstance to the miracle likely to make it known without delay to the chief rulers, and either to compel them to enquire into the fact, and acknowledge its reality, or to acquiesce in the imputation of malice, bigotry, and superstition. To this vexatious dilemma Jesus, in the incident before us, reduced his opponents: and uncommon is the address which he discovers in accomplishing his purpose. The cripple, long confined to a retired and solitary spot, was a stranger to the person, and perhaps to the fame of our Lord. This circumstance was requisite to answer the intended end: And that he might not become personally known to the patient, until the cure had been effected and duly examined by the Pharisees, he took an opportunity of going to the place

when the people were all withdrawn\*, and of going, too, on the sabbath-day. He then, in the manner related, healed the cripple with his word only; and commanded him to go home, bearing his couch on his shoulders. This command the infirm man, no doubt, felt reluctant to obey, as he would thereby violate the sabbath-day. But, however unwilling, it was impossible to resist a benefactor that evidently acted with the authority of God. The consequences turned out, as Jesus had anticipated. The poor man was accused of having broken the sabbath. They therefore seized and brought

\* This is asserted in verse 13. Ο' δε ιαθεις ουκ ηδει τις εστιν ο γαρ Ιησους εξηνευσεν οχλου ουτος εν τω τοπω, *The restored man knew not who he was : for Jesus had avoided the multitude in the place.* This verse does not seem to be fully understood by modern critics. The ancient commentators however thoroughly comprehended its meaning. They considered it as asserting, that Jesus went to the impotent man, when the people were all gone away, that he might not have an opportunity of coming to the knowledge of his benefactor, by asking of somebody present, who he was, "Why, says Crysostom, did Christ conceal himself? First that the testimony given of him in his absence might be without suspicion, secondly, that he might not too much inflame the resentment of (the Jews): for the very sight of a person envied kindles, in the envious, no inconsiderable spark." See his commentaries on the place, p. 704. See also Theophylact, who pursues Crysostom's remark somewhat farther; p. 625. D.

him before the rulers. The culprit thus told his own tale, which, simple as it was, must have been somewhat to this effect: "I laboured under an infirmity eight and thirty years, and all that time lay at the pool of Bethesda, hoping, but without success, to find relief from the troubled-water. Thus deplorably situated, a man just now came to me, and put the question, if I wished to be healed: and immediately, without even touching me, or using any other mean than his word, he restored me to that strength and health, which you see me now enjoy. After this he commanded me to take my bed and go home. I obeyed his orders: for motives both of fear and gratitude compelled me to act in compliance with a person, who is evidently endued with a power from God. This is the only apology I have to offer for my conduct. On the truth of my tale you may fully rely: nor can my veracity be called in question, as my long confinement, in so public a situation, has made me and my inveterate disorder known to multitudes of people, many of whom are now present ready to attest the fact. But what renders it impossible fairly to suspect me of collusion, and precludes all temptation to falsehood, is

the circumstance, that my benefactor is, at this very time, unknown to me: Nor can you suppose, that I should have obeyed the commands of a stranger, and, by that means, bring upon myself your displeasure, and the sentence of the law, if I did not perceive, in my restoration to health, that command fully sanctioned by supernatural authority."

As this story, which carried its own demonstration, was incontrovertible, the Pharisees dismissed the man, not perhaps without charging him to inform them, as soon as he should come to the knowledge of the person who had compelled him to break the sabbath. The person guilty of this, he soon found out, and accordingly, "He told the Jews that it was Jesus who made him whole\*." They, therefore, transferred to

\* Observe the address which the man shews in covering the supposed guilt of his benefactor. When he returns with the information to the Jews, he tells them not that it was Jesus who made him break the sabbath, or take up his bed; but that it was Jesus who *made him whole*; insinuating by that means, that what he did was a *beneficent* and *worthy* deed, and that he acted with a power given him of God. When on the contrary the bigotted enemies of our Lord interrogated the cripple, they asked not, *Who healed thee?* but, *Who was it that said unto thee, Take up thy bed?* Ουτως, remarks Theophylact, προς μεν το καλον εθειλοντι επιφλυττον, την δε δοκουσαν παραβασιν του σαββατου ανω και κατω περιεφερον, p. 625.

him the accusation, which they had before urged against the lame man. The defence, which our divine Master made, is no less remarkable for its brevity, than it is for its conclusiveness. *My Father yet worketh; and I too work*: As though he had said: “The wisdom of my heavenly Father directed, and his power enabled me to do the deed for which you deem me guilty. From the charge of guilt, I am, therefore, protected by his concurrence: and that concurrence, as it demonstrates my innocence, demonstrates your malice, bigotry and superstition. Nor is it possible effectually to defend yourselves from the imputation of these odious qualities, but by disproving a fact, which you have already investigated, and the reality of which you are compelled to believe, and which indeed you have virtually acknowledged in the dismissal of the accused person.”

An argument thus enforced by appeal to a miracle, the truth of which could not be denied, they were unable either to evade, or to resist. They therefore gave up the point: but, instead of candidly confessing their error and contumacy, they sought out new

grounds for accusing him, and depriving him of life. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God; ver. 18.

As every Jew was in the habit of addressing the Supreme Being under the endeared name of *Father*, it is not easy to see how the adversaries of Jesus could, with any colour of truth infer, that because he spoke of God as his Father, he made himself equal with him. It is however but justice to the accusers to observe, that if we consider his words in the exact point of light in which they were used by the Saviour, there will appear some speciousness, though no real justice, in the inference. Joseph, the carpenter, taught his son Jesus, we have reason to believe, his own occupation, and thus enabled him to pursue it on equal terms with himself. Previously, however, to the commencement of his ministry, the father, we may conclude from a variety of circumstances, resigned his breath. Now, in reference to the death of Joseph, his earthly father, and in contradistinction to that event, our Lord uses this language respecting his *heavenly Father* :

*My Father STILL worketh, and I too work.* Which is to this effect; "Though my father on earth, whose employment I learnt, and with whom I worked on equal terms, as being now no more, hath *ceased* to work, yet my Father in heaven, with whom I am at present engaged, in a more important occupation, and who, with the same parental kindness, which I have experienced, in a worldly sense, from the beloved author of my existence, hath instructed me in the divine art of healing the bodies and souls of men;—this my heavenly Father, I say, *still* continues to work with me, and I with him\*." This comparison, being implied in the words of Jesus, it was natural in his enemies to affect to understand him, as if he represented himself as employed on the same

\* The phrase *εως αρτι*, literally rendered, means *until now*; or as Mr. Wakefield has it *to this time*, that is, My heavenly Father continues to work in the extraordinary deeds, of which I am but the instrument in his hands, and in the ordinary operations of nature, which, unlike human operations, are carried on, and will be carried on without intermission, and that on sabbath days as well as other days. Let me here remark, as a confirmation of the explanation given above, that the Jews present understood the clause as bearing a pointed reference to Joseph his natural father, who worked *no more*. Thus understanding the words of Jesus, they had some plausible foundation for their accusation of him: And had they not understood him so, such a construction would not only be palpably perverse and devoid of all plausibility, but would never have occurred to them.

footing with respect to God, a colleague or a partner, as he was in regard to Joseph of Nazareth, in his worldly calling. Jesus, perceiving that his adversaries construed his words into an assertion that he possessed the same equality with the Deity, which one man has with another, disclaims their perverse construction in a manner unusually solemn: "Indeed, indeed, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these doeth the Son likewise;" ver. 19. Which is, as though he had spoken to the following effect: "An equality between two partners in one business, or two colleagues in the same office, implies some resources originally underived from, and still independent of, each other: an equality of this kind, in regard to my heavenly Father, is what I most solemnly disclaim. For the power and wisdom, which I possess, are entirely derived from him, and upon him I depend in the same unqualified manner for the exercise and continuance of them. And as whatever I did when first learning the trade of my father on earth, I did, by his assistance and direction; and without that assistance and direction was unable to do any thing; even so, in the



divine art of healing men, and of teaching them the way of salvation, I am utterly unable to perform a single action without, in a similar way, being directed and assisted by my Father in heaven." He then subjoins: "For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him whatsoever he doeth himself." That is, "My human parent in consequence of his affection for me, kept from my knowledge no mysterious branch of his art, no secrets of his trade, but shewed me whatever himself knew, and taught me to attain skill and excellence in the most difficult and refined parts of it. This is, too, the case with my divine Parent. With the same parental affection he has revealed to me his Son those mysteries which he had hitherto concealed from his servants in the preceding ages; and for the same reason he has enabled me to do, what no other being but himself is able to perform.

Having thus repelled the heinous charge of making himself a God equal with the Almighty; and attested, on the contrary, his absolute dependence upon and subordination to his heavenly Father—Having done this, too, in a language which recognises his descent from Joseph of Nazareth, he

proceeds, after a short digression, occasioned by the train of his ideas\*, to prove that he was, however, what he represented himself to be—THE SON OF GOD. But he again repeats his former protestation, that he had nothing, but what was given him. “I can do nothing of myself: As I hear I judge, and my judgment is just; for I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which sent me.” 30. He then begins with the testimony which John bore to him at his baptism. “There is another that beareth witness of me: And I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John and he bare witness unto the truth.” 32, 33. In the next place he alleges the miracles, which he performed as proving far more decisively than the testi-

\* The curing of a man, so aged and infirm, of a disease so inveterate, excited of course much attention and astonishment. The wonder, which the people thus expressed, naturally led our Lord to reflect upon two other events, which from their magnitude and extraordinary nature, would command still greater astonishment.—Accordingly he anticipates his raising of Lazarus from the dead, and his own subsequent resurrection. And having these in his mind, it was equally natural, that he should immediately deliver some general remarks, founded upon them, respecting the future resurrection of mankind; of which his own was designed to be at once the proof and the pledge. The subject, into which, he thus digressed, verse 20, he pursues till the thirtieth verse, where he again takes up his dispute with the Jewish doctors.

mony of John, that he was the Son of God. "But I have greater witness than that of John, for the works which the Father gave me to finish, the same works, that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." 36. He appeals, thirdly, in support of his claims, to the declaration made by God himself—*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*; "And the Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me." 37. He then insinuates that the voice and form, which was then sensibly heard and seen, were not perceived in a proper manner, that is, *were not understood and obeyed*, by those, who though present to the testimony given him from heaven, now opposed his claims. "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." In proof of this he gives the following very good reasons: "And ye have not his word abiding in you: For whom he hath sent, him ye believe not." 38. Finally in justification of his claims as the Son of God, he directeth their attention to the Jewish scriptures as bearing testimony to him: "Search the scriptures: For in these ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." 39.

Simon Magus, we have seen, was, for some time, the leading disciple of John, and perhaps present when at his baptism Jesus was announced from heaven as the Son of God. Be this; however, as it may, it is certain that the great body not only of the Jewish people, but also of the Pharisees, expected the Baptist to be the Messiah, and joined with his disciples from sinister motives, in extolling him in opposition to our Lord. There is reason to believe, too, that many of them, when disappointed in respect to John, were prompted by the same dishonourable views, to support the pretensions of the Samaritan impostor. Accordingly while our Saviour was, on this occasion, exhibiting to his perverse countrymen a beautiful summary of those arguments, which demonstrate the divinity of his mission, he had his eyes fixed on some such events; and he levels his language against them. Thus he adverts to the expectation of his adversaries that John was to be the Messiah. "But I receive not testimony from men: But these things I say that ye might be saved. He (John) was a burning and shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." 34, 35. In this verse we see it suf-

ficiently declared that for a certain time the Pharisees were inclined not only to prefer the Baptist, but even to exult in his elevation. He then reflects upon their baseness in affecting to receive, from mere spite to him, an impostor, who came in his own name, without any recommendation from God or any good man. "I am come in my Father's name and ye receive me not. IF ANOTHER COME IN HIS OWN NAME, HIM YE WILL RECEIVE" \*. 43. The object of Simon and his followers, was to gratify lust, avarice and ambition, or to receive honour from men. In reference to these base views, our Lord attests, *I receive not honour from man.* ver. 41. and in verse 44

\* The ancient writers on the New Testament very properly understand our Lord as meaning *Antichrist* in the person of Simon Magus. Τίνα, asks Crysostom, δε ἤξειν φησιν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι ἐδῶ: τον Αντιχριστον αινετιεται ενταυθα και αναντιξρητοι αυτων της αγωνομουνης τήθησιν απωδειξιν· ει γαρ ως αγαπωντες τον Θεον με διωκετε, πολλω μαλλον επι του Αντιχριστου τουτο γενεσθαι εδει· εκεινος γαρ ουδεν τοιουτον ερει, ουτε απεσταλθαι παρα του πατρος, ουτε κατω γυμνη ἠκειν την εκεινου· αλλα τουναντιον ἄπειν, τυραννικως τε μηδεν αυτω προσηκοντα ἄεπαζων, και τον επι παντων Θεον ἑαυτον ειναι λεγων· It is plain from the last clause in particular, that this author had his eye on Simon Magus as the origin and founder of *Antichrist*. He pursues his explanation much farther, which my reader, if he have means, will do well to consult. I advise him also to peruse the Comment of Theophylact on the place; vol. i. p. 636. and also Theodoret in his beautiful little treatise *De Antichristo*; Hær. Fab. Lib. v. 23.

he adds, “ How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour, which cometh from God only ?” The impostor taught that the God of the Jews was not the only God ; and that being evil he did not love his human offspring. In opposition to this, Jesus characterises his heavenly Father as the *only God* (*μονος θεος*) ver. 44. and inculcates that he is *love itself*, though rejected by those among the Jews, who sided with the Samaritan impostor ; ver. 42. Farther, Simon denied a future life, and rejected the Jewish prophets. These important points our divine Master next maintains : And he directs the attention of his adversaries to the Jewish scriptures as *latently* containing that life and immortality, which he brought to light in his gospel, and to himself as the person corresponding to the representations of ancient prophecy. “ Search the scriptures\*, for in them ye think ye have

\* The verb *εξευωατε* is used not in the *indicative*, but in the *imperative mood*. As it signifies to search *minutely*, or to examine with *accuracy* and *attention*, it carried with it when here employed by Jesus, a command not merely to peruse *the letter*, but thoroughly to enter into *the spirit* of their sacred writings ; not to rest in their primary signification, but carefully to weigh their *internal*, their metaphorical sense. By which he insinuated to them, that if they thus investigated

reference to Simon and other impostors, who had no will to fulfil but their own; no doctrine to teach but such as coincided with the mistaken views, and flattered the base passions of men; nor any other to bear testimony to their claims, but their associates in guilt.

I cannot quit this interesting chapter, without calling the attention of those, who

If, however, you supply *solum* in the first clause, and read *at* for *et*, in the second, the difficulty vanishes at once: And in plain English it will be as follows:

*Nævius is not only in the hands, but remains fixed in the memories of men.*

Eurudamas, the soothsayer, delivered a prophetic dream, that his two sons would never return from the Trojan war: And the dream was realized; for Diomedes slew them both; Hence Homer thus sings:

Τοις οὐκ ἐρχομενοι; ὁ γέρων ἐκρίνατ' ονειρούς  
 Ἀλλὰ σφείας κρατερός Διομηδῆ; ἐξέναριξε

*Iliad, iv. 151, 152.*

Critics have been equally unsuccessful in explaining these, as the above verse of the Latin Poet: But supply *μονον* to the first, and then they may be rendered thus: *In respect to their return, the sage, (ου μονον εκρινατο) not only interpreted dreams (signifying that his sons would be slain) but the valiant Diomedes did (actually) slay them.*

believe in the supposed divine nature and miraculous birth of Jesus, to a review of the leading points contained in it. In consequence of having performed a miracle, which the Divine Power alone could have enabled him to do, he asserted his divine mission, and spoke of God as his Father. Baffled in their attempt to prove him guilty of breaking the sabbath, his enemies perverted his words into a declaration, that he was equal with God. This impious charge he instantly disclaims with the utmost solemnity, and, on the contrary, asserts his absolute dependence upon, and subordination to the Deity. Professing however to be the Son of God, the Christ, the Messiah, or the Saviour of the world, he places before his opponents a short, but decisive, statement of those arguments, which substantiated his claims. In their presence he asserts, that he came to reveal and execute the will of his heavenly Father, which had for its object the eternal salvation of mankind; that in the execution of his office, he did not seek after selfish gratifications, or honour from men, but solely the approbation of his Supreme Commissioner; that a man of tried integrity and acknowledged authority had, in a public manner, borne his testimony



to him as the expected Messiah; that his divine mission was still more signally confirmed by the extraordinary works, which his Father enabled him to do; and finally, that the declaration of Jehovah himself at his baptism, and the predictions of the prophets concurred in certifying the authenticity of his credentials. Now, if Jesus considered himself the Son of God, as being born in a supernatural manner; if a star in the east indicated his birth, and Magi, in consequence, came to proclaim him as the newly born king of the Jews, would he have overlooked such events on an occasion, in which he enumerated every circumstance, that proved the divinity of his mission? It is not credible that he should have omitted circumstances so signal and decisive in his favour, if they had really happened. But so far from appealing to a supposed supernatural birth, as a proof that he was the Son of God, he disclaims the doctrine of his divinity in terms, which, when fairly interpreted, suppose Joseph of Nazareth to be his natural father.

The advocates for the supernatural conception and divinity of Jesus, represented Mary and his other relations as knowing

cumstance Christ has noticed in emphatic terms, on the present occasion: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; *there is one that accuseth you even Moses\**,

Daniel, Ezekiel—these with Elias and Elisæus they repudiate: Nor do they assent to their predictions, but reject them with curses;" Hær. 30. cap. 18. This writer presently subjoins, concerning them, Ουτε δεχονται την Πεντατευχον ἔσλην, ἀλλὰ τινὰ ῥήματα ἀποβαλλουσιν. At the end of the chapter he again adds of *Ebion*, βλασφημεί τα πλεω της νομοθησιας. And here I wish to direct the attention of my readers to a fact no less curious than important; namely, that by the Jewish christians whom Epiphanius describes, under the ignominious title of Ebionites, are meant those, who among the Jews, favoured the system of Simon Magus. The truth of this fact will appear more fully in the sequel. Nor does it by any means follow from this, that the name of Ebionites did not, in early times, comprehend all the Jewish converts. The distinction between them and the Nazarenes, and the appropriation of the former term to the Jewish heretics still appear to be owing to the artifice of Epiphanius and others. Nothing was more natural, than that the fathers should confound the faithful followers of Jesus in Judea with those of the Jews, who favoured the extravagant sentiments of Simon, or apply to them the same common appellation. Permit me farther to remark, what has been hinted at already, that the real writer of the *Homilies* ascribed to Clement of Rome, cherished, in a great degree, the sentiments of the impostor Cerinthus, who was a disciple of Simon Magus. Hence we may perceive, that though his leading object was to expose the system of the Samaritan deceiver, while yet in open hostility to the christian cause, he holds in reality many opinions which were borrowed from him. One palpable error among these was, that several falsehoods respecting the Supreme Being, are inserted in the law of Moses and the prophets. See Hom. ii. 38. with Cotelerius's Annotation.

\* Some ancient commentators suppose, and the supposition

in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me : for he

is extremely probable, that our Lord referred to the following passage of Moses—"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder. And the sign or wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee ; Saying, Let us go after other Gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them. Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams ; for the Lord your God proveth you to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul ;" Deut. xiii. 1-4. This commandment compared with the words of Jesus, places them in a point of light peculiarly forcible and pertinent.

Moses in the name of Jehovah warns the Jews against an impostor, who should attempt to seduce them to the worship of another *unknown God*. To this warning voice of their lawgiver the Jews of our Saviour's time refused to pay attention, but followed a false prophet, who rose among them, to serve a God superior to Jehovah, and hitherto unknown to the Jewish people, and even to Moscs and the prophets. How proper then, and how forcible was the language of our Lord, when he tells his perverse countrymen, that *Moses would accuse them* ? Again, the above commandment implies, that the Lord permitted false prophets to rise among his people in order to prove whether or not they had a real love for him ; that if they loved him with all their heart and with all their soul, they would not of course hearken unto the words of that prophet. This criterion serves to unfold the meaning of our Saviour in the following verses : "But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I come in my Father's name and ye receive me not : If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive ;" 42, 43. Now the Jews rejected the claims of Jesus, from a pretended love for the character, and regard for the honour of God, whom they affected to consider as blasphemed and dishonoured by a man, who

wrote of me. *But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words;*" 45, 46. Finally; the Lord, when declaring that he did not seek his own will, but the will of the Father, that sent him; and that if he bore witness of himself, his witness\* is not true; verses 30, 33. has a

represented himself as equal with him. To this pretence Christ adverts in the above paragraph, and his argument in exposing it is to this effect: "You attempt to justify your rejection of me, under the pretext of love towards your heavenly Father. But I know that this is not your true motive: For if you really loved him, you would receive me, who come not in my own, but in his name, and act with his authority: Nor would you, as will be the case after my death, support the pretensions of an impostor, who will come in his own name, and who will impudently blaspheme the God of your fathers as an evil being."

\* The whole verse is thus: "If I bear witness of myself my witness is not true." That is, If I *alone*, or if I be the *only* person that bears testimony of myself, *then* would my testimony be unworthy of credit. Every scholar knows that *μολον* in Greek and *solum* in Latin are frequently left out, and that the corresponding adverb *alone* or *only*, in English, must be supplied in order to make out the sense. Take the following example from Mark ix. 37. "Whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, (that is receiveth not *only* me) but (also) him that sent me." Let my learned reader consult *Longinus* by *Toupe*, p. 4. 32. and the editor's notes. And will you forgive me, if, for once, I step aside to snatch a flower or two from classic grounds? Horace, Epis. ii. 53. writes thus:

Nævius in manibus non est, et mentibus hæret.

Critics all complain of the obscurity of this line; nor has it received any illustration from the splendor of Bentley's genius:

born of *known parents*, they concluded that he was not the Christ; since it was generally believed, that the Messiah, when he would make his appearance, should spring from parents *unknown* \*. This is a very singular circumstance; and remarkable is the answer, which our Lord returns to their objection: "Then cried Jesus in the temple, as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am, and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is

\* The Jews seem universally to have expected the Messiah to be born at Bethlehem. When, therefore, they say of him, *No one knoweth whence he is*, they refer not to the *place* of his birth, but to the *man* that would be instrumental in giving him birth. Their argument then is this, "We know that this man is born of Joseph of Nazareth: he cannot therefore be the Christ, because no one will know who is to be his father." And this is the manner in which Grotius understands the clause *τουτου οιδαμεν ποθεν εστι*.—Quo patre natus sit.—Apud quosdam Judæos fama invaluerat Messie patrem indicari non posse. At hujus patrem nosse se sibi persuaserant, Josephum Scilicet; Grot. in loco. And this is the way in which some of the ancient commentators explain their words; See Theop. p. 667. Origen, however, interprets them thus, The Hierosolymites, when saying that *they knew whence he is*; refer to his birth at Bethlehem; Com. Vol. ii. 262. I cannot help suspecting indeed that Origen is here guilty of a wilful misrepresentation. He could not but know that the Jews, in this very chapter, refer his birth to the town of Nazareth, and ground upon that fact, an argument against his being the Messiah. See verse 42. Consult what Lightfoot has said on the above clause in his *Hore Tabudicæ*. The explanation given by him is certainly not the true one.

true, whom ye know not;" 28. As though he had thus replied, "You have, indeed, a personal knowledge of me, and my father and mother, but I have another real Father, who, in strict sense, is the real Father of us all:—From this Father I am come; and this Father you do not know; and therefore, *on your own principle*, I am the Christ, because no man among you knoweth whence I am."

As they were assured that Jesus had received his birth at Nazareth in Galilee, they again objected, that he could not be the Christ, because the town of Bethlehem was to have the honour of giving birth to their expected Messiah. "Many of the people, therefore, when they heard this saying, said of a truth, This is the prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" 40—43. So confident were the enemies of our Lord, that Galilee, and not Bethlehem, claimed the honour, or, according to them, the infamy, of his birth, that they urged it as an objection to his claims, without the least fear of being

contradicted. When Nicodemus put the question, Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doth? their answer was, “Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet;” 52.

“Upon his saying these things, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him, If ye continue in this doctrine of mine, ye are truly my disciples. And ye will know the truth, and this truth will make you free. They answered, We are Abraham’s race, and were never slaves to any one: how dost thou mean then that we shall be free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every man that committeth sin is a slave of sin. Now the slave hath no settled abode in the family for ever. If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, ye will be free indeed. I know that ye are the race of Abraham; but ye are seeking to kill me, because my doctrine thriveth not in you. I speak what I have seen with my Father; and ye are also doing what ye have heard from your father. They answered, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would

do the works of Abraham. But now ye are seeking what Abraham, would not have done, to kill me a man, who have spoken to you the truth from God. Ye do the works of your father. Then said they unto him, We were not born of fornication: we have but one Father, which is God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would have loved me: because I came forth from God, and am coming from him; for I am not come of myself, but he sent me;" chap. viii. 30—43.

We have just seen, that our inspired Lord foresaw that the Jews, who accused him of violating the sabbath, and with whom he is here conversing, would, when become nominal converts to the gospel, depart from its purity, and profess it as debased by Simon, Cerinthus, and others of the Samaritan and Egyptian schools. In consequence of this foreknowledge, he thus forewarns them on the present occasion: IF YE CONTINUE IN THIS DOCTRINE OF MINE, YE ARE MY DISCIPLES INDEED; which means this, "When you, after having ranked nominally among my followers, shall reject my doctrine as not coinciding with your worldly views, and demanding sacrifices to which your depravities



also the number of its members, and bones, and veins, and arteries, and nerves; the several constitutions of body, hot and dry, cold and moist, and the tendencies of them; how the soul operated upon the body; what its various sensations and faculties were; the faculty of speaking, anger, desire; and lastly, the manner of its composition and dissolution, and other things, which the understanding of no creature had ever reached. Then that philosopher arose and worshipped the Lord Jesus;" chap. 51, 52.

This representation was intended, no doubt, to confer honour upon our Lord; but the honest John thought it an honour too dear to purchase at the expence of truth. He therefore produces the authority of his countrymen, who were the best judges of the matter, that he was perfectly uneducated in the school of human wisdom. "Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, how knoweth this man letters, *having never learnt*;" chap, vii. 14, 15.

Though our Lord silenced the Jews, when accusing him of violating the sabbath,

they did not relinquish the design of killing him: and he was obliged to leave Jerusalem in order to evade their diabolical purpose. He returns, however, about the middle of the feast; and he went into the temple publicly to teach. The cure of the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda, and the interesting discourse which it occasioned, from the strong and lasting impression which they left upon both parties, became the immediate subject of their dispute. Perceiving their hostile views painted in their countenances, our Lord asks them with seeming abruptness, "Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you doeth the law. Why are ye seeking to kill me;" 19, 20. As if he had said, "You accuse me of violating the law of Moses, because I healed a poor man, on the sabbath-day, while at the same time yourselves are grossly chargeable with that crime: For contrary to an express commandment of that law, you are endeavouring to deprive me of my life, and that not because I have done you any evil, but because I have done good to an helpless victim of disease and infirmity." He goes on; "I did but one work *on the sabbath*, and ye all wonder at it. Moses gave you circumcision (not that circumci-

sion came first from Moses, but from the patriarchs) and ye circumcise a man on the sabbath-day. If a man receive circumcision on the sabbath, so that the law of Moses (by that act) is not broken, ought you to be enraged with me, because I made a man whole throughout on the sabbath-day." 21—24. Which argument is to this effect, "You think it no violation of the law, to cut and maim a man, on the sabbath; but to restore health and vigour through the whole frame of a debilitated and long-neglected sufferer, is such a heinous transgression, as should rouse your resentment, and prompt you to vengeance\*!!! Then said

\* This explanation will lead us to perceive the meaning of our Lord in the following incident, recorded by Mark, c. iii. 1—5. "And he went again into the synagogue. And a man with a withered hand was there. And they were maliciously observing, whether he would heal the man on the sabbath-day, that they might accuse him. And he saith to the man with the withered hand: Come forward into the midst. And he saith unto them: Is it right to do good, or to do evil on the sabbath-day? to save life, or to destroy it." The pertinence and force of his questions lie in this: *You on the sabbath-day plan means to take away my life, and yet you accuse me of breaking the sabbath, for saving the life of a poor infirm sufferer.* The first question, *Is it right to do good, or to do evil, on the sabbath-day;* our Lord knew to be too *indefinite and general*, to convey his full meaning, and therefore to bring it home to their consciences, he subjoins the second, *Is it right to save life, or to destroy it.* His words, thus adapted to the guilt of his accusers, they immediately understood: and the justice of the retort struck them dumb. And

some of them of Jerusalem, is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But lo! he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him: Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit, we know this man whence he came, but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." 25—28. When the miracles of our Lord first excited the attention, and awakened the malice of the Jews, they made, it is reasonable to suppose, every enquiry about the place of his birth, his parents, his education, and character. Every thing that could be known of him, curiosity rendered public and notorious. And hence his enemies, with confidence, say of him, that *they knew whence he came*, that is, they knew that Nazareth was the place of his birth, and that Joseph and Mary were his parents. And because he was thus

the history adds: "And they became silent. Then after looking round upon them, being indignant, and at the same time sorry for the blindness of their hearts, he saith unto the man: Stretch out thy hand, and he stretched it out, and his hand was restored to its soundness like the other." Observe, reader, the conduct of our Lord on this occasion. And can you refrain from admiring the firmness and promptitude which he here displays? Reflect, farther, that the miracle, recorded in this place, is interwoven with a simple event, utterly beyond the reach of fiction and imposture. No human imagination, I am persuaded, could have feigned an incident, the pith of which thus rested on a *latent* circumstance in those who were concerned in it.

will not submit;—when, farther, you shall countenance a system of imposture, adapted to your prepossessions and vices—then you will cease to be in reality my disciples, though you may still retain the profession of my religion\*.”

Those of the Jews, who supported the systems of Simon and Cerinthus, supposed that the salvation, which Jesus came to bestow, was altogether of a temporal and carnal nature, that as being the Messiah he would again soon appear to rescue them from the bondage of slavery, confer upon them the blessings of opulence and freedom, and give them by conquest a superiority over the other nations of the world †. These

\* *Εαν μείνητε εν τω λογω τω εμω*. Which may be otherwise rendered thus, *If you adhere to that doctrine which is mine*. Observe that the possessive *εμω* is put last with the article prefixed. The design of this was to mark more emphatically the intended opposition between the doctrine, which Jesus delivered, and that, which he foresaw, those Jews would adopt as the followers of the Gnostic teachers. The adverb *αληθως* in the next clause is also very expressive and emphatic, as by the use of it our Lord intimates, that they would not be *really* his followers, when they deviated from the purity of the gospel, and debased themselves with the principles and practices of their deceivers.

† In order to enable my reader to see, who the Jews, here  
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mistaken motions, which originated with pride and avarice, led Christ, on this

addressed, were, I shall produce what *Theodoret* says of *Cerinthus*: “ At the same time *Cerinthus* instituted another heresy. This man, having spent much time in Egypt, and being versed in the philosophic sciences, came afterwards into Asia, and called his followers by his own name. He taught that there was one God over all; that the world was not created by him, but by other powers, distinct from him, and utterly ignorant of him. He also said similarly to the Hebrew (*Christian*), that Jesus received his birth agreeably to nature, from a man and a woman; namely, Joseph and Mary; but excelled others in temperance, righteousness, and other good qualities; that the Christ descended upon him from above in the form of a dove, that then he proclaimed the unknown God, and wrought the wonders recorded of him; that, at the period of his suffering, the Christ again receded, and that (the man) Jesus underwent crucifixion. This same person fabricated certain *Revelations*, which he pretended to have seen, and composed doctrines, consisting of certain menaces. He maintained, that the kingdom of the Lord was *earthly*, and painted it, as though he was dreaming, as consisting of eating and drinking, of lusts and nuptial festivals, of sacrifices and entertainments, which would be celebrated in Jerusalem; and that these things would be performed for a thousand years, for thus long he taught the kingdom of the Lord would continue.” *Theod. Hær. Fab. Lib. ii. 3.* Absurd and pernicious, as these sentiments were, multitudes among the higher orders of the Jews eagerly embraced them; nor does there appear to me room to doubt, but that the persons, whom our Saviour here forewarns, were the future followers of the above impostor. As the *Cerinthians* supposed that the kingdom of Christ would be earthly, and that Jerusalem would be the seat of his empire, they rejected of course, as blasphemy against the holy city, the prediction of its fall, delivered by Jesus. And this was the circumstance, which led our Lord to assert the truth of that event on the present occasion. From the above extract, we

occasion, to represent himself as their deliverer indeed from the worst of slavery—the slavery of sin; and their restorer to the best of freedom—the freedom of virtue. And he takes the opportunity of hinting to them farther, that so far from rescuing them from temporal bondage, and restoring them to civil liberty, the very house in which they gloried as the peculiar residence of Jehovah would be destroyed, and themselves dispersed in captivity among the nations. “Jesus answered them; Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever doeth sin is the slave of sin. THE SLAVE DOTHT NOT ABIDE FOR EVER IN THE HOUSE; but the Son remaineth for ever: If then the Son should make you free, you will be

farther see, that the opinions of Cerinthus were, in the main, the very same with those of Simon Magus. Hence it may be inferred that the former was a disciple of the latter. The place where they became acquainted, as has been hinted above, was, perhaps, Alexandria, where the Gnostic system was first taught by the Samaritan deceiver. The reference, which Jesus in the text makes to Cerinthus and his system, proves that both of them were objects of his abhorrence. And this may serve to illustrate and confirm the truth of the following story, subjoined by Theodoret, and first related by Irenæus: “There is a tradition that the divine John the Evangelist, seeing him bathing, said, let us flee hence, lest the bath, having fallen on account of Cerinthus, may involve us too in its ruins.”

free indeed;" 34, 35. It is worthy of observation that he alludes to the destruction of the Jewish state, when he thus presently adds:—"I came from God, AND AM COMING,"—"coming to inflict signal punishment upon my destroyers, to prove the divinity of my mission by the accomplishment of the prophecies, which I deliver, and to expedite the progress of true religion by the destruction of Jewish bigotry, pride, and superstition."

One of the distinguishing principles, held by the followers of Cerinthus and Simon, consisted in the supposition that the Christ, being of a divine or angelic nature, descended upon the man Jesus at his baptism, and continued incorporated with him until his apprehension. This notion, which, as it introduced after it a thousand superstitious errors into the christian church, proved as fatal in its consequences as it was base and artful in its origin, our Lord here anticipates: and he has furnished a remarkable provision for its refutation. "But ye are now seeking to kill me A MAN, who have spoken to you the truth from God." Observe, he not only tells them that he was a man, but that this was the character, which he sustained as a teacher sent from



God,—*A man who have spoken to you the truth from God.* Observe, too, that this declaration he makes to those very men, who, he fore-saw, would espouse the opinion, that as the Christ he was a divine or angelic being\*.

The object of Simon and his followers in professing christianity, we have seen, was to gratify their bad passions, and the more effectually to undermine, by artifice, a cause, against which, direct and open opposition they found to be ineffectual. For this reason, our Lord, his apostles, and all ecclesiastical writers in succeeding ages, concur, in exhibiting them as the greatest enemies of the gospel;—as men, who had received their commission from, and patronised the interests of, the devil, serpent, or satan, the father of lies, the prince of darkness. And this is the very representation, which our divine Master gives, in this place, of those Jews, who, in after times, would epsouse the Samaritan system: “The devil is your father, and ye willingly perform the lusts of your father. He was a man-slayer from the

\* We may gather from what Epiphanius says, p. 463, that the ancient Jewish Unitarians quoted this very declaration of our Lord to prove that he was but a man.

first, and continued not in the truth, because there is no truth in him;" 44.

As Simon was a leading disciple of John, and had now for some time, set up his claims in opposition to Jesus, he and his principles must, ere this, have been made known to those scribes and Pharisees here addressed by the Saviour. They could not, therefore, fail to understand him, by the above description, as insinuating, that they were then abettors of the Samaritan impostor, for whose person and doctrine they, perhaps, yet cherished unfeigned aversion and hatred. And this insinuation it was natural in them to repel, by representing Christ to be himself a Samaritan. Accordingly, we read these words, as coming from them on the occasion: "Then the Jews answered, Do we not say rightly that thou art *a Samaritan*, and hast a demon?" 48. The doctrine, which Simon maintained, that the Creator of the world was an inferior and evil being, was highly offensive to every serious and well-disposed Jew. For this reason he was, according to the Jewish mode of speaking, said to have a demon: that is, he was thought to be influenced by an impure and malignant spirit, or, a spirit opposite in nature and disposition to the infinitely powerful, wise, and benevolent

Author of the universe. And this very charge, we see, they retorted on Jesus, supposed to be guilty of blasphemy against God, for calling them the children of the evil principle. His reply, though remote from common apprehension, is short and expressive: "I have not a demon, but I honour my Father, and ye dishonour me;" 49. That is, "I am not influenced with those impious sentiments respecting my heavenly Father, which the demons are supposed to inspire, and which characterise the impostors of Samaria. I dishonour not God, as Dositheus and Simon do, by arrogating to myself those divine honours, which are due to him alone, nor by blaspheming him as a malignant and subordinate Being." This sentiment he again repeats in what follows: "And I seek not my own glory: there is one, who seeketh my glory, and will punish;" 50. In verse 44, he utters these remarkable words: "He (the devil) was a man-slayer from the beginning; and he continued not in the truth, because the truth is not in him. When the liar\* speaketh, he speaketh from his own;

\* A critical remark has been made in my first vol. p. 218. which the reader should consult. There it is shewn, that το ψευδος means the same with ὁ ψευστης, *the liar*, and is the nominative case to λαλεῖ, *speaketh*.

because his father too is a liar. But I speak the truth, and yet you do not believe me." As Jesus has the Samaritan impostor in his view through the whole context, we may safely conclude, that he was the person principally meant in the above paragraph\*. The devil or serpent was his father, who commissioned him to disseminate false doctrines, in opposition to the word of truth. Like his father, he was a man-slayer; like him too, he continued not in the truth; that is, he apostatised from his master the Baptist, and the reason why he did not persevere in the truth, as taught by John was, that the truth was not in him; or, in other words, that he did not embrace, what he professed, with upright and sincere views, but from sinister and selfish purposes. Lastly, though this first-born of satan propagated nothing

\* It is observable, that by the liar here described, Origen understood *Antichrist*, and it is easy to see, that when the ancient writers speak of *Antichrist*, they speak of it under the character of Simon Magus, its first founder. And this is no more than what is done by the Apostle Paul himself. Because Simon, as is said of him in the Acts, professed to be the power of the supreme God, or of a God above the Creator of the world, Paul, describing *Antichrist*, thus says, "The son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped;" 2 Thess. ii. 4. The words of Origen may, I fear, be applied to my own case. "Perhaps, says he, some will stumble at my saying, that the liar is *Antichrist*." Com. vol. ii. p. 309.

but falsehoods, the Jews, here addressed, affected to believe in him in preference to the Son of God.

The character of Simon was notoriously marked by malice, cruelty, lust, and avarice. In every respect he exhibited a picture quite opposite to the meek and benevolent Jesus. The latter indeed could not but be sensible of the striking contrast, which subsisted between him and the former; and when, therefore, he was now describing his infamous character, he puts to his very enemies the triumphant question, *Who among you can convict me of sin?* The deceivers Dositheus and Simon, denied the immortality of the human soul, and the resurrection of the human body. According to them, therefore, there was no hope either of surviving the stroke, or of being rescued from the dominion of death. In order, however, to succeed in their project of deceiving men, they impudently pretended at other times to confer upon such as followed them, in preference to Jesus, an eternal exemption from natural death. Conformably to this doctrine, it was professed of course, that themselves should not die, but continue for ever superior to decay. And this is the idea held out by Simon,

when he speaks of himself as the standing power of God, and one that would never fall away in the body. Dositheus appears to have made a similar profession; for his followers, even after his death, affected to believe that he did not really die. In testimony of this, hear the words of Origen: "We must not be ignorant, that as Jesus rose among the Jews, who not only professed, but proved himself (to be the Messiah); so among the Samaritans arose Dositheus, professing to be the predicted Christ: And even at this time there are some Dositheans, who hawk about books under his name, and relate certain fables of him; namely, that he never tasted death, but still dwells somewhere among the living" \*. Now the pretension of the impostors in this respect was a circumstance too singular and momentous to be left unnoticed, by our Lord, on the present occasion. He therefore directly levels his language against it; and represents himself to be the teacher whose doctrine, if kept, would confer eternal life. *Verily, verily, I say unto you,*

\* This passage forms a part of Origen's comment on the following words of Jesus, addressed to the woman of Samaria, *Ye worship what ye know not*; John iv. 22. and this shows that he understood our Saviour, as alluding to the unknown God of Dositheus and Simon; Com. Vol. ii. p. 219.

*if any one keep the doctrine which I teach, he shall not see death for ever; 51.* That is, “It is I, and not the impostors of Samaria, that reveal the doctrine of eternal life; and the man, who will adhere to this my doctrine, and practise those virtues, to which it gives birth, shall be raised after death to a new and everlasting existence\*.” The objectors, understanding or affecting to understand these words in a literal sense, found fresh and more plausible materials for cavil. “Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets; and dost thou say, If any man keep my doctrine, he will never taste death?”

\* The original is thus : *Αμην αμην λεγω υμιν, εαν τις τον λογον τον εμον τηρηση, θανατον ου μη θεωρηση εις τον αιωνα*. Here again, in the first clause, *τον εμον* are put after *λογον*, in order to place the opposition, which Jesus intended, in a stronger point of light. The last, which is rendered, *he shall never see death*, should be translated conformably to the original, *he shall not see death for ever*; meaning, he shall not be obnoxious to that death, which is eternal. Our Lord certainly did not mean to say, though the Jews understood, or affected to understand him in that light, that the keeping of his doctrine, would exempt a person from natural death. On the contrary his meaning is, that the man, who firmly perseveres in the profession of his gospel in all its purity, and reduces it to practice, shall not be the victim of eternal death, nor remain for ever prisoner of the tomb. Similar to this is the signification, which he conveys by the words, *ου μη απολωνται εις τον αιωνα*. Chap. x. 26. *They shall not remain under the eternal dominion of death.*

Art thou greater than this Abraham, who died, as the prophets also died? Whom makest thou thyself?" In answer to these queries, our Lord replies in effect, that he did not seek to be raised above Abraham, or the prophets, nor to procure glory for himself; that, if he sought his own glory, it would, like that of his impious rivals, be nothing and end in nothing; that his Father, however, would glorify him in his resurrection from the dead, as the basis of that eternal life, which he held out to his faithful followers:—"Jesus answered, If I give glory to myself, this glory is nothing: it is the Father who giveth me glory."

He then hints that the grounds of Abraham's glory or exultation did not consist in any other privilege than in being enabled by the power of faith to foresee the day, in which he, as the Messiah, should appear in the world. "Abraham your father exulted to see my days, and he saw it and was glad;" 56. The words carry an obvious allusion to a man, who, standing on low ground, springs up in order to get a glimpse of an object, concealed from his eyes either by distance, or something intervening. They therefore cannot, without violence, be inter-



preted as asserting that Jesus really existed in the days of that patriarch. And yet so intent were the Jews upon perverting his language, that, when he said Abraham leapt up, as it were, to see the distant day of Christ, they construed his saying into a declaration that *he* saw Abraham. “Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?” Instead of exposing this artful misconstruction of his words, our Lord coolly proceeds to assert, that he was the personage whose day was anticipated not only by Abraham, but by others, before Abraham received his birth.” Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was born, I am he.” Observe carefully, our Lord does not say before Abraham was born I *was*, but I *am*, that is, am the person meant when it was promised, that one should come into the world for the benefit of mankind\*. It should be remarked, that, as our divine Master holds himself up to be the

\* As the clause *εγω εμει*, is but an assertion, that he is the Messiah, Simon and Dositheus, having claimed that character, made use of it respecting themselves. The following is a striking instance of this : Του Σιμωνος αποστολος ΕΓΩ ΕΙΜΙ, ο Δωσιθεος εαυτον γινους ουκ οντα τον εσotta, πισων προσεκυνησε. Hom. Clem. ii. 24. Compare this with what Jesus says, Mat. xxiv. v.

person whom the Jewish patriarchs foresaw; and in whose coming they rejoiced, and that, as his discourse is throughout levelled against those men, who he knew, would reject the Old Testament, as delivered by a Christ different from the founder of christianity, his object in part was to preclude this absurd notion; and to assert, on the contrary, the unity of the Jewish dispensation with the christian, as having both proceeded from the same great Author, and conspiring alike in the same happy end.

Some observations have already been delivered on certain parts of the tenth chapter. There remains much more of what is very material to notice in it. "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers;" verse 8. In the number of those thieves and robbers, who came before Christ, Simon Magus, I have shewn, held a conspicuous rank. This is a fact, which we are now able more satisfactorily to explain. Being a disciple of John the Baptist, he began his imposture while his Master was yet living: And we are told that he had already become famous at Alexandria, for his skill in the arts of magic. On his return home, he set up a system of opposition to

the ministry of Jesus, and, though his artifices did not perhaps prove very successful at first in Judea, he made many converts in his own country, and among other nations, before the gospel was yet extended to the gentiles. This is a fact very probable in itself, and it is directedly attested by the author of the *Homilies*. For he represents the apostle Peter, as using these words: "In this way we may easily see to which class, (that is to the evil or to the good) belongs Simon, *who came before me to the gentiles*. What renders this passage worthy of notice is the circumstance of the writer alluding seemingly to the above declaration of Christ\*: And hence he well illustrates the propriety of it, by asserting that the darkness of antichrist was diffused among the gentiles, ere any of them were yet illuminated by the light of the gospel. Simon then being in the number of the impostors and perhaps the principal one of

\* Ὁ πρὸ ἐμοῦ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πρῶτος ἐλθὼν, Hom ii. 17. The words of Christ are these: Ἰαντες ὅσαι πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἦλθον, chap. x. 3. In the spurious book, entitled *The Apostolic Constitutions*, it is also asserted, that Simon, with an associate of the name of *Cleobius*, preached their heresy among the gentiles, before the true gospel was taught them by the apostles. See Cotelerius, vol. i. p. 335.

those, whom our Lord here calls thieves and robbers, we are hence enabled to see the beauty and force of the contrast, which this chapter exhibits of them. Jesus was the shepherd, who entered into the sheepfold by the door; Simon was the thief, that climbed up some other way; verses 1, 2. The former was a native, and the flock knew his voice; the latter a foreigner, whose speech they did not know; 4, 5. The one wished to feed and multiply the sheep; and to secure their lives from the destroyer; the other aimed at destroying them and diminishing their number; 10. Jesus superintended the flock, because he loved them: and wished to promote their good; Simon because he was a *hireling*. 12. The good Shepherd gave even his life for the sheep: The hireling, when he saw the wolf coming took to flight, and the sheep were scattered. “But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth: And the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep;” 12. If you reflect upon the persecution which first broke out in Rome, you will see much propriety in this representation; as it exhibits the hireling, and not the shepherd as being with the flock,

when the wolf made his first appearance. And this corresponds with the fact. When Sejanus and the Senate, the wolf here meant, worried the sheep of Christ, the Samaritan thief was, we have reason to believe, then in that city, endeavouring, as Lucian says of the impostor Alexander, to shear them of their brain and their wool. Simon and his associates were then compelled to seek security by flight, and all the converts were scattered over the whole world, by their banishment from Italy.

“As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: And I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: There shall be one fold and one shepherd;” 15, 16. By other sheep, which he had, and which were not of that fold, Jesus seems to have principally meant those of the Samaritans, who, he foresaw, would embrace his religion. The audaciousness of the deceiver in breaking into his fold, and leading astray many of his sheep in Judea, appears to have led our Lord by a natural association to reflect on those, who in the impostors

own country, would be converted to the gospel, and ranked in the number of his sheep. Thus considered there seems much propriety in the last clause: "And there shall be one fold and one shepherd." That is, "Even those Jews and Samaritans, who had hitherto been inflamed against each other by religious animosities, and separated into distinct societies by party spirit, shall unite together in peace and harmony, forming one church, and acknowledging one Master." Simon, it is to be observed, farther, had the arrogance and impiety to maintain, that none but himself knew the unknown God. To this circumstance also the above words have an apparent allusion. "As the Father knoweth me; *even so know I the Father.*" That is, "As I, and not the Samaritan impostor have received commission from God, it is I, and not he, that have the knowledge of him."

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father;" 17, 18. That Christ really

suffered and rose again, which were the great doctrines denied by the founders of the Gnostic school, are facts here anticipated and attested by our Lord; and what is most worthy of observation is, he represents his submission to death, so far from being an evidence of the divine displeasure, or not forming any part of his commission, as the grounds of his Father's love to him, and the principal charge which was given him to execute.

“ And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter : and Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt ? If thou be the Christ tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not : the works, which I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice : And I know them, and they follow me ;” 22—28.

The Jews, who surrounded our Lord on this occasion, seem to have been in part

the same with those, whom he addresses in the eighth chapter. There it is asserted by the Evangelist, that many of them believed in him. Jesus, however, foreseeing that they would espouse the Samaritan system, apprizes them, that, if they departed from the purity of his doctrine, they would cease to be in reality what they professed—his disciples. And of this he assures them in direct terms, while now speaking in reference to their deceiver. “But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you;” 26. The severe reflections, which our Lord then made upon their conduct and principles, threw them into rage, doubt, and perplexity. But they appear to have still entertained the secret conviction, that their reprover could be no other than the Christ. They therefore put to him the question in these strong terms, How long wilt thou take away our life (with doubt) \*? If thou be the Christ tell us plainly;” 24.

\* This is an expression no less peculiar than forcible. The use of it may be thus accounted for: Our Lord told his enemies that they would take away his life. The words thus uttered they picked up, and addressed them back to the speaker in a sense somewhat different from what he used them. As if they had said: “Thou sayest that we shall take away thy life, how long wilt thou take away ours with anxiety and doubt, whether or not thou be the Christ.”



To this Jesus replied: "I told you and ye believed not: the works, that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." He then subjoins this reason for their unbelief; "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me;" 26, 27. Which is as though he had spoken to this effect, "You have already expressed your faith in me. You belong not, however, to my fold, but, as I told you, to that of a hireling. Being the disciples of an impostor, you have neither principles nor dispositions, which qualify you to exercise a firm faith in my mission, nor yield proper obedience to my words. *They* are really my followers, (and these divine wisdom hath enabled me to foreknow) who have power to obey my commands, and follow my example." He goes on, "And I give them eternal life, and they shall not perish eternally: And no one shall snatch them out of my hand;" 28. As if he had thus said: "My impious antagonists promise, it is true, an eternal exemption from death to their deluded votaries\*.

\* Menander, the immediate disciple of Simon, made this promise to his followers; if so be, that they were baptized in

But I am the person authorised to proclaim this unspeakable blessing. I promise not, indeed, to my faithful followers an indemnity from natural death, but they shall not remain for ever captives of the king of terror. And these my sincere disciples, who are prepared by proper dispositions for immortal felicity, no impostor will be able either by fraud or violence to snatch from my hand."

Simon pretended to reveal a God unknown and superior to the God of the Jews. This seems to have been the chief artifice, by which he seduced many of that nation to espouse his system. And it is this which

his name.—*Resurrectionem per id quod est in eum baptisma accipere ejus discipulos, et ultra non posse mori, sed perseverari non senescentes et immortales; Irenæus p. 96. The same thing is thus attested of him by Tertullian: Sed Hæretici magi Menandri Samaritani furor conspuatur, dicentis mortem ad suos non modo non pertinere, verum nec pervenire; in hoc scilicet se a superna et arcana potestate legatum, ut immortales et incorruptibiles, et statim resurrectionis compotes fiant, qui baptisma ejus induerint; p. 301. D. This doctrine, or rather this impudent imposture of Menander did not originate with him, but was borrowed from Simon and Dositheus: both of whom, as the standing power of God, asserted that they should continue immortal in this life: And of course they promised a similar privilege to their deluded disciples. The notion of Cerinthus must have been also similar; since he and his followers believed, that they should live a thousand years on the earth.*

our Lord next has in view, and in opposition to it, he holds up his own Father, as being greater than all. “My Father, who gave them me, IS GREATER THAN ALL, AND NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO SNATCH THEM FROM HIS HAND; 29. Another tenet inculcated by the deceiver was, that Christ, as being not the Son of the Jewish Jehovah, did not derive his commission from him, and that he did not co-operate with him in the execution of it. To this absurd opinion the next words of Jesus, carry a direct reference: “*I and the Father are one;*” Which may be thus paraphrased: “I act in conjunction with my heavenly Father. My object is the same with his. The scheme, which I proclaim, proceeded from his paternal affection for the human race; it was his wisdom that contrived it, and his power alone enables me to execute it; so that the supposition of my having no connection, no union with him, in accomplishing the salvation of mankind, is false and impious.” The Jews, who were bent upon finding out some fresh grounds for accusing him, affected to take his words in a literal sense, as if Jesus had asserted, that he was one and the same with Jehovah

himself. “They, therefore, took up stones again to throw at him; and Jesus said unto them, Many good works have I shewn you from my Father; for which of those works would ye stone me? The Jews answered, We are not stoning thee for a good work, but for a wicked speech; because thou, who art a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered, Is it not written in your law, I said, *ye are gods*? If ye called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and this scripture cannot be set aside; do ye say that I, whom the Father sanctified for his apostle to the world, speak wickedly, because I called myself a Son of God?” 31—37. When our Lord, on a former occasion, was accused by his perverse countrymen of making himself equal to God, he repelled, we have seen, the accusation as false and groundless. Here we behold him assailed with a similar charge; and remarkably decisive is the manner in which he refutes it. His argument, as contained in the above extract, is to this effect: “In your law those, who were sent from God, have the name of gods given them\*. I therefore might, without incur-

\* See Exod. xxii. 28. Ps. lxxxii. 6. From these texts it is evident, that it was usual with the Jews, as well as with the gentiles, to give their *rulers* the appellation of *Gods*. For this

ring the guilt of blasphemy, have assumed that title : But, though a far more important commission is entrusted to me than to any other messenger of heaven, I never called myself God. I only profess to be the *Son of God*, and this my claim is substantiated by the works, which I do ; the reality of which you cannot yourselves deny." Thus does our Saviour himself, a second time, refute, in express terms, the doctrine of his divinity. Those men, who have hitherto embraced this as true, will do well to examine Jesus's own testimony. His authority, for which they profess to have due regard, leaves them no room to hesitate for a moment, but that it is a doctrine which has no foundation in truth.

The traitor Judas, it has already been observed, is considered, by some ancient

reason, had our Lord claimed that name to himself, it would not follow, that he meant to represent himself to be a supernatural being. And this is obviously implied in the drift of his argument. It is as though he had said : " Every messenger from God, or any person acting with the authority of God, might be called God. But I in an eminent manner sustain that character ; therefore I have an eminent claim to the honour of that denomination ; and had I availed myself of that claim it would mean no more than that I was the messenger of God." See, if you have leisure, the *Recognitions*, Lib. ii. 41, 42. What the author there says is very good and much to the purpose.

writers, as the original founder of the Gnostic heresies. This, however, is an assertion, which cannot be strictly true; as Judas does not appear to have formed any new system of his own, or intended to oppose the claims of his Master, nor yet to place himself at the head of a party, by modifying the doctrine delivered by Jesus. But, inasmuch as he had perpetrated an act, which rendered him an object of abhorrence to the faithful disciples; inasmuch, too, as the first Gnostic resembled him in dispositions and character, and for this reason ranked, on his side, in opposition to the true believers, defended his cause, and affected to extol him, as surpassing in evangelical knowledge not only the apostles, but the founder of christianity himself—for these reasons Judas might be considered as the father of all heresies. Nor is it improbable that the Samaritan deceiver, while yet the disciple of John, was acquainted with the traitor, and that he instigated him to the perpetration of the treacherous deed. The Gnostic heretics, as the advocates of Judas, appear to have maintained, that he did not betray his Master from any evil motive, or any suggestion of satan, but to display an act, which exhibited his superior mystic knowledge. This artful and specious no-

tion appears to have led the evangelist John to be more explicit than any other of his brother-historians, in shewing that the motive of the traitor was evil, and proceeded purely from the evil being. See chap. xii. 6. xiii. 2, 26.

It would be a matter of triumph no less to the pretended friends, than to the open enemies of the christian faith, if the apostate disciple had delivered its illustrious founder *unawares* to the chief priests. In order, however, to deprive them of all cause for exultation on this ground, John shews, with peculiar precision, that the treachery of Judas was an event, which his Master foresaw, and even foretold\*. “After Jesus had said these things, he was troubled within

\* Our Lord went farther still; and represents the treachery of Judas as but the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy.—“I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture might be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me;” John xiii. 18. This should be rendered *he hath lifted up his heel UPON me.*—*επιηρσεν επι εμε την πτερυνην αυτου*. The expression has an elegant allusion to the *posture*, which the ancients used when eating their meals. They so reclined, that the foot of the person above came near the head of the one below. Judas then, when his Master gave him and the other disciples the precedence, on this occasion had the ingratitude as well as cruelty to put his foot, as it were, upon his throat.

himself, and declared, saying, Verily, verily, I say unto you, one of you will deliver me up. Then the disciples kept looking at each other, doubting whom he meant. Now that disciple, whom Jesus loved, placed himself at the breast of Jesus; to him therefore, Simon Peter beckoned, that he should ask Jesus, whom he meant. Then he, who was placed at the breast of Jesus, saith unto him, Master, which is it? Jesus answered, It is he, to whom I shall give the piece I am going to dip. Then he dipt in the piece, and gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after this satan went into him;" 21—27. Whoever reads this passage with due attention must, I am persuaded, if he possess any taste and judgment, be strongly impressed with the pathetic tenderness which it breathes, and be convinced that the writer sustained a character very opposite to that of an impostor; and that he copied not from his imagination, but faithfully related a fact, previously imprinted upon his memory.

After washing the feet of his disciples, Jesus tells them, "Now ye are clean, *but not all;*" xiii. 10. In this last clause he hints, as his manner was, when referring to



future, or unknown events, at the one among them, that had an unclean heart. He then, as is above related, more clearly informed them, whom he meant, and Judas in consequence, presently withdrew. His departure gave rise to the following language, which Christ uttered in the course of this pathetic address: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he (my Father) taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth (pruneth), that it may bring forth more fruit. *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you\**;" xv. 2, 3. The latter part of which signifies, if considered in its primary application, that they were now all good and faithful; the person, who was an exception, having, because of what he told them, gone away.

Now since our Lord foresaw that the first heretics would class themselves with Judas

\* In chap xiii. 8. he tells his disciples, that unless he washed them, they should not, as being yet unclean, have any part with him. After he had washed them, he tells them, *ye are clean*, ver. 10. And here he says, they are made clean by *his doctrine*. From his words being thus compared together, they will appear to contain the following comparison: *As your feet are now clean by my washing them, so are your hearts made clean by the instructions, motives, and consolations, which I have in the course of my ministry communicated unto you.*

Iscariot, as one of their chiefs, and affect to extol him, as superior to the other apostles, it was natural that after the traitor had withdrawn, he should advert to the sentiments and conduct of his depraved partizans. And this, upon proper enquiry, we shall find to be fact. Immediately after the apostate disciple left them, Christ proceeded to lay before his now desponding associates a series of exhortations, calculated partly to console them in his absence, but chiefly to confirm their faith in those fundamental points, which, he knew, would be rejected by the impostors. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead, though the principal basis, on which the christian faith was founded, the Gnostic stubbornly denied; and this grand principle is the first, which arrested the attention of our divine Master after the departure of Judas. “Therefore when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall glorify him also in himself, and shall straightway glorify him\* ;” xiii. 31, 32. The glory

\* *Και Θεος δοξασει αυτον εν εαυτω* The position of the two last words shews that they were intended to be emphatic. They are generally considered as referring to God and not to Jesus; See Grotius on the place. He has only given the interpretation

here spoken of, means, no doubt, that glorious display of the divine power, which was speedily to be displayed in his resurrection from the grave. But remark carefully what is said in the last verse: "God will glorify him, *ἐν ἑαυτῷ*, *in himself*, and will immediately glorify him." Which means, I conceive, that the divine glory would be soon signalled in that *very person*, which suffered death, and not as the deceivers maintained, *in the Christ*, supposed to be a distinct being, and to have ascended to his original glory after the apprehension of the man Jesus. It was the event of his resurrection, which the Saviour intended principally to inculcate,

of the ancient commentators, and particularly that of Theophylact. Mr. Wakefield, however, refers them to *Jesus*: but before he could give them any meaning, he was obliged to transpose them. In fact no ingenuity under heaven can annex to the clause any signification, that is easy and appropriate, but that suggested above; and that because they are levelled at the false notion there pointed out. Considered in this light nothing can be more expressive and appropriate. "The Son of man hath glorified God in the course of his ministry, asserted his supremacy, exhibited his character in the most amiable point of view, acknowledged his dependence upon him, and ascribed to him the glory resulting from the miracles which he performed. For this reason God, in his turn, will soon glorify the Son of man himself." So that Jesus here asserts that the person who was soon to be glorified by the Deity, was the very same with himself, and not, as the impostors maintained, some other being different from him, and supposed to reside in him.

when he thus speaks of himself in the beginning of the fifteenth chapter: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." For it is the property of that plant, after it had been so pruned, as apparently to be deprived of life for ever, to shoot up again, and produce, in consequence, richer and more abundant fruits. His divine Father was the husbandman, because it was his will that he should be cut off and wither unto death, and because it was his power that should cause him to shoot forth anew, and flourish with immortal life.

The death of Christ was rejected by the impostors, as forming no part of his divine commission. This doctrine which he has before contradicted, he again refutes, on this solemn occasion, and speaks of his suffering, as a matter enjoined upon him by the Deity. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me: But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do: Arise, let us go hence;" xiv. 30, 31. By the prince of this world, Jesus appears to have chiefly meant the Roman governor\*, who tried him, and

\* *The prince of this world*, means the evil principle in the

and pronounced him innocent. And it is remarkable, that he has used words nearly the same with those, which Pilate made use of when he declared his innocence to the Jews; See chap. xviii. 38. But if no fault could be found in him, why then did he submit to a cruel and ignominious death? His own words furnish a satisfactory solution of the question, *That the world may know that I love the Father*, Which may be interpreted thus: "Though innocent I willingly suffer, in order that all may see, that I am no

abstract, but our Lord here applies it to those agents in the hands of the devil, who put him to death; namely Pilate and the Jewish rulers. Crysostom understands the terms in this sense, and his paraphrase exactly accords with mine. "By the prince of the world, Jesus, writes he, means the devil, and thus he calls wicked men. Not that the devil rules heaven and earth; since he overturns and pulls down every thing: But he rules those who deliver themselves up to him. On this account he (Jesus) calls him the Prince of this world. What then? Does the devil slay thee? By no means: for he hath nothing in me. How then do they slay thee? I voluntarily submit to death that the world might know, that I love the Father;" Comment. on John, p. 86g. See also Theophylact on the place, and particularly Grotius. It is worthy of observation that Jesus here says, that the adversary has nothing *in me*, and not, has nothing *against me*. By this he insinuates, that his destroyers would closely examine him, and lay open, as it were, the inside of his character, in order to find some fault of which to accuse him; Compare this idea with what our Lord told Simon Peter; Luke xxii. 31.

impostor, actuated by interested motives; but that I exercise such affection and confidence towards my heavenly Father, as to lay down my life in obedience to the commandment which he gave me.”

Simon and his immediate followers, being too proud to be deemed but branches of the true vine, separated from it, and the shoots, which they impudently stole from the vineyard of Christ, they went and planted in a nursery of their own. Hence though they admitted the divine mission of Christ, they pretended to be independent of him, and to claim an equality or even a superiority to him in power and wisdom\*.

\* Dositheus professed to be the Messiah; Simon the supreme power of God; Menander to be the Saviour himself; (Theod. Hær. Fab. Lib. i. 2); Manes that he was the Holy Ghost, promised by Christ to his disciples; (Theod. H. F. Lib. i. 26). The arrogance of Carpocrates was such, that he said, that he and his followers might be equal, and even superior, to the Lord Jesus; (Theod. H. F. Lib. i. 5). But permit me here to place before you a short section from Irenæus, where he is speaking of the impious presumption of these and the other impostors: “When they are refuted from the scriptures, they accuse the scriptures themselves, as if they were not right, or not authentic; or contained various readings, or that the truth could not be found from them, excepting by such as are acquainted with *Tradition*: which is handed down not by records, but by living voice: For this reason Paul said, We speak wisdom amongst the perfect, but not the wisdom of this world.

This was a circumstance which our divine Master foresaw : and he foresaw, too, that his own Apostles, when the descent of the spirit should enable them to perform works equal to those, which Jesus himself performed, would be exposed to strong temptations to follow the example of the impostors ; or, in other words, to act in *their own*

*And every one of these men affirm, that this wisdom is in himself, that he findeth it of himself ; namely, the fiction, which he hath invented : So that according to them, the truth is said to be, sometimes in Valentinus, sometimes in Marcion, sometimes in Cerinthus, and after that in Basilides. When again we appeal to that tradition, which is delivered from the Apostles, and which is preserved in the church by a succession of elders, they then turn against tradition ; saying, that being wiser than the elders, and even the Apostles, they found out themselves the pure truth ; that the Apostles mingled things of the law with the words of the Saviour ; that the Lord himself delivered discourses, dictated now by the Creator, (the lowest God) now by the intermediate, and now by the Supreme (divinity) : but that they knew the true mystery without doubt, and uncontaminated by impure mixture ;”* Iren. Lib. iii. Cap. 2. p. 199. Should my reader be disposed to question the truth of this representation, I will pledge myself to confirm it hereafter from the writings of the Apostles. In the meantime let him attend to the following verse in which Paul contrasts their conduct, with those of the impostors : “ We preach not *ourselves*, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves to be your servants for Jesus’s sake.” The obvious meaning of which is : “ We do not, like the deceivers, proclaim ourselves to be your lords, but proclaim Jesus to be the Lord, and profess to be ourselves only employed under him for your advantage ;” 2 Cor. iv. 5.

*name*, and not in subordination to the name of Jesus. Of the danger which thus awaited he here expressly warns them; and he tells them: "I am the vine, ye are the branches;" xv. 5.: and again, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and have planted you; so that you should go (back into the world), and bring forth fruit, and your fruit will remain;" 15, 16.

As a motive to persevere in their fidelity to Christ, and to beat down the ambition of being thought independent of him, he reminds them, that as a branch when cut off from the parent trunk, whence it had hitherto derived life, support, and nutriment, is no longer able to bring forth fruit, but withers away; so they, if transplanted from the divine stem, in which they had been ingrafted, would no more be capable of exhibiting those miraculous works, which should attest their divine mission, nor produce those unrivalled fruits of righteousness, which would abound and ripen in their conduct. "Continue in me, and I will continue in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit, unless it continue on the vine; so cannot ye, unless ye continue in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that continueth in me, and I



in him, the same beareth much fruit; but separated from me, ye can bear no fruit at all;" 4—7. He then reminds them, that the same fate would await them, which generally awaited barren branches, if, by a deviation from the purity of his doctrine, they ceased to produce those divine and human virtues, which it is calculated to generate. "Whosoever continueth not in me, will be thrown away like the withered branch; and such are gathered together, and cast into a fire to be burnt;" 6. Our Lord, who foresaw every circumstance, that concerned his gospel and its professors in future times, appears to have had his eye on the magicians, whose baseness, notwithstanding their profession of christianity, provoked an edict from Tiberius, enjoining the præfect of the provinces to seek out and destroy them. If this were the case, what force and propriety must the apostles have felt in the admonition here given, when they saw the destruction of many of those wretched impostors, whom ambition and other base passions had separated from the stem of Jesus Christ.

To encourage his desponding apostles, Christ assures them, that their heavenly Fa-

ther would impart to them whatever they asked, provided they presented their petitions in *the name of Jesus*, and not in their *own*, or any *other* name; that is, they should obtain of God all necessary aid, however extraordinary, upon condition, that they asked it in subordination to the prophet of Nazareth, and considered him, to the exclusion of themselves, and every other person, as the Messiah, or the Saviour of the world. Hence we are able to perceive the meaning of the following declaration: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever he shall ask in my name, I will do it;" xiv. 12, 13. Observe here how careful and expressive our divine Lord is in ascribing to his Father, and not to himself, as their proper source, the powers, which the apostles were afterwards to receive. He would do, he assures them, whatever they asked in his name, but for this the Father, and not the Son, was to be glorified or praised. He would enable them to perform greater works than those he wrought; but this ability he had not to give of himself, and he was to go unto the Father to receive it.

In order, farther, more effectually to exclude the idea of his being the origin of those endowments, he tells his disciples, that, if in his name they would ask the Father, he would bestow them directly without the instrumentality of the Son. “And in that day ye will have no need to ask me any thing; for verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.—These things have I spoken to you in dark speeches; but a time is coming, when I will no longer speak to you in dark speeches, but will tell you plainly of the Father. In that day ye will ask in my name; and I do not say that I will ask the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye love me, and believe that I am come from God;” xvi. 23—27. Here then we perceive the precise object, which Jesus had, in holding up to his disciples his own name, as the proper medium of presenting their addresses to God. It was to inculcate upon them the absolute necessity of acknowledging their subordination to Jesus, and to restrain them from imitating the impious conduct of the impostors, who, so far from praying to the Father, blasphemed him, and disclaimed all

subordination to his Son Jesus Christ. This therefore, like many others, is a precept, which relates only to the peculiar circumstances of the apostles; And it is far from authorising any one to conclude, that prayers offered with a becoming spirit, though not formally and specifically presented in the name of Jesus, would be rejected by the supreme Father. This is an important point to be attended to, and the truth of it is virtually asserted, in the above paragraph, by our Lord himself. All that he enjoins upon his followers was to consider him as the sole Messiah, the true way of approaching the Deity, to the rejection of those false prophets who opposed his claims. They are to make use of his name in their supplications to God, as an open confession of this simple but important belief. But he forbids them to suppose, that his name contained in itself any extraordinary efficacy, or that, when used by way of intercession, it had any avail in obtaining favours of the Deity, who, from motives of pure love, is ever ready to hear the petitions of those who worship him in sincerity and in truth. There is one thing more to be here remarked: Christ, while he yet lived with his disciples, did not teach them to pray in his name; and in that beauti-

ful form of prayer, which he left for the edifications of his followers in every age and country, his own name is not mentioned. And why then should he be so particular and solemn in enjoining upon his disciples to use his name in their addresses to the Father after his departure? The reason is now obvious: As long as they were with their divine Master there was no danger, lest they should set up claims in opposition to him, or follow any other impostor that did so. But when he had now left them, and when, in particular, they found themselves endowed with powers, which, though not entirely at their discretion, might tempt them, if not faithful and true, to seek their own independent gratifications, it was highly expedient to bind them down *to a form*, which implied a continued acknowledgment of their dependence upon, and subordination to their divine Master.

Superior knowledge, spiritual seed implanted within them from above, some secret bias of nature in their favour,—these were deemed by the impostors to be the means of acceptance with God, and of being finally saved. To this false and pernicious standard, our divine Master, we have seen, elsewhere

opposes the fruits of virtue in the temper and conduct; and similar is the way, which he here lays down in opposition to the same men, of glorifying the supreme Father. "In this is my Father glorified, when ye bring forth fruit, and ye shall then be my disciples;" xv. 8. Which is to this effect: "As true honour is then reflected on the husbandman, when his fields are adorned with rich and plentiful crops, so my Father, which is in heaven, receives real glory, not from those who pretend to have more perfect knowledge of him, or to be more assiduous in offering him external acts of devotion, but from those, whose lives are crowned with the produce of those good principles, which my gospel has sown in them: And those only, who are thus distinguished, are in reality my disciples."

The impostors who separated from Christ, the true vine, were far from exhibiting, in their behaviour, the delicious grapes of candour, meekness, forbearance, and brotherly love. The reverse of these amiable virtues, were the passions, which marked their character; and that his chosen disciples might not indulge in dispositions so base and pernicious in themselves, and so opposite to the

benevolent genius of his religion, he exhorts them again and again to cherish mutual love, and to carry this principle to such extent, as that all his followers might be known by this and by no other mark of distinction. “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another; xiii. 34, 35. also xv. 12. Where he again repeats the same sentiment.

There was no circumstance, which more widely distinguished the Gnostic teachers from the faithful disciples of Jesus, than that affectation of superior knowledge, in which they prided; or that insolence, with which they treated those humble christians supposed to be less learned than themselves. Our Lord foresaw the prevalence of this haughty spirit in his false followers; and he appears particularly anxious to preclude or eradicate it in his true disciples: And in order to afford them the most impressive lesson of the opposite temper, he condescended, though their Lord and Master, to wash their feet.—“He rose from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poured

water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.—So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments and was set down again, he said unto them, know ye what I have done to you, &c. I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you ;” xiii. 4—14. It was the pride of the Gnostics, and their stubborn reluctance to imitate his humility, meekness, and other virtues, that led them to reject our Saviour under the characters of *Lord* and *Teacher*. This disgusting trait in them Christ seems here to have in view : and he levels against it the following remarkable declaration : “ Ye call me Teacher and Lord, and ye call me so rightly for I am (your Teacher and Lord,)” xiii. 13.

The followers of Judas, (for so the early impostors might be called), not only evaded persecution, for conscience sake, by equivocation and falsehood, but joined with the heathens, in vilifying and oppressing the virtuous professors of the gospel. This contrast, which subsisted between the true believer and the false, seems, with other causes, to have led our Lord, in this his last address, to



remind the apostles of the sufferings which awaited them : and he encourages them to perseverance, under their trials and afflictions, by placing before them his own example ; chap. xv. 18.—22.

The reference, which Jesus has to the deceivers throughout this pathetic address, will enable us to see the beauty and force of the following, much-disputed passage : “ These words spake Jesus, and lift up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father ! the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth : I have finished the work, which thou hast given me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was ;” xvii. 1—6. Here it is asserted, first, that our Lord had received from the Father, power *over all flesh*\* ; which means that the Almighty,

\* The word *flesh* often denotes, in the New Testament,

by raising his Son from the grave, would enable him finally to abolish death, or, subject as mankind are at present to its ravages, to emancipate them in the end from its dominion. Secondly, it is implied that this eternal life consisted in knowing the Father as the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; that is, in acknowledging and obeying Jehovah, as the true and only God, and not the fictitious god, whom the impostors of Samaria affect to reveal and worship; and in embracing *Jesus* as the Christ, and not anathematizing him, as will be done by the heretics. Thirdly, it is implied, that our Lord did not possess power to *glorify himself*; that is, to raise himself from the dead, but that he entirely depended for this glory upon the power of his supreme Father, which he obtained, like every other blessing, by humble supplication. Finally, the passage affirms, that the glory which awaited Jesus, was with the Father *before the world was*.

the same thing with *man*, (Mat. xvi. 17. xxiv. 22. and in many other places) but man, as a *mortal* and *corruptible* being in opposition to whatever is divine, immortal, and incorruptible. On this account the divine nature is represented by sacred and profane authors to be *απαθης, αναιμιμος, ασχετος*. The term *σαςξ* thus used, to signify the *human body*, or the mortal part of man, is synonymous with 'ολη'. A few passages on this subject I shall produce on a future occasion.

By this we are taught, *that the glorious display of the divine power, which signalised the Son of God in his resurrection from the dead, and exaltation into heaven, so far from being unreal and unforeseen as was maintained by the heretics, had been fore-ordained by the supreme Being himself, and had existed in the divine mind from the beginning, as the grand means of opening to mankind the prospect of eternal life.* The reference which he has to the impostors is still more obvious from what follows : “As I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee, preserve them, holy Father! whom thou gavest me, **IN THY NAME\***, that they may be one, as we are one ;” xvii.

11. The meaning of which seems to this effect : “As I am now leaving my disciples, and as they will be in danger of being misled by false doctrines, keep them, holy Father, in the belief and worship of thee only. Suffer them not to be deluded by impostors into the impious opinion, that thou art an inferior evil being, and that there exists another higher and better than thyself.” He then prays that his heavenly Father

\* The common version has it, *through thy name* : but Mr. Wakefield, whose translation I have adopted, renders the clause, conformably to the original, *in thy name*.

might enable the Apostles to persevere in the truth of the doctrine which he delivered to them, and to encounter those evils, which the profession of it, in its purity, would bring upon them : “ I have given them thy word, and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask thee to take them out of the world, but to preserve them from the evil one ; As they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world, prepare them for thy truth.” After this he asserts the truth of the doctrine which he taught as received from God, in opposition to the system taught by the impostors : *This doctrine of thine is the truth* ; 17.

It has already been observed, that, according to the deceivers, our Lord, so far from acting in union with the Creator in respect to the object of his mission, came to destroy his works, as the works of a malignant being, and to set men free as they were pleased to say, from his arbitrary injunctions \*. This profane and pernicious

\* Simon encouraged his followers to indulge in every species of vice: And he professed that his object was to rescue them from the controul of the Creator of the world and his angels. The words of Iræneus are these : *Qua propter et solvi mundum,*

notion, Christ in this his last solemn address contradicts; and in a language indeed highly figurative, but well adapted to the purpose, asserts the unity of his scheme with his Father: "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also; and ye very soon will know him and see him. Philip saith unto him: Master, shew us the Father, and we will be satisfied. Jesus saith unto him: Do ye not know me, when I have been with you so long a time? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? These words which I am speaking to you, I speak not from myself, but my Father speaketh them; these works also the Father, who is in me, doeth. Believe me when I say, that I am in the

et liberari eos qui sunt ejus, ab imperio eorum qui mundum fecerunt, repromisit; p. 95. Saturnilus, who under Menander was educated in the school of Simon, entertained this same opinion. Speaking of the Samaritan supreme God, who according to him was the Father of Christ, he says: "Wishing to destroy, with the other angels, the God of the Jews, he sent Christ into the world for the salvation of those, who should believe in him" (that is in Christ and not in Jehovah;) Theod. Hær. Fab. Lib. i. 3. See also what the same author says of the *Antitactæ*, a race of pretended Christians, who, armed with bold impiety, carried their hatred and opposition to the Jewish God so far, as to infringe his commandments, merely because they were his; Lib. i. 20.

Father and the Father in me ; if not believe me for the sake of these very works ;” xiv. 7—14. Which expressions, strong as they are, mean simply this: “The words, which I speak, are inspired by the wisdom of my Father ; the works, which I do, are performed by the power of my Father. And in as much as these his effects are visible in me, he may be said to be himself visible in me, and with me, and consequently I am *one* with him in respect to the grand plan in the execution of which I am engaged.” Having asserted the presence of God with him, and the agency of God in him, he declares that he was inferior to the universal Father, and not, as was represented by the Gnostic teachers, superior to him ; “If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father. FOR MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I ;” xiv. 28. Simon pretended that he was the true way to the unknown God, as that God was made known only to himself. In reference to this impious pretension Jesus thus declares : “I am the way, the truth, and the life ; no man cometh unto the Father but by me ;” xiv. 6.

As the tenets of the impostors were the

fictions of their own invention, they changed them as circumstances required; nor did they vary less from each other, than they often did from themselves. Having deviated from the acknowledgment and worship of the only true God, and thus rendered the divine commission of Jesus nugatory in those who adopted their sentiments, they were destitute of that consistence, which proceeds from truth, and of that peace and harmony which accompany benevolence. From these evils our divine Lord prays his heavenly Father to preserve his faithful followers; and as the best and most effectual means of securing them against that turbulence, noise, and contention, which should mark the deceivers, he supplicates that they should be kept in the truth of his doctrine; that they should with one heart believe *in his name*, and maintain an unity of sentiment and conduct, similar to that which subsisted between him and his Father: "This doctrine of thine is the truth; As thou sendest me into the world, so send I them into the world. And for their sakes do I devote myself to thee, that they might be devoted to the truth. And I ask not for these only, but for those also, who will believe in me

through their preaching, that they all may be one, as thou, Father! art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe, that thou didst send me, and that thou gavest me the glory which I gave them; that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them, as thou in me; so as to be perfected in one, for the world to know, that thou sendest me, and lovedst them as thou lovedst me;" xvii. 17—24.

Having now finished what I had to observe on the gospel of John, I return to a few passages, which it would have been premature previously to notice in the other gospels: "And one of the scribes, who had come up and heard them disputing, knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, which is the first commandment of all? Jesus answered, the first of all the commandments is, Hear, O! Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord: 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, and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these;" Mark xii. 28—32.



Here our Saviour asserts in the most express and unequivocal language, that the God of Israel is the only God. Now as he cited this passage from Moses, it follows, first, that his ideas respecting the supreme Being must have been the same with those of Moses, who like every other real Jew, thought, that he consists not of *three* persons but of one; that he is simple and uncompounded in essence, in nature, and in name:—Secondly, that his object in citing it must have been the same with that of the Jewish lawgiver\*, viz. to assert the unity of God to the exclusion of all other gods, and by consequence to inculcate him as the only proper object of religious homage. Hence we may infer, that, as the unknown supreme God, pretended to have been revealed by the Samaritan impostors, was the chief divinity, which was now generally opposed to the God of Israel, our Lord had an eye to him on

\* The object of Moses in giving this commandment to the Israelites is well explained by the learned Spencer, Vol. i. 27. There it appears that *אֱלֹהִים One*, is applied to Jehovah as a *proper name*, in order to impress upon the minds of the Jews the constant sense that there existed but one God. The Assyrians, it appears from Macrobius, copied this appellation, and hence called their supreme divinity *Adodus*; Satur. Lib. i. cap. 23.

this occasion. And that he had the Samaritans here in view, is certain : Since he proposed the example of the good Samaritan to the scribe above-mentioned, as a model for his imitation ; See Luke x. 30. The reference, which Jesus had to those false teachers, who denied that the Christ sprang from the seed of David, was the circumstance which led him to put, in this connection, the following remarkable question to the scribes : “ Why do the scribes say, that the Christ is the Son of David? for David himself said : The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right-hand, till I make thine enemies my footstool, David therefore himself calleth him Lord : how is he then his Son?” Mark. xii. 36. It is here observable, that he not only proves the Messiah to be of the race of David from the Jewish scriptures, but brings in his own adversaries, the scribes, as themselves asserting that fact. The historians of his life, he knew, would have need of such an incident, in order effectually to refute the Gnostic teachers : and nothing certainly could be provided that might answer the purpose better.

Matthew has recorded the following words, which form a part of our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount : “ Ye have heard that it was

said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies; bless them who curse you; do good to them who hate you; and pray for them, who despitefully use you and revile you, that ye may be the sons of your Father, which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust. For if ye love them who love you, what is your reward? Do not even the tax-gatherers the same? And if ye salute your brethren only; what good will this do you? Do not even the tax-gatherers so. Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect; chap. v. 41—48.

In this, as well as in almost every part of the gospel, our divine Master appears to allude to the teachers of the Gnostic school. A few observations will, it is presumed, render this allusion manifest. First, then, those vain men maintained, that the Creator of the world was *imperfect*, and *evil*, that is, one who hated his human offspring. Here on the contrary Jesus represents the universal Father, as perfect, and perfect too, in *love*; causing his sun to shine, and rain to descend upon men of all descriptions. Secondly, the

Gnostic hypocrites hated, cursed, reviled, and blasphemed Jehovah. And this is a circumstance Christ seemingly had in his mind when delivering the passage:—"But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them which curse you, &c.—that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust." Which argument is to the following purpose: "Some men, pretending to be believers in me, hate and blaspheme my Father which is in heaven; yet he withholdeth not from them the exercise of his benevolence. Do you in this respect imitate his conduct and resemble his character. Cease not in imitation of him to regard with compassion, and to treat with kindness those who revile and persecute you." Thirdly, those refractory christians allowed that the God of the Jews was *just*, but not *good*. Apparently from a regard to this arbitrary distinction, our divine Instructor here observes a similar distinction, for he maketh his sun to rise on the *good*,—and sendeth rain on the *just*. But observe, he places the *good* before the *just*; intimating thereby that justice is a principle, which proceeds from goodness, and that those only are just

(or agreeably to the original acceptation of the term, abstain from wronging others\*) who are benevolent. Observe, farther; the sun (the most beautiful and beneficent object in nature) is represented to rise on *the good*; whereas the rain (an inferior though a necessary blessing) he sendeth on the just. By which is signified, that our Father in heaven regards with peculiar favour those who are good, those who come nearest to himself in goodness and benevolence. Fourthly; to make it appear that the Creator of the world, or the Author of the Jewish dispensation, was a different being from the author of the gospel, and inferior to him in goodness, wisdom, and power, they cited those maxims from the law of Moses, which are noticed by Christ in this chapter, and contrasted them with those principles which he sub-

\* The ancients defined justice to signify much the same thing with that virtue, which disposes a man to refrain from injuring another either in his person or property. This is the definition given of it, by *Aristotle* in his *Rhetoric*; p. 39. Ἐστὶ δὲ δικαιοσύνη ἀρετὴ δι' ἣν τὰ αὐτῶν ἕκαστοι ἐχρῶσι, καὶ ὡς ὁ νόμος. Cicero describes *justitia* as synonymous with *abstinentia*; See *Epis.* 17. The same Author thus speaks of a just man: Homo autem justus, nihil cuiquam, quod in se, transferat, detrahet; *De Off. Lib.* iii. 19. And similar to these are the words of *Xenophon* respecting *Agesilaus*: Τῷ μὲν δίκαιῳ ἀρκεῖν ἡγουμένους τὸ εἶναι τὰ ἀλλοτρίαι, *De Agesilas, Cap.* ii. p. 89. edit. Simpson's.

stituted in their room \*. Now in order to preclude, or to do away this specious argument, that the universal parent is a malevolent being, Jesus wisely subjoins to those sayings of Moses and his own improvement upon them, a testimony in favour of the divine benevolence, as displayed not through the medium of any human being, (whose authority might be disregarded or doubted), but in those provisions made to warm and to water the earth, the benevolent effects of which are felt and acknowledged by all. Lastly, in order to preclude every motive and every attempt in men to become virtuous and to improve in virtue, the impostors represented mankind as *naturally prone* † to

\* In attestation of this fact I refer my reader to Theodoret; Hær. Fab. Lib. v. 16, 17.; where in opposition to the heretics he maintains that a good and a just man is one and the same; and that the New and Old Testaments claim the same divine author. See also Jerome on this place.

† The impostors, however, seem to have made an honourable exception in favour of themselves and their followers. The opinion which they held was, that some of the human race were good and others bad *by nature*. They classed themselves of course under the former division; See, if you please, on this subject, Philo, p. 74. Iræneus, p. 96. Theod. Hær. Fab. Lib. i. De Saturnilo, Origen Philocal. p. 51, 62. Contra Celsum, p. 153. Tertul. p. 261. B. The notion that certain human souls are depraved by nature, flowed as an immediate and necessary consequence from the impious opinion, maintained by the Gnostics, that mankind are the creatures of an *evil being*.

evil, and *incapable* of moral acquirements. In opposition to this vile and dangerous doctrine, our blessed Lord places the nature of man in the most noble and engaging point of light. The votaries of the gospel, he represents as advancing from one perfection to another, until, in a moral view, they coalesce with the infinite perfection of God; while those, who were deemed the most abandoned and profligate of the age, even in their natural state, or previously to their conversion to the faith, exercised, in a measure, the virtues of reciprocal benevolence and justice.

As our Lord foresaw, that the facts of his having really suffered and risen the third day from the dead, would meet with universal opposition as well among his false friends, as his open enemies, wisdom required that he should establish their reality by the most satisfactory evidences, and take such precautions as were best adapted to remove, in the estimation of sober reason, the objections that should be urged against them. Some of those precautions, which divine wisdom thus prompted him to take, I shall here cursorily notice. The specification

of every particular on the subject would require little short of a whole volume.

The simple ordinance, enjoined upon his faithful followers to celebrate, he instituted as a perpetual memorial of his death, as a standing proof that he had a real body, continually suggesting to them by visible symbols, that his flesh was really bruised, and his blood really shed.—“ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat: This is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them; saying, drink ye all of it: For this is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins ;” Mat. xxvi. 26—28. Which may be thus paraphrased : “ Flesh and blood, you know, are perishable in their nature, and form the mortal part of man. As then this bread is broken, and this wine poured out, so is my body to be bruised and my blood to be shed. You are therefore to regard these elements as symbols of my having a real body, and of that body being really pierced and lacerated. Nor presume to celebrate, in honour of my supposed divinity, a feast, by which I intend to perpetuate the belief of my simple huma-



nity and death\*.” Of the propriety and justice of this interpretation, my reader will be fully convinced hereafter, when it is seen, that the first Gnostics classed the *Eucharist* with those solemnities, which the pagans instituted in honour of their gods; and frequented it in commemoration of the pretended divinity of its founder. This was a circumstance, which our Saviour foresaw, and it seems, that his words, related above, are levelled against it. That he had, however, other objects in view, in the institution

\* When we come to explain the words of Paul on this subject, I will shew from a variety of passages that this paraphrase comprehends the real meaning of our Lord. I shall, however, here observe, that some ancient writers considered the bread and wine, as figures intended to represent his *real* body and blood in opposition to the Gnostics.—Ut repræsentaret, says Jerome on the place, veritatem corporis et sanguinis. The author or authors of the Apostolic Constitutions evidently considered these aliments as intended to represent the same thing; and the institution of the Eucharist by our Lord as designed to perpetuate the belief of his having really died; See Lib. vii. chap. 25. It is here not improper to remark, that the first converts made by the Apostles, daily participated of the sacrament, and one chief object of its frequent celebration was to keep alive, in their minds, the conviction of their Master's real death, and to bear down the sentiments of their impious antagonists. I had almost forgotten to observe that the author of the Harmony ascribed to *Tatian*, which Lardner thinks to be genuine, represents the principal object of the Eucharist to be the same as is described above. His words you will find in Lardner, vol. ii. p. 428.

of the sacrament, is what I readily allow. But as these do not coincide with my subject, I pass over them in silence.

2. The conduct of our Lord under his acute sufferings in the garden of Gethsemane, and the manner in which he caused that scene to be recorded, seem to have been designed by him and his biographers, as everlasting monuments of his real humanity and suffering. The reader, if he be capable of drawing just conclusions from the known operations of the human mind in given circumstances, must be convinced that the virtuous sufferer, had the prospect of the direful death which awaited him fully before his eyes. The horror of this fills him with anguish; and he prays to his Father, if possible, to avert the impending hour. The infirmity of human nature now sinking under the weight of anguish, is nevertheless buoyed up by the dictates of a sublime resignation to the will of heaven. Thrice he returns to his disciples, and thrice he repeats the same prayer: And the repetition of it was well adapted to impress upon their minds a deep recollection of the solemn scene, and thus to prompt them to the recording of it, as a standing proof, that the in-

nocent victim had no feelings but those of a man—a man indeed, whose frame was exquisitely susceptible by nature, whose heart was refined by the purest benevolence, and whose views were exalted by the most rational piety. Without directly professing to foresee the fatal catastrophe, Jesus, by his agonies, evinces that he had a distinct, and lively foresight of the whole transaction. And hence the divine illumination that guided him, flashes with more convincing lustre, from the dark cloud which now encompassed our illustrious Lord. The disciples cherished the hope that, notwithstanding his own repeated declarations, his deliverance from the sentence of death, would be effected either by his own discretionary power, or by the interposition of heaven. At this mistaken notion he appears to glance in the following clause, and he insinuates by it, that his suffering would terminate in nothing short of death: “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, EVEN UNTO DEATH;” *Mat. xxvi. 38.*

The peculiar manner, in which Luke has related the anguish of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, renders it necessary here to transcribe it: “And when he was at the

place, he said unto them, pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast; and he kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father! If thou be willing, remove this cup from me: Nevertheless not my will but thine be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him. 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;" xxii. 40—45.

The figure of wrestling with God in prayer was familiar with the Jews: And the very term, which usually expressed *perseverance* and *steadiness* in prayer, denotes, in its primary sense, exertion of bodily strength\*. This figure was naturally recalled to the imagination of Luke in recording the incident before us. And hence he paints his Master struggling with distress, and supplicating his Father for succour, under the image of two men combating with

\* See Genesis xxxii. 24. The word to which I allude is προσκλιθεῖν. It signifies to cling to a thing by taking a firm hold of it. Metaphorically applied, it means to adhere steadfastly to God by means of prayer; See Rom. xii. 12. Col. iv. 2.: And many other passages of the same kind may easily be pointed out.

each other. When a pugilist sinks under the weight of his antagonist, and his breath is exhausted, he disengages himself in order to recruit his strength. And this is the representation given of Jesus: "And he separated himself from them, or more conformably to the strong language of the original, *he disengaged himself*, (*απεσπασθη*) from them about a stone's throw;" 41. To the combatant when now apart from his opponent, *his second* usually comes, and administers to him support and refreshment. And here we read that a heavenly messenger was sent to second the Lord Jesus: "An angel from heaven appeared unto him, to strengthen him; 43. Which, divested of its figure, means no more than that extraordinary aid, which he derived from praying to his Father\*. But farther, the disengaged pugilist, if he be animated with the hope of success, again renews the combat with redoubled vigour. And this was the case with our victorious champion of truth and virtue.

\* This is not remote from the explanation which Tatian in his *Harmony* gives of this clause. His words are the following: Protinus ex cælo vox angelica auditur, quæ animum ac robur addidit; Apud. Lard. Vol. ii. p. 427. The author perhaps alludes to what we read in John, chap. xii. 29.

*Being (again) in the conflict\**, he prayed with greater energy; 44. The contending parties frequently exhibit mutual marks of their skill and strength, in the blood which trickles down over them during the struggle. This is a circumstance, which did not escape the bold imagination of our Evangelist. And he therefore describes under an allusion to it, the profuse sweat, which the anticipation of the direful scene, and a tender concern for the interests of his cause and his followers, wrung from the delicate and susceptible frame of Jesus.

\* The original is thus: *Και γινόμενος εν αγωνια εκτενεσθερος προσευχετο*. The poet Sophocles in his *Ajax* when representing that hero in a scene of great distress, puts into the mouth of the *chorus* words not unlike these of the Evangelist:—

Αλλα ανα εξ ιδρωτων ὅπου μακρακινη  
 Στηριζει ποτε ταδ' αγωνιη σχολα  
 Αταν ουρακιαν φλεγων\*

l. 195—7.

The scholium upon these words is much to my purpose:—  
*Αναστα εκ των ιδρωτων, ὅπου πολυν χρονον σεαυτον ενδηριξας, την εκ του ουρακιου πεμψθεισαν ατην αυξων, και οιον, εμπυρομενος υπο του παθους; ΚΑΙ ΕΝ ΑΓΩΝΙΑ ΠΟΛΜΗ ΩΝ*. Compare this with what is said of Ajax again, in line 618. where the epithet *εφιδρος* is given him, for the explanation of which, consult the *Scholia*. In both these places, the hero is described as struggling with his distress under the figure of a pugilist thrown by his antagonist to the ground, and preparing again to combat the foe with stronger exertions.

*And his sweat was running down like drops of blood upon the earth.*

Such is the stile in which the sacred penman thought fit to delineate the agonies of our blessed Lord, when contemplating the closing scenes of his life. My readers perhaps may be offended with it as extravagantly bold and symbolical; and for this reason be disposed to reject the interpretation, which I have given of the passage. Let them, however, reflect that such a description, extravagant as it may appear to them, well suited the genius of an Eastern writer. Luke undoubtedly had his reason for giving such strong colouring to the narrative, and that reason, it appears to me, was to render *prominent* and *memorable*, the real sufferings of Jesus, and the inference implied therein that he was in truth a human being.

3. In order to render his suffering, his death, and resurrection credible in all ages and countries, our Lord delivered to his astonished disciples repeated and minute predictions of them; manifesting by that means, that he was inspired by the wisdom

of God; that he was actuated by no interested and sinister motives, and that he was far from being apprehended and condemned by surprize.

These predictions, it should farther be observed, though in the earlier part of his ministry they were no more than *indirect hints*\*, he rendered more definite and in-

\* The very first time our Lord appeared at Nazareth after the commencement of his ministry, he hints at his future suffering, and predicts a remarkable circumstance, that would happen to him while hanging on the cross: "And he said unto them, YE WILL tell me, Physician, by all means heal thyself;" Luke iv. 23. Now turn your eyes to chap. xxiii. 37. and you will meet with the event, to which Jesus, I conceive, refers: "And they mocked him, saying, If thou be king of the Jews save thyself." Observe, that in this version I have joined *πρωτως* with *θεραπευσον*, and not with *εσειτε*; and hence appear the force and propriety of it. Annexed to the latter it seems to me incapable of any appropriate signification. I readily admit that the evangelist Luke considered the above saying as having an immediate reference to the request, which the Jews made to Jesus, to work such miracles in his own country, as they heard he had performed in Capernaum. But the use of the verb *εσειτε* in the *future tense* is a demonstration, that the speaker referred it also to an event that was yet in futurity. The words which Eschylus puts in the mouth of the *chorus* addressing *Promethus*, nailed to the rock, for the benefits he had bestowed on the human race, contrary to the will of Jupiter, but now unable to relieve himself, are extremely like those words in which our Saviour predicts the address made to him by his enemies while hanging on the cross:

Πεποιθως αεικεις; πημ' αποσφαλεις φρενων  
 Πιλωτου σου τε 'κωτρος; ως τις, ες ιουδου



telligible, as the events to which they referred drew near. He delivered them, too, in connection with such memorable occurrences, and in terms borrowed from such striking objects, as could not fail to bring them to the recollection of his disciples after they were accomplished.

4. The credibility of our Lord's death and resurrection, required that those events should, as being contrary to the preposses-

Πιστων αδυμεις, και σεαυτον ουκ εχεις  
 Ευρειν οποιους φαρμακους ιασιμος\*

But to return to the purpose of this note. The next hint which Jesus threw out respecting his future sufferings is more direct and intelligible; See Matthew ix. 15.

The first direct and specific assurance, which he gave his disciples, that he should be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles and put to death, he caused them to associate with his *transfiguration*; an event which from its singular nature they never could forget. See Mat. xvi. and xvii. It is remarkable that he predicted his crucifixion immediately before, and immediately after that scene took place. Early in his ministry Jesus foretold his destruction by the Jews and his subsequent restoration to life, in terms suggested by the sight of the temple; which terms, as implying the demolition of the temple when literally taken, became deeply rooted in the memories of those present, by the astonishment which they excited, and the offence which they occasioned; John ii. 20.

sions, be very remote from the expectation of the disciples. But how was it possible for them not to expect, if they were foretold of those things? Labouring under the common prejudices of the Jews, they never could be induced to think that the Almighty should suffer his beloved Son to undergo a cruel and disgraceful death. When, therefore, their Master forewarned them that he was to suffer and to rise again, they construed his words in a metaphorical sense. Jesus, doubtless, perceived their error, but he wisely refrained from dissipating it, until the events foretold took place. By his prudence, in this respect, he precluded many serious objections that might have otherwise been made to the fact of his resurrection, and placed its evidence on the firmest foundation. As the disciples were *ignorant* of that event till it was actually realized, they could not reasonably be suspected of collusion with their Master, or of having stolen his body from the grave. Moreover, in as much as the resurrection of Jesus was a fact, which they by no means expected, but which was directly opposite to their previous conceptions, it cannot be said, that they believed it on cursory and superficial evidence. On the contrary, as they had now given up the hope

that he was the person that should redeem Israel, nothing less than the repeated assurance of all their senses was sufficient to force upon their minds the full conviction of its truth. Finally, as the belief, that Jesus was the Messiah, which had been wrought by his previous miracles, was now done away by his crucifixion, the miracle of his resurrection, which is the grand basis of the christian faith, had, by the wisdom of our Lord in not rectifying the misconstruction of his disciples, its due weight and influence in reanimating their hopes, and consolidating their attachments to Christ and his cause.

3 5. Our Lord, well knowing that the event of his resurrection would be questioned by the heathen philosophers and the Gnostics, precluded every possible ground for objecting that his disciples were mistaken, by appearing to them in the manner in which he did; namely, at distinct intervals and for a length of time; by appearing also to them at first separately, and then collectively; by eating in their company; by inviting them to see his wounds, and to handle his body; by immediately directing their attention to the things which he foretold he would do

after his restoration to life; and, finally, by bringing to their recollection his former manner of acting, by then acting in a similar manner.

¶ If a candid and enlightened sceptic were asked, what circumstance, connected with the death and subsequent resurrection of Christ, would, if proved to be true, be most likely to remove his doubts of the divine origin of christianity, and secure his firm practical faith in its fundamental points, he, perhaps would reply, that nothing could so effectually answer this end, as that the very soldiers, employed by the Jewish rulers in his execution, and especially that soldier who drove the spear into his side, should themselves soon after become converts to the faith, and attest the truth of the wonders which they had beholden, though urged by tortures to their denial. And this is a circumstance, which the wisdom of providence caused to have taken place, and even to be recorded by apostolic authority, in order to remove the objections of infidelity in all succeeding generations. The passage, to which I allude, is as follows: “ Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other, which was crucified with

him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side; and forthwith came thereout blood and water: And he, who saw it, bare record, and his record is true: And he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done that the scriptures should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken; And again, another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced;" John xix. 32--38. It is universally supposed, that by the person here said to have seen this event, and bare record to it, is meant the Evangelist himself. Now, in opposition to this opinion, I contend, that it is the soldier who pierced him. My reasons for this assertion are the following:

1. First; The verb *μεμαρτυρηκε*, which is here rendered *bare record*, means, when employed by early christian writers, to bear testimony to the faith in circumstances of tortures or of death: And this acceptation was so usually given to it, that the corresponding noun *μαρτυρ*, which before simply signified *a witness*, denotes a *martyr* to the truth. It is to be observed too, that the writer has employed the

*perfect* tense; and he could not, therefore, so properly intend himself now writing, as some other person, who had previously borne a signal testimony to the fact in question.

2. If the Evangelist meant himself, there would have been little propriety in the appeal, which he makes, as it would be only an appeal to his own authority. On the contrary, nothing was more decisive and forcible than appealing, in corroboration of the death of Jesus, to the evidence of a man, who, like himself, was an eye-witness of the event, and who suffered torments in attestation of its truth.

3. That the soldiers alluded to became converts to the Gospel, and that the sacred writer, had, on this occasion, their conversion in view, is demonstrable from the prophecy which he cites, and of which he considers that conversion to be the accomplishment. “And again another scripture, saith, *they shall look upon him whom they have pierced.*” That is, “They shall now love him, whom they before hated without a cause; they shall regard with regret and compassion the Saviour whom they had cruelly slain; or, in the words of Zechariah,

whence the Evangelist has copied this prophecy: *They shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one is in bitterness for his first-born*; Zech. xii. 10.

4. That the soldiers, whom the Jewish rulers entrusted with the execution of Jesus, did, after they had put him to death, receive him as their Saviour, is a fact very probable, from the Evangelists Mark and Luke, who represent the *leader* of those soldiers, as openly declaring his belief in the divine mission of the illustrious Sufferer, while yet standing at the foot of the cross: "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"; Mark xv. 39.

5. The following narrative of Matthew corroborates the same inference: "Now when they were going, behold! some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things which were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken council, they gave large money unto the soldiers; saying, Say ye, his disciples came by night

and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught." Now it may be asked, how came the disciples at the knowledge of these secret transactions? The conversion of these very soldiers renders the solution of the question very obvious. The confession of what passed between them and the priests was, doubtless, the first act they did after their happy change, and it was the only atonement, which they felt themselves able to pay for the murder of their Lord.

6. Lastly; The arguments here offered, receive some confirmation, from a tradition handed down in the christian church\*, that the soldier, who pierced the

\* The Greek and the Latin churches have a festival instituted in memory of the martyrdom of the Centurion and this soldier. There are also spurious acts under their common name; which, though seemingly full of fable, are founded upon matters of fact; namely, the conversion and martyrdom of these soldiers. The history of the former, according to the acts ascribed to him is, that having been appointed with the soldiers to watch the sepulchre of Jesus Christ, as he had been to guard at the cross, he would not receive money from the chief priests to say, that his disciples had taken away his body; which so much exasperated Pilate, that he was resolved to destroy him, but was not able; that in order to devote himself entirely



side of Jesus, became a convert to the faith, and suffered martyrdom in attestation of its truth.

From these reasons, it is hoped unanswerable, I conclude, that to this very man, to-

to Jesus Christ, he renounced the military employment without Pilate's leave, and retired to his own home with two of his soldiers, who had followed his example; that he returned afterwards with them into Cappadocia, and there began to preach the faith as an Apostle even to the Gentiles; that the Jews, being informed that he propagated the faith in many countries, persuaded Pilate to write to the emperor and demand punishment for these deserters, who preached up the reign of Christ; that the emperor having ordered that they should be punished with death as deserters, Pilate sent some soldiers into Cappadocia, and that these soldiers without any more formality beheaded Longinus and his two companions.

The name *Longinus* seems to have been taken from *λογχη* a spear, and to have been thus given him because he was a spearman. This also was the denomination under which the soldier, who pierced the side of Jesus, went in the Latin church: and the circumstance of their being thus called from their occupation will account for their being confounded together. What is said of this soldier among the Latins is, that having been instructed by the Apostles, he quitted his arms and retired into Cæsarea in Cappadocia where he passed twenty-eight years in a solitary life, preaching the faith however till he was martyred under the governor Octavius upon the 15th of March, according to some MSS. and on 22d of November or the 2d of December according to others. *Tillemont's History of Christ*, note 38. p. 368. The soldier who pierced our Lord is mentioned in the gospel of Nicodemus. There also he is called Longinus but no notice is taken of his conversion; See chap. x.

gether with his comrades, individually taken, the Evangelist appeals, when he inculcates, that his Master had received a wound, which of itself would inevitably have proved mortal. And whose testimony could be deemed so decisive as that of the man, who had himself inflicted it ; and who after he became sensible of his guilt attested the truth of the wonders which he witnessed, with torments, if not with death ?

Lastly ; Our Lord, being led by divine inspiration to foresee, that pretended friends would rise, and distinguish between him personally and a supernatural being, supposed to reside in him ; and well knowing that his open enemies would have no objection to this distinction, as it would enable them to account, with some degree of speciousness, for the miracles which he performed, and for his appearing after death to his disciples, without admitting, as a necessary consequence, that Jesus was the Messiah, attached to the name appropriated to him as a man those miraculous endowments, which he communicated to his Apostles : and this communication he wisely deferred till some time after his departure from the earth ; in order to prove by the evidence of

miracles, that he was not perished, but that, as his apostles maintained, he rose again the third day, ascended into heaven, and received all power from God. Accordingly it will be seen, when we view their conduct as recorded in the Acts, that they uniformly refer their miracles to the name of Jesus, alledge them as incontrovertible proofs of his resurrection and ascension, and insist that he is himself the Christ, and not any superior being said to have dwelt in him.

When Jesus rose from the dead, there prevailed a general disposition to believe that he was possessed of one of those inferior divinities called among the heathens *demons*, and among the Jews, *angels*. To this erroneous conclusion the latter as well as the former were inclined; since a belief in supernatural immortal spirits prevailed no less in Judea than in other countries; and since too the leading principle, supposed to constitute a God was *immortality* or *exemption* from death\*. Now it is remarkable that the dis-

\* The Gods, as such, were said by the Greeks to be *αίει εόντες* or *αθάνατοι*, and the Latin writers as frequently stile them *immortales* or *morte carentes*. When Sophocles intended to convey the idea, that the divine laws as being free from the principle of decay would ever flourish, he uses these terms: *Μεγας εν του-*

ciples themselves, though instructed in the christian school, were disposed, at first, to draw a similar inference that he was a supernatural being: nor was their mistake rectified until the testimony of their own senses and his solemn assurance had convinced them, that what they saw was no other than the man Jesus. Read, in confirmation of this fact, the following passage: “ And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them; saying, the Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them: Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts rise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and

τοις θεοις, ουδὲ γηρασκει, *Æd*; *Tyr.* 890. Indeed what ever was thought to be free from mortality or superior to death, had the title of God given it. Thus when the barbarians in the Island of Melita saw that Paul did not fall down dead, after he had been bit by the viper, they said that he was a God. See *Acts* xxviii. 6.

see me, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have ;” Luke xxiv. 33—40.

From the first part of this extract, it is plain, that the eleven were already convinced before they were informed by those returning from Emaus, that their Master was really risen : But in what, let me ask, did they think his resurrection to consist ? Did they believe that the man Jesus who had suffered death on the cross was again restored to life ? Of this they had not the most distant idea. To prove this I need only remind you, that they were alarmed at the sight of him, though he appeared to them in his former benign and familiar form ; nor did they believe him to be the man Jesus until they had felt his wounds, handled his bones, and saw him eating. In what, then, permit me to repeat the question, did they suppose his resurrection to consist ? They fell into the very notions adopted by the Gnostics. A supernatural being, they supposed, inhabited him during his ministry, and enabled him to do the works which they saw him doing : this supernatural being, when Jesus was put to death, disengaged itself, and now appeared to them in the shape of that body in which he before dwelt.

Our Lord, perceiving their mistake, informs them: *αυτος εγω ειμι* *It is I myself*, that is, It is the very same person whom you formerly followed as your Master, who died on the cross and was buried, and not a superior spiritual being appearing to you in my well known shape\*. And of this he

\* That by what the disciples here call a spirit, they meant one of those supernatural beings, stiled *demons* among the gentiles, is a fact corroborated by two remarkable authorities; I mean that of the first Jewish converts, and that of *Ignatius*. For Jerome informs us, that the *Nazarene Gospel* for *spiritus* read *incorporale demonium*, which doubtless was intended as explanatory of the meaning, which the Apostles annexed to the term spirit. Ignatius, who had the best opportunity to know what they meant by that word, thus paraphrases the words of our Lord, in his *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*: *ψηλαφησατε με, και ιδετε οτι ουκ ειμι δαιμονιον ασωματον*. It is implied moreover, in what Jesus himself subjoins, that they supposed him to be an *incorporeal demon*. “Handle and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones.” They seem then to have thought that while he appeared to have flesh and bones, he in reality had them not. Now the idea generally entertained of the demons was, that they were spirits occasionally assuming the form, though not the substance of the human body. For this reason they were called *δαιμονια ασαρκα*. Maximus Tyrius thus speaks of the demons. *Ου γαρ σαρκεις αι δαιμονων φυσεις, ουδε οσα ουδε αιμα ουδε αλλο τι σκεδασον η λυημενον η τηκομενον η διαρρξον*, *Disser. xv. p. 163*. Because the demons had not flesh and blood they were said not to eat any thing.

*Ου γαρ σιτον εδουσ', ου πινουσ' αιθοπα οινον  
Τουνεκ' αναιμονες εισι, και αθανατοι καλεσονται\**

*Iliad. v. 340.*

As the demons never ate, to shew that he was no demon,

convinces them, by eating with them, by shewing them his flesh and his bones, by reminding them that he had foretold those things, and that it was necessary his crucifixion and death should take place, as the fulfilment of what had been written concerning him in the law and the prophets.

Thomas was not present at this interview. When he found that his Master was really risen, it was natural that he should have fallen into the same erroneous conclusion. And this seems to have been the case: "After eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them, then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said; Peace be unto you. Then said he to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing;" John xx. 26, 27. Thomas on being thus unexpectedly addressed, and perceiving that it was the voice of Jesus, felt, doubtless, the same alarm and confusion, with the other

our Lord thus said to his disciples: "Have ye any thing here to eat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and some honey-comb; and he took of these and ate before them."

disciples when they first saw him. Actuated by emotions of fear and astonishment, he applies to his Master a title, expressive of that superior or divine nature, which, at the moment, he supposed him to possess: *And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God.*

The evangelist John, perceiving that some might construe this address of Thomas, which, was the effect of terror and astonishment, into a testimony for the divinity of Jesus, subjoins to it a clause, in which he defines, what it is that we should believe concerning Jesus Christ; and what were the sentiments, the inculcating of which was his object in writing the gospel under his name. “These (signs) are written, that ye might believe, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name;” xx. 31. Here we are informed by apostolic authority what those points are, which, as christians, we are called upon to believe, and the belief of which it was the design of the Evangelist to enforce, in publishing his gospel.—They are, then, simply these: That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; in other words, That the person, who suffered, died, and rose again, and whom the impostors blasphemed and re-



jected, is the Messiah; that he was not, as Thomas and the other disciples at first hastily supposed, a supernatural being, or, as the deceivers maintained, a *demon*, *æon*, or *god*; but the Son of God; that in the belief of these two principles, we should look forward to a new life in his name, and not in the name of any other teacher, who opposed his claims, or who inculcated doctrines different from them.

When our Lord first appeared to Mary Magdalene, the warm affection which she cherished for him, the surprise which she must now have felt on seeing him again, and above all, the apprehension forced upon her mind by his superiority to death, that he had something supernatural about him, led her instantly to cling to him, and address to him that homage, which was due only to God. Hence he tells her, “Cling not to me: For I am not yet ascended to my Father;” xx. 17. As though he had said, “Lay not thus your hands on me; I am not the proper object of such devout prostrations. My rising from the dead is not the result of my own power. I possess nothing of myself, though I am indeed to be invested with all power and authority. But this will

not take place till I ascend to my Father." To prevent the disciples from falling into the error with which Mary is here chargeable, and to preclude the inference, which, he knew, they would draw, on seeing him risen from the dead, he sends by her a message to apprise them, that, though he now proved triumphant over the king of terror, yet he was but their brother, a being possessing their nature and constitution, on an equality with them with respect to God, and bearing a common relation towards him as their Father: "Go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God;" chap. xx. 17.

In the last affecting address, which he delivered to his disciples, our Lord assured them, that as the afflictions of a woman in labour, are exchanged for joy, on first seeing her born child, so would their sorrows in a little while be turned into gladness, when they should see him again restored to life. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy; A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because

her hour is come: But, as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more her anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world; xvi. 21, 22. By this impressive comparison, he enforces upon their attention these three things:—

1. That his subsequent resurrection would consist not in a *recovery* of the vital principle, but in being endued with a new life;—
2. That, when thus endued, so as to occasion them to rejoice, he would be in nature *a man*, though raised above the imperfections of human kind;—
3. That, in coming again to life, he would be as *passive* as the child, that is brought into the world; and that, consequently, the energy of his Father, and no power of his own, would effect his resurrection from the dead.

Having at length finished those remarks, which I had to make on the four Gospels, I proceed to those parts, which relate to my subject in the *Acts of the Apostles*. And the first thing, which solicits our attention, is, the death of Judas, as related by Luke.

The fishermen of Galilee, however poor

and obscure in a worldly view, yet occupied, as the chosen disciples and apostles of Christ, an eminence which far surpassed all human grandeur. Our Lord himself has given us a high notion of the distinction which they thus enjoyed, by comparing them to two of the most striking objects in nature—to a city erected on a hill, and to that luminary which dispenses light and life to the world. The Apostate Judas, while faithful, held the same honourable and conspicuous rank. But when he betrayed his Master, though he had his advocates among the Gnostic teachers, who for that act affected to extol him even above the other disciples, he sunk into the lowest depth of ignominy: and his former high elevation served only to aggravate the infamy of his fall. Now the historian, in order to convey, in opposition to the malicious defenders of Judas, a strong idea of his degradation and guilt, describes that death, which he incurred in consequence of his treachery, under allusion to a person falling from some high eminence, and bursting while he fell to the depth below. “Now this man obtained a field with the reward of his iniquity and falling headlong he burst in the middle; and his bowels gushed out;” chap. i. 18. Which,

I conceive, may be thus otherwise expressed, "With the reward given to Judas was procured a piece of ground. Into this as into a pit his iniquity hurled him from the exalted station which he before occupied. While precipitating, his middle opened with a loud crash and all his entrails rushed out." Divest this of its strong figure, and you will have the following simple meaning: *So sensible became the traitor of the distinguished rank which he forfeited, and of the deep disgrace into which he precipitated himself by betraying his innocent Lord, that he was seized with such violent grief as occasioned the rupture of his bowels, and ended in suffocation and death: and his unrighteous reward served only to procure him a piece of ground for his grave\*.*

\* If my readers should think this language too bold and hyperbolic to be taken in a figurative sense, their scruple will perhaps be removed by observing that this very writer has recorded things equally bold and metaphorical, which yet admit of no other construction than a figurative one. In proof of this assertion I refer them to the history of our Lord's temptation and of his agony in the garden of Gethsemane. But it may be fit to produce one example more specific and indisputable. When our Lord anticipated the removal of those obstacles, which the prejudices and vices of mankind opposed to the progress of his religion, he thus expressed himself: "And he said unto the seventy: I was beholding Satan fall, like lightning from heaven. Lo! I give you authority to trample upon serpents and scorpions: and nothing in any wise shall hurt you;" Luke x. 19. But whatever objection may be made to the interpretation given of this passage, it contains in

The Gnostic teachers, in order to evade the force of those numerous passages, which

its self a sufficient proof that it is penned in a style unusually strong and figurative. It seems to be a circumstance, which has escaped the attention of learned men, that Judas was buried in the field purchased with the reward of his iniquity. And yet this appears to me a real fact: It is implied in the following words of our historian: *‘Ουτος εκτησατο χωριον εκ μισθου της αδικιας; This person possessed himself of a field with the reward of his iniquity.* Here then the simple idea of a man being buried in a spot of land, procured by money which he had unjustly obtained, is described under allusion to a person who goes to reside on an estate, which he had lately purchased in the vicinity; but who, while he is going, falls down headlong over a precipice; and thus the seat which he intended for his residence becomes his grave and his monument. This allusion is carried on still farther, by the Apostle Peter, when he says: —“To take the lot of this service of an Apostleship, which Judas left to go to his own seat.” This is evidently the language of breathing irony and burning indignation. The figure, which describes a person buried, as the *possessor* of the place where he is deposited, is thus put by Sophocles into the mouth of *Ajax* addressing *Ades* whither he was going:

Ελεσθ' ελεσθ' οικητορα·

Which Milton has thus imitated:

—————And thou profoundest hell,  
Receive thy *new possessor* —————

Horace in one place employs an image very congenial to the representation here given of Judas:

Tu secunda marmora  
Locas sub ipsum funus, et Sepulchri  
Immemor, struis domos;

Lib. ii. Od. 18.

The general meaning of which is:—*You hire artists to hew*

our Lord had levelled against them in the course of his ministry, endeavoured to throw over them the dark and ambiguous veil of allegory. And this is the artifice to which they appear to have had recourse in order to conceal the turpitude of Judas's conduct. According to them his treachery was a mystic act, containing under it a lesson of superior and divine wisdom\* : But as his

*marbles for your mansion, which unexpected death renders necessary to be hewn for your monument. Unmindful, however, of your approaching dissolution you build up houses. If this be the true sense of the poet, the last line but one should be read thus,*

Locas IN ipsum funus, AT, sepulchri ; *i. e.*

Locas marmora secanda in ipsum funus.

\* The following are the words of Irenæus respecting the abettors of Judas: Et hæc Judas proditorem diligenter cognovisse dicunt, et solum præ cæteris cognoscentem veritatem, perfecisse mysterium proditiõnis; p. 113. To say that the traitor had a more complete knowledge of the truth than the other disciples, or that his treachery in delivering up his Master contained under it some mystic signification, were assertions so impudent, and groundless as, at first view, to excite indignation; and yet if we examine the matter closely, they will appear to have some speciousness, though nothing of truth in them. The leading principle in the system of those men was, that the Christ was an angel or æon, which descended into the man Jesus. Of this they appear to have maintained that Judas was aware: but of which the other disciples were ignorant; and that his motive in delivering Jesus to be crucified was to prove by this ignominious death, that the celestial being within him, and not he, constituted the Christ. Now the ground, which they had for this representation is, that Judas, in giving

death was an event which little accorded with their allegorical construction, they

up his Master, had a full conviction that he would use his power in rescuing himself from their hands. And this is a fact, in my opinion, founded in truth. My reasons for this opinion are the following:—The excessive grief, which he displayed after he saw Jesus condemned, demonstrates to my mind, that that event was *unforeseen* and *unexpected* by him. His repentance proves that he was not actuated by inveterate and determined malice towards the sufferer: And the established laws of the human mind exclude the very possibility that a man, who could be so devoid of every principle of honour, every tender emotion, and every generous feeling, as to give up for the express purpose of being executed, his innocent Lord, should immediately after the commission of that act, be overwhelmed by a remorse which could occasion the very dissolution of his frame.—That Judas expected that Jesus would miraculously rescue himself from the hands of his enemies; in the same manner as he had done before that time, may be inferred from the following words, which he addressed to the soldiers, κρατησαντες αυτον και απαγαγετε ασφαλως: As if he had said, Make yourselves sure of him, and by all means lead him away, *if indeed you be able so to do, for it will not be a very easy matter to seize and take away by violence a person, who is armed with a power, that controuls even the elements, and can suspend the laws of nature*—If then this statement be just, the sole motive which influenced him in betraying his Master was *avarice*. He perceived that the Pharisees had used very unfair means to get Jesus into their hands, and he thought it but fair to turn upon themselves their own arts, and cheat them of a little money. The consequence, he perhaps fondly imagined, so far from being injurious, would prove advantageous to the sufferer; as the circumstance of the case would compel him to display his divine authority, and thus convince his foes of the impracticability of putting him to death. It is of consequence to remark, that many of the ancients, sanction by their opinion the statement here given of the motive which influenced Judas in betraying our Lord. Hear the words of Theophylact:



probably denied it altogether, or, at least, denied that it was the consequence of his

“Some say that Judas, being a lover of money, supposed that he should gain silver in betraying Christ; that Christ would not be killed, but would escape the Jews as he had often done before;” Com. on Mat. p. 170. C. In the number of these was the learned Origen. See his book against Celsus, p. 65, 66.

If then the traitor really expected that Jesus would elude, when seized, the grasp of his assailants, how natural was it, that the impostors, who patronised the cause of Judas, should pretend, that he evinced by that act, a superior wisdom, and that this wisdom consisted in the belief that the Christ, which inhabited Jesus, would leave him as soon as apprehended? Nor does it appear to me improbable, that the traitor did actually suppose that the Spirit, which descended on Jesus, was a real being, and that this being constituted the Christ. Mark has recorded an incident, from which it may be inferred, that this notion was cherished by some, while our Lord was yet engaged in his ministry. For there it is said, that a man preached *Christ*, though, when called upon to follow the disciples, he blasphemed the man Jesus. That the impostor, to which I refer, considered Christ as existing in the person whom he anathematised, is evident from the remark, which our Lord makes on that occasion. See chap. ix. 39.

Now the circumstance that Judas did entertain a similar notion, will account for some things worthy of notice, which our Lord said and did in reference to the apostate disciple. In order to impress the idea on the mind of Jesus, that he did not come with hostile views in delivering him up, he gave him a kiss in compliance, perhaps, with a command given in the second Psalm, *Kiss the Son lest he be angry*. On his conduct in this respect our Saviour instantly thus animadverted: *Judas, Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss*; Luke xxii. 48. Here you see the meek Sufferer enforcing on the attention of his unworthy associate, that he was the *Son of man*, a human being, possessing

guilt. This, however, is a fact, which Luke attests, and that he might render it incontrovertible, he appeals to an incident, which was notorious among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and which still existed as a monument of its truth: "And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem, insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, *Aceldama*, that is to say, the field of blood;"

19. Attend to this verse; and, I think, you will allow, that the writer appears, by the remarkable manner in which he makes the above appeal, to have in view some persons, who either evaded or denied the subject of his narrative.

"Wherefore of these men, which have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, be-

the same feelings and constitution with other men. Again our Lord has connected the treachery of Judas, with the institution which was to perpetuate the belief of his simple humanity, his suffering, and resurrection. And what could be his reason for deferring to develop the design of the traitor till he was now establishing that ordinance? Does not this suppose, that his conduct had some alliance with those false sentiments, which Jesus, by the establishment of it, had in view to refute? It is remarkable, that the institution of the Eucharist, and the treachery of Judas, appear to have gained a firm association in the mind of our Lord long before those events took place. See John Chap. vi. 50—70.

ginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness of his resurrection;" 21, 22. Here are three circumstances deserving of our notice; namely, that the testimony of the apostles respecting their Master was not to extend farther back than the baptism of John; that they were ordained to be witnesses of his *resurrection*; and lastly, that they were to acknowledge, as their Lord, not a supernatural being supposed to have descended upon him at his baptism, but the man Jesus, whom the heretics rejected and blasphemed. In this place, then, we are assured by this writer, in the very commencement of his history, that no records respecting Christ, ever came from the hands of his apostles *antecedent* to his baptism; and that the chief points, which they were commissioned to attest, in preaching the gospel, were *the humanity* of their Lord, and his *resurrection* from the dead."

Let us next consider a part of Peter's address to the Jewish and other nations when assembled at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Here we shall find every article of the Samaritan creed contradicted in direct and unequivocal language:—"Ye men of

Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know. Him, being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands ye have crucified and slain. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible he should be holden of it;" ii. 22—25. In this passage we see the apostle declaring to the house of Israel, that Jesus came from *Nazareth*; that he was *a man*; that he was betrayed, and that he *really suffered*; that the power of God enabled him to perform signs and wonders, and that after he was slain by wicked hands, God raised him from the dead. The Apostle, in the next place, asserts, that he descended from the race of David, and that his resurrection was foretold by that patriarch; verses 25—32. Our Lord, in his last discourse to the disciples, promised to send them the Comforter, or the Holy Ghost, which might enable them to do things, more wonderful even than those which they saw him doing. And the descent of the Spirit upon them, he taught them to consider and to represent as the sure and final pledge, that

God had raised up the man Jesus, and exalted him to his right-hand. Accordingly our Apostle assures the Jews, that the shedding of the Holy Ghost upon them, so as to enable them thus to speak in unknown tongues; was both a confirmation and the consequence of Jesus having been raised from the dead; of his having ascended into heaven, and received from the Father all power in heaven and earth. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses."

Peter then assures the Jews, that the holy Spirit, the effects of which they now saw and heard, was promised to the disciples in corroboration of the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus: "Being therefore raised to the right-hand of God, and having received from the Father the Holy Spirit promised (to us), he poured out this which ye now see and hear." He next insists that the very man whom they crucified, and not as the deceivers maintained, a superior Being within him, constituted the Christ, and as such was authorised of God to be their Lord: "Therefore let the house of Israel

KNOW assuredly THAT GOD HATH MADE BOTH LORD AND CHRIST THIS VERY JESUS, WHOM YE HAVE CRUCIFIED;" 36. The effect of this address was the conversion of three thousand souls: and the historian says of them, that "they continued in *laying a firm hold of* the doctrine of the Apostles, in partaking of bread, and in breaking it and in prayers." That is, they stedfastly adhered to the doctrine taught by the Apostles in opposition to that of the deceivers; and in order to bear down the opinion of the latter, that the Christ, as being distinct from the man Jesus, did not suffer and rise again, they incessantly held out to view the symbols of his humanity and death. "And all the believers continued together and had all things common; and were selling their possessions and goods, and distributing them to all, as each had need. And they continued daily with one mind in the temple, and at home, breaking bread and partaking of it with gladness and a guileless heart, praising God and having favour with all the people." This is a beautiful and interesting description of the first christian converts. But what gives it a claim to our attention, is the circumstance

that it is levelled by the writer against the character of the impostors and their followers. The faithful believers gave proof of the sincerity of their profession by selling their possessions and distributing them to all such as were in want. They cherished that brotherly love, that peace and harmony, which disposed them to have one common heart, as well as common property. They every day celebrated the institution which was intended to perpetuate the belief of their Master's suffering, and they partook of it with cheerfulness and a perfect freedom from those sinister and base views, which actuated the deceivers, when *in the night* they met to commemorate the festival of christian love.

Though they cherished high veneration and love for their divine Lord, they imitated not the false brethren in affecting to worship him as a superior Being, but gave the praise, for the wonders that were exhibited in him, to God alone : and their conduct in this, as in other respects, procured them the favour of the people. The men, with whom the true believers are here contrasted, *introduced themselves* into the christian

church. But the Lord of that church,—he who by his authority was building it up,—rejected them on account of their vices, as being perishable materials and unworthy of a place in this holy edifice. He, however, enlarged and reared it up by adding to it those men whose sincere and stable repentance qualified them for composing, and for being preserved in its sacred structure. And this is the meaning of the historian in the last verse: “And the Lord daily super-added to the church (τους σωζομενους) such as were preserved in it.”

Jesus spent his last hour in consoling his desponding disciples with the assurance, that the Comforter would come unto them after his departure. But as he was to come *in his name*; they were hence instructed to regard and to profess themselves as only the delegated servants of Jesus. With what scruple and fidelity they conformed to this instruction, may be seen from the following incident: “When he (the lame man) saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked an alms: And as they both fastened their eyes upon him, Peter said, look towards us; and he gave heed unto them,



expecting to receive something from them. Peter said, Silver and gold have I none, but what I have that I give thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk;" iii. 3—7. Here you will observe, that the apostle attaches the power, which cured the cripple, to the name of Jesus; and lest that should not be definite enough, he adds, *of Nazareth*. As, however, the people saw that Peter was the only ostensible agent in the transaction, it was natural enough in them to ascribe to him the merit of the miracle; and consequently to think that he acted not in subordination to any other, but with an authority immediately derived from God. This mistake, of which any person that was not actuated by strict integrity would have availed himself, our honest apostle hastens to correct. "Then Peter, seeing this, said unto the people: Ye men of Israel, why wonder ye at this? As if by our own power or ability we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified his servant Jesus\*, whom ye deli-

\* The Jews, as generally believing in the existence and

vered up, and rejected in the presence of Pilate, who had determined to let him go ; but ye rejected that holy and righteous man, and asked a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Author of life ; him whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses : And by faith in his name hath he given strength to this man, whom ye see and know : that name, I say, and that faith therein hath given him this perfect soundness in the sight of you all ;” iii. 12--17. From this passage we see, that the spectators looked with astonishment on the wondrous cure done before them ; and they considered the apostle as alone under God entitled to the praise of it. He, however, acknowledges that he did it by faith only in the name of Jesus. And, in order to render his language more impressive and decisive, he repeats the same assertion ; namely, that faith in the name of Jesus, and not any virtue of his own,

agency of superior beings, evil as well as good, might be disposed to ascribe the resurrection, no less than the miracles of Jesus, to some inferior divinity unfriendly to the Jewish nation. This conclusion the apostle Peter here has in view ; and he precludes it by asserting, that the Being, who glorified the Lord Jesus, was no other than the God of the Jewish patriarchs—*The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified his servant Jesus.*

was the cause of the miracle. And that all might understand how such efficacy came to be connected with a name deemed so mean and ignominious, he explains to them, that Jesus was the servant of God; that after being put to death, though pronounced innocent by his judge, he was glorified, that is, raised from the dead, and invested with divine authority by his heavenly Father; that of his resurrection and ascension they were eye-witnesses, and that the miraculous power, which they now displayed, was wisely annexed to the name of their Master, in corroboration of the facts which they attested. By an explanation thus fair and explicit, the error of the people was at length dissipated: and they no longer considered the apostles as acting with an independent authority, but with an authority derived from, and subordinate to the Lord Jesus. Hence we may perceive the real meaning of the following verse: "And after this no one joined himself to them (the apostles), though the people magnified them, but rather believers in the Lord were superadded (to the church);" That is, The people, though they still continued to revere the apostles as the servants

of Jesus, no longer adhered to them *as principals*, but believed in the Lord Jesus as the illustrious head of the christian church; and thus were superadded to it multitudes of men and women; chap. v. 13\*.

The Sadducees, seeing the apostles thus attesting the resurrection of the man Jesus, and through him the resurrection of all mankind, were induced by a bigotted zeal for their distinguishing tenet to oppose and persecute them: "They set Peter and John in the midst, and asked, by what power and what name did ye this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we are now examined about the welfare of the infirm man, by what he is become well, be it known to you all, and all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God

\* Ananias, who sold his property, and sequestered a part of it, fell into the same error with the rest of the people; namely, that the apostles acted *in their own name*, and did not hold themselves in subjection to Jesus as their Master. Hence the crime, which he committed, extended, he naturally supposed, no higher than the apostles themselves. And to his fatal mistake in this respect Peter thus refers: Ουκ εψευσω ανθρωποις αλλα τω θεω, *Thou hast not lyed unto men but unto God*; chap. v. 4.

raised from the dead, by him, I say, doth this man stand restored before you. This Jesus is that stone, which was despised by you the builders, but is become the Head of the corner. And by no other is such restoration to soundness: Neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, by which we can be saved;" 5—13.

In this passage Peter, you see, bears before the rulers the same consistent and undaunted testimony, which he delivered to the people. He tells them, that the man Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, was the immediate source of the miracle exhibited in the impotent man: but lest they should conclude, that he possessed such power inherent in himself, and independent of God, he ascribes, in explicit terms, his resurrection and exaltation to the energy of the Almighty.

It has already been observed, that the enemies of our Lord adopted, as the most effectual means of undermining the doctrine of the divine mission of Jesus, the Gnostic hypothesis, that a supernatural being descended upon him at his baptism, and left

him on his apprehension \*. Without this supposition they were unable to account with any degree of plausibility for the miracles, which, during his ministry, he performed, and his appearing after crucifixion to the disciples. Our Lord distinctly fore-

\* The Gnostic hypothesis that a God descended into the man Jesus, enabled him to perform miracles, and left him when put to death, was avowed without any scruple by some of the heathen philosophers. In proof of this assertion, I will here cite the well-known words of Amelius, a disciple of Plotinus, and the intimate friend of the malignant Porphyry :—*Και εις σωμα πιπτειν και σαρκα ενδυσαμενον, φανταζεσθαι ανθρωπον· μετα και του τηνικαυτα δεικνυειν της φυσεως το μεγαλειον, αμελει και αναλυθεντα παλιν αποθεουσθαι, και την σαρκα και τον ανθρωπον καταχθηναι*, Euseb. Evan. Præp. lib. xi. 19. That is, *This God descended into a body, and clothed himself with flesh, and appeared a man; and, after displaying the greatness of his nature, disengaged himself (from human flesh), again became a God, and is a God, as he was before he came down into the body and flesh of a man.* In this paragraph we see a pagan philosopher asserting, that a divine principle, which from the evangelist John he calls the *Logos*, inhabited the body of a man, namely of Jesus; that the miracles, which Jesus performed, were but the display of the divinity within him; and that this divinity, after being disengaged from the human body which it animated, reassumed its original pure nature. Now, does it not appear from the testimony and example of this learned heathen, that a Jew or a gentile might adopt the Gnostic system without necessarily becoming a christian;—that, on the contrary, the adoption of it was well calculated to counteract the efficacy and undermine the very foundation of the christian doctrine? For this reason indeed it was, that the apostolic teachers not only classed the first heretics with unbelievers, but represent them as the worst species of unbelievers which the gospel had.

saw the subterfuge, to which his adversaries and his pretended friends would in this respect have recourse. Accordingly, he furnished his apostles with instructions and powers to defeat it: And remarkable are the precision and the emphasis with which Peter in this, as in his other addresses, has guarded against that supposition. He tells them, that the person who restored to health the infirm man, was *Jesus*—Jesus of *Nazareth*—whom they crucified—whom God raised—that *this* Jesus, the stone rejected by the builders, became the head of the corner. And he adds, “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved;” 12. As though he had said, “Despicable as this Jesus is in your views, he is the mean, which has healed the malady of this man, and must be the only mean of healing the maladies under which *you* and all others labour in order to be saved: And vain is your attempt to substitute any other as the medium of salvation, either by maintaining, that some other person is the Christ, or by absurdly supposing, that he is a superior being, which, for a while, inhabited the man Jesus.” Such an union of prudence, moderation and firmness,

accompanied with a superior power in illiterate men, excited the astonishment, though it could not subdue the prejudices of their adversaries. The consequence was, that they were dismissed with an injunction not to preach any more in the name of Jesus. The Apostles however nobly preferred to obey the voice of God rather than men: And when their persecutors again arraigned them, a man of high reputation delivered in their behalf the following speech:—"Ye men of Israel, take care what ye do against these men. For not long ago Theudas rose up pretending to be some great person, to whom about four hundred men joined themselves: but he was slain, and all that had been persuaded by him were scattered abroad and came to nothing. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the registering, and drew aside much people after him: he also perished: and all that had been persuaded by him were dispersed. And I advise you on this occasion, have nothing to do with these men, but let them alone: for if the contrivance of this business be of men, it will be destroyed, but if it be of God, you will be unable to destroy it, and may be found also fighters against God;" chap. v. 36—40.



On this passage I observe, *First*, that one motive which induced Gamaliel to deliver this wise advice in favour of the Apostles, was the circumstance of their preaching the resurrection of the dead, a doctrine which the Pharisees always maintained, though on different grounds, in opposition to the Sadducees. This is a conclusion which, I conceive, is warranted by what we read in chap. xxiii. 8. where the Pharisees on a similar occasion, acted a similar part. And this, doubtless, is the reason why the historian is so particular in stating that the persecutors were Sadducees, but that their illustrious advocate was a Pharisee. *Secondly*, One is authorised from the above speech, if minutely examined, to infer that the Jewish doctor felt at this time a decided conviction of the divine authority, with which the Apostles were invested : For when he supposes that their scheme originated with men, his words are *hypothetical*; while in laying down the opposite alternative that it proceeded from God, he uses *positive* terms : “IF this scheme or this work BE of men, it will come to nothing : BUT SINCE IT IS FROM GOD YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO FRUSTRATE IT\*.

\* Εαν η εξ ανθρωπων η βουλη αυτη η το εργον τουτο καταλυ-

It must however be allowed that, though Gamaliel was convinced of the divine mission of Christ and his Apostles, there is reason to believe that he never made an open declaration of his faith, or professedly classed with the followers of Jesus\*. Hence

θησεται· ΕΙ ΔΕ ΕΚ ΘΕΟΥ ΕΣΤΙ ου δυνασθε καταλυσαι αυτου, v. 38, 39. That the conjunction ει, when connected with a verb in the *indicative mood*, signifies *since*, is well known to every scholar. The reason is; that the verb then conveys an *assertion unconditional and certain*. What grammarians say of conjunctions governing sometimes an indicative, and sometimes a subjunctive mood, is sufficiently absurd: The fact is; that when the writer or speaker expresses a *positive* signification, he uses the former; when a *conditional* or *hypothetical* sense, he employs the latter mood. The sense of the verb then governs the conjunction, and not the conjunction the mood of the verb. I forbear to illustrate this position by examples, as it is too well known to need illustration.

\* The author of the *Recognitions* asserts; that Gamaliel was a convert to the faith; but that he continued among the Pharisees by the advice of the apostles, in order, by this means, to defend them when any accusation was brought against them before the rulers, and to give them secret information in case their enemies should adopt any plan to destroy them. He represents Peter as using this language respecting the Jewish Doctor—*Qui latenter frater noster erat in fide, sed concilio nostro inter eos erat*. On this saying Cotelerius thus justly remarks: *Vulpinum hoc consilium Apostolis indignum est; lib. i. 65*. This is one of the very exceptionable things in this spurious, yet, in my opinion, important book. With respect to Gamaliel, it is well known, that his name has descended to posterity in the number of the Jewish converts. It is true, indeed, that the writers of the *Mishna*, make an honourable

it may be inferred that he was one of those Pharisees, who embraced the gospel without publicly avowing their conviction of its truth, and who for this reason are censured by the evangelist John, chap. xii. 43. Nor ought it to be forgotten that the writer of the Acts presently adds, that *a great multitude of the priests became obedient to the faith*. In the number of these, it is probable, he included the Jewish Doctor. One of the principal objects, which the Gnostic system had in view, was to accommodate the new religion to the prepossessions of unbelievers and to screen its professors from that obloquy, shame, and distress, which it brought on those who embraced it in all its purity. Hence all the learned and opulent Jews, whose previous habits had disqualified them to make those sacrifices, which the Gospel required

mention of him as one of those illustrious rabbis that lived in the times of Jesus. But the only conclusion that can be drawn from this is, that he never avowed his belief in the gospel. It should not be forgotten, that John the baptist was held in the highest estimation by many of those Jews, who cherished the bitterest enmity against Christ and his disciples; and yet, John not only believed in Jesus, but bore him the most signal testimony as the Messiah. See Lard. vol. vii. p. 119, 146. Some ancient writers affirm, that Gamaliel not only believed in christianity, but was baptised by Peter and John; Tillemont, vol. i. p. 268. Crystostom says, that his speech was the means of converting the priests mentioned by Luke in the subsequent chapter.

of its faithful votaries, favoured the sentiments of Simon Magus. And it appears that Gamaliel himself was not at this time free from the apprehension, that Jesus, who suffered an ignominious death, and the Christ, that dwelt in him, were two distinct beings. And this was perhaps the circumstance that led our historian thus to subjoin : “ And they went from the presence of the council, glad to be accounted worthy of suffering shame for the name OF JESUS, and ceased not every day, in the temple and at home, teaching this gospel, THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST ; chap. v. 41, 42.

A notion derived either from a mistaken interpretation of certain passages of the Jewish scriptures, or from oral tradition, generally prevailed among the Jews, that their Messiah, when he should appear, would establish an eternal empire on the earth, and confer upon his subjects an everlasting exemption from death. This expectation, flattering and pernicious as it was, the crucifixion of the Saviour was well calculated to rectify ; yet we find traces of its being fondly cherished by the faithful disciples after the descent of the Spirit had enlarged their views, and confirmed their faith. That Ga-

maliel should have fallen into an error, universally prevalent among his countrymen, cannot be deemed improbable. He had just seen the apostles miraculously delivered from the hands of their enemies. As he obviously discerned, in the shield of divine power encompassing them, that grand criterion of the coming age superiority to death, he naturally inferred that they were the auspicious heralds of the Messiah's reign, and that the persons, who sought to destroy them, were impiously impugning not only the will, but the energy of God. Considered in this view, his speech will appear full of force and decision. It may be paraphrased thus; "Theudas pretended to be that great personage, who shall confer on the Jewish nation the privilege of eternal life on the earth. But his speedy dissolution evinced the falsehood of his claims. The fate of the impostor of Galilee also proved, that he was neither himself immortal, nor had he the power of conferring immortality on others. The destruction of these deceivers affords us a fair criterion to judge of the pretensions of the men before us. Unlike Theudas and the Galilean Judas, they seem superior to all opposition from men. Your united strength and wisdom

are not able to take away their lives, to frustrate their views, or to scatter their followers. Leave them therefore to their fate; any farther interference on your part would be but an impious resistance to the will of heaven." Now it is remarkable that, unless the address of the Jewish rabbi be considered in this point of light, the instances adduced were calculated rather to encourage, than to dissuade the persecution of the Sadducees. *For they are instances of successful opposition, made by the state, to those who pretended to be divinely commissioned.*

The persons among the Jews most forward to embrace the Gnostic heresies, were those, who, having received their birth and education in Gentile countries, and being for this reason called *Hellenists*, had imbibed the Gentile philosophy. Of these notice is taken in the following passage: "And in those days, as the disciples multiplied, the Grecians complained against the Hebrews, that their widows were neglected in the daily distribution of alms;" vi. 1. From the manner these Grecian or Hellenistic Jews are here mentioned it is evident, that they ranked with the disciples of Jesus, though the turbulent and discontented tem-

per, which they display, little resembles the meek spirit of the apostolic converts. But the following paragraph places their character in a light far more odious: "And some of the synagogue of the Libertines and Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and they of Cilicia and Asia rose up to dispute with Stephen. But they were not able to withstand the wisdom of that Spirit, which spoke in him. Then they suborned men to say, We have heard him speak wicked words against Moses and God;" vi. 9—12. Now the men, who here disputed with Stephen, were, I conceive, in the number of those Hellenistic-Jews mentioned in the first verse as converts to the faith. This may be inferred from the topics of the controversy which Stephen had with them. The notions, which they appear to have maintained in opposition to him, were these—That the divinity resident in Jesus, and not Jesus himself, constituted the Christ, and that the ceremonies of the Mosaic law were not to be superseded by a practical faith in the Gospel. This virtuous defender of the truth insisted, it seems, that the very same Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, and whom God, having raised him from the dead, exalted to his right-hand, foretold the destruction of the temple, and

would evince the truth of his resurrection and exaltation in the accomplishment of that prediction. And this is what apparently gave rise to the false testimony borne against him before the council. “ We have heard him say, that Jesus the Nazarene, this (same person) will destroy this place, and change the customs, which Moses delivered unto us;” 14. As though they had said : “ We have heard him saying, that the self same Jesus, who was born at Nazareth, and crucified at Jerusalem—that this Jesus, and not the divinity resident in him, would do these things;” \*. That a distinction of this

\* The original is as follows: *Ἀκηκοαμεν γαρ αυτου λεγοντος οτι ιησους ο Ναζωραιος ουτος καταλυσει τον τοπον τούτον*. Here the false witnesses annex to the name Jesus the place of his birth, to specify who was meant in opposition to any other of the same name. And in order farther to distinguish him personally from the being supposed to have resided in him, they subjoin the definitive *ουτος*, and that they might impress the distinction more fully on the minds of their hearers, they put *ουτος* last: The language, which the apostle Peter uses above, when asserting that the person, whom God made Lord and Christ, was the very same with the crucified Jesus, and not any other supposed to be in him, is if possible still more definite and specific: *Ἀσφελως ουν γιγνωσκειτω πας οικος Ισραηλ οτι και Κυριον και Χριστον αυτον ο Θεος εποιησε τούτον τον Ιησουν, ον υμεις εσαυρωσατε*. What a crowd of definitives are here employed?—*αυτον—τουτον—τον—ον*—all qualifying the name Jesus. Half of them would have been superfluous, had it not been the intention of the apostle



kind was intended, is to me obvious from the specific terms here used, and from the singular manner in which they are arranged.

The false brethren no less than the Jews denied, that either the history of the patriarchs, or the predictions of the prophets, had any reference to the circumstances of Jesus: In order to refute this opinion, Stephen selects the leading events in the case of Abraham, of Joseph, and of Moses, and shews that they bore such resemblance to those, which distinguished our Lord and his followers, as that the former were intended by the wisdom of providence to have a typical reference to the latter. Thus—Did God command Abraham to leave his own country and kindred? This presignified the fate of the expected Messiah;” chap. vii. 2—5. Was the Jewish patriarch foretold that his posterity would sojourn in a strange land under bondage and ill-treatment? The prediction, in its ultimate reference, was accomplished in the ill-usage and hardships, which

to preclude the artifice, which the Jewish rulers seem in general to have adopted in order to account for the miracles of our Lord and his appearing after death to his disciples, by supposing that a supernatural being inhabited him distinct from the person of Jesus.

the followers of Jesus, the true posterity of Abraham, received from their countrymen; 6—8. Was Joseph sold by his brethren, carried into slavery, falsely imprisoned by Pharaoh, and afterwards raised to the government of Egypt?—These were events symbolical of the conspiracies, which the Jewish people formed against the prophet which God should raise among them like unto Moses, and of his subsequent exaltation to the right-hand of God; 9—11. Did the Israelites, after God had delivered to them the doctrines of life by his servant Moses, refuse them obedience, and turn back in their hearts unto Egypt; saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us? In a similar manner acted the Jews of our Saviour's days: They rejected that gospel, which brought life and immortality to light, and they were now following an impostor to the worship of strange gods; 37—42. Finally, were the Israelites carried beyond Babylon, because they took up the tent of Moloch, and the star of their god Rephan, that is, a divinity worshipped by the Egyptians? This unhappy fate also awaited the Jewish people, because they forsook Jehovah, and espoused the idolatry of Simon Magus and his Egyptian disciples; 42—44.

That the main design of our apologist might not pass unfelt or misapprehended, he concludes his ingenious address with this general application of it:—"Ye stiff-necked men of uncircumcised heart and ear, ye are always opposing the Holy Spirit: As your fathers did, so do ye\* ; 51. He then alludes to the apostacy of the Jews, from the law of Moses at the instigation of the false brethren: "Who have received the law by the ministry of angels, but do not defend it†:

\* The expression *men of uncircumcised heart and ear*, is founded upon the blind zeal with which the opponents of Stephen urged the necessity of circumcising the body while they neglected that metaphorical circumcision of the heart and understanding, of which the literal was but a symbol—*Ye are always opposing the Holy Spirit*. That is, As your fathers have ever acted contrary to the will of God, so do you now resist the Spirit of God, which is exerted in the performance of those miracles wrought by the apostles in attestation of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

† ΟΙΤΙΝΕΣ ΕΛΑΒΕΤΕ ΤΟΝ ΝΟΜΟΝ ΕΙΣ ΔΙΑΤΑΓΑΣ ΑΓΓΕΛΩΝ, ΚΑΙ ΟΥΚ ΕΦΥΛΑΞΑΤΕ. By this last verb Stephen insinuates, that the Jewish rulers did not stand up in defence of the law—did not protect it from the blasphemy of those impostors, who, in their disputes with the apostles, arraigned it as having proceeded from an evil being. Angels delivered the law, as it were, a sacred trust into their hands to preserve it inviolate and unprofaned. But the Jewish people, from motives of spite and malice towards Jesus and his followers, now suffered it to be blasphemed and trampled upon by apostates and deceivers.

The holy Spirit, which enabled the Apostles to work miracles, in proof of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, now corroborated these same facts by exhibiting before the eyes of Stephen a visionary scene, in which he beheld his Lord sitting at the right-hand of God: "But he being full of the Holy Spirit looked stedfastly towards heaven, and saw a divine brightness, and JESUS at the right-hand of God; 55." And this person he declares to be no other than he, who under that name sustained the character and possessed the nature of man: "And he said, Behold! I see the heavens opened, AND THE SON OF MAN at the right-hand of God;" 56. While he is now expiring, he addresses him as his Lord; and in order to inculcate that the man Jesus, and no other, was the person he thus regarded and addressed, he places that name in the most prominent position—"And they stoned Stephen calling upon the LORD JESUS, and saying, receive my spirit;" 59.

The disposition, which the enemies of the new converts cherished towards them in the provinces, depended of course very much upon the Spirit which was shewn them in the metropolis of the empire. When the

jealousy and apprehension of the government were awakened, the conduct of the governors served as a signal to those in distant parts, who had hitherto been restrained from molesting the christians by the terrors of the law. Accordingly we find that the dogs of persecution in Jerusalem sprang with savage fury on their unprotected prey, when they saw the chains that confined them loosened by the hands of the emperor himself\*.

\* The reader will understand by this, that I refer this persecution to the conduct of Tiberius and the senate in molesting the followers of Jesus at Rome as its real cause. Hence we are able to fix, with some degree of precision, the date of the former, and of the death of Stephen connected with it. The expulsion of the Jews could not have happened later than twelve months after the death of Jesus: and allowing six for the time which elapsed before that event was known in Jerusalem, we gather that the converts in that city began to be molested early in the year 34, to which some have assigned the death of Stephen. The conversion of Paul took place soon after this; and consequently that event must have happened within the same year. Tiberius, we have seen (Vol. i. 174.) became sensible that the accusations alleged against the christians were calumnies, the mere inventions of Sejanus and others. He, therefore, changed his measures, and soon published an edict in favour of those very men, whom a little before he had banished from the city. To the beneficent effect of this edict sent to the præfects of the provinces, I have assigned the peace and edification of the churches mentioned in Acts ix. 31. The persecution here related by Luke must have been restrained as soon as this edict was known in Jerusalem. And hence we find that this happy effect was produced by it. I shall only observe, that this persecution and its cessation in Judea correspond with

“And at that time there was a great persecution against the church, which was at Jerusalem : And they were all scattered abroad throughout the region of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles ;” chap. viii. 1. On mentioning this persecution, it was natural that the writer should be led by the impulse of association to reflect upon the man, in whose artifices and baseness while yet at Rome this persecution chiefly originated.—  
 “Now a certain man, named Simon had been some time in that city, astonishing the nation of Samaria with his magic, pretending that he was some great person : To whom they all gave heed from the least to the greatest ; saying, This is the great power of God. And they gave heed to him, because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic ;” viii. 9—12 \*.

The writers of antiquity concur in

such precision to the measures of the government, that we are authorised to conclude they owe their existence to no other cause.

\* One leading motive, which Luke had in noticing Simon Magus, was to shew that there was no ground for the calumny, which seems to have been industriously circulated in Judea and other countries, that the followers of Jesus were the associates of the Samaritan impostor. The author of the Recognitions

attesting that Simon professed to be the *power of God*. This title, I have shown, he assumed in opposition to our Lord, who was called the *word of God*. And this fact, however improbable, is here implied in the history before us. Those, who were duped by his magical artifices, he induced to believe and maintain that he was the great power of God, or the power of the great God, meaning the highest God. It is worthy of remark, farther, that Luke is particular in stating, that the impostor had been employed in disseminating his principles long before the gospel was preached among them. And hence is confirmed in one signal instance the declaration of our Lord, that thieves and robbers came before him.

tells us that Saul was a principal agent in instigating the Jews to the murder of Stephen, and to the persecution of the church, under the pretence that the Apostles were in league with Simon the magician. See Lib. i. 70. Little credit could be given to this assertion, were it not countenanced by the authority of Luke. The writer of the above book was no friend to our Apostle: and the invidious allusion he makes to him on this occasion has been noticed by learned men. It is however but justice to observe, that he elsewhere refers to him in a very honourable manner, as being the person who was to combat the principle of evil in the diffusion of the gospel among the Gentiles—Speaking of the opposite pairs of good and evil he writes: *Nonum (par) omnium Gentium, et ILLIUS QUI MITTETUR SEMINARE VERBUM INTER GENTES*; Lib. iii. 61.

When Philip first taught the christian doctrine in Samaria, it was to be expected that he should principally insist on those tenets; which were denied by Simon and his followers. And this we find to have been the case. “But, when they believed the gospel of Philip concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were constantly coming in to be baptised, both men and women. And Simon himself believed also, and, after his baptism, kept close to Philip, and was astonished at seeing signs and great miracles performed;” 12—14.—Philip proclaimed the *kingdom of God*; that is, he preached the great doctrines of providence, of a life to come, and of a future retribution, all which, though the distinguishing principles of the gospel, were denied by the impostor of Samaria. He next taught these people to believe in *Christ*, as the person by whom these doctrines were brought to light and established, and in the *name of Jesus*, whom Simon had hitherto anathematised, as constituting that Christ.

As the apostles taught that the man Jesus, who expired on the cross, was raised from the dead, and exalted to the right-hand of God; and as the Holy Spirit had descended



upon the Apostles, to enable them to perform miracles with the express purpose of confirming the truth of those facts, it was highly expedient that the converts in Samaria, who had hitherto as the followers of Simon denied them, should now after their conversion receive the same spiritual endowments. And this expediency was realised in the event. “ Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto the Samaritans Peter and John, who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit—Then the apostles laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit ;” 14—18,

Meek, gentle, and beneficent as was the character of Christ, the malice of his enemies connected with it ideas of uncommon aversion, infamy, and contempt. And there is reason to believe that multitudes in Judea, and in other countries declined for this reason, though convinced in their hearts of his divine authority, to assume in public his venerable name. This timid and unworthy spirit the apostles sought, by their exhortation and example, to discourage and subdue. And as one likely means to induce the de-

cided convert to make an open profession of his faith, they enjoined upon him, the necessity of being *publicly baptised*. Of those, who came to receive that ceremony, the apostolic teachers very prudently required a confession of the simple principles which they taught, and in which they were opposed by the Gnostic leaders. The formulary which Philip prescribed on this occasion, was highly simple and rational: and, as it consisted in an acknowledgment, on the part of the initiated, that the man Jesus was their Lord, and that they were bound to obey his precepts and imitate his example, we may infer that it was directly levelled against the system of Simon Magus; See verse 16. Simon himself was in the number of the baptised: and, “when he saw, that this Holy Spirit was given by laying on of the hands of the Apostles, he offered them money, saying: Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Spirit: But Peter said unto him, thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased by money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this doctrine—for thy heart is not straight in the sight of God. Repent therefore of thy

wickedness and beg of God, that this deceitfulness of thy heart may thereby be forgiven thee: for I perceive thee to be in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity;" 18—24. Here you are to observe, first, that Peter distinguishes between the doctrine which the Apostles taught and that inculcated by Simon—*ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τοῦτῳ* in this doctrine. Observe, secondly, that in very emphatic terms he denies the claims of that impostor to the christian character,—*Thou hast neither part nor lot in this doctrine.* That is, thou hast no concern either as a professor or a teacher, in the gospel which we teach. Cease therefore to class thyself any longer with the followers of Christ, and to advance falsehoods of thine own invention as branches of that doctrine which we preach." Remark, lastly, that Peter describes the character of Simon under figures borrowed from the serpent, whose divinity he affected to extol in opposition to the Jewish Jehovah,—*Thy heart is not straight before God:* Which is to this effect; "Though by thy baptism and seeming repentance thou hast put on a fair appearance in the sight of men, yet to the eyes of that Being, who discerneth the thoughts, thou appearest to resemble the insidiousness, the cunning, the obliquities

of the serpent. Thou art entwined around with habits of inveterate guilt as with the scaly contortions of that animal, and thy temper is bitter and virulent like the poison under its tongue.”

The gospel as it originated in the wisdom of heaven, and was far from coinciding with the prepossessions; or flattering the vices of men, is stiled by the Apostolic teachers *the doctrine of God*. This title they never fail to give it, whenever they oppose the Gnostic impostors, whose systems were but heterogeneous compositions of Jewish traditions, of the pagan philosophy, and the christian doctrine, so blended indeed as to meet the prejudices and gratify the bad passions of those whom they deceived. And thus the historian designates the gospel twice on this occasion; See verses 14, 25. One leading point in this doctrine of the Lord, which Peter and John taught in opposition to Simon, was the *death* of Jesus as predicted by the Jewish prophets. ¶ The discussion of this point forms the next step in the narrative before us: And remarkable is the incident, which providence called forth in the interview between Philip

and the Ethiopian eunuch, in order to furnish future ages with additional evidence for its truth. After reading the beautiful passage in which the evangelical Prophet predicts the silence and meekness of the Messiah during his trial, and the cruel manner in which his life was taken away, the latter thus asks the former: "I pray thee, of whom doth the prophet say this? Of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began from this scripture, to preach unto him JESUS. And as they were going along the road, they came to some water; And the eunuch saith: See, here is water, why may not I be baptised? And Philip said: if thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest: And he answered: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;" 34—38. If you consider this passage in reference to the above history of Simon Magus, you will see that it inculcates, in opposition to that impostor, that the Jewish prophets foretold the sufferings and death of the Messiah; that Jesus, and not a divine being within him, was the Christ, and that as such he was but *the Son of God*, or the anointed king of the Jews; and, finally, that the eunuch might be bap-

tised, on condition of his believing these points *from his heart*, that is, with unfeigned simplicity and sincerity, and not, as the deceivers did, from sinister purposes.

In the tenth chapter it is recorded, that the apostle Peter was directed by the Holy Spirit to instruct Cornelius in the principles of the christian faith. Now as this was the express purpose for which he went, and as the person, who wanted this instruction, was a *pagan* and a *stranger* to the gospel, we may well expect that the Apostle should not omit any essential branch of it, but state all its fundamental points with precision and clearness, and place them too in such a light as to exclude the sentiments of Simon Magus, with whom, if we may believe the author of the Recognitions, the centurion was not unacquainted. To remove the prejudices, that had hitherto divided the Jews and gentiles, Peter wisely opens his discourse with asserting, that God regarded no personal distinction among men, but accepted every person of whatever nation, who feared him and worked righteousness; ver. 34. In a bold and personified language he then informs them, that the doctrine, which the Apostles taught, was not of human

invention, but revealed from God ; that it was first revealed to the children of Israel ; that the knowledge and influence of it would in the end universally prevail, and unite the discordant nations of the world in peace and harmony ; 36. In the next place, Peter specifies the *country*, in which this divine commission was first announced, and this country was *Galilee*. He then defines the *time*, in which it was first made known, and that was after the baptism of John : “ That doctrine, you know was published throughout all Judea, AND BEGAN FROM GALILEE, AFTER THE BAPTISM WHICH JOHN PREACHED.”

Peter, after this, describes who the person was, whom God appointed to be his messenger to mankind :—“ God anointed JESUS—him from Nazareth—with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil : for God was him ;” 38. That they might not conclude that these miracles were artifices, which had no foundation in truth, he asserts that he and his fellow-disciples witnessed all the things Jesus had done in the land of Judea, and in

Jerusalem ; 39. The crucifixion of Jesus by the Jews, his resurrection from the dead on the third day, his appearing to the disciples after death, the commandment which he then gave them to preach him as the person ordained of God to be the Judge of all mankind—these were the next leading principles, which our Apostle enforces on the attention of his hearers : Nor does he omit reminding them that the ancient prophets bore witness to him as the Messiah, and that whosoever believeth in the name of Jesus shall receive the pardon of his sins ; 39—44.

The history concludes with saying, that this statement of Peter was corroborated by an immediate descent of the Holy Spirit upon those who heard him. Here, then, you see what Apostolic authority holds up to our views as the only principles which christians are called upon to believe. These principles are the divine mission of Jesus, his being a man come from Nazareth, but endowed with supernatural power and wisdom, his death on the cross, his resurrection from the dead, his coming again to judge the living and the dead, and finally, a practical faith in his name. Whatever arti-



cles are enjoined upon us as necessary to salvation beyond these, have originated in the ignorance of some, and in the bad passions of others in ancient times : and they constitute that wood, hay, stubble, erected upon the foundation of Christ and his Apostles, which one day shall most assuredly be destroyed by the fire of truth.

The passage, which next demands our attention, occurs in chap. xiii. 6—13. “ And after passing over the island of Cyprus as far as Paphos, they found a certain magician, a false teacher, a Jew, named Barjesus, in the train of the deputy-governor, Sergius Paulus a man of understanding, who called to him Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But the magician, otherwise called Elymas, opposed them, endeavouring to turn aside the governor from the faith. Then Saul, who was called Paul also, full of the Holy Spirit, set his eyes upon him and said : O ! full of all guile and of all craftiness ! son of the devil ! enemy of all righteousness ! wilt thou not cease making crooked the strait ways of the Lord ? Behold ! therefore the hand of the

Lord is now against thee ; and thou wilt be blind without seeing the sun for a season. And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him ; and he was going about in search of a guide. Then the governor, upon seeing that, believed in astonishment at this doctrine of the Lord.” Now my object is to shew that this is one of those magicians, who professed the christian religion, and corrupted it so as to render it subservient to their bad passions. That before this interview with our Apostle, he was a pretended believer in Jesus is obvious from hence :—

1. Paul addresses him as a person continually employed in perverting the new faith to his own sinister purposes : “ *Wilt thou not CEASE making crooked the strait ways of the Lord?*”
- 2. The historian informs us that he was a *false teacher* ; by which he means that he blended with the christian doctrine falsehoods invented by men.—3. Paul accosts him as an *enemy* of all righteousness : That is, while he professed himself the friend, he was in reality the worst foe of the gospel ; he was one who concealed, under a fair and external profession, a heart full of guile.
- 4. The impostor called himself *Barjesus*, which in Hebrew signifies the son or suc-

cessor of Jesus \*. By putting this construction on his name, he appears to insinuate that the powers, with which Jesus was invested were transferred to him, as his lawful successor. In allusion to his impious arrogance in this respect, Paul, seemingly, denominates him *son of the devil*, that is, son of the evil one, and not of the holy and benevolent Jesus ; 5. The impiety of this impostor, in making the profession of christianity the cloak of evil passions, was the circumstance, which rendered it expedient to inflict upon him a signal punishment, and thus to exhibit his fate as an awful warning to those bad men who acted a similar part. The mist, which fell upon his eyes and made them blind to

\* An apposite instance, which may illustrate this remark, occurs in the life of Josephus, p. 2. Havercamp's edition. " Having heard," says he, " That a man named BANOUN tarried in the wilderness, using for raiment the foliage of trees, and spontaneous vegetables for food, and that he often both day and night bathed in cold water for purification, I became his zealous follower ; and after spending with him three years, I returned into the city : " Now from the description which Josephus here gives of this Banoun it is evident, that he professed himself the successor of John Baptist, and the character, sustained by him in this respect, he described by the very name he assumed : which being thus written in Hebrew, בנין, signifies *a son or successor of John*.

the light of the sun, conveyed to the governor, and to those, who had hitherto been duped by him, an impressive symbol of that ignorance and depravity, under which he laboured, while he blasphemously claimed superior power and wisdom\*.

“ Now some, who came down from Judea were teaching the brethren, Except ye circumcise yourselves after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. As, therefore, Paul and Barnabas differed with them in opinion, and could not settle the dispute, the brethren determined, that Paul and Barnabas with some of their number should go up to Jerusalem to the Apostles and elders about this question ;” xv. 1—4.

The dispute between the men here

\* As the blindness, which fell on this magician, was symbolical of the moral blindness that darkened the eyes of his mind ; and as it was inflicted only *for a season*, we may infer that the removal of it, so as to enable him again to see the material sun, was accompanied with that repentance and reformation, which qualified him to discern the Sun of Righteousness in its native lustre, and no more to tarnish it with the dark clouds of fraud and falsehood. And this fact, deducible as it is from the passage before us, is directly attested by Origen. In his Commentaries on Exodus, p. 22. he thus writes : Παυλος δε τον συν τω Ανθυπατω Σεργιω Παυλω τω λογω τυφλων δια των πονων επισρεφει αυτον εις θεοσεβειαν\*

spoken of and the two Apostles claims our attention. It is resolvable into this simple question, Whether salvation was to be attained by the ceremonies of the law, which, being performed by the body, are often stiled in the Apostolic writings *the works of the law*, or by the cultivation of those divine, social, and personal virtues, resulting from a practical belief in a life to come through the resurrection of Jesus; which belief, in contradistinction to the works of the law, is sometimes called *the faith* (ἐν πίστις), and at other times *the favour* (ἐν χάρις)\*. The former of

\* The question here stated is discussed at large by the apostle Paul in several of his epistles, and particularly in his epistle to the *Romans* and that to the *Galatians*. It is a topic, therefore, which will claim our particular attention in the succeeding volume. Permit me, however, to remark that the exact signification of the terms *πίστις faith*, and *χάρις favour or grace*, as used by the apostolic teachers, is to be ascertained by considering, what it was which the Jewish converts, with whom they disputed, urged as the means of being saved. Now it cannot be doubted, that the latter insisted on the right of circumcision and other ceremonial observances as the grounds of salvation. The former then must have maintained, that a gracious exemption from those observances, or such an efficacious belief in the gospel as superseded the use of them, formed those grounds. How different from this is the sense which the majority of christians in modern days connect with the above terms? Because the apostles rejected the mere performance of external ordinances, under the phrase *works of the law*, as the proper medium of obtaining the pardon of our sins and the favour of God, it has hence been concluded, that they rejected *moral virtue* as the

these grounds was maintained by the false teachers who came down from Judea, the latter by Paul and Barnabas. After the matter was referred to the arbitration of the apostles, Peter rose up and sanctioned their opinion by a short speech; which, when properly understood, will appear pregnant with good sense and conclusive reasoning. First, he argues that the Holy Spirit having descended upon those gentiles whom he had converted, was a proof that God did not consider the rite of circumcision as necessary to salvation; 8. His next argument against circumcision is, that it affected only *the body*, whereas by a proper faith in Jesus, *the heart* was purified and refined; 9. It was, farther, a burden which the Jews

means of attaining to these ends; and that in the room of this principle they substituted the necessity of believing in some tenets, which none can comprehend, and of receiving some divine endowment, called *grace*, which none can command, but which depends upon the uncontrollable will and capricious favour of the great Supreme.

This perversion of the meaning of the Apostles is not the offspring of modern ignorance, but has originated in the depravity of the first gentile Gnostics; for we are told that Simor. Magus inculcated upon his followers, that not by good works, but by grace, they were to attain salvation. Ου γαρ δια πραξεων αγαθων αλλα δια χαριτος τευξεσθαι της σωτηριας; Theod. Hær. Fab. Lib. i. 1. At what period this principle of *Vital Christianity* was imported into the christian church will be noticed in the sequel,

themselves had ever felt an oppressive yoke. He concludes his address in this manner : “ We believe that we are to be saved by the favour of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the same way (then) must they too be saved.” Which is to this effect : “ Circumcision is not the mean by which we Jews obtain salvation : It cannot, therefore, be the mean of saving the gentiles. Being useless in the Jewish converts, who are already circumcised, it can by no means be of any utility to the heathen converts, should they be circumcised.” The following resolution was then adopted by the Apostles, and sent to the believers at Antioch and other places. “ Forasmuch as we have heard, that some who went out from us, have troubled you with doctrines, and unsettled your minds, by enjoining circumcision and the keeping of the law ; to whom we gave no such commission : we have all agreed to send chosen men unto you with our beloved brethren Barnabas and Paul ; men, who delivered up their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accordingly we have sent Judas and Silas with them, who will also tell you the same that we have written. For it seemeth good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay upon you no other burden than these

necessary things ; to abstain from eating sacrifices to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication : from which, if ye wholly keep yourselves, ye will do right ;” 24—29. It cannot well be doubted, but that the men, who came down from Judea to oppose the Apostles’, were advocates of the Samaritan imposture. But the paragraph before us contains some intimations by which we can discover their character and their views. Like their brethren among the Gnostics, they appear not to have had the virtue to suffer persecution for the faith. To this trait in their character Paul and Barnabas afforded a striking contrast. And hence we may perceive the meaning of the Apostles when thus speaking of the two latter—*Men who have delivered their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* As though they had written, “ Barnabas and Paul have evinced their attachment to the christian name by submitting to grievous sufferings and to imminent dangers. They, therefore, have the fairest claims on your attention and obedience ; and not those men, who possess neither the honesty openly to avow, nor the magnanimity voluntarily to suffer for the cause which they affect to



patronise." From the above address it may farther be inferred, that the false teachers who came to Antioch pretended to have received, from the Apostles in Jerusalem, a commission to enforce upon the gentile converts the necessity of being circumcised, and of keeping the other ceremonies of the law. To their pretension in this respect the following clause bears an obvious allusion---*To whom we gave no such commission.* This circumstance shews that they were rank deceivers\*. But, though they were not sent by the apostolic teachers, they appear to have been sent by the Pharisees: for when Paul and Barnabas had arrived in Jerusalem, and laid the matter before the council, some of them stood up and defended their cause; urging the necessity of

\* The words of the Apostles in the original imply that they belonged to those men, whom our Lord describes under the figure of wolves, that would break into his fold and plunder the sheep—ΤΙΝΕΣ ΕΞΕΛΘΟΝΤΕΣ ΕΤΑΡΑΞΑΝ ὑΜΑΣ ΛΟΓΟΙΣ ΑΝΟΙΣΤΕΥΟΜΕΝΟΙΣ ΤΑΣ ΨΥΧΑΣ ὑΜΩΝ *Some having gone out (from among us) have confounded you with their doctrines, wringing your souls.* The allusion is to beasts of prey, which, having come upon a flock of sheep, throw them into alarm, disorder, and confusion, and seize them by the throat in order to devour them. To men of this description the apostle Paul alludes in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians. He stigmatises them as *false brethren* who clandestinely introduced themselves into the church as *spies* to deprive the gentile converts of their liberty in Christ.

circumcision and other ritual observances :  
 “ And certain believers of the sect of the Pharisees rose up and said it was proper to circumcise the gentiles, and to command them to keep the law of Moses ;” \*. 5. These Pharisees, it appears to me highly probable, were the same with those who our Lord foresaw, would embrace his religion, as modified by Simon Magus and other disciples of John. When on a certain occasion they came to Jesus and put the question : “ Why do not thy disciples fast ?” he anticipated their false zeal for the rites and ceremonies of the law in these remarkable words :—“ No one putteth a patch of new cloth to an old

\* There is something perplexing in this verse, as it implies that the Pharisees rose up, and spoke against the Apostles and elders, *before* they were yet met to consider the matter. But this perplexity will be removed, if we reflect that the opposition which they made to Paul and Barnabas, was made in the assembly of the Apostles and elders and people, into which, on their arrival in Jerusalem, they were introduced. The business perhaps would at once have been terminated, had it not been for the opposition of the Pharisaical converts. The number, rank and bigotry of these gave the dispute a serious form, and rendered it impracticable to be settled at that time. It was become, therefore necessary to appoint a subsequent day for the discussion of the subject. The sixth verse begins with an account of the assembly, that was then formed, and of the speeches made by Peter and others. The obscurity arose from the studied brevity of the writers who wished to bring this narrative into as small a compass as possible.

garment : for it taketh away from the entireness of the garment, and a worse rent is made. Neither is new wine put into old bottles ; if so, those bottles burst, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles are destroyed : but new wine is put into new bottles, and they are preserved together ;” Mat. ix. 16, 17. This contains a direct but obscure reply to the question. The old garment and the old bottles were those ritual observances to which the Jews were attached. The Baptist was not the person authorised to throw aside that thread-bare garment, those rotten vessels. It would not, therefore have been right in him to put a new patch to the one, or infuse new wine into the other. That is, his office, as it consisted solely in pointing out the Messiah to his countrymen required, that he should not attempt to introduce any amendment in the Jewish institutions, but conform to them as he found them. For this reason, as if he said, John permitted you his disciples to fast and keep the other customs of the law : but with my disciples the case is different. I, as being the bridegroom, shall invest my followers with new manners, and instil into their minds new doctrines. That they may, therefore, be enabled to wear the former,

and preserve the latter, it is necessary that they should lay aside their former customs, and inure themselves, for the future, to different habits. Unless they thus discontinue old observances, and undergo a thorough change in their practices, they will be unable to retain those lessons of piety, benevolence, and self-government which I deliver to them. From this beautiful and wise admonition the disciples of John and the Pharisees derived no advantage, but imported into the new religion, notwithstanding the warnings which the Saviour here and elsewhere administered to them, a blind attachment to ceremonial observances, together with other notions which took their rise in the school of the Baptist. And may we not infer from the conduct of the Pharisaical converts in sending their agents to Antioch, that they sent missionaries also to other places, in order to oppose the apostolic teachers; and that they endeavoured even to pre-occupy the Jews in their favour by teaching their principles in those cities, which the gospel in its purity had not yet reached?

Now if we take a retrospective view of Paul's address to the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, we shall find that the disciples of

the Baptist, and the Pharisaical believers had already disseminated their distinguishing tenets among them ; and that the influence of these deceivers formed the chief impediment in the way of the true gospel at that place. As those Jews were acquainted with the baptism of John and acknowledged his authority, the apostle, just before he enters upon the leading principles of christianity as taught by him, cites the testimony which the Baptist bore to the Messiahship of Jesus. “ And when John finished his course, he asked whom think ye me to be ? I am not he, but behold ! One cometh after me, the sandal of whose feet I am not worthy to loosen ;” xiii. 25. When the followers of the Baptist with their Pharisaical brethren were compelled by their Master’s own testimony, and his subsequent death, to abandon the favourite hope that he was the Christ, they had recourse, from motives of spite and malice towards the true claimant to that character, to the absurd supposition that a superior being, which came down from heaven and entered into him at his baptism, and not Jesus personally, constituted the Messiah. Observe now, how our Apostle cuts up this notion by the roots ;

“Men, my brethren, descendants of the race of Abraham, and those (of any other race) among you who fear God, to you the Logos of this salvation is sent: For this (Logos) the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and their rulers have through ignorance condemned; thus having fulfilled the cries of the prophets, every sabbath read unto you;” 26, 27.

Here you see Paul calls the commission, which his Master publicly received at his baptism by the name of *Logos* or divine Commissioner; and lest his hearers should infer, that this personified Commissioner was a real being, possessing a spiritual and immortal nature, and therefore distinct from Jesus of Nazareth, he instantly transfers the term to the latter; and thus holds up the very man, that had expired on the cross, as alone constituting the messenger of heaven. The impostors, in consequence of having distinguished between the man Jesus and the Christ within him, were led of course to deny, that the latter was of the race of David; that he really suffered; that God raised him from the dead; and that the things which befel him were foretold by the Jewish prophets. To these notions, which were rejected by the Jewish as well as

by the gentile Gnostics, the Apostle adverts ; and he enforces the truth of them, in a language singularly plain, simple and emphatic. Read from verse 22d to verse 38th. Nor is this all. Being now opposed by men, who professed the same sentiments with the Pharisaical missionaries at Antioch, he maintains that a practical faith in the crucified and exalted Jesus, and not the ceremonies of the law, was the means of securing the remission of sins ; verses 38, 39. The anti-apostolic teachers of course insisted, that the converts should conform to the injunctions of Moses, before they should be invested with the privileges of the christian faith. *But Barnabas and Paul persuaded them to remain in the favour of God ; 43.* That is, They exhorted the proselytes not to listen to those self-commissioned teachers, who sought to impose upon them useless and burdensome ceremonies, but to abide in that gracious exemption from ritual obligations, which God dispensed to them, in consequence of believing the truth, and practising the virtues of the gospel.

I propose next to examine a part of Paul's

celebrated speech before the Athenian philosophers. “ Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his mind was provoked within him at seeing the city so full of images. Moreover, he was constantly reasoning with the Jews, and with the gentile proselytes in the synagogue, and every day in the market-place with those that came in his way. And some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers happened to meet with him, some of whom said, What doth this babbler mean to say? And others: He seemeth to be a strange publisher of new demons! because he was preaching to them Jesus and the resurrection;” xvii. 16—19. Here we see what were the grand and fundamental topics, on which the apostle Paul first insisted, when explaining to strangers the nature of that doctrine which he preached. These were the *man Jesus*, his resurrection from the dead, and through him the resurrection of all mankind. And yet the philosophers concluded that he published some *new demon*. To prevent the reader from falling into a similar error, the historian immediately subjoins the reason, which led them to that conclusion. “ Because he was preaching to them Jesus and the resurrection, that is, the resurrection of Je-



sus." This inference of the philosophers, though false, was natural with their prepossessions; Since in the conception of a heathen, superiority to death is the chief circumstance which constitutes a God\*.

\* That my reader may see what reason the philosophers had for supposing that the Apostle was a *publisher of new demons*, let him attend to the following statement. Many of the ancient philosophers supposed, that *the souls of men* emanated, like rays of light, from the Supreme Luminary, and existed before their incorporation. When immersed in human forms, as being then in a state of debasement, and subject to the contagion of noxious matter, they were said to be *dead*, or to use the language of Philo—*τον μετα σωματων αποθνησκειν βιον*, p. 1153. *to lead a dead life with bodies*. For this reason human souls were sometimes stiled *θεοι θνητοι*, because according to Hierocles, they are banished from that blessed existence which they had before enjoyed in the presence of the Deity. *Ως αποθνησκουσαι προς την θειαν ευζωιαν τη απο θεου φυγη* Hier in Aur Carm. p. 18. This appellation was given them also by Heraclitus. See Clem. Alex. Pæd. Lib. 3. Cap. 1. The soul being now imprisoned, as it were, in a dark and narrow cell, its perceptions were obscured, and its faculties enfeebled. So says Plutarch, *Εντυφλουται δια την προς το γεωδες ανακρασιν του σωματος*, vol. ii. p 431. When however released from the bondage of flesh and blood, she was said to have risen *from the dead*, that is, to have recovered the happy state which she had lost. In this exalted condition she was now described as,

— *Αθανατος, θεος, αμβροτος, ουκ επι θνητος*'

If, farther, during her incorporation the soul kept herself free from the pollution of the body, if she continued mindful of her high original, and if in particular she proved beneficial

To introduce a new God, or a strange demon, unauthorised by the laws, was deemed, it is well known, in Greece and in Rome, a capital crime. With this crime the Apostle is here charged by the Epicureans and Stoics : and in order to enforce it, they conducted him to the *Areopagus* or the chief seat of justice. Here then our venerable teacher is summoned in the most solemn manner to maintain and defend the divinity of Jesus, if so be that he indeed taught that doctrine ; or to repel the accusation brought against him as groundless and unjust. Now it is curious to observe which alternative Paul

to mortal men while on the earth, she had, on her emancipation, the honour of ranking under the name of a *demon* among the tutelar gods of this lower world, whom Hesiod calls, ἄγνοι ἐπιχθονιοὶ φυλακῆς θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων ; while the mortal person, in whom she had resided, was himself to be entitled to divine homage among the terrestrial divinities. Now, when the apostle Paul preached *Jesus* and his *resurrection*, the philosophers whom he addressed naturally concluded, that by the latter he meant the soul of our Lord, become, by its separation from the body, a *demon*, and, on account of its beneficence and purity, classed with the celestial guardians of men ; and that he proposed the deification of the former as being the person in whom that demon resided ; while yet among men. And this is the reason why they considered our Apostle as proclaiming more than *one* demon. I shall only observe, that Chrysostom and other ancient writers understood the matter as here explained : for they say, that the Athenians supposed Ἀναστασις or the resurrection spoken of by Paul to be a demon,

thought it proper to choose. Hear his own words: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by **THAT MAN**, whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead;" 31, 32. Now, do but examine the contents of the above paragraph, and it must appear to you to be directly levelled against the serious charge of acting contrary to the laws in introducing a new god.—Because, 1. The person raised from the dead he declares to be *a man*—2. His words imply, too, that Jesus rose not by virtue of his *own power*, but by the *power of God*.—3. In coming again to raise the dead and pass upon mankind a final decision, he will not act with an authority of his own, independent of the Almighty, but is to be only instrumental in the hands and subordinate to the sovereignty of God. Accordingly we find that, the accusation being thus clearly refuted, our illustrious Apostle was dismissed.

“And a certain Jew, named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus : This man was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently (*ακριβως accurately*) the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly: And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote exhorting the disciples to receive him, who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace. For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ;” xviii. 24—28. This is one of those many passages in the New Testament, the full import of which cannot well be discerned or illustrated by mere philological learning; but requires a knowledge of the leading facts, which the writer had before him, in order to be sufficiently comprehended. The disciples of the Baptist maintained, in opposition to the apostles, that the divinity dwelling in Jesus, and not Jesus himself, constituted the Christ, and that a

strict adherence to the Levitical code formed the only solid grounds of acceptance with God. In professing these doctrines, they widely deviated from their Master, who preached the baptism of repentance and reformation as the means of escaping the wrath to come, and bore the most unequivocal testimony to Jesus as the coming Saviour. Apollos, however, refused to adopt the errors of the apostate disciples, but adhered strictly to the things which John his Master had taught. And this is the precise idea which the historian inculcates in the following verse: "This man was instructed in the way of the Lord, and, being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught ACCURATELY, the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John;" 15. That is, In preaching Christ he conformed with fidelity and exactness to the doctrine, which he had learnt respecting him in the school of the Baptist, having rejected those false notions, which were introduced into it by his fellow-disciples after the decease of their common Master. The information which John communicated was, however, very defective, and came far short of that knowledge of the divine will, which the Apostles afterward attained. Under this

defect Apollos must have laboured, while he had not yet received any instructions in the college of Nazareth. Fortunately for him and for the interests of the gospel, his deficiency was supplied on the present occasion—"Aquila and Priscilla having heard him, took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of the Lord *more perfectly*; 26. The disciples of John, again, even after they were compelled to acknowledge the Messiah in the person of Jesus, insisted on ritual observances as the means of being saved. They therefore, together with their Pharisaical brethren, were properly enough said to be—*οἱ πεπιστευκότες δια των εργαων νομου*. *Believers through the works of the law*. On the contrary, the apostles with their faithful followers pleaded, as the medium of salvation, the favour of that exemption from all ceremonial performances, conferred upon them by an efficient faith in Jesus. For this reason they are here and elsewhere, in contradistinction to their false brethren, stiled, *οἱ πεπιστευκότες δια της χάριτος*, *Believers through the favour*. Apollos, being a good man, and now fully instructed in the christian doctrine, sided of course with the apostolic teachers against his former fellow-disciples. And hence it is said of

him that, after passing over into Achaia, he helped them much WHO BELIEVED THROUGH THE FAVOUR. The other main ground, in which he supported the apostolic teachers, in opposition to the impostors, was, that Jesus, and not a celestial being within him, formed the Christ. "With firmness he refuted the Jews (and that) in public, demonstrating from the scriptures, that THE CHRIST WAS JESUS." Observe Apollos is said to have demonstrated this from *the scriptures*, that is, from the Jewish prophets, which were rejected by the apostate disciples of the Baptist.

"And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, he said unto them: Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard, whether there be any Holy Spirit. And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptised? And they said: unto John's Baptism. Then said Paul: John verily baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on

Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus;" xix. 1—6. Now it appears very evident from this passage, that the persons here spoken of ranked among the converts to the new religion, though they had yet only received the baptism of John : And what is more, the apostle and the writer of the Acts recognized them as disciples. This circumstance, which would otherwise be unaccountable, receives an easy solution from the preceding facts. The missionaries from the school of the Baptist here, as at Antioch, had been beforehand with the apostles. The men mentioned above were converts to their scheme, and accordingly supposed, that a scrupulous conformity to the letter of the Mosaic law was the means of obtaining the forgiveness of their sins ; and that the Christ was an angelic being, resident for a time in the man Jesus. Now in reference to the former of these notions, Paul tells them, that John preached *repentance*, that is, a change of sentiments and manners, in order to avoid the coming wrath ; and to the latter, that he held up Jesus to the people as their Messiah : intimating by this, that the men who had baptised these disciples, had departed from the true doctrine



of the baptist, and preached as his, tenets of their own invention. Their errors being thus rectified, they believed in the true Christ, acknowledged his authority as their Lord, and that Lord to be the man Jesus—  
 “ John baptised the baptism of repentance to the people : saying, that they should believe on him that was coming after him, that is, on the Christ (namely) JESUS. When they heard this they were baptised in the name of THE LORD JESUS.”

There is one thing more to be remarked in the paragraph before us. When Paul put the question whether they had received the Holy Spirit, they replied: We have not so much as heard that there is a Holy Spirit. This is a curious circumstance. Their ignorance, however, may thus be accounted for. The men by whom they were converted to christianity, as taught in the school of John, denied that Jesus was the Messiah. Consequently according to them the real Christ did not suffer and rise again from the dead. The express purpose, for which the Holy Spirit was shed upon the apostolic teachers, was to enforce the truth of these points in opposition to their false brethren. Was it then to be expected that the latter, when

disseminating their principles in places where the gospel of truth had not yet reached, should notice a power vested in their opponents, which demonstrated the falsehood of their own peculiar sentiments? It was a wise policy in them to draw over it, as far as they could, the veil of silence and secrecy. And upon this policy they evidently acted in the instance before us. Hence, too, we see the wisdom of the divine appointment, that the converts at Ephesus should now on receiving the faith in its purity not only hear of the Holy Spirit, or see the effects of it in the apostle, but that themselves should be endued with it.—“And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied” 6. The history thus proceeds. “And God performed no common miracles by the hands of Paul, so that, when handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, the diseases left them, and the evil spirits went out of them.” 11, 12.

The circumstance of these and other miracles being performed in the name of Jesus could not fail to induce those magicians, who were witnesses of them, and who were in

the habit of using certain barbarous terms as charms in their incantations, to conclude that that name had some supernatural efficacy connected with it, and to employ it as such in their magical artifices. Accordingly we thus read—"Then some of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to name, over those that had these evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying: We adjure you by that Jesus, whom Paul preacheth. Now the seven sons of Sceva, a chief priest of the Jews, were among them that did this. And the evil spirit answered: I know Jesus, and am acquainted with Paul: but who are ye? Then the man, in whom the evil spirit was, leapt on them, and overpowered them so much as to make them flee from that house naked and wounded." xix. 13—17. The devotion of these men to the arts of Magic, is a presumption that they ranked with other Pharisees among the followers of the Samaritan impostor; and the train of the historian's ideas leads us to infer, that they were those men, who had initiated the converts spoken of above into the baptism of John. Be this however as it may, it is obvious from the narrative before us that, on seeing the miracles done by the hands of Paul, they came over in name to the true

faith, and that they not only professed to believe in the Lord Jesus, but even to cast out demons in his name. Hence are discernible the wisdom and justice of Providence in the event which befel them : as it was a signal proof to all around them of their presumption and wickedness in pretending to be the disciples of a master, whose name and gospel they disgraced by their behaviour. With the character of Jesus these men, in common with the unbelieving Jews, had associated ideas of odium and disgrace : and, even after they embraced the Samaritan imposture, they still continued to blaspheme his venerable name. Now, what could be so well adapted to rescue our blessed Lord from an ignominy so unjust and a blasphemy so impious, as the glorious lesson now exhibited to the world ; namely, that the power which the Almighty had connected with the name of Jesus, was to be employed only by good men, and for beneficent purposes, and never by bad men for evil purposes ? And to the happy consequence resulting from this lesson our historian thus adverts : “ And this became known to all both Jews and Greeks, inhabitants of Ephesus, and fear fell upon all. **AND THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS WAS MAGNIFIED ;**” 17.

Numbers of the Jews and Egyptians expelled from Italy, came, we shall hereafter see, to Ephesus. While yet in the metropolis their leaders composed, with other spurious books, certain oracles which they ascribed to the Sibyl and which after examination were burnt by the emperor Tiberius. On seeing the treatment which the sons of Sceva received from the demoniac, many of the impostors were led to a sense of their guilt, and confessed their former wicked practices: “And a good many magicians brought together their books and burnt them in public, and the value of them altogether was reckoned to be fifty thousand pieces of silver.” The writer then subjoins this remark:—“In such a manner did the Logos (word) of God grow up and prevail;” As though he had said, “The divine Logos, descended on Jesus, and entrusted by him to the Apostles to be educated under their paternal care, flourished with all the bloom of health and vigour: and when this celestial youth was now brought to combat with men, who under the mask of friendship had disgraced and injured him, he triumphed over them by this signal display of power.”

The circumstance of some of the impostors here noticed having come from Rome, and the burning of their books as was done by the emperor Tiberius, appear to have excited in the mind of Paul the idea of that city, and hence led him to express the following resolution :—“ Now after these things were completely settled, Paul resolved in his mind, when he had passed through Achaia and Macedonia to go to Jerusalem ; saying : after I have been there, *I must see Rome also ;* 21.

The passage, above explained, serves to throw much light upon a discourse, which our Lord once had with the Pharisees :—“ Then a blind and dumb man, a demoniac, was brought to him, and he healed him ; so that the blind and dumb man both spake and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed, and said : Is not this the Son of David ? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said : This man could not cast out these demons, but through Beelzebub the prince of the demons ;” Mat. xii. 22—25. Now I propose to shew that the Pharisees, who had recourse to this disingenuous artifice, joined in after-times with the disciples of John in espousing the Samaritan

system; and that the Saviour, foreseeing this, blended with a refutation of their cavils a series of remarks all levelled at the new character which they afterwards would assume as his pretended disciples. Let us then examine his words: "If by Beelzebub I cast out demons, by whom do your children cast them out? They therefore shall be your judges?" 27. Here it is implied, that the sons of some among the Pharisees were employed in exorcising demons, and that these would condemn the subterfuge adopted on this occasion by their fathers. But suppose the matter was *then* referred to their arbitration, would they have condemned the cavillers and justified the divine authority of Jesus? They certainly would not have done this. Our Lord knew that they would not; and therefore refers to a future time, when they should thus condemn their fathers. "They *WILL* be your judges." Now Luke in the Acts has related the incident to which Jesus appears to have referred: The sons of Sceva, the Chief Priest, with other Pharisees did, in abandoning their former art of exorcising demons, and attempting to do these things by means of the divine power connected with the

name of Jesus, openly acknowledge that he acted with the authority of God. That our divine Master had his eyes fixed on those impostors mentioned by Luke, appears evident from what he subjoins on this occasion : “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out ; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself *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, Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation ;” 43—46. Under the veil of Jewish mythology, if I may so speak, Christ has here conveyed a beautiful lesson concerning the nature of evil habits. But he applied the parable to the men whom he was then addressing. And in what did the propriety of this application consist ? These Pharisees together with the sons of Sceva, would, he knew, receive the new religion. This change in their sentiments would doubtless induce some of them, for a season, to relinquish their former evil ways. They, however, soon exchanged the word of God,



which worketh reformation, for doctrines of human invention which favoured the grossest indulgences. Under the influence of these pernicious doctrines they sunk in depravity and crimes seven-fold deeper than those into which they had plunged themselves, while they were yet the open enemies of Christ and his cause. Luke has subjoined the above paragraph to the appeal which Jesus makes to the children of the Pharisees: and this circumstance, together with his particularity in specifying the *seven* sons of Sceva, affords a presumption that he intended to impress upon his readers the inference which his Master had to them.

Our Lord, foreseeing that these men would, after his resurrection, rank in the number of his disciples, and by their wicked conduct bring disgrace upon them and their cause, availed himself of an incident, that at the moment occurred, to assure them that even his own nearest relatives would not be acknowledged by him as his followers, would not be considered as bearing any affinity to him, unless they acted conformably to the will of his heavenly Father:—  
 “Whosoever SHALL DO the will of my Father which is in heaven.—This (and not

he that merely professes to be my follower, or affects to honour me by ascribing to me attributes and praise which belong only to God) is my brother, sister, and mother ;” 50. That a resemblance in temper and conduct, a practical obedience to his laws, formed the only alliance, which could subsist between Christ and his disciples, was a lesson which he was anxious to impress on his hearers. He therefore repeats it in a different form, and in a language still more relevant to those, who, after embracing, would widely deviate from the purity of his gospel. A certain woman of the company, struck at the promptitude with which he exposed the subterfuge of his adversaries, pronounced that mother *blessed*, who had the honour of giving birth to so illustrious a prophet. To this he instantly replies : “ Yea, rather blessed are they that hear THE WORD OF GOD AND KEEP IT ;” Luke xi. 38. That is, *Happy are they, who attend to the doctrine, which I now teach as come down from God ; retain it in its primitive purity, and refuse to listen to those false tenets respecting my nature and birth, which will originate with deceitful men* \*.

\* These Gnostic impostors, who maintained that Jesus was

In reference to those Pharisees, who, though convinced of his divine mission, would not have the magnanimity to avow their conviction or to class with his professed followers, our Lord delivered on this occasion the following maxim: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad;"

a man only in appearance, that is, had neither mother nor father, appear to have understood the above passages as levelled by the Saviour against their sentiments. Accordingly, they endeavoured as usual to take away their force by putting upon them a construction favourable to their own tenets. This circumstance opened the eyes of the orthodox commentators; and they place in consequence the meaning of Jesus in its proper light. Theophylact, in commenting on the congratulation of his mother by the woman, puts this question: "Where now are those, who say that the Lord only *appeared* to exist: for, behold! it is here attested of him that he *sucked the breast*. But he pronounces those to be blessed, who keep the doctrine of God: not that he excludes from this blessedness his own mother, but only shews that it will be of no avail to her to have borne and given suck to him, unless she possess every other virtue." And may it not with equal propriety be asked; Where now are those, who affect to honour Mary for having given birth to the Son of God, or to extol Jesus as having received his birth in a supernatural manner? The declaration of Christ, that those who did the will of his Father which is in heaven were his mother, gave the Egyptian deceivers a handle for saying that he rejected Mary under that relation. This subterfuge Jerome repels by putting on the words a just interpretation. Non juxta Marcionem<sup>ac</sup> Manichæum matrem negavit, ut natus de phantasmate putaretur, sed Apostolos Cognationi prætulit; *Com. in loco.*

Mat. xii. 30. The secondary and more obvious meaning of which is to this effect : “The man, who doth not openly take my part, taketh in effect, whatever may be his sentiments, the part of the adversary : And he, who by his example and exhortation endeavours not to form societies of men in my name, is by such timid behaviour, the cause of eventually dispersing many more widely in vice and error.” Jesus next anticipates the blasphemy, which the men before him would, as the followers of Simon Magus, throw on his name, and in allusion to it thus subjoins :—“ Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men ; but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him : but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the age to come.” Mat. xii. 31, 32. As though he had said : “Those of you, that now vilify me as a magician casting out demons by the assistance of Beelzebub, or will hereafter anathematise me as being *the Son of man*, as being one of the human race and different from the Christ within me, shall upon

repentance be forgiven. But if you asperse with impious imprecations that Holy Spirit, which, having descended in my name upon my faithful disciples, will enable them to demonstrate the truth of my resurrection and exaltation by miracles, you will have sunk in a depravity and guilt which shall meet its due punishment in the present age; and exclude you moreover from the privileges of that dispensation which I am to introduce and establish in the coming age.”

“ But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thine own words thou shalt be justified, and by thine own words thou shalt be condemned;” 36, 37. *Idle word* (αεργον ρημα, or αεργος λογος) are dialectic terms\*, which signify a sophis-

\* I rest this assertion on the authority of Origen. His words are what follows: Hujusmodi est sophisma illud vocatum αεργος λογος, quod ægrotum sophisticè dehortatur, ne sanitatis causa utatur medico hoc pacto, si tibi fatale est, e morbo resurges, sive accersas medicum sive non: itidem, si fatale tibi est e morbo non resurgere, non resurges, sive accersas eum sive non: ergo sive in fatis est te resurgere, sive in fatis est te non resurgere, frustra accersis medicum; 73, 74. It is to be observed, that what our Lord here calls αεργον ρημα is called by Paul κενoi λογoi, when describing the vain and sophistical arguments of the impostors; Ephes. v. 6. They were κενoi, because they had the empty appearance without the solidity of

*tical argument* or a *false syllogism*, contrived for the purpose of evasion. Our Lord by the use of this phrase immediately refers to the above subterfuge of the Pharisees. But he appears to have also an eye to those *barbarous subtleties, equivocal language, evasive constructions, and mystic interpretations*, to which, he foresaw, some of the men before him would have recourse in support of their heresies. And to their being advocates for opinions, which they believed in their hearts to be false he alludes, when saying they shall be acquitted or condemned *by their own words*; that is, they shall be tried upon no other principles than those, which themselves allow to be true respecting Christ.

The men, that had this dialogue with our Lord, composed in after-times the followers of Cerinthus, who seems to have been a principal and successful agent in seducing the Jewish people into the errors of Simon Magus. As his followers they maintained,

truth, ψευδὸς γὰρ ἐστὶ, καὶ οὐκ ἀληθὴς, ἀλλὰ φαίνομενον εἶκος, καὶ ἐν οὐδεμίᾳ τέχνῃ This is a good description of ἀργὸν ῥήμα Aris. De Rhetor. Lib. ii. Cap. 20. Ad finem. Chrysostom defines it thus: ἡ λέγουσιν δὲ, τὸ μὴ κατὰ πραγμάτων κείμενον, τὸ ψευδὲς, τὸ συκοφαντικὸν ἔχον, ἐστὶ. The poet Aeschylus expresses the same idea by ματαιὰ ῥήματα.

that the Christ was a God though resident in the man Jesus yet distinct from him; that the latter did not rise from the dead; that the Jewish prophets did not predict the sufferings of the Messiah, and that the holy city would not be destroyed. Now the Saviour, in reply to a request they presented him on this occasion, places before them the truth of those events in a language then indeed unintelligible, but sufficiently clear after they had come to pass: and he holds up too one of the prophets as bearing in his history a symbolical and prophetic reference to his own mission and character: “But he answered, a wicked and ungodly race\* seeketh a sign: but no sign shall be given it, except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For as Jonah was in the belly of the

\* The Jews, whom our Saviour addressed, were even then infected with idolatrous notions. For this reason he calls them *γενεα πονηρα και μοιχαλις*, a *depraved and idolatrous race*. After their pretended conversion to christianity they espoused the worship of the *serpent*, and on this account received the title of *Ophitæ*. The anticipation of this circumstance led the Saviour to characterise them on this occasion as *offspring of tipers* (*γεννηματα εχιδων*) that is, children not of Abraham, as they pretended to be, but of a divinity which opposed itself to the God of Abraham: Compare with this what the Baptist said to this very people; Chap. iii. 7—10. and also what Jesus told them; John viii. 39—45. The ancient writers understood our Lord in this light; and they are supported by the authority of Grotius.

fish three days and three nights; so also will **THE SON OF MAN** be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Men of Nineveh will rise up in the place of judgment with this race of men, and will condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold one greater than Jonah is here ;” 39—42.

The chief objection, which the learned in Judea as well as in other countries had to the divine mission of Jesus, was his being uneducated in the school of human wisdom. To supply the want of philosophic learning which so obviously distinguished his doctrine, such of the reputed wise as embraced it had recourse to the pagan systems, whose jarring tenets and profane mysteries they borrowed and imported into the christian church.

The guilt they incurred in shutting their eyes against the supernatural light displayed in the discourses of Jesus—in forsaking the ever-living oracles of God—in overlooking these sublime lessons respecting the supreme Being and moral duty, which are supplied by the divine philosophy of Moses, by the inspiration of the prophets and the wis-



dom of Solomon, and in substituting in their room the vain fictions of men, seems to be the circumstance which led our Lord, in the next place, thus to remark: "The queen of the south will rise up in the place of judgment with this generation, and will condemn it: for she came from the extremities of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon: and behold one greater than Solomon is here;" 42.

He next glances at the practice, which the impostors before him in common with their Gnostic brethren would adopt, of veiling the light of the gospel with mysteries; and by a simple but impressive comparison he exposes the absurdity of withholding from the people a doctrine, the knowledge of which was intended to enlighten and reform them. "No one, 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;" Luke xi. 33. Here, too, seems to be an anticipation of the custom, adopted by the impostors, of removing the lights when met to celebrate their nocturnal orgies. He then reminds them, that the true origin of this base practice was their having *evil eyes*, that

is, *evil desires*\*; that when the desires of the heart are pure, the actions of the body are not concealed from the light of day; that if they be impure, they necessarily seek gratification under the covert of darkness; Luke xi. 34—37.

The Jewish people in general, there is

\* The light of the body is the eye, therefore when thine eye is single thy whole body is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness." That is, "Reason is a light within thee; as long as this remains unperverted by base desires, thy words and actions will be ever open and ingenuous, courting rather than avoiding the eyes of men; but when it is become depraved by vicious passions, it ceases then to throw its lustre around thee, and thou seekest to screen thy conduct and principles from the public view by darkness, duplicity and mystery. Our Lord in this place signifies by *οφθαλμος*, not only the principle of reason, but also that passion of lust or of avarice, which is excited in the mind when the corresponding object presents itself through the medium of this organ. In confirmation of this read the following examples: "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." And if thy RIGHT EYE offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee;" Mat. v. 28, 29.—Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.—The light of the body is the eye.—Ye cannot serve God and mammon;" vi. 21—25. Here it is obvious that to have a *single eye* is synonymous with having a heart free from the love of money, and that to have an *evil eye* means the same thing with serving *mammon*, or with being avaricious. The exact meaning of the Saviour then, is that if they should be free from lust and avarice, they would not, as his pretended disciples have recourse to the practice of concealing the truths of the gospel under mystical representations, or of putting out the lights in their nocturnal assemblies.

reason to believe, were become in the times of our Lord, unusually degenerate. But the degeneracy which characterised the higher orders, was, beyond comparison, more flagrant and notorious than that of their inferior neighbours. Actuated by avarice, pride, luxury, and lust, they sought to conceal their vices under the veil of superior sanctity; and, in proportion as they neglected the cultivation of genuine morality, they affected a greater zeal for the external ordinances of religion. For this reason it was, that when the preacher of righteousness proclaimed the kingdom of heaven in the wilderness of Judea, after baptising the people on confessing their sins, he addressed the Pharisees in language of severe reprobation, and reminded them of the necessity of *reformation* as well as repentance, of a thorough change in *their conduct* no less than in their principles in order to avoid the coming evil. When Nicodemus came to Jesus, he candidly confessed, that he and his brethren (for he speaks in the name of the Pharisees) to whatever artifices they had recourse for evading his claims, yet in their hearts were convinced that the author of such miracles must have come from God. In reply to this our divine Master, well knowing the evil propensities and inveterate

habits of those men, assures the Jewish teacher, in positive and solemn language, that unless *they were born again*, that is, unless they underwent a complete renovation both in principle and in conduct, they should not even *see*, much less should they enter into the kingdom of God.

This awful admonition, though repeated in different forms and on different occasions, did not produce the desired reformation. Their divine Instructor, indeed, who knew what was in man, was well aware, that those unhappy sons of darkness had cherished habits too inveterate to be regenerated, however they might assent to the truth or assume the name of his religion. It became him therefore, as a teacher sent from God, to describe before their face, and expose to the world, the enormities of those Scribes and Pharisees, who would embrace his gospel without exhibiting in their tempers and conduct the happy fruits of it: and thus hold them up as examples to all ages and countries to prove, that the christian lawgiver regarded with abhorrence, and rejected with indignation, all those, however distinguished by rank or fortune, who, under a pretended zeal for the

glory of God cherished dispositions, incompatible with the happiness of men. And this is what he has done on the present occasion. Being now surrounded by numbers of the Pharisees and lawyers, he arraigns them as guilty of hypocrisy, extortion, and avarice ; of being zealous for external ablutions while they neglected internal purity ; of their being punctual in performing trifling forms of the law, when at the same time they omitted the great duties of love towards God and justice to men. After this, he turns to his own disciples, and delivers to them a series of admonitions, calculated to secure them from the principles and vices of the Gnostic impostors. In the first place, he cautions them against the *insidious insincerity* of the men whose vices he had been exposing :—" Whilst an innumerable multitude was gathered together so that they trod upon each other, Jesus began to say unto his disciples : Above all things beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy ;" Luke chap. xii. 1. As though he had said : " These men, whom I have now arraigned, finding themselves unable by open violence to destroy you and your cause, will have recourse to artful means in order

the more effectually to answer this end. They will, therefore, pretend to become your friends, rank themselves with you as my followers, and affect to feel concern for the interests of my religion. But be upon your guard against their treacherous arts. The sole object of their pretended conversion will be, under the mask of friendship, to gain your confidence, and then betray you to your open enemies; or to seduce you into vice and error, and thus bring disgrace on your character and profession; or to make your generosity and simplicity the instruments of gratifying their own avarice\*." Jesus then assures his faithful fol-

\* The representation here given is confirmed in a remarkable manner by Philo. In the beautiful and eloquent apology which he published in behalf of the followers of Jesus in Judea, he thus describes their sufferings: "Many powerful men, distinguished by natural and acquired endowments, rise up at seasons in their own country in opposition to them. Some of these being eager to surpass the untameable fierceness of wild beasts, omit nothing that may gratify their cruelty, and cease not to sacrifice whole flocks of those within their power, or like butchers to tear in pieces while yet living their limbs and members; until themselves are brought into the same calamities by that justice which inspects the affairs of men. Others (of these persecutors) cause their snarling fury to assume a different form. Indulging a spirit of unrelenting asperity, they nevertheless address (their victims) with *gentleness*, display their intolerant temper in their *affected mildness of speech*, resembling those

lowers that the measures, which the Pharisees would adopt to answer these base ends, however artfully contrived or secretly conducted, would be brought to light and defeated:—"There is nothing covered up that will not be uncovered, and hid that will not be known;" ver. 2. After this, he commands them not to follow the example of their false brethren in making their doctrines mysterious or in keeping the knowledge of them from the people\*, but

dogs which fawn when going to inflict envenomed wounds. Thus they become the cause of irremediable evils, leaving behind them throughout whole communities, monuments of their impiety and hatred to men, in the ever memorable calamities of the sufferers;" p. 878. Par. edition.

\* I shall here lay down what Irenæus says of the followers of Basilides, in respect to the practices of concealing their doctrines from others. "As the Son, say they, was unknown to all, so it is fit that they should be known by none, but that, while themselves should know all and pass through all, they should be invisible and unknown to all. Do thou, (inculcate they), know all, but let no body know thee. Therefore they are always prepared to deny what they are: nor are they indeed able to suffer for the (christian) name, while they assimilate themselves to every description of men. The multitude (they pretend) are not capable to comprehend their mysteries, excepting *one* in a thousand or *two* in myriads: they ought therefore by all means not to *divulge* them, but to keep them in secrecy and silence;" p. 99. For which reason this impostor required of his followers the trial of five years before he regarded them as his legitimate disciples. This was a circum-

always to make known to others whatever discussions they might have in private ; to have no secrets, to use no equivocal language but to speak as they thought on every subject : “ Therefore, whatsoever ye have said in darkness shall be heard in the light, and whatever ye have whispered in the closet shall be published aloud on the house-tops \*.

stance which did not escape the notice of the Evangelical writers. And in order to impress upon their readers a strong sense of the contrast which his conduct, in this respect, exhibited to the Samaritan deceivers, they represent their divine Master as receiving the chosen disciples into his confidence and friendship without any loss of time :—“ And, as he was walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea ; for they were fishers : And he saith unto them, Come with me, and I will make you fishers of men, and IMMEDIATELY they left the nets and went with him : And going forward thence, he saw two other brethren, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother.—And he called them : and IMMEDIATELY they left the vessel and their father, and went with him ; Mat. iv. 18—23. Mark in relating this incident uses the adverb (εὐθὺς) *immediately* three times, and he makes the opposition between Jesus and the impostors more pointed by saying that *he called them immediately* ; i. 20.

It is remarkable that Luke represents the Saviour as choosing his disciples *in the day time*, on the top of a *hill* in the *presence* of the multitude, and from the number of *those around him* : And all these particulars he has stated in so transient and indirect a manner as to seem to an inattentive reader to mean nothing by them ; vi. 12—14.

\* The Apostles complied with scrupulous fidelity to this



In the next place, he glances at the timidity of the false believers in refusing to suffer for the sake of their Master: And he assures his sincere disciples, that they alone, who had the virtue to act a different part, were regarded by him as his friends:—

“And I say unto you WHO ARE MY FRIENDS fear not them that kill the body, and after this can do no more;” &c.

4. A principal argument, which the impostor used to prove the supposed impotence or malevolence, of Jehovah, was that he refused, or that he was unable to avert the sufferings of those who were devoted to him as the supreme God. This specious blasphemy, our Saviour in the next step repels by insinuating, that God exercised a providential care over those who feared him; and that their hardships would not pass

important injunction of their upright Lord. Hence Irenæus thus speaks with justice and truth of their conduct: “The doctrine of the Apostles was open and decisive and in no respect disguised,—They did not represent things one way in private, another way in public.—He then adds respecting the impostors with whom he is here contrasting the Apostolic teachers: *Hoc enim fictorum (fingentium), et prave seducentium, et hypocritarum est molimen. Hi enim ad multitudinem—inferunt sermones, per quos capiunt simplices, et illiciunt eos,* &c. p. 237.

unrewarded : “ Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? Yet even one of these is not forgotten before God ; but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore ; ye are better than many sparrows ;” 6—8. As the Gnostic believers did not scruple, when apprehended or accused of being *christians*, to deny Christ, Jesus subjoins a solemn assurance, that such persons would not be acknowledged by him, in the presence of the angels of God ; 8—10. After which he adverts to their custom of rejecting the man Jesus, while they affected to acknowledge the Christ resident in him ; and of blaspheming the Holy Spirit which corroborated the truth of the Apostolic declaration, that the Son of man rose from the dead and ascended to heaven !

He next enjoins upon them not to premeditate, as was done by the impostors, what apologies they should offer for themselves when arrested by the hand of violence, and brought before synagogues, and rulers, and magistrates ; 11—13. The Creator of the world, being, according to the deceivers, evil and impotent, was both unable and unwilling to exercise a kind providence over the works of his hands. This animating

doctrine which of course was rejected by the Gnostics, our Lord, (after a short digression occasioned by one of his hearers 13—22. soliciting his interference) here took an opportunity to enforce and illustrate: And this he does in a language inimitably simple and eloquent; 22—32.

Those of the Pharisees, who favoured the doctrines of Cerinthus and Simon, declined to evince the sincerity of their profession by dispensing with their substance for the use of the poor. On the contrary, their great object was to acquire riches as the principal means of entering unto that temporal kingdom of which they were in expectation. Our Lord, in the next place warns his true followers, for whom, few and humble as they were, the kingdom would be given, against acting in a similar manner; 32—35. It has already been shewn, that the wicked servant who began to beat his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, primarily applied, meant the Samaritan impostor, and that the *foolish virgins* designated those among the Jews who espoused his system. The truth of that representation is confirmed by what follows in the narrative of Luke:

For according to this historian, our Saviour, when now instructing his true disciples in reference to the deceivers, cautions them against that servant and his followers. And what is remarkable he places in a prominent light the apostle Peter, the successful antagonist of Simon Magus ; 35—49.

Let us now return to the Acts of the Apostles. One passage more invites our attention, and we shall then close this volume : “ And now behold ! I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there ; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying : that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself ; so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now behold ! I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men : For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the council of God. Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the

flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his blood. For I know this that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, watch and remember that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now brethren, I recommend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them, which are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel. Yea, you yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewn you all things; how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus; how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive;" chap. xx. 22—36.

In this pathetic and interesting passage, it is clearly asserted by the Apostle, that impostors would come and infest the church

after his departure. The description, which he gives of them, leaves us no room to doubt who they were. They are said to be *wolves* that would not spare the flock. This is the very language, which our Lord has used respecting Simon Magus and his followers. See Mat. vii. John x. We may infer, therefore, that these were the persons here meant by Paul : And this inference is corroborated by the author of the Recognitions, who informs us that Simon, after his defeat by the Apostle Peter, went to, and spent some time at Antioch. And if we examine the words of Paul with attention, we shall find that they are levelled against the principles and the practices of the Samaritan impostors and his disciples :—

1. He bears his testimony to the man Jesus as the Lord, who claimed his obedience and that of all others professing his religion ; ver. 24.

2. Secondly, He describes the doctrine, which he preached, as being a *gospel of the grace of God*, that is, a doctrine, which God revealed through Christ, containing the glad tidings of salvation to mankind, and not a fiction of human invention, having

no other object in view, than the interest of those who preached it; a doctrine that held out the gift of eternal life, on the sole condition of repentance and reformation, without the necessity of complying with burdensome rites and ceremonies; ver. 24, 32.

3. The Apostle preached *the kingdom of God*, that is, he inculcated in opposition to the deceivers, that God governs the world; that he will vindicate his moral attributes by the future distribution of rewards and punishments, and that the kingdom, which he is to establish on the earth by means of Christ, is not carnal or temporal, as the Pharisaical converts supposed, but consists in the universal prevalence of truth, virtue, and happiness; ver. 25.

4. The guilt of those among the vulgar who favoured the Gnostic heresies, lay, for the most part, at the door of their teachers, who concealed the gospel by throwing over its doctrines the air of incomprehensible mystery, and who tempted them to act contrary to its precepts by their own examples and exhortations. With their conduct in this respect Paul here contrasts his own behaviour during his stay at Antioch. “Where-

fore I declare unto you this very day, that I am pure from the blood of you all; for I forbore not to tell you the whole will of God;" 26, 27.

The first heretics belonged to no christian society. Such were their crimes, indeed, that they could not remain long in the same situation, without being detected and expelled. They, therefore, roved like vagabonds from place to place, actuated by the fear of punishment where they were known, and by the hope of successful deception in places where they were not known. In opposition to the character which they thus sustained, the faithful believers are, in the writings of the Apostles and of succeeding ecclesiastical authors, stiled *the church of God*, that is, an assembly of people separated from the vices and bad practices of the world, and devoted to the cultivation of those divine, social, and personal virtues, which rendered them the sons of God, and the fit heirs of immortality. \*

\* The apostle Paul uses the phrase *church of God*, eleven times, if not more, in his epistles; and where the use of it occurs, it means, in most instances, a body of people sanctified to God by the exercise of faith and virtue, and that in opposition to those men, who, like beasts of prey, went about to destroy and scatter the flock of Christ. Irenæus, Tertullian, Epiphanius, and other early writers, characterise the catholic believers by the



Our Apostle adds, that he (meaning Jesus) secured, hedged or fenced this church

term *church* or the *church of God*, and that in opposition to the Gnostic heretics. It would be an endless task to illustrate the truth of this assertion by examples. One passage of Origen, however, as it coincides with the description I have given above, of the church of God, shall here be subjoined: "And God," says he, "who sent Jesus, having defeated all the artifices of demons, has so ordered it, that the gospel of Jesus should prevail every where for reforming mankind; and that there should be every where teachers governed by laws different from the churches of superstitious, intemperate, and unrighteous men: For such are the manners of most of those who belong to the churches of the cities. But the *churches of God* instructed by Christ, compared with the churches of the people among whom they live, are as lights in the world; Mat. v. 14. Phil. ii. 15. And who is there, who must not acknowledge, that the worst of those, who are in the *church*, and are inferior to the rest, are better than most of those who are in the churches of the people. For instance, the *church of God* at Athens is quiet, mild, and well-behaved, being desirous to approve itself to God who is over all. But the church of the Athenians is turbulent, and by no means comparable to the *church of God* there. The same, you must also acknowledge of the *church of God* at Corinth, and the church of the people of the Corinthians; as you must also allow of the *church of God* at Alexandria, and the church of the people of the Alexandrians. Every one who is candid, and diligently attends to those things with a mind open to conviction, will admire him who formed this design and has accomplished it that there should be every where churches of God, dwelling together with the churches of the people in every city. And if you will observe the senate of the church of God, and the senate in every city, you will find some senators of the *church*, worthy to govern in the city of God, all over the world, if there were such a thing. And on the other hand, you will find, that the senators of the cities have nothing in their behaviour to render them worthy of the distinction allotted them. And if you

with *his blood* \*: By which are inculcated these three propositions : namely, that

should compare the presidents of the *churches of God*, with the presidents of the people in the cities, you will find the senators and governors of the churches, though some may be inferior to others who are more perfect ; nevertheless, you will find them to excel in virtue the senators and governors of the cities." This charming passage, charming because it contains a delightful and important truth, I have given in the words of Lardner, vol. viii. p. 49, 50. It is taken from the book against Celsus, p. 128, 129. No writer among the ancients has borne a more decisive, a more eloquent testimony to that reformation in the morals of men, otherwise irremediably diseased by inveterate depravities, which was effected by the Son of God, than is done by the immortal Philo. In a fragment of his preserved by *John Damascene*, he thus speaks of the church of God, Βουλῆθεις ὁ Θεὸς τῆς Θείας ἀρετῆς ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ καταπερῆσαι τὴν εἰκόνα εἰς τὴν γῆν, δι' ἐλεῶν τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν, ἵνα μὴ ἀτυχήσῃ ἀμεινονος ἀμοιβῆς\* καὶ ἀπολουσαμενὸν τὰ καταρυσπαινόντα τὸν ἀθλιὸν καὶ δυσκλείας γεμοντα βίον, That is, *The God of divine virtue decreed to send down from heaven his Image (his Logos) to the earth, that in mercy on our race we might be raised to a better state ; which (Logos) hath washed the pollutions of a life (that is, the life of those who formed the members of his church) miserably depraved (previously to their conversion) and laden with infamy.*

\* The original word is περιεποισατο, which, literally taken, signifies to cause one thing to surround another ; such as to make a hedge round a field, a wall round a town, or a furrow round a piece of land marked out for building. Hence it signifies to procure, to appropriate, to fence, to protect. The allusion, under which the term is here used by the apostle, is borrowed from the custom of drawing a furrow about those spots of land, which were destined for religious and other distinguished edifices. The ground upon which holy men assembled for the purpose of devoting themselves to God, was inclosed, it seems, on every side by, the blood of Jesus.

Christ was not (*αρουμων*) or *without flesh and blood*, which some of the impostors represented him to be, as being a man only in appearance ; that in order, as it were, to lay the foundation, to consecrate the ground, to form the cement, to fence around the church of God, Jesus did in reality shed his own blood, that is, he suffered and died in fact as well as in appearance ; that the death of Christ formed the great line of distinction between the true and the false believers, between those who in truth were his disciples, and those who were so only in name. The former, like an innocent peaceful flock, are inclosed on every side within its benign circumference, the latter excluded and kept without, like rapacious beasts, seeking to break down the barrier of their faith, and to seize the unsuspecting victims of their fraud and violence.

Finally, To the covetous and rapacious dispositions of those men, and to their custom of living on those fruits, which their fraud and extortion wrung from their mistaken and abused followers, the great Apostle of the Gentiles thus gloriously opposed his own behaviour: “ I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel : Yea, you

yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessities and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring, ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive."

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## APPENDIX.

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NOTE OPPOSITE PAGE 294.

**S**SOME Commentators have asserted with unqualified confidence, that the true reading of John iii. 25. is *Ιουδαίου τινος*, instead of *μετα Ιουδαίων*, as it is written in the comm on text. A regard to the authority of those critics induced me to adopt their opinion, and to erect upon it a supposition which I now retract as false, that the *certain Jew*, there mentioned, was *Dositheus*. I am glad, however, to have this opportunity to acknowledge my error, and to demonstrate the truth and propriety of the vulgar reading. In various places it is, I trust, satisfactorily proved, that the Pharisees, from motives of envy and malice towards our Lord, joined with the disciples of John, and that, when they were deprived, on the death of the latter, of every pretence for adhering to him as the Messiah, they adopted the scheme of Simon Magus, and other Samaritans who classed with the followers of the Baptist. This feature in the character of the Pharisaical teachers was anticipated by the inspiration of Jesus, who in his conversation with Nicodemus has levelled his language in the most pointed manner against the wild theory they would espouse, and the base conduct they would pursue as his pretended followers. Now the evangelist John, after having related the circumstances of the interview between his Lord and the Jewish teacher, and thus refuted by the highest authority the sentiments of the Gnostic impostors, proceeds to state the unnatural coalition that subsisted between the Pharisees and the disciples of John, as the advocates of the

Samaritan system. *And there was an enquiry made by the disciples of John, with the Jews, concerning purification, That is, The disciples of John, accompanied with certain men who were Jews, went to him in order to know, whether his baptism or that of Jesus was to be regarded as the baptism of the Messiah.*

The disciples, who made this enquiry of their Master, were, it is natural to suppose, the leading disciples, and these were no other than *Dositheus and Simon Magus*. Hence appears the propriety of the Evangelist describing the Pharisees who joined with the Baptist's disciples as *Jews*, in opposition to the latter who were *Samaritans*. Hence too we perceive, that John, in reply to the question proposed to him, was called, as being a faithful witness to the truth, to direct his words in part against the Samaritan deceivers. If any of my readers be disposed to question the justice of the interpretation, which I have put upon his words, let him attend to the following queries: Did John receive his commission from heaven or from the earth? Or did he teach a doctrine which was inspired by the wisdom of God, or suggested by the prejudices of men? Jesus himself has solved these questions. See Mat. xi. 9. *xxi. 25.* John v. 33. The Baptist then could not have meant *himself* when he thus speaks: *He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth*; John iii. 31. Again, was it with himself or with some self-commissioned teachers, who propagated sentiments of human origin, that he thus contrasts the doctrines inculcated by the Son of God. *He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God?* 34. Moreover, the Baptist in the next verses represent Jesus to be the Son of the Universal Father and the person, through whom eternal life is to be attained. Is not this representation levelled at the pretensions of the Samaritan impostors, who inculcated that the Christ was not the Son of the Creator but a God superior to him, and that eternal life was to be conferred by them? This testimony which the Baptist bore against the Samaritan imposture compelled his apostate disciples after his death to acknowledge, that he did not countenance their peculiar sentiments. They solicited, indeed, his concurrence; but as his love of truth did not permit him, even for his own advan-

tage, to sanction falsehoods, they vilified him as the man of an evil divinity, unacquainted with the new and Supreme God, *Ἀθέωτος Δημιουργοῦ ἀγνοῶν τὴν καὶνὴν Θεότητα*. Finally, that the Baptist had his views fixed on the Samaritan impostors may be presumed from the conduct of the evangelist John. For the latter, after stating the testimony of the former, proceeds to illustrate the divine inspiration of his Master, and thus to bear down the claims of his impious antagonists.

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NOTE OPPOSITE PAGE 494.

Much has been written by modern divines on the subject of *baptism*. And yet the principal reason, why the apostolic teachers enjoined this ceremony on those who embraced the faith, seems to have escaped their attention. The first preachers of christianity required this rite of the initiated as the means of declaring to the world, that they received the christian doctrine, and received it too as taught by Christ and his apostles, and not as it was modified by the Samaritan or [Egyptian] impostors. This assertion might be confirmed by a variety of passages in the New Testament and other ancient writings; and these it serves in return to explain and illustrate. One passage of this kind I shall here produce: "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit;" Mat. xxviii. 19. The meaning of which injunction is simply this: Go, and preach the gospel to all nations, to all descriptions of men without any distinction. Teach them to believe in my *Father* as the *supreme God*; in *me* as his *Son*; in the *Holy Spirit* as a power given you to work miracles in attestation of my resurrection and ascension. Let these be the fundamental principles of the gospel which you preach; and encourage those, who shall embrace it, to make an open avowal of their faith by being publicly baptised. Now, if this were the real meaning of our Lord, it is manifest that his words are levelled against the Gnostic system. For that system inculcated, that a God existed superior to the Creator of the world; that the Christ was not the Son of the latter, but a God surpassing him in power and beneficence; and, finally, it blasphemed the Holy Spirit which evinced the resurrection

and exaltation of the man Jesus. In confirmation of the above interpretation, let it farther be remarked that the anti-apostolic teachers understood the language of Christ, as directed against their peculiar tenets.

My evidence for this assertion is the following: Those of the impostors, who classed themselves under the denomination of *Cainists* or *Ophites*, rejected and vilified the ceremony of baptism as administered by the Apostles in compliance with the command of their Master. This is attested by Tertullian in his treatise *De Baptismo*; p. 224; by Jerome in his Epistle to *Oceanus*, and by Irenæus; p. 91; Others of the Gnostic teachers, however, administered to their followers the rite of baptism, and connected with it a formulary of faith, which, in their turn they levelled against the Apostolic doctrine. That formulary Irenæus thus records—Οἱ δὲ ἀγοῦσι ἐφ' ἕδαρες, καὶ βαπτίζοντες ὑτῶς ἐπιλεγοῦσιν, εἰς ὄνομα ἀγνώστου πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων, εἰς Ἀληθεῖαν μητέρα πάντων, εἰς τὸν κατελθόντα εἰς Ἰησοῦν; *They lead (the disciple) to the water, and on baptising (plunging) [him, they thus say—into the name of the unknown Father of all; into truth mother of all; into (the God) which came down on Jesus;* p. 91. Here you see, that for the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the Son of God, and for the Holy Spirit, are respectively substituted the unknown God of Simon Magus, the fictitious divinity called *Alethia*, and the God said to have come down on the man Jesus at his baptism. The reference, which this formulary bears to that dictated by the Saviour, is too obvious to be denied: and as the deceivers used theirs in opposition to the Apostles, so we may reasonably conclude, that they understood that of the Apostolic teachers as used in opposition to their own.



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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**T**HE Publication of the First Volume has been delayed for the following reason: From a careful perusal of its contents, the Author became sensible, that the Argument was not pursued to an extent sufficient to engage the attention, much less to convince the judgment of enquiring men.

This deficiency he has endeavoured to supply, by preparing a Second Volume to be published with it. The subject, it is to be feared, still lies within a compass too narrow for the public to form a very decisive opinion. It was indeed the design of the Writer when beginning the last impression to comprise in it all that related to his argument within the New Testament. But this he found impracticable, since materials, and those very important ones, opened to his views as he advanced; and he found himself under the necessity of closing with the Acts of the Apostles. His inability to proceed any farther will, it is apprehended, leave the reader in doubt as to the truth of some facts stated in the First Volume. With those facts the Epistle to the Romans has an intimate connection; and he hopes that when analysed it will remove all hesitation to receive them as true. This circum-

stance will serve to render the Third Volume more important than the Second, though nothing can exceed in importance the materials contained in this if indeed they be founded in truth.

As the Epistles abound with matter that affects his subject, the Author intends giving a regular and complete analysis of each in order. The latitude of his scheme, therefore, renders Two Volumes more necessary to finish his explanation of the New Testament. The work thus far finished will be complete; and it will secure the Subscribers from disappointment or loss, should it be carried to no greater extent. His intention, however, is without delay to proceed in his enquiry into the writings of those, who, whether the friends or the foes of the Christian Doctrine, flourished in the first two centuries. The result of his enquiries, he fondly hopes, will be a general conviction, that the wisdom of Providence has so over-ruled the events of ancient times, as to furnish, and to keep in reserve, for this and future ages, evidences, hitherto undiscovered, in favour of the Divine Mission of Jesus Christ, which in the end shall render his gospel an universal rule of faith and practice in the world. Every competent judge, indeed, on the subject of christianity, will readily allow, that it comes recommended to the reception of mankind by a body of arguments, which infidels can never refute and which they in vain attack: Yet it must at the same time be admitted, that something nevertheless is wanting to ensure it a complete success over superstitious notions on one hand, and sceptical depravities on the other. And is it too much to presume that, if christianity has originated in the wisdom, and was formerly supported in a special man-

ner by the power of heaven, such a deficiency, resulting, as it is, from the constitution of man and the present situation of society, shall finally be supplied. The investigation, which the Writer of these Volumes has already made, inspires him with the hope, that treasures, though yet unknown, really exist adequate to answer this desirable end. And he doubts not that, if the Facts developed by him be founded in truth, he will meet with encouragement, at least from the rational friends of truth and virtue, in a cause so novel honourable and useful. The prosecution of a project like this is impracticable without such encouragement. The difficulty of obtaining books, the expence of publication, and the necessary abstraction from almost all other engagements, place it beyond the reach of any person, however able and industrious, who does not possess time and property at his command. The progress of this work, therefore, will entirely depend upon the assistance which its Author receives from the public. In case of a favourable reception the Volumes shall rapidly succeed each other. Any person may, at pleasure, withdraw his name from the list of subscribers: and as the work must comprehend in its progress topics unconnected, the value of the preceding Volumes will not necessarily depend on those that follow. There is one thing more to be noticed:—The learned reader will perceive with regret the page often defaced by typographical errors. Errors, circumstanced as the writer was, could not well be avoided. The greatest part of the materials, contained in the latter part of the first, and in the whole of the Second Volume, were collected and arranged the last summer. The sheets passed successively from under the pen to the printing-office—That office was in a distant place, and the proof-sheets were corrected, for the most part, in those hours when

the attention of the corrector was engaged in the instruction of youth. He hopes that these inconveniences will in future be removed, and that the succeeding Volumes will be free from many faults and inaccuracies, that tarnish those which are now offered to the attention and candour of the public.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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