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THE
HISTORY

OF OUR
BLESSED LORD AND SAVIOUR
JESUS CHRIST :

WITH

*The Lives of the Holy Apostles, and their Successors
for three hundred years after the crucifixion.*

BY THOMPSON AND PRICE.



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BLESSED LORD AND SAVIOUR

JESUS CHRIST:

WITH THE

LIVES OF THE HOLY APOSTLES,

AND THEIR SUCCESSORS FOR THREE HUNDRED YEARS
AFTER THE CRUCIFIXION.

BY EBENEZER THOMPSON, D. D. AND WILLIAM C. PRICE, L. L. D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE COMPLETE
H I S T O R Y
OF THE
L I F E A N D D E A T H
OF OUR
BLESSED SAVIOUR ;
WITH THE
LIVES, TRANSACTIONS, AND SUFFERINGS OF
HIS HOLY APOSTLES.

CHAP. XXXI.

Upon the conclusion of the feast of dedication, Jesus returns into Galilee, followed by a great concourse of people. Jesus declares divorce to be unlawful; and mentions why it was permitted by Moses. His explanation of what he had said. Our Saviour receives, and blesses little infants. He replies to a young man, who enquired the way to eternal life. Riches an obstruction in the pursuit of happiness. Jesus promises to reward his apostles. A similitude of a man hiring people to labor in his vineyard. Lazarus of Bethany is seized with a violent illness, and Jesus informed of that event. He informs his disciples that Lazarus is dead. Jesus repairs to Bethany, where he is met by Martha, Mary, and a number of the Jews. Our Saviour weeps. The resurrection of Lazarus. A consultation in the Sanhedrim. The prophetic

opinion of Caiaphas the high priest. The Sanhedrim resolve to put Jesus to death; in consequence of which, he retires towards the wilderness of Jericho.

THE feast of dedication being concluded, our blessed Saviour departed from Jerusalem, and repaired into Galilee, where, however, he remained but a short time, on account of the country being still under the government of Herod. Our Lord directed his course towards the confines of Judea, passing through that part of the country, situated near the banks of the river Jordan; and in the beginning of the fourth year of his ministry, he took up his residence at the place where John first baptized penitents.

While he remained at this place, vast numbers of people resorted to Jesus, who continued to instruct the people in the laws of the kingdom of heaven, and to relieve all the sick that were presented to him. Several of the inhabitants of that part of the country where Jesus now resided, had seen John perform the ceremony of baptism, and heard his discourses; and they acknowledged, that many of his predictions concerning Jesus had been fulfilled.

Several of the Pharisees knowing that Jesus had declared himself an enemy to divorce, which was at that time very frequent among the Jews, and being desirous of extorting from him some reply that they could use as the means of inflaming the enmity of the people against him, they proposed to him the following question; Is it lawful for men to repudiate their wives on slight occasions? Hereupon our Lord said, they were not ignorant that God created one of each sex, and transmitted to their posterity a law purporting, that, as the two persons were formed out of one sub-

stance, husband and wife ought to live together in a state of the strictest union : therefore, those whom God had so nearly allied, could not be separated without a violation of the original law. He also said, that they were guilty of sin, who declared that it was lawful for a man to be divorced from his wife.

The Pharisees now observed, that it was, according to Moses, lawful for a man to part from his wife, provided he gave her a certificate of the divorce. Hereupon our Lord said, that though, on account of their insatiable lusts, and the hardness of their hearts, Moses had permitted them to put away their wives ; yet arbitrary and unlimited divorces, were contrary to the original institution of God ; as they were not permitted in the state of innocence, so he positively prohibited them under the gospel dispensation. “ The Pharisees also
“ came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him,
“ Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every
“ cause ? And he answered and said unto them, Have
“ ye not read, that he which made them at the begin-
“ ning, made them male and female ? And said, For
“ this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and
“ shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one
“ flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one
“ flesh. What therefore God hath joined together,
“ let no man put asunder. They say unto him, Why
“ did Moses then command to give a writing of di-
“ vorcement, and to put her away ? He saith unto
“ them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts,
“ suffered you to put away your wives : but from the
“ beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Who-
“ soever shall put away his wife, except it be for for-
“ nication, and shall marry another, committeth adul-
“ tery : and whoso marieth her which is put away,
“ doth commit adultery.” Matt. xix. 3, &c.

Though our Saviour had twice before made a pub-

lic declaration of his sentiments on the subject of divorcements, yet they were surprised at their master's decision. They remained silent, however, because the Pharisees were present ; but upon the return of Jesus to his place of habitation, they requested that he would inform them of the reasons on which he had founded his determination. “ And in the house, his
“ disciples asked him again of the same matter ;
“ and he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away
“ his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery a-
“ gainst her. And if a woman shall put away her hus-
“ band and be married to another, she committeth
“ adultery.” Mark. x. 10, &c.

The apostles, who had been educated in the principles of Judaism, observed to Jesus, that from the decision he had pronounced, they * conceived a state of celibacy to be more eligible than that of marriage. Upon this, our Lord reminded them, that without the especial assistance of the Almighty, it was not in the power of every man to preserve his chastity in a single state ; and that marriage was therefore necessary, it being the most effectual means of restraining inordinate desire. He added, that men whose passions were so temperate as to permit them to preserve their chastity in a state of celibacy, were, at their own discretion, either to contract matrimony, or remain single.

Divorcements were common among the Jews ; and they were found greatly to promote family dissensions, and to be an impediment to the proper education of children ; and therefore, our Saviour's prohibition tended to promote the welfare of society.

* From this inference, the prohibition appears to extend to polygamy, since they might have had a remedy in marrying more than one woman.

The innumerable cures that Jesus had performed in divers places, inspired the people with an opinion, that he had the power of preventing, as well as of removing bodily afflictions; and therefore they brought their children to him, requesting that he would lay his hands on, and bless them. The apostles, conceiving that the people were giving their Master unnecessary trouble, rebuked, and ordered them to depart: but Christ repeated to them an admonition, to which they had not paid due attention. Do not prevent, said our Lord, these little children from being brought to me: and I am now to recal to your recollection, that those men only, who in their dispositions resemble the innocence and simplicity of these babes, shall be permitted to enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of heaven. “And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.— But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.” Mark x. 13, &c.

Our Saviour now proceeded by the way of Jericho towards Jerusalem. On his journey he was accosted by a young man who was of a noble family, and one of the members of the Sanhedrim, and who kneeling before him, applied to him the epithet of good Master, and enquired of him, what means he should pursue to obtain eternal life. Though this young man, in the levity of his disposition, pretended to venerate our blessed Redeemer, his motive was merely to ridicule him: but his design could not escape the penetration of Jesus, notwithstanding his artful and hy-

pocritical address ; and therefore, previous to answering his question, he reprov'd his vanity and insolence. He asked, why he had call'd him good Master, saying, there was only one good, and that was God. “ And when he was gone forth into the way, “ there came one running and knee'd to him, and “ ask'd him, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit “ eternal life ? And Jesus said unto him, Why call’st thou me good ? there is none good but one, that “ is God.” Luke xviii. 8, 9.

By the above words, our Lord implied, that the man had given him an appellation which was not applied to the most celebrated of the rabbies ; asking, whether he imagin'd he partook of the divine nature, and instructing him that he ought to believe the Father dwelt in him, if he supposed the title he had given him to be properly applied.

To confirm this interpretation, it is necessary to observe, that in preaching to the Jews, our Saviour assert'd, that he was a prophet appointed by the Almighty, and that he had afforded them the most incontestible evidence of the divinity of his commission, in the miracles he had wrought by the power delegated to him by his heavenly Father, whence it was evident that God and he were one. “ That ye may know and “ believe, that the Father is in me, and I him.”— John x. 38. In consequence of this declaration, the Jews had pronounc'd him guilty of blasphemy.— Therefore it was with much propriety that the Son of God ask'd the man, why he call'd him good Master, unless he believ'd him to be a teacher sent from God. You cannot, said Jesus, acknowledge me as a prophet appointed by the Almighty, unless you judge of me from my works, by which I have prov'd that I partake with the Almighty in the title of good.

But with his usual condescension, our Lord answered the question proposed by the young man, informing him, that as the means of attaining to a state of everlasting happiness, he must strictly conform to all the precepts of the moral law. “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which; Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness: honor thy father and thy mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go, and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.” Matt. xix. 17, &c.

It is probable, that this young man had complied with the above commandments, in the imperfect manner prescribed by the doctors and interpreters of the law. But he was by no means a person who entertained a due veneration towards the Almighty, however plausible the character he had supported. He was possessed of great wealth, which he rendered subservient to the gratification of his sensual appetites. So attached was he to these indulgences, that he expressed much concern, when our blessed Redeemer recommended him to apply his riches to charitable purposes, as one means of rendering himself worthy to be employed in the honorable office of proclaiming the happy tidings of salvation to the children of wicked men. “But when the young man had heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.” Matt. xix. 22.

Our Lord improved this instance of the pernicious influence of riches, by cautioning his disciples against

employing their attention upon acquisitions which had so dangerous a tendency. "Verily, I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a * camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Matt. xix. 23, &c. Riches are a temptation to the indulgence of sensuality, and are in no respect necessary to procure an admission into the regions of bliss. Men who are not assisted by the grace of God, cannot possibly enjoy the rewards of the kingdom of heaven: but by the influence of the divine grace, which the Almighty never withholds from those who seriously endeavor to obtain it, they may be qualified to enjoy the blessings of eternity.

What Jesus had said, was by no means satisfactory to his disciples; who reflected, that men were naturally desirous of acquiring wealth, and had long flattered themselves in the expectation of the honors and emoluments that would be conferred upon them, when their Master's kingdom should be fully established. Peter appears to have been particularly disappointed; for he observed to Jesus, that he and the rest of the apostles had actually complied with the injunctions which the young man had rejected; they had deserted their families and friends, and relinquished all their temporal possessions and pursuits, in order that they might the more effectually promulgate the principles of his gospel; therefore, in the name of himself and his brethren, he requested to be informed of what rewards they were to expect for their perfect obe-

* Some read cable-ropes, which certainly corresponds better with the idea of passing through the eye of a needle.

bedience to his commands. In reply to Peter's question, our Lord said, that immediately after his resurrection, they should be advanced to the honor of judging the twelve tribes of Israel; intimating by these words, that they should govern the Christian church, which they were already authorised to establish in the different quarters of the globe. "Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee: what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matt. xix. 27, 28, 29.

Having thus replied to Peter, our blessed Saviour mentioned the rewards which his other disciples should experience, both in this life, and in futurity. Those who have abandoned their relations, friends, and all the enjoyments of this world, in order to conform to my laws, shall be amply recompensed for their obedience: divine providence shall supply them with every thing necessary to their eternal happiness; and, notwithstanding the mortifications they should endure in this life, they should after death be transported to the regions of uninterrupted and perpetual bliss.— "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." Matt. xix. 29, 30. To animate his followers to increase their faith, and continue to employ themselves in good works, and at the same time to intimate to them, that although the gospel was first preached to the Jews, the blessings of heaven should not be confined to those people alone, but

be extended to the Gentiles; who, although they received the gospel dispensation at a later period, should, in process of time, greatly exceed the Jews in righteousness, our Saviour delivered the following parable.

A * housholder went early in the morning to the market-place, where laborers were accustomed to wait, in expectation of being called into employment, to hire people to cultivate his vineyard; and having engaged several men to work for him at the rate of one penny per day, he sent them into his vineyard. About the third hour, he again went to the market-place, and seeing other men waiting there for employment, ordered them also to go into his vineyard; but without making any conditions, and only saying, that he would pay them what they should deserve. About the sixth and the ninth hour, he engaged other laborers in the same manner. About the eleventh hour he went to the market-place a fourth time, and asked some men, why they remained idle? They said, that though the day was expired within a single hour, they had not been so fortunate as to procure any employment. Hereupon, he ordered these men also into the vineyard, saying, that he would satisfy them for the work they should perform. “ So when even was come, “ the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call

* A narrative bearing an evident resemblance to this similitude, is contained in the Jerusalem Talmud; and indeed, many of our Saviour's parables are to be found in the different Jewish books; and therefore it has been conjectured, that the Jews made use of them in imitation of Christ. But, when it is considered, that the Jews bore an implacable enmity to Christ, and that Christ took almost the whole of the Lord's prayer from the Jewish prayers, and also, that he frequently introduced Jewish proverbs into his discourses, the more reasonable conclusion must be, that he spoke a parable that was before known among the Jews, and that they afterwards received it into their writings; and so of the other Jewish parables that are to be found in the New Testament.

“ the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from
“ the last unto the first. And when they came that were
“ hired about the eleventh hour, they received every
“ man a penny. But when the first came, they sup-
“ posed that they should have received more; and
“ they likewise received every man a penny. And
“ when they had received it, they murmured against
“ the good man of the house, saying, ‘These last have
“ wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them
“ equal unto us, which have borne the burden and
“ heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and
“ said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou
“ agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is,
“ and go thy way: I will give unto this last even as
“ unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will
“ with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am
“ good? So the last shall be first, and the first last; for
“ many be called, but few chosen.” Matt. xx. 8,
“ &c.

The interpretation of the above parable, will not be attended with any considerable difficulty. By the vineyard, is represented the dispensation of the gospel. The laborers whom the housholder hired in the morning, are descriptive of the Jews, who were the early members of the true church, and enjoined to yield obedience to the laws of Moses. The laborers engaged about the third, sixth, and ninth hours, represent the Gentiles, who were at different periods converted by the interposition of the divine Providence. The invitation given about the eleventh hour, implies those persons who receive the dispensation of the Gospel in the decline of life. By the law of Moses, very severe restrictions were imposed upon the Jews; and therefore, it was strongly represented by the similitude of the laborers, sustaining the fatigue and heat of the whole day. But as the reclaimed Gentiles conformed only to some particular precepts of the

law, they were described under the characters of the men who were engaged at the third, sixth, and ninth hours. The heathens, who observed no other law than that of nature, and imagined that piety, temperance, charity, and works of justice, were the only duties required of them, were typified by those men who were employed only one hour.

Upon the close of the day, the laborers were paid their wages, without distinction as to the time they had been respectively employed ; and thus are shewn the glorious advantages and privileges, that are to be derived from the gospel of Christ. The Jews, who had complied with the ceremonials of the Mosaic institutions, complained, when they discovered that the Gentiles were to enjoy equal privileges with themselves, although they had not conformed to the ceremonial worship.

By the above parable our Saviour implied, that those people who in distant ages should conform to the principles of his gospel, should be equally rewarded with those who were originally employed by him to establish the christian church.

Having delivered the above discourses, our blessed Redeemer received a message from Martha and Mary, at whose house, in the town of Bethany, Jesus had formerly resided, purporting that their brother Lazarus was sick. They did not request that he would hasten to his relief, for since he had cured so great a number of strangers, they deemed it sufficient to intimate to him their distress ; being persuaded, that he would not refuse assistance to their brother Lazarus, for whom our Lord entertained a particular esteem.

Upon receiving intelligence of the indisposition of

Lazarus, our Lord said, "This sickness is not unto death;" adding, that it would prove the means of rendering the power of God more conspicuous; for in the restoration of Lazarus, he should speedily perform an astonishing miracle. After this, Jesus remained two days in that part of the country beyond the Jordan where he was preaching the gospel, when he was informed that Lazarus was sick. The reason of this delay was, that, by the space of time which was to elapse between the decease of Lazarus and his resurrection, no room should be afforded for suspicion of a fraud; and that he should plainly manifest his own Almighty power in recalling him to life, after it should be publicly known that he was dead, and that his remains were deposited in the sepulchre. It is true, that the sisters of Lazarus were exceedingly distressed, because Jesus did not hasten to the relief of their brother; but they were amply compensated, when he was restored to them from the dreary mansions of the grave, by the divine power of our blessed Redeemer.

Upon the expiration of two days, after receiving the message from Martha and Mary, our Lord informed his disciples, that he intended to return into Judea: but his followers endeavored to divert him from this purpose; reminding him of the imminent danger to which he would unavoidably expose his life, by again going among those people who had industriously sought occasions of stoning him to death, and of perpetrating other acts of violence against his sacred person. "When he heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. Then after that, saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in a day? If any man walk in the

“ day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.” John xi. 6, &c. As during the day, a man may travel without danger of falling, because he enjoys the benefit of the light of the sun ; so during the period in which my heavenly Father has determined to protect me from the insidious artifices and violent outrages of the Jews, I can have no reason to harbor apprehensions concerning my personal safety : but as the traveller is in danger when he pursues his journey, surrounded by the darkness of the night ; so not till the time when the Almighty, in his infinite wisdom, shall judge it proper to withdraw his protection from me, and when the powers of wickedness shall be without restraint, will it be necessary for me to dread the machinations of my enemies.

Having in the above manner recommended them to suppress their groundless apprehensions, and represented to them the necessity of strengthening their faith, our blessed Saviour said to them, “ Our friend Lazarus sleepeth : but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.” Interpreting what Jesus had said according to the literal sense, they replied that if he slept, in all probability the malignity of his distemper had subsided, and therefore it might be expected, that he would speedily recover his usual health. At the same time they discovered their apprehensions for their Master’s safety, by saying, that it would be unnecessary for him to go into Judea merely to awaken Lazarus from his sleep ; and intimating, that he would be perfectly safe by remaining in his present situation ; whereas he would expose himself to great danger, by venturing among the people who had shewn such repeated proofs of their implacable enmity towards him.

Perceiving that his apostles had mistaken his meaning, Jesus informed them, in explicit terms, that Lazarus was dead; saying, that he rejoiced that he was not at Bethany at the time of his indisposition, because, upon the solicitation of his sisters, he should have restored him to health: but now he had an opportunity of giving confirmation to their faith in him as the Messiah, by convincing them that he derived his authority immediately from heaven, by making them the witnesses of his power of bestowing animation upon the body of the deceased. “Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there (to the intent that ye may believe) nevertheless, let us go unto him.” John xi. 12, &c.

Our Lord having resolved to return into Judea, Thomas, imagining that destruction would be the inevitable consequence of his undertaking this journey, and being unwilling to desert his Master in a time of danger, proposed that he and the other apostles should accompany him into Judea, and share whatever dangers he might be exposed to from the malice of the barbarous Jews. “Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.” John xi. 16.

As our Lord pursued his journey towards Bethany, he was met by some of the inhabitants of that town, who informed him that Lazarus had been buried four days. The fate of Lazarus had proved exceedingly distressing to Martha and Mary; and many of the Jews had come from Jerusalem, in order

to condole with them on occasion of the grief they experienced, in consequence of the decease of their beloved brother.

Previous to our Lord's arrival at Bethany, the news of his approach was conveyed to that village; and Martha hastened to meet him, leaving her sister, who was of a more contemplative and melancholy disposition, mourning in the house.

Upon meeting Jesus, in an extacy of sorrow, Martha said, that if he had hastened to Bethany when he received intelligence of her brother's indisposition, his death would have been prevented; for she was conscious that the Almighty would not deny any request he should make. Martha undoubtedly entertained an exalted idea of the power of our blessed Redeemer: but yet she did * not imagine that he was able to exert that power on all occasions, but that by appealing to heaven in behalf of sick persons, the Almighty invested him with power to effect their recovery. It may reasonably be presumed, that she was not ignorant of the miracle he had performed, in giving life to the deceased daughter of Jairus, and the son of the widow of Nain: but as her brother had been buried three days, she probably was doubtful, whether Jesus had power to effect his recovery, and that therefore she did not supplicate him to restore Lazarus to life.

But to increase the imperfect faith of Martha, Jesus informed her, that his heavenly Father had invested him with power to give life to those who had faith in him. As these words did not specifically express any

* According to Grotius and many other writers, the faith of Martha was weak; and they are of opinion, that though she believed Christ was prevalent with God, she did not suppose that the fullness of the divine power resided in him.

period of time, she understood them in the indefinite sense, imagining that they were meant only to afford her consolation in her distress, and that they alluded to the time of the general resurrection. Martha therefore said, that she had a firm reliance on that important article of the Christian faith, which expressed, that the dead should rise from the dreary mansions of the grave, on that great and tremendous day, when the judgment of the world would be pronounced from the throne of the Almighty. Hereupon the blessed Jesus informed her, that he was the author of the resurrection, and had received power from God to effect the immediate resurrection of all who believed in the dispensations of his gospel. To this Martha replied, that she was firmly persuaded he was the true Messiah, whose appearance had been so long predicted by the prophets; and that no miracle was too great for him to perform, since in him resided the fulness of divine power.

Martha now appears to have conceived hopes of the immediate recovery of Lazarus; and departing from Jesus, she hastened by his command into the village, in order to summon Mary to be a witness of the astonishing miracle that was to be speedily performed. “Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.— And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus said unto her, Thy Brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the

“ resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, “ I am the resurrection and the life : he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live : “ and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall “ never die. Believest thou this ? She saith unto him, “ Yea, Lord : I believe that thou art the Christ, the “ Son of God, which should come into the world. “ And when she had so said, she went away, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master “ is come, and calleth for thee.” John xi. 17, &c.

Mary was no sooner apprized of the approach of Jesus, than she hastened to meet him. The Jews who had come from Jerusalem to condole with the afflicted sisters, imagining that she was going to pour forth her sorrows over the grave of her deceased brother, followed her into the presence of our blessed Redeemer, who still remained in the field where he had been accosted by Martha. Thus were the Jews conducted to the grave of Lazarus, and made witnesses to his miraculous resurrection.

Prostrating herself before Christ, in an agony of grief, she exclaimed. “ Lord, if thou hadst been here, “ my brother had not died.” Martha stood weeping by the side of Jesus, and with a heart dissolved in grief, the pious Mary lay at his feet ; while the surrounding Jews joined the mournful scene, by mingling their friendly tears with those of the afflicted sisters, in testimony of their esteem for the departed Lazarus, and of the justice of the lamentations of Martha and Mary for the loss of so truly amiable and deserving a brother. The compassionate Jesus could not behold this melancholy scene, without yielding to the tenderest sensations of pity, and generously * participating in the common distress.

* Hence we may learn, that those affections of the mind which are

This pathetic occurrence is related by the Evangelist, in a style of the most expressive simplicity and peculiar tenderness. Mary being informed by her sister, that Jesus was in the neighborhood of Bethany, "as soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was at that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold, how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, said unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lift up his eyes, and said, Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they

called the weaknesses of humanity, are not to be condemned as sinful, provided they do not impel us to actions repugnant to virtue and reason.

“ may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead, came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes : and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.” John xi. 29, &c.

The grief expressed by the tender and compassionate Jesus was a convincing proof to the Jews, that he had entertained a strong affection for Lazarus ; but some of them interpreted this circumstance to his disadvantage, urging, that had he possessed sufficient power, he would have cured him of the distemper which terminated in his death ; and recalling to their recollection the miraculous cure of the blind man at the feast of tabernacles, which they considered as a more extraordinary matter than restoring to health a man laboring under a disease, which however violent, had in many instances yielded to the power of medicine, and in others, had been subdued by the mere efforts of nature.

Martha observed to Jesus, that the body of the defunct must be in a state of putrefaction, as it had been four days in the grave. Thus she plainly indicated, that she imagined Jesus had not power to effect the resurrection of her brother ; but he reproved her want of faith, by repeating what he had said to her in the field concerning the unlimited power of the Almighty. Martha being convinced that our Lord was appointed to execute the will of the heavenly Father, Christ proceeded to effect the wonderful resurrection of Lazarus ; who rose from the grave in a state of the most perfect health and vigor. Some among the crowd of astonished spectators might probably have suspected that Lazarus had been buried alive, and that the vital principle had not departed from his body,

had not they been fully convinced, by the appearance of, and stench emitted from the grave-clothes, and many other circumstances, that the body had been actually in a state of putrefaction. When he had performed this stupendous miracle, our blessed Saviour manifested no instance either of triumph or exultation; but consistently with his conduct on every other occasion, proved himself to be a perfect example of humility and self-denial.

In the resurrection of Lazarus, is exhibited a striking emblem, and a glorious earnest of a future state; and this astonishing event cannot fail to impress upon our minds an idea of that solemn day, when the scattered particles of our bodies shall be collected, and our souls be exalted into a glorious immortality, through the beneficent interposition of the Son of God.

We shall here introduce a concise account of the town of Bethany, wherein the above miracle was wrought. Departing from Jerusalem through St. Stephen's gate, and crossing the valley of Jehoshaphat, and part of mount Olivet, in about half an hour you arrive at Bethany. Upon entering this place, is seen a ruined building, called the castle of Lazarus, and supposed to have been the place of his residence. At the foot of a gentle declivity, and at a small distance from the castle, is shewn the sepulchre out of which he was raised to a second mortality. The descent into the sepulchre is by twenty-five steep steps, which lead to a small square apartment, from whence you creep down, to the depth of about a yard and a half, into a smaller room, where the body of Lazarus is said to have been deposited. The Turks hold this place in high veneration, and make use of it as an oratory, not allowing it to be seen by any Christians, till they have paid a small caphar for their admission.

At about the distance of a bow-shot from the sepulchre, you are shewn a place, which is said to have been the habitation of Mary Magdalen; and then descending a steep hill, you arrive at the fountain of the apostles; so called, because, according to tradition, it was the place where those holy men were accustomed to refresh themselves in their frequent journies between Jerusalem and Jericho. This is very probable, and perhaps what is done by most of the persons who travel that way; the fountain being close to the side of the road, and extremely inviting to the thirsty passenger.

The resurrection of Lazarus was so extraordinary an instance of the divine power of Christ, that it prevailed over the prejudices of a great number of the Jews, who acknowledged him to be the Messiah. This wonderful event, which occurred in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, and in the midst of a great multitude of people, could not long remain concealed from the knowledge of the chief priests and elders, who were exceedingly alarmed, lest the great and increasing reputation of Jesus should impair their authority, and diminish their influence over the people.

The members of the Sanhedrim being assembled, it was asserted in that grand council, that the intention of Jesus was to establish a new mode of religious worship, the principles of which were inimical to the Jewish laws, and threatened to subvert the Jewish constitution both in church and state. It was argued, that the miracles of Jesus would induce the lower classes of the people to acknowledge him for the Messiah, and support his pretensions to that character by force of arms; and that the insurrections thus excited, would afford the Romans a pretext for sending an army into Judea, to destroy the

city and temple, and put the whole Jewish nation to the sword. “ But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.” John xi. 46, 47, 48.

Various expedients were proposed in the Sanhedrim, for securing the Jewish constitution from that danger, by which it was supposed to be threatened by the preaching and miracles of Christ; and at length a resolution passed, purporting, that it was expedient to put him to death: but this vote did not receive the unanimous sanction of the council, it being resolutely opposed by Nicodemus, Joseph of Armathea, and some other zealous disciples of our blessed Redeemer.

Caiaphas, who was at this time high-priest of the Jewish nation, having attended to the debates concerning our Saviour, arose, and informed the assembly, that those persons were but little acquainted with, or concerned for the interest of their country, who opposed the condemnation of Jesus, because no act of criminality had been proved, or even advanced against him; for the nature of government, and the principles of human policy, frequently rendered particular acts of injustice necessary, in order that the safety of the state might be secured; and therefore he advised, that Jesus might be condemned to die, in order to avert the destruction which threatened the whole Jewish nation. Thus, by the divine impulse did the high-priest predict to the rulers of Jerusalem, that Christ was to be offered up as an expiatory victim for the sins of mankind. “ And one of them, named

“ Caiaphas, being the high-priest that same year, said
 “ unto them, Ye know nothing at all : nor consider
 “ that it is expedient for us, that one man should die
 “ for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.
 “ And this spake he not of himself : but, being high-
 “ priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should
 “ die for that nation ; and not for that nation only,
 “ but that also he should gather together in * one, the
 “ children of God that were scattered abroad.”—
 John xi. 49, &c.

The Sanhedrim having resolved to sacrifice the life of Jesus, he declined publicly appearing in the frequented parts of Judea ; but he returned to the small city of Ephraim, situated on the confines of the wilderness of Jericho, where he resided with his apostles till the following passover.

We shall conclude this chapter with some observations on the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus. From what is above related, it is not to be inferred, that our blessed Saviour “ wept, and groaned in spirit,” on account of the death of the man whom he was about to restore to life ; for his expressions of sorrow proceeded from a sympathetic tenderness of disposition, which impelled him to participate in the deep affliction of those who deplored the loss of Lazarus. The Jews who attended on this occasion, mistook the cause of the grief of our tender and compassionate Redeemer ; for by their saying, “ Behold, how he loved him,” it is evident that they supposed he lamented his death. But this will be allowed a very natural expression, when it is considered, that they entirely mistook the cause of his sorrow, and were entirely ignorant of his intention to restore Lazarus to life.

* In one community.

Some of the Jews asked, why Jesus, who had given sight to a man born blind, could not have rescued Lazarus from the power of death. Hereupon, Jesus groaned a second time; and this like the former expression of sorrow, was not on account of the deceased, but on the contrary, a proof that he lamented the obstinate incredulity of the living. By the connection which the word "therefore" bears to the preceding part of the text, it appears that the second groaning of Jesus, was occasioned by the malicious application which some of the Jews gave to the miracle he had wrought in favor of the man who had been born blind; for they insinuated, that it was not probable he should have so wonderfully relieved a stranger, since he had not power to preserve the life of his beloved friend Lazarus.

By his own example, our Lord has instructed us in the virtue of sympathizing in the distresses of our fellow-creatures; and this is agreeable to the precept of the apostle, who commands us to "weep with them that weep." The ancient heretics propagated an opinion, that Christ did not appear in the real flesh, with which he appeared to be clothed, and that he was no more than the apparition of a man. But this pernicious idea, so derogatory from the merit of his sacrifice for the sins of mankind, must immediately vanish, when we reflect, that it is recorded by the evangelist, that "Jesus wept;" and thereby afforded an incontestible demonstration, that he had assumed the nature of humanity, together with all the innocent passions thereunto annexed. That the reality of the resurrection of Lazarus was not disputed in the life-time of our Saviour is certain, for no suspicion of fraud in this case was among the accusations advanced against him before Pilate.

Lazarus was still living, when Matthew, Mark, and

Luke, wrote their gospels, and therefore they did not mention the miracle. The Jews had endeavored to execute vengeance upon Lazarus, because he had been the instrument whereby our Saviour had exhibited a most wonderful instance of the divinity of his commission : but their malice was disappointed. Had the evangelist above-mentioned introduced the miracle of his resurrection in their gospels, the Jews would, in all probability, have been provoked to revive their rage against Lazarus with more implacable fury. But when the gospel of St. John was written, Lazarus had a second time departed from these regions of mortality ; and therefore, this evangelist had no motive to induce him to suppress the narrative of his wonderful resurrection ; and that the facts were faithfully communicated to him, may be reasonably presumed ; for when he wrote, there were many persons still living who had been witnesses to the divine power which our blessed Redeemer displayed in reanimating the body of the deceased Lazarus.

CHAP. XXXII.

Upon the approach of the passover, our blessed Saviour departs from the desert near Jericho, and repairs to Jerusalem. During his journey, he predicts to his apostles the circumstances of his condemnation, death, crucifixion, and resurrection. He instructs his apostles, as to the manner in which they shall regulate their conduct. Jesus cures two blind beggars, and holds a conversation with Zaccheus the publican. The parable of the talents. In consequence of a proclamation issued by the Sanhedrim, the Jews endeavor to apprehend Jesus. He repairs to Bethany, where his feet are anointed by the pious Mary. He replies to an objection advanced by Judas. Our blessed Saviour rides towards Jerusalem upon an ass, amidst the acclamations of an immense concourse of people. The conduct of Jesus excites the rage of the Pharisees. The advice of the Pharisees to the Sanhedrim. The lamentations of our blessed Saviour over the city of Jerusalem. Jesus enters Jerusalem, and a second time expels the traders from the temple. Persons afflicted with various diseases are brought to Jesus, in order to be restored to health. The priests interrogate, him and he answers their questions. The curiosity of some Greeks to behold Jesus. His discourse to the multitude on the subject of the curiosity of the Greeks. The voice of the Almighty heard from the heavens. Jesus answers to the enquiries of the multitude, concerning the voice of the Almighty. He discourses to them on the subject of his approaching dissolution. Jesus secludes himself from the society of men. Some words of the

prophet Isaiah applied to the Jews. Having admonished the Jews to repose faith in him, our blessed Saviour returns to the town of Bethany.

UPON the approach of the passover, our blessed Saviour quitted his retirement in the neighborhood of Jericho, being followed by his apostles, who were exceedingly concerned on account of their Master having undertaken a journey, which they imagined would terminate in his death. During his passage to Jerusalem, our Lord, addressing himself to his apostles, said that he was going to the city of Jerusalem, where all the events predicted by the prophets concerning him would be fulfilled; for he should be betrayed into the power of the Sanhedrim, who would condemn him to suffer death; adding, that, as the Romans had deprived the Jewish nation of the privilege of pronouncing sentence upon persons accused of capital offences, he should be condemned to suffer death by a Roman governor; but that before his decease he should be ignominiously spit upon, and scourged: he further informed his disciples, that he should suffer a painful death upon a cross; and that three days after his crucifixion, he should rise from the dead, and ascend to the throne of his heavenly Father. “Then he took unto him the twelve, and
 “said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem;
 “and all things that are written by the prophets
 “concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.
 “For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and
 “shall be spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and
 “they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and
 “the third day he shall rise again.” Luke xviii. 31, &c.

Though the prediction of the above events so manifestly corresponded with the ancient prophecies, the

apostles were unable to comprehend the meaning thereof. The sons of Zebedee imagined, that, by saying he should rise from the dead, Jesus meant to intimate to them, that he should establish a temporal sovereignty ; and therefore they became ambitious of partaking of the honors and emoluments, which they expected would be distributed among his followers. Upon the road towards Jerusalem, they prevailed upon their mother to prostrate herself before our blessed Redeemer, and humbly to supplicate that he would exalt her sons to the dignity of sitting on each side of his throne ; and thus she solicited, that he would bestow upon them the most dignified offices under the temporal government which he was about to erect. Addressing himself to the petitioner and her sons, our Lord informed them, that they were entirely ignorant as to the nature of the rewards which he had promised to bestow upon those who strictly adhered to the principles of his gospel. “ Then came to him the
“ mother of Zebedee’s children with their sons, wor-
“ shipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.
“ And he said unto her, What wilt thou ? She saith
“ unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit,
“ the one on the right hand, and the other on the
“ left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered, and
“ said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to
“ drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be
“ baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with ?
“ They say unto him, We are able. And he saith
“ unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and
“ be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized
“ with : but to sit on my right hand, and on my left,
“ is not mine to give : but it shall be given to them
“ for whom it is prepared of my Father.” Matt. xx.
20. Thus our Lord informed them, that they did not comprehend the nature of the rewards which he was to bestow upon his disciples ; and that they would

partake of the troubles and afflictions which he was to encounter.

The ambition of the sons of Zebedee greatly displeased the other apostles, who deemed themselves equally worthy of the distinction which their two brethren had solicited. To restore friendship and harmony among his disciples, our Lord informed them, that the exaltation of those of his followers who should distinguish themselves by their superior virtue, should not consist in the pomp and splendor of a temporal empire, or in the exercise of despotic authority over the people; adding, that in this world, rank and precedence, were indications of merit, but that Christian greatness consisted in humility and righteousness.—
“ And when the ten heard it, they were moved with
“ indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus
“ called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the
“ princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over
“ them, and they that are great, exercise authority
“ upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but
“ whosoever will be great among you, let him be your
“ minister; and whosoever will be chief among you,
“ let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came
“ not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to
“ give his life a ransom for many.” Matt. xx. 24, &c.

Our blessed Saviour now departed from Jericho, attended by a vast concourse of people. The son of Timæus, called Bartimæus in the Hebrew language, and another blind beggar, were laying on the side of the road; and upon hearing a great number of voices, they enquired the reason of such a multitude of people being assembled. They were informed, that Jesus of Nazareth approached; and they immediately exclaimed, O Jesus, the son of David, compassionate our miseries, and afford us relief! Being unwilling that the progress of our Saviour's journey should be

interrupted, his followers reprimanded the blind men, and ordered them to be silent. But they reiterated their complaints, and with additional vehemence supplicated our Lord to bestow upon them the blessing of sight, by the influence of the divine power which resided in him. Jesus ordered the men to be conducted to him; and when they approached, he touched their eyes, and commanded them to depart, assuring them, that they should be restored to sight, as a reward for their faith in him. Our blessed Redeemer had no sooner pronounced these words, than they recovered the faculty of seeing. This miracle being performed, they glorified the name of the Almighty, through whose goodness so inestimable a blessing had been conferred upon them. “And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And behold two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I should do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes; and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.” Matt. xx. 29, &c.

Having performed the above miracle, our Saviour continued his journey. Zaccheus, the chief of the publicans inhabiting the city of Jericho and its adjacencies, had heard the fame of Jesus greatly extolled, and was extremely desirous of beholding a person of so distinguished a character; and he several times endeavored to gratify his curiosity, but was as often disappointed, he being a man of low stature, and

our Saviour being surrounded by an immense concourse of people. However, he hastened forward, and climbed into sycamore-tree, standing on the side of the road through which our Saviour was to pass. Perceiving Zaccheus on the tree, our Lord commanded him to descend ; informing him at the same time, that he meant to retire with him to the place of his habitation. Zaccheus came out of the tree, and expressed the utmost joy at the condescension of Jesus, whom he conducted to his house, and there entertained him, behaving towards him with every instance of kindness and respect. “ And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And behold, there was a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus, who he was, and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore-tree, to see him ; for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.” Luke xix. 1, &c.

The circumstance of our Saviour’s condescending to be entertained by a publican, proved exceedingly disagreeable to the multitude ; and therefore they reproached him, for having acted in a manner which they conceived to be inconsistent with the dignity annexed to the character of a prophet. Zaccheus seems to have overheard the reflections which were discharged against Christ : and therefore, that he might rescue his character from the indignity which was annexed to that of the publicans in general, he thus addressed himself to Jesus in the hearing of the multitude.—“ Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor : and if I have taken any thing from any man

“ by false accusation, I restore him * four-fold.”—
Luke xix. 8.

Our saviour now informed Zaccheus, that the time of his salvation was arrived, and that all the persons of his family would experience the like blessing, if they adapted his generous example; for he had proved himself worthy to be considered as a son of Abraham, the father of the faithful, by acting in so commendable a manner, although he was not † lineally descended from that patriarch; and our Lord added, that he had come to the house of Zaccheus, in pursuance of the commission he had received from his heavenly Father, that he might reclaim mankind from their iniquities, and instruct them in the ways of salvation. “ And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation
“ come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son
“ of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek
“ and to save that which was lost.” Luke xix. 9, 10.

The multitude imagining, that upon his arrival at Jerusalem, the ancient seat of their kings, Christ

* This was doing more than was enjoined by the law. When any property purloined or fraudulently obtained, was voluntarily restored, the transgressor was to add a fifth part to the sum. Numb. v. 7. The property being found in his possession, after he had persevered to conceal it, he was to give double the amount to the injured party. Exod. xxii. 4. When an ox or a sheep was killed, or sold after it was stolen, the aggressor was to pay five oxen for one ox, and four sheep for one sheep. Exod. xxii. 1. Hence then it appears, that Zaccheus restored for money or goods what the law required only for living creatures; thereby conforming to the precepts of the law, in their most extensive meaning.

† Some writers suppose, our Saviour meant that he was the son of Abraham, not only in faith, but also by birth. For, say they, “ The
“ Pharisees do not murmur against Christ, that he eats with one uncircumcised, but that he eats with a sinner.” It is true indeed, that many of the publicans were Jews by birth: and it is probable, that Zaccheus was one of these.

would publicly avow himself as the Messiah, and assume the government of the Jewish nation; he delivered the following parable, which will appear to have been most admirably calculated for correcting their erroneous opinion.

A certain prince made preparations for a journey into a distant country, in order to pay homage to a powerful potentate, who was to invest him with the full powers of sovereignty; after which, he was to return. Previous to his departure, he called ten of his servants, and divided ten talents equally among them, commanding them to employ the money in the most advantageous manner during his absence.—While he was upon his journey, some of the citizens appointed deputies to exhibit accusations against him, and to petition, that he might not be intrusted with the powers of the government. However, he succeeded in his application, in despite of the opposition of his enemies; and upon his return, he commanded his ten servants to inform him what advantage they had made of the money. The first servant that appeared, delivered him ten talents, being the produce of the single talent that he had received. Fully satisfied of this man's strict integrity, the king bore public testimony to his irreproachable conduct; and farther to reward him, restored to him the ten talents he had gained, and appointed him governor over ten cities. Another of the servants produced five pieces; and therefore the king commended him, and promoted him to the government of five cities. “And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which have kept up in a napkin; for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up what thou laidest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thy own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man,

“ taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow. Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required my own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds. For I say unto you, that unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.” Luke xix. 20, &c.

In the above parable are delineated the characters of three several classes of men; the true disciples of Jesus, the hypocrites, and the openly profane. The manner in which the men were treated by their sovereign, is descriptive of the final judgment that will be pronounced on the awful day of resurrection. The true disciples of Christ shall be rewarded with the blessings of immortality; the hypocrites shall be divested of the advantages of which they had long boasted, and be consigned to perpetual pain and infamy; and the avowed enemies of Jesus, shall be punished with a degree of severity proportioned to the enormity of their crimes.

Though the above interpretation contains the general sense of the parable, it must be added, that it had a particular allusion to the time when it was delivered; and was intended to instruct his disciples, that though they might expect the kingdom of the Messiah would be speedily erected, and the blessings thereof to be conferred upon them, yet those events would not transpire till after the decease of the master; and that before they could partake of the blessings which were to be enjoyed under the sovereignty of the Messiah, they must perform a long and painful course of service. It was further intimated, that

after his resurrection and attainment to the possession of his kingdom, he should return from his seat of majesty, in order strictly to account with his servants, and distribute rewards among those who had improved the treasure committed to their custody, and execute exemplary vengeance upon those who had transgressed his commands, or omitted their utmost endeavors to promote the establishment of his sovereignty.

This parable seems to have been founded upon the custom of the kings of Judea going to Rome, in order to be invested with the powers of sovereignty by Cæsar. This was done by Herod the Great, and Archelaus his son. The case of Archelaus bears some similitude to the circumstances mentioned in the parable. After his departure for Rome, the Jews transmitted complaints to Cæsar, expressing their aversion towards Archelaus, and petitioning that he might not enjoy the powers of government, although he had been nominated to succeed to the throne by the will of his father. Notwithstanding this opposition, Archelaus ascended the throne, and maintained an arbitrary and tyrannical government for the space of ten years ; when, in consequence of a second complaint from his subjects, he was banished to Vienna.

Upon the approach of the passover, vast numbers of the Jews repaired to Jerusalem, in order to purify themselves, preparatory to the celebration of the feast. These people being assembled in the city, earnest enquiries were made after Jesus, whom they suspected would not venture to attend the feast, since the Sanhedrim had published a proclamation, enjoining the people to employ their utmost endeavors to discover the retreat of Jesus, and to give information thereof, in order that he might be apprehended.

Departing from the house of Zaccheus the publican, our blessed Saviour pursued his journey towards Jerusalem; and six days before the commencement of the passover, he arrived at Bethany, and repaired to the house of Lazarus, whom he had restored to life. A supper being provided for the entertainment of our Saviour, Lazarus sat with him at table, and Martha discharged the office of an attendant. During the repast, Mary anointed the feet of our Saviour with a costly ointment made of the genuine spikenard, and wiped them with the hair of her head.

Hereupon Judas Iscariot exclaimed against what he called an unnecessary profusion; saying, that had the ointment been sold, it would have produced upwards of three hundred denarii, equal to between nine and ten pounds of English money, which sum might have alleviated the distresses of many indigent families. It was not, however, because he had any real desire to relieve the misfortunes of the poor, that he spake this in their favor: but he was intrusted with the care of the common purse, wherein the benevolences of charitable persons were deposited; and he was accustomed to embezzle part of the money, and apply it to his private use.

Upon this, our blessed Saviour desired that the pious offices of Mary might not be interrupted; for her observance of this ceremony was to solemnize his approaching death; adding, that it was customary for the friends and relations of deceased persons to embalm their bodies with spices and perfumes, and that they would have sufficient opportunities of manifesting their charity towards the poor: but this was the last opportunity that would be afforded her of expressing her regard towards him, since he should in a short time depart from amongst the sons of men.—

“ Then Jesus, six days before the passover came to

“ Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead,
 “ whom he raised from the dead. There they made
 “ him a supper, and Martha served : but Lazarus was
 “ one of them that sat at table with him. Then took
 “ Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard very costly,
 “ and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet
 “ with her hair ; and the house was filled with the
 “ odour of the ointment. Then said one of his dis-
 “ ciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, which should
 “ betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for
 “ three hundred pence, and given to the poor. This
 “ he said, not that he cared for the poor ; because he
 “ was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put
 “ therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone : against
 “ the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the
 “ poor always ye have with you : but me ye have not
 “ always.” John xii. 1, &c.

We have already related, that our Saviour was in-
 vited to the house of a Pharisee, named Simon, when
 a woman of an abandoned character anointed his feet,
 according to the testimony of St. Luke : but it is evi-
 dent, that this is not the same fact which is mention-
 ed by St. John, and which happened in the fourth
 year of our Saviour’s ministry : and, besides the dif-
 ference of time, there are other points in which the
 narratives materially vary.

There is another relation of the same kind in Mat-
 thew and Mark, who agree in the circumstances, and
 say, the event happened at Bethany in the house of
 Simon the leper. Many writers have strongly con-
 tended, that this is the same story mentioned by St.
 John, because Bethany was the place where Mary and
 her sister Martha resided ; and John has not express-
 ly said, that the feast was at Martha’s habitation.—
 This evangelist, however says, that Martha waited
 upon the guests, which she would scarcely have done

at the house of Simon : and they also contend, that many of the circumstances correspond with those recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark. Grotius goes so far as to insist, that the three narratives are founded upon a single fact, notwithstanding there is so material a disagreement between the particulars mentioned by St. Luke, and those recorded by the other evangelists.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, agree in saying, that at a feast, a woman came with an alabaster box of ointment, and poured it on Jesus : but it does not then necessarily follow, either that Jesus was at but one feast, or that he was acquainted with but one Simon. The contrary of both, indeed, appears from the gospels. The Simon in Matthew and Mark is called a leper, and the Simon mentioned by Luke, is said to have been a Pharisee. Anointing with oil, was a ceremony commonly practised at entertainments ; and therefore it is not extraordinary that it should be repeated to Jesus, who was held in high veneration, and consequently treated with every possible mark of respect.

Luke differs from the other evangelists ; informing us, that the woman washed the feet of Christ with her tears, before she anointed them with the ointment ; which circumstance the others would scarcely have omitted in relating the same fact. He also differs very remarkably from John, in saying, the woman was of a lewd character ; which can by no means be applicable to Mary, the sister of Lazarus, whom Jesus applauded, for having “ chosen that good part “ which should never be taken from her.” We have no reason to imagine, that the woman mentioned by Matthew and Mark, was of an abandoned and licentious course of life, for nothing of that kind is intimated by either of them. Thus then it appears, that

these are three distinct histories; for though they correspond in many particulars, they differ very essentially in others, and therefore cannot reasonably be supposed to relate merely one fact.

Upon this subject, we shall only add a remark upon the reply of Jesus to the objection advanced by Judas Iscariot, when he observed Mary anointing the feet of Christ. From what our Lord said upon this occasion, it appears, that the obligation of giving alms, does not oppose our free expences in doing honor to good men. Thus Mary bestowed her box of ointment; and Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, purchased spices for the interment of our blessed Saviour.

Bethany being not more than two miles distant from Jerusalem the news of Christ's arrival was speedily conveyed to that celebrated capital; and great numbers of the people came from thence, as well as from the adjacent parts of the country, in order to behold our Lord, and likewise Lazarus, whom he had so miraculously restored to life. Great numbers of the people believed in the resurrection of Lazarus, and consequently in the divinity of Christ: but the news of their conversion so highly exasperated the members of the Sanhedrim, that they formed a resolution in the council, of exerting every possible effort for sacrificing the lives both of our Saviour and Lazarus.

Though our Saviour knew the barbarous designs which the rulers of Jerusalem had projected against him, he steadily maintained his purpose of "fulfilling all righteousness:" and therefore, so far was he from endeavoring to elude the malice of his enemies, that he resolved to proceed towards the capital of Judea in the most public manner.

Having reposed himself at Bethany during the sabbath, on the following day Jesus pursued his journey towards Jerusalem, passing over that part of the Mount of Olives, which belonged to Bethany and Bethpage. From Bethpage our Lord dispatched two of his disciples into the * opposite village, where he informed them they would find an ass tied with its colt, which latter had not yet been backed; and he commanded them to bring to him both the ass and the foal. If any person should enquire as to the cause of their proceeding, he told them, that they should say their master had occasion for the beasts, and they would receive no further opposition. Our Saviour determined to ride to Jerusalem upon an ass, agreeable to the prophecy of Zechariah. “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem.—Behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.” Zech. ix. 9.

In obedience to the command of Jesus, his disciples went to the village, and observed an ass and a colt tied near a building, situated in a place where two roads met. While they were untying the creatures, the owner demanded of them, the reason why they interfered with his property; but upon their answering as Jesus had commanded, he freely permitted them to drive the beasts away for the use of their Master, to whom he was known. Upon the return of the disciples, the usual trappings were put upon the † colt,

* According to Bochart, a small village two miles from the mount towards the south.

† St. Matthew says, they “put on *them* their clothes:” but St. Luke mentions the colt in particular; and it is not very probable, that in so short a journey he should ride upon both. In St. Matthew’s text, then, it seems necessary to admit the figure called *Enallage Numeri*.

and mounting the beast, Christ proceeded towards Jerusalem.

In the mean time a great concourse of the people who had repaired to Jerusalem for the purpose of celebrating the passover, received notice of the approach of Jesus by the way of the Mount of Olives : at which place they proceeded to meet him, carrying branches of palm trees in their hands thereby demonstrating their joy, according to the custom of the country.

At the foot of Mount Olivet, the multitude joined in magnifying the name of the Almighty, and in congratulating Jesus ; exclaiming, All hail to the glorious Messiah, the descendant of David, who comes to Jerusalem by the especial appointment of God ! Hail to the king of Israel ! In demonstration of their unbounded joy upon occasion of beholding the great Redeemer of Israel, the populace * strewed the road with small branches of trees, and spread their garments upon the ground over which he was to pass. “ And it
 “ came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethpage
 “ and Bethany, at the mount called the Mount of
 “ Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying, Go ye
 “ into the village over against you ; in the which at
 “ your entering, you shall find a colt tied, whereon yet
 “ never man sat ; loose him and bring him hither. And
 “ if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him ? Thus
 “ shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of

So the ark is said to rest on the mountains of Ararat, instead of upon one of them. Gen. viii. 4. And we read of the cities, instead of the city, in which Lot dwelt. Gen. xix. 29.

* To spread the roads with branches of trees, flowers, and garments, when emperors, kings, and other distinguished personages were travelling, was a ceremony in common use in ancient days. Of this we have instances in Herodotus, Plutarch, and other writers.

“ him. And they that were sent, went their way, and
“ found even as he had said unto them. And as they
“ were loosing the colt, the owners therefore said unto
“ them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The
“ Lord hath need of him. And they brought him to
“ Jesus; and they cast their garments upon the colt
“ and they set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they
“ spread their clothes in the way. And when he was
“ come nigh, even now at the descent of the Mount
“ of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples
“ began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice,
“ for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying,
“ Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the
“ Lord. Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.”
Luke xix. 29, &c.

Notwithstanding the great affronts and injuries which our blessed Saviour had repeatedly experienced from the people of Jerusalem, upon his approaching that city, he would not refrain from expressing a most benevolent concern and divine tenderness on occasion of those dreadful calamities, which he foresaw would shortly be inflicted upon the people as a punishment for their obstinate infidelity.

While our blessed Saviour was indulging these compassionate reflections, some of the Pharisees desired Jesus to suppress the acclamations of the populace, since the praises and honors they bestowed upon him were considered by the magistrates of the city as instances of impiety, and as proofs of a restless and discontented spirit, tending to foment an insurrection. Hereupon our Saviour said, that if the multitude were silenced, the very * stones would

* This proverbial expression was here introduced, to signify, that if the disciples of Christ should be silent, the kingdom of the Messiah would be proclaimed by more extraordinary means; even by the Gen-

complain. “ And some of the Pharisees from among
 “ the multitude, said unto him, Master, rebuke thy
 “ disciples. And he answered and said unto them,
 “ I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the
 “ stones would immediately cry out. And when he
 “ was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over
 “ it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least
 “ in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy
 “ peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For
 “ the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies
 “ shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee
 “ round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall
 “ lay thee even with the ground, and thy children
 “ within thee ; and they shall not leave in thee one
 “ stone upon another : because thou knewest not
 “ the time of thy visitation.” Luke xix. 39, &c.

Our blessed Saviour entered Jerusalem, attended
 by so immense a concourse of people, that the whole
 city was thrown into a state of confusion “ And
 “ when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was
 “ moved, saying; Who is this? And the multitude
 “ said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Gali-
 “ lee.” Matt. xxi. 10, 11.

Jesus proceeded immediately to the temple, amidst
 the acclamations of the applauding multitude ; and
 alighting from the ass, he entered the sacred build-
 ing, and took a survey thereof : but as night was
 now approaching, he remained only a short time in
 the city, but returned with his apostles to Bethany,
 to the great disappointment of the people, who had
 flattered themselves, that he would immediately as-
 sume the reins of government. “ And Jesus enter-
 “ ed into Jerusalem, and into the temple ; and when

files, who were considered by the Jews as the most ignorant and con-
 temptible race of men.

“ he had looked round about upon all things, and
“ now the even-tide was come, he went out unto
“ Bethany with the twelve.” Mark xi. 11.

Early on the following morning, Jesus, accompanied by his apostles, returned from the town of Bathany to the capital of Judea. Going to the temple, our Lord found the outer court of that holy edifice crowded with traders, who had brought thither doves and beasts for sacrifice, which they exposed to sale. The meek and righteous Jesus being displeased to see a place consecrated to the worship of God, thus profaned, he drove the irreligious and venal tribe out of the temple, overturning the seats of those who sold doves, as well as the tables of the money-changers. “ And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast
“ out all them that bought and sold in the temple, and
“ overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and
“ the seats of them that sold doves; and said unto
“ them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a
“ house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of
“ thieves.” Matt. xxi. 13.

Thus did our Saviour a second time expel the profane traders from the place peculiarly consecrated to the worship of God. But had he not acted under the immediate influence of the divine Spirit, it would not have been possible for him to have driven the mercenary traders from the temple of God. Without authority from the Roman emperor, without encouragement or countenance from the rulers of Jerusalem, without arms to defend himself, or terrify the fierce and ungovernable multitude, this mighty reformer rescued the house of God from a state of abominable profanation, and at the same time afforded a signal instance of his divine power; and this great work was effected, without being productive either of tumult or opposition.

After the expulsion of the sacrilegious traders, the people brought into the temple a great number of persons who were blind, lame, and diseased, and presented them to Jesus, who removed the afflictions of these miserable objects. These miraculous cures had such an effect upon the multitude, that they proclaimed our Lord to be the Messiah, who was to prove the great deliverer of Israel. “ And the
“ blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and
“ he healed them. And when the chief priests and
“ scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and
“ the children crying in the temple, and saying, Ho-
“ sanna to the son of David; they were sore displeas-
“ ed, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these
“ say? And Jesus saith unto them, yea. Have ye
“ not read, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings,
“ thou hast perfected praise?” Matt. xxi. 14, 15, 16. By this question, which our blessed Saviour quoted from the eighth Psalm, he intimated, that the least considerable of the works of the Almighty, had been rendered instrumental in glorifying his holy name, on account of his unbounded love towards the sons of sinful men.

Notwithstanding the cruel and sacrilegious designs which the Sanhedrim had projected against our blessed Redeemer, he continued daily to repair to the temple, and there to instruct the people, who resorted to him in great numbers. After the fatigues of the day, he was accustomed to retire to Bethany, where, on account of the benevolent miracle he had performed in restoring Lazarus to life, he was held in high veneration.

Some Greek proselytes, who, though uncircumcised, were, notwithstanding, worshippers of the true God, came to Jerusalem, in order to celebrate the passover. Having heard of the preaching and sur-

prising miracles of our Saviour, they were exceedingly desirous of beholding a person, whose extraordinary sanctity and benevolent actions, had acquired him so eminent a degree of celebrity; and therefore they requested, that Philip and Bethsaida, would introduce them to his presence. But Philip being ignorant, whether his master would be willing to receive the Greeks, he communicated to Andrew the request they had made; and these disciples agreed to inform Jesus of the honor which the Greeks had solicited.

Being informed of the request the Greeks had made, our Lord informed his disciples, that he would willingly admit them into his presence; and at the same time intimated, that the time was approaching, when the conversion of the Gentiles would be effected; saying, however, that those who acknowledged him as the Messiah, and yet expected that he would affect the pomp and splendor of a temporal monarch, would be disappointed. The period approaches, said our blessed Redeemer, when he who now appears to you as one of the common race of mortals, will be exalted to the highest pinnacle of glory, and be manifested not to the Jews alone, but also to the Gentiles. But this, he said, could not happen till after his decease; illustrating the necessity there was for his dying, by delivering the similitude of a grain of corn, which, if not sown in the earth, remains unfruitful; but which, if buried in the ground, yields a vast increase of fruit. It was absolutely necessary, that he should die and be buried, before his ascension to the glorious throne of his heavenly Father; and his disciples must also expect to be maliciously and cruelly persecuted on his account; but if they persevered resolutely in supporting his cause, firmly resolving to forfeit their lives, rather than violate their obedience, he would amply reward their constancy and fortitude,

by bestowing upon them the blessings of immortality. “ And there came certain Greeks among them, that came up to worship at the feast. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew; and again, Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal,” John xii. 20, &c.

Our Saviour further said, that whoever wished to be numbered among his faithful disciples, must adopt the example which his conduct exhibited to them, for the purpose of teaching them the means of securing their eternal salvation; and such faithful servants, after this transitory life, should reside with him in the regions of perpetual bliss. To convince his disciples, that the conditions he imposed upon them were not more severe than those to which he was himself subjected, he acknowledged that he was greatly afflicted, upon considering the calamities which he was shortly to endure. And he now addressed himself to his heavenly Father, praying that he would afford a demonstration of the divinity of his mission. “ If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honor. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.” John xii. 26, 27, 28.

Our blessed Saviour had no sooner pronounced the

above words, than the voice of the Almighty was heard from the heavens. The people were fully satisfied, that the voice was preternatural ; for though it resembled thunder in loudness, it was so articulate, as to be clearly understood by the astonished multitude. “ Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said, that it thundered : others said, an angel spake to him.” John xii. 28, 29. In the above manner did the Almighty signify, that his holy name had been already glorified by the miracles Jesus had wrought, and that it should be again glorified by further manifestations of his divine power.

Our blessed Saviour now informed the multitude, that the voice they had heard was not pronounced on his account, but to confirm them in their faith of the divinity of his mission. “ This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes,” John xii. 30.— It was meant to confirm what I have predicted to you concerning my sufferings, death, resurrection, and the conversion of the Gentiles to the precepts of my gospel. Further to enforce this doctrine, Jesus said, that the time was approaching, when the power of Satan, under whose dominion the people were enslaved, would be destroyed, and when exemplary justice would be executed upon idolatrous and all other wicked persons, and the light of the gospel be spread throughout the universe ; adding, that he himself should be exalted upon the throne of his heavenly Father. “ Now is the judgment of this world : now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.” John xii. 31, 32, 33.

Some of the auditors of our blessed Saviour imagined, that the words of Jesus were contradictory to what they by the scriptures were taught to believe concerning the Messiah, who, according to the sacred writings, was never to die; and yet, said they, you who have assumed that sacred character, now predict your own death. Since his prophecy of his approaching death, and what was written concerning him in the law, appeared to them to be irreconcilable; they asked, whether he was really the Messiah, or whether that appellation belonged to a person who was not yet made known to them. “The people answered him, We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is the Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, yet a little while is the light with you: walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whether he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.” John xii. 34, 35, 36. Thus our blessed Saviour intimated, that the time would soon arrive, when they would be deprived of the benefit of his preaching and miracles; and therefore it behoved them to adhere to the precepts of his gospel, as the infallible means of qualifying themselves to enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of heaven; adding, that if they acted in contradiction to his precepts, they would be afflicted with a spiritual blindness and rendered incapable of enjoying that state of perpetual felicity, which had been promised to all those who conformed to his doctrines.

Our blessed Redeemer now retired from the temple, and for a short time secluded himself from society, that his devotions might not be interrupted. He departed from Jerusalem, and in all probability, retreated, as before, to the town of Bethany. Notwith-

standing the many incontestible proofs that Jesus had afforded of his being the Son of God, and the messenger appointed by his heavenly Father to effect the salvation of mankind, great numbers of the Jews still considered him as an impostor; and therefore, what Isaiah had said of the people of his time, may be applied to those who lived in the days of Christ. "They have not known, nor understood; for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and hardened their hearts, that they cannot understand." Isa. xlv. 18. Thus the prophet signified, that many of the Jews would be of such contumacious and obdurate dispositions, that what was calculated for enlightening their understandings, would have an effect immediately contrary.

It is here necessary to introduce some explication of the above prophecy of Isaiah, which St. John applied to the Jews. The words of the evangelist are these. "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled which he spoke, Lord who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah had said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them." John xii. 37, &c. Though in our translation we read, *He* hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts; the meaning of the writer was, that through obstinacy and wickedness they were wholly irreclaimable. The personal is substituted for the impersonal, and the active for the passive; so that by reversing the structure of the phraseology, the reading would run thus; "Their eyes are blinded, and their hearts are hardened." The Greek inter-

preters of Isaiah, and the Chaldee paraphrast, correspond in giving the following version: "Their eyes are shut and darkened, lest they should see." And that this is the true import of the prophet's words is indisputably certain; for it was not by the will of the Almighty, but through the influence of their own evil dispositions, that they were afflicted with spiritual blindness. Though God is omniscient, his knowledge of past, present, and future events, has no such influence upon the will of man, as to incite or necessitate him to improper actions. If the will of wicked men was not free from every restraint, but such as is imposed upon them by the dominion of Satan, our blessed and benevolent Saviour would not have so passionately exhorted the Jews to embrace his gospel. Our Lord says, "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. These things I say unto you, that you might be saved. How often would I have gathered you, and ye would not. Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

Although the generality of the Jews refused to acknowledge Christ as the Messiah, who they supposed would establish the seat of his government in Jerusalem, and reign over all the kingdoms of the earth, yet many of them became converts to his gospel; and among these were some of the members of the Sanhedrim. But though these people acknowledged Christ to be the Son of God, they pusillanimously concealed their faith, lest they should render themselves odious to the other members of the council; for they were more ambitious of power and popularity among the multitude, than desirous of acquiring the approbation of the Almighty; whose displeasure they were willing to incur, rather than expose themselves to the hazard of being expelled the synagogue.

Upon the return of our Saviour to the temple, in order to encourage the faith of those who believed him to be the Messiah, he exhorted them to a rigid adherence to the principles of his gospel. He who becomes a convert to my doctrines, does not repose faith in my preaching, so much as he acknowledges the power and goodness of God, who by the miracles which he has enabled me to perform, has plainly demonstrated, that my commission is derived immediately from him ; and that what I execute upon earth, is perfectly consistent with his divine pleasure.—Whoever properly reflects on the great works I have wrought, must be convinced, that I act by virtue of the divine authority ; without which, it would not have been possible for me to perform the great miracles of which you have been witnesses. I am come into the world for the great purpose of enlightening it by my gospel, and to dispel those clouds of ignorance and superstition, in which the minds of mankind are involved.

But the period is approaching, when I shall inflict exemplary justice upon the incredulity of those who persevere in rejecting the offers which I make them for securing their eternal salvation. My design is not to condemn and punish, but to save mankind, by reclaiming them from their abominable iniquities.—Those, however, who disregard my admonitions, shall, on the great day of judgment, be fatally convinced of the heinous sin of their incorrigible obstinacy, in disregarding those lenient measures which I pursue, in order to direct them into the paths of eternal life and salvation. A due observation of the commands of the Almighty, will infallibly entitle you to participate with me in the blessings of immortality : and in thus proposing to you the means of obtaining everlasting life, I act agreeably to the benevolent will of my heavenly Father. “ 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. Jesus cried and said, He that be-
“ lieveth on me, believeth not on me, but on him
“ that sent me. I am come a light into the world,
“ that whosoever believeth on me should not abide
“ in darkness. And if any man hear my words,
“ and believe not, I judge him not ; for I come 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 that I have
“ spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.
“ For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father
“ which sent me ; he gave me a commandment what
“ I should say, and what I should speak. And I know
“ that his commandment is life everlasting : what-
“ soever I speak therefore, even as the Father said
“ unto me, so I speak.” John xii. 42, &c. Having
delivered the above discourses, our blessed Saviour
returned from Jerusalem to Bethany, accompanied by
his twelve apostles.

CHAP. XXXIII.

In his way from Bethany to Jerusalem, Jesus curses a fig tree, which immediately withers. The rulers of Jerusalem conspire to effect the destruction of Christ. The power of faith, and the necessity of forgiveness. The rulers of the Jews question Jesus as to the authority by which he had expelled the traders from the temple, and assumed the privilege of publicly discoursing to the people; and he retorts upon, and confutes them. Our Saviour delivers the parables of the father and two sons, and of the vineyard that was hired by husbandmen. Parable of the wedding supper, and of the man who was found without a wedding garment. The Pharisees concert measures for exposing Jesus to the enmity of the populace, and send different people to examine him; but he exposes the futility of their discourses. The Sadducees propose a question to Jesus concerning a woman who had seven husbands; whereupon our Lord finds occasion of addressing them on the subject of a future state. Our Saviour becomes the object of popular admiration. In reply to a question proposed by a lawyer, Jesus explains, which is the most important precept amongst the legal institutions; and he commends another of the same profession, in consequence of his having made a pertinent remark. Jesus questions the Pharisees concerning some words of David, and they are unable to offer any reply. Different sects among the Jews.

AT the dawn of the following morning, our Saviour, accompanied by his twelve apostles, departed from Bethany, and repaired again towards the capital of Judea. On the road, our Saviour perceived a

fig-tree, which from the abundance of its foliage, promised to afford fruit; and being hungry, he approached the tree, expecting to find figs to satisfy his appetite. But perceiving that the tree was barren, he thence took occasion to represent the deplorable state of the obstinate Jews, who were incapable of producing the fruits of virtue; and therefore, pointing to the tree, he pronounced upon it the curse of barrenness, and it immediately withered. "Now in the morning as he returned into the city he hungered. And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came unto it, and found nothing thereon but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away? Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done." Matt. xxi. 18, &c.

This action was entirely emblematical, and intended to perfigure the speedy destruction of the Jewish nation, in consequence of their unfruitfulness in religion and virtue, notwithstanding the advantages they enjoyed in the circumstance of our Saviour preaching to them the ways of salvation.

After relating, nearly in the same words of St. Matthew, that our Lord found no fruit on the tree, St. Mark adds, "For the time of figs was not yet." It plainly appears then, that this was a species of fig-tree, which had leaves of sufficient growth, to induce the expectation that it was not destitute of fruit; it is also evident, that this was a particular kind of tree, be-

cause it is distinguished by having leaves when other fig-trees had none, or only such as were small and tender; and that the former species abounded in the neighborhoods of Bethpage, Bethany, and the Mount of Olives, we are assured upon indisputable authority.

Jesus approached the tree in expectation of finding fruit, a short time, probably four days, previous to the passover, or the time of his crucifixion; and this appears, from the strict connection of the subsequent discourses and actions of our blessed Redeemer, as recorded in the gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark. The passover is well known to have been in the month of Nisan, or about the end of our March, or the beginning of April.

The tenderness of the branches, and the putting forth of the leaves of the ordinary fig-tree, are circumstances appealed to by our Saviour himself; and that soon after his pronouncing the curse of barrenness upon the tree in question, as natural indications of the approach of summer. It would therefore be absurd to suppose, that Jesus could expect to gather the common kind of figs at a season five months before their time of arriving at perfection.

It is clearly proved from the Talmudist cited by the learned Lightfoot, that the ordinary figs of Judea did not arrive to perfection till five months after the middle of Nisan; and the same Jewish writers, exclusive of the common sort, describe various different species of figs; and they particularly mention one kind of tree, which bore leaves through all the seasons of the year, and was seldom destitute of fruit; and this tree was called Benoth-Shuac. According to these writers, the Benoth-Shuac produced figs every year; which, however did not come

to perfection till the third year ; and it bore figs of three different sorts at one time ; the fruit of the present year, and of the two years preceding.— Other trees, they inform us, produced ripe fruit in two years ; and therefore a part of it, must have hung upon them during the winter. The tree, on which our Saviour expected to find fruit, must have been one of the two sorts above-mentioned, which bore ripe fruit through all the seasons.

Pliny and Theophrastus aver, that there are a sort of fig-trees in Syria and Greece, having leaves continually upon them and bearing at once, both old fruit and young. And the emperor Julian asserts, that there is a kind of fig-tree at Damascus in Syria, which bears both old and young fruit at the same time ; and this famous apostate adds, that the uninterrupted succession of fruit on the same tree, mentioned in Homer's description of the garden of Alcinous, was verified in a fig-tree at Damascus.

Baumgarten assures us, that in December 1507, he found flowers and ripe fruits, growing on the same trees in the neighborhood of Jericho ; and in January, abundance of ripe fruit at Baroot in Syria. And Tournefort says, that some sorts of figs grow in the Archipelago in winter, spring, and summer : but that the garden or ordinary figs, are not ripe till the latter end of August, or the beginning of September.

Our Lord, as we had before observed, had all the innocent infirmities of human nature : and though it was “ his meat and drink to do the will of his Father,” yet his exhausted spirits were, of necessity, to be repaired by food. It is true, that he might have appeased his appetite, by the same miraculous means which he had repeatedly exerted for supplying the necessities of the multitude ; but where human means

could be had recourse to, it was his custom to reserve his miraculous powers for occasions of high importance.

The members of the Sanhedrim having listened to the discourses of Jesus, they became exceedingly alarmed, lest he should obtain such an ascendancy over the multitude, as would render it dangerous for them to oppose him; and therefore they assembled, in order to concert measures for effecting his destruction. Knowing the malignant and barbarous designs which the rulers of Jerusalem had projected, our Lord constantly retired from the city in the evening, lest under favor of the darkness of night, he should be privately attacked by his enemies.

The day after Jesus had pronounced the curse of barrenness upon the fig-tree, as he was passing as usual towards Jerusalem, in order to instruct the people in the temple, the apostles observed, that the fig-tree was dried up: and Peter requested his Master to remark the circumstance. Hereupon Jesus said, That their was no cause for their expressing surprize, that the tree had decayed at his command, since, provided they reposed a steady faith in the power and goodness of God, they would be able to effect more extraordinary miracles; for if they ordered Mount Olivet to remove into the sea, it would start from its foundations and obey their command; for the Almighty had graciously promised to comply with the petitions of those who strictly conformed to his divine pleasure. But our blessed Saviour recalled to their recollection, that if they hoped to obtain a remission of their sins from his heavenly Father, they must forgive those from whom they had sustained injuries; for without performing this just condition on their part, it would be fruitless to hope for pardon of their trespasses against the Almighty. “ And in the morning, as they passed

“ by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots.
“ And Peter calling to remembrance, saith unto him,
“ Master, behold the tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering, saith unto them,
“ Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that
“ whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou
“ removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall
“ not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those
“ things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall
“ have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto
“ you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray,
“ believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.
“ 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 ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which
“ is in heaven forgive you your trespasses.” Mark
xi. 20, &c.

But to return to what occurred on the preceding day. After he had cursed the fig tree, Jesus proceeded to the temple, and there walked with his disciples, and instructed them in the nature and principles of his gospel. A deputation from the supreme council of the Jewish nation now came to him, and enquired by what authority he had presumed to expel the traders from the temple, and publicly to instruct the people ; and whether he made pretensions to the character of a prophet, a priest, or a king ; observing, that persons of no other descriptions were qualified to introduce alterations either in the constitution of the church or state ; and if he claimed either of the above-mentioned characters, they demanded from whom he derived his commission. Instead of replying to the Pharisees, Jesus said he had a question to propose to them, and if they would resolve him, he would candidly answer to the demands they had made. He then desired they would communicate to him their opinion

concerning John the Baptist, both with respect to his preaching, and baptizing proselytes ; and to declare, whether they supposed him to have acted in virtue of his own authority, or in consequence of a commission delegated to him by the Almighty ? “ And they came again to Jerusalem ; and as he was walking in the temple, there came to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, and say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things ? and who gave thee this authority to do these things ? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men ? Answer me.” Mark xi. 27, &c.

The Pharisees were utterly disconcerted by the above question ; for if they declared John to have acted by the divine authority, they must, as a necessary consequence, have admitted the divinity of Jesus, whom the Baptist had publicly proclaimed to be the Messiah ; and on the contrary, if they denied the divine authority of John, they were apprehensive of incurring the displeasure of the multitude, who would probably stone them to death, since they almost universally esteemed the Baptist to have been a prophet. These considerations induced them to decline offering any reply to the question proposed by Jesus, to whom they acknowledged, that they were incapable of deciding, as to the authority by which John had preached, and performed the ceremony of baptism. Our Saviour now said, that since they had not pretended that it was unlawful for John to baptize penitents, although they were ignorant by what authority he had acted, and since it has not been pretended that the conduct of the Baptist had deserved reproach, there remained no necessity for him to gratify their curiosity, by explaining to them by what authority

he performed those things in the temple, which had proved offensive to the Sanhedrim. “And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say from heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if he shall say, Of men, they feared the people, for all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.” Mark xi. 31, 32, 33.

The deputation from the Sanhedrim having avowed their ignorance as to whence John derived his authority for practising the ceremony of baptism, our blessed Saviour severely rebuked them, conveying his reproof in the parable of the father and his two sons. “A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.” Matt. xxi. 28. But this undutiful youth abruptly said to his father, “I will not.” Reflecting, however, on the impropriety of his conduct, he determined to make some atonement for his disobedience to his indulgent parent, by complying with his command; and he therefore went to work in the vineyard.

The ungrateful behaviour of one son, induced the father to impose the same command upon the other; and this youth, with an affectation of ready obedience, said, “Sir, I go.” But notwithstanding his pretended willingness to obey the commands of his father, he went not into the vineyard. The conduct of the second son, our Lord represented as bearing a similitude to that of the Pharisees; who attributed to the Almighty the most honorable appellations, and professed the most earnest solicitude for his service in their devotional exercises; but at the same time obstinately refused to engage in any part of that work

which he had enjoined them to perform. The character of the other son, said Jesus, is descriptive of the disposition of the publicans and harlots. They promised not to execute the will of the Almighty; but upon seriously revolving in their minds the ingratitude and disobedience of their conduct, and the gracious offers of mercy which were made to them, they reformed their lives, and embraced the Christian gospel, whereby they have made atonement for their former delinquencies, and have intitled themselves to enjoy the rewards of a blessed immortality. “Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you.— For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.” Matt. xxi. 31, 32.

Having reproved the Pharisees for rejecting the preaching of John the Baptist, our blessed Saviour proceeded to represent the sinfulness of the Jewish nation, in disregarding the predictions of all the prophets that had been sent to them by the Almighty, as well as the admonitions of the Son of the Most High; apprizing them, at the same time, of the dreadful punishments that would inevitably be inflicted upon them, if they persevered in their obstinacy. “There was a certain housholder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

“ Again, he sent other servants, more than the first ;
“ and they did unto them likewise. But last of all,
“ he sent unto them his son, saying, They will rever-
“ ence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the
“ son, they said among themselves, This is the heir,
“ come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inhe-
“ ritance. And they caught him, and cast him out
“ of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord
“ therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do
“ unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He
“ will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will
“ let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which
“ shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus
“ saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scrip-
“ tures, The stone which the builders rejected, the
“ same is become the head of the corner : this is the
“ Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?
“ Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God
“ shall be taken from you, and given to a nation
“ bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever
“ shall fall on this stone, shall be broken : but on
“ whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to pow-
“ der.” Matt. xxi. 33, &c.

In the sacred scriptures, the church is frequently compared to a vineyard : but, for the fuller conviction of the Jews, the above parable was founded upon a part of the fifth chapter of Isaiah. “ The vineyard
“ of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the
“ men of Judah his pleasant plant : and he looked for
“ judgment, but behold oppression ; for righteous-
“ ness, but behold a cry.” The reader will perceive, that our blessed Saviour continued the prophet’s metaphor. He informed them, that the Almighty sent the prophets to exhort the Jews to pursue the paths of religion and virtue : but, enraged against the messengers of God, on account of the freedom with which they had reprov’d the iniquities of the people, they

cruelly persecuted, and even put them to death, with the most unrelenting fury.

Notwithstanding their impious barbarity which was exercised upon these holy men, the Almighty withheld his divine wrath; and in his unbounded love to the children of sinful men, sent other prophets to exhort them to reclamation: but these experienced a fate similar to that of their predecessors.

But notwithstanding the base ingratitude of mankind, God sent his only Son upon earth, invested with a commission to labor with unceasing anxiety to promote the salvation of mankind: but notwithstanding he proved his divine authority by the incontestible evidence of the various miracles he performed, they obstinately persevered in refusing to acknowledge him as the Messiah, and thereby aggravated their former guilt. In consequence of their having rejected the offers of mercy made to them by the prophets, and afterwards by the Messiah, he said the Almighty would deprive the Jews of the kingdom of heaven, and bestow it upon another people, who would render themselves worthy to enjoy the blessings thereof; and they who had rejected the corner-stone, by which was represented the true religion, should be consigned to everlasting punishment. By this parable, is represented the favor of God towards the Jewish nation, who had been put into possession of the vineyard he had himself planted. The husbandmen to whom the vineyard was let, were descriptive of the priests and Levites, who were remarkable for their irreverent treatment of the prophets; and it was intimated, that this deportment of the husbandmen, particularly towards the Son of God, would render the Jews obnoxious to the divine vengeance.

The Pharisees were sensible, that the above admi-

rable discourses of Jesus, and the denunciations of punishment they contained, were purposely directed towards them: and they deliberated among themselves, upon the means of taking him into custody, in order to conduct him before the Sanhedrim for examination: but they dared not carry the iniquitous plan they had suggested into execution, apprehending, that if they presumed to offer any violence to the person of our blessed Redeemer, they should thereby create an insurrection among the populace who esteemed him to be a prophet.

Our Saviour now delivered another parable, wherein he represented the slight and inconsiderable manner in which his gospel had impressed the minds of the Jewish nation; and, on the contrary, the cheerful and warm reception it had experienced from the Gentiles. The gracious and benevolent intention of the Almighty, in imparting the gospel to mankind, our blessed Saviour illustrated, by representing to his auditors the conduct of a sovereign, who, in honor of his son, invited a great number of guests to a superb entertainment. “ And Jesus answered, and spake
“ unto them by parables, and said, The kingdom of
“ heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a
“ marriage-feast for his son. And he sent forth his
“ servants to call them that were bidden to the wed-
“ ding: and they would not come. Again he sent
“ forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are
“ bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my
“ oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are
“ ready, come unto the marriage. But they made light
“ of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, ano-
“ ther to merchandize. And the remnant took his
“ servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew
“ them. But when the king heard thereof, he was
“ wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed
“ those murderers, and burned up their city. Then

“ saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready,
“ but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go
“ ye therefore unto the highways, and as many
“ as ye shall find, bid them to the marriage. So
“ the servants went out into the highways, and ga-
“ thered together all as many as they found, both
“ bad and good: and the wedding was furnished
“ with guests. And when the king came in to see
“ the guests, he saw there was a man which had
“ not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him,
“ Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a
“ wedding-garment? and he was speechless. Then
“ said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and
“ foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer
“ darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of
“ teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.”
Matt. xxii. 1, &c.

In the above manner did our Saviour intimate, that the Jews had been first admonished to pursue a life of righteousness by John the Baptist, and afterwards by himself; but they obstinately rejected the offers of mercy and eternal salvation made to them, both by the Messiah and his forerunner. After the death and resurrection of the Messiah, the apostles would be sent abroad to proclaim the establishment of the gospel covenant: but these messengers would prove as unsuccessful as the former. By this part of the parable, was predicted the destruction of the Jews by the Roman army, which was made the instrument of executing vengeance upon those rebellious people. The concluding part of this similitude shews, that the conditions of salvation proposed to, but disregarded by the Jews, would be gladly accepted by the Gentiles; and that those who refused to embrace the gospel of Christ, represented by the wedding-garment, would be consigned to everlasting punishment. Hence then it appears, that in this parable, the king signi-

fies God the Father ; that the king's son was meant to represent our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ ; and the servants who were employed to invite the guests to the entertainment, were John the Baptist, the twelve apostles, and the seventy disciples.

Enraged by the severity of our Saviour's reproofs, the Pharisees and their adherents, now determined to exert their utmost endeavors for effecting the destruction of our blessed Redeemer : but on account of the great popularity he had acquired by his preaching and miracles, they judged it prudent to observe great caution in the prosecution of their iniquitous project.

The Pharisees united themselves in a conspiracy with the Sadducees or Herodians ; and that the enmity of these people towards Jesus, was now arrived to the highest degree, is apparent ; since, with a view to execute their barbarous design against the Son of God, they suspended that rancorous animosity which had so long subsisted between the two sects. They suborned some persons, a part of whom were attached to the Pharisees, and others to the Sadducees, to engage in conversation with Jesus, and endeavor to surprise him into some expression, the meaning of which they might pervert into the foundation of a criminal charge before the Roman governor.

Under the pretext of entertaining a rigid veneration for the divine laws, the conspirators repaired to Jesus, and, with an affectation of righteousness and sanctity, declared that they considered him as a zealous advocate in the cause of truth, and a person who was in every respect qualified to decide on a * con-

* A native of Galilee, named Judas, had industriously propagated a

troverted point, respecting which, they were in great doubt. They then requested, that he would declare his opinion on the following question, which had long been the subject of furious controversy. Is it lawful for the people of Israel to pay tribute to Cæsar, he being a foreign prince, since it is enacted by the law, that the Jews shall not elect a king to reign over them, who is not a native of Judea ?

They imagined, that if he should pronounce the payment of tribute to a foreign potentate, to be consistent with the law, he would thereby inflame the enmity of the people, who would accuse him of being a flatterer of men in power, a traitor to the liberties of his country, and one who taught doctrines destructive of the known privileges of the chosen people of God : and if he should pronounce the payment of tribute to be contrary to the law, they meant to accuse him before the deputy from the Roman empire, who, they hoped, would consider him as the fomentor of rebellion, and therefore put him to death.

Jesus informed them, that notwithstanding their artifice and dissimulation, he was apprized of their malignant intentions : but, though they meant to ensnare him, and not to learn whether they should violate the law in complying with a tax imposed upon the public, he would condescend to answer their question. At his request they shewed him a piece of the tribute money ; upon which, he said to them, that since the coin bore the image and the name of Cæsar, they acknowledged his authority by making use of it : adding, that while they discharged their duty to the ci-

notion, that the payment of taxes to a foreign power, was an absolute infringement of the law : and this doctrine was so agreeable to the mercenary dispositions of the Jews, that it obtained great numbers of strenuous partizans, particularly among the lower classes of the people.

vil magistrate, they should constantly remember what was due to the Almighty ; and that since they bore the image of the great and omnipotent King of heaven and earth, it behoved them to pay him the tribute of praise and adoration, and to serve him with fidelity, and to the utmost extent of their power. “ Then
 “ went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they
 “ might entangle him in talk. And they sent out
 “ unto him their disciples, with the Herodians, say-
 “ ing, Master, we know that thou art true, and teach-
 “ est the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for
 “ any man ; for thou regardest not the person of men.
 “ Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou ? Is it law-
 “ ful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not ? But Jesus
 “ perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt
 “ ye me, ye hypocrites ? Shew me the tribute-money.
 “ And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith
 “ unto them, Whose is this image and superscrip-
 “ tion ? They say unto him, Cæsar’s. Then saith
 “ he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar, the
 “ things which are Cæsar’s ; and unto God, the things
 “ that are God’s. When they had heard these words,
 “ they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.”
 Matt. xxii. 15, &c.

The Pharisees and their adherents, under the pretext of a regard to religion, were accustomed to promote, and defend rebellious practices. But to ingratiate the favor of the reigning powers, the Herodians readily complied with whatever injunctions were imposed upon them, however contradictory such commands might be to the divine laws. Our Saviour therefore adapted his reply to both sects ; exhorting them to yield due obedience to the Almighty, and conform to the institutions of the civil government.

Though our Lord had so effectually defeated the crafty designs of the Pharisees and Sadducees, he

was presently afterwards attacked by a party of the latter sect, who denied the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body; and these people proposed to him the question which they had frequently put to the Pharisees, with a view of disconcerting them. “Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him, saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, that if any man’s brother die having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren; and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her: and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife. And Jesus answering, said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage. But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection of the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him.” Luke xx. 27, &c.

The Sadducees, who believed that the soul was a refined material substance, contended that, if there was to be a state of futurity, it must resemble that of this world; they therefore argued, in contradiction to those who believed in the resurrection of the body, and the immortality of the soul, that, as the soul

in a future state must be material and mortal, the existence of the human race could not be preserved, without those intercourses between the sexes which were authorised by marriage. Hence then they conceived it to be a necessary consequence of the doctrine of the resurrection and a future state, that the wife of every man should be restored to him.

But our Saviour clearly confuted the arguments of his adversaries, by informing them, that the Almighty had created spirit as well as matter ; and he observed, that the nature of that life which was to be obtained in a future state, would render marriage altogether superfluous ; for as man would partake of the spiritual and immortal nature of angels, the necessity of propagating and continuing the species, would of necessity be superceded.

Having exposed the folly and incredulity of the Sadducees, our blessed Saviour proceeded to prove their total ignorance of the true meaning of the scriptures ; and particularly of the writings of Moses, from whence they had deduced their objection. He observed, that Moses had called the Almighty the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, long after the decease of those venerable patriarchs ; therefore it was evident, that their relation to the Almighty still subsisted ; and that they were not to be annihilated by death, but to continue the faithful servants of the most High. The circumstance of the Almighty proclaiming to Moses from the flaming bush, “ I am the God of thy Father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And our blessed Saviour’s illustration of that passage, proved so palpable a refutation of the pretensions of the Sadducees, that the people could not refrain from expressing their admiration on account of the victory he had obtained over that impious sect.

The superlative wisdom of our Saviour extorted commendation even from the most obstinate of the Pharisees: but though his controversy with the Herodians, had terminated so highly to his honor, one of the lawyers, influenced by the same insidious motives which had operated upon the assailants, whom he had so lately defeated, requested him to declare, which was the most important precept of the law. The reason of his proposing this question to our Saviour, was to prove, whether he had as perfect an acquaintance with the sacred laws, and was as conversant in, and as acutely observant upon, the controversies that had been maintained upon different parts thereof, as he had, on various occasions proved himself qualified to deduce convincing and irrefragable arguments from the inspired writers.

That the question proposed by the lawyer may be the more clearly understood, it is necessary to remark, that some of the most learned of the rabbies insisted, that the chief precept was the law of sacrifices; some contended in favor of the law of circumcision; and others were as strenuous advocates for the law of meats and washings. But our Lord replied, that the chief commandment was that which informed them, that there was only one God, whom they were to worship with all the affections of their soul. “ And one
“ of the scribes came, and having heard them reason-
“ ing together, and perceiving that he had answered
“ them well, asked him, Which is the first command-
“ ment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first
“ of all the commandments is, hear, O Israel, the Lord
“ our God is one 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. Mark xii. 28,
29, 30.

Our blessed Saviour having thus replied to the lawyer's question, he added, that the second commandment was that which enjoined us to love our neighbors. It is true, that this had no relation to the question proposed by the lawyer; yet our blessed Saviour was graciously pleased to inform him, which was the second commandment; probably, because the people of his sect did not acknowledge the importance of loving their neighbors or because they were remarkably deficient in the practice of that duty. "And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: there is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one God, and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question," Mark xii. 31, &c.

In the course of our blessed Saviour's ministry, the Pharisees had proposed to him many intricate questions, with a design of proving whether he possessed the prophetic gift: and in his turn, our blessed Redeemer now judged proper to prove the extent of their knowledge in the sacred scriptures. He therefore enquired of them, from whom they supposed the Messiah to be descended; and they replied, that he was unquestionably of the family of David. Since you assert, said he, that Christ is the son of David, you ought to advance some argument in support of your opinion, and render what you have said consistent with what David implies, when he distinguishes Christ by the appellation of Lord. "While the Pharisees

“ were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, “ What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They “ say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto “ them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord; “ saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on “ my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy foot- “ stool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his “ son.” Matt. xxii. 41, &c.

The Jews did not imagine that the Messiah would be endowed with any more extraordinary perfections, than such as human nature was capable of attaining; for though they distinguished him by the title of the Son of God, they did not conceive that he was to enjoy the fulness of divine power; and therefore, they acknowledged themselves unable to answer the questions proposed to them by our blessed Redeemer.

Had not their obstinacy been wholly incorrigible, the latter question must have convinced them of their error; for if, as they imagined, the Messiah was to be only a secular prince, he could not have been called Lord, by those pious men who died previous to his birth; nor can it be supposed, that so mighty a sovereign as David, would have applied to him that honorable appellation. Since then he is the king, not only of the ordinary classes of deceased men, but of the monarchs from whom he was descended, his kingdom necessarily comprehends the inhabitants of all countries and periods of time. He was to remain at the right hand of God, till his enemies were subdued: and therefore those who persist in their iniquities, and refuse to yield a due obedience to the divine will of our blessed Saviour, shall, like the rebellious subjects of temporal sovereigns, be condemned to punishments proportioned to the enormity of their crimes.

The consummate wisdom displayed by Jesus in his controversies with the Pharisees and Sadducees, convinced the Jews, that, with respect to the extent of his knowledge, the strength and brilliancy of his imagination, his strong powers of argument, and the persuasive force of his eloquence, he had an infinite superiority to the most renowned of their rabbies. On a variety of occasions, he had so clearly confuted the objections advanced against his gospel, and so evidently proved them to be absurd, frivolous, and vain, that his most inveterate enemies were compelled to acknowledge the astonishing profundity of his wisdom : and from this time, they declined all attempts to embroil him in difficulties, by means of intricate and insidious questions.

As we have hitherto had frequent occasion to speak of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who alone are mentioned by the evangelists, we shall conclude this chapter, with an account of those, and the other principal sects among the ancient Jews. And to execute this purpose, we shall have recourse to the works of the learned * Josephus, who is justly esteemed the most accurate and authentic of the Jewish historians.

“ Among the Jews are three sects of religion : Es-
“ senes, Pharisees, and Sadducees ; of which, the first
“ are most distinguished for their moral and religious
“ conduct. The Essenes are the most friendly among
“ each other of any people existing. They are ene-
“ mies equally to pleasure and to vice, and deem con-
“ tinence, and the subjection of their passions as the
“ first of virtues. They have no exalted idea of mar-
“ riage ; but are fond of the children of other peo-
“ ple, whom they take when young, and educate

* Vide Josephus, translated by Thompson and Price, Vol. II. p. 286, &c.

“ them as their own. Their objections to marriage
“ do not lead them to wish the extinction of mankind ;
“ but they think the women frail, and doubt their fide-
“ lity to any single man.

“ They despise abundance of wealth ; and one prin-
“ cipal cement of their society, is the enjoyment of
“ their possessions in common, so that none of them
“ shall experience the extremity of riches or poverty :
“ but the whole society, like brothers, share in the
“ common bounties of Providence.

“ They cannot bear that oil should touch their bo-
“ dies ; and if such a thing happens by accident, are
“ uneasy till they get rid of it. They affect great
“ simplicity in their apparel, not regarding how coarse
“ it is, so it be clean and white.

“ From the best men of their society they choose
“ stewards, to whom they commit the receipt and ma-
“ nagement of their revenues, leaving it to them to
“ distribute to the brotherhood, according to their
“ several necessities.

“ They do not reside in any fixed habitations, but
“ wander about in different cities, where they are al-
“ ways ready to accommodate such of their party as
“ may happen to come there, though they have been
“ perfect strangers till such accidental meeting.

“ When they travel, they carry nothing with them
“ but arms for their protection. There are always
“ some of the fraternity in every city to accommodate
“ their friends ; so that they are in no want of lodg-
“ ings, provisions, clothes, or the other necessaries
“ of life. Their dress is not unlike that worn by
“ children when under the care of their preceptor.

“ They neither change either their clothes or shoes
“ till they are ragged, or worn out. They neither
“ buy nor sell one with another, but cheerfully supply
“ each other with such things as are wanted; and
“ this not in the way of exchange; for the laws compel
“ the one to give, and leave the other at liberty to
“ accept.

“ They are the most conscientious men existing.
“ They will not speak a word of common business
“ before the rising of the sun; but, at that time, use
“ traditional forms of prayer, in which they ask of God
“ that the sun may shine on them. These devotions
“ ended, they engage in their various occupations till
“ eleven in the forenoon, when they again assemble,
“ with linen clothes thrown over them, and wash
“ themselves from head to foot with cold water; which
“ being done, they retreat to their cells, where no
“ person of any other profession is permitted to come
“ near them. Thence they proceed into a refectory,
“ which they deem almost as holy as the temple.
“ Here they remain some time without speaking,
“ when the baker brings each man his loaf, and the
“ cook a plate, or mess of soup to every one, and sets
“ it before them. The priest then says grace, before
“ which no one must presume to touch his food.—
“ After dinner, solemn thanks are returned, and then
“ they strip off their habits, which they deem some-
“ what sacred, and proceed to their common em-
“ ployment till evening. When they go to supper,
“ they sit at one table, and if they have any visitors
“ they sit with them.

“ No noise or disturbance is heard in these houses.
“ They speak alternately; and their gravity makes
“ them greatly admired by strangers. These are the
“ consequences of their sober life, and moderation in
“ eating and drinking. The advice of their superi-

“ors is necessary to every act they do, except those
“of charity, in which they are left to their own dis-
“cretion, every man being at liberty to assist the
“virtuous in distress. Yet they are not permitted to
“give any thing to their relations, without consent of
“their governors.

“They have great command of their passions; are
“men of firm faith, fond of peace, and deem their
“word as sacred as an oath: in fact, they consider
“the taking an oath as worse than perjury; and have
“no opinion of a man, who cannot be credited with-
“out calling God to witness what he says. They
“are great admirers of ancient wisdom, as far as it
“relates to the good of soul or body, particularly re-
“specting remedies for diseases; and the virtues of
“plants, minerals, metals, and stones.

“If a person is disposed to enter into their society,
“they do not hastily admit him, but keep him on trial
“for a year. Those thus on probation receive each
“a pick-ax, a girdle, and a white garment. After a
“man has given some proof of his continence and
“virtue, his diet is changed, and he is allowed the
“use of the purifying waters: but he must be two
“years on probation, before he is admitted to the ta-
“ble in the refectory. After this, he is admitted into
“the society; but not deemed an established mem-
“ber of it, till he has bound himself to the following
“conditions.

“He must first solemnly profess to love and wor-
“ship God; to do justice to all men; not to injure any
“one, even if commanded to do it; to abhor all wick-
“ed men; to associate with the friends of justice
“and equity; to keep faith with all men, but espe-
“cially with princes, who are the appointed servants
“of God. He must declare, that, if he should be

“ promoted above his companions, he will not abuse
“ his power to the injury of those beneath him, nor
“ by elegance of dress distinguish himself from his
“ inferiors : but that he will love the truth, and de-
“ vote himself to keep it, and punish those who speak
“ falsely. He must bind himself to keep his hands
“ free from theft and false dealing, and his soul un-
“ polluted with desire of unlawful gain : not to con-
“ ceal the mysteries of religion from his brethren of
“ the profession, nor develope them to the profane,
“ even to save his life. With regard to his doctrine,
“ he must promulgate only what he has been taught ;
“ endeavor to preserve the doctrine he professes,
“ the books written concerning it, and the names of
“ those from whom he received it. These professi-
“ ons and protestations are used as a test to new mem-
“ bers, to bind them strictly to their duty.

“ When any person is detected in a notorious
“ wickedness, he is turned out of the society ; and
“ these generally make an unfortunate exit. The
“ man who is reprobated by these solemn vows, is
“ not permitted to receive a single mouthful of bread
“ from the hands of a stranger, even though his life
“ depended on it ; so that they are driven to graze
“ like beasts, till the flesh perishes from their bones.
“ The society have sometimes received them again,
“ when they have been in this utter extremity, and
“ at the point of death : conceiving that the punish-
“ ment they had undergone, was a kind of atone-
“ ment for the crime.

“ They are singularly strict in the administration
“ of justice : nothing is determined on without be-
“ ing carried by a hundred voices ; and there is no
“ revoking the judgment when it is once past.

“ Second to the authority of God they deem that

“ of their law-givers, to speak ill of, or blaspheme
“ whom is punished with death. They pay the ut-
“ most respect to their elders, and to the majority of
“ the people; deeming it reasonable to obey the
“ former, and attend to the opinion of the latter.—
“ When ten of them meet in council, no one is per-
“ mitted to speak if the other nine oppose him. Spit-
“ ting towards the midst of the company, or on the
“ right hand, they deem an act of inmorality.

“ No Jews are so strict observers of the sabbath as
“ these people. On the preceding evening, they eat
“ a meal to suffice for the sabbath, that they may not
“ kindle a fire on that day, on which they dare not re-
“ move a pot or dish from one place to another, or even
“ relieve themselves by a natural evacuation. When,
“ on other days, they have these necessary calls, they
“ dig a hole near a foot deep with a pick ax, and hav-
“ ing disburthened themselves, fill the hole again, su-
“ perstitiously careful that such an object may not pol-
“ lute the beams of the sun. Thus they attempt a
“ solemn purification, after a common relief of nature.

“ The persons professing this way of life, are in
“ four divisions, agreeable to the respective obliga-
“ tions they have taken; and the younger are deemed
“ so much inferior to the elder, that if they happen to
“ touch each other, they are compelled to purify, as
“ if they had touched a stranger. They live to an ad-
“ vanced age; many of them to more than a hundred
“ years; which may be attributed to the purity of their
“ food, and the simplicity of their manners.

“ They are fearless of danger, and despise torment
“ to such a degree, that they deem an honorable death
“ preferable to life. For proof of this, it is only ne-
“ cessary to refer to the war between the Jews and
“ Romans. On many occasions the Jews sustained

“ excessive torments ; such as burning alive, breaking
“ of bones, and pains of every kind, rather than speak
“ disrespectfully of their law-giver, or eat a mouthful
“ of prohibited food. This they did despising idle
“ supplications, and dejections of mind ; but with
“ serene and cheerful countenances amidst all their
“ pains, triumphing over their tormentors, and
“ yielding their lives with a resolution that evidenced
“ their hope of a glorious future existence.

“ The Essenes believe that the body is mortal ; and
“ that the soul, being no more substantial than the
“ most subtil air, is incorruptible and immortal ; but
“ that it is enclosed in the body, as in prison, by a
“ sort of natural inclination or attraction : and that
“ when it shall be separated from these bodily ties, as
“ relieved from a long slavery, it will ascend to the
“ regions of eternal bliss. These sentiments are not
“ dissimilar to those of the Greeks, who imagine a
“ place beyond the ocean, where neither rain, snow,
“ or extreme heat prevails, but that it is refreshed by
“ gentle gales. This they deem the seat of the happy
“ souls : but with regard to the wicked, they hold
“ them sentenced to regions of violent tempests, se-
“ vere frosts, and eternal pains. Nor is the Grecian
“ story of the Fortunate Islands unlike this : these
“ are deemed places appropriated to the reception of
“ the spirits called heroes, and demi-gods. The
“ Greeks have likewise their hell, described as an in-
“ fernal pit, provided with plagues and punishments
“ for such as Sysiphus, Tantalus, Ixion, and Tityus.
“ They deem the soul immortal, from its love of vir-
“ tue and hatred of vice : since the hope of future re-
“ wards, makes virtuous men still better in this world :
“ it likewise checks impiety, from the reflection, that
“ though men may escape the stroke of justice in this
“ life, yet the divine retribution will not fail to meet
“ and punish them eternally in a future. Similar to

“ all this is the opinion of the Essenes on the soul ;
 “ and it rarely happens, that any one who has em-
 “ braced these sentiments, is ever induced to change
 “ his opinion.

“ Among the Essenes, are some who pretend to
 “ predict future events ; grounding their predictions
 “ on the prophecies in the sacred writings, and prepar-
 “ ing themselves by purification for the business :
 “ and it generally happens that their predictions are
 “ fulfilled.

“ There is another sect of Essenes who agree with
 “ the former with regard to laws, manners and food,
 “ but not in that of marriage ; for they say, that those
 “ who oppose this institution, are declared enemies of
 “ mankind, as they would prevent the propagation of
 “ the human race : urging, that if every one held this
 “ sentiment, the world would soon be at an end.—
 “ These latter, however, are cautious ; for they sub-
 “ ject the women to a probation of three years ; and
 “ if, at the end of that period, they are in health pro-
 “ per for child-bearing, they are then deemed qualifi-
 “ ed for marriage. Among these, the women are co-
 “ vered when they wash, in the same manner as the
 “ men.

“ The Pharisees are the most eminent doctors of
 “ the law, and men of the greatest learning in all the
 “ rites and ceremonies of the Jews. The principal ar-
 “ ticle in their creed is, that ‘ Every thing is effected
 “ by God and fate ;’ yet that it is much in our own
 “ power to determine, whether he will do well or ill ;
 “ only fate sometimes interposes in particular instan-
 “ ces. They acknowledge the immortality of the soul,
 “ and believe that the souls of good men are transmi-
 “ grated into other bodies ; but that the souls of the
 “ wicked are sent into a state of eternal misery.

“ On the contrary, the Sadducees absolutely deny the doctrine of fate. They say that ‘ God is incapable of doing evil, but leaves men at liberty to act as they please ; and that they have their choice of good and evil.’ With regard to future rewards and punishments, they have no idea of them. The Pharisees are a sociable people, and live in harmony with each other ; but the Sadducees are perpetually disagreeing among themselves, and are remarkably severe in their conduct towards strangers.”

But in another part of his work, our learned author mentions another sect in religion, introduced among the Jews after the establishment of the Essenes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees.

“ At * this period (about the year of the world 3973) Cæsar sent as a governor into Syria, Cyrenius, a man distinguished by the eminence of his character, a senator of Rome, and one who had arrived to the dignity of a consul, after having gone through all the offices of honor which lead to that eminent station. He was attended by Coponius, the master of horse, who went with him in the character of governor of Judea : but as Judea was at this time annexed to Syria, Cyrenius was charged with the business of taxing the people, and likewise directed to seize on the money and effects that had belonged to Archelaus.

“ For some time, at first, the Jews were extremely uneasy at this mode of taxation ; but they were at length induced to submit to it and comply, without giving any farther trouble ; partly by the advice, and partly by the authority of Joazar, the high-

* See the Jewish historian last quoted, Vol. II. Cap. 1, 2.

“ priest, and son of Boethus. About this time, one
“ Judas, a Gaulanite, of the city of Gamala, began to
“ distinguish himself. This man combined with a
“ Pharisee, named Sadducus, to entice the people to
“ revolt. They urged, that taxes were only badges
“ of slavery ; and that it would become the dignity
“ of the whole people, to unite in an assertion of their
“ liberty : they said, that one fortunate and well-tim-
“ ed stroke, would render them independent for ever ;
“ and would contribute no less to the security of their
“ possessions, than the advancement of their repu-
“ tion.

“ There were but few arguments necessary to induce
“ the multitude to acts of violence ; nor is it in the
“ power of language to describe the havock that was
“ made in the country, by these outrageous depreda-
“ tors : friends and enemies were equally robbed and
“ murdered without distinction ; massacres and as-
“ sassinations were dreadfully frequent ; and all this
“ was done under the pretence of promoting the com-
“ mon good ; of advancing liberty, and securing pro-
“ perty ; but the fact is, that malice and private inte-
“ rests were the leading motives. While the people
“ were thus mutually seeking the destruction of each
“ other by all the severities of an intestine war, they
“ were likewise engaged in a foreign war, and had to
“ struggle with all the aggravated calamities of a se-
“ vere famine : yet, for a considerable time, nothing
“ could put a period to the course of destruction in
“ which they were engaged, till at length a fire seiz-
“ ed the temple, and burnt it to the ground.

“ Such was the unhappy consequence of seeking
“ after new laws and customs, and endeavoring to de-
“ stroy those established. Judas and Sadducus were
“ the authors of this confusion, who, from a particu-
“ larity of disposition, were inclined to add a fourth

“ sect to the three former : and the idea of innovation
 “ so charmed the multitude, that a great party join-
 “ ed them ; which not only occasioned the present
 “ disturbances, but laid the foundation of much fu-
 “ ture calamity : in this place, therefore, it will be
 “ proper to treat of those mischievous principles and
 “ opinions, from which such fatal consequences have
 “ arisen.

“ Judas Galilæus was the founder of the fourth sect
 “ of religion, which did not differ in any great degree
 “ from that of the Pharisees ; principally, indeed,
 “ in their holding the maxim of uncontrollable liber-
 “ ty. They asserted, that there was no other Lord
 “ or superior than God ; and rather than call any man
 “ by the name of *Master*, they would expose them-
 “ selves and their nearest relations, to any degree of
 “ punishment, though ever so severe. But this fact
 “ is so well attested, and has been confirmed by such
 “ repeated observation and experience, that it is un-
 “ necessary to urge any thing in proof of it : besides,
 “ no language can convey a tolerably adequate de-
 “ scription of the fortitude which these people evinced
 “ in their contempt of pain.

“ The animosities were greatly inflamed by the ty-
 “ ranical cruelties of Gessius Florus, at that time go-
 “ vernor of Judea ; the consequence of which, was,
 “ that the people at length absolutely revolted from
 “ the Romans.”

The Essenes, or Essenians, though not mentioned
 by the evangelists, were a numerous and powerful
 sect among the Jews. All attempts to trace their
 origin have proved ineffectual, and even the etymolo-
 gy of their name is still to be ascertained. It is, how-
 ever certain, that they were settled in Judea in the
 days of Jonathan, the brother of Judas Maccabæus,

about one hundred and fifty years previous to the birth of our Saviour.

The Essenes were accustomed to interpret the scriptures in an allegorical manner; and in this they appear to have excelled all their Jewish contemporaries. They entertained the highest veneration for the five books of Moses; and they revered that lawgiver as the chief of all the inspired writers. So rigid were these people in their principles, that they consigned to instant death, all persons who presumed to speak with the slightest disrespect, either of Moses or his writings. They studied the writings of Moses more particularly than the other parts of the scriptures, and appear to have deduced their religious system principally from the Pentateuch.

So extreme was the austerity of many of the Essenes, that they continued in their cells during the whole week, without even indulging themselves so far as to look once out of the windows of their lonely habitations; their intervals of repose being very short, and their time being engrossed in reading and writing comments upon the sacred books.

The period when the sect of Pharisees was founded, is wholly uncertain. They pretended, that the celebrated Hillel was the first of their order. Some have imagined that Hillel lived during the pontificate of Jonathan, mentioned above: but others, more reasonably conjecture him to have been contemporary with the famous Someas, who lived about the time of Herod, long before whose days the sect of Pharisees were in great repute.

In the preceding pages, they are represented as violent and implacable enemies to our blessed Saviour, who incurred their enmity, in consequence of the se-

verity with which he reproved their unjustifiable preference of pretended and fallacious traditions, to the written word of God.

Among other principles which exposed the Pharisees to the deserved reproaches of Jesus, were their supererogatory attachment to the ceremonial law: their frequent washings and fastings; their public and ostentatious distribution of charity; their affected solemnity of deportment, and the studied mortification expressed in their countenances; their erecting and repairing the tombs of the prophets; whereby they intimated, that they were of greater sanctity than their ancestors, who had cruelly massacred those holy men, and whose conduct, however, they impiously approved; their superstitious observation of the sabbath-day, to the exclusion of works of charity; their utter destitution of mercy, justice, and humility; and their deceitful pretensions to the virtues of kindness, charity, and benevolence, even at the time when they were sacrilegiously projecting measures for sacrificing the life of our blessed Redeemer.

Such was the rapacity and cruelty of the Pharisees, that they made no scruple of seizing the property of helpless widows and orphans. They not only committed the most heinous acts of injustice, oppression, and barbarity themselves, but encouraged their disciples in the perpetration of similar crimes; and these enormities were committed, under the specious appearance of sanctity and religion. It was, therefore, with peculiar propriety, that Christ compared them to whited sepulchres, beautiful without, but containing only rottenness and corruption.

The sect of Sadducees is said to have been founded by one Saddoc, a disciple of Antigonus of Socho.—These people industriously sought occasions of ridi-

culing the doctrine of the resurrection, and of opposing their tenets to those of the Pharisees, with whom they lived in a state of continual enmity and contention. They were extremely severe in their decisions, when they presided in the capacity of judges; and they rejected the pretended oral traditions, which were so highly respected by the Pharisees; regulating their conduct by no other rules than scriptural texts, and preferring the books of Moses to all the other inspired writings. The Sadducees were not a very numerous society, but they were, in general, men of rank and opulence. When persons attached to the principles entertained by the Sadducees, were elected into public employments, they were under the necessity of disguising their own sentiments, and of openly professing the opinions of the Pharisees; for otherwise, the people would not permit them to hold their stations.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Our Saviour recommends his disciples to attend to the doctrines of the Pharisees, but carefully to avoid an imitation of their manners. He exhorts them to suppress ambitious desires. He severely reproaches the Pharisees, accusing them of perfidy, partiality, cruelty, and other heinous crimes. Our Saviour applauds the liberality of a widow. Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, and the sufferings to be inflicted upon his apostles; and at the same time, exhorts those holy men not to dread the utmost malice of their enemies. Jesus says, that the persecutions of their enemies will occasion many of his disciples to desert his cause; but that the faithful servants of God will be amply rewarded. Predictions relating to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem; and the misery of the Jewish nation described. Jesus cautions his disciples against imposters. Other predictions of the dreadful calamities to be inflicted upon the Jews. Similitude of a fig-tree. Jesus declares the truth of his predictions, and exhorts the people to constant watchfulness. The suddenness of the judgments to be passed upon mankind. Watchfulness and diligence recommended in a similitude. Parable of the ten virgins. The rewards and punishments to be distributed in the great day of judgment.

OUR blessed Saviour having, as we have related in the preceding chapter, eluded the artful stratagems of his enemies, he proceeded to admonish his disciples, and the rest of his auditors, not to adopt the pernicious examples of the Scribes and Pharisees. He advised them to listen to the doctrines preach-

ed by those people, whose abominable practices, he said, were so entirely inconsistent with the excellency of their professions. While they teach the doctrines contained in the laws of Moses, carefully attend to what they recommend to your observation : but beware of their stratagems and artifices, lest you be seduced into the paths of wickedness. Although they pretend to interpret the law with exact fidelity, they impose upon other people a rigid compliance with those ceremonials which they themselves entirely neglect : but those who act from motives of virtue and integrity, practise those duties which they represent to others, as the essential means of obtaining happiness, both in this life and in futurity ; thereby encouraging men to worthy pursuits, by the combined recommendation of precept and example.

But, said Jesus, the hypocrisy, pride, and arrogance of the Pharisees are intolerable ; for if they occasionally act in a manner that redounds to the honor of God, or the advantage of their fellow-creatures, the merit of their conduct is vitiated, by the motive from whence it proceeds. Their works of charity, are no more than an ostentatious display of a virtue which they do not in reality possess ; they are immoderately ambitious of popular applause, but are wholly neglectful of the great and important duty of regulating their conduct, agreeably to the divine pleasure of Almighty God. To render themselves conspicuous, they wear larger * phylacterics than the

* The word phylactery is derived from the Greek, and signifies a preservative, or charm, against diseases, or other misfortunes. They were worn by the ancient Heathens, and are so still by the inhabitants of the eastern parts of the globe. But the phylacterics of the Jews, were small boxes or rolls of parchment, in which were written certain words of the law ; and these they wore, either upon the forehead, or upon the wrist of the left arm. They supposed the use of phylacterics to be commanded. “ And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes, for by strength of hand, the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt.” Exod. xiii. 16.

generality of the people, and broader edgings of scarlet to their apparel; thereby endeavoring to impose themselves upon the world, as men of extraordinary sanctity. They are earnestly solicitous to obtain the most distinguished seats in the synagogues and other public assemblies, and of being saluted with the title of rabbi, or master. “Then spake Jesus to the multitude and to his disciples, saying, The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do: but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders: but they themselves, will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men. They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, † rabbi, rabbi.” Matt. xxiii. 1, &c.

But you who are my disciples, must prove your humility, by declining to be addressed by the titles of rabbi and master; for the title of master is peculiarly due to the Messiah, who will bestow the blessings of immortality upon all his servants who faithfully discharge their duty towards him. Neither are you to call any man your father, thereby implying that you are disposed to yield him implicit obedience; for it is the great Father of heaven and earth to whom you are to dedicate all your services, and offer up your praises and adorations.

† The word rabbi signifies great; and it was applied to those men who had rendered themselves conspicuous by the extent of their learning. It is not therefore strange, that the haughty and supercilious Pharisees, should be fond of a title which so highly complimented their understanding, and served to increase their consequence and authority among their disciples.

It was not, however, the intention of the divine Teacher, to intimate, that it was sinful to address men by those titles which they acquired from their respective stations in life : but he meant to reprove the multitude, for ascribing to the teachers of the law, those honors which were due only to the Almighty. To teach them the duty of humility, and to dispose them to offices of friendship and kindness towards each other, he said, that by assuming what did not properly belong to them, they would incur the displeasure of the Almighty, and render themselves objects of the contempt and hatred of their fellow-creatures : but, on the contrary, if they strictly obeyed the commands of God, and performed offices of friendship and love to their brethren, they could not fail of obtaining the blessings of heaven. “ But be not ye called “ rabbi ; for one is your master, even Christ, and all “ ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon “ earth ; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. “ Neither be ye called masters ; for one is your mas- “ ter, even Christ. And whosoever shall exalt him- “ self, shall be abased ; and he that shall humble “ himself, shall be exalted.” Matt. xxiii. 8, &c.

The Scribes and Pharisees were greatly incensed by the above discourses : but they dared not attempt carrying their barbarous designs against him into execution, in the presence of the great concourse of people by whom he was surrounded ; for his preaching had so deeply impressed the minds of the people, that they held him in the highest veneration, and would most certainly have opposed, and severely re- sented any violence offered to his sacred person.

Not in consequence of the personal injuries and insults he had received from the Scribes and Phari- sees, but on account of their abominable and irre- claimable iniquities, our blessed Saviour solemnly

denounced against them the most dreadful woes. They were professedly public teachers of religion; and therefore it was their duty, not only to recommend the practice of righteousness in their public discourses, but also by the example of their lives. But under the appearance of the most austere sanctity, they gave uncontrolled liberty to their malicious, lewd, cruel, and rapacious dispositions. Instead of reforming their lives, their attention seemed to be directed to the business of corrupting the principles of their fellow-creatures, and seducing them to the practice of every species of the most abominable iniquity; and therefore they were deserving the utmost severity of our blessed Saviour's reproof, and of those punishments which he foretold would be inflicted upon them. "But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye devour widow's houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive greater damnation. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing: but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools, and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools, and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by

“ the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.” Matt. xxiii. 13, &c.

In the above manner did our Saviour inform the Scribes and Pharisees, that the punishments to be inflicted upon them would be dreadfully severe because they had falsely interpreted the ancient prophecies concerning the Messiah, and obstructed the way to the kingdom of heaven, by concealing from their disciples the knowledge of the true religion. Under the pretence of a zealous desire to promote the interest * of widows and orphans, you cruelly defraud them of their property. Though you pursue every means in your power to convert the Gentiles to the Jewish religion, your motive is not to increase their wisdom or virtue, but to obtain possession of their wealth ; and instead of being reformed, they are rendered † more wicked by the pernicious influence of your advice. You absurdly pretend, that if a man swears by the temple only, his oath is not obligatory ; but that he binds himself under an indispensable obligation, if he swears by the gold of the temple. You also say, that men do not perjure themselves when they act contra-

* These people pretended to a more intimate acquaintance of the law than others ; and the women were greatly subject to their power, because they believed them to be the peculiar favorites of the Almighty. They obtained so great an ascendancy over Alexandra, queen of the Jews, that they directed the reins of government at their own discretion. Widows and orphans, having no protectors, became an easy prey to this rapacious sect.

† The Jews were accustomed to complain, that the proselytes to their religion were the “ scabs of their church ;” and prevented the appearance of the Messiah, as they were ignorant of the law, and objects of the divine displeasure. Justin Martyr represents the proselytes as more inveterate enemies to the Christian religion than the native Jews, and as the instruments of the wicked Pharisees in opposing the establishment of the gospel of Christ.

ry to what they have sworn by the altar only, and not by the offerings placed thereon. But he informed, that the altar is more sacred than the gifts which are consecrated and rendered holy by it. Whoever swears by the altar, swears also by whatever is placed thereon, and consequently by the Almighty, to whose honor the altar is consecrated; so he that swears by the temple, at the same time adjures the majesty of the divine Being who resides therein; he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God; and whoever swears by any part of the creation, makes an appeal to the great Father of the universe.

Our blessed Saviour also severely reprehended the Scribes and Pharisees, for their superstitious observance of the most minute precepts of the ceremonial law, while they were wholly regardless of the supreme duties of religion and virtue; and also censured them for having repaired the sepulchres of the prophets, predicting that the time was approaching, when they would commit barbarities equal to those perpetrated by their ancestors. “Woe unto you, Scribes and
“Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint, and
“anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier
“matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith:
“these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the
“other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a
“gnat and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, Scribes
“and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye make clean the
“the outside of the cup, and of the platter, but within
“they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind
“Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup
“and platter, that the outside of them may be clean
“also. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypo-
“crites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres,
“which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are
“within full of dead men’s bones, and of all unclean-
“ness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous

“unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and
“iniquity. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees,
“hypocrites ; because ye build the tombs of the pro-
“phets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous.
“And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers,
“we would not have been partakers with them in the
“blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses
“unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them
“which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the
“measure of your fathers.” Matt. xxiii. 23, &c.

Great punishments are reserved for you, who with scrupulous exactness pay tithes of herbs, and rigidly observe other minute ordinances of the law, but utterly neglect the practice of justice, mercy, faith, righteousness, and the other most important duties of virtue and religion. You should first observe those precepts which enjoin the observance of the more important duties, and then direct your attention to obligations of inferior consequence. Ye hypocrites, ye shall most assuredly experience those punishments which are due to your iniquities ; for though you make a parade of religion and probity, your hearts are corrupted by the most detestable vices. As men cleanse the insides of their cups and other vessels, it behoves you to purify your hearts from their vicious propensities ; after which, you may, without impropriety, assume the external appearance of virtue.—Great shall be your punishment, ye sinful hypocrites ; for you resemble those sepulchres, which are beautifully ornamented without, but contain only rottenness and corruption. You repair the monuments of the prophets, who were barbarously massacred by your sacrilegious ancestors ; and manifest your approbation of their cruelties, by your anxiety to perpetuate the memory thereof ; although you pretend, that, had you lived in the days when those murders were perpetrated, you would have opposed the unprovoked and

bloody deeds of your progenitors. But the time is approaching, when you will commit cruelties equal to those of your ancestors, and rival them in the perpetration of the most abominable deeds of wickedness.

Having thus reproached them for their complicated wickedness, and predicted the terrible punishments that would be inflicted upon them, the blessed and benevolent Jesus was deeply impressed by the sensations of tenderness and compassion, and pathetically lamented the destruction that awaited the miserable inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem, who, having embued their hands in the blood of the prophets, and committed innumerable other crimes of unexampled magnitude, were shortly to become the objects of divine vengeance. “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not? Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Matt. xxiii. 33, &c.

Ye wicked generation, you must not hope to escape those dreadful and eternal punishments, which, by the

ministry of John the baptist, the Almighty has denounced against those who transgress his commands: for you have in no respect endeavored to avert the effects of his just indignation. Prophets and men skilled in the interpretation of the law, will be appointed to instruct you in the ways of salvation: but * some of them you will put to death, and scourge others in your public assemblies; and those who endeavor to escape your fury, you will persecute and pursue from city to city, with the most violent and implacable enmity. So far from complying with the repeated admonitions of the messengers of God, and being deterred from the practice of sin, by the many examples of just severity against offenders, you will prove your approbation of the crimes of your ancestors, by surpassing them in the shocking barbarity of your conduct: for by one act of cruelty, you will render yourselves more eminently guilty, than were your progenitors, after the many murders committed by them, from the slaughter of Abel the son of Adam, to that of † Zacharias the son of Barachias, who was slain between the temple and the altar. Do not imagine that the punishments I have denounced, will be postponed for a long series of years: but know, that the Almighty will most assuredly inflict them upon the present degenerate race of men. O ye wicked inhabitants of Jerusalem, how earnestly have I endeavored to defend you from the power of Satan: but you re-

* This was verified, in the treatment which the apostles and first disciples experienced from the Jews. They stoned Stephen to death; they put James, the brother of John to death, by the sword; they scourged Peter and the apostles, and persecuted Paul and Barnabas from city to city.

† Some insist that this Zacharias was the father of John the Baptist: but this is as strongly denied by others. He seems to have been put to death about the time when our Saviour delivered the above discourses; and if so, from the days of Abel to those of Zacharias, are included all the ages of the ancient church.

jected my offers of protection. Such has been your ingratitude and wickedness, that your country shall be laid in a state of utter desolation : and I predict to you, that after my death and ascension into heaven, you will anxiously, but in vain, wish for my interference, to avert the impending vengeance of an offended God.

Thus did our blessed Saviour expose the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees ; he reproached them with severity, because their crimes were of unexampled magnitude : and hence we may learn the necessity of regulating our lives by the dictates of righteousness and morality, and that all our endeavors to conceal our crimes, by assuming the outward appearance of sanctity, will prove ineffectual.

The freedom with which the great Preacher of Israel reprov'd the Scribes and Pharisees, excited the astonishment of the people, who had ever been accustomed to consider their teachers as the most righteous among the sons of men. The very people, indeed, to whom our Lord particularly directed his reproaches and threats of vengeance, by the conviction of their own consciences, were convinced of the justice of every accusation alledged against them : but, however malignant and cruel the designs they had conceived against Jesus they dared not attempt carrying them into execution in the presence of the multitude, who, they were persuaded, were disposed to resent any violence that might be offered to the person of Jesus.

The blessed Jesus, the great infallible teacher of righteousness, repaired with his disciples to the court of the woman, called the treasury, on account of several chests being affixed to the pillars of the portico surrounding the court for the reception of the gifts presented by those who came to worship in the tem-

ple. Among other persons, who gave money for the use of the sacred building, was a poor widow, who put into the chest two small pieces of coin, worth together about an English farthing. Upon this, Jesus observed to his disciples, that the poor widow had more liberally contributed towards the temple, than any of the other subscribers; for those who were possessed of abundance, could feel no inconvenience in consequence of their donations; but, from motives of righteousness, she had cheerfully given her whole stock of money. “And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.—And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance: but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living,” Mark xii. 41, &c.

Although the offering made by this poor woman was in itself very inconsiderable, yet, comparatively with the state of her finances, it was great; for she had given all she was possessed of, though she might, without any breach of piety, have reserved it to herself, since she had occasion for it, for the purpose of procuring her the means of subsistence. To animate his disciples to the practice of charity, and to prove to them that it was the disposition of the mind, and not the magnificence of the offering that was most acceptable to God, our blessed Saviour applauded the conduct of the poor widow; because, in proportion to her circumstances, she had contributed more liberally than those, who, from the abundance of their wealth, had made more splendid offerings. Hence we are to learn, that those persons, whose situation in

life will not permit them to perform acts of great munificence, will render themselves acceptable to God, by discharging their duty to their fellow creatures according to the extent of their ability. The rich may collect an admirable lesson from this passage. It is not sufficient that they exceed the poor in the value of their charitable donations; for it is their duty to contribute towards the relief of the indigent, in proportion to their respective incomes; and they will be prudent, if they consider, that a little given, where only a little is reserved, constitutes a more noble offering, and evinces a more humane and benevolent disposition, than larger sums given by those who are in possession of plentiful estates.

Departing from the temple, our blessed Saviour directed his course towards the Mount of Olives; and on the way, his disciples observed, that at the conclusion of his pathetic lamentation over the miserably devoted city of Jerusalem, he had declared, that the temple should not be again honored with his presence, till the Jews should exclaim, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." This declaration had greatly alarmed them; and therefore they requested, that he would observe the magnificence and beauty of the holy edifice; intimating at the same time, that they conceived it to be extraordinary, he should resolve to leave so glorious a fabric, celebrated in every quarter of the globe, in a state of desolation; and that they should deem themselves supremely fortunate, when he, as the great Messiah, and the descendant and successor of David, should take possession of the temple, and establish his throne in the city of Jerusalem. But our Lord informed them, that the period was approaching, when the magnificent structure would be entirely levelled with the earth. "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple; and his disciples came to him, for to shew him the build-

“ing of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Matt. xxiv. 1, 2.

Though the disciples of Jesus understood that the temple was to be destroyed, they did not imagine that the practice of offering up sacrifices was to be abolished, and a new religion established, which would render the temple unnecessary. But they supposed that this building was to be destroyed, in order that a more magnificent and capacious structure might be erected on the same spot, after a plan more agreeable to the grandeur of the ideas they had formed of the approaching kingdom of the Messiah. As they proceeded on their journey, the disciples meditated with pleasure on the glorious events which they imagined would take place, when their Master should assume the reins of government, and render all the inhabitants of the earth subject to his dominion.

Upon his arrival at the Mount of Olives, our Saviour seated himself upon an eminence, which commanded a prospect of the temple. His disciples now requested, that he would inform them, when the temple would be demolished, and what would be the signs preceding his appearance to reward the righteous, and punish the wicked, and of the end of the world. “And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be; and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world.” Matt. xxiv. 3.

It appears, that the disciples were desirous of learning what tokens would precede the establishment of that extensive and splendid empire, over which they imagined, the Messiah was to exercise the powers of a

temporal sovereignty. Therefore they connected the idea of the destruction of the temple, with that of their Master's appearance to judge mankind: but they entertained no notion, that he had referred to a reformation in the mode of religious worship.

By "the end of the world," or, as the words should have been translated, "the end of the ages," they meant the period of political government, then executed by Heathen procurations; and considered, that by abolishing the constitution then subsisting, their Master would produce a most desirable event.

That the matter was thus understood by the disciples, will be sufficiently clear, if we consider, that they were greatly delighted with the idea of the expected alteration; for, if by "the end of the world," they had meant the final destruction of all sublunary things, they could not, in the disposition of mind they were then in, but have been impressed with melancholy ideas.

But to relieve them from their mistake, our blessed Saviour informed his disciples, that he had come upon earth, not to govern a secular kingdom, but to lead mankind into the ways of salvation, and to punish the perfidy and rebellion of the Jews, by destroying both their temple and nation. "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ: and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers place. All these are the beginning of sorrows," Matt. xxiv. 4, &c. Though the disci-

ples were to be witnesses of the ascension of their Master into heaven, yet it was probable that they might expect he would again appear upon earth: and therefore he admonished them to guard against being deceived by impostors, who would arrogate to themselves the character of the Messiah. Intestine discords, he informed them, would prevail in Palestine, between the Jews, the Gentiles, and the neighboring princes; and famine, and pestilence, would succeed the horrors of war and rebellion; adding, that amidst all these calamities, it would behove them to preserve their fortitude, and steadily to persevere in their faith. But however deplorable these events, they would be only the preludes to more dreadful misfortunes, which would be inflicted upon the Jews, as the just punishments due to their abominable iniquities.

Our Saviour now proceeded to apprise his disciples of the persecutions they were to encounter, and to predict the further calamities in which the perfidious Jews would be involved. “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.— And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.— And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.— And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand.) Then let them which be in Judea, flee into the mountains. Let him which is on the house-top, not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the

“ field, return back to take his clothes. And woe unto
“ them that are with child, and to them that give suck
“ in those days. But pray ye that your flight be not
“ in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day : for then
“ shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the
“ beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever
“ shall be. And except those days should be shor-
“ tened, there should no flesh be saved : but for the
“ elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” Matt.
xxiv. 9, &c.

In the above manner did Jesus intimate, that the unbelieving Jews and apostate Christians, would be guilty of the most abominable crimes ; and that the violent contentions among them, and their perfidy and wickedness, would interrupt the propagation of the gospel. But those who steadily maintained their faith, should not be condemned to the terrible destruction in which the rebellious Jews were to be involved. When the city of Jerusalem should be invested by the Pagan armies, bearing upon their standards the images of idols, the “ abomination of desolation,” mentioned by the prophet Daniel, then would be verified the predictions relating to the city and the temple, and the abolition of the custom of offering up sacrifices ; and there would be a final period to the political institutions of the Jewish nation. In those days of vengeance, when the awful judgment of heaven would be inflicted upon the impenitent and unbelieving Jews, pregnant women, and those having children at their breasts, would be particularly unhappy, on account of their incapacity of flying from the impending ruin. He represented, that it behoved them to pray that their flight might not be in winter, or on the sabbath-day ; that their progress might not be interrupted by the rugged state of the roads, and the rigor of the season ; and that they might not be compelled to seek shelter from the fury of the soldiers,

by prosecuting their journey on a day, when they deemed it unlawful to travel. Though the desolation and horrors that would prevail at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, would greatly surpass the most dreadful calamities that had been known from the creation of the world; yet the elect of God, or such as had embraced the doctrines of the Christian gospel, would be protected from the common miseries which would be experienced by those who rejected the offers of salvation.

That the prophecies of our Saviour, concerning the dreadful calamities the Jewish nation was to experience, were verified in their fullest extent, is confirmed by the testimony of Josephus, who was present at the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman army, under the command of Titus.

“ The * extreme severity of the famine had almost
“ depopulated the city ; and the miseries consequent
“ on this calamity, are beyond all number or recital.
“ If it was but suspected that there was any conceal-
“ ed food in a family, this circumstance was sufficient
“ to dissolve the tenderest ties, and create a general
“ insurrection among the parties. Those who abso-
“ lutely perished of mere hunger were not credited,
“ even at the hour of death, when they declared that
“ they had no food ; for no sooner had the breath
“ left their bodies, than immediate search was made
“ about their persons on the supposition that they
“ had concealed some bread. When the survivors
“ found not what they searched for, they ranged the
“ streets like mad dogs, reeling like drunkards through
“ weakness, repeatedly prying into every corner of
“ every house ; seizing whatever they could find,
“ even such articles as a canine appetite would have

* See Josephus, translated by Thompson and Price, Vol. II. p. 514.

“ refused. The skins of beasts, leather girdles, and
“ shoes were eaten; and even a handful of old hay
“ bore the price of four atticks. But wherefore
“ should I trouble myself with a description of this
“ dreadful calamity, in the mention of these inani-
“ mate substances, when I have before me a preg-
“ nant instance of a circumstance never equalled
“ among the Greeks and Barbarians; a story of so
“ horrid a nature, that it shocks humanity but to think
“ of it. I should be willing to omit this unfortunate
“ narrative, lest future times should censure me for
“ relating a falshood: but I have so many testimonies
“ of its veracity, that if I should seek to suppress it
“ through partiality to the deceased, I should be de-
“ ficient in my duty to my country.”

He then proceeds to relate, that Mary, the daughter of a man named Eleazer, inhabiting the village of Vetezobra, situated beyond the river Jordan, after being despoiled of all her property by the Roman soldiery, endeavored by the most acrimonious reproaches to provoke them to put her to death: but failing in this, and being driven to a state of desperation by extreme hunger, she formed a resolution more horrid than it is possible for the powers of language to describe. After tenderly embracing the infant that was sucking at her breast, she exclaimed, “ In what terms shall I address thee, most unhap-
“ py infant, who art born during the raging of such
“ horrid judgments as rebellion, famine, and war!
“ To which of these shall I reserve thee? It is pos-
“ sible the Romans will grant thee thy life, but not
“ thy liberty; famine will prevent slavery: but our
“ present tyrants will be worse foes than the other
“ two. What, in thy present situation, canst thou
“ do better than to supply a meal to thy starving mo-
“ ther, and terrify the party with the horror of the
“ deed? Thus shalt thou complete the history of

“ the Jews, with the only atrocious act that is
“ yet wanting to render their misery perfect.” Af-
ter this apostrophe, she slew the infant; and hav-
ing boiled it, satisfied her appetite with one half of
her child, and covering up the other part, placed it
where she usually kept her food. “ This circum-
“ stance, continues our author, soon came to the
“ knowledge of the faction; some of whom went to
“ the house of the woman, and threatened her with
“ immediate death, if she did not produce what pro-
“ visions she had in the house. Hereupon she fetch-
“ ed out that part of the child which still remained
“ undevoured, and told them, that was all the food
“ she possessed. This sight had such an effect on
“ the spectators, that they at first appeared terrified
“ with horror, then trembled at the idea of what had
“ passed, and were shocked at the consequences that
“ were to be dreaded from it.” On this the woman
addressed them as follows: “ Be assured that this
“ is my son, and that I have dressed this dish, the
“ half of which I have eaten myself, and request that
“ you will eat the remainder. I flatter myself that
“ you will not pretend to more delicacy than a wo-
“ man, or more compassion than a mother. But if
“ you refuse the oblation through scruples of consci-
“ ence, you are welcome to leave the food where you
“ have found it; only remember that I have eaten a
“ part of it already. She had no sooner ended speak-
“ ing, than they departed with evident signs of ter-
“ ror, leaving, though against their inclinations,
“ the remainder of the child with the unfortunate mo-
“ ther.”

The learned author, from whom we have extracted
the above melancholy narrative, * speaks of the de-
struction of the temple, and the miseries that prevail-

* Vol. II. p. 521, 522.

ed among the Jews, in a manner which fully confirms the prophecy of our blessed Saviour, concerning the unexampled severity with which those people were to be punished.

“ During the time that the temple was in flames, the soldiers seized every person they could find ; and having first plundered, they slew them, without paying the least attention to age, sex, or quality. The slaughter on this occasion was immense : the old, the young ; those of the priesthood, and those of the laity ; persons of all ranks and all degrees ; whether they resisted or submitted ; whether they sued for quarter or otherwise, were all involved in the general calamity of the war.

“ As the fire continued to increase, the noise of the flames was heard, intermixed with the groans of persons in the agonies of death : and to those at a distance, the whole city appeared to be on fire, owing to the extent of the conflagration, and the depth of the hill. The confusion and disorder occasioned by this event, were so great, that it is not in the power of language to describe them. The Roman legions made the most horrid outcries : the rebels, when they found themselves at the mercy of the fire and sword, screamed in the most dreadful manner ; while the unhappy wretches enclosed between the enemy and the fire, lamented their situation in the most pitiable complaints. Those on the mountain, and those in the city, seemed mutually to return the groans of each other. Those who were already on the point of expiring through famine, acquired fresh spirits to deplore their misfortunes, when they saw the dreadful effects of the raging flames. The complaints and lamentations from the city were repeatedly echoed from the adjacent mountains and places beyond Jordan : but the calamity exceeded in reality, all that could be expressed by the

bewailings of the sufferers. The flames of fire were so violent and impetuous, that the mountain on which the temple stood, resembled one large body of fire, even from its foundation. The blood of the sufferers flowed in proportion to the raging of the flames; for the number of those who were slain, exceeded that of their executioners. Dead bodies strewed the ground on every side, and the Roman soldiers trampled on the bodies of the slain in pursuit of their survivors. At length, however, a body of the insurgents repelled the Romans, and having forced a passage into the outward temple, effected their escape into the city; while the outward porch was gained by the remainder of their number.

“ Many of the priests who had engaged in this contest with the Romans, made use of the spits belonging to the temple, instead of darts; and, in the place of stones, they threw their seats, which had lead in them; but at length, finding that the efforts of all their resolution were fruitless, and that fire pursued wherever they attempted to fly, they took refuge for some time under a thick wall that was not less than eight cubits in breadth. Among the principal persons who exerted themselves on this occasion, were Meirus, the son of Belgas, and Joseph, the son of Dalæus, who might have preserved their own lives, if they would have taken part with the Romans; but they rather chose to adhere to their associates, and plunging themselves into the fire, were buried in the conflagration that destroyed the temple.

“ The Romans now finding that the temple was reduced to ashes, were less anxious as to the preservation of any other particular buildings; wherefore they set fire to most of the gates and galleries at the same time; sparing only one on the east side, and another on the south: but, in a short time afterwards,

these underwent the fate of the former. They likewise burnt the treasury and the wardrobe, containing an immense treasure in jewels, and money, and rich habits to a very large amount: for, in fact, the Jews had made this place a repository of every thing that they deemed most valuable.

“ There was yet standing one gallery on the outside of the temple, to which had resorted an immense number of women and children, with a variety of persons who had fled from the multitude; the whole number amounting to almost six thousand. The soldiers, enraged to the utmost degree of fury, set this place on fire, before Titus had an opportunity of giving any directions concerning it; and they continued their operations against it with such vehemence, that not a single person escaped with life, numbers throwing themselves precipitately from the ruins, and all the rest being consumed by the flames.”

We shall now relate what our blessed Redeemer further said to his disciples. He admonished them to be cautious, lest they should be deceived by impostors; saying, that many persons would falsely pretend to be prophets, and arrogating to themselves the character of the Messiah, would endeavor to support their claim to that character, by performing miracles sufficient to mislead, not only the obstinate and contumacious Jews, but even many of those people who believed in his gospel. This prediction, Josephus informs us, was verified during the siege of Jerusalem, when many persons assumed the character of the Messiah, and pretended that they had power to redeem the Jewish nation from its calamitous and deplorable situation. “ Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there: believe it not. For there shall rise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insonuch

“ that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very
“ elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore,
“ if they shall say unto you, behold, he is in the de-
“ sart, go not forth : behold, he is in the secret cham-
“ bers, believe it not.” Matt. xxiv. 23, &c.

Our blessed Redeemer now informed the people, that no man could foresee when he should come to execute vengeance upon sinners ; for his appearance would be unexpected, and swift and destructive as the lightning’s flash. But the words of our Lord implied, that he was not personally to appear in order to execute judgment on the contumacious Jews, but that the Roman armies should spread desolation and horror throughout Judea, and be sensible of no more compassion for the sufferings of the Jews, than is felt by a voracious eagle after having seized its prey.— Wherever the tumultuous Jews shall assemble, vainly expecting that the Messiah will become their leader in war, and enable them to rescue themselves from the power of their oppressors, thither shall they be pursued and put to death by the Romans. “ As the lightning
“ cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the
“ west ; so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For
“ wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be
“ gathered together.” Matt. xxiv. 27, 28.

Having particularized the tokens which were to precede the destruction of Jerusalem, he described that dreadful catastrophe itself, with all that grandeur of imagery, and pomp of diction, which the ancient prophets were accustomed to use when they predicted the ruin of kingdoms or cities. “ Imme-
“ diately after the tribulation of those days shall the
“ sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her
“ light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the
“ powers of the elements shall be shaken.” Matt.
xxiv. 29. “ And there shall be signs in the sun, and

" IN THE HEAVEN, AND IN THE WINDS : AND UPON THE EARTH,
 " DISTRESS OF MINDS, AND PAIN EXACT : THE SEA AND THE
 " WINDS TORMENTING, WHOSE VOICES SHALLING TELL FOR ME,
 " AND SHALLING TELL THESE THINGS, WHICH ARE COMING
 " UPON THE EARTH. Luke xii. 19-25.

In these last, and in the figurative expressions, are denoted the destruction of the Jewish nation of earthly grandeur, and the introduction of universal confusion and misery. The shaking of the sea, the signs of the sun, moon, and stars, are figurative, metaphorical expressions, and by the powers of heaven are meant the principal laws and political institutions of the Jewish government, which were the works of the Almighty and which the Jewish law should be shaken, thereby meaning, that they should be entirely abolished.

Our Saviour mentioned his disciples, some of whom had asked him, what should be the sign of his coming, and after the revelation which he had predicted, they stood as witnesses to the accomplishment of what Daniel had prophesied by the figurative expression of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, and they should behold the exemplary punishments which the Roman army would execute upon the Jewish nation, upon the true believers in his kingdom, who would be a people prospering in a speedy and glorious manner, and opposing under which they had so long groined, and when they would be entirely converted by the judgments of every quarter of the globe. That these events would occur, he said they might remain perfectly secure; for the world would not be a country of wars, but a universal empire, and the nations would be fully united, and the nations would be united, and the nations of the earth would be united, and they shall see the sign of the

“ house had known in what watch the thief would
 “ come, he would have watched, and would not have
 “ suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be
 “ ye also ready : for in such an hour as ye think not,
 “ the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful
 “ and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler
 “ over his houshold, 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 over 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 hy-
 “ pocrites : there shall be weeping and gnashing of
 “ teeth.” Matt. xxiv. 42, &c.

In the above manner, did our blessed Redeemer ex-
 hort his auditors to the continual practice of righte-
 ousness, and explain to them the necessity of perse-
 vering in a course of piety and religion. You who
 are the ministers of my gospel, are particularly en-
 joined to a punctual discharge of the trust reposed in
 you, who are the stewards appointed to hold posses-
 sion of the houshold of the church ; and it will be-
 hove you constantly to remember, that your example
 will have a considerable influence upon the rest of
 mankind. It is your duty to render yourselves per-
 fectly conversant in the great truths of the gospel dis-
 pensation, and to qualify yourselves to apply them in
 such a manner, as will most effectually operate towards
 the benefit of mankind.

It is also necessary that you should inform your-
 selves of the characters and dispositions of those who

are employed under you, that you may administer to them whatever their necessities may require ; and if, at my appearance to judge mankind, I find you thus employed, be assured that I will bestow upon you the rewards of my heavenly kingdom, even as an earthly master bestows favor and recompence upon such servants as have distinguished themselves by their fidelity, and their zeal for promoting his advantage. But those on the contrary, who betray the trust reposed in them, and neglect to exert their utmost endeavors for effecting the salvation of their fellow-creatures, shall severely lament their disobedience ; for when they conceive themselves to be in a state of the most perfect security, I will make them the objects of exemplary justice, and inflict punishments upon them proportioned to their respective crimes.

To illustrate the doctrine he had advanced, the divine Preacher of Israel delivered the following parables. The * men who wish to obtain the blessings of heaven, shall prove to resemble the ten virgins who were invited to a nuptial entertainment.

These virgins were to go forth to meet the bridegroom, and, after accompanying him home, to partake of the banquet provided on occasion of his marriage. They assembled at the appointed time, each being provided with a lamp and some oil. But five

* A strong resemblance of this parable is to be found in the Jewish records ; and in one of the books of those people, we have the following expressions : “ Our wise men of blessed memory say, Repent “ whilst thou hast strength to do it ; whilst the lamp burns, and the oil “ is not extinguished ; for if the lamp be gone out, the oil will profit thee “ nothing.” Most of the fathers are of opinion, that this parable was meant to shew the inefficacy of late repentance. The advice of the son of Sirach deserves particular attention, “ Humble thyself before “ thou beest sick, and in the time of sins, shew repentance, and defer “ not till death to be justified.”

of them had taken the precaution to provide themselves with a portion of oil, exclusive of what they had put into their lamps. The other five brought their lamps already burning, but had not oil to preserve the flame, in case the bridegroom should not repair to them so early as they had been taught to expect. The bridegroom not coming at the appointed time, the virgins composed themselves to sleep.

About the third watch, they were awakened by messengers, dispatched to apprize them of the bridegroom's approach. They now hastily arose, and trimmed their lamps: and the improvident young women, perceiving that their oil was exhausted, requested a supply from their companions. They replied, that it was not convenient to comply with their request, lest they should have occasion for oil for the supply of their own lamps: but they advised their associates to hasten to the nearest place where oil was sold, and purchase a sufficient supply. They followed this advice: but during their absence, the bridegroom arrived. The five virgins whose lamps continued burning, joined the train, and proceeded to the banqueting-room: but when the other five came, they were denied admittance. They earnestly solicited, that the bridegroom would permit them to partake of the entertainment: but he resolutely adhered to his resolution, of not allowing them to attend the celebration of his marriage.

So also shall I behave toward those, who, notwithstanding the benefits proposed to their acceptance, shall continue under the dominion of sin; and therefore I admonish you to be careful, lest you should transgress the precepts of my gospel, your strict observance of which will most assuredly secure eternal salvation. "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 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. Afterwards came also the other virgins,
“ saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answer-
“ ed 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.”—
Matt. xxv. 1, &c.

In order to explain the meaning of the above parable, it is necessary to observe, that it alludes to the ceremonies observed at the marriages among the Jews. It was usual for the bridegroom to conduct his wife home in the evening ; and his female friends and acquaintances were accustomed to wait with lamps, till they were informed of the approach of the new married couple, when they proceeded to meet and congratulate them on occasion of their marriage, and to accompany them home, each carrying a burning lamp.

To ten such virgins, our blessed Saviour compared all those persons to whom the gospel was preached ; ten being the usual number of virgins appointed to

attend the bride and bridegroom. To these virgins, may be compared all the true professors of the Christian gospel; and the lamps which were carried by the virgins are descriptive of faith in Christ, who is the celestial Bridegroom, and to meet whom all true disciples go forth, in order to solicit that they may be admitted into the blessed regions of immortality.

The weakness of some, is represented by the virgins who did not provide oil for the supply of their lamps: so those Christians who only make a profession of faith in the gospel, and neglect to furnish themselves with the oil of divine grace, the fruit of which is holiness, must not expect to obtain the favor of the heavenly Bridegroom. But, on the contrary, the wise, conscious that faith without holiness must prove ineffectual, are careful to acquire a necessary portion of divine grace, and ever disposed to perform works of love and charity.

While waiting for the appearance of the bridegroom, the ten virgins are said to have slept: whereby it is intimated, that both the sincere and hypocritical professors of the Christian religion, lie down together in the common sleep of death; and while the Messiah delays his appearance, mankind slumber together in the mansions of the grave.

The Jews have a tradition, that the Messiah will come to judge mankind at midnight; but however this may be, certain it is that his appearance will be sudden, alarming and awful; his tremendous voice will be heard in the remotest quarters of the globe, and will penetrate into the very bowels of the earth, and the utmost depths of the ocean. "Behold the
"Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him."

As the improvident virgins were refused admittance to the marriage banquet, so will the enemies of Christ, and those who do not conform to the precepts of his gospel, be rejected by him on the great and awful day of judgment. Therefore he kindly exhorts us to watch, that we may be in a constant state of preparation to appear before the grand and solemn tribunal of Almighty justice. Let us not disregard this benevolent invitation, but by a steady perseverance in the duties of righteousness and virtue, be ever prepared to accompany the great author of our salvation, to the banquet of happiness prepared for his true disciples in the blessed regions of the heavenly Canaan.

More clearly to explain the true nature of, and the inestimable advantages to be derived from, Christian watchfulness, our blessed Saviour delivered another parable, which, like the former, is calculated to excite us to a punctual discharge of our religious duties.

A man who had occasion to undertake a long journey distributed a sum of money among his servants, giving five talents to one, two to another, and one talent to a third, and commanding them to employ these sums to the best advantage during his absence; and upon their promising to comply with his directions, he departed.

The servant who had received the five talents, immediately employed them in traffic, and his success was equal to his industry and application; for before his master's return, he doubled the original sum.—The man who had received the two talents, pursued a similar conduct, and with equal success. But the third servant, being fearful of engaging in traffic, lest his master's property should be consumed, dug a hole

in the earth, and therein deposited the talent he had received.

After a considerable time had elapsed, the master returned, and ordered the three servants to relate in what manner they had discharged the trust reposed in them. He highly extolled the prudence and industry of the two servants who had doubled the money they had received, and promised to bestow upon them such rewards as were due to their merits. But the third servant returned to his master the talent with which he had been intrusted, alledging, in excuse for not having improved the money, that being conscious of the covetousness of his disposition, he had neglected to employ the money in commerce, from an apprehension that his undertaking might prove unsuccessful, and that payment of the money he was intrusted with, would be rigorously exacted. Hereupon his master severely reproached him for his indolence; and informed him, that although he believed him to be of an austere and rapacious disposition, he should have put the money out to use, that some advantage might have been obtained by the accumulation of interest. He then ordered the talent he had returned, to be given to the servant who had gained five talents by traffic, and that the indolent man might be dismissed his presence, to spend the night in a solitary place near the house, there to lament his indiscretion; and at the same time, he gave the other two men permission to sit at table with him in the banquetting-room, which was illuminated with lamps and torches.

“ For the kingdom of heaven 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 other 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. Af-
“ ter a long time, the lord of those servants cometh,
“ and reckoneth with them. And so he that had re-
“ ceived 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 ru-
“ ler over many things; enter thou into the joy of
“ thy lord. He also that received two talents, came
“ and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two
“ talents: behold, I have gained two other talents be-
“ sides 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 strawed: 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 sowed not, and gather
“ where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore
“ to have put my money to the exchangers, and then
“ at my coming I should have received mine own with
“ usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and
“ give it unto him which 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. And cast ye
“ the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there

for whatever he enjoys, he is not to consider as his due, but as an unmerited bounty bestowed upon him by the unlimited benevolence of the omnipotent Creator of the world.

Every man therefore should be grateful for, and satisfied with what he has received; and instead of being envious of the more liberal enjoyments of others, it is his duty assiduously to employ himself in the improvement of his own advantages.

The talents mentioned in the parable above related, are principally meant to signify the communications and graces of the Holy Spirit, which the Almighty bestows in different proportions. According to every man according to his will. Dispositions to these, are all the means and opportunities to exercise and improve the graces of the Spirit, all the advantages of station in life, fortune, education, and in short, whatever may contribute to enable us to perform acts of goodness, for all the benefits we enjoy we have received from the Almighty, by whom we are surely engaged to exert our best endeavours, for promoting the wise ends for which he distributes his favours among the children of such men.

God has bestowed upon all men a sufficient degree of understanding to distinguish good from evil, and acquire into the causes, reasons, and consequences of things, and to collect from their proper ends for the regulation of our conduct through life. In the pursuit of our eternal happiness, the Almighty has, by means of the power, discernment, so generously supplied the lights of human reason, and men of the wisest mental powers, has had no difficulty in creating the way to everlasting happiness, if they will but once God to grant them such assistance of the Spirit

grace as will enable them to subdue their intemperate passions and corrupt inclinations.

The powers we possess are gifts deposited with us by God, to whom we are accountable for their proper application ; and if we pervert them to improper purposes, we must not hope to escape the divine displeasure. The capacities which we have derived from the favor and affection of God, are doubtless improveable, for they would otherwise be neither of value nor use ; and indeed, the Almighty has solemnly enjoined us to effect this improvement ; for he has denounced the severest vengeance against those who neglect this important duty.

Without proper cultivation, the finest natural abilities will fail of having their proper effect ; and the most extensive knowledge cannot be preserved, unless they are frequently called forth into use and exercise ; and the same observation is applicable to moral accomplishments, which, if they are suffered to remain inactive, will gradually lose their vigor, and be, at length, wholly obliterated. To habituate ourselves to a virtuous course of life, considerable attention and care will be found necessary ; but to persevere in that course, with that degree of spirit and vigor which we are commanded to maintain, will require additional exertions of fortitude as well as piety. Unless we co-operate with the impulses of divine grace, the impressions they have made upon the heart of man, will gradually decay, and in process of time be wholly expunged. “ The Spirit of God will not always strive with a man.”

The Almighty intrusts to our care and management, a charge equal to the service which he expects us to render him : but if we are indolent, and neglect to employ the gifts he has bestowed upon us towards

effecting the purposes for which they were designed, he will recall the bounties he has bestowed. "Take from him the talent, and give it to him that hath ten talents." Let us therefore industriously make advantage of the trust reposed in us; for the time will arrive, when we shall be called strictly to account for our conduct; and if we have neglected to improve the gifts of the Almighty, he will deprive us of what he has bestowed. What this improvement implies, and how we may discharge this duty, are matters claiming our most serious concern. To improve the gifts of God, is certainly to employ them in such a manner, as will most effectually tend to the advancement of his honor and glory.

In the creation of man, the design of the Almighty was, that he should magnify the divine honor and glory; and he has been graciously pleased to bestow upon us such powers, and to grant us such assistance of divine grace, as are adapted to the full accomplishment of this important end. By learning, we may cultivate our understanding; and by studious enquiry, extend our knowledge through all the subjects of human investigation: but if our design in these pursuits be only to gratify curiosity, indulge vanity or ambition, or to promote our temporal advantage, we shall not be serving God, but, on the contrary, be acting either as is most agreeable to our own inclinations, or most likely to promote our private interests.

We may increase our portion of God's outward gifts, but, if we only apply them to the enlargement of our own conveniences, we neglect to make that improvement which our Master expects. We may exult in the acquisition of knowledge and wealth, considering them as inexhaustible sources of private satisfaction: but it behoves us constantly to remem-

ber, that when we are called to a reckoning with the Almighty, these advantages will be included in our account, and they will in no respect operate to our benefit, unless we have employed them in the multiplication of our virtues, or rendered them instrumental in promoting the cause of religion and the eternal salvation of our fellow-creatures.

From what has been said above, we may reasonably infer, that in a future state, there will be different degrees of happiness and glory; and that they will be proportioned to the fidelity with which we have discharged our religious duties to God, and our moral obligations to men.

Dreadful will be the situation of that man, who has improvidently squandered away the stock intrusted to his care, or suffered the gifts bestowed upon him to perish for want of use; or by perverting them to the purposes of vice, has provoked the Almighty to recall his benefactions. By what means shall the prodigal, who has extravagantly dissipated his wealth, appease the wrath of his provoked Judge? by reflecting on the awful scene that will ensue, when he appears before the solemn tribunal of the Almighty, he will have sufficient cause for alarm and terror; but he must not suffer these to overwhelm him with despair, since by an immediate and sincere reformation, he will make atonement for his past indiscretions, and extinguish that wrath which has been kindled against him.

He who has forfeited the most excellent endowments, may have them restored to him in their utmost perfection, by the benevolent power by whom they were originally bestowed. Those who have observed the most rigid circumspection in the discharge of their religious duties, will not be so free from the contaminations of vice, as to require no allowance to be

made for their failings : but on the great day of judgment, they are to rely on the benevolence of the all-merciful Judge, and not on the supposition of their own desert, for the enjoyment of the blessings of the kingdom of heaven.

The blessed Jesus now delivered a third parable, wherein he described his coming to judge mankind. When he, whom you now consider as one of the ordinary race of mortals, shall come from heaven, surrounded by the glorious heavenly host of angels, he shall seat himself upon the grand tribunal of almighty and eternal justice. Then the whole human race shall be rescued from the dominion of death, and be summoned to appear before the tremendous judgment-seat of God. They shall then be divided into two parts, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats : the sheep, or the good men, shall stand on his * right hand, and the goats, or wicked people, on the left. The King of men and angels, addressing himself to those on his right hand, shall say, Approach, O you, who are appointed by my heavenly Father to receive the rewards of his everlasting kingdom, which were † prepared for you from the creation of the world. When I was hungry, you supplied me with food ; when I thirsted, you gave me drink ; when I appeared among you as a stranger, you courteously entertained me ; when I was deficient of clothing, you furnished me with apparel ; when afflicted with sickness, you afforded me relief ; when under confinement, you visited me, kindly condoling with me on account of my

* This seems to allude to a custom among the Jews in capital causes, when they who were to receive absolution, were placed on the right hand of the Sanhedrim, and those who were to receive sentence of condemnation on the left.

† The Jews are of opinion, that the Almighty prepared Paradise for the reception of the righteous, even previous to the formation of the earth.

misfortunes, and offering me every assistance in your power.

The righteous men will then ask when these events happened, and say, that they are not conscious of his having been in a situation to require their assistance, or that he had received any services from them.— Hereupon the King will reply, that he considers all the offices of charity which they have performed in behalf of their distressed brethren, as instances of their affection towards him, and as proofs of their obedience to the precepts of his gospel. Then turning to those on the left hand, he will pronounce upon them that dreadful and irrevocable sentence which their obstinate perseverance in the most abominable iniquities has provoked. Depart from me, ye children of abomination; for you are consigned to the place of everlasting torments, * prepared for the devils and wicked men. When I was hungry, you refused me meat, and drink when I was thirsty; when I appeared as a stranger, you would afford me no entertainment; nor when sick and in prison, would you grant me relief. The wicked will then deny the justice of these accusations, and alledge, that they neither refused to afford him relief, nor even knew him to be in circumstances of distress. But the Judge will answer, that he accounts their refusal to afford relief to his disciples, as an heinous offence committed against himself. Therefore they shall be condemned to suffer perpetual torments, while the others shall enjoy a state of uninterrupted felicity.

* The Fathers are of opinion, that where Christ speaks of the punishments, he is not to be understood in the same manner as when he speaks of the blessings, lest it should be supposed, that God had designed the punishment of men before they had sinned. God is the author and procurer of man's happiness; but man only is the author of his own misery.

In the Old Testament, good men are frequently compared to sheep, on account of their usefulness and innocence, as are wicked men to goats on account of their inordinate lusts. However, the allegory is pursued no further; but he proceeds to exhort mankind to a life of righteousness, in a stile of beautiful simplicity; for notwithstanding the solemnity and grandeur of the subjects on which the great Preacher of Israel addresses the multitude, his meaning is clearly obvious. “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he set upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them 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 hungred, 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 hungred, 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, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirs-

“ ty, 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 visited me not.—
 “ Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord,
 “ when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, 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 did it not to one of the least of these. ye did
 “ it not to me. And these shall go away into ever-
 “ lasting punishment ; but the righteous into life
 “ eternal,” Matt. xxv. 31, &c.

From the above parable we learn, that we shall be
 condemned to everlasting torments, or be rewarded
 with the glorious and ineffable blessings of the king-
 dom of heaven, according to our conduct during our
 state of terrestrial probation. A more effectual meth-
 od could not possibly have been suggested, for con-
 veying an idea of the warmth and force of the divine
 benevolence to the sons of sinful men, or to incite a
 stronger disposition to charitable offices, than that of
 the Son of God, surrounded by the whole celestial
 host, proclaiming from his seat of judgment, in the
 presence of the whole human race, that all good offi-
 ces towards their fellow-creatures, he would reward
 as liberally as if they had been performed in behalf of
 himself. During his residence upon earth, under the
 appearance of humanity, our blessed Redeemer suf-
 fered innumerable injuries and mortifications. Righ-
 teous men laboring under persecution and distresses,
 he considers as his brethren ; he loves them with the
 utmost tenderness, and interests himself in their wel-
 fare ; he grieves when they are afflicted, and rejoices
 upon the return of their happiness.

It is probable, that the reason why the grand en-
 quiry in the above parable should refer only to the

performance of duties is, that the generality of mankind consider the neglect of moral obligations as a matter of but small importance, although they scrupulously avoid the commission of those actions which come under the description of absolute crimes.—Hence then, while they keep themselves free from the latter, they are with little difficulty, able to silence the upbraidings of conscience on the score of the former. This being one of the most fatally pernicious errors both in religion and morality, our blessed Redeemer judged it prudent to pronounce a most solemn caution against persevering in so dangerous a mode of conduct.

On another occasion, the great Judge himself declared the duties of piety to be of superior importance to those of charity; and therefore it is necessary to observe, that charity and religion cannot exist separately from, and independently of each other; for piety, of which faith is the origin, must ever be productive of charity; and a desire to perform offices of kindness, friendship, and charity, must necessarily include a disposition to righteousness. It is indisputably certain, that a very intimate connection subsists between righteousness and charity; for our love of God, results from our admiration of his unbounded benevolence, and other perfections.

In the parable above recited, the enquiry is perhaps represented as turning upon the duties of charity, because in this there are fewer opportunities for self-deception than in other branches of goodness. By an ostentatious display of extraordinary zeal, and a specious conformity to the external ceremonials of religion, hypocritical professors of holiness may obtain the reputation of possessing those virtues to which their hearts are absolute strangers; they may assume the appearance of sanctity, although they are

incapable of discharging the important obligations of charity ; they may obtain the credit of being righteous, although they are covetous, unjust, rapacious, proud and cruel : but none can assume the appearance of charity, unless they supply the hungry with food, the naked with apparel, or in some other manner contribute to relieve the necessities of their distressed brethren.

In particular instances, however, works of charity may proceed from other principles than those of piety and benevolence ; they may be performed from motives of pride, vanity, or ostentation, or from interested views : but though the affectation of these virtues may raise a transitory reputation, the fallacy must, in the very nature of things, be speedily detected. The man whose heart is warmed by a genuine, permanent, and extensive principle of charity, we may reasonably conclude to have an ardent affection for God.

From what is said above, it follows, as a natural consequence, that all pretences to goodness, without a principle of grace implanted in the heart, will not operate towards our eternal salvation. He who entertains a due veneration for holiness, justice and truth in men, cannot fail to admire, reverence, and love God, who possesses those qualities in an infinitely superior degree : and he who is disposed to express gratitude towards his fellow-creatures, on account of benefactions received from them, cannot but be more strongly inclined to acknowledge the wonderful goodness of God, to whose bounty alone he is indebted for all the blessings he enjoys. But if we do not return thankfulness for the benefits conferred upon us by God, and are deficient in the practice of our religious duties, we must expect to feel the punishments due to such abominable ingratitude. Hence then it ap-

pears, that true righteousness can never exist where morality is wanting; and that the man who affects to comply with the moral obligations, and is yet destitute of holiness and sanctity, must expose himself to the displeasure both of God and man; for he can be no other than a wicked impostor.

Our blessed Saviour has told us, that the fire of hell was prepared for the devil and his angels, but not purposely for wicked men: but he expressly declares, that the kingdom of heaven was prepared for the reception of the righteous. Hence it appears, that our Lord meant to teach us that the original design of heaven was to render mankind happy; for a state of consummate felicity was formed for the human race, at the time of their creation: but the fire of hell was prepared for the devil and his angels immediately after their fall. And as wicked men unite themselves with the devils in their sin and rebellion against the Majesty of heaven, they are consigned to share in the punishments prepared for the apostate spirits.

In addition to the evidence already adduced to prove that Christ was possessed of a divine power, we shall here enumerate some further circumstances. Our blessed Saviour foretold, among many other prophecies which were afterwards fully accomplished, that he should suffer at Jerusalem; that he should there be betrayed into the power of the Sanhedrim, who would condemn him to a painful and ignominious death, and deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged: that Judas was the person who would betray him; that he should be forsaken by the other disciples; that Peter, in particular, would deny him three times; that he should die upon a cross, and rise on the third day: he also predicted the manner of St. Peter's death; that St. John would live to be a witness of the destruction of Jerusalem; that after his decease, the

apostles would be cruelly persecuted, together with the mission of the Holy Ghost to comfort and enlighten them, and to enable them successfully to preach the gospel.

The time when the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, the circumstances attending the demolition of the temple, the terrible judgments inflicted upon the Jewish nation, and their final dispersion, were events which occurred precisely according to the prophecies of our blessed Saviour; and this is attested by Josephus, who was a witness to many of the facts.

With respect to the time, our Lord said, that the generation of men then living should not pass away, till the prophecies he then spoke to them should be fully accomplished; thereby informing his auditors, that some of those to whom he then addressed himself, would be still living at the time of the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem; and after his resurrection, he says, that St. John should live to see those terrible judgments, all of which were executed precisely as had been foretold, within forty years after being denounced.

He also denoted this time by the signs that should then appear, particularly by the coming of false Christs and false prophets. False Christs were such as assumed the name of the Messiah, and pretended to be endued with the power and authority, which the Jews expected would be exerted by the Deliverer of Israel. One of these impostors was Dositheus, who affirmed that he was the Christ foretold by Moses, and of whom Origen testifies, that "he did prodigious things;" and Simon Magus, who averred, that he appeared among the Jews as the Son of God, is said by the sacred historian, to have "bewitched the Samaritans" with his sorceries, that they all believed on him."

False prophets were such as promised or foretold events that were not to happen. Of these, Josephus speaks in the following manner.

“ * During the time that Cuspius Fadus held the government of Judea, a pretended prophet, named Theudas, persuaded a great number of people to take their most valuable effects, and follow him to Jordan ; promising, that by a single word, he would cause the waters to divide, and afford them a dry passage to the opposite shore. He was followed by a great multitude ; but they had sufficient reason to repent their folly ; for Fadus sent against them a troop of cavalry, by whom many were slain, and others made prisoners. The soldiers returned to Jerusalem ; and the head of the impostor was exposed as a public spectacle.

“ The people sustained great mischiefs from the impositions of pretended magicians and other impostors, who seduced the populace to follow them into solitudes and deserts, under pretence of shewing them miracles : but they had cause severely to regret their credulity and folly ; for Felix caused a great number of them to be taken into custody, and put to death. A man came from Egypt at this time, and pretending to possess the gift of prophecy, invited the people of Jerusalem to follow him to the summit of mount Olivet, situated at about the distance of five furlongs from Jerusalem ; promising, that upon his pronouncing certain words, they should see the walls fall to the earth, affording them a free passage into the city. When Felix received intelligence of what the impostor had proposed, he ordered his troops un-

* See Josephus, translated by the authors of this work, Vol. II. p. 97, 104, 572, 573.

“ der arms, and, with a numerous body of horse
“ and foot, he presently attacked the multitude by
“ surprise, putting four hundred to death, and mak-
“ ing prisoners of two hundred ; but, notwithstand-
“ ing the most vigilant search was made, the Egypt-
“ tian impostor escaped.

“ The whole country of Cyrene now felt the ill
“ effects of the singular insolence of the Sicarii, of
“ which the following is a striking instance. An
“ enthusiastic weaver, named Jonathan, a man of
“ equal wickedness and cunning, made his escape
“ into that country. This man enticed great num-
“ bers of weak and credulous people to follow him
“ into the woods and deserts, pretending that he
“ would shew them visions and wonderful prodig-
“ ies ; and many of the vulgar gave credit to the
“ imposition : but several of the most eminent Jews
“ of Cyrene hearing of the affair, traced it to its
“ source, and having learnt what rout the deluded
“ people had taken, and the real state of the case,
“ they sent immediate intelligence thereof to Catul-
“ lus, governor of the Pentapollitan Lybia. Hereup-
“ on the governor dispatched a body of cavalry and
“ infantry, who intercepted them, and, as they were
“ unarmed, made an easy conquest of them. Most
“ of them were taken prisoners, and conveyed to Ca-
“ tullus ; but considerable numbers were killed on
“ the spot.

“ However, Jonathan, the seducer of these un-
“ happy people, effected his escape. Diligent search
“ being made after him for a considerable time, he
“ was at length apprehended, and sent prisoner to
“ Catullus : but he found a method of ingratiating
“ himself with the governor, and while he diverted
“ the storm from falling on his own head, furnished
“ the other with a pretence to direct it another way.

“ This was to charge the richest Jews of the place
“ with being the contrivers and promoters of the plot.
“ Catullus was charmed with this scheme, however
“ ill founded, and reflected on it till he had in a man-
“ ner declared war against the Jews in his own mind.
“ What aggravated the wickedness of this avaricious
“ governor was, that he not only pretended to believe
“ the calumny, against the convictions of reason and
“ common sense, but likewise excited the Sicarii to
“ join their endeavors for effecting the ruin of the
“ innocent people. There was one Alexander, a
“ Jew, to whom Catullus had long been a determined
“ enemy; and having instructed false witnesses to
“ accuse this man, and his wife Berenice, they were
“ put to death. These were the first sufferers by
“ this scheme of iniquity: but soon afterwards no
“ less than three thousand persons shared a simi-
“ lar fate, at one time, through the base arts of per-
“ jury; all their crime being, that they were men
“ of character and fortune. Catullus left their es-
“ tates as a forfeit to the empire, which he thought
“ would secure, if not justify him, in appropriating
“ their ready money to his own use.

“ Catullus, being now apprehensive that the capital
“ Jews in other parts might detect and reveal the vile
“ plot of which he had been guilty, instructed Jona-
“ than, and some other prisoners, to exhibit articles
“ of complaint against such of the Jews of Rome and
“ Alexandria, as were most distinguished for their
“ unblemished reputation. Among the persons thus
“ accused, was Joseph, the writer of this history.
“ Catullus now repaired to Rome, taking with him,
“ in chains, Jonathan and the rest of his prisoners.
“ He entertained no doubt but that all enquiry was at
“ an end, and that every thing he had asserted would
“ obtain full credit: but the event of the affair prov-
“ ed that his contrivance had not succeeded as he

“ could have wished : for Vespasian, entertaining
“ great suspicion, enquired diligently into the cir-
“ cumstances of the case, in which he was assisted by
“ Titus, who advised him to declare the innocence of
“ Joseph and the other persons accused. This was
“ accordingly done, and they were set at liberty,
“ while orders were given that Jonathan should be
“ whipped, and then burnt alive ; and this sentence
“ was executed in its utmost rigor.”

Other signs also predicted by our Saviour, were famines, earthquakes, pestilences, tumults, fearful sights, and great signs from heaven : and all these prophecies were punctually accomplished. According to Eusebius, the whole Roman empire, but particularly Palestine, was dreadfully oppressed by famine, to which, vast numbers of people fell sacrifices. Grotius mentions several earthquakes during the reigns of Claudius and Nero, at Crete, Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Coloss, all which places were inhabited by the Jews. Josephus says, that in his time, dreadful thunderings and lightnings, and vast convulsions of the earth, portended evil to the Jewish nation ; and he adds, that a sword hung over the city, or a comet pointed down upon it for the space of a year ; which, he says, plainly indicated, that the Jewish nation would be put to the sword ; and that at the ninth hour of the night, during the feast of unleavened bread, a light shone upon the temple equal to that of noon-day ; that the principal gate of the temple, which could scarcely be turned upon its hinges by the united strength of twenty men, and which was secured with iron bolts and bars, was seen to open without the assistance of any human force ; that before the decline of the sun, armies in battle array were seen in the clouds ; and that at the feast of Pentecost, when the priests went into the temple, in order to discharge the duties of

their office, they heard an uncommon noise, and afterwards a voice pronounce, "Let us depart."

Tacitus, the famous Roman historian, thus enumerates the signs which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. Armies seemed to meet in the clouds, weapons were there seen glittering, the temple seemed to be in a flame, with fire issuing from the clouds, and a divine voice was heard, signifying that the Deity was quitting the place.

Thus it appears from indisputable testimony, that the predictions of our Saviour concerning the signs that would precede the desolation that awaited the Jewish nation, were fully accomplished; and pursuing his discourse on this subject, Josephus * writes in the following manner. "But the most extraordinary story of the whole still remains unrelated.—About four years before the commencement of the war, and while the city appeared to be in the most perfect peace and unbounded plenty, there came to the feast of tabernacles, which is annually celebrated to the honor of God, a simple countryman, named Jesus, who was the son of Ananus, and who, without any previous intimation, exclaimed in the following manner: 'A voice from the east; a voice from the west; a voice from the four quarters of the world; a voice to Jerusalem, and a voice to the temple; a voice to men and women newly married, and a voice to the nation at large.' "In this manner did he continue his exclamations night and day, and in various places through all the streets in the city. Some persons of eminence in the government were so offended at the freedom of the ill-omened exclamation, that they directed that the man should

* See Josephus, translated by Thompson and Price, Vol. II. p. 524, 525.

“ be apprehended and whipped severely. He bore
“ his sufferings, not only without complaint of the
“ injustice of them, but without saying a word in his
“ defence : but his punishment was no sooner ended,
“ than he proceeded as before, with his denouncing
“ exclamations. By this time the magistrates were
“ suspicious (and indeed not without reason) that
“ what he had said, proceeded from the divine im-
“ pulse of a superior power that influenced his words.
“ Hereupon he was sent to Albinus, the governor of
“ Judea, who directed that he should be whipped with
“ such severity, that his bones appeared ; yet even in
“ this situation, he neither wept nor supplicated ;
“ but in a voice of mourning, he repeated, after each
“ stroke,” ‘ Woe, woe, to Jerusalem.’ “ On this
“ extraordinary conduct, Albinus was induced to in-
“ terrogate him with respect to his character, and the
“ places of his birth and residence, and what could
“ induce him to proceed as he had done : but he re-
“ plied not to any of these questions ; whereupon
“ Albinus found himself under the necessity of dis-
“ missing him, as a man out of his senses. From
“ this period, to the commencement of the war, it
“ was not known that Jesus visited or spoke to any
“ of the citizens ; nor was he heard to say any other
“ words, than that melancholy sentence ;” ‘ Woe,
“ woe to Jerusalem !’ “ Those who daily punished
“ him, received no ill-language from him ; nor did
“ those who fed him, receive his thanks : but his gene-
“ ral speech to every one, was an ominous prediction.
“ It was remarked, that on public festivals, he was
“ more vociferous than on other occasions : and in
“ the manner above-mentioned, he continued to pro-
“ ceed for the space of seven years and five months ;
“ nor did his voice or strength appear to fail him, till
“ his predictions were verified by the siege of Jerusa-
“ lem. When this event had taken place, he went,
“ for the last time, on the wall, and exclaimed, in a

“ more powerful voice than usual,” ‘ Woe, woe to this city, this temple, and this people ;’ “ and he concluded his lamentation by saying,” ‘ Woe, woe be to myself.’ “ He had no sooner spoken these words, than he was destroyed by a stone thrown from an engine.

“ From what has been above recited, continues our author, it will be evident to mankind in general, that our destruction arises from our misconduct ; and that Providence, by the gift of our reasonable faculties, as well as by the aids of prediction and revelation, has contributed in an abundant degree, to the general good, and lasting advantage of all its creatures. Our ruin is certainly to be attributed to ourselves, when we refuse to take warning, after being premonished of future events.”

Thus have we the positive evidence of a rigid advocate for the principles of Judaism, that he was himself an actual witness to the full accomplishment of several of the predictions of our blessed Redeemer ; of whom, with that candor and regard to truth, which contribute infinitely more than the finest literary acquirements, to render the character of an historian truly respectable, he speaks in the following terms*.

“ About this period, there arose to notice one Jesus, a man of consummate wisdom, IF INDEED HE MAY BE DEEMED A MAN. He was eminently celebrated for his power of working miracles ; and those who were curious, and desirous to *learn the truth*, flocked to him in abundance. He was followed by immense numbers of people, both Jews and Gentiles. This was that Christ whom the princes and great men of our nation accused. He was delivered up to the cross by Pontius Pilate ; notwithstanding

* Josephus, translated by Thompson and Price, Vol. II. p. 9.

“ which, those who originally adhered to him, never
 “ forsook him. *On the third day after his crucifix-*
 “ *ion, he was seen alive, agreeable to the prediction*
 “ *of several prophets.* He wrought a great number
 “ of marvellous acts: and there remain even to this
 “ day, a sect of people who bear the name of Chris-
 “ tians, and who acknowledge this Christ for their
 “ head.”

The destruction of Jerusalem, and its attendant cir-
 cumstances, are thus described by our Saviour.—
 “ Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and
 “ compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side.
 “ And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy
 “ children within thee: and they shall not leave with-
 “ in thee one stone upon another.” Luke xix. 43, 44.
 “ Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not
 “ since the beginning of the world, no, nor ever shall
 “ be.” Matt. xxiv. 21. These prophecies were ful-
 filled by Titus, who encompassed the city with new
 fortifications, which were erected by his troops in the
 space of three days. “ Titus directed * his officers
 “ immediately to begin the erection of the wall, and
 “ let the whole army take a share in the business, as-
 “ signing to each party its proper station. These
 “ orders were no sooner issued, than every soldier
 “ was animated with a wish to exceed his fellows in
 “ this work. The ground was measured out, the le-
 “ gions were divided, and every man was emulous who
 “ should most effectually distinguish himself. The
 “ common soldiers copied the example of the serje-
 “ ants; the serjeants that of the captains; the cap-
 “ tains that of the tribunes; and the tribunes that
 “ of their superior officers; the whole being under
 “ the direction of Titus, whose zeal for the dispatch
 “ of this business was such, that he was continually

* See the work last quoted, Vol. II. p. 483, 489.

“ taking his rounds to superintend the whole pro-
“ ceeding.

“ This wall commenced at a place called the Camp
“ of the Assyrians, where Titus himself held his
“ head-quarters. Hence it was continued to the low-
“ er Cænopolis ; carried forward by the way of Ce-
“ dron to Mount Olivet, which was inclosed to the
“ south as far as the rock Peristereon ; and this inclo-
“ sure comprehended an adjacent hill, which com-
“ mands the vale of Siloah. From this place it in-
“ clined somewhat to the west, and was carried on to
“ the valley of the Fountain. Its next direction was
“ to the sepulchre of Ananus, the high-priest ; after
“ this, it inclosed the mountain on which Pompey
“ had heretofore encamped. It then turned to the
“ north, and was extended to the village named Ere-
“ binthonicus. It included the sepulchre of Herod
“ on the east-side ; and soon afterwards was joined
“ to that part of the wall, where the building origi-
“ nally commenced.

“ Nine and thirty furlongs was the whole extent of
“ this wall ; and thirteen forts were erected on the
“ outside of it, ten furlongs being the compass of
“ each fort. It is somewhat extraordinary, but not
“ less so than true, that this amazing work was com-
“ pleted in three days, though an equal number of
“ months might have been supposed a reasonable time
“ for it. As soon as it was finished, garrisons were
“ placed in all the forts, who did duty under arms
“ every night. On each night likewise, Titus went
“ the first round in person ; Tiberius Alexander the
“ second ; and the officers who commanded the legi-
“ ons the third. Some persons were constantly on
“ guard in the forts during the whole night ; but some
“ of the soldiers were allowed to rest alternately,
“ with others who were appointed to watch.

“ The above-mentioned inclosure of the Jews within
“ the town, reduced them to the last degree of despair ;
“ for by this time the famine had increased to such a
“ height, that whole families fell a sacrifice to its rage.
“ The dead bodies of women and children were seen
“ in every house ; the old men were found dead in all
“ the narrow lanes of the city, while the younger men,
“ who were yet able to walk, appeared like ghosts pa-
“ rading the streets. It became impossible to commit
“ the bodies of the dead to the ground. Many of the
“ living were unable to perform this charitable office ;
“ while others were unwilling to undertake it, partly
“ discouraged by the numbers of the deceased, and
“ partly by the reflection, that themselves would not
“ survive any considerable time. Numbers of them
“ expired, even while they were burying their fel-
“ low-citizens ; and some, prompted by despair,
“ sought their own graves.

“ Yet miserably distressful as the present situation
“ of these wretched people was, not a single com-
“ plaint or lamentation was heard ; for the pangs of
“ excessive hunger, absorbed every other passion.
“ Those who last expired, beheld those who had
“ gone before them with unweeping eyes, and looks
“ marked with the near approach of death. The
“ most profound silence reigned through every
“ part of the city ; and during the course of the
“ night, heaps of dead bodies were frequently pil-
“ ed on each other.

“ Yet a more melancholy part of the story (if more
“ melancholy can be) still remains untold. This arose
“ from the brutal insolence of a number of thieves,
“ who broke into the houses, that at this time ap-
“ peared only like charnel-houses, and having strip-
“ ped the bodies of the dead, they derided their si-
“ tuation : exclusive of which, they ran their swords

“ into the bodies of those who lay expiring. When
“ any despairing wretch called for some friendly hand
“ to dispatch him by a sword, that he might no lon-
“ ger endure the miseries of famine, this earnest
“ request was constantly refused with the most un-
“ feeling barbarity. When any of the unfortunate
“ reached the moment of death, they turned their fa-
“ ces to the temple, and thus closed their eyes ;
“ lamenting at the same time, that the vile incen-
“ diaries who had profaned the holy place, should
“ be yet left among the living. When the offensive
“ smells arising from the corruption of the dead bo-
“ dies, became insupportable, an order was given
“ that all of them should be buried at the public ex-
“ pence : the abandoned incendiaries threw them
“ from the walls into the vallies ; a sight that occasi-
“ oned so much horror to Titus, that while he was
“ going his rounds, and found the ditches infested
“ with dead bodies, and pestilential vapors arising
“ from them, he extended his hands towards heaven,
“ and made a solemn appeal to God, that these mis-
“ fortunes arose not from any orders he had given.
“ At the period, of which I am writing, this was
“ the unfortunate situation of the city.

“ The insurgents were now so pent up within the
“ walls, that they found it impossible for any of them
“ to quit the place. In the mean time, they endur-
“ ed all the pangs of famine, aggravated by the tor-
“ tures of despair ; while on the contrary, the Ro-
“ mans lived at their ease, and passed their time ve-
“ ry agreeably, being supplied with the necessaries
“ of life from Syria and the adjacent provinces. En-
“ couraged by their better fortune, many of the Ro-
“ mans advanced to the walls, and made an osten-
“ tious display of their possessions, with a view
“ to reflect on the necessities of those who were in
“ circumstances of distress. All this appeared to

“ have no effect on the unfeeling minds of the se-
 “ dicious multitude : whereupon, Titus, in mere
 “ compassion to the residue of an unhappy people,
 “ determined on the immediate erection of new works,
 “ and resolved that no time should be lost in their
 “ completion. One considerable difficulty, indeed,
 “ now occurred, which was the providing proper
 “ materials for carrying these works into execution ;
 “ for all the wood in the neighborhood of the city
 “ had been cut down, for the erection of the former
 “ works : wherefore they were under the necessity
 “ of fetching all the timber for this second supply,
 “ from a place at the distance of ninety furlongs :
 “ and herewith four ramparts, of greater magnitude
 “ than the former, were erected at the fortress of An-
 “ tonia. Titus carried on this business with great
 “ assiduity ; and the besieged being now at his mer-
 “ cy, he plainly hinted to them, that he knew their si-
 “ tuation. Still, however, they shewed no concern
 “ for what had happened : they seemed to have no
 “ regard for themselves, or each other. Those who
 “ were decaying with sickness, they confined in pri-
 “ sons, and tore the dead to pieces as dogs would have
 “ done.”

The Jewish historian further * informs us, that
 immediately after the conquest of the city of Jerusa-
 lem it was entirely levelled with the ground ; and that
 during the war, “ No † less than ninety-seven thou-
 “ sand persons were made prisoners ; and the num-
 “ ber of those who lost their lives during its progress,
 “ was eleven hundred thousand. Of these far the
 “ greater part were Jews though not born in Judea.”
 To account for this amazing resort of people to the city
 of Jerusalem it is necessary to observe, that they had

* Vol. II. p. 538.

† Vol. II. p. 557.

assembled from all parts of the country, in order to celebrate the passover.

Our blessed Saviour predicted the destruction of the temple in the following manner. " Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Matt. xxiv. 2. And in addition to what we learn from Josephus, Maimonides, another Jewish writer, says, Turnus Rufus dug up the very ground on which the temple stood with plough-shares. This was a remarkable completion of the following prophecy. " Therefore shall Zion for your sakes be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest." Mic. iii. 12. It is also remarkable, that the conflagration of the temple happened on the same day of the same month, on which it had been before burnt by the Babylonians.

The general judgments that were to befall the Jewish nation, are thus mentioned by our Saviour. " For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days : for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations : and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke xxi. 22, 23, 24.—According to these predictions, they were cut off in war, to the number of upwards of two hundred thousand, in divers sieges and battles, and in different towns, and various parts of the country, exclusive of the dreadful carnage at the final destruction of Jeru-

salem. After mentioning the conquest of Jerusalem, Josephus says †, “ There is scarcely a habitable part of the globe, in which some of the Jewish people are not dispersed ;” and from the same writer we learn *, that “ Those who appeared to be in full health, and fit for service, were imprisoned in the temple, in that quarter heretofore destined to the use of the women. Fronto, one of the freedmen and friends of Titus, was deputed to enquire into the cases of the prisoners, and to treat them according to their deserts. The abandoned, the seditious, and those who mutually charged each other with crimes, were put to death without mercy : but Titus reserved the young and healthy, particularly those of a comely appearance, to grace his triumph on his entrance into Rome. All those who remained after this selection, and were above seventeen years of age, were sent in chains into Egypt, to be employed as slaves ; and those who were under seventeen, sent into the various provinces of the empire, to be engaged as gladiators in the several theatres. In the interim, no less than eleven thousand of the prisoners who were under the care of Fronto, were starved to death ; partly owing to their own obstinacy in the refusal of provisions, and partly to the severity of their overseers, who neglected to supply them in a proper manner : but one great cause which aggravated this calamity, was the want of sufficient provisions for such an immense number.” From this period, the Jews have been a dispersed and scattered people throughout all the nations of the earth, having neither country, nor government of their own.

That the predictions of our blessed Saviour, when accomplished, were intended by him, to be proofs of

† Vol. II. p. 543.

* Vol. II. p. 536.

his being the real Messiah, we may collect from his own words. Having informed his disciples that he should be betrayed by Judas, our Saviour soon after adds, "Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He." And after the predictions of his death, resurrection, and ascension, he says, "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe." John xiv. 29. Thus our Lord intimated, that by being witnesses to the accomplishment of his prophecies, they might be convinced of the truth of his gospel, and of the necessity of reposing faith on him; and to the same purpose, are the words subjoined to our Lord's account of the persecutions that his disciples were to encounter after his decease. "These things I have told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them." John xxi. 4.

"He that endures to the end, says our blessed Saviour, shall be saved." Agreeably to this, Eusebius informs us, that † "before the commencement of the war, all the faithful of the church of Jerusalem were warned by a divine revelation to abandon that city, and to retire to a place called Pella, situated beyond the river Jordan."

The "abomination of desolation," quoted by our blessed Saviour from the prophet Daniel, was meant to signify the Roman army; which might very properly be stiled an abomination to the Jews, since among the ensigns of the Roman soldiery were the images of Cæsar, and of the eagle; and this army might be termed a desolation, because it was to lay the temple, the city, and the whole country desolate.

† Euseb. Hist. Eccles. I. iii. c. 5.

“ There shall then, says Jesus, be great tribulation, such as never was known from the beginning of the world.” In confirmation of this, Josephus, and many other Jewish writers, assure us, that the calamities to which the Jews were reduced, were more grievous than those sustained by any other people from the time of the creation.

“ Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.” Nothing of this kind has literally occurred; and therefore the expression is to be received figuratively, being intended to signify, agreeably to divers instances in the Old Testament, an utter desolation of cities and countries. In this language, the prophet Isaiah mentions the destruction of Babylon. “ Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath, and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.” Isa. xiii. 9, 10. The indignation of the Almighty against the Idumeans, the destruction of Sennacherib and his people, and the ruin of Egypt, are expressed in the following dreadful words. “ Come near, ye nations to hear, and hearken ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein, the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their

“ host shall fall down as the leaf falleth off from the
“ vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree. For my
“ sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall
“ come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of
“ my curse to judgment. The sword of the Lord is
“ filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and
“ with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of
“ the kidnies of rams: for the Lord hath a sacrifice
“ in Bozra, and a great slaughter in the land of Idu-
“ mea. And the unicorns shall come down with
“ them, and the bullocks with the bulls, and their
“ land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust
“ made fat with fatness. For it is the day of the
“ Lord’s vengeance, and the year of recompences for
“ the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof
“ shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into
“ brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burn-
“ ing pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor
“ day, the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from
“ generation to generation it shall lie waste, none
“ shall pass through it for ever and for ever. But
“ the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it, the
“ owl also and the raven shall dwell in it, and he
“ shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and
“ the stones of emptiness. They shall call the nobles
“ thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there,
“ and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns
“ shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles
“ in the fortresses thereof, and it shall be an habita-
“ tion of dragons, and a court for owls. The wild
“ beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild
“ beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his
“ fellow, the screech-owl also shall rest there, and find
“ for herself a place of rest. There shall the great
“ owl make her nest, and lay and hatch, and gather
“ under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be
“ gathered, every one with her mate. Seek ye out
“ of the book of the Lord, and read; no one of these

“ shall fail, none shall want her mate : for my mouth
 “ it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered
 “ them. And he hath cast the lot for them, and his
 “ hand hath divided it unto them by line : they shall
 “ possess it for ever, from generation to generation
 “ shall they dwell therein.” Isa. xxxiv. 1, &c.—
 There is a degree of grandeur and dignity in the language of the above denunciations of vengeance, which cannot fail to excite our admiration and terror : but the curses here enumerated are figuratively expressed, and intended, like what our Saviour says of the sun, moon, and stars being darkened, to import the utter destruction and ruin of a nation.

The phrase of Christ’s “ coming in the clouds,” is generally extended no farther than his coming with the Roman army to effect the destruction of Jerusalem; and his “ sending forth his angels to gather forth his “ elect from the four winds,” is referred to the ministry of his disciples, and their making converts of the inhabitants of all nations, for the establishment of the Christian church.

From what is said above, we trust that we have manifestly and incontrovertibly proved, the existence of the divine power and knowledge of our blessed Redeemer. The particulars concerning his own death, and the consequent state and condition of his disciples, and of the Jewish nation, are events which he predicted, and which were fully accomplished, as we learn partly from the accounts of our own Scriptures, and partly from the testimony of a Jewish historian, whose credit and authority have been universally admitted through a long succession of ages.

CHAP. XXXV.

Jesus continues to instruct the people daily in the temple. Two days preceding the passover, he predicts his death. Our Saviour is anointed in the house of Simon the leper. Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles, accepts a bribe from the Sanhedrim, to whom he engages himself to betray his Master. In consequence of their Master's order, Peter and John repair to Jerusalem, in order to make preparations for the passover. Jesus sups with his disciples, and during the entertainment, he says, that one of them shall betray him. The institution of the Eucharist. Jesus takes a second cup of wine, and commands his apostles to share it among them. The affection of our Saviour towards his apostles, and the treachery of Judas. Jesus exhorts his disciples not to indulge ambitious propensities, and proposes himself to them as an example of humility. He washes the feet of his disciples; and on this occasion holds a discourse with Peter. Jesus discourses to his apostles on the act of condescension he had performed, and recommends to their imitation the example he had shewn of humility. Our Saviour is troubled, and signifies by which of his apostles he shall be betrayed. Judas retires from the company; after which our Lord reminds the other apostles of his miracles; mentions his speedy departure from them; and recommends them to cherish mutual love. Peter enquires of his Master, to what place he should retire, since he had said the apostles could not follow him. He forewarns Peter, and predicts the persecution that his apostles were to encounter. Jesus exhorts his disciples against despondency; and informs them that by a strict obedience to his gospel, they will entitle themselves to the enjoyment

of everlasting happiness. He informs them, that, in having seen him, they may be considered as having seen the Father of the creation. He asserts his divine authority, and promises to reward the faith of his disciples. He engages to send the Holy Spirit to them. He promises divine assistance and comfort to all his faithful followers. Our blessed Redeemer bequeaths peace and comfort to his disciples, and declares the time to be approaching, when he shall be betrayed into the power of his enemies.

OUR blessed Saviour continued daily to repair to the temple, where he delivered instructions to the people concerning the laws of the kingdom of heaven : but in the evening he constantly retired to Mount Olivet, or some place adjacent thereto, lest he should be surprised, and taken into custody by his enemies ; for though the members of the Sanhedrim had formed a resolution of putting him to death, they dared not attempt to apprehend him in the open day, while he was surrounded by his numerous followers : but had he reposed within the city, they would, in all probability, have seized him during the darkness and silence of night.

Having delivered the parables recited in the preceding chapter, our blessed Saviour spoke to his apostles on the subject of his approaching death, in order to fortify their minds against a more trying scene than they had yet experienced. He observed to them, that on the Tuesday in the passion week the passover would be celebrated ; adding, that on that day he should be delivered into the power of his enemies, who would put him to death by crucifixion. “ And “ it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these say- “ ings, he said unto his disciples, Ye know, that af- “ ter two days is the feast of the passover, and the

“Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.” Matt. xxvi. 1, 2.

A great number of the members of the Sanhedrim had held frequent consultations at the house of Caiaphas the high-priest, where many stratagems were projected for apprehending Jesus, and putting him to death : but knowing the high veneration in which he was held by the multitude, they deemed it not prudent to attempt the execution of their barbarous and sacrilegious purpose during the * holidays, lest a popular tumult should be fomented, and they should expose themselves to the censure of the Roman governor ; for they knew that a great part of the people esteemed Jesus to be a prophet acting under the immediate authority, and by the inspiration of the Almighty ; and therefore they supposed that they would rescue him, even though he should be apprehended by virtue of an express and formal order issued by the grand council of the nation. “ Then assembled together the chief-priests, and the Scribes and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high-priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him.— But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar among the people.” Matt. xxvi. 3, 4, 5.

Upon the approach of the evening, our blessed Saviour departed from Jerusalem, and retiring to the town of Bethany, entered the house Simon surnamed the Leper, probably in consequence of his hav-

* Maimonides says, the Jews were accustomed to punish notorious offenders during the time of one of the three grand festivals, on account of the vast concourse of people who on those occasions assembled in Jerusalem. They meant to treat our Saviour with the utmost severity, but were yet willing to recede from this custom, rather than provoke the indignation of the populace. However, they were induced by the favorable opportunity which the treachery of Judas afforded, to embrace this season for carrying their iniquitous designs into execution.

ing experienced the healing power of the heavenly Physician. While he was at supper, a woman, who doubtless had been an object of his benevolence and mercy, entered the apartment, and from an alabaster-box, poured upon the head of Jesus, some precious ointment of the genuine spikenard; and perceiving that the ointment did not flow freely, she † broke, or shook the box, and poured the whole upon the head of Jesus. Some of the persons present, knowing that Jesus was averse to luxurious indulgences, censured the woman for her extravagant waste of the ointment, saying, that it might have been sold for three hundred ‡ denarii, which sum would have been sufficient to relieve the necessities of many indigent persons.

To reprove his disciples for having censured the woman on account of the manner in which she had manifested her zeal for him, our blessed Saviour observed to them, that the divine Providence had been pleased to order that there should always be persons in necessitous circumstances, and therefore the virtuous would be able to find continual opportunities for the exercise of their charity and benevolence; adding, that those who longer omitted to manifest their love towards him would be denied the privilege of testifying their zeal for his gospel and affection for his person, for his ministry was drawing towards a conclusion; upon the arrival of which, the king of terrors would enjoy a short triumph over his body. The woman, said our Lord, who has incurred your reproaches, has behaved towards me with the highest degree of respect that it was in her power to bestow: nor could she perform a more proper or seasonable

† The original word is of doubtful signification.

‡ A denarius was equal to about seven-pence half-penny of English money.

action than that of anointing my body, which, in a few days will be consigned to the dreary mansions of the grave: and I predict to you, that wherever my gospel shall be preached, the conduct of this woman shall be celebrated, and her fame shall be transmitted to the latest posterity. "Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster-box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." Matt. xxvi. 6, &c.

During the entertainment above-mentioned, Judas Iscariot, yielding to the impulses of his insatiate avarice, arose from table, and hastened to the city to Jerusalem, having formed the abominable resolution of betraying his Master for the sake of the reward he should obtain from the rulers of Israel. He found the council assembled, and communicated to them his horrid purpose. They eagerly embraced his proposal, and agreed to pay him thirty * shekels of silver, on condition of his betraying the blessed Jesus

* Thirty staters, or shekels of the sanctuary, were equal to about three pounds fifteen shillings English money, which sum was the usual price paid for a slave; so that in the circumstance of conspiring against his life, the Jews manifested their contempt for the Son of God.

into their power. Having engaged in this iniquitous contract with the chief-priests, Judas resolved to avail himself of the first favorable opportunity of carrying his design into execution, at a time when our Lord was not attended by his numerous followers, that he might avoid fomenting a popular tumult. “ Then one of the “ twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief- “ priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, “ and I will deliver him unto you? And they cove- “ nanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And “ from that time he sought opportunities to betray “ him.” Matt. xxvi. 14, 15, 16.

The time was now approaching, when our blessed Saviour was to conclude the mighty work for which he had come into the world; and he was determined to adhere to the most minute of the ceremonial institutions of Moses. Upon the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, being the fifth of the week, at which time the Jews were commanded by the law to kill the paschal lamb. the disciples enquired of Jesus, whether it was not his pleasure that they should make preparations for the celebration of the passover? Hereupon our Saviour commanded Peter and John to repair to Jerusalem, and make the necessary preparations for the feast, which he said, he meant to celebrate in that city, in company with his apostles; adding, that upon entering the city, they would meet a man bearing a pitcher of water, and enjoining them to follow him into his house, and in the name of their Master, request, that he would provide a convenient room for the reception of him and his disciples. This man, said our Lord, will immediately conduct you into a commodious and furnished room at the upper part of his house, where you are to make the necessary preparations for the passover. Thus our blessed Saviour meant to convince his disciples, that he was acquainted with every event that would happen to him; and that he should

voluntarily and with cheerfulness, submit to those punishments and indignities which were to operate to the benefit of mankind. In obedience to the command of Jesus, Peter and John repaired to Jerusalem, and, upon entering that city, they met a man with a pitcher of water, who behaved to them exactly as their Master had foretold. "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go, and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water: follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large room furnished: there make ready. And they went and found as he had said unto them; and they made ready the passover." Luke xxii. 6, &c.

The two apostles having made the necessary preparations for the passover, upon the approach of evening, our blessed Redeemer departed from Bethany; and some time before the hour at which the Jews were accustomed to eat the passover, he entered the city of Jerusalem, and repaired to the apartment which had been prepared for his reception, accompanied by his twelve apostles.

While they were at table, our blessed Lord said to his apostles, I tell you of a truth, that one of the twelve who are now at supper with me, shall treacherously surrender me into the power of the Sanhedrim. Hereupon they were greatly disconcerted, and severally asked their Master, to which of them he refer-

red. Jesus declined giving a decisive answer, but repeated, that he should be betrayed by one of the twelve.

So afflicted were the innocent disciples by what their Master had said concerning the treachery he was to experience, that they did not remark the words addressed to his apostate disciple, whom our Saviour had privately informed, that he was apprized of his villainous intention: but they repeated their question, as to which of them was capable of so horrid a crime as that he had mentioned. Yielding at length to their importunity, our blessed Redeemer signified to them that he should be betrayed by one of those who eat out of the same dish with him. The time is approaching, said our Lord, when I shall be put to death, agreeable to the prophecies concerning the Messiah*: but the most dreadful punishments shall be inflicted upon that man who shall betray me. The declaration of Jesus could not fail to disconcert the wicked traitor, who, however, soon recovered his usual confidence, and determined boldly to proceed in his iniquitous project. “ Now when the even was come
“ he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat,
“ he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you
“ shall betray me. And they were exceeding sor-
“ rowful, and began every one of them to say unto
“ him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He
“ that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same
“ shall betray me. The Son of man goeth, as it is
“ written of him: but woe unto that man by whom
“ the Son of man is betrayed: it had been good for
“ that man, if he had not been born. Then Judas,

* Hence it appears, that the prediction of Christ's suffering through the treachery of Judas, laid him under no necessity of performing the horrid deed, but only implied a knowledge in God, as to the manner in which the uncontroled will of man would operate.

“ which betrayed him, answered, and said, Master, “ is it I? He said unto him, ‘Thou hast said.’” Matt. xxvi. 20, &c.

A variety of conjectures having been framed concerning the motives whereby the perfidious Judas was induced to deliver his innocent Master into the power of his cruel enemies, it may not here be improper to insert those, which carry with them the strongest appearances of probability: but as this is a point of some intricacy, we shall be careful not to lay any restraint or prejudice upon the minds of our readers, who will be left entirely free to deduce from the explicit and candid arguments which we shall produce, such decisions as the dictates of reason shall suggest.

It is the opinion of many learned men, that Judas was induced to the perpetration of this abominable act of villainy, by the resentment with which they suppose him to have been inspired, in consequence of the rebuke he received from his Master, for having censured the woman who poured a precious ointment upon the head of our blessed Saviour, while he was at supper, in the house of Simon the leper. Though it is probable that this was a reason of some weight with the traitor, it could scarcely be his only motive, because the reproof was not directed to him in particular, but to his disciples in general, who had perhaps concurred in blaming the woman for what they conceived to be an unnecessary act of profusion. It is, indeed, scarcely to be imagined, that so mild a reproof could have provoked any man, of however an irascible and revengeful a disposition, to determine upon the murder of his friend: and it is less likely, that Judas, whose avaricious temper must have disposed him to bear much severity of treatment, rather than fail to improve the opportunity of acquiring

wealth, would have been urged to this wicked resolution by so slight a provocation ; for he, as well as the other apostles, still imagined that Jesus would affect the pomp and splendor of a temporal sovereign, and that his followers would be promoted to offices of high honor and emolument.

Others are of opinion, that the covetous disposition of Judas prompted him to betray his Master : but if by the word covetous we are to understand the desire of obtaining reward from the chief-priests, this conjecture must be extremely defective ; for the sum was too inconsiderable to tempt the most sordid mind, to resolve upon sacrificing the life of a friend ; and more especially, if the man expected to enjoy much greater emoluments from the future favors of that friend, than it was possible could result to him in consequence of his death.

A third party attribute the perfidy of Judas to the doubts he entertained, as to whether his Master was in reality the Messiah ; and these imagine, that he betrayed him in a fit of despair. But the futility of this solution may be proved with but little difficulty. Had Judas believed his Master to be an impostor, some parts of his conduct must have appeared as a foundation of so injurious an opinion ; and in this case, he would indisputably have particularized to the chief priests and elders, whatever he conceived to be objectionable in the behaviour of our Saviour, at the time when he engaged in the contract of betraying him. That he did nothing of this kind, is clearly evident ; for had he exhibited any accusation against his Master before the council, they most certainly would have reminded him of that circumstance, when he returned to them, and expressed his remorse and contrition for the perfidy of his conduct. Had he given any intimations tending to confirm the priests and

elders in their disbelief of the divinity of the mission of Jesus, they would most indisputably have been adduced against him in the course of his trial, when his enemies were wholly incapable of procuring evidence in support of their groundless accusations. It may be further observed, that had Judas considered his Master as an impostor, and expected no other reward for sacrificing his life than the money he was to receive from the council, he would scarcely have accepted of so small a sum; since he could not be ignorant, that the chief-priests and rulers would not have scrupled to give any price, rather than fail of getting the person of our Saviour into their power.

In short, the solemn declaration which Judas made to the priests, bearing testimony to the perfect innocence of our great Redeemer, and expressing his concern for the horrid crime he had committed, are clear confutations of the supposition that he believed his Master to be an impostor. "I have sinned," said he, "in betraying innocent blood."

The evangelist informs us, that Judas was of so rapacious a disposition, as to embezzle money from the common stock of our Saviour and his apostles; and this affords us sufficient reason to believe, that he became the disciple of Jesus with a view to amass riches, and acquire such other temporal advantages, as he supposed would be enjoyed by the friends and followers of the Messiah. This evangelist also gives a sanction to the idea, that as he had been disappointed in his expectations, he became extremely impatient of the delay; and the more so, as his Master had frequently, and particularly about that period, dissuaded his disciples from entertaining any ambitious views or expectations; and had also declined to embrace the opportunity of erecting a temporal sovereignty, to which he had been vehemently urged by

the multitude, who had accompanied him to Jerusalem with shouts and exclamations of Hosanna to the Son of David. His impatience, therefore, it may be presumed, was so excessive, as to prompt him to surrender his Master into the power of the Sanhedrim; conceiving, that he would then be under an absolute necessity of assuming the dignity of a sovereign prince, which would place him in a situation, whereby he would be enabled to bestow emoluments and other rewards upon his followers.

The grand council of the Jewish nation was composed of the principal persons of the sacerdotal order, the representatives of the most eminent of the Jewish families, and the doctors of the law; and when conducted into the presence of so august an assembly, the traitor, perhaps, imagined, that his Master would resolutely assert his pretensions to the title of the Messiah; and after proving the justice of his claim, to the entire conviction of the council, immediately assume the regal dignity, and claim the right of exercising the full powers government.

Though he could not be ignorant that the measures he was pursuing would prove exceedingly offensive to his Master, yet he might hope that the success of his project would ensure his pardon from the benevolent Jesus, and also recommend him to a more distinguished place in the esteem of so generous a Master. Considering himself affronted by the reproach he received when the woman had poured the ointment upon the head of Jesus, he was probably provoked to execute the resolution he had formed, of compelling his Master to an alteration of his measures. Rising, therefore, from table, he hastened to the council, and proposed to them his iniquitous project. For a small reward, he engaged to conduct a party of armed men to the place of retire-

ment, where our Saviour usually resorted at night, that they might apprehend him without danger of being opposed by, or of creating a tumult among the populace.

Judas asked the chief-priests and elders, what reward he was to expect for betraying his Master to them: but it is probable, that he did not suspect that his enemies had determined to put him to death; for they had not publicly avowed the barbarity of their designs, but pretended, that they were bound by the duties of their station, to bring him to trial for assuming the character of the Messiah, in order that he might be treated according to his deserts: and the offer that Judas made to the council, was in consequence of their public resolution. Had the chief-priests and elders suspected, that the design of Judas was to effect the death of his Master, they must have understood, that he coincided with them in the supposition, that Jesus was an impostor; and therefore they would have produced him as an evidence in support of the accusation exhibited against their Master.

It is true, that the persecutors of our blessed Saviour said, the money which they paid to Judas was "the price of blood;" but this phrase is not to be understood in the strict literal sense. The traitor had given them power to deprive our blessed Redeemer of life, and therefore they said, the money paid to him was "the price of blood."

Had Judas intended to take away the life of our blessed Saviour, he would have rejoiced when he was condemned to die; but, on the contrary, when this shocking sentence was pronounced, he repented of his wicked proceedings, proposed to return the bribe he

had received from the council, and bore solemn and public testimony to his Master's innocence.

Whatever was the motive of Judas it is certain that his treachery will not admit either of excuse or palliation; for, considered in the most favorable point of view, it must be admitted, that he acted in direct contradiction to every sentiment of religion and virtue. It is, however, indisputably certain, that Judas was not influenced by any suspicion as to the justice of the pretensions of his Master to the character of the Messiah, to impeach the divinity of whose commission, not the slightest circumstance can be collected from the whole tenor of the conduct of the abominable and impious traitor.

But, returning from this digression, we shall relate the particulars of the sacrament instituted by our Saviour in commemoration of his death and sufferings. Being shortly to surrender his life as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of mankind, our blessed Redeemer instituted the sacrament of his supper, that his death, and the beneficent purposes thereof, might be perpetuated to the most distant ages.

While our Lord sat, accompanied by his disciples, at the Paschal supper, he took some bread, and having broken it, desired his apostles to eat, saying, that the food he had offered them, they were to consider as his body. This rite, said our Lord, you are not in future to observe as a memorial of the deliverance of the Jewish nation from the Egyptian bondage, but in commemoration of the happy event of being rescued by me from a state of spiritual bondage, which is infinitely more deplorable than all the afflictions which your fore-fathers experienced from those people who had reduced them to a state of the most abject slavery. Your observance of this institution, will intitle

you to the glorious privilege of being numbered among the children of God. Do this in remembrance of me, who by yielding up my life, will redeem you from the power and tyranny of Satan, and enable you to attain to a state of glorious and immortal bliss.— Having divided the bread among his disciples, our blessed Redeemer filled a cup with wine, and having given thanks to God, presented it to his apostles, commanding them all to drink; and telling them, that the wine represented his blood, by the effusion of which, his heavenly Father would enter into a new covenant with mankind, by means of which the sins of the people then existing, and of future ages, would be expiated. My disciples, said the blessed Jesus, must in all ages drink of this cup, because the wine it contains, represents my blood, which will soon be shed for the remission of the sins of mankind, and by which the new covenant between God and man will be fully ratified; adding, after he had taken a second cup of wine, and presented it to the apostles who sat next to him, desiring them all to partake of it, that he had been extremely desirous of celebrating this passover with them, which was the last he should participate, until they should meet him in the glorious kingdom of his heavenly Father, and there celebrate their deliverance from the miseries inseparable from the imperfection unalienably annexed to humanity.— “ 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 Testament, which is shed for many for “ the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will “ not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until “ that day when I drink it new with you in my Fa- “ ther’s kingdom.” Matt. xxvi. 26, &c. “ The Lord “ Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed,

“ took bread: and when he had given thanks, he
“ brake it, and said, Take eat: this is my body,
“ which is broken for you: this do in remembrance
“ of me. After the same manner also he took the
“ cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the
“ New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as often
“ as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often
“ as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew
“ the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore, whoso-
“ ever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the
“ Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and
“ blood of the Lord. But let a man examine him-
“ self, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of
“ that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unwor-
“ thily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not
“ discerning the Lord’s body.” 1 Cor. xi. 23. &c.

The manifestation of the Son of God is the most illustrious and momentous event, that can possibly engage the meditation of mankind. On account of his sufferings for us, we are indebted to him for all our hopes and assurances of obtaining forgiveness of our sins, and the enjoyment of a state of ineffable and everlasting bliss. To procure the happiness of mankind, he assumed the veil of humanity, thereby condescending to suffer an amazing degradation from the dignity he enjoyed with his heavenly Father: for the same beneficent purpose, he employed himself with unwearied attention, in delivering such instructions as were calculated for enabling the sinful children of men to secure their eternal salvation; and while he delivered these divine precepts, he shone forth an all-perfect example of sanctity and virtue.

For the benefit of mankind, our blessed Redeemer submitted to a long course of the most cruel indignities and hardships, to the agonies of crucifixion, and the stroke of death; he then arose from the grave,

and in the fulness of heavenly splendor, ascended to the throne of the Almighty, to mediate in behalf of mankind.

The institution of the sacrament above-mentioned, was perfectly consistent with the unbounded wisdom and goodness which were manifested through the whole tenor of our blessed Redeemer's conduct, during his residence on earth. The beneficent Jesus instituted this rite, in order that his death and sufferings, and the glorious purposes thereof, might be constantly impressed upon our memories. The breaking of bread, and pouring out wine, were intended to represent to us a signal proof of the tender affection which both Jesus and his heavenly Father entertained for mankind, to procure whose salvation, the sacred body of our blessed Redeemer was exposed to the most vile indignities, and the most excruciating cruelties, that the inveterate malice of his enemies could suggest. In this instance of the divine love, we cannot fail to perceive a peculiar propriety; for it pointed out, by a particular ordination, a fact of the highest importance in the immense scheme of revelation. It may indeed be presumed, that, in those corrupt and illiterate ages, when the sacred truths of the Scriptures were but little known by the generality of the people, and when the works of the inspired writers were in a great measure neglected, even by the priests, the sufferings and death of our Saviour would scarcely have been remembered, had not those facts been perpetuated by the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Since we are naturally inclined to yield to the allurements of sensual pleasure, the charms of ambition, and the splendor of riches, which are calculated to suppress and obliterate the noblest sentiments of religion and virtue, our benevolent Redeemer was gra-

ciously pleased, by enjoining us to a frequent repetition of the sacramental feast, to afford us opportunities of reflecting upon our erroneous proceedings, and the necessity of a punctual discharge of the Christian duties.

The gospel of Christ is beneficent and generous : it is admirably adapted to correct the irregularity and intemperance of our passions, to enlarge our affections towards our fellow-creatures, and to inspire us with an ardent love of God : but though it enforces all the religious and moral obligations, by motives astonishingly powerful and affecting, yet such is the perverseness of the disposition of mankind, that their peace is continually interrupted by jealousies, contentions, envy, wrath, and malice. Therefore by uniting us together by the sacrament of his body and blood, the blessed and immaculate Jesus manifested his divine wisdom and benevolence, and powerfully urged us to avoid anger, calumny, revenge, and all other vicious dispositions, ; and at the same time strongly recommended the practice of compassion, humility, tenderness, and love.

We are bound by an indispensable obligation to a punctual observance of the sacrament of our Lord's Supper ; and therefore, that we may receive it worthily, it behoves us piously to meditate on the design of the gospel, the noble system of heavenly truths which it exhibits, the illustrious example of our blessed Saviour, the ravishing prospects of his revelation, and the powerful and incontestible evidence, by which the great truths of his gospel are so wonderfully confirmed.

It is an essential branch of our duty, to contemplate the unparalleled benevolence of the Almighty, in projecting the great scheme of our redemption ; the infi-

nite goodness of his only Son, in mediating in our behalf, and his wonderful transactions in the prosecution of this stupendous undertaking : and that our hopes of salvation may not prove abortive, we must strongly impress upon our minds a proper sense of the great and immediate purposes, for which this sacrament was appointed.

This sacrament was instituted by our Saviour, in order to establish the hearts of mankind in the love and fear of God, who yielded up his only Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of mankind. Those who have professed faith in Christ, are required to prove the reality of that profession, by a strict obedience to the precepts of his gospel, and by abounding in that righteous disposition which his own heavenly example so engagingly recommends. Thus will the sacrament be rendered subservient to the most beneficial purposes, and be made instrumental in qualifying us for participating in that dignity and happiness, which our Saviour enjoys in the blessed mansions of his heavenly Father.

Having before the passover predicted his sufferings and death, while our Lord remained among his disciples, he continued to behave towards them with the strongest instances of his love and benevolence.— Though he was acquainted with the impious design which Judas had projected against his life, and was invested with power by his heavenly Father to defeat the iniquitous machinations of the traitor, yet he did not obstruct the execution of his sacrilegious purpose, nor, on his account, behave with less tenderness and affection towards his other apostles. In the mean time Judas, having permitted his imagination to be entirely engrossed by the delusions of Satan, and being resolved to proceed in his treasonable design, continued assiduously to attend upon the person of Jesus,

anxiously waiting for an opportunity of betraying his Master into the power of his enemies.

Notwithstanding the frequent intimations that our Saviour had given, to convince his apostles that he was not to erect a temporal sovereignty, they still entertained an opinion that the time would soon arrive, when he would assume the reins of government, and render all the princes of the earth subject to his dominion; and therefore they engaged in a controversy, as to who should enjoy the most distinguished offices under his government. Hereupon our Lord admonished them, as he had done on former occasions.

The kings of the Gentiles, said Jesus, exercise an arbitrary dominion over their subjects, who bestow upon their tyrannical rulers the most honorable appellations. But you are to conduct yourselves in a very different manner: to obtain true honor and sincere esteem, you must omit no opportunity of rendering services to your fellow-creatures. The person who sits at table, is more honorably distinguished than the man by whom he is attended in the capacity of a servant. But I am resolved to minister to you, that by my example you may be instructed in your duty. But you are not to infer from what I have said, that I esteem you unworthy to enjoy the rewards of my heavenly kingdom. You have steadily adhered to me under all my misfortunes: and therefore, as my Father has admitted me to share in his kingdom, so will I delegate my authority to you; and you shall be seated in my presence upon twelve thrones, to pronounce judgment upon the twelve tribes of Israel. “ And there was also a strife among them, which of “ them should be accounted the greatest. And he “ said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise “ lordship over them, and they that exercise au- “ thority upon them are called benefactors. But

“ ye shall not be so : but he that is greatest among
“ you, let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief,
“ as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he
“ that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth ? is not he
“ that sitteth at meat ? but I am among you as he that
“ serveth. Ye are they which have continued with
“ me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a
“ kingdom, as my hath Father appointed unto me :
“ that ye may eat and drink at my table in my king-
“ dom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes
“ of Israel.” Luke xxii. 24, &c.

Our blessed Saviour now arose from table, and putting off his upper garment, girted a napkin round his body ; then pouring water into a bason, he proceeded to wash the feet of his apostles, and to wipe them with the napkin which he had put round his waist. When our Lord came to Peter, that apostle objected to having his feet washed by his Master ; who thereupon said, that though he was yet unacquainted with the reason of his performing that office, he should be informed of it in a short time. However, Peter still objected, saying, that he could not endure to see his Master degrade himself by so servile an employment. Upon this Jesus said, that if Peter continued to oppose his design, he could not partake of the blessings of the kingdom of heaven. Hereby our Lord signified, by an allusion of corporeal washing, that the minds of men were to be purified from their vices and defilements, before they would be qualified to enjoy eternal happiness. Peter not yet comprehending the meaning of Jesus, exclaimed, If it seems good to thee, O Lord, wash not my feet alone, but my head and hands also. Upon this our Saviour said, that the man who had once washed his body, was entirely clean, and that therefore it was not necessary for him, to have recourse to frequent cleansings, except with respect to the feet, which were liable to be defiled by the

dust and dirt ; and he added, that though some of them were clean, they were not all so. Thus he intimated, that those who had resolutely determined to divest themselves of their evil habits, were not required to effect a thorough and entire change, since they had only to free themselves from some relicks of their former vices ; and at the same time he reflected upon the wickedness of Judas, who he did not consider as being upon terms of equality with his other disciples, and who had the confidence to remain in the presence of his Master, and dissemble his desperate design, although he was conscious that his iniquity could not be concealed from Jesus. “ He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. After that, he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter : and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet ? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now : but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit : and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him ; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.” John xiii. 4, &c.

Having performed this office, our Lord put on his garment, and having again seated himself, enquired of his apostles, whether they understood the meaning of what he had done, the action being entirely emblematical. You properly, said Jesus, distinguish me by the appellations of Lord and Master ; for I am the Son of God, and the Saviour of mankind. If then

I, who am your Lord and Master, condescend to * wash your feet, by my example you are instructed in the duty of being ever cheerfully disposed to employ yourselves in the most humble offices of charity in behalf of your fellow-creatures. I have afforded you a striking example of humility and moderation: and the servant cannot reasonably expect more favorable treatment than his Master, nor is the messenger to be considered as superior to him from whom he has received his commission. You have had many opportunities of being instructed in the principles of your duty, by a strict adherence in which you will most assuredly obtain everlasting happiness.— He added, that previous to his calling them to the apostleship, he was perfectly acquainted with their most secret dispositions; and if one of those he had chosen should prove a traitor, his delinquency was not to excite the astonishment of the others, as that man was appointed to be one of his disciples, that the scriptures might be fulfilled, since he was voluntarily disposed to submit to what David complained of. “He that has eaten bread with me, hath lift up his heel against me.” This I say, in order that none of you may erroneously imagine, that any occurrence can possibly happen to me, without my being previously informed thereof, and that you may cheerfully and resolutely proceed in the duties of your apostolical commission. Whoever shall afford you reception worthy the characters you are to maintain, I shall esteem as having rendered those services to me; and whoever shall be thus esteemed by me, will be as liberally rewarded by the Almighty, as if their kindness had been exerted in favor of me, who am his messenger, and act under the authority of his

* This is not to be literally understood, as imposing a command upon mankind to wash the feet of each other, but to be interpreted in the spiritual sense; Jesus meaning to instruct his disciples, that they were bound to perform offices of charity and service to each other.

divine commission. “ 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 ? Ye call me Master, and Lord : and
 “ ye say well : for so I am. If I then, your Lord and
 “ Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to
 “ wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an
 “ example, that ye should do as I have done to you.
 “ Verily, verily I say unto you, The servant is not
 “ greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent, greater
 “ than he that sent him. If ye know these things, hap-
 “ py are ye if ye do them. I speak not of you all ;
 “ I know whom I have chosen ; but that the Scrip-
 “ ture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me,
 “ hath lift up his heel against me. Now I tell you
 “ before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may
 “ believe that I am he. Verily, verily I say unto
 “ you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiv-
 “ eth me : and he that receiveth me, receiveth him
 “ that sent me.” John xiii. 12, &c.

While our blessed Saviour was discoursing in the above manner to his disciples, he was much troubled by reflecting, that he should be betrayed by one of them : and this circumstance he again mentioned in the hearing of them all. Jesus had signified to Judas that he knew him to be the traitor, but this not being overheard by the other apostles, they earnestly regarded each other, being unable to conceive which of them could be capable of so abominable an act of villainy. At length Peter requested John, who was greatly beloved by Jesus, and was at that time reclining upon his bosom, to ask his Master, to which of his disciples he alluded. In reply to the request of John our Saviour said, that he meant the man to whom he should present some bread dipped in wine ; and he immediately offered a sop to Judas Iscariot, who had no soon-

er received it, than he became * more furiously agitated by the evil spirit. This being observed by our Saviour, addressing himself to the traitor, he said in a loud voice, "That† thou doest, do quickly." These words were not understood by the apostles, some of them imagining, that as Judas was accustomed to carry the bag, containing the common stock of money of Jesus and the apostles, his Master meant to command Judas to provide such necessaries as would be required during the remaining days of the feast ; and others supposed, that he meant Judas should distribute alms to the poor. However, when Judas had eaten the sop presented by his Master, he departed, the evening being then far advanced. "When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask whom it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot the son of Simon. And after the sop, Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things

* The devil did not enter into Judas in substance, but in operation, as he is said to possess those who are fully inclined to obey his evil suggestions.

† This is not to be understood as an encouragement for Judas to proceed in his wicked enterprize, but only as a declaration of Christ's readiness to suffer death.

" that we have need of against the feast : or that he
 " should give something to the poor. He then having
 " received the sop, went immediately out : and it was
 " night." John xiii. 21, &c.

When Judas had retired, our Lord expressed himself more explicitly to the other apostles. The period, said Jesus, will speedily arrive, when I shall conclude the great business to which I came into the world ; and therefore I must now remind you, that my heavenly Father has demonstrated who I am by many stupendous miracles, although the obstinate Jews still consider me as one of the common race of mortals. As I have manifested the glory of God to mankind, so also will he, by miracles more surprising than have been yet seen, and by other most indubitable tokens, testify that the authority by which I act, is derived immediately from him. He informed them, that he had but a short time to * remain with them ; and then took leave of them, with great tenderness and affection. O my beloved disciples, said our Lord, as I have told the obstinate Jews, so now I inform you that in the place to which I shall shortly go, you cannot immediately obtain admittance. But I strictly exhort you to obey this new command. Cherish a mutual love for each other, and that with an † ardour of affection equal to that I have manifested towards you, for this shall be the criterion, whereby my disciples shall be ‡ distinguished from those of any other

* He was not to be conversant with them by his bodily presence, but by his sensible union, to abide with them for ever, by his Spirit, or his ever present love.

† To give to the world, as their blessing, in behalf of each other.

‡ The disciples of John the Baptist were particularized by their residence in those of the Pharisees by their habit, and their separation from the Jews, and from the Jews, but the blessed Jesus requires, that his

Master. "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 also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway
 " glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am
 " with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto
 " the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I
 " say unto you. 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." John xiii. 31, &c.

Peter now requested to be informed of the place where he meant to retire, since he had said, that his apostles would not be permitted to follow him. Our Lord informed him, that although he could not be immediately admitted to the place whither he was going, yet at a future period he should enjoy that privilege. Upon being asked by Peter the reason he could not be allowed to accompany him, our Saviour said, * Know that the evil spirit hath requested permission of God to make a severe trial of thy faith and constancy: but I have supplicated my heavenly Father, not to suffer thy faith to be subdued; and I now enjoin thee, that when thy fidelity shall be established, thou shalt, by thy example, confirm thy brethren in their allegiance to me. Displeased at being deemed the weakest of the apostles, on whom the power of Satan would most successfully operate, Peter declared, that

disciples shall be known by their sincere affection for each other; a virtue so much cultivated in the primitive ages, that it excited at once the hatred and admiration of the heathens.

* Hence good men derive the comfortable assurance, that Satan has not power, either to tempt or afflict them, without the divine permission; and we are at the same time instructed, that it is the duty of those who have repented of their sins, to commiserate the fall of others, and to be solicitous for their confirmation in faith.

neither the terrors of imprisonment, nor the pains of a violent death, were sufficient to induce him to retract his resolution of sharing the fortune of so kind a Friend, so dear a Master, so wise a Guide, and so profitable a Teacher. But in reply, our Saviour told him, that notwithstanding the confidence he had in his own strength, the cock should not be heard to crow that day, till he had thrice disowned his Master. “ And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat ; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not : and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.” Luke xxii. 31, &c.

Our blessed Saviour having concluded what he had to communicate to Peter in particular, addressed himself to his other disciples, reminding them, that when he first commanded them to separate themselves, and travel into different parts to preach his gospel, he directed them not to be solicitous as to providing themselves with the means of subsistence, or weapons for the defence of their persons ; assuring them, that if they firmly relied on the assistance of divine Providence, they would be amply supplied with whatever their necessities should require, by those persons whom the Almighty, in every place they should visit, would graciously dispose to behave towards them with friendship and benevolence.

He observed, that their ministry had proved successful ; and enquired, whether, during their several journies, they had been involved in circumstances of distress, or deficient of provisions, or other necessaries. Upon their replying in the negative, our blessed

Redeemer said, the case was now widely different, for the number of their enemies was greatly increased; and therefore they would find it necessary to be provided with money, as the means of procuring subsistence; and that rather than be destitute of weapons for the defence of their persons, it would be prudent for them, even to sell their garments for the purpose of purchasing swords.

Our Lord now informed his apostles, that he had so nearly accomplished the important purpose for which he came into the world, that when, according to what he had been foretold by the * prophet, he should submit to be treated as a criminal, the whole dispensation of Providence, with respect to him, would be completed.

Interpreting his words, according to the literal sense, the apostles informed their Master, that they were possessed of two swords. But our Lord judged it unnecessary to explain himself, knowing that at a future period they would fully comprehend his meaning, and being unwilling to dwell longer upon this subject, but desirous of affording consolation to his apostles, whom he now perceived to be extremely afflicted and melancholy.

The apostles informed Jesus that they had two swords, because they supposed he meant, that they should arm themselves in a literal sense, in order to oppose the assaults that would be made upon them by the Jews: but he merely intended to convey to them an idea of their approaching distress and temptations, and to shew them the necessity of continually guarding themselves against being surprised into danger by craft and treachery; and therefore he only said to

* Isa. liii. 12.

them, "It is enough;" thereby signifying, that it would be needless to concern themselves on the subject of providing arms for the defence of their persons. "And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors. For the things concerning me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, there are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough." Luke xxii. 35, &c.

Our blessed Redeemer now exhorted his apostles against being terrified and disconsolate, on account of his having informed them of the sufferings he was to endure, and that they would for a time be deprived of his company. You have ever been taught, said Jesus, to repose a firm reliance on the Almighty, who will yield you assistance and support in all your afflictions; and since I am invested with full power by my heavenly Father, and am the head of my church, it behoves you to trust in me for the full accomplishment of all that I have promised. The blessed regions wherein my Father reigns, are more than sufficiently * spacious to accommodate all true believers in my gospel; and if you persist in a strict obedience to my commands, neither persecution, death, nor any other circumstance, shall prevent your obtaining that happiness which I have proposed to your acceptance.

* "In my Father's house are many mansions." The Jews are of opinion that paradise contains seven mansions, each being twelve thousand miles in length, ten thousand broad, and ten thousand in height.

It also behoves you patiently to submit to my departure from you, since I shall leave you to † prepare a place of happiness for your reception, to which I shall introduce you when the time appointed by the divine wisdom shall arrive; and in those regions of bliss, you shall remain with me in a glorious state of immortality.

You cannot now surely, be ignorant of the place of my destination, nor of the means whereby you may qualify yourselves to participate with me in the blessings of the kingdom of my heavenly Father. “Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know.” John xiv. 1, &c.

The disciples of our Lord, however, still entertained an idea that their Master was to reign in the character of a temporal prince, and therefore hoped to enjoy honors and riches under his government.—Thomas said, that neither he nor his brethren were able to comprehend whither their beloved Master meant to retire, and that consequently they must be ignorant of the way to follow him. Hereupon our blessed Redeemer replied, I am myself, as I have repeatedly informed you, the true and only way to eternal life. No man truly knoweth me, who is ignorant of my Father; for my Father and I are one. If you have a just conception of my doctrines, you must know the duties which my Father expects you to dis-

† By the entrance of Christ into heaven, he procured for us admittance to a place which was before inaccessible.

charge ; and in having seen me, you may be considered as having seen him, whose will I proclaim, and whose works I execute.

Thomas replied, Lord, shew us the Father, and we will decline all further importunity. Have you, said our blessed Saviour, been so long, and so constantly my companions, and still remain ignorant of my real character. I am the representative of the heavenly Father of mankind, the great Creator and Governor of the universe, who is himself, indeed, invisible : but I tell you, Philip, that truly to know one, is to know and hold spiritual intercourse with both. Believe me when I assure you, that I act by the authority of the Almighty, and am acquainted with his divine determinations : and that whatever I speak, is the declaration of his will ; and whatever I perform, is the operation of his power. If you sincerely believe in, and strictly conform to the precepts of my gospel the Almighty will confer upon you the power of working miracles, even * greater than those which I have performed, when I shall have returned to my heavenly Father. And be assured, that whatever you ask of him, in my name, shall, on account of the merit you derive from being my disciples, be granted to you. “ Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know
“ not whither thou goest ; and how can we know the
“ way ? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the
“ truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Fa-
“ ther, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should
“ have known my Father also : and from henceforth
“ ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith
“ unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it suffic-
“ eth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long
“ time with you, and yet hast thou not known me,

* This seems principally to refer to the admirable success of the gospel preached by the apostles, after the descent of the Holy Ghost.

“ Philip? He that hath seen me; hath seen the Fa-
“ ther; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Fa-
“ ther? Believest thou not that I am in the Father,
“ and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto
“ thee, I speak not of myself: but the Father, that
“ dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me
“ that I am in the Father, and the Father in me:
“ or else believe me for the very works sake. Veri-
“ ly, 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 ye shall ask in my
“ name, that will I do, that the Father may be glo-
“ rified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my
“ name, I will do it.” John xiv. 5, &c.

O my beloved disciples, if you entertain a sincere and ardent affection for me, you will punctually conform to the rules I have prescribed for the regulation of your conduct, your obedience being the only certain token of your esteem. Upon my return to the blessed kingdom of my heavenly Father, you shall receive sufficient pledges of my affectionate remembrance of you; for I shall supplicate him to bestow upon you the power not only of healing diseases, giving sight to the blind, casting out evil spirits, but even of performing more astonishing miracles than those I have wrought; and in compliance with my prayers, you will, by an intuitive faculty, be endued with the power of understanding and speaking all languages, and of successfully propagating my gospel through all the nations of the earth. O my beloved disciples, when I shall have ascended into the mansions of my heavenly Father, that you may have the less cause to regret my departure, I will supplicate him graciously to provide against the inconveniencies which you may apprehend from my absence, by sending you another Advocate and Comforter, who shall di-

rect and assist you in all your emergencies. This infallible guide is the Holy Spirit; of whose transcendent perfections the corrupt part of mankind are entirely ignorant; the abandoned profligacy, and vile corruption of their hearts, prompting them to oppose those divine sensations, which he is ever disposed to transfuse into the souls of the sons of sinful men: but you are inspired by, and inclined to cherish and entertain this Holy Spirit; and therefore he shall for ever remain with you. You are already possessed of his secret and invisible efficacy; and be assured, that hereafter he shall gloriously display himself to you by great and visible manifestations. “If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” John xiv. 15, 16, 17.

But, said the blessed Jesus, I will not leave you in a state of despondency; for upon my departure from you, you will have the consolation to reflect, that you will receive assistance and support from the Holy Spirit; and, that your constancy and fortitude may not relax, be assured that I shall return to you.—After my body shall be consigned to the grave, the generality of mankind will behold me no more: but I shall be restored to life, and again become visible to you; who will then be convinced, by the most indubitable evidence, that I am intimately conversant in all the great purposes and determinations of my heavenly Father; with whom you shall be assured, that I am in a state of the most perfect unity and communion. I must, however inform you, that it will be needless for you to expect the enjoyments of those blessings which I have proposed to your ac-

ceptance, unless you continue steadfast and immovable in your faith to me, and in your obedience to all my commands; for unless you strictly comply with this condition, all your hopes of future happiness will prove abortive. "I will not leave you comfortless: "I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the "world seeth me no more: but ye shall see me: because I live, ye shall live also. And that day ye "shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, "and I in you. He that hath my commandments, "and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he "that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I "will love him, and will manifest myself to him." John xiv. 18, &c.

Our Saviour was now interrupted by one of his apostles named Judas Thaddeus, who asked him the reason whereby he was induced to manifest himself only to his select disciples, and not to the promiscuous multitude; who might by his public avowal of his sacred character, be reclaimed and converted.— Hereupon our Saviour replied, As I have already informed you, I act in this manner, because the generality of mankind are not disposed to obey my commands, and therefore cannot maintain a communion with me: but I manifest myself to you, because you embrace my gospel. Whoever loves me, and demonstrates his love of me by his obedience to my commands shall be rewarded with signal instances of the favor both of my Father and myself; for he shall abound in spiritual blessings, and become an inhabitant of the happy regions of endless bliss. But those who love me not, and refuse to obey my commands, shall have no intercourse either with me, or my heavenly Father. The doctrine I preach is not of my own invention, but what my Father has commanded

me to proclaim. The * Holy Spirit, whom as I have already informed you, the Father will send in my name to comfort and assist you, is as it were my spirit, and will therefore be called the spirit of the Messiah; and this Holy Spirit and Divine Comforter, shall recall to your recollection such parts of your duty as may have escaped your memory, instruct you in points wherein you may be deficient, fully explain whatever may appear obscure in my gospel, and communicate to you whatever shall be further necessary for you to understand. "Judas saith unto him, not " Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest " thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus an- " swered, and said unto him, If a man love me, he " will keep my words: and my Father will love him, " and we will come unto him, and make our abode " with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my " sayings: and the word which ye hear, is not mine, " but the Father's which sent me. These things have " I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.— " But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom " the Father will send in my name, he shall teach " you all things, and bring all things to your remem- " brance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John xiv. 22, &c.

The time of my sufferings now approaches, and therefore, said our blessed Saviour, I must now affectionately take a farewell of you: but I do not take leave of you according to the common custom of the generality of mankind, who only affect the appearance of friendship and kindness; for after my departure, I shall retain a tender recollection of you, and be unremittingly careful to promote your safety and

* The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is therefore stiled, "The Spirit of the Son." Gal. iv. 6. "the Spirit of Christ," 1 Pet. i. 2. Rom. viii. 9. and "the Spirit of the Father," Matt. x. 20.

happiness. Be not afflicted on occasion of my departure, nor dread to encounter those evils to which you will necessarily be exposed. Although I shall shortly leave you, rest firmly assured that you will behold me again. If you love me with sincerity and truth of affection, instead of lamenting my absence, you will rejoice to reflect, that I am preparing to go into the presence of my heavenly Father, since he is superior to me in dignity and power; and since it is from him, who is the supreme Author of all glory and happiness, that I derive all my authority.

These things I now predict to you, because when you shall be witnesses of their full accomplishment, your faith in me may be strengthened and confirmed. Since the time which I have to remain with you will be soon elapsed, I must be under the necessity of speaking to you in brief; but though my directions are delivered to you in a concise manner, they are not, on that account, to claim a slighter share of your attention. The prince of wickedness is now employing all his instruments for effecting my destruction; and * those who are instigated by his spirit, shall by the divine permission, assume the appearance of friendship for me: but this shall not happen because I have been guilty of any crime, or because it is possible for the power either of the devil, or the malice of man, to prevail over me, but because the time will be then arrived, when I shall, by submitting to a painful and ignominious death, manifest the greatness of my affection to God, and my cheerful resignation to his divine will. Now let us arise, said the blessed Jesus, and retire from the city.

Having spoken in the above manner, our great Re-

* Julius and his followers, and the rulers of the Jews, who although they shall find no guilt in me, yet shall they put me to death.

deemer was joined by his apostles, in chanting forth a hymn magnifying the name of God; and having thus concluded the passover, they repaired to the Mount of Olives. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go to the Father, for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for 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." John xiv. 27, &c.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Our blessed Saviour delivers the parable of the vine and its branches, thereby recommending the practice of virtue to his apostles. He exhorts them to cherish a mutual affection towards each other. Jesus proposes himself, as an example for teaching them the virtue of patiently submitting to the malice of their enemies, and informs them of the reason of his exhortation. He consoles them with assurances of the mission of the Holy Ghost ; and explains to them the purposes for which the Spirit will descend upon them. Of the affliction which the apostles were to experience upon the decease of our Saviour, and the great joy that would succeed on occasion of his resurrection. He exhorts his apostles to pray to God in his name. He again mentions his going to the Father, and predicts the desertion of the apostles. Our blessed Saviour addresses himself in prayer to his heavenly Father in behalf of himself, his apostles, and all who should in future believe in him.

UPON the arrival of our blessed Saviour and his apostles at the Mount of Olives, he intimated to them, that some events were approaching which would require the utmost exertions of their fortitude ; and therefore he exhorted them to fortify their minds by prayer. From the vines which were growing upon the Mount of Olives, our Saviour drew an allusion most admirably calculated to impress upon the minds of his disciples those great truths, to enforce and explain which was a most essential part of his divine commission.

I may be compared, said the blessed Jesus, to the root, or body of a vine, of which you are the branches; and of this vine my heavenly Father may be called the dresser. If this vine produces any unfruitful branches, or if any profess themselves to be my disciples, and yet bring forth no fruits of virtue, my Father will cut off those unprofitable branches, or not admit those faithless professors to enjoy the privileges to which my true and righteous disciples will be entitled: but he will only prune the branches which bear fruit, whereby they will acquire additional vigor: and thus the sincere lovers of truth and holiness, will be denied some of the advantages and conveniences of life, that their virtues may become more extensive and resplendent. But you who have for a considerable time worthily approved yourselves my disciples, are free from all intemperate passions, and superfluous and vain desires. Be careful that, in all circumstances and situations, you exactly conform to my precepts, and your obedience will insure to you the full enjoyments of all the rewards I have promised you. A branch lopped off from the body of the tree cannot possibly bear fruit; nor can you continue in the paths of righteousness and virtue, if you transgress the rules which I have prescribed for the regulation of your conduct.

The man who adheres to my precepts, shall bring forth the fruits of virtue in abundance: but he who rejects my doctrines will resemble a branch, which being cut from the body of a tree, must consequently wither and decay, and be only fit for fuel. Thus, if you regulate your conduct according to my directions, * whatever you request of me shall be granted: but those who disobey my commands, shall be con-

* Whatever you request according to the will of God, for the promotion of his glory, and the furtherance of your ministry, provided that you ask in faith.

demned to everlasting torments. “ I am the true vine,
 “ and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch
 “ in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away : and
 “ every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that
 “ it may bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean
 “ through the word which I have spoken unto you.
 “ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot
 “ bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; no
 “ more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine
 “ ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and
 “ I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit ; for
 “ without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not
 “ in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is wither-
 “ ed, and men gather them, and cast them into the
 “ fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and
 “ my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will,
 “ and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Fa-
 “ ther glorified, that ye bear much fruit.” John xv.
 1, &c.

As my Father has loved me, so will I continue to love you, unless you render yourselves unworthy my esteem by disobeying my commands ; for my heavenly Father has loved me, because I have ever † obeyed his commandments with the most exact fidelity. I am desirous that the comfort you have derived from my presence, may be continued to you after my departure ; and therefore I particularly enjoin you to love one another, with that ardor of affection which I have manifested towards you. My love of mankind induces me to sacrifice my life for their benefit ; and since I propose myself to you as an example, you cannot be ignorant of the nature of that pure and genuine esteem which I recommend you to

† Though truly God, our blessed Saviour may with great propriety be said to have kept his Father's commandments while he remained on earth, because he sustained the character of a prophet, and acted by the influence of the Holy Spirit.

cherish for each other. In the circumstance of surrendering my life, I shall afford the most incontestible demonstration of the sincerity of my love of you, and of all mankind.

On the easy condition of obeying my commands, I admit you to the privilege of my friendship ; though, considering how infinitely I am your superior, I might justly stile you my servants : but so far from having reduced you to a servile state, I have ever treated you as my beloved friends, and have fully and explicitly communicated to you the great † purposes and determinations of my heavenly Father. Upon our first interviews, you did not voluntarily acknowledge me as your Master : but on the contrary, I selected you to be my apostles, and the ministers of my gospel, that you might proclaim the will of God to mankind, and abundantly produce the fruits of godliness in the conversion of men to the knowledge of truth, and the profession and practice of righteousness and virtue, which will infallibly secure to them the enjoyment of everlasting bliss. “ As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you : continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love ; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.— This is my commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever, I com-

† This is not to be absolutely understood, as comprising all the purposes and determinations of God ; for they would not hear of the cessation of the law, circumcision and the sabbath, and of the casting off of the Jews, and calling in of the Gentiles, without offence ; but all matters that were proper for them to be informed of concerning Christ, themselves, and the future church.

“mand you. Henceforth I call you not servants ;
“for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth :
“but I have called you friends ; for all things that
“I have heard of my Father, I have made known
“unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have
“chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go
“and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should
“remain ; that whatsoever ye should ask of the Fa-
“ther in my name, he will give it you. These things
“I command you, that ye love one another.” John
xv. 9, &c.

You must indeed expect, that a considerable part of mankind will hate and persecute you, on account of your love of me, and your adherence to the principles of my gospel. Do not, however, suffer this unworthy treatment to dispirit you, or render you less persevering in the cause of righteousness ; for you will not be subjected to more severe sufferings, or greater indignities, than your Master. I have already observed to you, that the servant is not to esteem himself as being superior to his employer. I have been treated as an enemy to mankind, who will behave towards you with cruelty and injustice equal to what I have sustained. Had the generality of men readily and cheerfully embraced my gospel, you might indeed have had some reason to expect, that they would hold your preaching in due veneration : but since I have sustained great indignities and persecutions from the wicked and the perverse, the obstinate and the incorrigible part of mankind, because I reprov'd their vices, and exhorted them to the practice of holiness, it is reasonable that you should expect to meet with a similar opposition in the prosecution of your ministry.

Amidst all your sufferings, you will have the consolation to reflect, that the righteousness of your

cause, and the injustice and malice of your persecutors, will be rendered more conspicuous. Had I not fully explained my Father's will to them, they would be less deserving blame; for in that case, they might have pleaded want of information, and the consequent impossibility of attaining to the knowledge of truth; but I have so clearly demonstrated the divinity of my commission, that not the slightest excuse can be urged in extenuation of their guilt.

Those who oppose my gospel, and persecute you, on account of your proclaiming it to mankind, thereby inviting them to provide for their eternal salvation, prove themselves to be the enemies of God, and his holy commandments. Had not I confirmed the truth of my doctrine by more signal miracles than had been performed before, they would have had some appearance of excuse for not relying on my bare affirmation: but although they have received abundant proofs of my divine authority, and the most incontestible evidence of the truth of my doctrines, they still obstinately persist in opposing the will of my heavenly Father, because they cannot, consistently with the rules of duty prescribed to them, yield gratification to their abominable lusts. Hence then, it is evident, that by their obstinate and contumacious disobedience to my commands, they dishonor God, and expose themselves to the dreadful effects of his displeasure. When men have surrendered themselves to the government of worldly affections and passions, it is not surprising that they act in contradiction to the strongest evidence of reason; for this is but the natural consequence of obstinate and habitual wickedness, whereby is fulfilled what the holy David complained of when he said, the Jews hated him without cause.

Notwithstanding all the opposition of sinful men

to my gospel, there will be many who will heartily espouse, and resolutely promote my doctrines. That Holy Spirit who will be sent from heaven to comfort and support you, shall with wonderful efficacy bear indubitable testimony to the truth of the divinity of my mission, and cause my gospel to be successfully proclaimed throughout the universe: and you also, who are not even yet entirely divested of doubts and apprehensions, although you have so long remained with me, and been witnesses to my divine power and authority, shall then bear ample testimony in my behalf. “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my saying, they will keep your’s also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me, hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye shall also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.” John xv. 18, &c.

I thus forewarn you of the persecution you will experience, in order that you may so fortify your

minds, as not to be discouraged from persevering in the punctual discharge of your duty. You must expect to be treated with great severity by the chief priests and the rulers of the Jews, who are men of the most extravagant hypocrisy and superstition, and the most strenuous advocates for their ceremonial and ritual traditions ; but wholly regardless of the will of Omnipotence in matters of great and eternal obligation, and invincibly prejudiced against the holiness and purity of my gospel : these men will * excommunicate you from their societies, upbraiding you as the most iniquitous malefactors. To such excess will their malice and superstition arrive, that they will † put you to death with circumstances of the most horrid cruelty, and even imagine that they are thereby rendering an acceptable service to the Almighty. Thus will they act, in consequence of their refusal of those benevolent offers which I have made to them, by the command of my heavenly Father. I have hitherto omitted to inform you of the troubles in which you will be involved, and the sufferings that will be inflicted upon you, because, being present, I could upon all occasion relieve you in your necessities, and regulate your conduct by salutary advice and directions. But as I am now preparing for my departure, I deem it expedient to remind you of the gracious promises I have made you, in order so to fortify your minds, that you may courageously encounter those

* The Jewish synagogues were not dedicated wholly to public worship ; for punishments were there inflicted upon offenders against the law, sometimes by scourging, and at other times by removing the parties accused, four feet from the rest of the people. Such as were not reformed by these means, were publicly cited, and expelled the communion of the church.

† Agreeably to this prediction, Justin Martyr says, that the Jews disgraced and execrated the Christians in the synagogues, and cruelly murdered them whenever opportunities occurred.

cruel persecutions which you will receive from the obstinate and incorrigible Jews.

But though I have informed you, that I shall speedily leave you, in order to return to the blessed mansions of my heavenly Father, you do not appear to be so earnestly solicitous to learn the particulars concerning the place of my destination, as the importance of the matter I have proposed to your consideration evidently demands. “ These things have I spoken unto you that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues : yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known my Father nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go my way to him that sent me ; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou ?” John xvi. 1, &c.

I perceive that you are afflicted by what I have said concerning my departure, and the temptations and miseries to which you will be exposed in my absence ; and that you disregard the consolatory part of my discourse, whereby you are apprized of the descent of the Holy Ghost, and of the advantages that will thence result to you. Instead of suffering your spirits to be dejected by the consideration that I am about to leave you, that circumstance should occasion you to rejoice, since it will operate so essentially to your advantage.

Such are the orders and dispensations of Providence, that until I shall have taken possession of my heavenly kingdom, the Holy Spirit cannot be sent to comfort

and assist you : but when I have ascended the throne of heaven, I will appoint him effectually to plead your cause against your malicious adversaries ; and, in despite of all opposition, he shall cause my gospel to be established in every quarter of the globe.

When the Holy Spirit shall descend upon earth, he shall accuse and convict the Jews of their obstinate incredulity, and their cruelty towards me. He shall, by wonderful signs, attest and confirm the truth of my gospel, and convince mankind of their enormous wickedness in rejecting those terms of salvation, which I have so urgently proposed to their acceptance. By demonstrating my departure from earth to be only a temporary and short privation of the vital principle, preparatory to my being invested with full power and authority both in heaven and earth, he shall abundantly convince mankind of the justice and righteousness of my cause, and of the glorious excellency of that dispensation which I have proclaimed to mankind, for the great purpose of rescuing them from the dominion of Satan. This Holy Spirit shall also, by a wonderful efficacy, destroy the power of the evil spirit, establish the pure and holy doctrine of my gospel throughout the world, and convince mankind of the power and authority which are delegated to me for the purpose of executing vengeance upon those who have wickedly opposed the establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah. “ And because I have said these things
“ unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Neverthe-
“ less I will tell you the truth : it is expedient for you
“ that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter
“ will not come unto you : but if I depart, I will send
“ him unto you. And when he is come, he will re-
“ prove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of
“ judgment : of sin, because they believe not on me ;
“ of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye

“ see me no more ; of judgment, because the prince
“ of this world is judged.” John xvi. 6, &c.

As I have before observed, “ I * have yet many things to say unto you ;” but because your minds are not sufficiently divested of prejudice to afford them a proper reception, I shall postpone particularizing these matters : but by the agency of the Holy Ghost, I shall hereafter communicate to you many important points, which are to be observed with respect to the establishment of my church. The Spirit of truth, that infallible guide, with which I have promised that you shall be inspired, shall enlarge your understandings, remove your prejudices, and instruct you in all those divine truths, which will be necessary to enable you successfully to pursue the great work which I have commenced, and which I shall continue to prosecute through the means of your ministry. The Holy Spirit is not to establish any new doctrine : but as I have instructed, and will continue to instruct you in the name of my heavenly Father, so shall the Spirit fully explain and illustrate whatever may appear obscure in what I have said to you, and inspire you with such ideas and determinations, as will effectually tend to the establishment of my church. He shall manifest my glory, as all my actions have tended to manifest the glory of my Father. All that I have taught you, I received from my Father ; and so all the instructions that you will receive from the Spirit, I shall communicate to you through his agency.

I have said, that the Spirit shall teach you what he shall receive from me ; for receiving from my Father, may be properly said to be receiving from me ; and

* These words are by many supposed to have reference to the abolition of the ceremonial law, and the establishment of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, &c. which truths they were fully informed of by the Holy Ghost after his descent upon them.

teaching his will, is teaching mine ; for our natures are congenial, and the Father has invested me with full power and dominion.

The comfortable assurances which I have delivered to you, will be sufficient to support you under all your approaching distresses. But a short time now remains, before I shall depart from you : but suffer not this circumstance to afflict you ; for a short time after my departure, I shall appear to you again ; for when I depart from you I shall not perish, but only return to my heavenly Father. “ I have yet many things “ to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. “ Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he “ will guide you into all truth : for he shall not speak “ of himself : but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall “ he speak : and he will shew you things to come. “ He shall glorify me ; for he shall receive of mine, “ and shall shew it unto you. All things that the “ Father hath are mine : therefore said I, that he “ shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. A “ little while, and ye shall not see me : and again, a “ little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to “ the Father.” John xvi. 12, &c.

The apostles now enquired of each other, what their Master could mean by these words, which being unable to comprehend, they were much troubled. To relieve their perplexity, Jesus said to them, that the time was approaching, when he should submit to the stroke of death ; but that presently afterwards, he should triumph over the king of terrors by a glorious resurrection, and appear to them again, previous to his ascension into heaven. The world, said our Lord, will rejoice and triumph over you, supposing that they have effected my utter destruction, and wholly suppressed your ministry : and in consequence hereof, you will be overwhelmed with affliction : but your

sorrow will not be of long continuance ; for upon my return to you, your hearts will be filled with inexpressible joy.

A woman in labor is for a time sensible of much pain and sorrow, but after delivery she no longer reflects on her poignant sufferings, but greatly rejoices on occasion of the birth of her child ; and so while you are under the apprehension of my departure, and during the distresses and temptations which you will experience in my absence, your minds will be deeply impressed with sorrow and anxiety ; but upon my return to you, you shall greatly rejoice ; and the utmost power and malice of your enemies shall not deprive you of the satisfaction, which shall result to you in consequence of my appearance, after my resurrection. But there will be no necessity for me to remain long with you ; for the Holy Spirit will be commissioned to impart unto you, all that it will be expedient for you to know ; and, exclusive of this advantage, the Almighty himself will be ever disposed to listen to your petitions, and to bestow upon you whatever you ask of him in my name.

Hitherto you have not supplicated the Father * in the name of his only Son : but you are now instructed to put forth your petitions to God in the name of your Redeemer, who is preparing to surrender his life for the salvation of mankind : and be assured, that whatever you shall ask for the glory of God, and to enable you to pursue your ministry with success, shall be granted to you ; and that your joy, which will commence at the time of my appearance to you after my decease, will be fully completed by the efficacy and success of your holy ministrations.

* You have not prayed to the Almighty in my name, as the Mediator between God and man, and with respect to my merits and intercession.

According to the extent of your knowledge, and the strength of your capacities, I have hitherto spoken to you concerning the establishment of my church by allusions and similitudes, which have seemed to you imperfect and obscure; but the time will now speedily arrive, when I shall in a more open and explicit manner acquaint you with the determinations of my heavenly Father, respecting the nature and establishment of my kingdom; and explain to you how, and for what purposes you are to address yourself in prayer to him, by whom you are already greatly beloved, because you believe that I act by his divine authority. I have descended from heaven, and resided upon earth under the appearance of a frail and imperfect state of humanity, in order that I might reveal to mankind the will of my heavenly Father, and instruct them in the means of attaining to everlasting life and happiness; and having accomplished this great and important undertaking, I am preparing to return to the blessed regions of ineffable bliss, from whence I derive my origin. “ Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while, and ye shall see me; and, because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? We cannot tell what he saith. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? 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 of the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have

“ sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart
“ shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.
“ And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily,
“ verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the
“ Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye
“ have asked nothing in my name : ask, and ye shall re-
“ ceive, that your joy may be full. These things have I
“ spoken unto you in proverbs : but the time cometh
“ when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs,
“ but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that
“ day ye shall ask in my name : and I say not unto
“ you, that I will pray the Father for you : for the
“ Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved
“ me and have believed that I came out from God. I
“ came forth from the Father, and am come into the
“ world : again, I leave the world, and go to the Fa-
“ ther.” John xvi. 17, &c.

Our Saviour had not before spoken in such plain and express terms to his disciples, who now understood that by the departure he had so often mentioned, he meant to inform them, that he should quit this sublunary sphere. Therefore they said, Now, O Lord, you speak to us in a stile that does not surpass the limits of our comprehension, and we clearly conceive your meaning. You have at once satisfied our curiosity, and added great confirmation to our faith, having convinced us of your power to penetrate into the most secret recesses of the hearts of men ; for though we did not declare our doubts, you perceived the perplexity in which our minds were involved, and were graciously pleased to communicate to us such information as has entirely dispersed those scruples which were the effects of our ignorance. We were, indeed, as you perceived, extremely desirous of an explanation, but were fearful of applying to you on that subject, lest we should give you offence : but you have perfectly convinced us, that you are the ambassador of God.

Hereupon Jesus said to them, that although they firmly believed in him, and had resolved to persevere in their faith, it behoved them to be careful, lest they should be too confident of their own strength; and to pray fervently to heaven, that they might be delivered from temptation in the time of distress.

You shall, said Jesus, before many hours elapse, utterly abandon me, in the hope of providing for your own security. But though you will desert me, I shall not be alone, for my heavenly Father will ever remain with me. I have predicted these matters to you, in order that ye may so increase your constancy and fortitude, as to be the better enabled to resist those temptations to which you will be exposed; and you cannot but derive comfort from my having prepared you to encounter those calamities which you will shortly experience, and which will most assuredly terminate in a glorious victory over the malice of your enemies.

Suffer not the consideration of the sufferings you are to endure to depress your spirits, or to impair your courage and constancy: but reflect, that, by the unremitting fortitude I have exerted, I have obtained a complete conquest over the dominion of sin; therefore adopt my example, and participate with me in the rewards of the kingdom of heaven. “ His disciples
“ said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and
“ speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou
“ knowest all things, and needest not that any man
“ should ask thee: by this we believe that thou cam-
“ est forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do ye
“ now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now
“ come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own,
“ and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone,
“ because the Father is with me. These things I have
“ spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace.

“ In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” John xvi. 29, &c.

Having exhorted and comforted his disciples in the manner above recited, the blessed Jesus “ lifted up his eyes to heaven,” and fervently prayed to his Almighty Father in the following manner. Holy and Almighty Father, the time will speedily arrive, when I shall submit to the most rigorous punishments, which will terminate in a painful and ignominious death. Grant me, O Lord, fortitude to support myself under the persecution and malice of my enemies, with that dignity which is becoming him whom thou hast been pleased to acknowledge as thy Son, that I may thereby add to the glory of thy holy name. Enable me, O God, to triumph over death by a glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven, that the honor of thy name may be magnified, and thy divine power be believed throughout the world: so shall mankind render themselves worthy to enjoy the blessings of eternity, according to the full intent of that office and power with which thou hast been graciously pleased to invest me.

That I might effect the great design of providing for the eternal salvation of mankind, I have faithfully proclaimed thy will, and preached the doctrine of repentance, whereby I have exalted the glory of thy name among mankind. That the great scheme of salvation may be perfected, do thou, who art the * only true God, glorify me by re-admitting me to

* That the Father is here called “ the only true God,” in exclusion only of those w. om the false persuasion of the Gentiles had introduced as g ^{ods}, and not in exclusion of Christ, as the Socinians pretend, is manifest from the circumstance of Christ himself being elsewhere called “ the only true God.”

those honors which I † enjoyed before the commencement of the world. I have manifested thy will to the disciples, whom, by thy appointment, I selected from the rest of mankind, to proclaim the precepts of thy gospel, and the doctrine of thy salvation.

The doctrine I have preached to the disciples, they have cheerfully embraced, punctually adhered to, and faithfully obeyed; they are firmly persuaded, that what I have preached to them is not a human invention, but a system of divine truths, proclaimed to mankind by thy especial authority and command. By the power thou hast transmitted to me, I have protected them from all the assaults of their malicious enemies; and eleven of them have maintained a due allegiance to me: but the perfidious man who has deserted my cause, will effect his own destruction; and in him will be accomplished the predictions of the prophets, who denounced exemplary vengeance against the abominable treachery of which he has been guilty.

As the period will soon arrive when I shall leave this world, I now address myself to thee, O heavenly Father, in the hearing of my faithful apostles that their minds may be strengthened and fortified against yielding to the impression of distressing and melancholy ideas. As thou hast begun the great work of their salvation by my preaching and revealing to them thy holy will, I supplicate thee, O God, to continue thy gracious favor and protection to them after my departure from this transitory life. Grant that they may be so sincerely affected with the truth of thy holy doctrine, that their conduct may be ever conforma-

† Our blessed Redeemer had a glory with the Father, before he assumed the appearance and nature of humanity; and this glory he declined, when he became a man, according to a variety of scriptural evidence.

ble thereto, since this doctrine contains only those divine precepts which I have published by thy authority and command.

I do not pray in behalf of the unbelieving and impenitent world, but for those who have embraced that most holy doctrine which you were graciously pleased to command me to preach for the redemption of mankind, and who by their ministry, have glorified thy name: I do not make these requests for my apostles alone, but for * all those who have reposed, or may hereafter repose faith in me. The period will soon arrive, when I shall return to thy heavenly kingdom; and therefore I recommend to thy peculiar care and protection, my eleven beloved disciples, who will faithfully proclaim the precepts of my gospel after my departure from this world. Endue them with grace to conduct themselves agreeably to the rules which I have prescribed to them, and with power to deliver to mankind with unimpaired purity, the holy doctrines of truth and righteousness, which they have received from me; so shall their fidelity and zeal in the discharge of their sacred function, entitle them to remain inseparably united to me, as I am to thee. From the hour when I first appointed them to be my apostles, I have been unremittingly assiduous to guard them against the smallest violation of their duty; and, excepting the ungrateful traitor who has conspired with my enemies to effect my destruction, they have yielded a perfect obedience to my directions: but now that I am soon to withdraw my per-

* Hence it appears, that Christ, after having prayed for his apostles in particular, put forth the same request, in behalf of his other disciples; and therefore it must follow, that the words of the evangelist have no regard to the election of a particular number, but only to those peculiar gifts and blessings, which were necessary to the apostles. "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me." John xvii. 9.

sonal protection from them, I earnestly beseech thee to assist them by thy Holy Spirit, and that they may derive comfort from the assurance that they will ever remain under thy especial care and protection.

My doctrine being utterly repugnant to the passions and lusts, the affections, designs, and inclinations of worldly men, my disciples will be hated and persecuted by the vicious and incorrigible part of the world. I do not request that you would take them out of the world, but beseech that you will preserve them in it, that they may be instrumental in promoting thy holy word, and in magnifying the glory of thy name.

These disciples are of a disposition exceedingly different from the generality of mankind; for they have adopted the example of righteousness and virtue, which I proposed to them in my own person. Do thou, O Father, increase in them the moderation and candor of their minds, and cause them to be thoroughly impressed with that true doctrine which I have recommended to them by your especial command, that they may both in their preaching and their moral conduct through life, become worthy and successful ministers of my gospel.

As thou hast appointed me to reveal thy holy will to mankind, so I depute these my apostles to continue assiduously to propagate the doctrine which I have established. To promote the great end for which I came into the world, I have communicated to my apostles, that power and authority of performing miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine, and the evidence of thy truth, which thou didst communicate to me; so that I, acting by their agency, as thou hast done by me, may promote that doctrine which I have hitherto preached, and convince mankind, by the efficacy of the Spirit, that I was sent into the world to

execute thy righteous will, and that my disciples act by the same divine commission.

Almighty Father, I beseech that thou wouldest admit all those who have heartily embraced my gospel, to participate with me in heavenly bliss! and exalt them to the privilege of beholding the wonderful glory, wherewith, in thy unbounded and eternal love, thou didst invest me before the creation of the world. The generality of mankind obstinately persist in opposing your divine pleasure: but my disciples hold thy sacred name in due veneration; and, by thy divine permission, I will continue to endue them with the Holy Spirit, that they may improve in righteousness, in faith, and in all good works; so that they shall themselves, as well as all who believe in, and act agreeably to what they preach, obtain that everlasting happiness, which is the effect of that infinite love that thou hast, through me, manifested towards them.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Our blessed Saviour crosses the brook Cedron, and repairs towards the garden of Gethsemane; but, previous to his arrival there, he predicts that he shall be seized that night, and that his apostles will desert him. The agony of the holy Jesus. Our Saviour departs from his disciples, and fervently addresses himself in prayer to his heavenly Father. Upon his return to his disciples, he finds them asleep, and awakens them. He prays again, and wakes his disciples a second and a third time. Judas enters the garden of Gethsemane, at the head of a party of soldiers, who take Jesus into custody. Peter cuts off the ear of Malchus, for which action he is reprov'd by Jesus, who heals the wound. Our Saviour questions the officers on the subject of his being taken into custody. A young man who was seized by the soldiers, escapes without his garment. Jesus is conducted to the house of Annas and Caiphas, whither he is followed by Peter and John. Peter thrice denies having any knowledge of Christ: but he repents, after having heard the cock crow twice. Caiphas examines Jesus before the chief-priests and rulers of Jerusalem, and false evidence is adduced against him. Jesus is conducted before the Sanhedrim, and further examined. He acknowledges himself to be the Messiah; and he is cruelly reviled and insulted, and condemn'd as deserving to suffer death.

AFTER the transactions recorded in the preceding chapter, our blessed Redeemer, accompanied by his apostles, descended from the Mount of Olives, and crossing the brook Cedron, proceeded towards

the garden of Gethsemane. On the way our Lord said to his disciples, that they would that very night forsake him, according to the prediction of the prophet Zechariah. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." Zech. xiii. 7. Hereupon Peter said, that though he should be deserted by his other disciples, yet he would steadily maintain his allegiance and fidelity to him, under every circumstance of distress and extremity. Our Saviour now reminded Peter of what he had already predicted, repeating to him, that before the cock should twice be heard to * crow, he would thrice deny being his disciple. But Peter solemnly protested, that he would submit to be put to the most cruel death, rather than deny obedience to his Master; and the other apostles as fervently declared, that no circumstance whatever should prevail upon them to violate their duty and allegiance to Jesus. "And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter said, although all shall be offended, yet will not I. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise.— Likewise also said they all." Mark xiv. 27, &c.

Upon their arrival at the garden of Gethsemane,

* The Heathen writers mention a double crowing of the cock; the first about midnight, and the second at the fourth watch, or at day-break. The latter of these is emphatically called the cock-crowing; and it was this that brought Peter to repentance.

Jesus, accompanied by Peter and James, and John, the two sons of Zebedee, the three select apostles who had been witnesses to his glorious transfiguration, proceeded forward, having commanded his other disciples to wait near the entrance, and recommended them to pray to God that he would not permit their constancy to be exposed to too severe trials.

Our blessed Redeemer now meditated upon those sufferings which in a few hours he was to endure ; and the prospect of the shocking scene that was shortly to ensue, overwhelmed him with affliction ; and therefore he addressed himself in fervent prayer to his heavenly Father, supplicating, that if he could, consistently with the salvation of mankind, he might be delivered from the sorrows by which he was then so heavily oppressed. On this occasion he sustained those grievous conflicts in his soul, by which, as well as his dying on the cross, he became a sin-offering, and thereby accomplished the redemption of mankind.

Having informed his three disciples that he was in an agony of sorrow, and commanded them to remain where they then were, and to watch, he retired to the distance of about a stone's throw ; and prostrating himself upon the earth, exclaimed, O Almighty Father, thou art able to prevent the cruel death, and those indignities which I expect shortly to suffer ; but if thy eternal wisdom hath unalterably decreed me to these purposes, I shall entirely resign myself to thy Almighty pleasure. While our Saviour was laboring under this agony, an * angel descended from heaven, and administered comfort to him ; and the

* In the time of St. Jerome, this account of the angel was wanting in many of the Greek and Latin copies. It seems to have been expunged by the Arians.

more he was oppressed with sorrow, the more fervently he addressed himself to God by prayer. So intense was his anguish, and so excessive was the perturbation of his spirits, that his blood was forced through the pores of his skin : and mixing with his sweat, it fell in drops upon the earth.

His earnest supplications to the Almighty, and his entire resignation to the divine will, procured an abatement of his agony ; and he arose, and returned to his apostles, whom he found in a sleep. Having awakened them, he said, Am I so little regarded by you, that you neglect to watch one hour with me in my affliction ? Arise, and pray, that you may be endued with constancy and fortitude to support yourselves under the severe trials to which you will in a short time be exposed ; for though you are fully persuaded that your duty requires you to be inflexibly persevering in your profession of being my disciples, yet such is the frailty of human nature, that it is scarcely possible for mankind to collect a sufficient degree of courage and fortitude effectually to resist the tyranny of those violent passions, which by frequent indulgence, often become too powerful for the controul of reason. “ And they came to a place “ which was named Gethsemane : and he saith to “ his disciples, sit ye here while I shall pray. And “ he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and “ began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy.— “ And he saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death : tarry ye here and watch. And “ he went forward a little and fell on the ground, and “ prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass “ from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things “ are possible unto thee : take away this cup from “ me : nevertheless not what I will, but as thou wilt. “ And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and “ saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou ? couldst

“not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.” Mark xiv. 32, &c. 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.” Luke xxii. 43, 44.

Having thus admonished his disciples, our Saviour again retired to pray; and upon his return, he discovered them to be a second time in a profound sleep. Having again awaked them, he rebuked them for their negligence; after which he retreated from them a third time, to supplicate his heavenly Father; but as he obtained no assurance of an abatement of his expected anguish, he expressed himself willing to encounter the utmost torments, which the Almighty should be pleased to permit the rage and malice of his enemies to inflict upon him.

Observing that the affliction his three apostles had experienced on his account, had so harrassed and exhausted their spirits, that they had not been able to resist an inclination to repose, Jesus said, The time is nearly arrived, when I must submit to the cruelty of my enemies; and I am resolved courageously to encounter the effects of their rage, however severe and undeserved; therefore take your rest, for your watching is wholly unnecessary. I shall shortly be surrendered into the power of wicked and unrelenting men, both Jews and Romans; and if you are inclined to be witnesses of the unmerited severity of treatment I shall receive from them, arise, and accompany me to meet the perfidious and ungrateful wretch, who is now upon his way to betray me to a party of soldiers, dispatched to apprehend me by the members of the Sanhedrim.

Judas had frequently accompanied his Master to the garden of Gethsemane, and therefore knew the spot to which he was accustomed to retire. At the head of a party of armed men, and a deputation of officers from the Sanhedrim, carrying lamps and torches, the traitor entered the garden in search of Jesus.— Though the passover was never celebrated but at the time of full moon, they foresaw that the light of that planet might be intercepted by clouds; they also knew, that the place was greatly shaded with trees; and for these reasons, the soldiers were attended by servants carrying lights. It is probable, that the soldiers were unacquainted with the person of Jesus, and that therefore it was judged necessary that Judas should point him out by a particular sign: and the soldiers were commanded to seize and conduct before the Sanhedrim, the man whom Judas should salute.

When Judas approached the spot where he expected to find our Saviour, he walked hastily up to him; probably with a design of concealing his villainy from his Master and the eleven apostles, and pretending, perhaps, that he was desirous of apprizing him of his danger. Judas accosted our Saviour, saying, Hail Master, and kissed him. But our Lord, knowing his design, did not fail to upbraid him with his treachery. Dost thou betray me, said our Lord, with a fawning salutation?

After receiving this reprimand, Judas retired into the company of the soldiers. And the time of his suffering being arrived, our Lord did not now, as he had formerly done, avoid his enemies; but turning towards the soldiers, he asked, whom it was they sought? They replied, that they came in search of Jesus of Nazareth. Hereupon our Lord immediately acknowledged himself to be that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they came to apprehend; and he had no soon-

er pronounced these words, than the soldiers being struck with astonishment fell back upon the ground. But so far was Jesus from taking advantage of their consternation, that he made not the least endeavor to escape, which he might have successfully attempted without the smallest difficulty : but on the contrary, he a second time addressed himself to the soldiers, repeating the question as to whom they sought. Being again told that they came in search of Jesus of Nazareth, he said, I have already acknowledged myself to be the man you seek ; and since it is me a one that you are authorized to take into custody, I request that you will offer no violence to these my attendants. “ He went away again the second time, and “ prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not “ pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be “ done. And he came and found them asleep again ; “ for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and “ went away again, and prayed the third time, saying “ the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, “ and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your “ rest ; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of “ man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, “ let us be going : behold, he is at hand that doth “ betray me. And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one “ of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude “ with swords and staves, from the chief-priests “ and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed “ him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall “ kiss, the same is he ; hold him fast. And forth- “ with he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master ; and “ kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, “ wherefore art thou come ?” Matt. xxvi. 42, &c.

The tribune who had the command of the cohort*,

* This was a military term among the Romans, signifying a body of troops consisting of six hundred foot soldiers, or as some say, of five

now advanced towards Jesus, who was rudely seized and bound by some of the soldiers. Enraged to see his Master thus unworthily treated, Peter drew his sword, and smote off the ear of Malchus, who was servant to the high priest. So exasperated was this disciple, that he was on the point of singly attacking the whole body of soldiers : but our Lord commanded him to sheath his weapon, and at the same time reproved his rashness, saying, that those who took up arms against him should fall by the power of their enemies ; and that his imprudent defence implied a want of confidence in the Almighty, to whose determinations he was willing to submit, that all the prophecies concerning his sufferings and death might be accomplished. To prevent any tumult, or other ill consequences from Peter having struck off the ear of the high-priest's servant, our compassionate Redeemer touched the wound, and it immediately healed.

Addressing himself to the chief priests and ministers of the Sanhedrim, our blessed Saviour asked them, why they came to apprehend him attended by armed soldiers ; which seemed to imply, that they considered him as a public robber. He had been accustomed daily to instruct the people in the temple, and yet, he observed, they had attempted no violence against his person : but the time was arrived, when God would permit the angels of darkness to execute the wicked designs they had projected against him. But before our blessed Saviour had spoken these words, his apostles, observing that their Master was in the power of his enemies, deserted him while under these circumstances of distress, as he had prophesied. “ Then came they and laid hands on Jesus, “ and took him. And behold, one of them which

hundred ; these were divided into three parties, called maniples, which were subdivided into centuries.

“ were with Jesus, stretched out his hand, and drew
 “ his sword, and struck a servant of the high-priest,
 “ and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him,
 “ Put up again thy sword into his place ; for all they
 “ that take the sword, shall perish with the sword.
 “ Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father,
 “ and he shall presently give me more than twelve le-
 “ gions of angels ? But how then shall the scripture
 “ be fulfilled, that thus it must be ? In that same
 “ hour said Jesus to the multitude, Are you come
 “ out as against a thief with swords and staves for
 “ to take me ? I sat daily with you teaching in the
 “ temple, and ye laid no hold of me. But all this
 “ was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might
 “ be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him
 “ and fled.” Matt. xxvi. 50, &c.

To learn the occasion of the tumult, * a young
 man, having a linen cloth about his body, came to
 the spot where the soldiers had taken our Lord into
 custody ; and this youth they also apprehended, prob-
 ably because he shewed some marks of respect to
 Jesus : but he escaped from them, leaving his garment
 in their hands. “ And there followed him a certain
 “ young man, having a linen cloth cast about his nak-
 “ ed body ; and the young men laid hold on him :
 “ and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them nak-
 “ ed.” Mark xiv. 51, 52.

The soldiers conducted Jesus to the house of An-
 nas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who that year

* Some of the fathers are of opinion, though on a very slender foundation, that this young man was James, the brother of our Lord. Others believe him to have been St. John : but, according to the evangelists, he followed Christ to the high-priest's hall. The most reasonable conjecture seems, that he belonged to the family of the proprietor of the garden of Gethsemane ; and that being awakened suddenly by an uncommon noise, he arose from his bed, and throwing a cloth over him, he retired to learn the occasion of the tumult.

held the office of high-priest. Annas had himself been advanced to the dignity of the high-priesthood, and that circumstance, together with his relationship to Caiaphas, procured him the respect that was shewn him on this occasion. But declining singly to interfere, Annas ordered our Saviour to be escorted before Caiaphas; who, as we have before observed, when the conduct of Jesus became the subject of investigation in the Sanhedrim, gave it as his opinion, that it would be expedient to sacrifice his life to the public good. Peter and John, the son of Zebedee, followed Jesus to the palace of Caiaphas, where several of the members had assembled, when the order was issued for apprehending Jesus; and where they had remained, to learn the issue of their stratagem. John having an acquaintance with some persons in the family of the high-priest, gained admittance into the hall, adjacent to the apartment where his Master was to be examined: but Peter was under the necessity of waiting without, till he gained an introduction through the interest of John.

Peter seated himself in the hall, in company with the domestics of the high-priest, anxiously waiting the issue of his Master's examination. The female servant who had opened the door to Peter, looking stedfastly at him, asked him, if he was not one of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth? This he positively denied, saying, he could not conceive what reason she had for proposing the question to him. The question put to him by the woman so disconcerted Peter, that he left the hall, and retired to the porch, where he in a short time heard the cock crow. Returning to the company, who were seated before the fire, another of the female servants asked him, if he was not one of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. In reply, he denied having any knowledge of Jesus; and to confirm what he had said, he appealed to heaven by an

oath. About an hour afterwards, another of the servants, the kinsman of him whose ear Peter had struck off, declared, that he had seen that disciple in company with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. In short, all the persons present concurred in opinion, that he was a follower of Jesus ; and their suspicions were greatly confirmed, by his pronounciation proving him to be a native of Galilee. He now with oaths and imprecations resolutely * disclaimed all knowledge of Jesus, immediately after which he heard the cock crow a second time.

Peter had no sooner pronounced the third denial, than Jesus turned towards him, and regarding him with remarkable sternness, reproached him for his infidelity. The displeasure and reproach expressed in the countenance of Jesus, and the crowing of the cock, recalled the prediction of his Master to the memory of Peter, and at the same time forcibly impressed his mind with remorse and sorrow. To conceal his grief and confusion, Peter covered his face with his garment, and retiring from the hall, by shedding abundance of tears, afforded some relief to his soul, which was oppressed by the most poignant anguish, arising from a proper sense of the enormity of the crime he had committed.

Our blessed Saviour was now introduced into the apartment where the high-priest, and several of the members of the Sanhedrim were assembled, to examine him concerning the doctrines he had promulgated, and the converts he had made to his gospel. Caiaphas demanded of Jesus, for what purpose he had

* It will not excuse Peter to suppose he said, " I know not the man." because he knew him to be God ; for this would be to defend the servant, and accuse the Master of falsehood. If Peter did not actually and absolutely deny him, Christ would not have said, " Thou shalt deny me thrice."

prevailed upon people to become his disciples, whether he intended to establish himself in the monarchical dignity, and what was the tendency of the doctrines he taught. This conduct was equally uncandid, artful, and ensnaring. The attempt to extort from a prisoner a confession which may affect his life or liberty, is surely a very inequitable and unjustifiable procedure; and this Jesus intimated in his reply, calling upon them to support the accusations alleged against him, by the testimony of witnesses.

Our blessed Lord informed the high-priest, and the elders of the people, that he had publicly delivered his doctrines in almost every synagogue in Judea, and that he had been accustomed to preach in the temple to very numerous audiences, and therefore, he observed, had he intended to delude the multitude into error, or to obtain any improper influence over their minds, he should certainly have been detected, since all his actions were exposed to public observation. Hereupon one of the officers, with sacrilegious insolence, struck Jesus, upbraiding him at the same time for not addressing himself to the high-priest with the veneration and respect, which, he said, were due to his character. Notwithstanding the gross affronts he had received, the meek and humble Jesus, with great composure, said, If I have given any just cause of offence to this assembly, prove to me in what particular my crime consists: if you cannot do this, by what means will it be possible for you to excuse this inhuman treatment of a defenceless prisoner. Thus Jesus became an example of the forbearance and humility, which he had before recommended. "Whosoever shall smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also." Matt. v. 39.

The council expected that Jesus would avow himself to be the Messiah: but being disappointed, they

proceeded to examine several witnesses, to prove that he had assumed that character; for they considered this pretension as an act of blasphemy in Jesus, who being, as they imagined, only a man, they supposed could not pretend to the character of the Messiah, without committing a most daring and unpardonable offence against the Almighty.

Some of the witnesses contradicted each other in their depositions, and others advanced charges of too insignificant and frivolous a nature, to serve as the foundation of convicting our Lord of any capital offence. But two persons, at length, agreed in deposing, that they had heard Jesus declare, that he was able to destroy the temple of God, and to re-construct it in the space of three days. When our Lord expelled the traders from the house of God, the Jews asked him, by what authority he acted? whereupon he said, "Destroy this temple, (pointing to his body,) and in three days I will raise it again," Therefore these witnesses, either through malice, or ignorance that he alluded to the miracle of his resurrection, interpreted our Saviour's words into a declaration that he was able to destroy and rebuild the magnificent temple of Jerusalem in three days: and the chief-priests and rulers deemed this expression an act of blasphemy, declaring it impossible that so stupendous an undertaking could be accomplished in so short a period of time, but by the operation of the power of the Almighty.

Notwithstanding the charge produced against him, our Lord remained silent; whereupon the high-priest, supposing that he meant to shew the contempt in which he held the members of the council, arose from his seat in a violent rage, and demanded the reason of so extraordinary conduct. "And the men that held
"Jesus, mocked him and smote him. And when they

“ had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face,
 “ and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that
 “ smote thee ? And many other things blasphemous-
 “ ly spake they against him. And as soon as it was
 “ day, the elders of the people and the chief-priests
 “ and the scribes came together, and led him into
 “ their council, saying, Art thou the Christ ? tell us.”
 Luke xxii. 63, &c.

Being thus questioned by the Sanhedrim early in the morning after his apprehension, our Lord said, that if he should acknowledge himself to the Messiah, they would not believe him ; nor would they restore him to liberty, even if he should demonstrate his innocence by the most incontestible evidence. “ And
 “ he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe.
 “ And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor
 “ let me go.” Luke xxii. 67, 68:

Disappointed in all his stratagems to extort some expression from Jesus, which might be perverted to his disadvantage, the high-priest now solemnly * adjured him, by the tremendous name of the Almighty, to declare whether he was the Son of God. Being thus urged by a religious obligation to make a public profession, our blessed Saviour avowed himself to be the Messiah ; saying, that his judges would soon be convinced of the truth of his assertion, by the destruction that he would inflict upon the Jewish nation, and the rapid progress of his gospel in every quarter of the globe ; adding, that finally he should prove the justice of his pretensions on the great and tremendous day of judgment, when he should be seated on the right hand of his Almighty Father, and surrounded with all the glories of the kingdom of heaven.

* An adjuration of this nature, was considered as equivalent to an oath, the party adjured being expected to declare the whole truth.

Our Saviour's public profession of being the Messiah, so exasperated the high-priest, that he rent his garments, and addressing himself to the whole assembly, said, it would be superfluous to attempt producing further evidence, since the prisoner's own confession, had clearly convicted him of the most horrid blasphemy. Upon this, they unanimously declared, that since he had presumed to arrogate to himself the character of the Messiah, it was expedient that he should be put to death.

Being thus cruelly and unjustly condemned, the servants and other people spit upon him, and offered him a variety of other indignities, of the most gross and affronting nature. Having caused our blessed Saviour to be blindfolded, some of the council, with a view of rendering him an object of ridicule, desired him to exercise his prophetic spirit, by discovering who smote him. Thus was the Son of God, the great and blessed Redeemer of the world, treated with a degree of severity and insult, wholly unworthy his sacred character: but he submitted to his sufferings with patience and resignation, thereby leaving mankind an example of an humble and entire acquiescence in the dispensations of divine Providence.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Our Saviour is conducted before Pilate, the Roman governor, who authorizes the Jews to judge him according to their own laws : but they refuse to exercise the power thus delegated to them. The members of the Sanhedrim exhibit accusations against Jesus, who makes no reply. Our Saviour acknowledges himself to be a king. Pilate is desirous of restoring Jesus to liberty, but he is opposed by the Jews. Pilate sends Jesus to be examined by Herod, who acquits him. The Roman governor says, he will release either Jesus or Barabbas, as the Jews shall decide ; and they prefer the latter. After endeavoring in vain to appease the rage of the Jews, Pilate orders our Saviour to be scourged. He shews Jesus to the people, and reluctantly consents to his crucifixion. Still desirous of preserving the life of Jesus, he further interrogates him : and at length he, after washing his hands in the open court, in token of his innocence, delivers him to the Jews, who behave towards him with contempt and insult. Struck with a conviction of his abominable treachery, Judas returns the thirty shekels he had received for betraying Jesus, and puts an end to his life. Simon, the Cyrenian, compelled to carry the cross. Our Saviour predicts the destruction of the Jews. He is crucified between two malefactors. Pilate puts an inscription upon the cross, and will not allow it to be altered. The chief-priests, the soldiers and the multitude, scoff at, and revile our blessed Saviour ; and their example is followed by one of the suffering thieves : but the other rebukes him, and receives a comfortable assurance from Jesus. Our Saviour recommends his mother to the care of John. A darkness for the space of three

hours. The death of the Redeemer of the world. Prodigies attendant upon the decease of Jesus. Women present at the crucifixion. The legs of the two malefactors are broken, and the side of Jesus is pierced with a spear. The body of our Saviour interred by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

THE blessed Jesus being condemned by the unanimous voice of the grand council of the Jewish nation, it was resolved, that he should be taken before the Roman governor, that he might give confirmation to their sentence.

Cæsarea was the general place of residence of the Roman governors of Judea: but on occasion of the great feasts, they repaired to Jerusalem, to prevent or suppress tumults, and to administer justice. The Jews conducted our Saviour to the palace of Pontius Pilate, where, however, they refused to enter, that they might not defile themselves, by being under the roof of a Heathen, whereby they would have been disqualified for eating the passover.

To accomodate the Jews on occasions of this nature, a structure called Gabbatha, in the Hebrew language, was formed adjoining to the governor's palace. This place was so contrived, that the people could stand in the open air, round the tribunal, excepting on the part which joined the palace, to observe the judicial proceedings. The great Redeemer of mankind being brought to this tribunal, Pilate ascended the judgment-seat, and demanded, what accusations the Jews had to alledge against the prisoner. Though this was both a natural and a necessary question, it gave much offence to the captious Jews; and they haughtily said that had they not conceived him to be a criminal highly meriting much severity of punishment,

they should not have appealed to him ; for they had examined him, and found him deserving to be punished with death, which the Roman laws prohibited them from carrying into execution. Thus was verified our Saviour's prediction, concerning the manner in which he should be put to death ; for the Romans were accustomed to crucify such strangers as were condemned to die, which was contrary to the practice of the Jews ; who were, besides, restrained from inflicting death, except on occasion of sudden tumults and insurrections.

The Jews now alledged against our Saviour, that he had endeavored to excite an insurrection against the Roman government, by prohibiting the payment of taxes to Cæsar, pretending that he was himself the king of the Jews. Upon being interrogated by Pilate, our Lord acknowledged that he was indeed a king ; but he was at the same time averred, that he did not effect the power, splendor, and authority of a temporal sovereign, for the kingdom of the Messiah was in the heavenly Canaan. The members of the Sanhedrim now advanced a variety of accusations, equally false and malicious, against our blessed Saviour ; who, however, disdained to speak in contradiction to his malicious accusers, lest it should be imagined, that he was terrified by the prospect of approaching death. Pilate, being unacquainted with the sentiments and motives of Jesus, asked him, why he made no attempt to refute the charges brought against him ? but he still remained silent, to the great astonishment of the governor. The question, as to whether he was a king being again put to Jesus, he a second time acknowledged the title ; saying, however, that his regal dignity was not of a nature to excite the jealousy of the court of Rome ; for had his kingdom been of this world, he should have raised armies to defend him against the power of his enemies ; and

our Lord added, that he was born to promote the happiness of mankind, and to instil into their minds the knowledge of truth. Upon this, Pilate asked, what was the nature of that truth of which he had spoken? but without waiting for a reply, he addressed himself the Jews, informing them, that he had strictly examined Jesus, who appeared not to have committed any offence, which, according to the Roman law, rendered him worthy to suffer death.

But the superstitious and bigotted Jews, persisted in accusing our Lord of seditious practices, saying, "he stirred up the people, beginning from Galilee to "to this place." Upon learning that our Saviour was a Galilean by birth, Pilate ordered him to be conducted before Herod, who was then at Jerusalem, for examination; saying, that the tetrarch of the province where the sedition was said to have commenced, was the proper judge to determine in this case; since he must necessarily be in possession of facts, which would enable him to pronounce an equitable decision.

The appearance of Jesus afforded great pleasure to Herod, who hoped to see him perform some great miracle: but in this he was disappointed; for however liberal in working miracles in favor of the wretched and distressed of every denomination, our blessed Redeemer would not exert his divine power merely to gratify the curiosity of a barbarous tyrant, who had apostatized from the doctrine of John the Baptist, and even caused his teacher to be put to death. The enemies of our Saviour accused him of having assumed the character of the Messiah, and Herod proposed to him divers questions on the subject of the crime of which it was pretended that he was guilty: but he declined making any reply, for the same reasons which had induced his silence when before Pontius Pilate.

Herod declared, that he did not believe Jesus to be criminal, or that any part of his conduct had been offensive or injurious to the government : but to make him an object of derision for having assumed the character of the Messiah, he caused him to be clothed in a gorgeous robe, and after permitting his attendants to ridicule and insult him, sent him back to Pilate.

To gain popular applause, the Roman governors were accustomed, during the feast of the passover, to restore to liberty some prisoner nominated by the people. At this time a man named Barabbas, who had been guilty of robbery and murder, and also the fomentor of a rebellion, was in confinement ; and Pilate asked the people, whether they were desirous he should comply with the annual custom, by releasing Jesus or Barabbas ; for he was desirous of shewing lenity to our Saviour, from a persuasion of his innocence ; and also that he might comply with a request made by his wife, who, in consequence of a dream, wherein it was represented to her that her husband would condemn our Lord, had interceded in his favor. But the multitude decided in favor of Barabbas ; and in consequence thereof, Pilate reminded them that, although Jesus had been examined both by Herod and himself, no criminal charge had been proved against him, and therefore he requested them to intimate in what manner they wished him to be disposed of. Upon this they said, that so far from desiring his acquittal, they hoped the governor would gratify them, by subjecting the prisoner to crucifixion. Pilate now informed them, that he could not, without a manifest breach of justice, exercise so rigorous a punishment upon Jesus as they required, since the charges exhibited against him did not appear to be founded in truth.

To so extravagant a pitch was the rage of the mul

titude provoked, by the crafty and wicked insinuations of their priests, that all the efforts of Pilate to appease their turbulent passions proved ineffectual.—“They cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.—“Then Pilate saith unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.” Pilate now commanded Jesus to be scourged, hoping that by subjecting him to that punishment, he should in some measure appease the malice of his enemies. In addition to the punishment they were ordered to inflict upon our Saviour, the soldiers scoffed at and ridiculed him, and placed a crown of thorns upon his head, and clothed him in a purple robe, and put a reed into his hand by way of sceptre, for the purpose of deriding him, on account of his pretensions to the sovereignty of the Jewish nation.

After our blessed Saviour had submitted to this severe and disgraceful punishment, Pilate accompanied him into the judgment hall, and shewed him to the populace; imagining, that when they should behold his miserable condition, their obdurate hearts would relent. Our great and blessed Redeemer appeared upon the marble pavement where the tribunal was erected, having his face, hair, and shoulders stained with his sacred blood. But so far was this truly melancholy and pathetic scene from producing the effect which the compassionate Pilate expected, that it served but more violently to inflame the malice of the priests; who, apprehending that the populace might relent, vehemently urged Pilate to condemn him to die by crucifixion.

The populace being thus outrageously clamorous, Pilate said, that since they were obstinately determined upon the destruction of an innocent man, he would, lest his opposition to their desires should create a

popular tumult, surrender him into their power, that they might themselves * crucify him ; but he added, that he was himself firmly assured, that the man whom they sought to destroy, had not committed any offence against either their religious or civil institutions, which would justify that severity of punishment which they seemed determined to inflict upon him.

But the Jews refused to exercise the privilege given them by the governor, of inflicting punishment upon a man, of whose innocence, even his judge had repeatedly borne public testimony ; for they reflected, that if they proceeded to the exercise of this power, the governor might afterwards accuse them of seditious practices, as his permission had been extorted from him by their clamorous proceedings. Supposing him to be guiltless of the other facts alledged against him, they observed that he had, by calling himself the Son of God, even in the presence of the council, committed an offence which demanded the most rigorous punishment.

In consequence of this last representation, the anxiety of Pilate to preserve the life of our Saviour, was increased ; for he called to his recollection, the great and many miracles which he had been told Jesus had wrought ; and apprehended, that he was in reality of divine origin. That mode of religious worship to which the governor adhered, instructed him to believe in the existence of men descended from gods ; and indeed, the Heathens believed, that the deities which they worshipped, sometimes resided upon earth, under the appearance of humanity. Hence Pilate was induced to interrogate Jesus, concerning

* Pilate did not give them permission to crucify our Saviour, but signified that if they were determined to proceed to the last extremity, they would do it at their peril.

his ancestors and his country. But our Lord declined making any reply, lest the governor should thereby be induced to reverse his resolution of surrendering him into the power of the Jews, who were to crucify him.

This silence greatly surprised Pilate, who asked our Saviour, why he refused to answer him ; saying, that he was invested with power either to restore him to liberty, or to condemn him to crucifixion. Hereupon our Lord said, that he knew him to be accountable to Cæsar for every part of his conduct, and would forgive him any injury which he might receive from him, since the fury of the populace would constrain him to act in contradiction to his own sentiments.

Pilate now addressed himself again to the multitude, signifying his resolution to release our Saviour ; whereupon the chief-priests, and rulers of Israel, vehemently exclaimed, “ If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar’s friend : whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar.” This argument had a powerful effect upon Pilate, who dreaded the idea of being accused before the emperor Tiberius : knowing that he was accustomed to punish with unrelenting severity, those officers acting under him, and who were found guilty of the slightest neglect or breach of duty.

Pilate again brought Jesus before the people, and pointing to him, said, “ Behold your king ;” by which words, he meant to ridicule the Jews, on account of their expectation of a Messiah. Greatly enraged by this sarcastical expression, they exclaimed, “ Away with him, away with him ; crucify him.” Upon this, Pilate, in the same taunting manner, asked them, whether they wished him to crucify their king ;

and in reply, they said, they owed obedience to no king but Cæsar. Thus they publicly renounced their hope of the Messiah, which the whole œconomy of the Jewish religion was calculated to cherish; and they at the same time acknowledged their subjection to the Romans, against whom they afterwards rebelled.

All his endeavors for mitigating the rage of the Jews proving ineffectual, Pilate, to shew the reluctance with which he delivered him up to his enemies, called for water, and in the presence of the multitude washed his hands; by which action he signified, that, whatever might be the fate of Jesus, he should himself be free from every cause of censure. When the governor had thus intimated, that he was in no respect the author of the sufferings which Jesus had already sustained, or of those further calamities which the Jews were desirous of inflicting upon him, the whole multitude exclaimed, If he be innocent, may the punishments due to the spilling of his blood, fall upon us and our posterity.

Pilate now commanded Barabbas to be released, and delivered over Jesus to the Jews, in order for being crucified. Our blessed Redeemer, who was still compelled to wear the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, and to carry the reed by way of sceptre in his hand, was again made the object of public derision and insult. Being thus disguised, the multitude bowed their knees before him, sarcastically exclaiming, Hail, king of the Jews! Having continued for some time to treat him in this cruel and insulting manner, they stripped him of the purple robe, and taking the reed out of his hand, struck him with it.—Having clothed him in his own garments, the soldiers

led him towards the spot appointed for his crucifixion.

No sooner did Judas perceive that the righteous Jesus was condemned to suffer death, than, touched with remorse, on account of his abominable treachery, he hastened to the Sanhedrim, and made a declaration of his repentance. "Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief-priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver, and went and hanged himself." Matt. xxvii. 3, &c. The rope by which Judas hung himself, broke, "And falling head-long, he * burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." Acts i. 18.

Judas threw down the thirty shekels in the midst of the council: but though the priests secured the money, they declined depositing it in their treasury, because they considered it as being polluted, on account of its having been applied to the purpose of betraying a man who was to suffer death. This money the priests disposed of, in the purchase of a spot of ground, called the Potter's-field, which they converted into a burying-place for such strangers as should die at Jerusalem. The manner in which this spot of ground came into the possession of the priests, being publicly known to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, they gave it the name of *Aceldama*, which signifies the Field of Blood.

* Or probably, by the suddenness of the fall, the peritonæum broke; in consequence of which, the bowels descended into the scrotum; which sometimes happens from leaping, or other violent motions of the lower parts.

Our blessed Saviour was compelled to walk towards Mount Calvary, the place appointed for his execution, bearing on his shoulders the cross on which he was to suffer : but the fatigue he had sustained from the time of being apprehended, having been hurried from place to place, obliged to stand during the whole time of his several examinations, the want of food, and the loss of blood, had so exhausted his strength, as to occasion him to faint under his burden. In consequence of this, a native of Cyrene in Egypt, named Simon, was compelled to carry the cross after our Lord. But the soldiers did not appoint Simon to this office from motives of compassion to our Saviour, but because they apprehended he might die under his burden, and thereby escape the punishment to which he was destined.

Our Saviour was followed by a vast concourse of people, and among these were a great number of women who tenderly compassionated his sufferings. Addressing himself to these females, our Lord bid them not to weep on account of his sufferings, but rather to lament the calamities to which their own children were destined ; saying those would be the happiest women who had no issue ; for the time was approaching, when the most dreadful calamities would overwhelm the people of Jerusalem.

Our Saviour was escorted, in company with two criminals, who were also to suffer crucifixion, to the spot called Golgotha, or the Place of Skulls, on account of the great number of bones of the persons who had there been put to death, being scattered about. The crosses being fixed, and every other preparation made, some of the people presented to our great Redeemer a † soporific potion, which hav-

† St. Matthew says, “ Vinegar mixed with gall ;” St. Mark,

ing tasted, he refused to drink, resolved to bear his sufferings with patience and fortitude. He was now stripped, and his garments were divided into four parts, so that each of the quaternions, who were his executioners, might have a share. The upper garment being of one piece, and without a seam, his executioners cast lots for it. Thus our Saviour in reality, experienced what the Psalmist figuratively spoke of himself, "They divided my garments among them, and cast lots for my vesture." Psalm. xxii. 9.

Our blessed Redeemer was lifted up to the cross, to which he was affixed by nails being driven through his hands and feet; and of the two criminals above-mentioned, one was crucified on each side of him.—Amidst the excruciating torments he endured, he maintained the most unshaken fortitude, and fervently prayed for his cruel persecutors. "Father, said he, forgive them, for they know not what they do."—This instance of a meek and forgiving temper, was worthy the only-begotten Son of God.

Pilate caused the following inscription in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, to be placed over the head of Jesus: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.—The chief priests and elders, requested Pilate to alter the inscription thus: *This is Jesus of Nazareth, who said he was king of the Jews*: but the governor refused to comply.

The chief priests and elders, the soldiers, and the multitude, united in insulting our dying Redeemer; saying, that since he had performed so many miracles, and pretended to a divine power and authority,

"Wine mingled with myrrh." It appears, however, to have been an intoxicating liquor, given to render suffering persons less sensible of pain.

he would do well to descend from the cross, in which case they would no longer discredit his assertions.

To add to the indignity of his punishment, our Lord was crucified between two malefactors; one of whom insultingly said to him, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us: but the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke xxiii. 39, &c.

Near the cross of our Saviour, stood Mary his mother, with Mary the daughter of Cleopas, his mother's sister, and Mary Magdalene, with John, the son of Zebedee. Addressing himself to his mother, our Lord exhorted her to be comforted, and then recommended her to the protection of John, enjoining him to behave to her with the respect and veneration that would have been due to her, had she been his own mother. John faithfully observed his master's command; and from the circumstance of his recommending his mother to the care of his beloved disciple, it may be reasonably supposed, that her husband Joseph was at this time deceased.

Jesus was placed upon the cross about the third hour after the rising of the sun, and about the sixth hour, a preternatural darkness overspread Judca and the neighboring countries. "About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But it must be observed, that our Saviour did not mean to say that he

was forsaken of God; for according to the Jewish mode of expression, persons laboring under afflictions were said to be forsaken by the Almighty; and in this sense, the words of Jesus are to be interpreted.

Some of the multitude, not distinctly hearing our Lord, imagined that he invoked the prophet Elias; and dipping a sponge in vinegar, they affixed it to a reed, for the purpose of moistening his mouth, that his life might be prolonged, till it should be known whether Elias would rescue him from his sufferings. Having tasted the * vinegar, our blessed Redeemer said, "It is finished;" meaning, that the redemption of mankind was accomplished; and then addressing himself to the Almighty, he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."—Having pronounced these words, he "bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

The death of Jesus was attended with many prodigies. Without any human force, the veil of the temple was rent asunder; the earth trembled to its foundations; rocks were split, and the bodies of saints deposited in the sepulchres hewn therein, were re-animated, and many of these holy persons were seen at Jerusalem after the resurrection of Christ. The centurion, and the three soldiers who guarded the crosses, were so affected by the earthquakes, and other wonderful signs which attended the death of our Saviour, that they glorified the name of the Almighty, and cried out, "Truly this was the Son of God." These prodigies also greatly astonished the multitude, and served to convince even those who had been most urgent for the crucifixion of

* Vinegar was a weak wine; and by its being offered to Jesus, were fulfilled the words of David, "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

Christ, that he was justly entitled to the sacred character he had assumed.

The many wonderful testimonies given by the Almighty in confirmation of the divinity of the mission of Jesus, occasioned a great number of people severely to lament, that they had neglected the opportunity afforded them by the governor, of preserving his life; and others were stung with the keenest pangs of remorse, for having been instrumental in procuring his condemnation. Among the spectators of the distressful scene of our Saviour's crucifixion, were a considerable number of women, eminently distinguished by the righteousness and sanctity of their lives; and several of these pious females, had attended our Lord in his progress through Galilee.

It was prohibited by the law of Moses, that the bodies of men who were hanged, should remain on the tree during the whole night. Our Saviour was crucified on a Friday; and as the sabbath was now approaching, the Jews requested that the ensuing day might not be polluted by the men who had been put to death remaining on the cross, and that their legs might be broken to hasten their death. Pilate complied; and the legs of the two malefactors were immediately broken: but the executioners perceiving that Jesus was already dead, judged it unnecessary to break his bones. One of the soldiers, however, thrust his spear into the side of our Lord, and from the wound issued blood and serum: and to this circumstance, John, the son of Zebedee, was an eye-witness; and he has recorded it as an incontestible proof of the reality of our Saviour's passion. Thus were fulfilled the two following prophecies: "A bone of him shall not be broken; and they shall look on him whom they have pierced."

Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrim, and a man of singular virtue, regardless of the malice of his countrymen, repaired to Pilate, and begged he might be indulged in the privilege of disposing of the body of Jesus. The governor complied with this request; and Nicodemus, who, as we have related, privately visited our Saviour by night, joined Joseph in giving interment to the sacred relics of our great Redeemer. Repairing to Mount Calvary, they removed the body from the cross, and wrapping it in a linen cloth, with an hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, which Nicodemus had procured, they conveyed it to a garden adjacent to the mount, and deposited it in a sepulchre, which Joseph had caused to be hewn out of a rock, intending it for the reception of his own remains. The tomb to which the body of the holy Jesus was consigned, was not entirely completed; but Joseph and Nicodemus secured the door, by rolling against it a very large stone.

CHAP. XXXIX.

The women who were present at the interment of the holy Jesus, purchase spices for the purpose of embalming the body. Pilate orders the sepulchre of Christ to be guarded. The women repair to the sepulchre of Jesus, where they see two angels, one of whom informs them that Jesus is risen; and this circumstance they communicate to the apostles. Peter and John repair to the sepulchre, and are convinced of the removal of the body. Jesus appears to Mary, and sends her to the apostles, who disbelieve her relation. Other women behold Jesus, and are sent by him to the apostles. The soldiers bear testimony to the resurrection of Christ, and the priests bribe them to suppress the publication of the fact. On the road towards Emmaus, Jesus discourses with two of his disciples; and on their return to Jerusalem, they declare that they have seen their Master, but are discredited; and the testimony of Peter is also disbelieved. Our Lord appears to all his apostles, except Thomas; and after convincing them of the reality of his body, promising them the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and instructing them in the principles of their duty, he breathes upon them, and disappears. Thomas disbelieves the testimony of his brethren. Jesus appears to Thomas, and the rest of his apostles. Thomas acknowledges his Master, who pronounces those to be happy who believe without ocular demonstration.

MARY Magdalene, together with the mother of Jesus, and several other women, were present at the interment of Jesus; and after the funeral ceremony,

they agreed to purchase spices for the purpose of embalming the body of their blessed Redeemer, when the sabbath should be concluded, according to the custom of the Jewish nation.

Upon the sabbath the chief-priests came to Pilate, and said, that since Jesus, whom they sacrilegiously called an impostor, had frequently declared that he should rise from the dead, they judged it highly expedient that a guard should be placed at the sepulchre, lest his disciples should remove the body, and seduce the ignorant multitude into a belief of the prophecy concerning his resurrection. The governor acquiesced in their desire; and departing with the soldiers, they sealed the stone which was placed at the entrance of the tomb, and enjoined the men to the most vigilant attention to their duty, until the end of the third day.

Before the break of day on the Sunday, and about six and thirty hours after the body of Christ had been deposited in the sepulchre, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, with Salome, and other women, came to the sepulchre, in order to embalm the body of the holy Jesus, with the spices which they had purchased on the preceding Friday; Nicodemus having, as we have observed, furnished only myrrh and aloes. While they were on the road, an earthquake happened, which we may suppose to have been the prelude to the most memorable event to which mankind have been witnesses. The women had been much troubled, from an apprehension of their incapacity to remove the stone from the entrance of the cave; but this was performed by an angel of the Almighty, after which our blessed Redeemer departed from the tomb; and the soldiers, being thrown into the utmost consternation, fled into the city. "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn towards

“ the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene,
“ and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And
“ behold, there was a great earthquake, for the angel
“ of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and
“ rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon
“ it. His countenance was like lightning, and his
“ raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the
“ keepers did shake, and became as dead men.”—
Matt. xxvii. 1, &c.

The removal of the stone from the entrance of the sepulchre, greatly surprized the women, who imagined that the body of Jesus had been taken from the tomb by his sacrilegious enemies : but their astonishment was increased to the highest degree, upon beholding an angel clothed in a white garment, who informed them that Jesus was risen from the dead, and ordered them to go into the cave, and convince themselves that the body was not there. The angel also commanded them to inform the disciples, and particularly * Peter, of the resurrection of their Master ; and that he was departed into Galilee, where he would appear to them.

Upon entering the sepulchre, the women beheld another angel ; and were struck with such awe by the appearance of this heavenly messenger, as to be on the point of retiring ; but he graciously encouraged them to proceed further into the cave, where they perceived the linen in which the body of Jesus had been wrapped, and also the napkin which had bound his head. Notwithstanding the assurances they had received from the two angels, they were not firmly persuaded of the resurrection of their Master ; and

* Peter is here particularized, not as the chief of the apostles, but for the purpose of affording him consolation, and to remove the apprehension that he had forfeited the privilege of being numbered among the disciples by the threefold denial of Christ.

therefore the celestial ambassadors gently reproved their incredulity, reminding them at the same time of our Lord's predictions concerning himself. "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." Luke xxiv. 5, 6, 7.

Departing from the sepulchre of the blessed Jesus, the women hastened to acquaint the eleven apostles with what had occurred; but they were careful not to divulge these particulars to any of the persons whom they met on the way, lest they should expose themselves to the resentment of the Sanhedrim. The women communicated what they had heard and seen to the apostles; but they gave * no credit to their relation. Then Mary Magdalene, taking Peter and John apart, assured them, that she had visited the tomb; and that if Jesus was not risen from the dead, his body was removed from the place wherein she had seen it deposited. Hereupon Peter and John, followed by Mary, hastened to the sepulchre; and John being the younger man, he first arrived there, and stooping, looked into the tomb, but perceived nothing but the linen clothes, in which the corps of our holy Redeemer had been wrapped — Presently after came Peter, who entering the sepulchre, saw "the linen clothes lie; and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself." John now went into the tomb, and having carefully ex-

* The doubts of the apostles on the subject of their Master's resurrection, destroys as probability of their being imposed upon. From their doubts, says one of the ancients, we should deduce a confirmation of our faith; and the more difficulty they shewed in believing Christ's resurrection, the stronger reason is there to induce us to a belief of that event.

amined it, concurred with Peter in a belief, that the body of their Master had been stolen: for none of the apostles had yet formed an accurate comprehension of the predictions of our Saviour concerning his resurrection. Peter and John, who were much afflicted by the supposition that the body of their Master had been taken away by the Jews, now returned to their respective habitations.

Mary Magdalene continued for some time weeping without the tomb, which she at length entered, in order once more to view the place where the sacred relics of her beloved Master had been deposited. She was no sooner within the sepulchre, than she perceived two angels clothed in white robes, one standing where the head, and the other where the feet of Jesus had lain. Upon beholding these heavenly messengers, she was greatly terrified; but in a most endearing accent, one of them asked her the occasion of her sorrow. She answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." She had no sooner pronounced these words, than turning aside, she beheld Jesus: but her terror, and the garment in which he was then clothed, prevented her immediately recognizing his person. Jesus repeated the question proposed to her by the angel, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Mary, now mistaking him for the proprietor of the garden wherein the grave was situated, said, that if he had taken the body from off his premises, and would inform her where it was, she would cause it to be deposited in a place from whence a further removal would be unnecessary.

Jesus now addressed Mary by name; and regarding him more earnestly, she recognized her Master, and prostrating herself, would have embraced his knees: but he declined this compliment, saying, that before

his ascension into heaven, she would have frequent opportunities of manifesting her regard ; and commanding her to hasten to the apostles, and inform them that the time was approaching, when he should go into the presence of † his God, who was also the God of all his true disciples. “ Go to my brethren, “ and say unto them, I ascend to my Father, and your “ Father ; and to my God, and your God.”

The happy relation between God and man, which had been long cancelled, was now renewed. The children of sinful men, were exalted to the honor of being deemed the brethren of Christ. The apostles deserted their Master, when he was under circumstances of the most extreme distress : but notwithstanding this, he was graciously pleased to pardon them, and to assure them of the continuance of his affection, by distinguishing them by the endearing appellation of brethren.

The angels kept themselves invisible in the sepulchre, during the presence of James and John ; and indeed, none of the male disciples were honored with the first visions of the angels, or with the immediate news of the resurrection of the Son of God. When our Saviour was reduced to the utmost extremity of distress, he was deserted by his male disciples, whose faith was so weak, that when they saw him expire upon the cross, they absolutely despaired of his being the Messiah. But on this melancholy occasion, the women shewed an uncommon degree of magnanimity.

† Because Christ here calls the Father his God, as well as the God of his disciples, the Socinians contend, that Christ is not God : but from the words, “ My God and your God,” it only follows, that he was not God according to that nature which ascended. Thus speaking of Christ, the Psalmist says, “ God, even thy God, hath anointed thee :” and he adds of the same person, “ Thy throne, O God, is for ever “ and ever.”

They attended the blessed Jesus in his expiring moments, and, after his decease, accompanied the body to the place of interment, where they manifested the most pious veneration towards their deceased Master, of whose resurrection they entertained a firm belief. Thus the strength of their faith procured the women the distinguished honor of being favored by the divine approbation, in the circumstance of the resurrection of the holy Jesus being first communicated to them.

It is evident from the above circumstances, that Mary Magdalene was the earliest witness of the resurrection of Christ: but the apostles and disciples, seemed to have forgotten the promises of their divine Master. The other women having likewise gone to the sepulchre a second time, and discovered that the body was gone, returned towards the apostles, to tell them the fact, but were met by our Saviour, whose person they immediately recognized; whereupon, though terrified with apprehensions inspired by the awful occasion, they fell at his feet, and did him homage.

Our Saviour, with a benevolence that ever marked his divine character, raised them from the earth, bade them dissipate their fears, and go to the apostles, whom he distinguished by the appellation of "Brethren;" and inform them that he was proceeding towards Galilee, where they would find him.

In the interim some of the soldiers, who had been stationed to watch the sepulchre, having been eye-witnesses of the angels, and the resurrection of our blessed Lord, repaired to the city, and informed the chief-priests of what had passed: on which the Sanhedrim was assembled, and it was proposed by the priests that the soldiers should be bribed; in consequence of which a sum of money was given them, in

consideration of their affirming that the body was stolen while they slept; and they were likewise told, that if the governor should be informed of what might be reported, no harm should arise to the reporters. The soldiers received the money, and did as they were directed; and, for many years, their story obtained credit. Jesus likewise made his appearance to Peter; but we have no record of the particulars that passed at this meeting.

Two of the disciples going to Emmaus * on the same day, and conversing respecting our Redeemer and his crucifixion, were met by him; whom, however, they knew not, as they had not any expectation of an event so extraordinary as the resurrection.

When our Saviour had enquired into the subject of their discourse, and, in particular, what made them so dejected, one of them, named Cleopas, answered, as it is recorded by St. Luke, “Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?”—Hereupon our Saviour demanded what it was that had fallen out so very extraordinary. Cleopas expressed his astonishment, that he could be ignorant of events so generally known, and the subject of almost universal conversation. He mentioned the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, who “was a prophet, mighty in deed and word, before God, and all the people:” adding, that “the chief priests and rulers delivered him to be condemned to death;” but that they trusted he was the true Messiah, who was to be the Redeemer of mankind; but as he had been dead three days, their hopes began to vanish, even though some women of their own society had informed them that they had seen a vision of angels in the morning, who

* Emmaus was about seven miles and a half from Jerusalem.

told them that the Messiah was still living, and that this information was confirmed, as to the sepulchre being empty, by some of the disciples having visited the place in the morning.

Jesus now reprobated the narrowness of their ideas, which had not formed a clear conception of what had been predicted by the prophets; and had so ill understood his own explanation of the prophecies, that they could not comprehend, that by the express appointment of God, our Saviour “was to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory.” He then began with Moses, and proceeding through the prophetic writings, he explained to them all the scriptural writings respecting himself. Thus they conversed till they advanced near the village of Emmaus, when Jesus appeared as if he would have gone farther; but they pressed him to remain with them, as the evening was advancing. Our Saviour complied with their request, and while he was at supper with them, “he took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to them:” on which, in the elegant phrase of scripture, “their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”

They lost not any time in returning to Jerusalem, where they found the apostles assembled, with others of Christ’s disciples, who had been informed of the resurrection. To these they mentioned the circumstances of meeting with our Saviour, his conversation, and his being known to them during the breaking of bread.

While they were in conversation, Jesus appeared personally before them, and saluted them with,

“Peace be unto you.” But they were terrified to such a degree, that they supposed it was a ghost that appeared before them. Hereupon Jesus said, “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.” After having thus expressed himself, he shewed them his hands and his feet; but yet some of them were incredulous, and expressed a kind of joy mixed with wonder, if what they hoped might prove to be true.

Still farther to convince them of the certainty of his resurrection, and of his re-assuming the human form and powers, our Saviour demanded if they had any thing to eat; on which they produced a piece of a broiled fish and a honey-comb, of which he ate in their presence, and then addressed them in terms to the following purport: You must be now convinced, that all which I spake unto you while I was in my state of humanity, respecting what is written of me by Moses, and the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me, must be fulfilled. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and commissioned them to begin the preaching of the gospel at Jerusalem, and to promulgate its doctrines through all the nations of the earth. He empowered them to preach repentance, pardon, and a consequent remission of sins, in his name, and among all nations; and instructed them, that as they had been witnesses of what had passed, they could vouch for the authenticity of his doctrine, and the divine authority of his precepts. He then gave them his sacred benediction; saying, “As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you:” Follow my example; pursue the gracious plan I have laid down, and by the divine assistance, you may preach the gospel, not in Judea only, but through the world, and invite persons of all degrees to the acceptance of the glorious

terms held out by the dispensation of the gospel; the profession of which, after public baptism, will ensure eternal happiness; as on the contrary, a rejection, after equal profession, will entail misery as lasting as severe*.

In order to convince the apostles of the divine authority with which he invested them, our great Redeemer told them, that he would invest them with the following powers:—that in his name they should cast out devils; that they should speak with new tongues; (that is, in languages which they had never studied;) that they should have the power of grasping noxious animals without injury, and the still superior power of healing the sick, merely by the imposition of their hands: in fact, that the malignancy of all distempers should yield to the sacred power with which they were entrusted.

By the gospel according to St. John, we find, that after our blessed Saviour had thus commissioned his followers to perform the will of God, “he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:” that he empowered them to remit the punishments due to sin, and to retain the disorders of the impenitent.

At this time Thomas, who was surnamed Didymus, was not present with the other apostles: and when he came, and was informed by them that they had seen the Lord, so great was his incredulity, that he could not place any confidence in their assertions; but declared that he would not believe the story, except he should see Christ himself, and have ocular

* In the xvth chapter of St. Mark, verses 15 and 16, it is thus written: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.”

demonstration of the fact. He even went farther ; saying, “ except I shall see in his hands the print of “ the nails, and put my finger into the print of the “ nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not “ believe.” John xx. 25.

At the expiration of eight days, the eleven disciples being assembled in consequence of an expected visit from the Saviour, and Thomas being likewise in their company, the door was made fast; yet Jesus appeared among them, and said, “ Peace be unto “ you ;” and addressing himself particularly to Thomas, he said, “ Reach hither thy finger, and behold “ my hand : and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it “ into my side : and be not faithless, but believ- “ ing.”

Thomas appeared now to be ashamed of his former incredulity, and in the genuine spirit of faith and conviction, acknowledged Christ as his LORD and his GOD. To this Jesus replied, “ Thomas, because “ thou hast seen me, thou hast believed : blessed are “ they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” Having said this, our Redeemer quitted the company.

Thus have we, in as short a compass as possible, endeavored to deliver a plain narrative of the life and transactions of our blessed Saviour ; and we hope and trust that his bright example will be copied, as far as it can be, consistent with the frailties of mortality ; and that those who read this history, may be inspired with an ardent wish to be humble imitators of a conduct, which the mere efforts of human nature cannot arise to ; but which, by the assistance of the divine power, it is the duty of every one to imitate, and to shew, by his practice, that he is a CHRISTIAN in something more than in *name*. We now proceed to


a recital of the lives of the apostles ; which we presume, will adduce still farther proofs to those we have already given, of the **SOLID IMPORTANCE** of the **CHRISTIAN FAITH**, and the sacred obligation we are all under to live in a way which may not disgrace the holy religion we profess !



HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIVES OF THE APOSTLES, &c.





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THE LIFE OF ST. PETER.

THIS apostle was a native of Bethsaida in Galilee, a city delightfully stationed on the borders of the lake of Genesareth, otherwise called the Sea of Galilee; near which was a wilderness, to which our Saviour used to retire occasionally for the sake of meditation.

It is not possible to ascertain the year in which this apostle was born: but there is good reason to believe, that he was born full ten years before Christ; since, previous to his becoming a disciple of his divine Master, he had entered into the married state; and there are several instances of his being treated with singular respect by the rest of the apostles, by the gravity of his appearance.

Peter was legally descended from Abraham, and, of course, circumcised according to the ritual of the Mosaic system. The name given him by his parents, was Simon, or Symeon, a very common appellation among the Jews, at, and soon before the commencement of the Christian æra. After he became a disciple of Christ, the name of *Cephas* was bestowed on him, which in the Syriac, (the vulgar language of the Jews at that period,) signified a stone, or rock. The Greek word for this name is *Petros**, which in English is rendered *Peter*.

Of the parents of this apostle, the evangelists give not any farther information, than that his father was named Jonah, who was so highly favored by Christ, that he made choice of his son Andrew, as well as St. Peter, to be one of his apostles; and of consequence, a promulgator of those doctrines, on which true christians fix their firmest hopes of reliance.

In his early years, St. Peter was employed in the business of fishing on the lake of Bethsaida; and others of the apostles were likewise of the same humble occupation. Thus we see, that our blessed Saviour chose not his servants from the high and mighty, but from the lower orders of mankind; whence a plain reference may be reasonably drawn, that God is no respecter of persons; or, that if he does make a difference, it is in favor of the low, the humble, the diffident, and unassuming.

St. Peter, from his youth, was trained to the profession of fishing, and dwelled on the borders of the lake of Bethsaida, which was distinguished for its excellent fish. Having followed his business for a considerable time, he became an inhabitant of Capernaum,

* This word signifies a *stone, or rock*.

where he kept a house, and paid his tribute at the time that Christ began to discharge the important business which had occasioned his mission to earth. History informs us, that Helen, the mother of the celebrated Constantine the Great, in honor of the memory of St. Peter, built a superb church, on the spot whereon the house of that apostle had been erected.

Peter followed his occupation of fishing at Capernaum, which was exceedingly well calculated for the pursuit of his business, and where he might support his family by the honest profits of his industry. It is but too common for persons in the higher ranks of life, to treat with indifference at least, if not with contempt, those of whom, from a false pride, they have been taught to look on as their inferiors: but it should be remembered, to the degradation of human insolence, that with God there are no distinctions, but what are marked by the gradations of virtue and vice; and that, in his eye, a pious beggar is of more estimation than a wicked prince; and that, however different and distinct may be our fate in this sublunary world, the time will infallibly come, when all distinctions shall be forgotten, except those which arise from the supereminence of a religious life, to that of careless indifference, or abandoned profligacy.

We are not informed by the scriptural records, that St. Peter was of any particular sect; but we learn, that Andrew his brother, was one of the most zealous followers of our Saviour: nor is it probable, but that he who was anxious to carry to his brother the earliest intelligence of the great Messiah, must be as anxious to introduce him to John the Baptist, the great fore-runner of the Saviour of mankind. Peter's singular curiosity at the information that Christ would visit and converse with him, furnishes at least a collateral proof, that the preaching and declarations of St.

John had made a strong impression on his mind, and prepared him for the reception of his divine Visitor.

Jesus paid not his first visit to the apostle, till he was thirty years of age, and had been baptized by John in the river Jordan; where his commission as an agent of the divine mercy, was most solemnly attested, and generally acknowledged. After the baptism of our Lord, he was, as some of our writers express it, "hurried into the wilderness;" where he remained forty days in a contest with the devil, and was finally victorious over that grand enemy of the human race.

Immediately thereon, he preceeded to Bethabara beyond Jordan, where the apostle John was then employed in baptizing the converts to the Christian faith; and replying to certain Jews, who had been deputed by their brethren to enquire into the veracity of the reports respecting the expected Messiah, the great Redeemer of mankind. The apostle, with a veracity that marked his character, informed them of all he knew respecting the Redeemer of mankind; and in a short time, acquainted his followers who he was: on which two of them followed the Author of their salvation, one of whom was Andrew the brother of Peter.

Early in the morning of the following day, St. Andrew repaired to his brother, to inform him that he had beheld the expected Messiah; and expressed himself with rapture on the delivery of the glad tidings so long expected, and so anxiously hoped for.

Peter, who was of the number of those who had patiently awaited for that redemption which had been expected, followed his brother to the place where Jesus was; and when they arrived, Christ gave evident testimony of his divinity, by calling Peter by his pro-

per name, mentioning his family and relations, and acquainting him with the title by which he would soon be distinguished.

We learn not from sacred writ, whether the brothers constantly attended on our Saviour from this period : but it seems probable, that they remained with him till they had received such instructions as might enable them to pursue their ministration of divine knowledge, and then returned to their employment as fishermen.

By this time, the Saviour of mankind had exercised his holy and benevolent function for more than twelve months ; when the frequency of his preaching, and the constant success of his miracles, so greatly advanced his fame throughout Judea, that immense numbers of people repaired to hear him preach, and to be witnesses of the wonderful acts which he performed.

The crowds of people that perpetually crowded around our Saviour, became so troublesome, that he was induced to make frequent retreats to places of solitude. On one of these occasions, on the borders of the Galilean Sea, the people learning where he was, ran to him in multitudes ; on which, to avoid the throng, he went into a boat belonging to Peter, who had been fishing all night with others of his profession, and was now on shore, drying his nets. Jesus requested Peter to put off his boat from the land, that he might conveniently instruct the people, who by this time had assembled in amazing crowds.

In this situation Christ expounded the will of God ; and having finished his discourse, he resolved to exhibit an instance of his divine power ; and therefore directed Peter to row from the shore, and throw his

net into the water. The apostle replied, that they had not met with any success during the night, and that little was then to be expected : but he obeyed the commands of his Master. He then cast in his net, and drew up such a miraculous draught of fishes, that he fell at the feet of Christ in astonishment and admiration, and confessed himself unworthy of the presence of the Son of God.

Christ kindly compassionated his distress, and told him, that the miracle was wrought for the confirmation of his faith ; and that, thenceforth, he should be a *fisher of men*. Peter and his associates now became the constant disciples and companions of Christ ; comporting themselves as became true proselytes to the gospel dispensation.

Not long after this, Christ and his disciples repaired to Capernaum, where the mother of Peter's wife being in a violent fever, Jesus took her by the hand, and, by his divine power, immediately restored her to her former health : at once, giving the most indisputable proof of his heavenly influence and supreme authority.

Having deemed it expedient to select from among the number of his followers, some persons who should be the constant witnesses of his miracles and gospel, and who might be successfully employed in promoting the Christian religion after his ascension into the regions of his heavenly Father, our great Redeemer privately retired in the evening to a solitary mountain, where he employed the whole night in fervently supplicating the Almighty, to render him successful in the great and important undertaking in which he had engaged for effecting the salvation of mankind.

Having elected the twelve apostles, he appointed

them to be the constant attendants on his person ; and he afterwards invested them with the power of working miracles, and commanded them to travel into various parts of Judea, that the precepts of his gospel might be disseminated with the greater rapidity and success. In their enumeration of the apostles, the evangelists concur in naming St. Peter first : but we are not hence to infer that he was invested with any personal prerogative over his brethren ; for nothing of this kind is intimated in the scriptures ; and besides, St. Paul expressly says, that he himself was not inferior to any one of the apostles.

Soon after the appointment of the apostles, our Lord, attended by Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, proceeded to the house of Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, in order to restore the health of his daughter, who then lay at the point of death.— They were met by one of the domestics of Jairus, who informed them that the damsel was dead, and that, therefore, the attendance of Jesus would be unnecessary : but our compassionate Redeemer bid the afflicted father not to despair, assuring him at the same time, that if he had faith, his daughter should yet be perfectly restored. Peter accompanied our Lord to the house of Jairus, whose daughter, at his command, was immediately restored to life and perfect health.

We have no farther account of this apostle in particular, till the night after our Saviour had miraculously fed the multitude in the wilderness. Jesus ordered his disciples to embark and cross the lake, saying, he would himself dismiss the multitude. A terrible storm arising, they were thrown into the utmost consternation, momentarily expecting that they should fall victims to the fury of the contending elements. While in this situation, they perceived their

Master walking on the surface of the boisterous billows ; but supposing him to be an apparition, their terror was increased to an unspeakable degree. But approaching the vessel, our Saviour dispelled their fears, by assuring them, that their terror was without cause, and that he would protect them from every evil. Peter, who was ever remarkable for a forward and bold disposition, requested that his Master would permit him to walk to him ; and upon obtaining leave, he descended from the vessel, and walked upon the waves to meet the Saviour of mankind. The storm now increasing, Peter was much terrified, and his faith declining, he sunk in the water. Upon his calling upon his Master for assistance, the blessed Jesus stretched forth his hand, and raised him to the surface of the water ; at the same time, however, gently reproving him in the following manner : “ O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ? ” No sooner had the blessed Jesus entered the vessel, than the winds and waves subsided, and the ship was at the place of destination. This stupendous miracle could not fail of exciting the astonishment of the disciples, and of convincing them of the divinity of the mission of Jesus, before whom they prostrated themselves, exclaiming, “ Of a truth, thou art the Son of God.”

On the following day, our Saviour repaired to the synagogue of Capernaum, and upon his representing his kingdom to be entirely spiritual, many of his auditors deserted him ; and upon this occasion, Peter asked Jesus, whether he and his brethren should go ? saying, that since he had the words of eternal life, where ought they to apply for the purpose of securing their salvation ; and adding, “ Thou art the way, the truth, and the light.”

The people of Judea, who had with astonishment beheld the miracles of Jesus, entertained a variety

of conjectures concerning him. Of this our Lord was by no means ignorant ; but being willing to hear what account his disciples would give of the different opinions of the multitude, he questioned them on the subject. They replied, that some believed him to be John the Baptist risen from the dead, some that he was Elias, and others that he was Jeremiah, or one of the ancient prophets. In consequence of this full and comprehensive declaration of Peter, our Saviour said, “ Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jonah ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” By these words our Lord implied, the faith which Peter acknowledged, was not founded upon the testimony of man, but upon that knowledge which the Almighty had appointed him to reveal to mankind. I therefore say, continued our Saviour, “ that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” As thy name signifies a rock, so shall thy faith be, as a rock, firm and immoveable ; my church shall be so stedfastly established upon the faith thou hast professed, that it shall not yield to the assaults either of men or devils.

The disciples had no conception that Christ was to suffer death for the sins of mankind, but believed that the Messiah would establish an earthly sovereignty, subdue all the nations of the earth to his dominion by the terrors of war, and reign to eternity ; and therefore, when our Lord predicted the indignities which he was to experience during the course of his ministry, and the cruel and disgraceful death he was to suffer by the sentence of the Sanhedrim, Peter interrupted him, saying, “ Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee.” But our compassionate Redeemer, valuing the redemption of mankind greatly above his own personal safety, severely rebuked his apostle for this expression. “ Get thou behind me,

“Satan, thou art an offence to me.” Thy pernicious counsel, which opposes the great design for which I quitted the blessed regions of my heavenly Father, is offensive to me: because it proves, that thou “savor-
“est not the things of God, but those that be of
“men.”

When our great Redeemer was about to receive a specimen of his future glorification, he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, to the summit of a lofty mountain, which was the scene of our blessed Saviour’s transfiguration. From his face was diffused the radiancy of heaven, and beams of light issued from his garments. This event was a sensible representation of that state, when the “just shall
“walk in white robes,” and “shine as the sun in
“the kingdom of their Father.” During this wonderful scene, the prophets Moses and Elias appeared in all the splendor of a state of glorification, and conversed with Jesus on the subject of the sufferings and death he was shortly to undergo, and his ascension into the regions of ineffable and eternal bliss.

In the mean time, Peter and his two brethren fell asleep: but awaking, they were astonished upon beholding their Master surrounded by the glory of heaven, and engaged in conversation with his celestial visitants. They remained silent till the two prophets appeared to be preparing for departure, when Peter, in an extacy, declared, that his brethren and himself were sensible of the most exalted delight, in being witnesses to this glorious spectacle: at the same time requesting permission to erect three tabernacles, one for their Master, one for Moses, and another for Elias: but while he was speaking, a bright cloud overspread the two heavenly ambassadors, and a voice from heaven was heard to proclaim, “This is my be-
“loved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye

“him.” Hereupon the apostles were seized with the utmost consternation, and prostrated themselves upon the earth: but our Saviour bid them dismiss their fears, and look up with confidence: they obeyed, but saw only their Master, the celestial ambassadors having ascended into the regions of bliss during their state of prostration.

After the glorification of Jesus, he travelled into Galilee, and upon his return to Capernaum, the tax-gatherers applied to Peter, desiring to be informed, whether his Master was willing to pay the usual tribute. This demand being communicated to Jesus, he was unwilling to violate an established custom, and therefore wrought a miracle in order to enable Peter to pay the tribute for himself and his Master.

Our Saviour was now to repair to Jerusalem; and therefore he commanded Peter and John to fetch him an ass, that he might enter the city in the manner he had predicted.

Having visited Jerusalem, Jesus repaired to Bethany, from whence he dispatched Peter and John to make preparations for celebrating the passover.—These orders being obeyed, our Lord, accompanied by his apostles, repaired to the house where preparations had been made for their reception, and seated themselves at table. Jesus, who was accustomed to teach by example as well as precept, presently arose from his seat, and washed the feet of some of his disciples, thereby instructing them in the duties of humility and charity. When our Saviour came to perform this ceremony to Peter, he objected to his Master's condescending to so servile an office, saying, “Thou shalt never wash my feet.” Hereupon our blessed Saviour signified, that the washing was purely mystical, and represented the re-

mission of sins, and the purifying virtue of the Spirit of the most high God, which was to be diffused among all sincere Christians. This explanation removed the scruples of Peter, who exclaimed, "Lord, wash not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Wash me in every part, rather than I should lose any portion of thy blessing.

Having given his disciples this example of humility, the blessed Jesus mentioned his approaching sufferings, and that he should be betrayed into the power of his enemies by one of his apostles. The eleven apostles were greatly affected by this declaration; and Peter made signs to John, who was then reclining on the bosom of his Saviour, to enquire of his Master, which of the twelve could be capable of so abominable an iniquity as that he had mentioned. And in compliance with this request, our Lord signified that Judas Iscariot was the man to whom he alluded.

Upon the institution of the sacramental supper, our Saviour informed his disciples, that he was preparing to leave them, and that they could not obtain admittance where he was going. Not comprehending our Saviour's meaning, Peter asked, to what place he was going. Jesus answered, that he was going to a place where Peter would not be able to gain immediate admittance, though the time would arrive when he would follow; thus alluding to the martyrdom, he was to suffer for his Master's religion. Hereupon Peter said, that he was willing to follow him, even at the hazard of his life. This confidence was by no means agreeable to the meek and humble Jesus, who reproved his disciple, saying, that notwithstanding what he had promised, his resolutions were so weakly founded, that before the cock should be twice

heard to crow, he would three times deny his Master.

The paschal supper being concluded, they sung an hymn, and then departed to the Mount of Olives ; where Jesus again reminded them of the sufferings he was to endure, whereby they would be all offended. Upon this Peter said, that “ though all men should be “ offended because of him, yet he would never be of- “ fended.” Thus we see, that a forward and intemperate zeal, will transport even good men into vanity and presumption. Peter questions the fidelity of others, but reposes the firmest confidence in his own fortitude, although his Master had but a very short time before rebuked him for the error which he, on this occasion, repeated. The confidence of Peter inspired his brethren with courage ; and therefore they declared, that under all circumstances, and in all situations, they would faithfully maintain their allegiance to their Master.

They now repaired to the garden of Gethsemane, and leaving his eight apostles near the entrance, our Saviour, accompanied by Peter, and James and John, retired to a solitary spot, which was to be the scene of our great Redeemer’s agony. Our Lord told his select disciples, that “ his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ;” and indeed, he experienced a most violent conflict between the spirit and the flesh ; his human nature, like that of other men, being extremely averse to yield to the stroke of death. During the agony of our Lord, his disciples slept ; and awakening them, he addressed himself to Peter, saying, “ What, could ye not watch with me one “ hour ? The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” What endearing kindness, what unbounded generosity, what incomparable sweetness, did our Saviour display on this occasion ! He pronounced the most

mild and charitable censure upon the inattention of his disciples. Though repeatedly awakened from their sleep, and apprized of the melancholy scene that was shortly to ensue, still they disregarded the admonitions of their Master, who recommended them to pray, lest they should yield to temptation : but so far from severely upbraiding them on account of their disobedience, he considered their having indulged the desire of repose, as the consequence of the infirmities of their nature ; thereby instructing them in the useful lesson, of putting the most favorable construction on the actions of their fellow-creatures.

While our Saviour was discoursing to his apostles, the traitor Judas, followed by a band of soldiers, came into the garden ; and Judas having saluted Jesus, the soldiers rushed upon, and seized him. Hereupon Peter drew his sword, and struck off the right ear of the high-priest's servant. Our Lord rebuked the rashness of Peter, and entreated that the soldiers would forbear till he should have healed the wound.

The period was now arrived, when the boasted fidelity of the apostles was to be put to a severe trial. They beheld their Master in the power of a band of armed men, and therefore their duty required them to exert their utmost efforts for alleviating his sufferings ;—but, alas ! instead of administering comfort, and of affording assistance to their Master, they sought to secure their safety by flight.

Having bound our Saviour with cords, the soldiers conducted him to the house of Annas, and from thence to the palace of Caiaphas, the high-priest, where the members of the Sanhedrim had assembled, with a preconcerted determination to pronounce upon him

the sentence of condemnation, although no evidence of guilt should be adduced against him.

In the interim, Peter, who had, in company with the other disciples, deserted the blessed Jesus in his distress, recovered his spirits, and being encouraged by St. John, he repaired in search of his Master, whom he followed at a distance to the palace of Caiaphas; where, however he was refused admittance. But through the interest of John, he was permitted to enter the hall, where the officers and domestic servants of the high-priest were collected about a fire. Here one of the female servants charged Peter with being one of the followers of Jesus; but this he positively denied, and presently after retired into the porch, where he heard the cock crow.

After this, he was accosted by another female domestic, who also accused him of being a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth; but, as before, he resolutely denied the charge, and even ratified his declaration with an oath.

About an hour after this, the kinsman of the servant whose ear Peter had smote off, insisted that he was the disciple of Christ, in company with whom he declared he had himself seen him in the garden of Gethsemane; adding also, that his pronunciation evidently proved him to be a Galilean. But Peter still denied the fact, and appealing to the Almighty, with solemn imprecations, declared, "that he knew not the man." This denial was no sooner uttered, than he again heard the cock crow. Hereupon Jesus turned towards Peter, and regarded him with such peculiar earnestness, as recalled to his recollection, that his Master had frequently predicted that he would basely deny him. Struck with a consciousness of his guilt, Peter retired from the palace of the high-

priest, and “ wept bitterly :” he sincerely lamented his infidelity, and his repeated aggravations of his sin.

From a variety of circumstances it appears, that after the crucifixion of our blessed Redeemer, Peter resided at Jerusalem, or at least in the neighborhood of that city ; for when Mary Magdalene returned from the sepulchre to inform the disciples that the stone was removed from the door, and that the body of Jesus was not to be found, Peter and John hastened towards the garden.

But this apostle did not remain long in suspence with respect to his Master, who appeared to him on the same day. Thus as Peter, was the first of the disciples who acknowledged the divinity of Christ, so was it reasonable that he should first behold him after his resurrection. Thus our compassionate Redeemer convinced Peter that the crime he had committed was fully pardoned.

In a short time after, agreeably to the command of their Master, the apostles retired into Galilee ; and we find that Peter, the two sons of Zebedee, and three other of the disciples, returned to their former occupation of fishing in the lake of Genesareth. Early one morning, when these people were following their usual employment, they perceived a grave person on the shore, who asked them, if they had any provisions ; and upon their answering in the negative, he bid them cast their net on the right side of the ship, and their labor would be amply rewarded. They complied with his directions, and immediately enclosed so prodigious a quantity of fish, that it was not without the utmost difficulty that they were able to bring them to shore. This remarkable success, occasioned the apostles to look upon each other with as-

tonishment ; and at length, John observed to Peter, that the person to whose advice they were indebted for this wonderful draught, could be no other than their great Lord and Master. Peter had no sooner heard this, than he leaped into the sea, and swam to shore, so impatient was he to acknowledge his Master. Thomas, Nathaniel, James, and John, brought the vessel deeply laden with fish to land, and having disembarked, they perceived a fire already burning, and fish broiling thereon. Although there was fish on the fire, our Lord commanded them to bring some of those they had taken in the net, and lay them on the fire for their repast. Jesus presented to them both fish and bread, and also partook of the meal.

The repast being concluded, our Saviour, addressing himself to Peter, asked, whether his love of him exceeded that of the other disciples. Peter, who had been taught humility by fatal experience, replied, " Lord, thou knowest, notwithstanding my former denial of thee, which proceeded not from my judgment, but my fears, that thou art the object of my love and veneration." Our Lord repeated his question twice ; it being proper that he who had thrice denied his Master, should make compensation for his failings by a threefold acknowledgment of his Saviour. To each of the confessions of Peter, our Lord added " Feed my sheep ;" by which words, he enjoined his apostle to exert his utmost endeavors for reclaiming mankind from their iniquities, and for propagating his gospel.

The blessed Jesus was now pleased to intimate to Peter the fate that he was to experience, saying, that in his youth he girt himself, lived at his pleasure, and went wherever his inclination dictated ; but when old age should arrive, others would gird and bind him, and lead him where he was averse to go ; thus signi-

fyng, as the evangelist informs us, "by what death he should glorify God." Peter repined not upon learning that he was to encounter great misfortunes, and he was willing that his confession of faith should be as public as his denial of his Master; hoping, that he might by that means sufficiently atone for his former sins. Peter now asked our Saviour, what would be the fate of his beloved disciple John. And in reply to this question, Jesus said, "It doth not concern thee to learn the events which I shall dispose to to him; he shall not die, till he shall have been witness to the destruction of the Jewish nation."

A few days after this, our blessed Redeemer summoned his disciples to Mount Olivet; and there enjoined them to remain at Jerusalem, till, in compliance with his promise, he should occasion the Holy Spirit to descend upon them, that they might be fully qualified for the discharge of the ministerial function, into which he had already inaugurated them. Having spoken to this effect, our blessed Saviour bestowed upon them his solemn benediction, "and ascended up to heaven, where he sitteth on the right hand of God."

Notwithstanding they were deprived of the presence of their Master, the apostles were indefatigable in the discharge of the important commission with which he had invested them. Upon their return to Jerusalem, the first object that claimed their attention, was to supply that vacancy in their original number, which had happened in consequence of the apostacy of Judas Iscariot.

In a full congregation of the disciples of Jesus, who assembled in an upper apartment of a house belonging to one of the members of the church of Christ, Peter, as president of the meeting, observed, that Je-

sus had selected twelve persons for the purpose of propagating his gospel ; but as the number had decreased through the treachery of Judas, it appeared expedient that the office which had been vacated in consequence of his apostacy should be supplied.—The whole assembly assented to this proposition ; and “ they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, “ who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And “ they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest “ the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two “ thou hast chosen, that he may take part in this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. “ And they gave forth their lots ; and the lot fell “ upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” Acts i. 23, &c.

Ten days after the ascension of the blessed Jesus, and at the time of celebrating the feast of Pentecost, the apostles and many other pious Christians, who from the time of the ascension had constantly employed themselves in solemn devotional exercises, were assembled at their usual place of worship, when they were surprised by a loud wind, with which came “ * cloven tongues, as it were of fire, and sat upon “ each of them.” Perhaps a fiery vapor or exhalation, formed by the divine power into the figure of a man’s tongue, divided at the tip, was placed upon the head of each of the apostles, representing the gifts which the Almighty at that time bestowed upon them by the effusion of the Holy Spirit. They were now inspired by the Holy Ghost, and immediately enabled to speak divers languages to which they had been hi-

* Cloven, to denote the variety of languages which the apostles would be enabled to understand and speak ; and fiery, to represent their zeal in proclaiming the gospel ; as also that divine light which they were to impart to others, and that purity and holiness wherewith they were to be endued.

therto entire strangers, and were, of consequence, qualified to preach the wonderful works of God to the inhabitants of the various quarters of the globe.

The rumor of this miracle was soon dispersed throughout Jerusalem, where † immense numbers of people had assembled on occasion of the feast; and among these, were men of every nation under heaven; “ Parthians, Medes, Elamites, the dwellers in “ Mesopotamia and Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus and “ Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, the parts of “ Lybia and Cyrene.”

The wonderful faculty thus bestowed upon the apostles, of conversing in various languages, had different effects upon the minds of the people; some ascribing their gift of speech to a supernatural power, and others believing, in consequence of the slanderous insinuations of the Scribes and Pharisees, that what the apostles had uttered, was the result of having drank intemperately of new wine; and that their discourses were fallacious, confused, and incoherent.

To rescue his brethren and himself from this invidious accusation, Peter arose, and said, that the slanderous charge of intoxication was equally groundless and unreasonable; for it then being only about nine o'clock in the forenoon, it could scarcely be supposed that they had tasted wine, or any other inflammatory liquor; especially since, according to the established usage in the celebration of the feast of the Pentecost, the people received no kind of refreshment at so early an hour. He said, that these extraordina-

† St. Luke enumerates fifteen sorts of strangers, who, upon the report of this miraculous power, resorted to the assembly of the Christians, and were astonished to hear their several languages spoken with the utmost fluency and precision, by uneducated natives of Galilee.

ry and miraculous effects were produced by an effusion of the Holy Spirit, according to a prediction of the prophet Joel. This miracle, said the apostle, is an incontestible proof, that Jesus is the true begotten Son of God; for though by their malicious and bloody contrivances they had put him to death, yet he was ascended into heaven, and seated at the right hand of his Almighty Father, agreeably to what had been foretold of him by David; who had said, that he should sit at the right hand of God, and his enemies be made his footstools. Hence then, said he, it behoves the whole house of Israel to believe, that Jesus of Nazareth, whom you have barbarously crucified, is the true Messiah, appointed by the Almighty to effect the redemption of mankind, and establish the Christian church.

This was the first public discourse of Peter; and it so deeply impressed the minds of his auditors, that fearing they had incurred the displeasure of the Almighty, they enquired what means they ought to pursue for obtaining pardon. "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Upon this, Peter informed them, that the only means of expiating their guilt, and of obtaining the gift of the Holy Spirit, would be by sincere repentance, and baptism in the name of the holy Jesus. Upon these conditions, he said, the promises of the new covenant, ratified by the death of the Son of God, would be fulfilled to them, to their posterity, and to all those who should become converts to the gospel of Christ.

This endearing and persuasive address of St. Peter, was productive of the most salutary effects; for on this occasion, three thousand converts were made to the Christian religion; and these people received the sacrament, and ever after continued in the doctrine and fellowship of the apostles. Thus was ac-

complished that prophecy of our Saviour, which expressed that St. Peter should become "a fisher of men."

A short time after the above wonderful conversion, and during the continuance of the feast of Pentecost, Peter and John went to the temple about three o'clock in the afternoon, the time of evening prayers, and beheld a man, who had been a cripple from his birth, lying at the gate, and begging alms. The sight of this miserable object excited their compassion; and Peter said, that though it was not in his power to afford him pecuniary relief, yet he was able to confer a gift of infinitely higher importance; for he possessed the power of bestowing health and life, and was disposed to afford him relief. Then taking the man, who was about forty years of age, by the hand, he commanded him in the name of "Jesus of Nazareth to rise up and walk." The diseased members immediately performed their proper functions, and the man accompanied the apostles into the temple, at the same time glorifying the name of God.

The people were filled with admiration, upon beholding the free exercise of the beggar's limbs; and being informed of the manner in which this wonderful cure had been wrought, they repaired into Solomon's porch, to satisfy their curiosity, by beholding a man possessed of the extraordinary power which Peter had manifested.

Peter availed himself of this opportunity to magnify the name of our holy Redeemer; and addressing himself to the multitude, he said, they were not to suppose that this surprising cure had been performed merely by the force of their own power; for it had been wrought in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and by the power of that just and holy person whom they

had barbarously crucified. Though they had put him to death, he was risen from the grave, and ascended to heaven, there to remain till the great and tremendous day of general restitution. But notwithstanding the enormity of their sins, the apostle bid them not to despair of obtaining forgiveness; which would most assuredly be extended to them, provided they sincerely repented of all their sins, but particularly of the shocking cruelty they had perpetrated upon the only Son of God. He said, that it behoved them to reflect that they were the peculiar persons to whom the gracious promises of salvation were primarily given; and that since they were the men to whom the Almighty had sent his only Son to “turn them away from their iniquities,” they were bound by the obligations of duty and gratitude, to prove themselves not unworthy the tenderness and compassion that had been extended to them; which they could do no otherwise, than by atoning for their sins by sincere repentance. If they sincerely repented of their sins, and heartily embraced the doctrine of Christ, the apostle assured them, that they would be entitled to the full enjoyment of the blessings of eternity: but that, on the contrary, if they persevered in their obstinate incredulity, they would inevitably become the objects of the divine vengeance. This discourse had so happy an effect upon the minds of the multitude, that * in the course of the day whereon it was pronounced, five thousand converts were reclaimed to the gospel of Christ.

This amazing success of the Christian doctrine, could not fail of inflaming the jealousy of the rulers of Israel: and the chief-priests and Sadducees repaired to the Roman governor, and represented that the

* Thus is the above passage commonly understood: but there is room for a different interpretation, viz. that the whole number of believers in the gospel of Christ, amounted to about five thousand persons.

vast number of people who were assembled, and the preaching of the apostles, threatened to promote a rebellion. In consequence of this information, the centurion who had the command of the garrison stationed in Fort Antonia, which was built to overlook the temple on the north side, led forth a band of soldiers, who seized the apostles, and conducted them to prison. On the following day, they were brought for examination before the Jewish Sanhedrim: but the pretence of seditious practices was waved, because evidently groundless; and the several charges were at length resolved into the single question, "By what power and authority had the lame man been cured?" To this question, Peter resolutely replied, "Be it known unto you, and all the descendants of Jacob, that the miracle wrought in the cure of the cripple, was performed in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom you barbarously crucified, and whom the Almighty has rescued from the power of death. This Jesus is alluded to by the prophet, who mentions him under the similitude of a stone; which stone, you, like unskilful builders, have rejected: but God has made him the head of the corner; and through his merits and mediation alone, the children of sinful men are to expect salvation."

The undaunted spirit which the apostles displayed on this occasion, raised the wonder of the whole court, who, however strongly inclined, did not presume to dispute the existence of a miracle, which had been wrought in the presence of so great a multitude of people. But the court commanded the apostles to withdraw, while they deliberated on the measures to be pursued against them. Not being in possession of evidence which could even by the most forced and uncandid construction, fix the imputation of guilt upon them, the Sanhedrim determined to attempt justifying themselves in the opinion of the people, by treat-

ing the apostles with undeserved severity, thereby aggravating their former cruelty towards the blessed Jesus. They therefore, agreed to prohibit them from continuing to preach in the name of Jesus.

The apostles were again ordered into the court, and acquainted with the resolution of the council. Hereupon they said, that having received a commission from heaven, they were bound by the strongest of all obligations to proclaim the gospel of Christ; and therefore they would appeal to themselves, whether it was not their duty to "obey God, rather than man." This was a fair appeal to the consciences of their very judges: but instead of being satisfied, the rulers were inclined to proceed to acts of the most extreme severity; and this disposition they would certainly have indulged, had not their malice been restrained by the high veneration which the people entertained for the apostles, whom the council dismissed, after having repeated their menaces with additional vehemence.

Being thus restored to liberty, Peter and John returned to their brethren, and informed them of the treatment they had experienced from the Jewish magistrates. Upon this they joined in prayer to the Almighty, that he would be graciously pleased to grant them sufficient courage and fortitude, firmly to establish the religion of their crucified Saviour. Having uttered these pious supplications, God was pleased to signify to them that their prayers were heard. The house wherein they were assembled, was shaken by a mighty wind, as it had been during the feast of Pentecost; and they immediately found themselves replenished with fresh measures of the Holy Ghost, whereby they were inspired with power and resolution to proceed in preaching the gospel of Christ, and the doctrine of his resurrection, in despite of all the menaces of the Jewish rulers.

Among the various good effects resulting from the evangelical preaching, was a spirit of unbounded love and charity, with which the true believers were inspired. Many of the converts to the Christian doctrine were in circumstances of indigence: but such was the liberality of the rich, that they cheerfully relieved their necessities, selling their estates, and delivering the produce to the apostles, that they might distribute it in proportion to the circumstances of such of their brethren as had occasion for pecuniary assistance. Barnabas particularly distinguished himself by his benevolent disposition; for he disposed of a valuable estate in Cyprus, and delivered the produce to the apostles, to be disposed of in such charitable uses as their discretion should dictate.

But even in these primitive times of christianity, hypocrisy was not unknown among the professors of religion. Of this a singular instance was afforded in the case of Ananias, and his wife Sapphira. Ambitious of emulating the example of many pious people, who had consecrated their possessions to the honor of God, and the necessities of the church, having sold their estate, for the purpose of an ostentatious display of benevolence, they delivered only a part of the produce to the apostles.

When Ananias came to pay the money into the hands of Peter, that apostle severely rebuked him on the score of his hypocrisy, asking him, what atonement it was possible for him to make, for having been guilty of so enormous a crime, as attempting to commit an imposition upon the Holy Ghost. So greatly was Ananias affected by the dreadful apprehension of becoming an object of the divine vengeance, that he fell upon the earth, and instantly expired. “ But a
“ certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife,
“ sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his

“ wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain
“ part, and lay it at the apostles feet. But Peter said,
“ Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie
“ to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the
“ price of the land? While it remained, was it not
“ thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine
“ own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing
“ in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but
“ unto God. And Ananias, hearing these words,
“ fell down, and gave up the ghost. And great fear
“ came on all them that heard these things. And the
“ young men arose, wound him up, and carried him
“ out, and buried him.” Acts v. 1, &c.

About three hours after the death of Ananias, his wife Sapphira came to St. Peter, and as she had conspired with her husband in the abominable crime for which he had lost his life, the apostle upbraided her with her guilt; saying, that since she had shared in his iniquity, it was but just that she should be subjected to a similar punishment. She was smitten by the hand of Omnipotence, and fell dead upon the ground. The body of Sapphira was taken away by the persons who had removed that of her husband, and they were buried in one grave. “ And it was
“ about the space of three hours after, when his wife,
“ not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter
“ answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the
“ land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much.
“ Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have
“ agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?
“ Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy
“ husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.
“ Then fell she down straitway at his feet, and yield-
“ ed up the ghost. And the young men came in,
“ and found her dead, and carrying her forth, buri-
“ ed her by her husband. And great fear came upon
“ all the church, and upon as many as heard these
“ things.” Acts v. 7, &c.

The guilt of these people was unquestionably very great: but yet the punishment inflicted upon them was not so much on account of their sin, as that a signal example might be afforded, for deterring others from falsifying their religious resolutions and purposes, and from permitting their covetousness and avarice from seducing them into the practice of dissimulation and hypocrisy to the Almighty, from whose knowledge no motion of the heart can be concealed.

This severe infliction, which was certainly intended to inspire the people with a proper idea of the authority of the apostles, had the intended effect; for from henceforward the multitude feared their power, and venerated their persons. It was, however, but on very extraordinary occasions that the apostles proceeded to acts of great severity; but, on the contrary, they were accustomed to exert their power in works of mercy and beneficence towards the sons and daughters of affliction. They cast out devils, and perfectly cured every kind of disease. The Almighty was pleased to bestow such sanative virtue upon these holy men, that a single touch, or a word, from either of them, was sufficient to remove any bodily disease or infirmity, however desperate, or of however long continuance. The sick were laid upon beds and couches in the streets; and those afflicted persons, over whom even the very shadow of St. Peter passed, were instantly cured of their infirmities. These miracles caused the apostles to be held in great veneration, and procured a vast number of converts to the Christian religion.

The great influence which the apostles obtained over the minds of the multitude, and the extraordinary and continually increasing success of the gospel, proved highly offensive to the members of the Sanhe-

drim ; who were extremely exasperated, upon finding that their prohibition was entirely disregarded, and that the cause of christianity daily became more firmly established. They caused these holy men to be apprehended, and even proceeded so far as to commit them to the common prison. But the Almighty, to prove that no human power was capable of interrupting the divine purposes and decrees, sent his angel to them in the night to restore them to freedom, and command them to proceed in the duties of their holy ministration. In obedience to the angel's command, they repaired to the temple early on the following morning, and there publicly instructed the people in the means of providing for their eternal salvation.

Ignorant of the miraculous deliverance of their prisoners, the council assembled in the morning, and dispatched some of their officers to bring the apostles before them for examination. Upon the return of these officers, they made a report to the council, purporting that, although the prisoners were not to be found, there appeared no means by which it was possible they could have effected their escape ; for when they visited the prison the doors were fast, and the keepers were on guard.

This extraordinary circumstance greatly alarmed the council, and suggested to them, that they had engaged in a business which might probably terminate to their disadvantage. Being informed, however, that the apostles were preaching in the temple, they dispatched thither the captain of the guard with a number of their own officers, with orders to bring the apostles before them for examination ; but they cautioned their messengers against using compulsive measures, lest the populace should thereby be provoked to acts of fury and outrage.

The holy apostles being conducted before the Sanhedrim, Caiaphas censured them for having presumed to preach the gospel, after the prohibition that had been laid upon them. Your duty to this assembly, which is composed of the rulers of the people, said the high-priest, enjoins you to an implicit acquiescence in our decrees: but instead of yielding to our commands, you have inflamed the minds of the people, by representing us as the murderers of the Messiah; and hence it appears, that your design is to provoke the multitude to avenge themselves upon us for having put him to death. In reply, Peter, in the name of his brethren and himself, said, that although obedience was due to the governors of the people, obligations of an infinitely higher nature were due to the Almighty, an exact conformity to whose will was to supercede every other consideration; and therefore, in despite of all opposition, they would persevere in proclaiming those great truths, which had been communicated to them by the immediate inspiration of heaven.

So exasperated were the members of the Sanhedrim by the reply of Peter, that they formed a resolution of putting all the apostles to death; and this they would in all probability have carried into execution, but for the interference of Gamaliel, a grave and learned Pharisee, and a man of high reputation among the people.

The apostles being commanded to withdraw, this wise and prudent counsellor admonished his brethren to proceed with caution in the affair which was then under their consideration; reminding them, that divers factions had already been excited under the pretext of introducing new sects of religion, but these designs had all proved abortive without any opposition from that court. And he further declared, that

it would, in his opinion, be prudent to decline all opposition to the preaching of the apostles ; for since, if their doctrine was merely of human invention, it would necessarily fall into disrepute, and at length be lost in oblivion, without any measures pursued by the council for its suppression ; but if their doctrine was what they so confidently asserted, and what they appeared so powerfully to justify by the performance of miracles, it would not only be ineffectual, but even impious to attempt the suppression of the preaching of the disciples of the deceased Jesus, which, supposing them to be invested with a divine commission, would be sacrilegiously to oppose the works of the Almighty.

These reasonable expostulations were so far productive of their proper effect, that the council reversed their determination of putting the apostles to death, but sentenced them to be scourged, and admonished them to preach no more in the name of Jesus. Having submitted to the discipline of scourging, the apostles departed from the Sanhedrim, rejoicing that they were esteemed worthy to suffer reproach and disgrace in the cause of righteousness.

Although the speech of Gamaliel restrained the members of the Sanhedrim from directing the full force of their fury against the apostles, they still continued implacable enemies to the gospel of Christ.— Stephen, the proto martyr, a man of singular wisdom and piety, engaged in a controversy with the enemies of the gospel, whom he publicly confuted, by arguments founded on the divine truths of scripture.— The victory obtained by Stephen, so exasperated his enemies, that under pretext of his having been guilty of blasphemy, they accused him before the Sanhedrim ; and the charge falsely exhibited against him, was supported by two corrupt witnesses. No formal

sentence was pronounced against Stephen, but he was cruelly stoned to death by his malicious enemies.

After the death of Stephen, the Jews persecuted the disciples of our blessed Saviour with such unrelenting severity, that they were under the necessity of providing for their security, by retiring from Jerusalem into various parts of Judea and Samaria, but a very inconsiderable number remaining with the apostles in the city.

In this dispersion, Philip the deacon retired to the city of Sabaste in Samaria, where he preached the gospel, and confirmed his doctrine by casting out unclean spirits, and performing a great number of miraculous cures. In this city resided a man named Simon, who by magical illusions had greatly raised the admiration of the multitude, and particularly that of the lower classes of the people, who believed him to be "the great power of God;" an appellation which he had blasphemously arrogated to himself, pretending to be the father and sovereign of the whole world.

The doctrine of Philip was attended with such remarkable success, that the reputation of Simon rapidly declined: and therefore he pretended to become a convert to Christianity, and submitted to the ceremony of baptism; hoping that by this stratagem, he should be able to discover the means by which Philip wrought those miracles which so greatly raised the admiration of the multitude.

The conversion of so great a concourse of people was no sooner known to the apostles, who still remained in Jerusalem, than they determined to send Philip assistance. St. Peter and St. John accordingly hastened to Sabaste, in order to confer the Holy

Spirit upon those who had embraced Christianity ; for that privilege was peculiar to the apostles, and Philip was only a deacon.

Peter and John having prayed for, and laid their hands upon the new converts, they received the Holy Spirit : and Simon observing the wonderful effects produced by the imposition of the hands of the apostles, became extremely desirous of attaining to the power of exercising the same privilege. He therefore offered the apostles a sum of money, on condition that they would invest him with the power of giving the Holy Ghost to those on whom he should lay his hands. Knowing and abominating the insincerity and wickedness of this man, Peter rejected his proposal with indignation ; and admonished him to repentance, as the only means of securing himself from everlasting torments. What St. Peter had said, greatly alarmed Simon, who being apprehensive that he, like Ananias and Sapphira, should be made a terrible example of the guilt of hypocrisy, solicited the apostles to pray in his behalf, that the judgments due to his crimes might be averted ; but the insincerity of the repentance of this man will appear hereafter.

Having remained some time in Samaria, St. Peter and St. John returned to Jerusalem, proclaiming the divine truths of the gospel in all the towns and villages through which they passed.

The violence of the persecution against the Christian church now subsided ; and during this period of tranquillity, peace, and security, St. Peter undertook a general visitation of those churches which had been established by the disciples whom the persecution had dispersed. Upon the arrival of this apostle at Lydda, a village in the tribe of Ephraim, he performed a mi-

raculous cure upon Æneas, who had been so dreadfully afflicted with the palsy for eight years, as to be confined to his bed during that whole period. The fame of this miracle was rapidly spread throughout the adjacent country, and it served to impress great numbers of people with a belief in the gospel of the Son of God.

During the residence of St. Peter at Lydda, a pious woman, named Tabitha, who in the Greek language was called Dorcas, died at Joppa, a sea-port town about six miles from Lydda. This woman had been long highly celebrated for her universal benevolence, and particularly for her extensive charity to the poor, great numbers of whom she constantly clothed and supported. The death of this woman was universally lamented; and the people of Joppa having heard that Peter had restored Æneas to health, merely by commanding him in the name of Jesus to rise and walk, and likewise that he had performed divers other stupendous miracles, they dispatched two messengers to solicit his attendance.

Upon his arrival, Peter was introduced to the apartment, where the deceased lay, dressed in funeral attire, and surrounded by those weeping widows and other persons, who had been the objects of her benevolence. The mourners dared not presume to request that Peter would restore the deceased to life; but their lamentations sufficiently indicated their desire. Having caused the mourners to leave the apartment, Peter turned towards the body of the deceased, and having addressed himself in prayer to the Almighty, he commanded the dead woman to arise; immediately after which he took her by the hand, and presented her in perfect health to her friends. This miracle confirmed the faith of a great number of persons newly converted to the gospel of Christ, and occasi-

oned many others to embrace Christianity. Peter remained a considerable time in the town of Joppa, residing in the house of a man named Simon, who was by profession a tanner.

During the abode of Peter in the town of Joppa, our Saviour was pleased to fulfil his promise of giving him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, by making him the instrument of admitting the Gentiles into his church. While he was one day offering up his prayers to heaven, he found himself hungry, and called for meat to satisfy his appetite. While the food was preparing, he fell into a trance, during which a large sheet was let down from heaven, containing a variety of creatures, both clean and unclean; and at the same time a voice from heaven was heard to proclaim, "Arise, Peter, kill and eat." The apostle, yet tenacious of the Mosaical institutions, said, that he could not, consistently with the dictates of his conscience, comply; adding, that he had never eaten any common or unclean food. Upon this, the voice reproved him for his refusal, saying, that what God had cleansed, was not to be esteemed common or unclean. This was done thrice, after which the vision disappeared.

Upon awakening, Peter was greatly perplexed, being unable to divine the meaning of this extraordinary vision. While the apostle was ruminating upon the symbolical representation, which was intended to instruct him, that the Almighty intended to employ him in a new embassy, he was disturbed by a knocking at the gate. Three messengers being introduced to him, they informed him, that a Roman captain, named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian band, who was not a circumcised Jew, but a proselyte of the gate, requested his presence at Cæsarea.

On the following day, Peter set out for Cæsarea ; on his arrival there, Cornelius fell at his feet, according to the frequent practice of salutation in eastern countries ; but Peter raised him from the ground, saying, the honor he intended him was due only to God.

Cornelius now informed Peter, that four days before, an angel from heaven had informed him, that his prayers and alms had proved acceptable to the Almighty ; and commanded him at the same time to send to Joppa for Simon Peter, who resided at the house of a tanner adjacent to the side of the sea, who would fully instruct him in the mysteries of salvation.

Peter was greatly astonished upon hearing this relation, but upon comparing it with the vision which he had lately seen, he concluded that God no longer maintained an exclusive kindness for the Jewish race, but on the contrary, meant, that people of all persuasions should be permitted to participate in the benefits of the new covenant.

Peter now expounded the great mysteries of salvation to the centurion, and a considerable number of other persons, among whom were many Jewish converts ; and while he was speaking, the Holy Ghost descended upon those of his auditors whose hearts had been before purified by faith. The descent of the Spirit, enabled them to magnify the name of God in various languages, to the great astonishment of the Jewish converts ; who till now had maintained an opinion, that God would never bestow the graces of his Spirit upon the Gentiles. Observing the amazement of his auditors, Peter said, he knew no reason why those persons who had received the Holy Ghost, should not be baptized ; for their former errors could not reasonably be considered as an objection, since

they were now converted to the cause of truth and righteousness; and he accordingly gave orders for their baptism.

The news of Peter having admitted Cornelius and others to a baptism with water, which is only a type of the baptism of the Spirit, being conveyed to Jerusalem, upon the return of Peter to that city, the apostles and other brethren severely censured him for his eating with, and living upon terms of familiarity and friendship with the Gentiles. Peter defended himself against the accusations of his brethren, by representing, that the Almighty had not confined the grace of the gospel to the people of any particular nation; and that all descriptions of men, provided that they regulated their lives by the rules of virtue and religion, were entitled to be admitted into the communion of the gospel. The arguments of St. Peter so entirely removed the scruples of his brethren, that they applauded his conduct, and magnified the name of God, for the extensive benevolence and mercy he had displayed in affording the Heathens an opportunity of providing for their eternal salvation by a sincere repentance, and an exact conformity to the divine precepts of the gospel dispensation.

Having compleated his visitation to the newly established churches, Peter returned to Jerusalem, where, with unremitting industry, he continued to proclaim the blessed tidings of salvation. But he was interrupted in his course of righteousness by the cruel machinations of Herod Agrippa, who, with a view to ingratiate the favor of the Jews, had put the apostle James to death; and finding this act of barbarity highly acceptable to this obstinate people, he determined to render Peter an object of his savage barbarity; and in pursuance of this wicked design, he

caused that apostle to be apprehended, and cast into prison.

The Christian disciples fervently supplicated the Almighty for the deliverance of Peter ; nor were their prayers disappointed. On the night preceding the day appointed for the execution of St. Peter, an angel of the Lord descended into the dungeon where he was confined, and at that time sleeping between two of the keepers of the prison. Having disengaged the apostle from his fetters, the heavenly messenger awakened him, commanding him to gird on his garments, and follow him. Peter supposed this to be merely a vision ; till having passed the first and second guard, and also a strong iron gate, which opened to them by a divine impulse, and walked the length of a street into the city, he was so far recovered from his consternation, as to be persuaded that the whole was a matter of reality ; and he praised God for having rescued him from the power of Herod, and from the vengeance which the Jews had meditated against him.

Repairing to the house where a great number of Christians had assembled to pray for his deliverance, Peter knocked at the door, and the servant maid, hearing his voice, returned to inform those within, that the apostle was waiting. This information they considered as the mere effect of fancy : but as the woman persisted in her assertion, they supposed that the voice she had heard proceeded from the angel of Peter, or some messenger sent by him from the courts of heaven. But upon the door being opened, they were convinced of their error : and Peter briefly related to them, the manner in which he had been rescued from the power of his oppressors ; and after requesting that they would inform his brethren of his deliverance, the apostle retired.

Herod being informed on the following morning, that the apostle had effected his escape, he was exasperated to the most extravagant degree of rage, and commanded those who had been entrusted with the care of the prisoner, to be put to instant death.

A short time after the miraculous deliverance of St. Peter, a controversy occurred between the Jewish and Gentile converts on the Mosaic institutions. The Jews contended, that circumcision, and a strict observance of the precepts of the ceremonial law, as well as those of the gospel, were essentially necessary to salvation. In consequence of this dispute, a council of the apostles and brethren was summoned to meet in Jerusalem; and in this assembly, Peter, after reminding his auditors that the Almighty had been graciously pleased to appoint him the first preacher of the gospel among the Gentiles, he said, that by conferring upon them the Holy Spirit, God had admitted those people into the communion of his church; and that therefore, to impose upon them an adherence to the precepts of the ceremonial law, would be to offer an offence to the Almighty, who had given sufficient assurances, that both Gentiles and Jews would obtain salvation through the grace of the gospel.

Peter's address proved entirely satisfactory to his brethren; and it was unanimously resolved, that no other injunction than the observance of some particular precepts, which were deemed equally salutary and convenient both to the Jews and Gentiles, should be imposed upon them. This decision was drawn up in the form of a synodical epistle, and sent to the churches established in various parts, for the purpose of appeasing those contentions and animosities to which the dispute had given rise.

Some time after the above decision, Peter quitted Jerusalem, and repaired to Antioch, where, disregarding the distinction of meats prescribed by the law, he eat and conversed with the Gentile proselytes. This practice he continued till the arrival of certain Jewish converts, who were still tenaciously observant of the ceremonial law, from Jerusalem.—Lest he should offend these people, he separated himself from the Gentiles, refusing to eat, or hold further communion with them. This example confirmed the Jews in their superstitious observation of the law, and perplexed the Gentiles with new doubts. Hence were the ancient and inveterate prejudices between the Jews and the Gentiles revived; and after the example of the apostles, the whole body of the Jewish converts separated themselves from the society of the Gentile Christians; and even Barnabas followed this example of dissimulation.

St. Paul being now at Antioch, he personally opposed the conduct of Peter, severely reproving him for his gross prevarication and hypocrisy. He exposed the inconsistency of St. Peter, saying, that he, being himself a Jew, and consequently under a more immediate obligation of observing the Mosaic law, was highly deserving censure, since he had divested himself of the yoke, and at the same time endeavored to impose it upon the Gentiles, who had never been under the necessity of conforming to the ceremonies of the Israelites.

Almost the whole of what we have hitherto related concerning St. Peter, is founded on the authority of scripture: but for further particulars of the life of this apostle, we must have recourse to those writers of ancient history, who are most esteemed on account of their authenticity and candor.

How long Peter continued at Antioch, and whether he went immediately after his departure from thence, are matters of uncertainty. It is, however, certain beyond dispute, that he was indefatigably assiduous in promoting the gospel of Christ : and we are informed, that, exclusive of the strenuous and successful measures he pursued for the establishment of Christianity in the eastern quarters of the globe, he preached in Africa, Sicily, Italy, and also in Britain ; where he is said to have resided a considerable time, and to have obtained a great number of converts by his preaching.

St. Peter visited Rome, where, we are informed, he sojourned several years ; but the emperor Claudius, taking advantage of some seditious practices among the Jews, published an edict for their expulsion ; and Peter, with others, retired, and going to Jerusalem, was present at the synod which we have lately mentioned.

Towards the conclusion of the reign of Nero, Peter returned to Rome, where he found the minds of the people violently prejudiced against the doctrines of the gospel by the deceptions of Simon Magus, who, as we have related, he had chastized for his wicked practices in Samaria. Foreseeing that the contrivances of this abominable impostor would hasten his death, Peter applied himself with redoubled vigor to fortify the minds of his followers, and to confirm them in a belief of the divine truths of the gospel. For effecting this salutary purpose, he resolutely opposed the delusive machinations of the great deceiver of mankind. In the last year of his life, Peter seems to have written his two epistles to the dispersed Jews in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bythinia ; and in an appointed controversy with Simon, he publicly exposed the magical impostures

of that monster of iniquity ; and afterwards, through the divine assistance brought him to an ignominious, miserable, and exemplary death.

News of the death of Simon being communicated to the emperor, he determined to avenge himself both for the loss of his favorite, and the endeavors used by the apostle to “ turn mankind from darkness into light, and from the power Satan unto God.” He accordingly issued an order for taking Peter into custody, together with his companion St. Paul.

St. Ambrose informs us, that the people perceiving the danger to which St. Peter was exposed, they advised him to retire from Rome ; and that yielding, though reluctantly, to their persuasions, he escaped by night. But as he was passing the gate, he was met by a figure resembling his beloved Master ; and upon Peter asking whether he was going, he was answered, “ To Rome, to be crucified a second time.” Peter understanding this as a reproof for his want of resolution, returned into the city ; and presently afterwards he was apprehended, and, together with St. Paul, committed to the Mamertine prison ; where they remained eight or nine months, constantly employed in preaching to their fellow-prisoners, and to those people who resorted to them, and in other religious exercises. It is supposed that during this confinement, and but a short time before his death, Peter wrote his second epistle to the dispersed Jews.

Upon the return of Nero from Achaia, he resolved to sacrifice the apostles to his cruelty and revenge.— It was the pleasure of the Almighty, that St. Peter should now be released from the afflictions incidental to this sublunary life, and that his pious labors should be rewarded with the blessings of immortality. Being condemned by the Roman emperor to suffer death,

he was conducted to the summit of the Vatican Mount, adjacent to the Tiber, there to surrender up his life on the cross.

Upon his arrival at the place of execution, he requested, that he might not suffer in the usual manner, but with his head towards the earth ; saying, that he was unworthy to die in the posture in which his blessed Redeemer had suffered. This was complied with ; and he yielded up his soul, glorifying the name of God. St. Peter and St Paul suffered martyrdom on the same day, being, according to the calculations of many learned chronologists, in the year of our Lord LXV.

The body of St. Peter is said to have been embalmed, according to the Jewish custom, by a presbyter, named Marcellinus, and to have been buried in the Vatican near the Triumphal Way. A small church was soon afterwards erected on the spot where the body was deposited. This building was destroyed by Heliogabalus, and the remains of the apostle were removed to the cemetery in the Appian Way. In the time of Cornelius, the body was, by order of that pope, conveyed back to the Vatican, where the emperor Constantine erected, to the memory of this apostle, a superb church, which bears his name, and is considered as one of the most stupendous and magnificent structures in the world.

That St. Peter was a married man is beyond dispute ; for his wife's mother is mentioned in scripture. A tradition is extant, mentioning, that long before the death of the apostle, his wife suffered martyrdom ; and that as she was proceeding to the place of execution, he exhorted her to rely on the mediation of the blessed Jesus. He is said to have left one daughter, named Petronilla ; but this is not ascertained to any degree of certainty.

THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL.

THIS apostle was a descendant from the race of Abraham, and a native of Tarsus, the metropolis of Cilicia, a rich and populous Roman municipium, or free corporation, situated about three hundred miles from Jerusalem. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, and born about two years before our blessed Saviour. St. Paul was educated in Jerusalem, under the celebrated rabbi Gamaliel. He was one of the most rigid and zealous observers of the law of Moses; and at an early period of life, attached himself to the sect of Pharisees.

With respect to his double capacity of being of Jewish extraction, and born a Roman citizen, he had two names, Saul and Paul; the former being Hebrew, and the other Latin. The descendants of Benjamin were accustomed to give the name of Saul to their children, from the time of the first king of Israel, who was chosen out of that tribe; and Paul was a name common among the Romans. He was brought up to the trade of tent making; it being an invariable practice of the Jews, to cause their children to be instructed in some useful occupation, that, in case of a change of circumstances, they might be able to earn a livelihood.

Saul, being of an active and sanguine disposition, became a distinguished advocate in favor of the law of Moses, and the traditions of the elders. He was impatient of all opposition to the doctrines and tenets in which he had been educated, and a vehement blasphemer and persecutor of the Christians. But, in justification of the conduct of this apostle, in the early

part of his life, it must be observed, that he acted according to the dictates of his conscience, whereby he conceived himself to be bound to do "many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Hence then it appears, that the prejudices of his education, and the natural warmth of his temper, co-operated to incite him to those implacable persecutions of the Christians, for which he was so celebrated.

Saul was one of those who engaged in the disputation with Stephen the martyr, concerning the Messiah; but how far he was accessory in procuring him to be put to death by false accusation, is uncertain.—After this, he procured a commission from the Sanhedrim to extend his persecution to Damascus, and to bring back in chains such Christians as had fled thither for shelter. But on his way to Damascus to execute the commission of the Jewish Sanhedrim, a light, far more refulgent than the meridian brightness of the sun, darted upon him. Saul, and the persons who accompanied him, were thrown into the utmost consternation, and they fell from their horses prostrate on the earth. A voice in the Hebrew language was now heard to say, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Upon this Saul said, "Who art thou, Lord?" He was immediately answered, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." These words implied, that all his endeavors to exterpate that faith which his disciples reposed in him would prove ineffectual, and like kicking against the spikes, would serve only to wound and torment himself.

Being now perfectly convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, Saul said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Upon this the blessed Jesus informed him of the reason of his appearance, saying, "Arise and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee

“ for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a
“ witness, both of those things in which I will ap-
“ peal unto thee, delivering thee from the Gentiles ;
“ unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes,
“ and turn them from darkness to light, and from the
“ power of Satan to God ; that they may receive for-
“ givness of sins, and inheritance among them that
“ are sanctified by faith that is in me.” Our blessed
Saviour commanded Saul to repair immediately to
the city, referring him for further instructions to one
of his followers named Ananias.

Upon arising, Saul found himself deprived of sight ;
and therefore his companions, who heard, but did not
understand the voice, led him to the city of Damas-
cus, where he entered the house of one Judas, there
he remained without sight for three days ; during
which space he neither eat nor drank, but employed
the whole time in beseeching the Almighty to pardon
the sins of his ignorance.

Our blessed Redeemer appeared to Ananias, and
commanded him to go to the house of Judas, and en-
quire for Saul of Tarsus, whom he had chosen to
preach the gospel both to the Jews and Gentiles ;
mentioning at the same time, the great sufferings he
would endure in the cause of religion.

In obedience to the command of his heavenly Mas-
ter, Ananias repaired to Saul, and laying his hands
upon him, said, that Jesus had sent him to restore
his sight ; and by an infusion of the Spirit to give
him a knowledge of those divine truths which he had
opposed ; adding that Jesus was now willing to re-
ceive him by baptism into his church, and to consti-
tute him a member of his body. Ananias had no
sooner concluded, than Saul recovered his sight.

To the utter astonishment of the multitude, Saul now publicly proclaimed the gospel of Christ, asserting that "Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God;" and demonstrating this great truth by such incontrovertible testimony, as would admit of no reply from the enemies of the Christian doctrine.

Soon after the miraculous conversion of St. Paul, he travelled into Arabia Petræa, where he received a full revelation of the mysteries of Christianity. Having preached in various parts of the country, he returned to Damascus, where he converted a great number both of Jews and Gentiles. The great success of the preaching of St. Paul so irritated the Jews, that after he had remained in Damascus, and the parts adjacent thereto, about two or three years, they prevailed upon the governor to determine upon putting him to death: but knowing that he had a vast number of friends in Damascus, his enemies foresaw, that to apprehend him would be an undertaking of considerable difficulty. They continually searched for him in the houses where he was supposed to conceal himself, and obtained a body of soldiers from the governor to watch the gates, lest he should escape their fury. While he was thus circumstanced, his Christian friends exerted their utmost endeavors for giving him an opportunity of privately retiring from the city: but finding it impossible to effect an escape through either of the gates, they lowered him in a basket from the window of one of their houses; and by that means, he eluded the vigilance of the people employed to apprehend him.

St. Paul now returned to Jerusalem, where the Christians, however, avoided his society: but Barnabas introduced him to Peter, and James, the bishop of Jerusalem, informing them of his miraculous con-

version ; in consequence of which, they kindly entertained him for the space of fifteen days.

Being warned by God in a vision, that his testimony would not be received at Jerusalem, and that it was expedient he should depart, and preach the gospel to the Gentiles, St. Paul returned to Tarsus, his native city ; from whence he in a short time accompanied Barnabas to Antioch, to assist in propagating Christianity among the inhabitants of that city.

In this city, where St. Paul resided a whole year, the disciples first acquired the appellation of Christians, being before distinguished by the name of Nazarenes.

About this period, a dreadful famine prevailed in many parts of the Roman empire, and particularly in Judea. In consequence of this calamity, Barnabas and Saul were deputed to convey contributions from the Christians of Antioch to their distressed brethren in Jerusalem. Immediately after executing their commission, they returned to Antioch, and while they were there employed in the exercise of their religious duty, it was revealed to them by the Holy Ghost, that it was the pleasure of the Almighty, that they should preach the gospel in distant parts.

They accordingly departed, and first visited Seleucia, from whence they sailed for Cyprus ; and at Salamis, a considerable city in that island, they preached in the Jewish synagogue. From hence they proceeded to Paphos, the residence of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of the island ; a man who, though of great wisdom and integrity, had yielded to the seductions of Bar-Jesus, a Jewish impostor, who stiled himself Elymas, or the magician. The apostles severely rebuked Elymas for his opposition to the truths of

the gospel, and informed him, that he would speedily be made a signal instance of the divine vengeance; and of this he was no sooner informed, than he was deprived of sight. This miracle, in conjunction with the preaching of the apostles, convinced the proconsul of the truth of the gospel, to which he became a convert.

St. Paul, accompanied by Titus, repaired to Phrygia in Pamphylia, and from thence to Antioch, the metropolis of Pisidia, where Paul preached in the synagogue on two succeeding sabbaths. The impression which the discourses of Paul made upon the minds of the people, so exasperated the Jews, that they exclaimed against Jesus of Nazareth in a stile of the most shocking blasphemy. But notwithstanding their malicious and vehement opposition, the apostles persevered in the discharge of their duty, and obtained a great number of converts.

By base and artful insinuations, a number of the bigotted women were induced to attempt inflaming their husbands against the apostles, who in consequence of this stratagem, were driven out of the city. Upon their departure, they shook the dust from their feet, in testimony of their disapprobation of the ingratitude and infidelity of their enemies.

From Antioch they proceeded to Iconium, the capital of Lyconia, in the Lesser Asia, where their preaching was attended with great success. Though they had made converts of a very considerable part of the inhabitants of the city, others still entertained the most implacable enmity towards them. The unbelieving Jews prevailed upon a number of the Gentiles to join them in opposing the apostles, whom this faction, at length, determined to stone to death. But

being apprized of this cruel design, they privately departed.

Proceeding to Lystra, they preached the gospel in different places of public worship; and amidst a numerous congregation, St. Paul, beholding a man who had been born a cripple, said to him aloud, "Stand upright on thy feet:" and these words were no sooner pronounced, than he rose and walked. This miracle raised the admiration of the spectators, who being educated in the superstitious customs of the Heathen worship, cried out, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." The fame of this wonderful cure, was soon spread throughout the city; and the inhabitants assembled, and being preceded by the priest of Jupiter, and several oxen decorated with garlands, repaired to the house where the apostles resided, in order to offer up sacrifices to them, and otherwise honor them as divinities.

Paul and Barnabas were no sooner informed of their intention, than being greatly affected on account of the superstitious notions of the people, they rent their garments in testimony of their abhorrence of the idolatrous principles of the multitude. Addressing themselves to the people, they said, that the miracle was performed in the name of Christ, and that they themselves being no more than men, were consequently unworthy divine honors; but they exhorted them to pay their adorations to that Almighty Being, to whose bounty alone they were indebted for all the blessings they enjoyed.

By the arguments of the apostles, the multitude were, though with difficulty, persuaded to decline their intended idolatrous sacrifice. The apostles continued to proclaim the happy tidings of salvation, through repentance, and faith in our blessed Lord and

Saviour Jesus Christ: but they were still harrassed by the malicious and bigotted Israelites, some of whom coming from Antioch and Iconium to Lystra, instilled such vile prejudices into the minds of the people, that they cast stones at, and in other respects treated the apostles with the most savage barbarity. St. Paul nearly fell a sacrifice to this severity; for he was deprived of all sensation, and dragged out of the city under the supposition that he was dead. While the Christians of Lystra were lamenting over him, and probably preparing to convey him to a place of interment, he arose, and returned with them into the city. On the following day, Paul and Barnabas departed to Derbe, and gained many converts to the gospel of Christ.

In a short time they re-visited Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, where, after confirming the faith of the people they had converted to Christianity, they appointed elders and pastors to yield them further instructions as to their religious duties.

Passing through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia; and after preaching at Perga, they proceeded to Attalia. Having completed the circuit of their ministry, they returned to Antioch in Syria, from whence they had at first departed.

The famous controversy now occurred, with respect to the observation of the Jewish ceremonies in the Christian dispensation. Paul and Barnabas went to consult with the apostles and other brethren at Jerusalem, as to the most expedient measures for terminating their controversy. They addressed themselves to Peter, James and John, who perceiving that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to Paul, and that of the circumcision to Peter, it was resolved, that the former should preach to the Gen-

tiles, and the latter to the Jews. A council being summoned, a resolution unanimously passed, that the Gentiles were not under the obligation of the law of Moses, and therefore that some persons of their own church should be joined with Paul and Barnabas to carry the decrees of the council to Antioch.

St. Paul and his companions returned to Antioch, whether Peter also repaired in a short time after.—The decretal epistle being read in the church, the converts familiarly associated with the Gentiles: but upon the arrival of some of the Jews from Jerusalem, St. Peter separated himself from the Gentiles, refusing to hold any communication with them. Upon this occasion, St. Paul severely rebuked him for the practice of hypocrisy.

Paul, accompanied by Silas, visited the churches of Syria and Cilicia, and from thence proceeded to Crete, where Paul constituted Titus to be the first bishop and pastor of the island. Hence Paul and Silas, by the way of Cilicia, came to Lystra, where they found Timothy, whom Paul designed for the companion of his future travels. But knowing that his being uncircumcised, would occasion the Jews to object to his gospel, he caused him to submit to that institution. St. Paul and his companions now passed through Phrygia into the country of Galatia, where they were held in high veneration, being esteemed the immediate messengers of heaven. By a revelation, St. Paul was prohibited from preaching in Asia, and by a second vision, he was commanded to repair to Macedonia.

Being joined by St. Luke, who from this time became his inseparable companion, St. Paul and his associates passed from Asia into Europe. They sailed to the island of Samothracia, in the Ægean Sea,

and the following day arrived at Neapolis, a part of Macedonia. From Neapolis they proceeded to Philippi, the capital of that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony, where they continued some days.

While they remained in these parts, Paul preached in the *proseucha*, or oratory of the Jews, which was situated by the side of the river and at some distance from the city. By the influence of the Holy Spirit, St. Paul obtained a great number of converts, among whom was a woman named Lydia, a Jewish proselyte, and a native of Thyatira. This woman and her whole family being baptized, she became exceedingly importunate that Paul and his companions should reside at her house ; and they were prevailed upon to accept her invitation.

While the apostles remained in this city, they daily resorted to the oratory, for the purpose of employing themselves in religious exercises. After some days had elapsed, as they were passing to the usual place of devotion, they were met by a young woman, who, by the influence of an evil spirit, possessed a prophetic spirit of divination. This woman followed Paul and his companions, exclaiming, " These men are the " servants of the most High God, which shew unto " us the way of salvation." In this manner she behaved on several successive days ; and at length Paul, in the name of Jesus, commanded the spirit to depart from her ; and the demon immediately obeyed.

Her masters had been accustomed to derive considerable emoluments from her predictions ; and therefore they were highly exasperated against the apostles, for having deprived them of a power which had proved so profitable to them. By the instigation of these men, the multitude were inflamed against Paul and his companions, whom they seized, and conducted

before the magistrates of the colony, accusing them of having introduced innovations, in which they, being Romans, could not lawfully acquiesce.

Desirous of preserving the tranquillity of the state, the magistrates resolved to punish Paul and his companions, whom the multitude had accused of seditious practices; and therefore they ordered them to be stripped, and severely scourged.

This discipline was inflicted upon the apostles, who were afterwards committed to prison, the keeper being ordered to guard them with uncommon vigilance: and he accordingly put them into the inner prison, and confined their feet in the stocks. Notwithstanding their disagreeable situation, their minds were perfectly serene; and at midnight they sung the praises of, and prayed to the Almighty in so audible a voice, that they were heard in every part of the prison. Their prayers to the throne of grace were not in vain; for the very foundations of the prison were shook by an earthquake; the prisoners were released from their chains, and the gates opened. The gaoler being roused from his sleep, concluded that all his prisoners had escaped, and being driven by this apprehension to a state of desperation, he attempted to put a period to his life. Observing his intention, Paul cried out, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." The gaoler now imagined that the late convulsion of nature had been wrought by the Almighty for the sake of the apostles, and calling for a light he hastened into their presence, and prostrated himself at their feet. He then conducted them to his house, bathed their stripes, and supplicated them to instruct him in the knowledge of that God, through whose unbounded goodness mankind might secure their eternal salvation. St. Paul replied, that if he sincerely believed in Jesus Christ, he might be saved with his whole

house. Accordingly the gaoler, and all the persons of his family, received baptism, and were admitted members of the church of Christ.

Early in the morning, the magistrates, either having heard of the extraordinary events which had happened, or reflecting that the severity of their proceedings was wholly unjustifiable, dispatched an officer to the prison, with orders for restoring the apostles to freedom. This message was joyfully received by the gaoler, who bid his prisoners, "depart in peace." But that the magistrates might be made sensible of the injustice of which they had been guilty in punishing him and his companions without either trial or examination, St. Paul sent them a message, purporting, that as they had proceeded to so unwarrantable an extremity as to scourge and imprison subjects to the Roman empire, in open violation of the law, it was expected that they would themselves repair to the prison, and make some compensation for the illegality of their proceedings. The Roman laws permitted no freeman to be punished without a formal trial, nor till sentence of condemnation had been pronounced against him; and therefore the magistrates were terrified, lest they should be called to a severe account for their delinquency. Induced by this consideration, they repaired to the prison, and in the most submissive and earnest manner, entreated the apostles to depart, lest the public tranquillity should be interrupted.

However inadequate to the cruel treatment they had experienced, the submission of the magistrates was accepted by the meek disciples of the blessed Jesus; who departing from the prison, went to the house of Lydia, where they were joyfully congratulated by their brethren, on occasion of their deliverance.

Having thus, as appears from the epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians, established a very considerable church, the apostles quitted Philippi, and pursued their journey towards the west. Upon their arrival at Thessalonica, the metropolis of Macedonia, situated about one hundred and twenty miles from Philippi, they entered the Jewish synagogue, where St. Paul preached to the people. While the apostles remained in Thessalonica, they resided in the house of a Christian named Jason, who entertained them in a most courteous and friendly manner. But the Jews still persevered in their obstinate incredulity, refusing to acknowledge Christ as the Messiah, and persecuting his disciples with unrelenting fury.

A number of Jews assembled before the house of Jason, with a design of surrendering Paul into the power of the enraged multitude: but in this they were disappointed; for being apprized of the intention of the banditti, Paul and Silas removed to another part of the city. This disappointment served more violently to exasperate the rage of the populace, who now determined to wreak vengeance upon Jason, for having afforded an asylum to the apostles of our blessed Saviour. Seizing Jason and several of his Christian brethren, they conducted them before the magistrates, alledging, that they had been guilty of seditious practices, in setting up Jesus as a king, in contempt of the dignity and power of the emperor of Rome. Jason was only accused of harboring those who had endeavored to introduce innovations in the government: but the magistrates could not be prevailed upon to release him and his companions till they had given security for their appearance, in case of being called upon to answer the charges exhibited against them.

The tumult being appeased, Paul and Silas, being

favored in their escape by a considerable number of Thessalonians, retired by night to Berea, a city at about fifty miles distance towards the south. Here Paul preached in the synagogue, particularly addressing himself to his countrymen, to effect whose conversion he was exceedingly anxious. He frequently adverted to the scriptures of the Old Testament, deducing therefrom the most incontrovertible testimonies in support of the truths of the doctrines he had advanced. The inhabitants of Berea were not so obstinately perverse as the people of Thessalonica, for they attended to the doctrines of St. Paul with serious respect and unfeigned reverence. He obtained a great number both of Jewish and Gentile converts, among whom were several women distinguished for their extensive possessions, and elevated rank in life.

News of this extraordinary success of the gospel being transmitted to Thessalonica, the Jews of that city were highly incensed against the apostles, and repairing to Berea, by a variety of stratagems they exasperated the populace against them. In consequence hereof, Paul was under the necessity of privately departing: but Silas and Timothy, being less popular, and consequently less envied, still remained in the city.

Paul having retired from Berea, a report was circulated, that he meant to depart from Greece by sea; it being supposed, that this would tend to appease that violent spirit of persecution, which the Jews had maliciously exerted against him. By the order of the apostle, the guides who attended him, conducted him to Athens, and returned, after being ordered to direct Silas and Timothy to repair to Athens with all possible expedition.

Taking an accurate survey of the city of Athens,

St. Paul was greatly afflicted to find, that it contained vast numbers of temples dedicated to the worship of different idols. St. Paul exerted his utmost efforts for effecting the conversion of these misguided people, to whom his doctrine was equally new and extraordinary. The Athenians did not persecute him as the Jews had done ; but the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, considered the gospel of our blessed Saviour as a fabulous invention, while others supposed Jesus to be some newly discovered deity, whose image the apostle wished to be erected in their temples.

The people were unwilling to receive any new objects of worship : but the Aræopagus or supreme council of the city being invested with power to decide with respect to all objects of public adoration, he was summoned to appear before these judges, and to explain to them the nature of the worship he was so desirous to establish. Being conducted into the presence of this assembly, in an elegant address he explained to them the principles on which his gospel was founded. In the course of his harangue he mentioned the resurrection, which was ridiculed by some of his auditors : but others, though not perfectly satisfied by the proofs he had advanced in favor of the Christian system, attended to his arguments with candor, and were deeply impressed by the strength of his reasoning and the elegance of his diction. He was at length dismissed by the council, who said they would give him a second audience on the same subject — St. Paul's discourse on the above occasion was not wholly without success, for some few of his auditors were converted to a belief in his gospel ; and among them were Dionysius, one of the judges of the court, and Damaris, supposed to be his wife. It is generally believed, that this Dionysius was afterwards constituted first bishop of Athens by St. Paul.

During the residence of St. Paul in the city of Athens, Timothy, in obedience to the instructions he had received, hastened to join him; and upon his arrival, he informed St. Paul, that from the time of his departure, the Christians of Thessalonica had been cruelly persecuted by their fellow-citizens. This intelligence gave much concern to St. Paul, who at first resolved to visit his brethren in person, in order to administer comfort to them, and confirm them in the faith they had embraced. But declining this intention, he dispatched Timothy to fortify their minds against being discouraged by those persecutions, to which he had informed them the professors of the Christian gospel would be continually exposed.

Soon after the departure of Timothy, St. Paul proceeded from Athens to the city of Corinth, where he found Aquila and Priscilla his wife, who had been banished from Rome by the decree of Claudius. We have already observed, that St. Paul was brought up to tent-making, at which trade he now worked, in conjunction with Aquila, that he might not be burthensome to the new converts.

St. Paul having resided some time in Corinth, he was joined by Silas and Timothy, and continued to preach the gospel with great fervency of devotion. His pious exhortations, provoked the obstinate Jews to treat the name of the holy Jesus with blasphemous indignity; and therefore the apostle told them, that since they were determined to render themselves the objects of the divine vengeance, he would no longer consider them as worthy his labors, but would henceforth address himself to the Gentiles. Repairing to the house of Justus, a religious proselyte, he there by his preaching and miracles, made a great number of converts; and among these were Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue, together with Gaius

and Stephanas, all of whom with their families were baptized, and admitted into the communion of the Christian faith.

Lest the ingratitude and cruelty of the Jews should discourage this able minister from prosecuting the glorious work of proclaiming the ways of salvation, our blessed Saviour appeared to him in a vision, informing him, that notwithstanding the little success which had hitherto attended his preaching, a great number of converts were to be gained in the place where he then resided; and therefore our Lord admonished him not to dread the power of his enemies, but to proceed with confidence and security in the discharge of the duties of his sacred function; assuring him, that he should constantly be an object of the divine care and protection. About this period, the apostle appears to have written his first epistle to the Thessalonians; and before he quitted Corinth, he wrote his second epistle to the same people.

Upon leaving the city of Corinth, the apostle embarked at the port of Cenchrea, and directed his course for Syria, being accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla. Upon his arrival at Ephesus, he preached in the synagogue of the Jews, whom he informed, that he was going to Jerusalem; adding, that he would return to them after the celebration of the passover.— He sailed to Cæsarea, and from thence proceeded to Jerusalem, whence, having kept the passover, and encouraged his Christian brethren to persevere in an observance of the duties prescribed in the gospel, he repaired to Antioch. Passing through the countries of Galatia and Phrygia, he confirmed the faith of the newly-converted Christians, and returned to Ephesus; to which city he was accompanied by Gaius of Derbe, Aristarchus a native of Thessalonica, Timothy and Erastus of Corinth, and Titus.

Immediately after his arrival, he enquired of certain of his disciples, "Whether they had received the Holy Ghost?" and upon learning that they had received baptism only according to the institution of St. John, he caused them to be baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: and after the apostle had prayed, and laid his hands upon them, they received the gift of tongues, and other miraculous powers.

After this he continued to frequent the Jewish synagogues, exerting his most earnest endeavors to convince the multitude of the great truths of the Christian religion: but his doctrine being vehemently opposed by the enemies of our blessed Redeemer, he declined visiting those public buildings dedicated to divine worship, but delivered his instructions in the school of a public preceptor named Tyrannus.

Thus did he continue to preach the gospel for two years, during which space he made a great number of converts. But, that the truth of the divinity of his commission might be confirmed by the most ample and indisputable testimony, the Almighty was pleased to confirm the gospel preached by St. Paul, by miraculous operations of a peculiar and extraordinary nature. He restored to health all afflicted persons, who besought him to relieve their sufferings; and if handkerchiefs or napkins were only touched by him, and applied to the sick, their diseases, whatever their degree of malignancy, were immediately removed.

About this time St. Paul wrote his epistle to the Galatians, among whom he learnt several corrupt opinions had been propagated, by persons who treated his person with contempt; and to destroy the authority of his gospel, slighted him as an apostle; urging, that his inferiority would be extremely manifest

upon comparing him with Peter, James and John, who had familiarly conversed with Christ during his residence upon earth. In this epistle, therefore, he vindicates the honor of the apostleship; asserting, that he received his commission immediately from Christ, and that he was in no respect inferior to any of the apostles. He refutes those Judaical opinions which had infected the people, and concludes with instructing them in the necessary rules of a righteous life.

In the city of Ephesus was a magnificent, rich, and beautiful temple, dedicated to Diana, whose image stood in the building. This figure was the object of public idolatry; and the priests had persuaded the people, that it was the work of the hands of Jupiter himself. Hence it was held in high veneration, not only in Ephesus, but throughout Asia. The people were accustomed constantly to carry small silver images of the temple in their pockets, as incentives to their superstitious zeal. Thus the manufacturers of silver, the principal of whom was named Demetrius, procured much employment. Perceiving that the introduction of Christianity would, by abolishing idolatrous practices, prove exceedingly injurious to a lucrative employment, Demetrius summoned a meeting of the artists, whose business it was to make images of the temple, and represented to them, that if Paul was permitted to pursue his endeavors for bringing the temple into disrepute, they must be reduced to a state of poverty, in consequence of the ruin of their business. This address greatly inflamed the minds of the people, whom Demetrius had summoned to assemble; and vehemently exclaiming, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," they resolved to effect the destruction of St. Paul.

Upon the celebration of public games, it was usual

for slaves to be exposed to the fury of savage beasts for the diversion of the public. The party formed by Demetrius, endeavored to seize Paul, in order to convey him to the theatre, and there expose him to the wild beasts. But being disappointed in this design, they hurried Gaius and Aristarchus, who were followers of Paul and natives of Macedonia, to the theatre, intending that they should be torn in pieces and devoured by the beasts.

Though Paul was exceedingly desirous of appearing publicly in the theatre in defence of his friends, he was, though with great difficulty, dissuaded from adopting a measure, which could not fail of exposing him to the most imminent danger.

Gaius and Aristarchus being brought into the theatre, an amazing tumult ensued; and during the confusion, a Jew, named Alexander, was seized by the multitude, and expecting to fall a victim to popular rage, he prepared to make a defence. The multitude, perceiving that he was a Jew, and suspecting that he was one of Paul's associates, the tumult was increased to the most extravagant degree, nothing being heard for the space of two hours, but the exclamation of "Great is Diana of Ephesus." In consequence of this confusion, the officer who kept the register of the games, addressed himself to the multitude, censuring their intemperate conduct, and apprizing them, that they had rendered themselves obnoxious to the effects of the displeasure of the magistracy. This discourse appeased the tumult, and Gaius, Aristarchus, and Alexander being restored to liberty, the people returned to their respective habitations.

St. Paul says, "he fought with beasts at Ephesus." This expression alludes to the design of the

enraged multitude, of exposing him to the fury of the wild beasts in the theatre ; or to the manners of the people, who sufficiently merited to be represented as monsters of barbarity.

The Corinthian church being distracted by a variety of schisms and factions, St. Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, with a view of restoring tranquillity, and correcting those gross corruptions which prevailed among the Christians. A short time afterwards, Apollos and Zenos having resolved to repair to Crete, St. Paul sent by them his epistle to Titus, whom he had constituted bishop of that island. In this epistle, he fully instructs Titus in the several duties of his holy office.

After residing almost three years in the city of Ephesus, and founding a considerable church there, of which he had ordained Timothy the first bishop, St. Paul directed his course about two hundred miles to the northward, expecting to meet Timothy at Troas ; but being disappointed, he took shipping, and pursued his journey to Macedonia, where he preached the gospel in divers parts, travelling as far as Illyricum, now called Sclavonia.

During this journey, St. Paul encountered many dangers and difficulties ; but amidst his difficulties, the arrival of Titus afforded a very seasonable relief to his harrassed and almost exhausted spirits. This worthy bishop brought with him large contributions from the Corinthian church ; and from the example of these liberal Christians, St. Paul excited the Macedonians to an imitation of their benevolence ; his design being to render their bounty subservient to the relief of the distressed Christians at Jerusalem.

While Titus remained in Macedonia, St. Paul

wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians, and sent it to them by Titus and Luke : and about the same time, he wrote his first epistle to Timothy, whom he had left at Ephesus. Before Paul's departure from Greece, he visited Corinth, where he wrote his celebrated epistle to the Romans, which he sent to those people by Phœbe, archdeaconess of the church of Cenchrea.

St. Paul now determined to repair to Jerusalem, in order to distribute the contributions among the Christian brethren inhabiting that capital. Having commenced his journey, he received intelligence, that the Jews had resolved not only to rob him, but also to put him to death ; and in consequence of this, he hastened back into Macedonia, and arriving at Philippi, proceeded from thence to Troas, where he remained seven days. On the sabbath, he preached to the inhabitants of Troas, and continued his discourse till midnight, proposing to depart early in the morning. Towards the conclusion of this discourse, several of his auditors were overtaken by sleep ; and among these, was a young man named Eutychus, who fell from the third story, and was taken up entirely dead : but the apostle addressed himself to heaven in behalf of the deceased, who was restored to life, to the infinite astonishment of the multitude.

From Troas he travelled on foot to Assos, whither he had before sent his companions by sea. Hence they sailed to Mitylene, a city in the isle of Lesbos. The next day they sailed to Chios, and on that following, disembarked at Trogyllium, a promontory of Ionia, near Samos. Arriving at Miletos on the following day, Paul sent to Ephesus, to summon the elders of the church to attend him. He reminded them of the fidelity with which he had discharged the duties of his ministry, exhorting them steadily

to maintain their faith in the blessed and immaculate Jesus, who had yielded up his life as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of mankind. He informed them, that he was going to Jerusalem, where he was ignorant of what would befall him, excepting the events predicted by those who were endued with the prophetic gifts of the Holy Ghost. He said, he was conscious that he should sustain imprisonment and other afflictions; but on the score of his sufferings, he felt no uneasiness, being willing to yield up his life, rather than in any respect violate the obedience which was due to his great Lord and Master. Having concluded a pious and pathetic discourse, St. Paul fervently addressed himself in prayer to heaven, in which he was joined by the whole multitude, who accompanied him to his vessel; expressing the most poignant sorrow, in consequence of his having informed them that they would "see his face no more."

From Miletos they proceeded to Coos, and from thence to Rhodes. From the latter island they sailed to Patara, the metropolis of Lycia, where they embarked on board a ship bound for Phœnicia. He remained a week in Phœnicia, where some of the Christian brethren endeavored to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem: but no consideration of personal safety, could induce the apostle to decline his resolution of exerting his utmost efforts for the propagation of the gospel. Finding all their persuasions ineffectual, they accompanied Paul to the sea-side, where he kneeled and prayed with them; and after affectionately embracing them, he embarked and sailed to Ptolemais, from whence he the next day proceeded to Cæsarea.

Agabus a Christian prophet, came at this time to Cæsarea; and taking Paul's girdle, this man bound his own hands and feet with it; by this symbol signify-

ing, that the Jews would bind Paul, and surrender him into the power of the Gentiles. Upon this his own companions joined the Christians of Cæsarea, earnestly beseeching, that he would not go to Jerusalem: but finding his resolution to be immoveable, they declined further importunity. Paul and his companions proceeded to Jerusalem, where they experienced a kind and friendly reception from their Christian brethren.

On the day after their arrival, they went to the house of St. James the apostle, where the bishops and governors of the church had assembled. He informed the meeting, of the contributions he had received for the relief of the distressed Christian brethren; and particularized the success, with which the Almighty had been graciously pleased to bless his endeavors for propagating the gospel; and hereupon they joined in thanksgiving to God. They observed to the apostle, that there were many thousands of Jewish converts in the city, who were zealously attached to the law of Moses; and that these people, being informed that he had instructed his Jewish converts to renounce circumcision, and the ceremonies of the law, would upon receiving intelligence of his arrival, immediately assemble to become witnesses of his conduct, according to which they would regulate their future proceedings. Therefore they advised him, as the most probable means of preventing a popular tumult, to join himself with four persons, who were at that time to accomplish a vow, and conform to the ceremonies required by the law. Convinced of the expediency of adopting this advice, St. Paul and the four other men, having purified themselves, repaired to the temple; signifying to the priest, that the time of a certain vow which they had made being accomplished, they were come to make such offerings as were required by the obligation of the law.

When Paul had been seven days in Jerusalem, wholly employed in distributing alms, and in making the sacrifices enjoined by the law, when certain Jews, who had violently opposed his doctrine in Asia, being come to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, fomented a tumult against him, accusing him of having advanced doctrines destructive of the institutions of the Jewish law.

Hereupon a violent outrage ensued, and the enraged multitude, forcing the apostle out of the temple, beat him, and in other respects behaved towards him with shocking barbarity. These violent proceedings threatened an insurrection; and therefore Claudius Lysias, the Roman tribune, who had the command of the garrison in the castle Antonio, led forth the soldiers and tribunes to suppress the riot. The presence of Lysias awed the multitude, who now discontinued their cruelty to Paul; and the captain caused him to be put into chains, demanding what was the nature of his offence: but no particular charge being alledged against him, he was ordered to be taken into the castle. In the way, he requested permission to address himself to the captain; who hearing him speak Greek, asked if he was not the Egyptian who had some time before excited an insurrection in the city. Upon this he assured him, that he was a native of Tarsus, and had been educated in the Jewish religion; adding that from a mistaken zeal, he had violently persecuted the Christians; and particularizing the several circumstances of his miraculous conversion, and of his subsequent trance, during which, he was instructed to depart from Jerusalem, and preach the gospel in other parts.

Upon hearing Paul mention that he had received a commission to preach the gospel, the fury of the po-

pulace became wholly ungovernable, and they united in insisting that he should be instantly put to death.

The captain of the guard commanded Paul to be brought within the temple, and to be scourged, till he should acknowledge the cause of that extraordinary aversion which the Jews had expressed against him; he was bound, and other preparations were making for executing this sentence, when the apostle demanded of one of the centurions, whether it was lawful to scourge a citizen of Rome who had not been tried, and consequently against whom no formal sentence had been pronounced. The centurion immediately hastened to Lysias, informing him, that the prisoner was a Roman, and therefore advising him to proceed with caution. Upon this the governor came to the prison, and being informed by Paul, that he was born a free citizen of Rome, he reversed the order for subjecting him to the disgraceful punishment of scourging, and was greatly terrified upon reflecting, that he might be called to a severe account for having confined him in chains.

On the following day, he ordered Paul to be released from his chains; and that the cause of the tumult might be discovered, he summoned the Sanhedrim to assemble, and conducted the apostle before them. The apostle informed the council, that throughout his whole life, he had conducted himself by the strictest rules of conscience and duty, “Men and brethren, “I have lived in all good conscience before God, until this day.” This expression greatly exasperated the high-priest, who ordered some persons that stood near the apostle, to strike him on the face. Upon this, the apostle said to Ananias, “God shall smite thee, thou whited wall.” Hereupon some of the spectators observed, that it was unlawful to revile the high-priest of the Almighty: and this reproof the

apostle received with great gentleness, excusing his inadvertency, and acknowledging that God himself had said, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of the people." Perceiving that the council consisted both of Pharisees and Sadducees, he loudly proclaimed, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the Son of a Pharisee;" adding that he was brought before the tribunal, to answer for having asserted the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

The Pharisees favored the doctrine of the resurrection, which was strenuously opposed by the Sadducees; and therefore the declaration of St. Paul, created much confusion in the court. The dissensions of these two sects increased to so extravagant a degree, that the captain feared Paul would be torn in pieces, and therefore he conveyed him back to the castle.

During the silence of night, St. Paul was comforted and encouraged by extraordinary communications of the divine Spirit, animating him to maintain his constancy and resolution; assuring him, that in despite of the malicious designs of his enemies, he should live to bear testimony in support of the gospel, even in the capital of the Roman empire.

On the following morning, about forty of the most turbulent Jews, engaged in a confederacy for the purpose of sacrificing the life of Paul; ratifying their agreement by a solemn oath, and vowing with shocking imprecations, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had perpetrated their barbarous design.

This iniquitous project was divulged to Paul by his sister's son, who also at the request of the apostle, communicated it to Lysias; who in consequence of

this information, commanded a party of horse and foot soldiers to be in readiness at nine o'clock in the evening, to conduct St. Paul before Felix, the Roman governor of the province; to whom he also transmitted a narrative of the proceedings of the Jews against the prisoner, at the same time commanding his accusers to appear before the Roman magistrate. St. Paul was accordingly conducted to Cæsarea; and Felix informed him, that his cause should be decided immediately after the arrival of his accusers; ordering him, in the mean time to be secured in the place called Herod's Hall.

Soon after the arrival of Paul, a charge of sedition, heresy, and profanation of the temple, was exhibited against him by Tertullus. Having heard the accusation and the apostle's defence, Felix declined pronouncing judgment, saying, he would consult Lysias, the governor of the castle; who, he said, could not but be qualified to relate the particulars of the tumult and sedition. He ordered Paul to remain a prisoner, indulging him, however, in the privilege of being visited by his friends.

A short time after this, Drusilla, a Jewess, the wife of Felix, and daughter of the elder Herod, came to Cæsarea; and sending for Paul, the governor permitted him to explain the principles of the Christian doctrine in presence of his wife. Hereupon Paul delivered a pious, affecting, and persuasive discourse; and when he came to a description of the day of judgment, Felix trembled on his throne; and abruptly interrupting the apostle, said, he would hear the conclusion of his discourse on a future opportunity.—The conscience of Felix was dreadfully alarmed; for he was cruel, unjust, revengeful and rapacious. He was informed, that Paul had possession of a considerable sum of money, and therefore he expected that

he would purchase his freedom with a considerable bribe : but being disappointed, he kept the apostle in prison for the space of two years.

Felix, being succeeded in office by Portius Festus, suffered Paul to remain in prison, in order to gratify the malice of the Jews, and induce them to speak favorably of his government, after his departure from Judea.

Upon the arrival of Festus in Jerusalem, the high-priest and the members of the Sanhedrim, brought an indictment against Paul, requesting that he might be sent for to Jerusalem, in order to take his trial, their design being to assassinate him on the way. But Festus informed them, that he meant in a short time to go to Cæsarea, where they might exhibit their accusations against him.

Upon the arrival of Felix at Cæsarea, the Jews renewed their accusations against Paul ; but notwithstanding all their wicked and malicious artifices, they were unable to prove him guilty of any crime. Festus, however, being desirous of ingratiating the favor of the Jews, asked Paul, whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem, for the purpose of taking his trial ; and to this the apostle answered, " I appeal unto Cæsar."

Some time after this appeal, king Agrippa, who succeeded his father Herod in the tetrarchate of Galilee, and his sister Berenice, came to congratulate Festus on his accession to the government. The apostle being brought into court, where Agrippa, Berenice, and a splendid retinue had assembled, Festus said, that in consequence of his having appealed to Cæsar, he had resolved to send the prisoner to Rome : but was notwithstanding desirous, that his case should be

debated before king Agrippa, that some particulars might be collected, for the purpose of grounding a criminal charge.

Being informed by Agrippa, that he was at liberty to make his defence, the apostle related, with what unrelenting cruelty he had persecuted the Christians, and particularized the circumstances of his wonderful conversion. While the apostle was pleading in his own defence, he was interrupted by Festus, who accused him of insanity : but the apostle denied this charge, saying, that his judgment was unimpaired, and that he spoke the dictates of truth. So eloquent and persuasive was the discourse of St. Paul, that Agrippa acknowledged to him, that he had almost prevailed upon him to embrace the Christian faith.

It was at length resolved that Paul should be sent to Rome, and be committed to the care of Julius, commander of a company belonging to the legion of Augustus ; and he was accompanied by St. Luke, Aristarchus, Trophimus, and some others. Embarking at Adramyttium, after a dangerous voyage, they were cast on the coast of the island of Melita, or Malta, where they landed, and experienced a friendly reception from the inhabitants. While St. Paul was putting some sticks upon a fire round which a number of people had assembled, a viper came from among the wood, and fastened on his hand. Hereupon the people imagined that he was some notorious offender, who had been rescued from the dangers of the tempest, that he might be thus exposed as an exemplary object of the divine vengeance : but upon seeing him shake the venomous animal into the fire they changed their opinion, and proclaimed him to be a god.

After remaining three months in this island, they took shipping in a vessel called the *Castor and Pol-*

lux, and landed at Puteoli. The Christian inhabitants of the city of Rome, being apprized of the approach of St. Paul, great numbers of them went to meet and pay their respects to him ; some travelling to a place called the Three Taverns, about thirty miles from Rome, and others as far as the Apii-forum, situated at the distance of fifty-one miles from the capital.

Upon his arrival in the city of Rome, St. Paul sent for the heads of the Jewish consistory, and informed them, that the malice of his enemies had compelled him to appeal to Cæsar, as the only means of rescuing himself from an injurious and cruel imputation. Paul resided two years in Rome, constantly exerting his best endeavors, both by preaching and writing, for the promotion of Christianity. Among those whom the apostle converted, was a man named Onesimus, who had absconded from his master with effects to a considerable amount. After the conversion of this man, St. Paul sent him back to his master, with a letter, enjoining him to pardon this reclaimed sinner, and treat him with kindness.

Being informed of the imprisonment of St. Paul, the Christians of Philippi made a contribution for his relief, and sent the money by Epaphroditus their bishop, by whom the apostle sent back an epistle, instructing them in the rules of religious and moral duty. Availing himself of the opportunity of the departure of Tychicus, St. Paul sent by him his epistle to the Ephesians ; and about this time he wrote his epistle to the Colossians. By what means St. Paul obtained his freedom, is a matter of uncertainty ; but before his departure from Italy, he wrote his epistle to the Hebrews.

Accompanied by Timothy, St. Paul now travelled into Spain ; and, according to the testimony of seve-

ral respectable writers, he crossed the sea, and preached the gospel in Britain. After remaining eight or nine months in these western parts, St. Paul returned to the east ; and after visiting Sicily, Greece and Crete, he repaired to Judea, where he met with Peter, and was together with that apostle cast into prison, in the general persecution of the Christians, on pretence of their having set fire to the city. How long he remained in confinement, and whether he was scourged previous to his execution, we are not informed. But pleading the privilege of a Roman citizen, he was sentenced to be beheaded.

St. Paul suffered at the *Aquæ Salviæ*, three miles from Rome, and was buried in the *Via Ostiensis*, about two miles from the capital. About the year 317, Constantine the Great, at the instance of Pope Sylvester, erected a superb church upon the spot where the remains of this apostle were deposited.

THE LIFE OF ST. ANDREW.

ST. Andrew was a native of Bethsaida, a city in Galilee, son of John or Jonas, a fisherman, and brother of Simon Peter, but whether older or younger is uncertain ; though it is most generally intimated by the ancients, that he was the younger. He was brought up to his father's profession, at which he continued to labor till our blessed Saviour elected him into the apostolical office. Andrew was one of the disciples of John the Baptist, who, when Christ appeared in the country beyond the Jordan, pointed out the Saviour of mankind, stiling him " the Lamb of God ;" and following him to his place of abode, Andrew conversed with Jesus, to whom he shortly after introduced his brother Simon. After remaining a short time with our blessed Redeemer, they returned to their usual occupation.

Something more than a year after this, our Saviour perceived Andrew and Peter fishing in the sea of Galilee, and by his divine power he enabled them to obtain a miraculous draught of fishes ; after which he commanded them to follow him.

After the descent of the Holy Ghost, St. Andrew is recorded by the generality of ancient writers to have been chosen to proclaim the gospel in Scythia, and the adjacent countries ; and this office he executed with great success, though he was furiously opposed by the malicious Jews.

In the city of Sinope, situated in the Euxine Sea, St. Andrew met his brother Peter, who remained there with him a considerable time. The inhabitants

of Sinopē engaged in a confederacy against Andrew, and determined to burn the house where he resided ; but being disappointed in this, they beat him with clubs, cast stones at him, and otherwise treated him with the most savage barbarity, till they supposed that they had entirely deprived him of life. But he recovered, and returned publicly into the city, and reclaimed a great number of the Jews to the religion of the blessed Jesus.

From Sinope St Andrew returned to Jerusalem, but he remained only a short time in this city. He travelled over Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, Achaia, and Epirus, zealously preaching the religion of Christ, and confirming his doctrine by miracles and wonderful signs. At length he arrived at Patrea, a city of Achaia, where he surrendered up his life upon the cross, thereby affording his greatest testimony in defence of the religion of his divine Master.

Ægenas, the proconsul of Achaia, came at this time to Patrea, and had recourse to every method of force and persuasion, for reducing the people to their former idolatrous mode of worship. But the apostle still persevered in the discharge of the duties of his ministry, and even ventured to expostulate with the proconsul ; who being highly exasperated against him, sentenced him first to be scourged, and then to be put to death.

Seven lictors successively scourged the body of St. Andrew, whose constancy, patience and fortitude under his sufferings, so provoked Ægenas, that he ordered him to be crucified ; and that his sufferings might be of longer continuance, he commanded him to be fastened to the cross by means of ropes instead of nails. Upon his arrival at the place of execution, the apostle fervently addressed himself in prayer to the

throne of grace, and exhorted the people to persevere in the faith which he had recommended to them. Being fastened to the cross, he remained in that situation two whole days ; during which, he continued to instruct the people in the principles of the gospel.— At length he supplicated the Almighty, that he might seal the truth of his religion with his blood. His prayers were heard, and he immediately expired.— The death of this faithful minister of Christ happened on the last day of November ; but in what year, cannot be precisely ascertained.

The body of St. Andrew was honorably interred by Maximillia, a lady of distinction, and who, according to Nicephorus, was wife to the proconsul.— Constantine the Great removed the body of St. Andrew to Constantinople, and deposited it in the superb church which he had erected in honor of the apostles. When this church was taken down by the order of the emperor Justinian, in order to its being rebuilt, the body of St. Andrew was found in a wooden coffin, and again deposited in the proper place.

THE LIFE OF ST. JAMES THE GREAT.

IN order to distinguish him from another of the same name, this apostle was called James the Great. He was the son of Zebedee, and by trade a fisherman ; in which occupation both he and his brother were employed, when the Saviour of the world called them to be his disciples. Soon after this, he was exalted from the station of an ordinary disciple, to the exercise of the apostolical duties. He was also honored with some peculiar instances of the favor of Jesus Christ, being one of the three chosen to attend his master, when he restored the daughter of Jairus to life ; he was also permitted to be present on occasion of the glorious transfiguration, and of the agony of Christ. Upon the calling of the three select apostles, our Lord gave them each a new title ; calling Simon by the name of Peter, or a rock, and James and John, who were brothers, Boanerges, or the sons of thunder.

Some imagine, that this appellation was given them on account of the bold and vehement manner in which they would proclaim the gospel ; and others are of opinion, that the name was meant to signify that they would proclaim the great mysteries of the gospel in a more profound and lofty strain than the other apostles. However this may be, by this term our Lord seems to allude to the resolute disposition of the brothers, who were of a more fiery temper than the rest of the apostles. When our Saviour sent some of his disciples to make preparations for his reception at Jerusalem, upon the arrival of these disciples in Samaria, they were treated with great severity by the inhabitants. This was so highly resented by James and

his brother, that they applied to Jesus, desiring to know, whether he would not imitate the conduct of Elias, by calling down fire from heaven to consume these inhospitable and degenerate people. But the holy Jesus informed them, that he came not to destroy, but to effect the salvation of mankind.

According to Sophronius, St. James preached to the dispersed Jews, after the ascension of our blessed Saviour. Herod inflamed a violent persecution of the Christians, and during the continuance thereof, he pronounced sentence of death upon St. James.

As the apostle was conducting to the place of execution, the man who had given evidence against him, being converted by the remarkable courage and constancy which he displayed during his trial, prostrated himself at the feet of the apostle, and supplicated forgiveness for the accusation he had exhibited against him. The apostle tenderly embraced the man, saying, "Peace, my son, peace be to thee, and the pardon of thy faults." These words were no sooner pronounced, than the convert publicly proclaimed himself to be a Christian, and St. James and this man were beheaded at the same time. Thus fell the apostle St. James, the first proto-martyr, by cheerfully drinking of that cup, of which he had long before assured his Saviour that he was willing to partake.

THE LIFE OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

THIS evangelist, of whose descent we have already given an account, was probably a follower of John the Baptist; and upon hearing him pronounce Jesus to be the “Lamb of God,” he followed the Saviour of the world to the place of his abode. He was the youngest of the apostles: but yet he was peculiarly honored by his divine Master, being present at the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus, the transfiguration of our Saviour, and the agony he endured in the garden.

When our Saviour was apprehended in the garden of Gethsemane, he was deserted by St. John; who, however soon repented of his pusillanimity, and going in search of Jesus, entered the hall of the high-priest; and from this time he steadily adhered to him, and attending him at the time of his crucifixion, resolutely avowed his faith, amidst a numerous body of armed soldiers, and an immense concourse of their most inveterate enemies. With his dying breath, our Saviour recommended his disconsolate mother to the protection of St. John.

St. John resided principally in Jerusalem till the decease of the Virgin Mary, which happened about ten years after our Saviour's ascension. After this event, he retired into Asia, and applied himself with unremitting assiduity to the propagation of the Christian religion. He founded churches at Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and many other places; but he most generally resided at Ephesus, where St. Paul had many years before

established a church. After residing several years at Ephesus, St. John was accused before the emperor Domitian, of being a public subverter of the established religion of the empire. Being conveyed in chains to Rome, by the decree of this barbarous prince, St. John was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil : but the Almighty was graciously pleased to rescue him, from this apparently unavoidable destruction. This miraculous deliverance, however, was not sufficient to convince the emperor of the divinity of the commission of John, or to abate the furious enmity he had conceived against him. He condemned John to banishment in the island of Patmos, situated in the Archipelago, where he resided several years, diligently employed in teaching the poor and ignorant inhabitants the principles of the gospel ; and towards the conclusion of the reign of Domitian, he wrote his book of Revelation.

Upon the decease of Nero, and the succession of Nerva, John returned into Asia, and established his residence at Ephesus, where the people had lately subjected Timothy their bishop to martyrdom. In conjunction with seven other bishops, he now assumed the government of the extensive diocese of Asia Minor, and disposed of the clergy in the most advantageous manner that the circumstances of the times would admit. With unceasing industry, St. John continued to cultivate the Christian religion, till death put a period to all his toils and sufferings. St. John died in the beginning of the reign of Trajan, being then in the ninety-eighth year of his age ; and according to Eusebius, he was buried in the neighborhood of Ephesus.

THE LIFE OF ST. PHILIP.

ST. Philip had the distinguished honor of being first called to be a disciple of the blessed Jesus; he was a native of Bethsaida, “the city of Andrew and Peter.” Soon after our Saviour’s temptation in the wilderness, he met Andrew and his brother Peter, and after some discourse, parted from them. On the following day, as he was passing through Galilee, he met with Philip, whom he commanded to follow him, that being the mode he constantly adopted in calling his disciples. Though the brethren above-mentioned first conversed with the Saviour of the world, they immediately returned to their usual occupation, and were not called to be disciples till a year after. Immediately after being appointed to attend our Saviour, Philip communicated the glad tidings of the appearance of the Messiah, to his brother Nathaniel, whom he also introduced to our Saviour.

When our Lord was fortifying the minds of his disciples against his departure, he informed them, that he was going to make preparations for their reception in the mansions of the heavenly Canaan; saying at the same time, that he was “the way, the truth, and the life;” that “no man could come to the Father, but by him; and that knowing him, they both knew, and had seen the Father.” Not understanding these words, Philip requested, that Jesus would shew him and his brethren the Father.—Hereupon our Lord mildly rebuked him for his ignorance in not knowing, after the information he had received, that he was himself the image of his Father, by whose divine pleasure all his actions were regulated.

We are informed by ancient writers, that in the distribution made by the apostles of the several regions of the globe, where they were respectively to propagate the gospel, the Upper Asia fell to the lot of St. Philip; and in that country, he discharged the duties of his ministry with remarkable industry, and correspondent success. He established divers churches, and confirmed the faith of those whom he converted by a great variety of miracles.

Upon his arrival at Hierapolis in Phrygia, St. Philip was greatly afflicted, upon finding the people most abominably addicted to idolatrous practices. The principal object of the worship of these superstitious people, was an enormous serpent; and by his fervent and continued prayers to heaven, he procured the death of this idol, or, at least, caused it to be removed from the temple, and the adoration that had been long paid to it, consequently to be discontinued.—Having thus destroyed their deity, he explained to the multitude the great mysteries of the gospel dispensation; and this discourse prevailed upon great numbers of the people to embrace the gospel of Jesus. But the magistrates of the city, being highly exasperated against Philip, on account of the great number of people whom he daily converted from the practice of idolatrous worship, they seized him, and caused him to be scourged. After this, he was led to execution; and, according to some writers, hanged against a pillar, or, as others assert, crucified. The body of this apostle was taken down by St. Bartholomew, his fellow-laborer in the vineyard of Christ, and Mariamne, St. Philip's sister, who caused it to be buried with the usual solemnities.

THE LIFE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

THIS apostle is mentioned as one of the twelve disciples of Christ, under the name of Bartholomew ; but it is evident from many passages of scripture, that he was also called Nathaniel , and St. John expressly says, that he was a native of Cana in Galilee.

Upon being informed by Philip that he had seen the long expected Messiah, whose appearance had been so frequently predicted by Moses and the other prophets, Bartholomew said, that the Messiah could not be a native of Nazareth, as Philip had described : but in reply. Philip requested, that he would accompany him to Jesus, and receive satisfaction of the truth of what he had asserted.

Upon his approaching, he was saluted with the honorable character of being “ an Israelite in whom “ was no guile.” This salutation greatly surprized him, as he supposed himself to be an entire stranger to him : but our Lord informed him, that he had seen him while he remained under a fig-tree at some distance, before being called by Philip. Thus convinced, he acknowledged Jesus to be the promised Messiah, and the only Son of God. Hereupon our Saviour said, that since from the above instance he believed him to be the Messiah, he should in future receive more powerful testimonies in confirmation of his faith ; for he should behold the heavens open to receive him, and the celestial hosts of immortal spirits attending his triumphant entry into the blessed regions of his heavenly Father.

After the ascension of the holy Jesus, St. Bartholomew travelled to different parts, for the purpose of promulgating the gospel; and in the pursuit of this righteous occupation, he passed the Asiatic confines of India. After residing a considerable time in India and the eastern extremities of Asia, he returned to the northern and western parts; and in conjunction with St. Philip, he exerted his most strenuous endeavors for reclaiming the inhabitants of Hierapolis in Phrygia, and the neighboring parts from their idolatrous worship, and for instructing them in the infallible means of eternal salvation. The preaching of these apostles so exasperated the bigotted magistrates, that they condemned them to suffer martyrdom; but this sentence was reversed, and they were restored to liberty.

From hence St. Bartholomew proceeded to Lyconia, where, as we are assured by St. Chrysostom, he preached the gospel with great success. At length he retired to Albanople in Great Armenia, where idolatrous worship was universally practised; and here he zealously endeavored to reclaim the misguided inhabitants. But the pious efforts of this apostle, to “turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God,” were so far from proving effectual, that they rendered him obnoxious to the most violent effects of the indignation of the magistrates, who prevailed upon the governor to condemn him to suffer death; and he was accordingly crucified.

THE LIFE OF ST. MATTHEW.

ST. Matthew, who was also called Levi, though a Hebrew, and probably a native of Galilee, held an office under the Roman government, being a publican or tax-gatherer. This evangelist appears to have been collector of the duties upon such merchandizes as came by the sea of Galilee, and the toll of passengers by water. His office or custom-house was at Capernaum, the usual place of our Saviour's abode. As Jesus was going out of the city of Capernaum, to walk by the side of the sea, he perceived Matthew sitting in his office, and said to him, "Follow me.—" "And he arose and followed him." Matthew was in opulent circumstances, and had a lucrative employment: but he not only relinquished his possessions, but also hazarded incurring the displeasure of his superiors in office, for so abruptly deserting the business which they had entrusted to his care.

The Pharisees, who were accustomed to avail themselves of every opportunity of endeavoring to bring the doctrines of our blessed Saviour into disrepute, informed some of the disciples of our Lord, that their Master's familiarity with publicans and sinners, they conceived to be extremely inconsistent with that purity and holiness of character to which he pretended. Thus was our Saviour censured, in consequence of his having accepted an invitation from Matthew, to partake of an entertainment, where the guests were composed almost entirely of publicans: but he informed these people, that though the persons with whom he had associated, were infamous to a proverb, yet the circumstance of his joining the company, could not justly subject him to reproach; for his motive was

not either to encourage or countenance their iniquitous proceedings, but to convince them of the necessity of reforming their lives, as the only means of effectually providing for their eternal salvation.

After his conversion, Matthew did not return to his former employment of a publican, although St. Peter, and some other of the apostles, re-assumed the profession of fishermen, after the resurrection of our Saviour. On this head, St. Gregory observes, that some callings are in themselves innocent, and that there are others which can scarcely be exercised without sin. The corrupt, insolent, and covetous practices of the publicans, had brought the characters of those officers into universal detestation; and had Matthew returned to his former profession, he would have been in danger of yielding to those temptations to which he must have been perpetually exposed.

During the first eight years after the ascension of our blessed Saviour, St. Matthew continued to preach the gospel in various parts of Judea: but after that period, he departed from the country of Palestine, in order to explain the principles of Christianity to the Gentiles. There is nothing of certainty, as to the course St. Matthew pursued in his travels; though the province which claimed his peculiar attention, is said to have been the Asiatic Æthiopia.

Before leaving Judea, at the instance of the Jewish converts, he wrote his history of the life and transactions of the blessed Jesus. The gospel of St. Matthew was written before that of either of the other three evangelists; and for this reason, it takes the first place in the canon of the New Testament.—Nicephorus is of opinion, that this gospel was written fifteen years after the ascension of our blessed Saviour; and Irenæus supposes it to have been produced

at a much later period. It must, however, have been extant previous to the dispersion of the apostles; for St. Bartholomew took it with him into India, and left it in that country. The ancients concur in opinion, that this work was originally written in Hebrew; and this, indeed is very probable, since it was intended by the author for the use of those who had been born and bred in Judea and Jerusalem; and therefore it is reasonable to suppose, that he wrote to them in their mother-tongue. Being translated into Greek, this version received the unanimous approbation of the apostles, and consequently obtained equal authority with the original. By whom this gospel was translated, is uncertain. Athanasius, in his Synopsis, ascribes the work of St. James the Less; Anastatius attributes it to St. Paul and St. Luke; and others say it was written by St. John. There is no certainty as to what became of the original Hebrew, or whether that copy of it which Pantænus is said to have brought from the Indies, was deposited in the city of Alexandria, and there kept till the time of St. Jerome, who avers that he perused it.

St. Matthew was a man extremely addicted to spiritual contemplation; he was temperate and abstemious to an exemplary degree, denying himself the common gratifications and conveniencies of life, and subsisting entirely upon vegetable productions. He was also a man of singular humility. In mentioning the apostles by pairs, the other evangelists place St. Matthew before St. Thomas; but he modestly speaks of himself last.

The other apostles mention the former sordid and disgraceful course of life in which this evangelist had been engaged, only under the name of Levi: but speaking of himself, he mentions his former circumstances and situation, under the name of Matthew.

Venantius Fortunatus says, St. Matthew suffered martyrdom at Nadabber, a city in the Asiatic Ethiopia: but the manner of his death is not particularly mentioned. Nicephorus writes, that in consequence of his prayers to heaven, the fire kindled to burn him was suddenly extinguished, and that he afterwards died according to the common course of nature.—Dorotheus asserts, that St. Matthew was honorably interred at Hierapolis in Parthia. St. Chrysostom imagines, that St. Matthew died before the seventieth year of Christ, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans.

THE LIFE OF ST. THOMAS.

WE have no account in the evangelical history, either of the country or kindred of St. Thomas: but from circumstances, however, we may pretty safely conclude, that he was a Jew; and in all probability, he was a native of Galilee. Learned men concur, in giving the following reason for St. Thomas being called Didymus: when the Jews travelled into foreign countries, or were accustomed to converse familiarly with Greeks or Romans, they assumed to themselves Greek and Latin names, bearing an affinity to, or perhaps being synonymous with those given them by their parents. Thus Thomas, a Syriac name, denoting a twin, was explained by Didymus, which has the same import in the Greek.

Soon after being appointed to the exercise of the apostolical duties, St. Thomas afforded an eminent instance of his willingness to encounter the utmost danger and difficulty, rather than abandon the righteous cause of his great Lord and Master. When the rest of the apostles were endeavoring to dissuade Jesus from going into Judea, on account of the decease of Lazarus, and were greatly troubled, lest he should be stoned by the multitude, finding their arguments would prove ineffectual, Thomas said, "Let us go, that we may die with him." For he concluded, that instead of restoring Lazarus to life, his Master would himself submit to the power of death, through the fury of the populace. When the holy Jesus, a short time previous to his sufferings, was speaking to his apostles concerning the joys of heaven, informing them, that he was about to depart, in order to prepare for their reception in the regions of eternal

bliss ; adding, that they might follow him, and that they knew both where he was going, and the way thither ; St. Thomas replied, that they knew not where he was going, and were equally ignorant as to the way leading to the place to which he alluded. Hereupon our Lord emphatically replied, “ I am the “ way ;” thereby intimating, that the Almighty had sent him to instruct mankind in the means of obtaining eternal life, which they could not fail of enjoying, if they followed his example.

On the day of the resurrection of our blessed Redeemer, he came to the house where a number of his disciples were assembled : but at this meeting, Thomas was not present, having, it is probable, not joined his brethren since their dispersion in the garden ; when the apprehension of danger, induced each of them to consult his particular personal safety. Upon being informed by his brethren, that their Master had appeared to them, he refused to yield credit to their assertion ; saying that what they had mistaken for their Master, must have been a spectre or apparition ; which opinion, had he been present, he would have retained, unless convinced of the identity of the person of his Master, by the prints of the nails, and the wounds in his hands and side.

Notwithstanding this infidelity in suspending his faith of those facts which the ancient prophets had expressly foretold, which Christ himself had inculcated in his discourses, and which the other apostles had attested, with infinite condescension our blessed Redeemer again presented himself, when Thomas and his brethren were assembled ; and, after the usual salutation of “ Peace be unto you,” he turned to Thomas, commanding him to “ reach forth his hand, and “ put it to his side, and his fingers into the prints of “ the nails.” Thomas obeyed, and being convinced

of his error, exclaimed, " My Lord, and my God ;" thus acknowledging that Jesus had proved himself omnipotent, in subduing the power of death ; and omniscient, in being sensible of the scruples * he had entertained. Our Saviour now observed, that it was happy for him, that he believed in the evidence of his senses ; adding, however, that he would have been more commendable, had he believed without such evidence, since he was not unacquainted with the several predictions, purporting that the Son of God would rise from the dead.

After the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost, which, according to his promise, our blessed Redeemer poured upon his apostles, St. Thomas and his brethren preached the gospel in different parts of Judea ; and after the dispersion of the Christian church in Jerusalem, Thomas repaired into Parthia, the province wherein he was appointed to discharge the duties of his holy ministration. After this, he preached to the Medes, Persians, Carmanians, Hyrcanians, Bactrians, and the neighboring nations. During his residence in Persia, he is said to have met with the magi, or wise men, who upon hearing of the birth of Christ, had travelled through a great extent of country, in order to pay their adorations to him ; and after baptizing these people, he admitted them among the number of his followers, employing them as his assistants in propagating the doctrines of Christianity.

Passing through Persia and Ethiopia, St. Thomas travelled into the Indies. When the Portuguese first visited India, after their discovery of a passage by

* By this doubting of Thomas, we are more confirmed, than by the faith of the other apostles ; for this circumstance was productive of an incontrovertible proof, that the very body in which our Lord suffered upon the cross, was restored to life.

the Cape of Good Hope, they collected several particulars concerning St. Thomas ; partly from ancient monuments, and partly from uncontroverted traditions, which had been preserved by the Christians. The substance of these particulars is, that St. Thomas arrived at Socotora, an island in the Arabian Sea ; from whence he proceeded to Cranganor, where having gained many converts, he travelled farther into the east. Having successfully preached the gospel, he returned into the kingdom of Coromandel ; and at Malipur, the metropolis, situated in the neighborhood of the mouth of the Ganges, he began to erect a place for divine worship : but this work was interrupted by the idolatrous priests, and Sagamo, the prince of the country. The apostle, however, performed several miracles, and with such effect, that he was permitted to proceed in his undertaking ; and Sagamo himself being converted to Christianity, a great number of his subjects followed the example of their prince.

From the great success of the gospel, the Brachmans dreading that their own religion would be extirpated, were extremely exasperated against St. Thomas ; and knowing that he was accustomed to retire to a tomb at a small distance from the city, for the exercise of private devotion, they resolved that this place should be the scene of the sanguinary designs which they had projected against the apostle. While he was fervently praying to the Almighty, the Brachmans, attended by a number of armed followers, surprised the apostle in his retirement ; and having discharged against him a shower of darts, one of the priests ran him through the body with a lance.

The body of St. Thomas was interred by his disciples in the church which he had lately constructed, and which was afterwards improved into a magnificent structure. According to St. Chrysostom, St. Tho-

mas, who was originally the most incredulous and weak of the apostles, became, through the condescension of Christ in satisfying his scruples, the most active and invincible of the whole number; travelling over a great part of the globe, and preaching the gospel to ignorant and barbarous nations, with unremitting zeal and fortitude.

THE LIFE OF ST. JAMES THE LESS.

IT may be reasonably conjectured, that St. James the Less was the son of Joseph, afterwards the husband of Mary, by his first wife, whom St. Jerome stiles Escha; adding, that she was the daughter of Aggi, brother to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. Hence he was reputed to be the brother of our blessed Saviour. In the evangelical writings, we indeed find, that several persons are mentioned as the brethren of our Lord; but in what sense, was greatly controverted by the ancients. St. Jerome, St. Chrysostom, and some others, assert them to have been so denominated from their being the sons of Mary, cousin-german, or according to the Hebrew idiom, sister to the Virgin Mary. But Eusebius, Epiphanius, and others say, that they were the children of Joseph by a former wife: and this seems best to accord with what the evangelist says. “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James and Joses, Simeon and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man these things?” Hence it appears, that the Jews understood these persons to be not only Christ’s kinsmen, but his brethren.

After the resurrection, St. James the Less was honored with a particular appearance of our Lord; and this circumstance, though not mentioned by the evangelists, is recorded by St. Paul. Some time after our Saviour had appeared to James, he was constituted bishop of Jerusalem, being advanced beyond his brethren on account of his relationship to Christ; and for this reason, Simeon was elected to succeed him in that see; for after James, he was the next kins-

man to our Saviour ; a consideration which induced Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, though they had been greatly honored by our Lord, to decline contending for that high office.

After the conversion St. Paul, upon his coming to Jerusalem, he applied to James, who honored him with the right hand of fellowship. Peter sent news of his miraculous deliverance from prison to St. James. "Go, shew these things unto James, and to the brethren." Thus he commanded that the intelligence should be communicated to the brethren in general, but particularly to James, who was the pastor of the church.

St. James was remarkably diligent in the discharge of the duties of his sacred office, and his preaching was attended with proportionate success. His zeal and industry rendered him a particular object of the rage of the enemies of the gospel, whom he has thus described : "they please not God, and are contrary to all men." Provoked in consequence of St. Paul having escaped the effects of their fury, by making an appeal to Cæsar, they directed their wrath against St. James : but being unable to effect their cruel design during the government of Festus, they resolved to attempt it under the procuratorship of Albinus, his successor, Ananus the younger of the Sadducees, being then high-priest.

In pursuance of their iniquitous design, a council was summoned for the purpose of examining St. James, whom this assembly condemned as a violator of the law. But lest the people should be enraged, and a popular tumult ensue, the Scribes and Pharisees endeavored to ensnare the apostle ; insidiously informing him, that they had reposed an implicit confidence in him, and that the whole Jewish nation as-

cribed to him the title of a just man : and they requested that he would avail himself of the opportunity afforded by the great number of people assembled on occasion of the paschal solemnity, of correcting the erroneous opinions they had imbibed respecting Jesus : adding, that if he would publicly disclaim his being the Messiah, they would accompany him to the top of the temple, whence his proclamation might be heard by the multitude.

The apostle said he would accept their proposal, of addressing the people from the top of the temple ; and being stationed on one of the pinnacles, the Scribes and Pharisees demanded that he would declare his sentiments concerning the crucified Jesus. Hereupon St. James said in an audible voice, “ Why do you enquire of Jesus, the Son of Man ? He sits in heaven, at the right-hand of the Majesty on high, and will come again in the clouds of heaven.” Hearing this declaration, the multitude exclaimed “ Hosanna to the Son of David.”

Thus disappointed, and knowing that the measures they had pursued could not fail more strongly to confirm the people in their belief of the gospel, they determined to put James to instant death, that the fate of this apostle might deter others from acknowledging Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. They accordingly cried out, that Justus himself was seduced and become an impostor, and immediately precipitated him from the pinnacle whereon he stood into the court below. Notwithstanding the violence of the fall, this holy man was so far recovered as to be able to rise on his knees, and fervently pray to heaven in behalf of his murderers. But his cruel and unrelenting enemies cast a great number of weighty stones at him, even at the very time when he was benevolently supplicating the Almighty to pardon their iniquities ;

but one of the multitude, more merciful than his associates, released him from his sufferings, by putting a period to his life with a fuller's club.

Thus fell this righteous man in the ninety-sixth year of his age, and about twenty-four years after the glorious ascension of our blessed Saviour. His death was severely lamented by all the members of the Christian church, and even, as Josephus acknowledges, by the most just and sober people of the Jewish nation. St. James the Less was a man of exemplary piety and virtue, and of such unblemished integrity, that he obtained the honor of being surnamed the Just by his countrymen. He was a man of such abstracted piety, as entirely to neglect his person, that his religious duties might not suffer interruption. He always lived in a state of celibacy, and neither eat flesh nor drank wine, nor any other kind of strong liquor : he only clothed himself in linen, and neither anointed, bathed, nor shaved his head, to which the inhabitants of the eastern countries were accustomed. He frequently retired into the temple, and there continued alone, earnestly supplicating the Almighty to pardon the sins of mankind. He was so constantly employed in prayer, that, as we are assured by Eusebius, the skin of his knees was as hard as the hide of a camel.

St. James wrote only one epistle, and that probably but a short time previous to his martyrdom ; for it contains some passages, mentioning the near approach of the destruction of the Jewish nation. This epistle was addressed to the Jewish converts dispersed in the eastern countries, and intended to comfort them under their sufferings, and confirm their faith.

The more conscientious and religious part of the citizens were exceedingly displeased with Ananus, on

account of his being instrumental in the horrid murder of St. James; and they privately sent to Agrippa, who had advanced him to the dignity of the high-priesthood, beseeching, that he might be restrained from the perpetration of future acts of unprovoked cruelty. Some of those people who went forth to meet Albinus, and congratulate him on his being promoted to his government, represented to him, that Ananus had abused the trust reposed in him, by assembling the council which had condemned James, without having a licence for that purpose. Hereupon Albinus wrote to Ananus, severely reproaching him for his conduct; and he also removed him from the pontifical office, after he had enjoyed it three months.

THE LIFE OF ST. SIMON THE ZEALOT.

IN the catalogue of the twelve apostles, St. Simon is distinguished from Simon Peter by two surnames, being called the Canaanite and the Zealot. Hence some have imagined, that he was a native of Cana in Galilee, and that it was on occasion of his marriage, that our Saviour wrought the miracle of changing water into wine. In his Greek Testament, Dr. Mill has observed, that this name is variously written, Cananæus, Chananæus, and Cannæus. The learned Cave says, it has no relation to Simon's birth-place, but descends from a Hebrew root denoting zeal.—St. Luke stiles him Simon Zealotes; so that it appears, his two names have the same signification.—When and upon what account he was called Zealot, cannot be clearly ascertained. Nicephorus dates this from the time of his commencing the apostolical office: but had the name been given him on this occasion, it is probable, that the circumstance would have been mentioned in the gospel, as well as the names of Peter and Boanerges, or have at least been taken notice of by some writer of much greater antiquity than Nicephorus. Others are of opinion, that previous to his engaging in the service of Christ, he was one of that particular sect, or party among the Jews, called Zealots, on account of the great zeal they professed for the honor of God. The zealots are mentioned by Josephus and other ancient writers, as a people whose zeal degenerated into every species of the most abominable licentiousness; and these writers concur, in mentioning them as the most deplorable pests of the Jewish nation.

Though it may be very fairly presumed that this apostle was of the sect of Zealots, yet we are not on that account to degrade him in our esteem, any more than St. Matthew for being originally a publican, or St. Paul a Pharisee, and a violent persecutor of the disciples of the blessed Jesus. Whatever the former character of St. Simon, it is certain, that after his conversion, he was a most zealous advocate for the honor of his Master; and considered the enemies of Christ as his own, however nearly allied to him by blood or affection. He was himself a most rigid observer of all religious duties, and constantly manifested a steady and pious indignation against those who professed a regard to that holy religion which they dishonored by their irregular courses.

According to Theodoret, Simon was of the tribe of Zebulon or Naphthali; and thus he distinguishes him from Simeon, the brother of our Saviour, who was of the tribe of Judah, and afterwards bishop of Jerusalem. At the feast of Pentecost, St. Simon received the miraculous gifts of the holy Spirit; so that he was equally qualified with the rest of the apostles, for discharging the duties of the gospel ministration. There is no doubt of his having exercised the gifts bestowed upon him with zeal and fidelity, but in what quarter of the globe is uncertain. Some writers assert, that he travelled into Egypt, Cyrene, and Africa, and likewise all over the Mauritania, proclaiming the gospel of Christ to those ignorant and barbarous nations; and others add, that he afterwards proceeded into the western parts, and preached in Great-Britain; where, they assert, after he had converted great multitudes of the people, and sustained manifold hardships and persecutions, he suffered martyrdom by crucifixion. None of these writers, however, have pretended to ascertain the place, either of the crucifixion or interment of St. Simon.

THE LIFE OF ST. JUDE.

IN the evangelical history, this apostle is mentioned by three different names ; Jude, or Judas, Thaddeus, and Lebbeus. The first of these appellations he had in common with many other Jews, and in honor of one of the twelve patriarchs ; and it is probable, that the other two were added, to distinguish him from Judas the traitor, whose conduct had rendered that appellation odious to the Christians. Lebbeus, according to the definition of St. Jerome, signifies a man of wit and understanding ; and Thaddeus imports divine fervor.

St. Jude was brother to St. James the Less, being the sons of Cleophas and Mary ; and consequently he was in the same degree of relationship to our Saviour with St. James, whose affinity to our Lord we have explained in the life of that apostle.

We are unable to determine, when or by what means, he became a disciple of Christ, no particulars concerning him being on record till we find him mentioned in the catalogue of the twelve apostles ; nor is he afterwards mentioned till our Lord's last supper, when discoursing to his disciples concerning his departure, he said, " the world should see him no more, though *they* should see him." Hereupon the apostle said, " Lord how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself " to us, and not unto the world ?" By this question it appears, that Jude expected the Messiah would establish a secular kingdom : but the reply corrects his error, informing him, that the world was unqualified for the glorious appearance of the Messiah, having treated his person with disrespect, and rejected his

doctrine; and that therefore his intimate converse, and special acts of grace, would in future be confined to those who made worthy returns, by instances of mutual love, and a due obedience to his commands.

After the glorious resurrection of our holy and blessed Redeemer, St. Simon resided with the rest of the apostles in the city of Jerusalem, till they received the effusion of the Holy Ghost, at the feast of Pentecost. We are told by Paulinus, that the province which fell to the share of St. Jude in the apostolical division, was Lybia; but he does not mention whether it was the Cyrenean Lybia, which is supposed to have received the gospel of St. Mark, or the more southern part of Africa. We have no other account of his preaching in those countries.

The Armenians aver, that St. Jude first introduced Christianity amongst them, and will not admit that his remains were deposited in St. Peter's at Rome; urging that he died, and was buried in their country. The Greek Menologies intimate, that this apostle died in consequence of being shot with arrows. But according to the general opinion of the writers of the Latin church, he suffered martyrdom with St. Peter in Persia; and in consequence of this supposition, both these apostles are commemorated on the same anniversary.

We have only one epistle under the name of St. Jude; and this is placed the last of those seven, which in the sacred canon are stiled the catholic.—It bears no particular inscription, but is supposed to have been originally intended for the converted Jews in their several dispersions, as were the epistles of St. Peter.

The subject of St. Jude's epistle, is nearly similar

to that of the second epistle of St. Peter, whose sense he principally follows, and whose expressions he frequently introduces. But as the iniquitous practices of the Nicolaitans, Gnostics, the followers of Simon Magus, and others, had arrived to a most exorbitant excess, he opposed their heretical principles with greater severity than St. Peter had done. And because true Christian charity, though zealous, is without bitterness and hatred, he exhorts his disciples to pursue gentle measures for effecting the reformation of those deluded people, and “to pluck them as brands out of the fire;” meaning by fire, their impious principles and practices, which, if persevered in, would inevitably produce their destruction. He plainly appears to intimate, that most of the apostles were dead at the time of writing his epistle, which seems not to have been written till after the reign of Nero, and the destruction of Jerusalem.

That St. Jude was a married man is unquestionable, for Hegeſippus mentions two of his grand-children. St. Jude, like St. James, St. John, and sometimes St. Paul, does not stile himself an apostle, but “the servant of God:” but he calls himself Jude, the brother of James. Many of the Greek writers insist, that he died at Berytus; but in this it is evident, that they confound this apostle with Thaddues, the evangelist of Edessa.

THE LIFE OF ST. MATTHIAS.

AFTER the eleven apostles had attended our Saviour to the summit of Mount Olivet, and been witnesses to his glorious ascension into heaven, they returned to the house of St. John, on Mount Sion, which Nicephorus informs us, was the place where the primitive Christians were accustomed to assemble. The company consisted of about an hundred and twenty persons; and in the midst of these St. Peter arose, and delivered a succinct narrative of the treacherous conduct of Judas Iscariot. After this, he moved for the immediate election of a new apostle, that the original might be again complete; recommending at the same time, that the person to whom this important office should be committed, might be one of those disciples who had punctually attended Jesus during the whole course of his public ministry, from the time of his baptism by St. John, to that of his ascension into heaven; for it was necessary, that the person to succeed to the apostolical dignity, should be an unexceptionable witness of the holy life and mighty works of the divine Jesus, and particularly of his resurrection, that eminent ratification of all his doctrines and miracles.

The assembly immediately assented to the proposal of St. Peter, and two persons were nominated as candidates; one of these was called Joseph, surnamed Barsabas and Justus, supposed to be the brother of James the Less; and the other was called Matthias. The mode of election was by lots, a manner of determination commonly resorted to, both by the Jews and Gentiles, for the choice of magistrates and other public officers. This method of decision the apos-

bles had recourse to, particularly on this occasion, because they were not yet inspired by the Holy Ghost, by whose especial influence they were afterwards directed in all the important concerns of life. They now fervently prayed to the Almighty, that he who knew "the hearts of all men, would shew, whether "of those two he had chosen." The lots being put into an urn, the name of Matthias was first drawn; and he was accordingly declared to be the twelfth apostle.

Hence we may with certainty conclude, though the scripture be silent with respect to the time when Matthias became a disciple of our blessed Saviour, that he was one of his earliest followers and attendants. St. Peter expressed an anxious wish, that the man who should succeed to the apostolical vacancy, might be one fully qualified, with the rest of the brethren, to bear testimony, from his own knowledge, of the divine nature and wonderful works of the holy Jesus. Eusebius and Epiphanius, and Clemens Alexandrinus, say, that St. Matthias was one of the seventy disciples of our Lord.

Having preached a considerable time in different parts of Judea, St. Matthias, as we are informed by the Greek writers, travelled eastward. St. Jerome says, his principal residence was near the eruption of the river Aparsus, and the haven Hyssus, in Cappadocia. He was indefatigably industrious in his endeavors to convert the uncivilized inhabitants to Christianity, which considerable numbers of them embraced. In the prosecution of this holy work, however, he was exposed to innumerable hardships and sufferings; and he suffered martyrdom in the year of our Lord 61, or as others assert, in the year 64.—Dorotheus asserts, that he died at Sebastople, and was buried there near the temple of the sun. And

ancient martyrology says, he was seized by the Jews, and being accused as a blasphemer, was first stoned and then beheaded. But the Greek offices, which are supported by several ancient breviaries, say, that he was crucified. Some contend, that his body was conveyed to Rome ; and others as strenuously assert that it was interred at Treves, in Germany. Bolandus is of opinion, that the body of Matthias which is at Rome, is that of Matthias, who was bishop of Jerusalem in the year of our Lord 120, and that his history has been confounded with that of the apostle.

THE LIFE OF ST. MARK.

THIS evangelist, who was one of the tribe of Levi, was descended from Jewish ancestors. By the ancients, he was generally esteemed to be one of the seventy disciples of our blessed Saviour; and Eusebius says, that he was sent by St. Peter to preach the gospel in Egypt; and in Alexandria, the metropolis of the country, he established a Christian church.—He converted great multitudes of both sexes; and his preaching was attended with such remarkable success, that the people not only embraced the Christian faith, but also conformed more strictly to the rules of morality.

Having preached in several of the oriental parts of Egypt, he travelled westward to Lybia, passing through Marmarica, Pentapolis, and other neighboring countries, inhabited by barbarous and idolatrous people; but by his preaching and miracles he prevailed upon them to embrace Christianity, and confirmed them in that faith.

Returning to Alexandria, he preached the gospel with great freedom and boldness, and constituted governors and pastors of the church; but while industriously laboring in the vineyard of his great Master, his progress in his holy avocation was interrupted by the idolatrous people.

About Easter, when they were celebrating the solemnities of Serapis, the multitude tumultuously entering the church, seized St. Mark, who was then performing divine service, and having bound his feet with cords, cruelly dragged him through the streets,

and over the most craggy places, to the Bucelus, a precipice near the sea, where they confined him in a lonesome prison. During the night, his great and beloved Master appeared to him in a vision, and comforted him under his afflictions, encouraging him to submit to his fate with Christian magnanimity and fortitude.

On the following morning the populace renewed their barbarity, dragging him about the streets till he expired. After this horrid murder, they wantonly mangled, and then cruelly burnt the body of the deceased. This abominable act of cruelty being perpetrated, the Christians carefully collected the bones and ashes of St. Mark, and buried them near the place where he had been accustomed to preach. The remains of this Evangelist were afterwards removed from Alexandria with great funeral pomp, and conveyed to Venice, where they were religiously honored, and St. Mark was adopted the titular saint and patron of that state. This evangelist suffered martyrdom on the fifteenth of April, but in what year is uncertain; though from circumstances it appears probable, that it happened towards the conclusion of the reign of Nero.

The gospel of St. Mark was written at the earnest entreaty of the converts in the city of Rome. Not content with having heard the discourses of St. Peter, they solicited St. Mark, his disciple, to commit to writing a narrative of what that apostle had delivered to them. This task was undertaken with cheerfulness, and executed with remarkable success. The work being approved by St. Peter, it was commanded to be publicly read in the Christian assemblies.

THE LIFE OF ST. LUKE.

THE city of Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, gave birth to St. Luke. This place abounded in seminaries of learning, and was eminent for the proficients it produced in the arts and sciences. Having acquired a considerable share of learning in his own country, he travelled into Greece and Egypt for further improvement; and becoming remarkably skillful in the science of physic, he determined upon the practice thereof, as the means of earning a subsistence. But it does not hence follow, that he was a man distinguished either for his birth or fortune; for in the early ages, the healing art was generally practised by domestics, or persons in a dependant situation. Grotius is therefore of opinion, that St. Luke went to Rome, and lived there in quality of a physician to some noble family; and that after obtaining his freedom, he returned to his own country, and there continued to pursue the practice of physic.

He also acquired great reputation by his skill in painting; and an ancient inscription found in a vault near the church of St. Maria de Via lata at Rome, supposed to be the place where St. Luke resided, a picture of the blessed Virgin is mentioned, "being one of the seven painted by St. Luke."

The evangelist, whose life we are writing, was a Jewish proselyte: but at what time he embraced Christianity is uncertain. St. Luke was the constant companion of St. Paul in all his travels, and his fellow-laborer in the vineyard of Christ. He was highly esteemed by that apostle, who appears to enjoy particular satisfaction in acknowledging him as his com-

panion. He calls St. Luke "the beloved physician," and "the brother whose praise is in the gospel."

St. Luke wrote two books in the Greek language for the use of the Christian church, being his gospel, and the Acts of the Apostles; and he dedicated both these productions to Theophilus, which many of the ancients suppose to be a feigned name, denoting a lover of God, an appellation commonly attributed to sincere Christians. But others are of a contrary opinion, and because the title of "most excellent," the usual form of address to princes and great men, they suppose Theophilus to have been a person of rank.

St. Luke is supposed to have written his gospel at Rome, during the two years imprisonment of St. Paul in that city. He forcibly mentions the several circumstances which relate to the sacerdotal character of the blessed Jesus, and records the principal transactions of his life; and therefore, in accommodating the four symbolical representations, mentioned in * Ezekiel, to the four evangelists, the ancients assigned the ox or calf to St. Luke.

The history of the apostolical acts, St. Luke also wrote at Rome; from the dedication, it appears to have been produced after his gospel; and from the concluding part we may reasonably conjecture, that he finished it about the end of St. Paul's imprisonment. In this history, he not only relates the actions, but also the sufferings of some of the chief apostles, and of St. Paul in particular, of whose transactions he was perfectly qualified to produce an authentic narrative. He particularly enlarges upon the great miracles performed by the apostles.

* Ezek. i. 10. The other representations are a man, a lion, and an eagle; the first of which is generally given to St. Mathew; the second to St. Mark; and the last to St. John.

We have no certain information, either as to the manner or the time of the death of St. Luke : but there is reason to believe, that he died either in the eightieth, or eighty-fourth year of his age. By the command of Constantine, or his son Constantius, if we may rely on the authority of Nicephorus, his remains were sent to Constantinople, and deposited in the church built to the memory of the apostles.

THE LIFE OF ST. BARNABAS.

THOUGH not one of the twelve, St. Barnabas is honored by St. Luke, and the primitive writers, with the title of an apostle; and indeed, the great share which he is represented to have had in the "Acts of the Apostles," gives him a just title to this distinction. He was originally called Joses; but his countrymen added the name of Barnabas, to denote some excellent quality which he possessed. St. Luke interprets this name, "the son of consolation;" and St. Jerome says, it further signifies "the son of a prophet." Both these explanations will accord with the character of this apostle, who was eminent for his prophetic gifts and endowments, as well as for that spirit of benevolence which he was constantly exerting in behalf of his Christian brethren. He was a descendant of the tribe of Levi; and his ancestors had removed from Judea, and settled in the isle of Cyprus. He was educated at Jerusalem, under Gamaliel, the preceptor of St. Paul. It is probable, that the accidental circumstance of being educated under the same master, proved the first foundation of that intimate friendship, which subsisted between those two eminent servants of the blessed Jesus.

The first mention of Barnabas in the scripture, is the record of that memorable service to the church, in disposing of his patrimony in Cyprus, and giving the whole produce to the apostles, to be distributed by them among the indigent followers of Christ. This example was followed by many other opulent Christians: but Barnabas is mentioned as having sold the most valuable estate in the island, and being the most active in promoting this laudable design.

When St. Paul, three years after his conversion, came to Jerusalem, he addressed himself to Barnabas, who introduced him to Peter and James, and satisfied them of the sincerity of his faith in Jesus. This recommendation was so powerful, that Paul was not only admitted into the communion of the apostles, but invited to Peter's house, "and abode with him " fifteen days."

Upon the inhabitants of Antioch making application for some of the superiors of the religious order to come amongst them, in order to confirm their faith in the gospel, which had been preached to them with remarkable success, St. Barnabas was deputed to preach the gospel to those people, and by his exemplary life and pious discourses, he made very considerable additions to the Christian church. The field being too extensive for one laborer, Barnabas went to Tarsus, to procure the assistance of Saul, who returned with him to Antioch, and continued to assist a whole year, in the pious work of establishing the Christian church. Their labors proved successful; and the disciples of Antioch, who before this had called themselves brethren, believers, and elect, were stiled by their enemies, Nazarenes; and Galileans were now first called Christians.

In consequence of the prophecy of Agabus, that there would shortly be a famine throughout the world, or as it is most generally understood, throughout the Roman empire, and particularly in Judea, the Antiochians sent large contributions by Barnabas and Paul, for the relief of their brethren in Jerusalem. Having discharged their charitable commission, they returned to Jerusalem, taking with them John, whose surname was Mark, the son of Mary, and sister of Barnabas.

A short time after the return of the apostles to An-

tiach, an express revelation was made by one of the prophets, purporting, that "Barnabas and Saul should be set apart for an extraordinary work, whereunto the Holy Ghost had assigned them" In consequence of this, a day was appointed for a solemn mission, and they were solemnly ordained to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. From being united with St. Paul in this commission, St. Barnabas obtained the name of an apostle.

Being consecrated the apostles of the Gentiles, Barnabas and Paul departed from Antioch, being attended by John Mark, who acted in the capacity of their deacon. Having preached the gospel in various parts, they arrived at Pamphylia, whence to the great grief of his uncle, Barnabas returned to Jerusalem.

Proceeding to Lystra, Paul cured a man who had been born lame; and this miracle so astonished the inhabitants, that they behaved towards him and his companion as divinities: but they modestly disclaimed the honors offered them by the people.

By the artifices of their former malicious persecutors, the inhabitants of Lystra were, at length, so violently inflamed against the apostles, that they assaulted them with unrelenting fury, and even stoned Paul till they believed him to be dead. By the divine assistance, however, he soon recovered his health and spirits; then departed with his companion for Derbe, where they converted many of the people to the religion of the holy Jesus.

After travelling through several countries, preaching the gospel, and confirming the faith of their disciples, they returned to Antioch; where soon after their arrival, they assembled the church for the purpose of composing a disagreement, occasioned by

some of the Jewish converts having endeavored to persuade the Gentiles, that they were enjoined to an observation of the law of Moses, as well as the gospel dispensation. All their endeavors to reconcile this difference proving ineffectual, Paul, Barnabas, and others, were nominated to submit the question to the decision of the church at Jerusalem. The synod having decreed that the Gentile converts should not have circumcision and other Jewish rites imposed upon them, the apostles returned to Antioch, accompanied by John Mark.

Some time after this, St. Peter arrived at Antioch; and, lest he should render himself odious to the bigotted Jews refused to hold communication with the Gentiles; and the authority of this example, seduced Barnabas into the same error; of which, however, they both repented, in consequence of being severely reproved by St. Paul.

A few days after the above event, Paul proposed to Barnabas, that they should repeat their late travels among the Gentiles; and this was approved of by Barnabas, who, however, desired that they might be accompanied by his reconciled nephew, John Mark. This was resolutely opposed by Paul, on account of John Mark having, when at Pamphylia, proved himself deficient in the constancy of becoming a faithful minister of Christ. Hence arose a disagreement; in consequence of which, these holy men, who had for many years been fellow laborers in the vineyard of Christ, separated. Barnabas and his kinsman sailed for Cyprus; and Paul, accompanied by Silas, travelled into Syria and Cilicia.

Barnabas afterwards travelled into various quarters of the globe, preaching the glad tidings of salvation, healing the sick, and performing other miracles.—

Returning again to his native island, he pursued the exercise of his holy ministration. While he was preaching in the synagogue, some Jews from Syria and Salamis, seized and barbarously stoned him to death. John Mark, who was a spectator of this horrid act of cruelty, privately interred his body in a cave, near the city. The body of St. Barnabas is said to have been discovered during the reign of the emperor Zeno, in the year of our Lord 485; and the tradition adds, that a Hebrew manuscript of the gospel of St. Matthew, was found lying upon his breast.

THE LIFE OF ST. STEPHEN.

THERE are no records concerning the birth, country or parents of St. Stephen. It does not appear that St. Stephen and the other six deacons, had any particular designation previous to their appointment to the service of the tables ; and therefore Stephen could not have been one of the seventy disciples, although it is probable, that he was long a zealous follower of the blessed Jesus.

He was a zealous promoter of the religion of the blessed Jesus, and performed a great number of miracles, in confirmation of his doctrine. His unremitting solicitude in obtaining converts to the cause of Christianity, highly exasperated the Jews. Some people of the synagogue of the freed men of Cyrenia, Alexandria, and other places, engaged in a controversy with Stephen ; and being unable to destroy the force of his arguments, they suborned false witnesses to accuse him of having committed blasphemy against God and Moses. These mercenary and perjured wretches deposed before the Sanhedrim, that they had heard Stephen speak disrespectfully of the temple and law ; and affirm, that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the holy place, and abolish the law of Moses. St. Stephen appeared before this assembly with an undaunted resolution ; and while he spoke in defence of his own innocence, his face became brilliant as that of an angel.

Having concluded his defence, his enemies were furiously enraged : but regardless of their malice, Stephen raised his eyes towards heaven, and perceived the glory of God, and the blessed Jesus standing

on the right hand of Omnipotence. Addressing himself to the council, he declared the particulars of his vision ; which so exasperated them, that they put their hands to their ears, and by other signals intimated, that they had heard some dreadful blasphemy ; and immediately after, they hurried him out of the city, and stoned him to death.

On these cruel occasions, the witnesses were accustomed to cast the first stones at the victims of the popular fury : but whether they conformed to this particular at the martyrdom of St. Stephen, is unknown. The evangelist, however, informs us, that the witnesses were principally concerned in this barbarous transaction ; for they stripped off their garments, and laid them at the feet of Saul, then a violent persecutor of the Christians, but afterwards one of the most zealous ministers of the gospel. In the midst of his torments, St. Stephen continued fervently to pray to the Almighty, that he would pardon his persecutors, saying, “ Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.”

THE LIFE OF ST. TIMOTHY.

ACCORDING to some writers, Timothy was a native of Lystra ; but others are of opinion, that he was born at Derbe. His father was a Gentile, and his mother was a Jewess, named Eunice. St. Paul extols the parents of Timothy on account of their piety, and of the great care they took of the education of their son.

When St. Paul came to Lystra, about the year of Christ 52, he circumcised Timothy, previous to admitting him among the number of his disciples. Timothy was so active a minister, that he rendered Paul very essential service in promulgating the gospel. We cannot ascertain the time when he was constituted a bishop, but it is supposed, that he very early received the imposition of the hands of the apostle. St. Paul calls him his dearly beloved son, his brother, the companion of his labors, and a man of God.

Timothy accompanied St. Paul to Macedonia, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea ; and, at this latter place, he was left, together with Silas, to confirm the converts. From Athens Paul sent for Timothy to join him ; and soon after his arrival, he was dispatched by the apostle to Thessalonica. From this place, accompanied by Silas, he repaired to meet St. Paul at Corinth.

Some years afterwards, St. Paul dispatched Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, ordering the former to call at Corinth, and remind the inhabitants of the

doctrines he had preached to them. Joining Paul in Asia, they travelled together into Macedonia.

When St. Paul returned from Rome, in the year of Christ 64, he left Timothy at Ephesus, to promote the church there, of which he was the first bishop. From Macedonia St. Paul wrote to Timothy, recommending him to moderate his austerities, and to drink a little wine, on account of the weakness of his stomach, and the frequent infirmities to which he was subject. After the arrival of the apostle at Rome, in the year 65, being but a short time before his death, he wrote a second epistle to Timothy, expressing the most tender affection for that disciple. He requests him to repair to Rome before winter, and to take with him several articles which he had left at Troas. It is reasonable to suppose, that he complied with the apostle's desire, and that he was a witness to his martyrdom. There is nothing known to a certainty with respect to the death of Timothy.

THE LIFE OF ST. TITUS.

BEING born a Gentile, Titus became a convert to the preaching of St. Paul, who calls him his son.— He accompanied Paul to Jerusalem, when the apostles went thither to procure the decision of the synod, as to whether the converted Gentiles were subject to the ceremonies of the Jewish law. Several persons were at this time very urgent, that Paul should perform the ceremony of circumcision upon Titus, but to this neither of them would consent.

Titus was sent by St. Paul, to compose some differences which had arisen in the Christian church at Corinth; and he succeeded in this commission, but refused to accept the presents offered him by the inhabitants; thereby proving, that he did not act from mercenary motives, but from an anxious concern for their eternal salvation.

From Corinth, Titus went into Macedonia, from whence Paul ordered him to return, in order to make preparations for his arrival. He immediately departed, taking with him the second epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. About the year of Christ 63, Titus was constituted bishop of the isle of Crete.

The following year the apostle wrote, desiring, that when he should have sent Tychicus or Artemas to succeed him in the care of the church in the isle of Crete, that Titus would come to him at Nicopolis, where he intended to reside during the winter season. In this epistle he enumerates the qualities necessary in a bishop and instructs Titus in the questions which he was to propose to persons of all descriptions. He also

exhorts him to maintain a strict authority over the Cretans, and to reprove them for the many vices to which they were addicted. It is not known where this epistle was written, or by what messenger it was sent.

Titus was appointed to preach the gospel in Dalmatia, where he resided in the year 65, when the apostle wrote his second epistle to Timothy. He afterwards returned into Crete, and preached the gospel there, and in the neighboring islands. Titus died in the ninety-fourth year of his age, and his remains were interred in the island of Crete. Several writers concur in affirming, that the cathedral of the city of Candia was dedicated to Titus.

CONCLUSION.

IN the History of our Blessed Saviour, we have inserted all the particulars which are known concerning the Virgin Mary, and Mary the sister of Lazarus. With respect to Joseph, or Joses, the brother of St. James the Less, the few particulars that are preserved in relation to him, will be found in our life of that apostle.

We have already observed, that Joseph of Arimathea, or of Banatha, Rama, or Ramulus, a city between Joppa and Jerusalem, was secretly a disciple of the blessed Jesus; and that, after avowing the Christian faith, he, in conjunction with Nicodemus, deposited the body of our crucified Saviour in a sepulchre. The name of Joseph of Arimathea is omitted in the ancient Latin martyrologies, nor was it inserted in many others till after the year of Christ 1585. His body is said to have been conveyed to Moyenmontier, by Fortunatus, archbishop of Grada. The relicks of this saint were here held in high veneration till the tenth age; when the monastery being given to the canons, the body was removed, but to what place is unknown.

Nicodemus was by birth a Jew, and belonged to the sect of Pharisees. After his conversation with, and conversion by the holy Jesus, he signalized himself for his Christian piety. Upon the return of the officers dispatched by the Pharisees to apprehend our Saviour, they told the council, that never man had spoken like him. Upon this the Pharisees severely reproached the blessed Jesus, when Nicodemus asked his brethren, whether they were permitted by the law

to condemn any man unheard. At length he openly declared himself to be a disciple of Jesus, and as we have already related, joined Joseph of Arimathea, in paying funeral honors to the Saviour of the world.

Nicodemus received baptism from the disciples of Christ, but whether before or after his passion is uncertain. Gaining intelligence of this circumstance, the council deposed him from the dignity of a senator, pronounced against him the sentence of excommunication, and compelled him to retire from Jerusalem. His effects were plundered, and he was so cruelly beaten, as to be very near losing his life. After this barbarous treatment, he took shelter in the house of Gamaliel, his uncle, or cousin-german; who, upon his decease, honorably interred him near the body of St. Stephen. In the year 415, the remains of Nicodemus, together with those of Gamaliel and St. Stephen, were discovered.

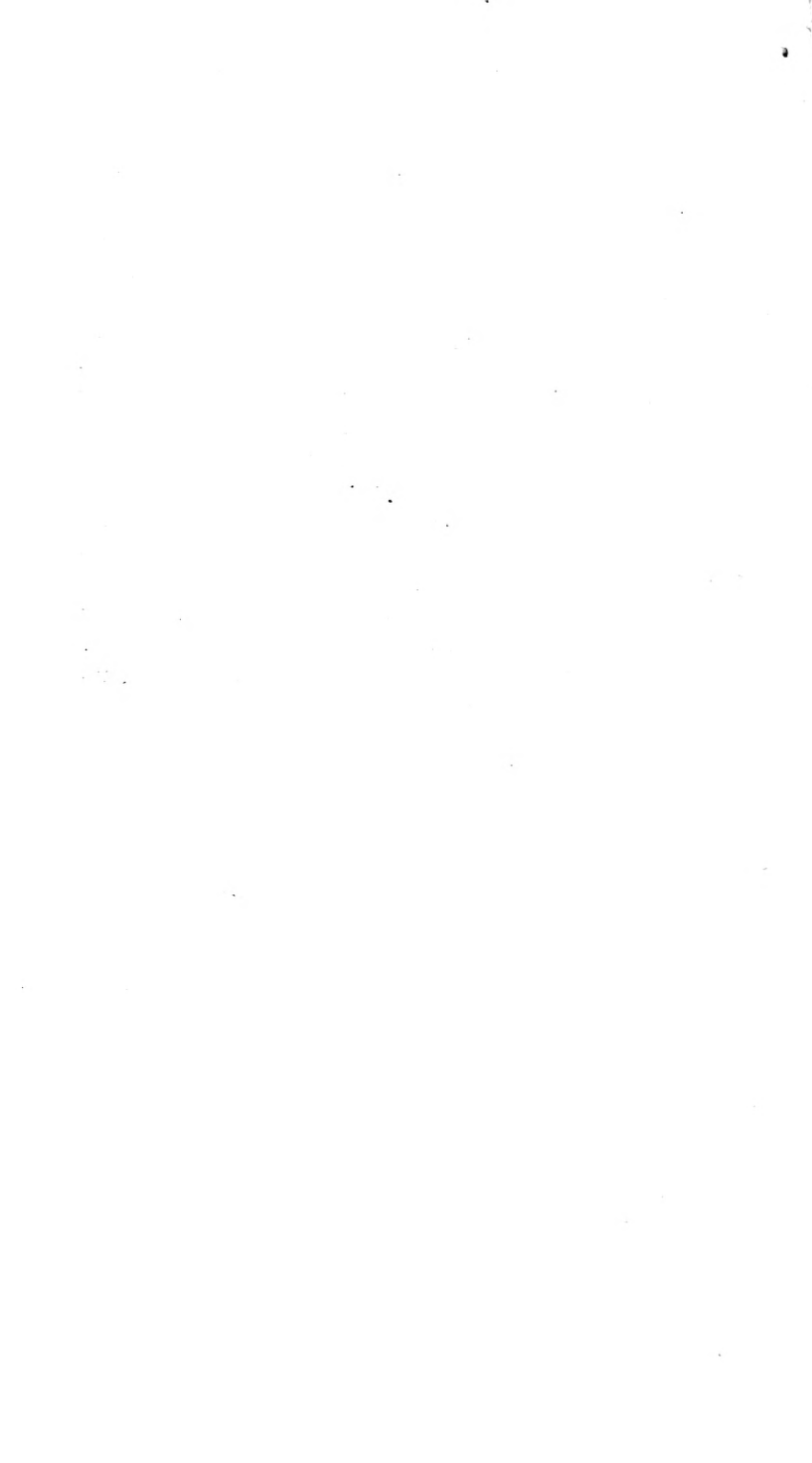
Nicholas was a proselyte at Antioch, where he was converted from Paganism to the Jewish religion. He afterwards embraced the gospel, and became one of the most eminent of the primitive Christians. He is accused, but with what degree of justice cannot be determined, with having countenanced the heretical sect called Nicolaites; from whence arose several others, addicted to the most horrid barbarities, and other crimes. His character, however is strenuously defended by many celebrated writers of antiquity: but St. John does not intimate the least circumstance, in extenuation of the fact alledged against him: nor has any Christian church paid honor to his memory.


Every remarkable event in the life of John Mark, is included in our account of Barnabas. It may not, however be improper to introduce some few additional matters. It is asserted by some writers, that he

was bishop of Biblis in Phœnicia. The Greeks call him an apostle, and say, that the sick were cured by his shadow. It is probable that he died at Ephesus, where his tomb was much resorted to and celebrated.

Concerning Clement, there are a great variety of opinions; but it is tolerably certain, that he was ordained either by Peter or Paul; and most probably it was by the latter. The immediate successor of St. Peter in the Bishoprick of Rome, was Limus, who was succeeded by Anacletus; and the successor of this bishop was Clement. During his pontificate, he wrote an epistle to the Corinthians, which is still extant; and this performance was so highly esteemed by the ancients, that it was frequently read in their churches. We are informed, upon good authority, that Clement was living in the third year of the emperor Trajan, being the hundredth of our great Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.


THE END OF THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES.





A BRIEF
ENUMERATION
OF THE
A P O S T L E S
AND THEIR
SUCCESSORS

For the first three hundred years after the Crucifixion.





A BRIEF
ENUMERATION
OF THE
APOSTLES AND THEIR SUCCESSORS,
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The first three hundred years after the Crucifixion.



ANTIOCH.

In this catalogue of the five Apostolical Churches, we shall place Antioch first, because it is generally admitted, that a church was founded in this city by St. Peter, a considerable time before the establishment of that at Rome. The succession of the bishops of this church was in the following order :

1. St. Peter the Apostle ; who presided 7 years, or, according to Nicephorus, 11
2. Evodus, 23
3. Ignatius, near 40
4. Heron, 20
5. Cornelius, 13
6. Eros, 26, or, according to Eusebius, 24
7. Theophilus, 13

8. Maximinus, 13
9. Serapio, 25
10. Esclepiades, 9
11. Philetus, 8
12. Zebinus, or Zebennus, 6
13. Babylus, 13
14. Fabius, or, according to Nicephorus Flavius, 9
15. Demetrianus, as Nicephorus says, 4 : but Eusebius says, 8
16. Paulus Samosatenus, 8
17. Domnus, presided 2, as Nicephorus asserts, but Eusebius says, 6
18. Timæus, 8
19. Cyrillus, Nicephorus says, 15, Eusebius, 24
20. Tyrannus, 13
21. Vitalis, 6
22. Philogonius, 5
23. Paulinus, or as Nicephorus calls him, Paulus, 5
24. Eustatius, formerly bishop of Beræa, a learned man, and one of great eminency in the council of Nice, the first general council, summoned by Constantine the Great, whose time will be the boundary of this catalogue.

R O M E.

The establishment of this church is attributed both to St. Peter and St. Paul; the one as apostle of the circumcision, preaching to the Jews; and the other, as the apostle of the uncircumcision, preaching to the Gentiles.

1. St. Peter and St. Paul, both of whom suffered martyrdom under Nero
2. Linus, 12
3. Cletus, Anacletus, or Anencletus, some say 9, and others 2
4. Clemens, 9
5. Euaristus, 9, or 13
6. Alexander, 10
7. Xystus, or Sixtus, 10
8. Telesphorus, 11
9. Hyginus, 4, or as Eusebius says, 8
10. Pius, 11, or 15
11. Anicetus, 9, or 11
12. Soter, or as Nicephorus calls him, Soterichus, 9, or, as Eusebius says, 7
13. Eleutherus, 15
14. Victor, 10, or according to Onuphrius, 12
15. Zephyrinus, 8, some say 18, and Onuphrius assigns 20
16. Calistus, or Callixtus, 6, others say 5
17. Urbanus, some say 6, others 4; Eusebius says 5, and St. Hierome, 9
18. Pontianus, some say 3, others 4, Eusebius 5
19. Anterus died before the expiration of a month after his exaltation to the pontifical dignity
20. Fabianus, 14
21. Cornelius, 2
22. Lucius, 2, others say 3

23. Stephanus, 2 or 3, or as some say 7
24. Xystus, 1, or 2, or according to Eusebius, 8
25. Dionysius, 6, 9, 10, 11, and Eusebius extends the time to 12 years
26. Felix, 4 or 5
27. Eutychianus, 1, though Eusebius allows him but 8 months, and Onuphrius says 8 years and 6 months
28. Gaius, or as Eusebius calls him, Gaianus, 11, or as Eusebius says, 15
29. Marcellinus, 8 or 9
30. Marcellus, near 6
31. Eusebius, 6, some say 4, though Eusebius allows but 7 months, and Onuphrius 1 year and 7 months
32. Miltiades, 2, 3, or 4
33. Silvester, 23, or as Nicephorus says, 28. He was elected in the year of our Lord 314.

JERUSALEM.

The church of Jerusalem may in some sense be said to have been established by our Saviour himself, for it was cultivated and improved by the whole college of apostles. The bishops presided in the following rotation :

1. St. James the Less, some say, was constituted bishop by our blessed Saviour, but others are of opinion, that the dignity was conferred upon him by the apostles
2. Simeon, the son of Cleophas, brother to Joseph, our Lord's reputed father. He presided 23 years
3. Justus, 6
4. Zacheus, or, as Nicephorus stiles him, Zacharias, 4
5. Tobias, 4
6. Benjamin, 2
7. John, 2
8. Matthias, or Matthæus, 2
9. Philippus, 1
10. Seneca, 4
11. Justus, 4
12. Levi, or Lebes, 2
13. Ephrem, or Ephres, or, as Epiphanius stiles him, Vaphres, 2
14. Joseph, 2
15. Judas, 2. This quick succession was owing to the turbulent and refractory spirit of the Jews, who frequently rebelled against the Roman power. Hitherto the bishops of Jerusalem had successively been of the circumcision, the church there being entirely composed of Jewish converts. But the city and temple being laid in a state of desolation, the Jews dispersed them-

selves into various countries, and the Gentiles were not only admitted members of the church, but even advanced to the episcopal chair. The first of these were,

16. Marcus, 8
17. Cassianus, 8
18. Publius, 5
19. Maximus, 4
20. Julianus, 2
21. Caianus, 3
22. Symmachus, 2
24. Julianus, 4
25. Elias, 2. Though omitted by Eusebius, this bishop is recorded by Nicephorus of Constantinople
26. Capito, 4
27. Maximus, 4
28. Antoninus, 5
29. Valens, 3
30. Dulichianus, 2
31. Narcissus, 4
32. Dius, 8
33. Germanio, 4
34. Gordius, 5
35. Alexander, 15
36. Mazabenes, 9
37. Hymenæus, 23
38. Zabdas, 10
39. Hermon, 9
40. Macarius, ordained in the year of our Lord 315. Nicephorus of Constantinople says, he presided 20 years, but St. Hierom allows a much longer time.

BYZANTIUM, AFTERWARDS CALLED CON- STANTINOPLE.

This church was established by St. Andrew.

1. St. Andrew, the Apostle
2. Stachys, 16 years
3. Onesimus, 14
4. Polycarpus, 17
5. Plutarchus, 16
6. Sedecio, 19
7. Diogenes, 15. The three latter are not mentioned by Nicephorus of Constantinople, but they are recorded by Nicephorus Callistus
8. Eleutherus, 7
9. Felix, 5
10. Polycarpus, 17
11. Athenodorus, 4
13. Euzoius, 16 ; though Nicephorus Callistus says only 6
13. Laurentius, 11 years and 6 months
14. Alypius, 13
15. Pertinax, 19 ; but Nicephorus reduces his time to 9
16. Olympianus, 11
17. Marcus, 13
18. Cyriacus, or Cyrillianus, 16
19. Constantinus, 7
20. Titus, 35 years and 6 months, but Nicephorus Callistus says 37 years
21. Demetrius, 21 years and 6 months.
22. Probus, 12

23. Metrophanes, 10. During his government of the church, Constantine removed the Imperial Court to this place, which he made the seat of his government, calling it by his own name
24. Alexander, 23

ALEXANDRIA.

The foundation of this church was established, and a great part of its superstructure raised by St. Mark. Though not strictly an apostle, yet being an Apostle at large, and receiving his commission immediately from St. Peter, the church of Alexandria received the honor of being admitted among the apostolical number.

1. St. Mark the Evangelist, who, according to Nicephorus of Constantinople, presided 2 years
2. Anianus, 22
3. Avilius, 12 or 13
4. Cerdo, 10, or, as Eusebius says, 11
5. Primus, 12
6. Justus, or Justinus, 10
7. Eumenes, 10; or, according to Eusebius, 13.—
St. Jerome calls him Hymenæus
8. Marcus, or Marcianus, 13; or, as Eusebius says, 10
9. Celadion, 10; or, as Eusebius says, 14
10. Agrippinus, 14, or 12
11. Julianus, 15, or 10
12. Demetrius, 21, or, as Eusebius, with greater probability, says, 43. He was a man of great piety, and labored under many troubles, during the persecution at Alexander.
13. Heraclas, was, upon the decease of Demetrius, advanced to the government of the church, over which he presided 16 years; though Nicephorus of Constantinople, probably mistaking Heraclas for his predecessor, say he governed the church 43 years.
14. Dionysius, 17. In the persecution under Decius, he went first to Taposiris, a small town be-

tween Alexandria and Canopus; then to Cephro, and afterwards to other places in the deserts of Lybia. He died in the twelfth year of the Emperor Gallienus.

15. Maximus, according to the computation of Eusebius, presided 18 years; but Nicephorus of Constantinople assigns only 8
16. Theonas, 17, or, according to St. Jerome's version of Eusebius, 19
17. Petrus, 12. He assumed the dignity three years before the last persecution, in the ninth year of which he purchased the crown of martyrdom with the loss of his head. Soon after the death of Petrus, Constantine the Great rescued the church from the dreadful calamities in which it had been so long involved, and established it in a state of prosperous tranquillity.
18. Achillas, 9, but Nicephorus of Constantinople allows him only one year.
19. Alexander, 23. During the government of Alexander, Arius began more openly to promulgate his heretical principles at Alexandria: in consequence of which, sentence of excommunication was pronounced against him; and soon after being banished from Alexandria, he was condemned by the fathers who composed the Nicene council.



GENERAL INDEX.





A

GENERAL INDEX.



CHAPTER I.

	Page.
The time of incarnation of our blessed Saviour	1
The birth of John the Baptist predicted	2
The characters of Zacharias and Elizabeth	<i>ibid.</i>
David divides the Jewish priesthood into twenty-four courses	3
The angel appears to Zacharias, who is struck dumb	4
The conception of John the Baptist	<i>ib.</i>
The salutation of the angel to the Virgin Mary	6
The visitation of the blessed virgin to Elizabeth, which is returned	7
Elizabeth is delivered of a son	9
Zacharias recovers the use of the organs of speech and hearing	10
The education of John the Baptist	11

CHAP. II.

Of the authority of the scriptures	12
Arguments against scepticism	<i>ib.</i>
Prophecies	13

	Page.
State of the Roman empire at the nativity of our Saviour	14
The Sibylline oracles	15
Description of the holy land	18

CHAP. III.

The pregnancy of Mary discovered to Joseph, who proposes to repudiate her, but declines that resolution in consequence of a dream	26
The decree of Augustus	27
Joseph and Mary repair to Bethlehem	28
The birth of our Blessed Saviour	<i>ib.</i>
The angels appear to the Shepherds, who go to Bethlehem, and worship the heavenly infant	29
The circumcision of Jesus and the appearance of the star in the East	30
The wise men repairing to Jerusalem, are examined by Herod, after which they pursue their journey to Bethlehem, where they pay adoration to the Messiah, and present to him myrrh, gold, and frankincense.	31

CHAP. IV.

The uncertainty of the particular day of Christ's nativity	33
Remarks on the decree of Augustus, and a description of the Roman empire	34
Time occupied in making the survey mentioned by St. Luke	35
Account of the Jewish shepherds	<i>ib.</i>
The city of Bethlehem, the cave of nativity, convents, chapel of the manger, and grotto of the blessed Virgin; chapels of St. Jerome, St. Paula, and Eustochium	36
The field of the shepherds	38
Solomon's pools, gardens and fountains.	40

CHAP. V.

	Page.
The genealogy of Jesus Christ	41
The line of the Virgin Mary included in that of Joseph	48
Reasons for the rejection of Cainan and other names in the catalogue of St. Luke	54

CHAP. VI.

Institutions relating to the presentation of the first-born, and the purification of women	56
Joseph and Mary repair to Jerusalem	57
Simeon takes Jesus in his arms, and praises God	58
Account of the prophetess Anna	59
In consequence of a vision, Joseph and Mary convey Jesus into Egypt	60
Massacre of the children of Bethlehem	61
Upon the decease of Herod, Joseph returns to Nazareth	62
Infant state of our Saviour	<i>ib.</i>
He accompanies Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem, whence they depart without him, and afterwards find him in the temple, engaged in dispute with the doctors	63
The humility of Christ towards Joseph and Mary	67
Proofs that Christ followed the occupation of Joseph	68

CHAP. VII.

Of the name of the blessed Virgin	70
Her parents and nativity	71
Her education and nuptials	72
Her virginity after marriage, and her annunciation	<i>ib.</i>
That Mary was with Jesus at Cana, and other places	74
The death of the Virgin Mary, and revelation concerning her	77
Of the perpetual virginity of the mother of Jesus	78
Her assumption.	<i>ib.</i>

CHAP. VIII.

	Page.
The commencement of the gospel of Jesus Christ	80
The character and commission of John; and the substance of his doctrine	81
Great multitudes of people resort to John from Galilee and the different parts of Judea, and are baptized by him	85
The discourses of John to the Pharisees, the publicans, and the soldiers	84
John declares that he is not the Messiah.	87

CHAP. IX.

Preliminary Rules for elucidating the history of our Saviour's public ministry, from the time of his baptism to the time of his crucifixion	90
---	----

CHAP. X.

The baptism of our blessed Redeemer	102
The visible descent of the Holy Spirit; and the voice of the Almighty heard from the heavens	103
Christ goes into the desert, where he remains forty days and forty nights, without receiving any kind of nutriment	104
The several efforts of Satan to tempt our Saviour	105
Satan is rebuked and repulsed by Christ, who afterwards returns from the desert	<i>ib.</i>
The several testimonies of John concerning our Saviour	107

CHAP. XI.

The calling of Andrew and another of the disciples of John the Baptist	117
--	-----

	Page.
The calling of Peter and of Philip	118
The conversation of our Saviour with Philip	119
Christ is invited to a marriage feast at Cana, where he changes water into wine	120

CHAP. XII.

The prophaners of the temple expelled by Christ	123
His discourse with the Jews on the subject of the expulsion of the traders from the temple, and the prophecy of his resurrection	124
The lessons of our blessed Saviour to Nicodemus, wherein he explains the purpose of his incarnation	125
Christ departs from Jerusalem, and baptizes such Jews as resort to him for that purpose	129
John continues to administer baptism at Ænon	130
A controversy between some of the disciples of John and the Jews, concerning the baptism practised by our Lord and his forerunner	<i>ib.</i>
The disciples reproved by John, who bears testimony in the divinity of Christ, and teaches the necessity of faith in him, as the means of eternal salvation	131
John reprimands Herod for having contracted an incestuous alliance with Herodias, the wife of his brother, Herod Philip, and the daughter of Aristobulus, the brother of both, in consequence of which the Baptist is thrown into prison	132

CHAP. XIII.

A resolution formed at a consultation of the Pharisees, and intelligence of the imprisonment of John being communicated to Jesus, he departs from Judea towards Galilee.	134
In the course of his journey he meets a woman of Samaria, with whom he discourses of the Holy Spirit, under the similitude of living water	135
He informs the woman of the secret circumstances of her life, and explains to her the nature of the true worship of God	136

	Page.
Christ acknowledges himself to be the Messiah	137
The Samaritan woman calls her neighbors to Jesus, and they believe in his doctrines	138

CHAP. XIV.

Christ proceeds into Galilee, where he preaches the gospel with great success	141
He performs a miraculous cure upon the son of a nobleman of Capernaum	142
He preaches in the synagogue at Nazareth, where he becomes the object of popular admiration: but upon reproaching the Nazarenes with infidelity, they are exasperated against him, and endeavor to throw him from a precipice	<i>ib.</i>
He enforces the necessity of repentance to the people of Galilee	144

CHAP. XV.

Christ relieves a person possessed of a demon	147
At the instance of Peter and Andrew, he cures the mother-in-law of the former, of a fever	<i>ib.</i>
Great numbers of diseased persons repair to Jesus, and are restored	148
Having fervently prayed to his heavenly Father, Jesus continues to preach the gospel	<i>ib.</i>
The miraculous draught of fishes	150
The calling of James and John	<i>ib.</i>
Jesus restores a leper to health	151
Christ returns to Capernaum, where he performs a wonderful cure upon a paralytic	153

CHAP. XVI.

The calling of Matthew	155
The reason of the conversation of Jesus with the publican	156
The similitudes and reasons of our Saviour, explaining why	

	Page
he did not exact from his disciples severities equal to those endured by the disciples of John and the Pharisees	156
Christ performs a miraculous cure at the pool of Bethesda	157
The Pharisees are exasperated against Jesus, and accuse him of violating the sabbath	159
Our Saviour proclaims himself to be the Son of God, the object of divine worship, and the future judge of mankind	161
He appeals to John for a confirmation of his divinity; and to the miracles he had wrought as well as to the scriptural writings	<i>ib.</i>
Christ reproves the Pharisees for their unbelief in him, and asserts that they shall be proved guilty by the writings of Moses	162

CHAP. XVII.

The disciples of Jesus gather some ears of corn to appease their hunger, on the sabbath, and are accused of profanation by the Pharisees	164
Our Lord excuses his disciples, and instances the cases of David and the priests	<i>ib.</i>
He reasons on the use of the sabbath, exposes the futility of the observations of the Pharisees, and performs a wonderful cure	166
To avoid the malice of the Pharisees, our Saviour embarks on the lake of Gennesareth	167
He cures various diseases, and relieves persons possessed with demons	<i>ib.</i>
Application of a prophecy of Isaiah to our blessed Saviour	168

CHAP. XVIII.

After fervently praying to the Almighty during a whole night, the blessed Jesus appoints the twelve apostles	169
Accompanied by the apostles, he repairs into the plains, and from thence proceeds to Capernaum	170
He ascends a mountain, and in the course of a most admirable sermon, pronounces the eight beatitudes	171
The character and duty of the disciples of Christ	174

	Page.
That he came to fulfil the law	175
Of murder, unprovoked anger, reconciliation, adultery, lust, divorce, perjury, profane swearing, retaliation, love to our enemies, charity, prayer, the Lord's prayer, fasting, love of riches, worldly care, judging others, blind guides, the prostitution of holy things, efficacy of prayer, doing as we would be done by, the strait and wide gates, fallacious teachers, and unsound professors of religion	<i>ib.</i>

CHAP. XIX.

Our Saviour descends from the mountain, and proceeds to Capernaum	186
He performs a miraculous cure upon the servant of a centurion	187
Jesus restores to life the son of a widow	188
John sends his disciples to Christ, who addresses the people concerning the Baptist	189
Jesus reproaches the inhabitants of the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, for their want of faith in him	192

CHAP. XX.

Christ accepts an invitation to the house of Simon, the Pharisee	194
The feet of our Saviour anointed by a repentant woman	<i>ib.</i>
Jesus proposes a question to the Pharisee, and receives an answer, which he applies to the case of the woman, whose sins he pardons	195
Christ continues his progress through Judea, accompanied by his twelve apostles, together with Mary Magdalene, and several other women on whom he had wrought miracles	196
Jesus performs a wonderful cure, in consequence of which he is wickedly traduced by the Pharisees	197
Our Saviour delivers certain similitudes, and deduces arguments therefrom	<i>ib.</i>

	Page.
He reproveth the Pharisees, and refuses to give them a demonstration of his power to perform miracles	200
The Virgin Mary repairs to Jesus, on occasion of which he says, all who live according to the rules of his gospel, are related to him in a spiritual sense	201

CHAP. XXI.

In order to avoid the inconvenience of being surrounded by a vast number of people, Christ goes into a boat, and preaches to the multitude	203
He compares his preaching the gospel to a man employed in sowing seed	<i>ib.</i>
Jesus explains to his disciples, the reason of his using similitudes	204
He explains the parable of the man sowing of seeds, and after illustrating what he had said on that subject, he delivers a caution to his disciples.	206
Christ delivers several parables concerning the gospel	207
Why he gave instructions in a figurative stile	209
Our Lord's explanation of the parable of the tares	<i>ib.</i>
He delivers other parables, and leaves the country	210

CHAP. XXII.

Our Saviour crosses the lake of Gennesareth, and gives an answer to a lawyer, who proposed to accompany him	213
He obviates the excuse of a person who desired to be admitted among the number of his disciples, on condition of remaining at home till after the decease of his aged father	214
He appeases a violent storm, and reproveth his disciples for a want of confidence in him	215
Meeting two men possessed with evil spirits, they request that Christ will not torture them	216
He depossesses the demoniacs, and suffers the evil spirits to enter into a herd of swine	217
The swineherds publish the news; in consequence of	

	Page.
which, the people of Gadara request Jesus to evacuate their country	<i>ib.</i>
Christ re-embarks for Capernaum, and the demoniacs publish the fame of his miracles	<i>ib.</i>
Upon his return, Jesus is met by a vast concourse of people on the banks of the lake of Gennasareth	218
The ruler of the synagogue solicits Christ to restore his daughter to health	<i>ib.</i>
In his way to the ruler's house, Christ meets a woman, whose afflictions are removed by her touching his garment	<i>ib.</i>
Intelligence is brought of the decease of the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus repairs to the house, and restores her to life	219
Christ relieves two men afflicted with blindness, and heals a demoniac	220

CHAP. XXIII.

Our Saviour repairs to Nazareth, and is again treated with contempt by his countrymen	223
He continues his progress through Galilee	224
Christ determines to send forth his apostles, and accordingly gives instructions for the regulation of their holy ministry, and invests them with the power of working miracles	<i>ib.</i>
The apostles separate, and proceed to exercise their ministry	220

CHAP. XXIV.

The return of the apostles of Christ	237
Our Saviour crosses the lake, and is followed by great multitudes of people	238
He feeds five thousand men, exclusive of women and children, with only five loaves, and two small fishes	239
Jesus commands his apostles to cross the lake, and in their passage they meet a dreadful storm	242
Christ walks upon the surface of the sea towards the vessel in which were the apostles	<i>ib.</i>

	Page.
At the command of Jesus, the apostle Peter walks upon the waters	243
Christ appeases the tempest, and the apostles proclaim him the Son of God	<i>ib.</i>
Our Lord disembarks and proceeds to Capernaum, followed by a great concourse of people, among whom he performs divers cures	<i>ib.</i>
Upon their requiring of him a miracle, Jesus addresses the multitude in a mystical discourse concerning his own body and blood	247
A contention arises among the people with regard to what Jesus had said	248
Our Lord pursues his allegorical discourse	<i>ib.</i>
The obscurity of his doctrine offends the auditors of Christ, who reproves his apostles, in consequence of their having murmured at his discourse	249
Several of his followers having left him, our Lord asks his disciples, whether they will desert him also	250
Jesus hints at the treachery of Judas Iscariot	<i>ib.</i>

CHAP. XXV.

Our Saviour goes to Jerusalem to celebrate the passover	252
The superstition of the Pharisees severely reproved by Christ	253
He discourses to the people on the subject of inward impurity, and predicts the abrogation of the ceremonials of the Jewish religion	254
He explains to his apostles what he had said to the multitude	255
He relieves the daughter of a Syrophœnician woman	256
Christ repairs to Decapolis, and cures a person who was deaf and dumb	258
Our blessed Saviour feeds four thousand men, and a great number of women and children, by the multiplication of seven loaves and a few fishes; after which he goes to Dalmanutha, and reproaches the Pharisees and Sadducees	260
Jesus cautions his disciples, and reproves them on account of their not understanding his meaning	262
At Bethsaida Jesus cures a man afflicted with blindness	263

	Page.
Being on the road to Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus questions his disciples as to the manner in which the people speak of him, and also concerning their own opinions.	<i>ib.</i>
He approves the reply of Peter, and promises that his fidelity and fortitude shall be rewarded by the blessings of futurity	264
Jesus predicts his sufferings and death, and rebukes the rashness of Peter	266
He delivers instructions to the multitude, and predicts the fall of Jerusalem	<i>ib.</i>

CHAP. XXVI.

Description of Jerusalem, and the temple, with the several revolutions of that remarkable city and building	268
The modern state of Jerusalem	271
Account of the church of the holy sepulchre	323
The sepulchres of the kings	326
The function of the holy fire	327
Account of St. Peter's prison, St. Mark's church, the house of Annas and Caiaphas, the church of Cænaculum, &c.	328
The pool of Bethesda, the Potter's-field, valley of Jehosaphat, brook Cedron, pool of Siloam, pillar of judgment, sepulchre of the blessed Virgin, the vaults of the apostles, mount Olivet, the chapel of ascension, the palace of Pilate	330
Description of the cities of Cana and Capernaum	336
Some account of Beer; with remarks on the country of Palestine	338

CHAP. XXVII.

The transfiguration of our blessed Saviour	341
He converses with Moses and Elias	342
A voice heard from the heavens	<i>ib.</i>
Our Saviour descends from the mountain, and discourses to his apostles concerning Elias	343
He restores a youth possessed with an evil spirit	<i>ib.</i>

	Page
Our Lord repairs to Galilee, and addresses his apostles on the subject of his sufferings and resurrection	346
Jesus goes to Capernaum, and empowers Peter to work a miracle, in order to pay the tribute-money	<i>ib.</i>
He reproves his apostles, enforcing to them the doctrine of humility, by proposing to them the example of a little child	348
He discourses on the subject of offences, and the necessity of a rigid adherence to the truth	349
He compares his disciples to salt	351
Christ prescribes to his apostles rules for the regulation of their conduct, and rehearses the parable of the lost sheep	<i>ib.</i>
Our Lord inculcates the duty of forgiveness, and mentions the example of a king and one of his subjects	354

CHAP. XXVIII.

On occasion of the feast of tabernacles, Jesus repairs privately to Jerusalem	362
On his journey he is refused lodging and entertainment by the Samaritans	363
Our Saviour appoints seventy disciples, and after delivering to them instructions for the regulation of their conduct, he sends them to different parts to preach the gospel	364
He pronounces a malediction against several cities, and farther discourses to his disciples	365
The Jews seek for Jesus, who appears in vindication of himself	366
Our Lord justifies himself with respect to a cure he had performed on the sabbath-day	368
Christ declares his mission from his Father	<i>ib.</i>
The rulers endeavor to apprehend Jesus, and he informs them that his time is not come	370
Christ invites the people to embrace his doctrines	371
Various opinions concerning Jesus, who becomes the subject of consultation in the Sanhedrim, or grand council of the Jewish nation	372
The judgment of Christ concerning a woman detected in adultery	374

	Page.
He vindicates his own testimony concerning himself	373
Our Lord declares that the Jews are strangers both to him and his heavenly Father	376
He gives an intimation of his speedy departure, but they mistake his meaning	<i>ib.</i>
He reproves the people, declaring them to be slaves, and that he alone has power of giving them liberty	379
He proposes for their imitation the example of Abraham; and declares that they cannot be imitators of God, because they do not repose faith in him	<i>ib.</i>
Our Lord defends himself against the slanderous imputations of the Jews	381
Proofs that Abraham foresaw the appearance of Christ	384
The Jews are offended at Christ	385
Jesus cures a man who had been born blind, and who being examined by the Sanhedrim, persists in ascribing his cure to Christ	386
Our Saviour effects the conversion of the man who had been born blind, and delivers instructions to the multitude	392
Different opinions of the Jews	401

CHAP. XXIX.

The return of the seventy disciples, with whom our Lord discourses concerning the extent of their power	403
Jesus gives thanks to his heavenly Father, for the success that had attended the ministry of his seventy disciples	404
Our Saviour's reply to a lawyer, who enquired by what means he could obtain happiness	406
The parable of the good Samaritan	<i>ib.</i>
Our Lord applies the parable to the question proposed by the lawyer	408
Jesus repairs to Bethany: he reproves Martha, and commends Mary	409
The instructions of Jesus concerning prayer	410
In order to encourage his disciples, he delivers to them several similitudes	411
Jesus exhorts his auditors against treating his gospel with indifference	<i>ib.</i>
Our Saviour refuses to shew the Jews a miracle	414

	Page.
He discourses of inward defilement, at the house of a Pharisee	418
Our Lord censures the Scribes and Pharisees, who are enraged against him	420
He exhorts the people to avoid the practice of hypocrisy, and delivers an encouraging discourse to his apostles	421
Of adhering to the gospel, and concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost	423
Our Saviour refuses to pronounce judgment on a controversy relating to private property	424
Parable of a rich man	425
Exhortations against the vice of avarice	426
Of treasure in heaven	427
The duty of watchfulness	429
A similitude concerning a nobleman and one of his domestics	430
Jesus mentions what will prove the effects of his gospel	432
His discourses to the people	433
That worldly calamities attack some men, though there are others more wicked	435
The parable of the fig-tree	<i>ib.</i>
Our Lord restores a woman to health, who had been long possessed with an evil spirit	437
Similitudes concerning the kingdom of heaven	438
That the blessings of the kingdom of God shall not be confined to the Jews alone	439
Jesus is warned to depart, in order to avoid the rage of Herod	440
Our Saviour's reply concerning Herod, and his lamentations over the city of Jerusalem	441

CHAP. XXX.

Our blessed Saviour is invited to dine with one of the Pharisees	443
On his way to the house of the Pharisee, he cures a man afflicted with the dropsy	444
Our Lord justifies his conduct in having performed this cure on the sabbath-day	445
He reproves the persons present at the entertainment, on account of their contending for the uppermost place	<i>ib.</i>

	Page.
The parable of the feast, where those who had been invited did not attend	446
The profession of the gospel to be preferred to all worldly considerations	<i>ib.</i>
Similitudes respecting those who profess the gospel of Christ	448
Parables of the sheep, and of the money that were lost	450
Parable of the prodigal son	452
Our Saviour rebukes the Pharisees for their avarice and hypocrisy	460
The sanctity of the gospel superior to the law	461
The parable of the rich man and Lazarus, delivered as a caution against the abuse of riches	462
Concerning offences, and the forgiveness of them	463
Of the increase of faith, and of unprofitable servants	465
In his way to Jerusalem, our Saviour cures ten lepers	466
Of the establishment of the kingdom of heaven, and the judgment of God upon the Jews	460
The parable of the unjust judge, and the importunate widow	471
The parable of the Pharisee and the publican, who prayed at the same time in the temple	473
Our Saviour arrives at Jerusalem at the time of the feast of dedication, and discourses to the multitude	474
The Jews endeavor to stone Jesus; but he disappoints their malice	475

VOLUME II.

CHAP. XXXI.

Upon the conclusion of the feast of dedication, Jesus returns into Galilee, followed by a great concourse of people

	Page.
Jesus declares divorce to be unlawful; and mentions why it was permitted by Moses	<i>ib.</i>
His explanation of what he had said	7
Our Saviour receives, and blesses little infants	9
He replies to a young man, who enquired the way to eternal life	<i>ib.</i>
Riches an obstruction in the pursuit of happiness	10
Jesus promises to reward his apostles	12
A similitude of a man hiring people to labor in his vineyard	14
Lazarus of Bethany is seized with a violent illness, and Jesus informed of that event	16
He informs his disciples that Lazarus is dead	19
Jesus repairs to Bethany, where he is met by Martha, Mary, and a number of the Jews	<i>ib.</i>
Our Saviour weeps	20
The resurrection of Lazarus	21
A consultation in the Sanhedrim	26
The prophetic opinion of Caiaphas the high-priest	27
The Sanhedrim resolve to put Jesus to death; in consequence of which, he retires towards the wilderness of Jericho	28

CHAP. XXXII.

Upon the approach of the passover, our blessed Saviour departs from the desert near Jericho, and repairs to Jerusalem	32
During his journey, he predicts to his apostles the circumstances of his condemnation, death, crucifixion, and resurrection	33
He instructs his apostles, as to the manner in which they shall regulate their conduct	34
Jesus cures two blind beggars, and holds a conversation with Zaccheus the publican	35
The parable of the talents	38
In consequence of a proclamation issued by the Sanhedrim, the Jews endeavor to apprehend Jesus	40
He repairs to Bethany, where his feet are anointed by the pious Mary	41
He replies to an objection advanced by Judas	<i>ib.</i>

	Page.
Our blessed Saviour rides towards Jerusalem upon an ass, amidst the acclamations of an immense concourse of people	46
The conduct of Jesus excites the rage of the Pharisees	47
The advice of the Pharisees to the Sanhedrim	<i>ib.</i>
The lamentations of our blessed Saviour over the city of Jerusalem	48
Jesus enters Jerusalem, and a second time expels the traders from the temple	49
Persons afflicted with various diseases are brought to Jesus, in order to be restored to health	50
The priests interrogate him, and he answers their questions	<i>ib.</i>
The curiosity of some Greeks to behold Jesus	51
His discourse to the multitude on the subject of the curiosity of the Greeks	52
The voice of the Almighty heard from the heavens	53
Jesus answers to the enquiries of the multitude, concerning the voice of the Almighty	<i>ib.</i>
He discourses to them on the subject of his approaching dissolution	54
Jesus secludes himself from the society of men	<i>ib.</i>
Some words of the prophet Isaiah applied to the Jews	55
Having admonished the Jews to repose faith in him, our blessed Saviour returns to the town of Bethany	57.

CHAP. XXXIII.

In his way from Bethany to Jerusalem, Jesus curses a fig-tree, which immediately withers	59
The rulers of Jerusalem conspire to effect the destruction of Christ	63
The power of faith, and the necessity of forgiveness	<i>ib.</i>
The rulers of the Jews question Jesus as to the authority by which he had expelled the traders from the temple, and assumed the privilege of publicly discoursing to the people; and he retorts upon, and confutes them	64
Our Saviour delivers the parables of the father and two sons, and of the vineyard that was hired by husbandmen	66
Parable of the wedding supper, and of the man who was found without a wedding garment	70

	Page.
The Pharisees concert measures for exposing Jesus to the enmity of the populace, and send different people to examine him ; but he exposes the futility of their discourses	72
The Sadducees propose a question to Jesus concerning a woman who had seven husbands ; whereupon our Lord finds occasion of addressing them on the subject of a future state	73
Our Saviour becomes the object of popular admiration	76
In reply to a question proposed by a lawyer, Jesus explains, which is the most important precept amongst the legal institutions ; and he commends another of the same profession, in consequence of his having made a pertinent remark	77
Jesus questions the Pharisees concerning some words of David, and they are unable to offer any reply	78
Different sects among the Jews	80

CHAP. XXXIV.

Our Saviour recommends his disciples to attend to the doctrines of the Pharisees, but carefully to avoid an imitation of their manners	94
He exhorts them to suppress ambitious desires	95
He severely reproaches the Pharisees, accusing them of perfidy, partiality, cruelty, and other heinous crimes	96
Our Saviour applauds the liberality of a widow	105
Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, and the sufferings to be inflicted upon his apostles ; and at the same time, exhorts those holy men not to dread the utmost malice of their enemies	106
Jesus says, that the persecutions of their enemies will occasion many of his disciples to desert his cause ; but that the faithful servants of God will be amply rewarded	109
Predictions relating to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem ; and the misery of the Jewish nation described	<i>ib.</i>
Jesus cautions his disciples against impostors	110
Other predictions of the dreadful calamities to be inflicted upon the Jews	111
Similitude of a fig-tree	119

	Page.
Jesus declares the truth of his predictions, and exhorts the people to constant watchfulness	<i>ib.</i>
The suddenness of the judgments to be passed upon mankind	120
Watchfulness and diligence recommended in a similitude	<i>ib.</i>
Parable of the ten virgins	121
The rewards and punishments to be distributed in the great day of judgment	125

CHAP. XXXV.

Jesus continues to instruct the people daily in the temple	160
Two days preceding the passover, he predicts his death	<i>ib.</i>
Our Saviour is anointed in the house of Simon the leper	161
Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles, accepts a bribe from the Sanhedrim, to whom he engages himself to betray his Master	163
In consequence of their Master's order, Peter and John repair to Jerusalem, in order to make preparations for the passover	164
Jesus sups with his disciples and during the entertainment, he says, that one of them shall betray him	165
The institution of the Eucharist	166
Jesus takes a second cup of wine, and commands his apostles to share it among them	172
The affection of our Saviour towards his apostles, and the treachery of Judas	177
Jesus exhorts his disciples not to indulge ambitious propensities, and proposes himself to them as an example of humility	178
He washes the feet of his disciples; and on this occasion holds a discourse with Peter	180
Jesus discourses to his apostles on the act of condescension he had performed, and recommends to their imitation the example he had shewn of humility	<i>ib.</i>
Our Saviour is troubled, and signifies by which of his apostles he shall be betrayed	182
Judas retires from the company; after which our Lord reminds the other apostles of his miracles; mentions his speedy departure from them; and recommends them to cherish mutual love	184

	Page.
Peter enquires of his Master, to what place he should retire, since he had said the apostles could not follow him	185
He forewarns Peter, and predicts the persecution that his apostles were to encounter	186
Jesus exhorts his disciples against despondency; and informs them that by a strict obedience to his gospel, they will entitle themselves to the enjoyment of everlasting happiness	187
He informs them, that, in having seen him, they may be considered as having seen the Father of the creation	190
He asserts his divine authority, and promises to reward the faith of his disciples	191
He engages to send the Holy Spirit to them	192
He promises divine assistance and comfort to all his faithful followers	194
Our blessed Redeemer bequeaths peace and comfort to his disciples, and declares the time to be approaching, when he shall be betrayed into the power of his enemies	195

CHAP. XXXVI.

Our blessed Saviour delivers the parable of the vine and its branches, thereby recommending the practice of virtue to his apostles	197
He exhorts them to cherish a mutual affection towards each other	198
Jesus proposes himself, as an example for teaching them the virtue of patiently submitting to the malice of their enemies, and informs them of the reason of his exhortation	199
He consoles them with assurances of the Holy Ghost; and explains to them the purposes for which the Spirit will descend upon them	203
Of the affliction which the apostles were to experience upon the decease of our Saviour, and the great joy that would succeed on occasion of his resurrection	205
He exhorts his apostles to pray to God in his name	209
He again mentions his going to the Father, and predicts the desertion of the apostles	210

	Page.
Our blessed Saviour addresses himself in prayer to his heavenly Father in behalf of himself, his apostles, and all who should in future believe in him	213

CHAP. XXXVII.

Our blessed Saviour crosses the brook Cedron, and repairs towards the garden of Gethsemane; but, previous to his arrival there, he predicts that he shall be siezed that night, and that his apostles will desert him	218
The agony of the holy Jesus	220
Our Saviour departs from his disciples, and fervently addresses himself in prayer to his heavenly Father	221
Upon his return to his disciples, he finds them asleep, and awakens them	<i>ib.</i>
He prays again, and wakes his disciples a second and a third time	<i>ib.</i>
Judas enters the garden of Gethsemane, at the head of a party of soldiers, who take Jesus into custody	223
Peter cuts off the ear of Malcus, for which action he is reproved by Jesus, who heals the wound	225
Our Saviour questions the officers on the subject of his being taken into custody	<i>ib.</i>
A young man who was seized by the soldiers, escapes without his garment	226
Jesus is conducted to the house of Annas and Caiaphas, whither he is followed by Peter and John	<i>ib.</i>
Peter thrice denies having any knowledge of Christ: but he repents, after having heard the cock crow twice	227
Caiaphas examines Jesus before the chief-priests and rulers of Jerusalem, and false evidence is adduced against him	228
Jesus is conducted before the Sanhedrim, and further examined.	<i>ib.</i>
He acknowledges himself to be the Messiah; and he is cruelly reviled and insulted, and condemned as deserving to suffer death	229

CHAP. XXXVIII.

	Page.
Our Saviour is conducted before Pilate, the Roman governor, who authorizes the Jews to judge him according to their own laws: but they refuse to exercise the power thus delegated to them	234
The members of the Sanhedrim exhibit accusations against Jesus, who makes no reply	235
Our Saviour acknowledges himself to be a king	<i>ib.</i>
Pilate is desirous of restoring Jesus to liberty, but he is opposed by the Jews	236
Pilate sends Jesus to be examined by Herod, who acquits him	<i>ib.</i>
The Roman governor says, he will release either Jesus or Barabbas, as the Jews shall decide; and they prefer the latter	237
After endeavoring to appease the rage of the Jews, Pilate orders our Saviour to be scourged	238
He shews Jesus to the people, and reluctantly consents to his crucifixion	<i>ib.</i>
Still desirous of preserving the life of Jesus, he further interrogates him: and at length he, having washing his hands in the open court, in token of his innocence, delivers him to the Jews, who behave towards him with contempt and insult	239
Struck with a conviction of his abominable treachery, Judas returns the thirty shekels he had received for betraying Jesus, and puts an end to his life	242
Simon the Cyrenian, compelled to carry the cross	243
Our Saviour predicts the destruction of the Jews	<i>ib.</i>
He is crucified between two malefactors	244
Pilate puts an inscription upon the cross, and will not allow it to be altered	<i>ib.</i>
The chief-priests, the soldiers and the multitude, scoff at, and revile our blessed Saviour; and their example is followed by one of the suffering thieves: but the other rebukes him and receives a comfortable assurance from Jesus	<i>ib.</i>
Our Saviour recommends his mother to the care of John	245
A darkness for the space of three hours	<i>ib.</i>
The death of the Redeemer of the world	246

	Page.
Prodigies attendant upon the decease of Jesus	247
Women present at the crucifixion	<i>ib.</i>
The legs of the two malefactors are broken, and the side of Jesus is pierced with a spear	<i>ib.</i>
The body of our Saviour interred by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus	248

CHAP. XXXIX.

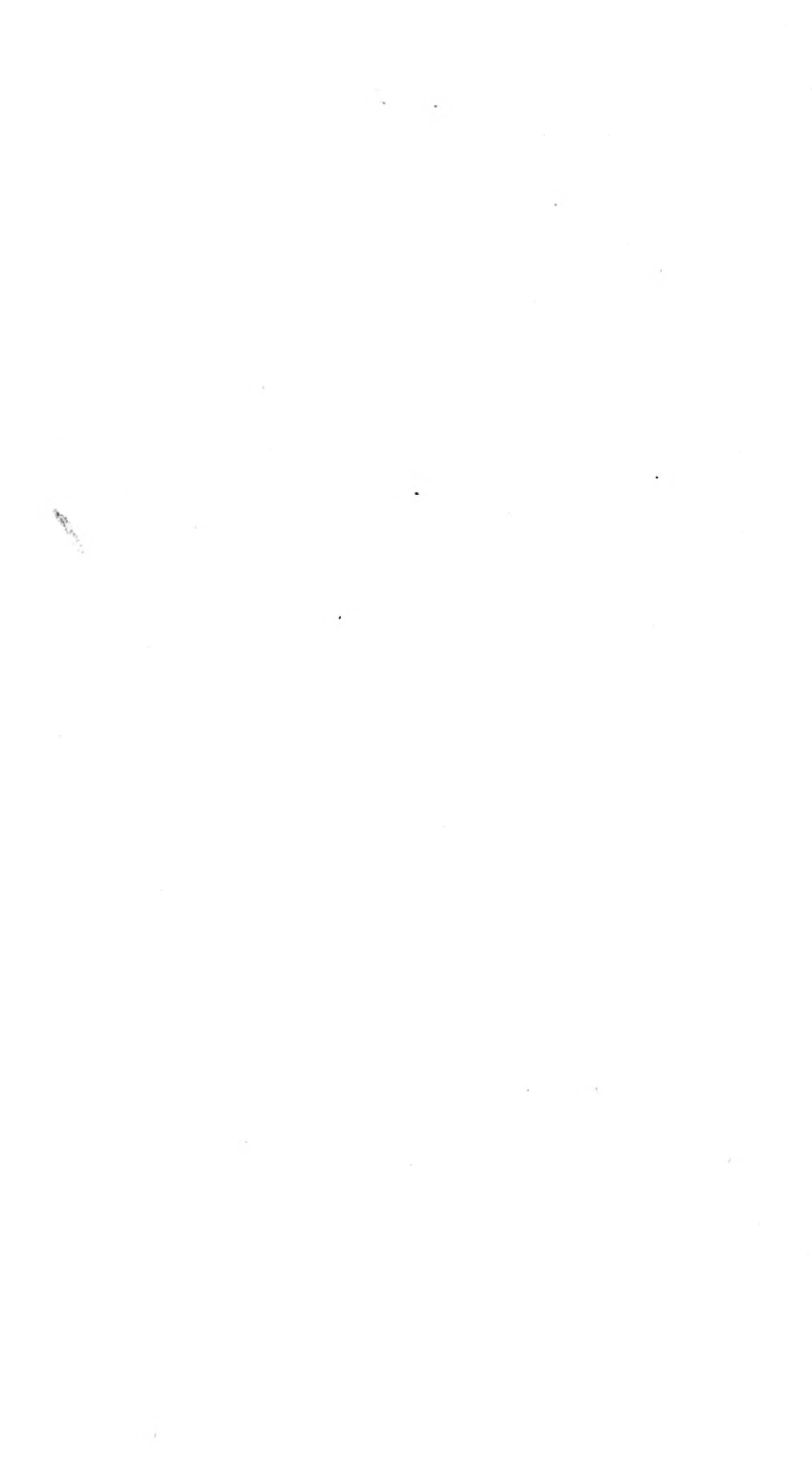
Then women were present at the interment of the holy Jesus, purchase spices for the purpose of embalming the body	249
Pilate orders the sepulchre of Christ to be guarded	250
The women repair to the sepulchre of Jesus, where they see two angels, one of whom informs them that Jesus is risen; and this circumstance they communicate to the apostles	<i>ib.</i>
Peter and John repair to the sepulchre, and are convinced of the removal of the body	252
Jesus appears to Mary, and sends her to the apostles, who disbelieve her relation	253
Other women behold Jesus, and are sent by him to the apostles	<i>ib.</i>
The soldiers bear testimony to the resurrection of Christ, and the priests bribe them to suppress the publication of the fact	255
On the road towards Emmaus, Jesus discourses with two of his disciples; and on their return to Jerusalem, they declare that they have seen their Master, but are discredited; and the testimony of Peter is also disbelieved	256
Our Lord appears to all his apostles, except Thomas; and after convincing them of the reality of his body, promising them the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and instructing them in the principles of their duty, he breaths upon them, and disappears	257
Thomas disbelieves the testimony of his brethren	259
Jesus appears to Thomas, and the rest of his apostles	260
Thomas acknowledges his Master, who pronounces those to be happy who believe without ocular demonstration	<i>ib.</i>

	Page,
Life of St. Peter	266
St. Paul	308
St. Andrew	340
St. James the Great	343
St. John the Evangelist	345
St. Philip	347
St. Bartholomew	349
St. Matthew	351
St. Thomas	355
St. James the Less	360
St. Simon the Zealot	365
St. Jude	367
St. Matthias	370
St. Mark	373
St. Luke	375
St. Barnabas	378
St. Stephen	383
St. Timothy	385
St. Titus	387
Conclusion	389
Brief enumeration of the Apostles, &c.	393



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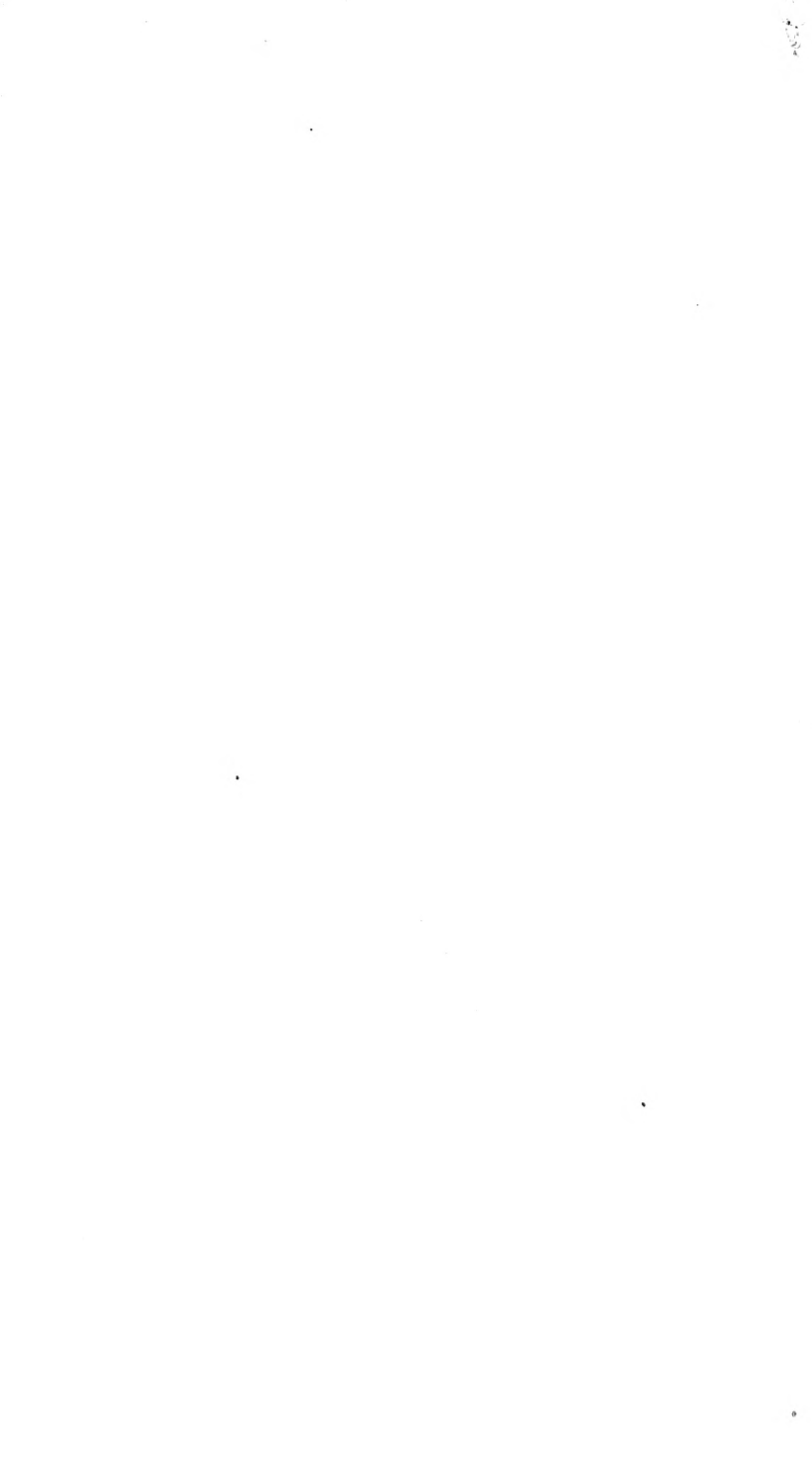
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