

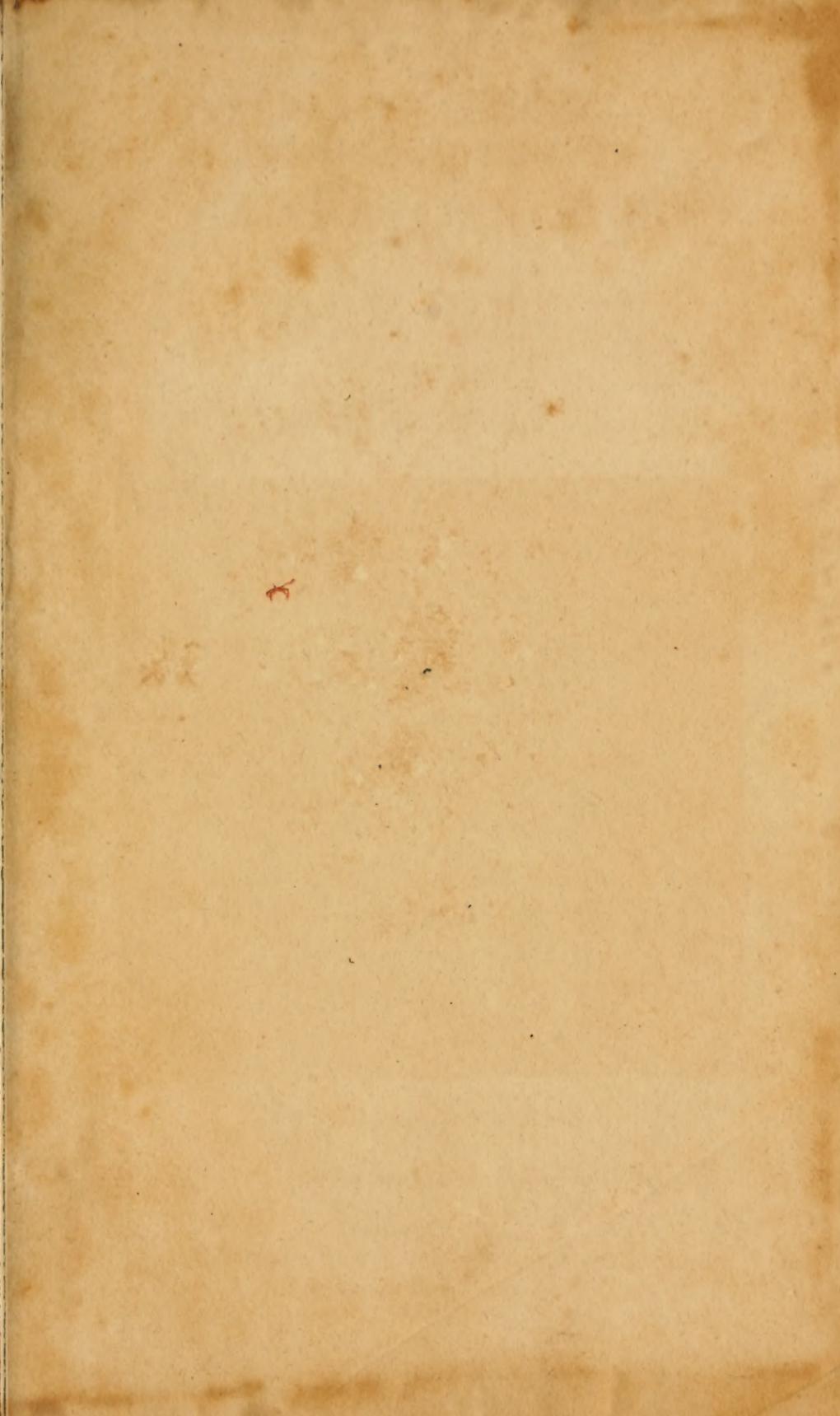


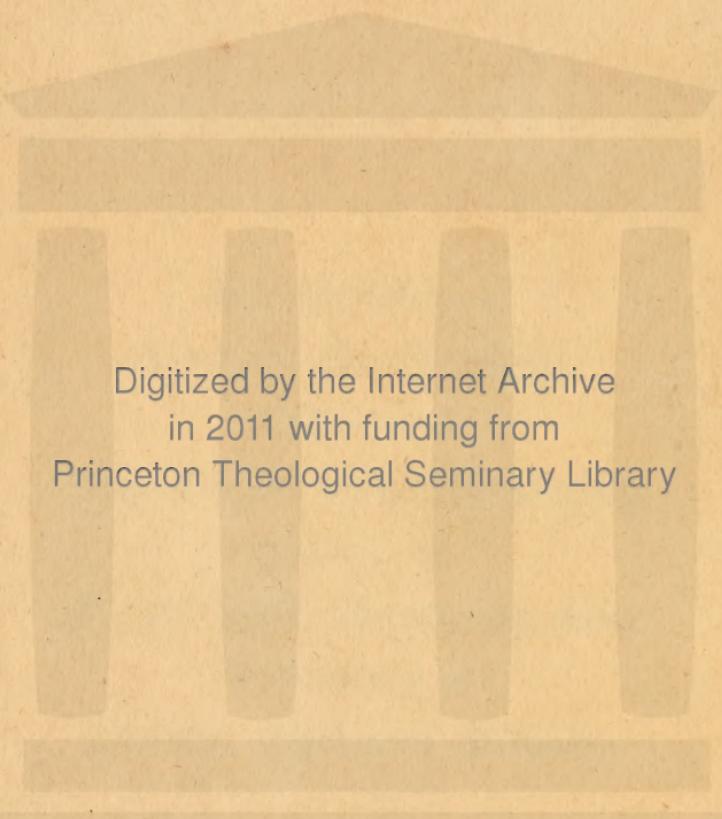
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III

СИДОРЪ СОКОЛОВЪ

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СИДОРЪ СОКОЛОВЪ

A  
NEW AND COMPLETE  
UNIVERSAL HISTORY  
OF THE  
HOLY BIBLE,  
FROM THE  
CREATION OF THE WORLD,  
TO THE  
*FULL ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY,*  
BY OUR BLESSED LORD AND SAVIOUR  
JESUS CHRIST,  
*AND HIS HOLY EVANGELISTS, APOSTLES,*  
*DISCIPLES, &c.*

CONTAINING A CLEAR AND COMPREHENSIVE ACCOUNT OF EVERY REMARKABLE TRANSACTION RECORDED IN THE SACRED SCRIPTURES, DURING A PERIOD OF UPWARDS OF FOUR THOUSAND YEARS.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

—♦— ✓  
BY THE REV. EDWARD KIMPTON,

VICAR OF ROGATE, IN SUSSEX, MORNING PREACHER OF ST. MATTHEW's, BETHNAL-GREEN, AND LATE OF CHRIST's COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

ASSISTED BY MANY LEARNED GENTLEMEN, WHO HAVE MADE THE SACRED WRITINGS THEIR PECULIAR STUDY.

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VOL. III.  
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FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

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1812.

THE HISTORY OF THE  
CIVILIZATION OF THE AMERICAS

BY JAMES FREDERICSON

IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. I.

THE HISTORY OF THE CIVILIZATION OF THE AMERICAS

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IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. II.

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IN TWO VOLUMES. VOL. VII.

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- Account of the ancient State of Jerusalem, with an accurate description of that magnificent Building, Solomon's Temple.
- The various Predictions of the Prophets, concerning the Coming and Offices of the Messiah, the Restoration of the Jews, &c. with other Prophecies that have been, and are now fulfilling, in different parts of the World,

INCLUDING PARTICULAR ACCOUNTS  
OF THE  
**LIVES AND TRANSACTIONS**  
OF THE  
**MOST EMINENT PATRIARCHS, PROPHETS,**  
AND  
**OTHER SERVANTS OF GOD,**  
Who, by an inspired Grace, have distinguished themselves in the  
Display of Divine Wisdom;

SUCH AS

NOAH,	JOSHUA,	EZEKIEL,	OBADIAH,
ABRAHAM,	SAMUEL,	JEREMIAH,	NEHEMIAH,
ISAAC,	DAVID,	DANIEL,	HOSEA,
JACOB,	SOLOMON,	JONAH,	ZECHERIAH,
JOSEPH,	JOB,	ELIJAH,	AMOS,
MOSES,	ISAIAH,	ELISHA,	MALACHI, &c.

TOGETHER

WITH A FULL AND UNIVERSAL HISTORY

OF THE

LIFE, TRANSACTIONS, AND MIRACLES,

OF OUR

BLESSED REDEEMER,

FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS CRUCIFIXION, RESURRECTION, AND  
ASCENSION.

Also the Lives, Travels, Doctrines, Sufferings, and various Martyrdoms of the Holy Evangelists, MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE and JOHN; with the Lives of the Holy Apostles, and other Disciples; particularly ST. PETER, PAUL, ANDREW, JAMES the Great and Less, PHILIP, BARTHOLOMEW, SIMON, JUDE, MATTHIAS, BARNABAS, STEPHEN, TIMOTHY, TITUS, &c. who were made Instruments, by Divine Grace, in promoting the Establishment of Christianity, the Foundation whereon are built all our Hopes of Eternal Salvation.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A summary View of the great Difference between the Law as delivered by MOSES and the PROPHETS, and the Gospel under CHRIST and his APOSTLES. Also the connexion between the OLD and NEW TESTAMENTS, with a clear DISPLAY of the great TRUTHS of DIVINE REVELATION.

INCLUDING,

THE VARIOUS OBSERVATIONS, COMMENTS AND  
ILLUSTRATIONS,

Of the most learned BISHOPS, DIVINES, Ecclesiastical and other authentic, ancient and modern Historians, who have hitherto written on the subject.

The whole calculated to Enlighten the Understanding, purify the Heart, and promote that Knowledge, by which we may obtain Happiness in this World, and eternal Salvation in that which is to come.

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**NEW AND COMPLETE  
UNIVERSAL HISTORY  
OF THE  
HOLY BIBLE.**

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**BOOK IV.**

**FROM THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY, TO THE BIRTH  
OF CHRIST.**

**[INCLUDING A PERIOD OF 588 YEARS.]**

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**CHAP. XIII.**

*Demetrius, the nephew of the late Antiochus Epiphanes, claims the crown of Syria, which he obtains, and orders Antiochus Eupater and the regent Lysias, to be put to death. Alcimus, the high-priest, represents the Jews in a very unfavorable light to Demetrius, who thereupon sends Bacchides, the governor of Mesopotamia, with an army into Judea, in order to carry on the war against them. The perfidy and cruelty of Alcimus the high-priest to his brethren. Bacchides returns to Antioch, and leaves Alcimus commander of his forces against the Jews. Judas Maccabeus obliges Alcimus to leave Judea, and fly to Antioch, upon which Demetrius sends another army into Judea under the command of Nicanor, with strict orders to destroy Judas and his followers. Nicanor enters into a treaty of peace with the Jews, which is rendered ineffectual by the baseness of Alcimus. Nicanor marches against Jerusalem, but is attacked by Judas, his army defeated, and himself slain. Judas enters into a league of friendship with the Romans. He engages the army of the Syrians under the command of Bacchides and Alcimus, from the superiority of whose numbers he is defeated and slain. His brother Jo-*

nathan succeeds him in the command of the Jewish forces, makes a brave stand, and afterwards forms a treaty of peace with Bacchides. Alexander, the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, usurps the kingdom of Syria, in which he is joined by Jonathan, who, among other favors bestowed on him by Alexander, is appointed to the office of high-priest. Alexander engages the army of Demetrius, obtains a complete victory, and kills his antagonist. The son of Demetrius endeavors to revenge his father's death, and to divest Alexander of the Syrian throne. He gains over to his interest Apollonius, the governor of Caelo-Syria, who, to oblige Jonathan to quit Alexander's party, marches against him with a considerable army. Jonathan engages him, and obtains a complete victory. Alexander, in conjunction with Ammonius his favorite, concerts a plot against the life of his father-in-law Ptolemy Philometer, which proves abortive. Ptolemy engages Alexander, defeats his army, and obliges him to fly into Arabia, where Zabdiel the king of that part of the country, cuts off his head and sends it to Ptolemy. Ptolemy dies of the wounds he received in the battle with Alexander, and Demetrius obtains quiet possession of the Syrian empire.

AFTER Antiochus Eupater had for some time been on the throne of Syria, Demetrius, the son of Seleucus Philopater (elder brother to Antiochus Epiphanes) laid claim to the crown. In the very year that Antiochus, the uncle of Demetrius, died, he was defeated in a pitched battle by the Romans, and taken prisoner, upon which his nephew Demetrius, who happened to be with him, and was then a child, was, to secure his uncle's liberty, sent as an hostage to Rome; and in consequence of his absence at the time of his uncle's death, Antiochus Eupater was declared king without the least opposition.

Demetrius was now in the twenty-third year of his age, and thinking that Antiochus Eupater possessed that dignity to which himself was entitled, he determined to put in his claim, and, if possible, make himself master of the Syrian empire. The first step he took towards effecting his design was, to apply to the Senate of Rome for their assistance, and as an inducement to their granting his request, he told them, that, having been bred up in that city from his childhood, he should always look on Rome as his country, the senators as his fathers, and their sons as

his brothers. This, however, had not the desired effect, for the Senate, paying a greater regard to their own interest than the claim of Demetrius, and judging it more advantageous to them to have a boy reign in Syria (as Antiochus Eupater then was) than a man of mature understanding and discernment (as they knew Demetrius to be) refused to give him any assistance, notwithstanding the pretensions he made of being justly entitled to the sovereignty of the Syrian empire.

This disappointment, however, did not intimidate Demetrius, who, in order to execute his designs, escaped from Rome, with a full resolution of risking his fortune in his own country. Having landed at Tripolis in Syria, he informed the inhabitants of his being the right heir to the crown, and that he was sent by the Roman senate, who would support his pretensions to take possession of the kingdom. This story being universally credited by the people of Tripolis, they readily espoused the cause of Demetrius, who, having raised a few forces in that city, marched towards Antioch, in his way to which he made himself master of many capital places, and the people, giving up Eupater's cause as lost, went over to him in such numbers, that he soon found himself at the head of a very considerable army.

So universal was the disaffection of the people towards Eupater, and so prepossessed were they in favor of Demetrius, that when they heard of his approach near Antioch, the soldiers in the city seized Eupater and the regent Lysias, with a design of delivering them up to Demetrius as soon as he should arrive. Demetrius, however, did not think proper to see them, but gave orders that they should be immediately put to death. This was accordingly done, soon after which Demetrius entered with his army into Antioch, amidst the universal acclamations of the people, and, without any farther opposition, became thoroughly possessed of the Syrian empire.

Soon after Demetrius was settled on the Syrian throne, the base and perfidious Alcimus (whom Antiochus Eupater had constituted high-priest, but who was never, by the Jews, acknowledged as such on account of his apostacy) in order to ingratiate himself in the favor of the new

king, went and implored his protection against Judas Maccabeus and his party, whom he accused of being enemies to the kings of Syria, fomentors of sedition, and persecutors of his faithful subjects.

In consequence of this representation, Demetrius, who, from the situation of Alcimus, was readily induced to give credit to all he said, was so exasperated, that he immediately ordered Bacchides, a very powerful man, and governor of Mesopotamia, to march with an army into Judea; and, having confirmed Alcimus in the office of high-priest, joined him in the same commission for carrying on the war against the Jews.

On their arrival in Judea, the Scribes and Doctors of the law, alarmed at so formidable a force, met together in order to consult, and fix on the most proper methods to be taken in so critical a state of affairs. After some deliberation it was at length agreed to send deputies to Bacchides and Alcimus, in order to bring matters to a peaceable accommodation. The Jews, having obtained the promise of a safe-conduct, accordingly dispatched the deputies, who were sixty in number, on the business; but no sooner did the perfidious and cruel Alcimus get them in his power, than he ordered them all to be instantly put to death, thereby violating the promise he had made for their safety, and thereby justly incurring the hatred and detestation of his brethren.

A short time after this, Bacchides returned to Antioch, leaving Alcimus in Judea, with some of his forces, to protect and defend him. In this situation the views of Alcimus were directed fully to secure himself in the office of high-priest, to effect which, he endeavored to ingratiate himself with the people by fair words and obliging behavior. This so far answered his purpose, that he soon doubled the number of forces that had been left him by Bacchides; but they consisted chiefly of renegadoes, who destroyed all the Jews who were friends to Judas wherever they found them.

As soon as Judas understood the cruelties exercised by the people under the command of Alcimus against his brethren in Judea, he marched from Jerusalem in order to give him battle; but Alcimus, knowing himself to be

unequal to the contest, retired hastily to Demetrius at Antioch, whom he still farther irritated against Judas, setting forth the great mischief he had already done, and the farther danger to be apprehended from him, unless a proper force was sent to check his proceedings. He farther told him that so long as Judas and his brothers were permitted to live, they would never suffer his authority to take place, nor could any lasting peace be ever established in that part of the country.

In consequence of this representation, Demetrius sent another army against the Jews, under the command of Nicanor, one of the principal men of his court, with strict orders to destroy Judas, disperse his followers, and thoroughly establish Alcimus in the office of high-priest. Nicanor, in obedience to these commands, left Antioch, but with no real intent of strictly executing the commission on which he was sent. He was sensible of the courage and conduct of Judas, and, therefore, on his arrival in Judea, being unwilling to come to an engagement with him, he endeavored to compromise matters by treaty, and, therefore, sent deputies to Judas with this message: "Wherefore (said he) should we risque all on the uncertain chance of war, when we may better adjust matters by negociation? I pledge my most solemn oath for your security. Peace alone is my object, which you may imagine by the number of friends I have brought with me, to testify our master's good will and affection to all the Jewish nation." Judas, imagining Nicanor to be sincere, readily agreed to the terms he offered, and accordingly articles of peace were drawn up between them. But, Alcimus the high-priest, disapproving of Nicanor's conduct, from a supposition that his own interest was not sufficiently secured in it, resolved to overthrow all that Nicanor had done, and, if possible, still farther irritate Demetrius against the Jews. To this purpose he repaired to Antioch, and so possessed the king against the peace made by Nicanor, that he not only refused to ratify what had been agreed on, but sent his positive commands to him to go on with the war, and not to cease prosecuting it till he had either slain Judas, or taken him prisoner, and sent him bound to Antioch.

In consequence of these instructions, Nicanor being obliged, though much against his inclination, to alter his conduct, marched his army up to Jerusalem, and designing (in order to fulfil the king's commands) to get Judas into his power by craft and treachery, he invited him to a conference, which the other, upon presumption of the depending peace, readily complied with, and set out for the place appointed. But Judas, by some means or other, happening to discover the plot on his way, stopped short, and retreated in time to his own people, who were so incensed at the treachery of Nicanor, that they vowed, if possible, to be amply revenged on him.

As soon as Nicanor found that his plot was discovered, and his designs frustrated, he marched with his army towards Jerusalem, with a resolution of obtaining by force what he could not accomplish by treachery. Judas hearing of his approach, led out his army against him, and a battle took place near a village, called Capharsaloma, in which Judas was worsted, and obliged to save himself by precipitately retreating to Jerusalem.

Animated with this success, Nicanor hastened with all expedition after Judas. On his arrival at Mount Sion, he was met by a number of priests, who, having sacrifices with them, shewed them to Nicanor, telling him that they were going to offer them up for the safety of king Demetrius. Nicanor, in a rage, threatened, that if they did not immediately deliver up Judas to him, he would raze the temple to the ground, and destroy the city; but this they could neither comply with, nor was he able to put his threats in execution.

Finding himself thus disappointed, Nicanor, in revenge, executed many severe cruelties on the poor Jews, who fell into his hands, and such as were wealthy he first plundered of their possessions, and then put them to death. Being informed that there lived at some distance a very rich man, named Razis, who was also eminent for his steady constancy in the religion of his country, he sent a guard of five hundred men to seize him, thinking the loss of so considerable a person would be a great affliction to the Jews. This company accordingly went, and attacked the good old man, in his castle,

which he defended for some time with great bravery; but being at length overpowered, and finding himself just ready to fall into the hands of the enemy, rather than be a reproach to his nation by submitting to the infidels, he fell upon his own sword, and put a period to his existence.

Nicanor, finding it unlikely to reduce Jerusalem, left it in a great rage, and encamped his army near a village called Betheron, where he was joined by several Syrian parties, so that the whole of his forces amounted to about thirty-five thousand. This, however, did not in the least dismay Judas, who, though his army was greatly inferior in number, marched from Jerusalem, and encamped at a place called Adasus, within thirty furlongs of the enemy. In order to encourage his troops, he told them, that though the number of the enemy was great, they need not to fear, for they fought in the cause of God, whose power could crush multitudes; and advised them rather to think on their own valor than the numbers they were to encounter. "Attack them courageously (said he) and "leave the rest to heaven."

The Jews, being thus encouraged by their leader, attacked the enemy with the most intrepid resolution, and the battle was exceeding desperate on both sides for some time, till at length victory declared in favor of Judas, for Nicanor being slain, with a great number of his troops, the rest were so intimidated that they immediately threw down their arms and fled. Judas availed himself of this advantage by pursuing the fugitives, to whom he gave no quarter. In his pursuit he proclaimed his victory by sound of trumpet in all the cities and towns through which he passed; the consequence of which was, that the country people gathered together from all parts, and such of the Syrians that fell in their way, in endeavoring to escape, they put to death; so that by means of them, and the close pursuit of Judas and his troops, not a single person of the Syrian army was left to carry home the tidings of their melancholy overthrow.

Judas and his victorious army returning to the field of battle, after the pursuit of the enemy, possessed themselves of the spoils of the slain; and having found Ni-

canor's body among the dead, they carried it to Jerusalem, where they cut off his head, and placed it upon one of the towers of the city. An universal joy prevailed throughout Jerusalem, on this occasion, and, in commemoration of so great a deliverance, it was ordained that the thirteenth day of the month Adar (which answers to part of our February) the day when this victory was obtained, should be ever after observed as an anniversary day of solemn thanksgiving.

After this victory, the Jews had a short respite from war, during which, Judas, in order, if possible, to obtain a lasting peace, bethought himself of making a league with the Romans. He had heard of their great fame in conquering the Gauls, Carthaginians, Grecians, &c. and was, therefore, desirous of making an alliance with them, in hopes of thereby obtaining some protection and relief against the oppressions of the Syrians. Judas accordingly dispatched two of his most intimate friends and counsellors (namely, Jason and Eupolemus, whom he knew to be sufficiently capable of executing such an embassy) to Rome, to request of the Senate that the Jews might be admitted as their allies; and that a letter might be sent to Demetrius, requiring him to desist from giving the Jews any further molestation. This proposal proved agreeable to the Senate, who immediately drew up articles of treaty, the original of which they kept, and sent a copy of them to Jerusalem, which were highly approved of by Judas. The purport of these articles was, "that no people subject to the Romans should make war on the Jews, or supply their enemies with money, shipping, corn, &c. and that the Jews should be held to the same terms in case the Romans should be attacked. That if the Jews demanded any future alteration of their agreement, the consent of the whole people should be necessary to ratify it." This was the first alliance ever formed between the Jews and the Romans; and the copy of the treaty was carefully preserved in one of the most secure apartments of the temple.

In the mean time, Demetrius, having received an account of the defeat and death of Nicanor, sent Bacchides again into Judea, at the head of a very numerous army,

in order to give battle to Judas, and with orders, if possible, to bring him to Antioch dead or alive. Bacchides immediately set out to execute the king's commands, and the first place he encamped at was Arbela, a town in Galilee, where he forced many Jews from the caves to which they had retreated, and cruelly put them to death. From hence he marched towards Jerusalem, in his way to which, he learnt that Judas and his army were encamped at a place called Bethseth. In consequence of this intelligence he immediately marched his forces thither, the whole number consisting of 22,000 foot and 2000 horse; while Judas had no more than 3000 to oppose them, and these were so terrified at the strength and number of the enemy, that the greatest part deserted, so that Judas had not above 800 left.

But, notwithstanding Judas was thus distressed for want of men, and had not any opportunity of recruiting his forces, yet he was fully bent on hazarding a battle, and, therefore, used the most powerful arguments he was master of, to prevail on the few he had to stand by him to the utmost extremity. They, however, expostulated with him on the impropriety of attempting to engage so very superior a number, and advised him rather to retreat with caution, and put off his design till he could augment his forces. To this Judas replied, "It shall never be said of me that I turned my back to an enemy. If it be the will of God that we now fall, let his will be done; but let us not, by an ignominious flight, destroy all the credit of a life of glory." This speech so animated Judas's soldiers, that they unanimously resolved to stand the combat, and every necessary preparation was made for opposing the enemy.

The army of Bacchides was disposed in the following manner. The front was composed of light armed men, and archers, supported by a body of Macedonians, while there were two wings of horse, the right being commanded by Bacchides himself. In this disposition they advanced towards the army of Judas, which they no sooner approached than they sounded a charge, gave a loud shout, and began the attack. The forces of Judas sustained the shock with great intrepidity, and the battle

continued desperate for some time, when Judas seeing Bacchides with his right wing pressing hard on his men, relieved them with a band of courageous youths, who broke Bacchides's right wing, and pursued them as far as the mountains of Azotus; but not having sufficient forces to keep the left wing in play during his absence, he was followed and closely surrounded by the enemy. The action was very hot and obstinate: the Jews sold their lives at a dear rate: their general did all that a valiant man could do, till at length, being overpowered with numbers, he was, with the greater part of his men, slain, and the rest intimidated at the loss of their leader, betook themselves to flight.

Thus fell the great Judas Maccabeus, the restorer and preserver of the true worship of God, and protector of his distressed countrymen. His two brothers Simon and Jonathan, having obtained permission of Bacchides to remove his body, they conveyed it to Modin, and there interred it in the sepulchre of his ancestors, with all the funeral honor that was due to the memory of so brave and excellent a commander.

After the death of Judas, Bacchides made himself master of the country, and, assisted by the apostate Jews, used all the friends and adherents of the Maccabees, wherever they found them, with the utmost barbarity. At this time, likewise, there happened to be a general famine throughout the land of Judea; so that through distress for want of bread on the one hand, and the difficulty of defending themselves against their enemies on the other, many of the Jews were, in a manner, compelled to adhere to the faction of the Macedonians. In short, the Jews were never so deplorably miserable; since the Babylonish captivity, as at this period; so that the late adherents of Judas entreated Jonathan to follow his brother's example in risking his life for the liberties of his country, and besought him to take upon him the office of general, saying, that without a leader to assist them in opposing their enemies, they must all be inevitably lost. Jonathan told them he was willing to do or suffer any thing for the public welfare; on which he was elected general by the unanimous voice of the people.

Bacchides, hearing of this election, and considering that Jonathan was not less likely to give trouble to the Syrians than his brother Judas, set aboutconcerting measures for destroying him; but Jonathan, having intelligence of his design, collected what force he could, and, accompanied by his brother Simon, retired into the wilderness of Tekoa, where he encamped, with a morass on one side, and the river Jordan on the other, so that it was not an easy matter for the enemy to attack them.

Intelligence being given to Bacchides of the place where Jonathan and his forces were encamped, he immediately marched after them, and, having made himself master of the pass that led to their encampment, he fixed on the Sabbath to attack them, presuming from thence that he should not meet with the least resistance. In this, however, he found himself mistaken, for Jonathan, after reminding his men of the determination that was made in this case in the time of his father Mattathias, encouraged them to dispute it bravely; which accordingly they did, even till they had slain about a thousand of the assailants, when, finding themselves likely to be overpowered by numbers, they took to the river, and, by swimming over to the opposite side, made their escape, not a single man of them meeting with the least accident.

The Syrian general, instead of making any attempt to pursue them, thought it more advisable to return back to Jerusalem, where, having fortified Mount Aera and the neighboring towns, and put garrisons in them, he took hostages for the fidelity of the inhabitants, and then returned to Antioch.\*

After the departure of Bacchides, Jonathan and his party, as well as all those Jews who were advocates for preserving their ancient religion, lived peaceably for

\* It is highly probable that Demetrius had, by this time, received letters from the Romans in behalf of the Jews, in consequence of the treaty of friendship formed between them and Judas, and that therefore the king had sent orders to Bacchides to cease persecuting those people, in obedience to which he at this time left the country.—Just before the departure of Bacchides, Alcimus the high-priest was suddenly struck with a fit of the palsy, which, in a very short time, deprived him of life.

about two years, at the expiration of which the adverse party, envying their happiness, sent to Bacchides, and prevailed on him to return with his army into Judea, proposing to seize Jonathan and all his adherents, as soon as he should arrive with his forces to support the enterprise.

As soon as Jonathan understood that Bacchides was again on his march into Judea, he was greatly alarmed, and knowing himself unable to stand against the great force he had brought with him, he retired into the wilderness, and raised walls round the village of Bethbasi, intending to make that his place of retreat on all emergent occasions.

Bacchides, having received information of Jonathan's retreat, marched with his forces against him. On his approach near Bethbasi, Jonathan left Simon his brother with one part of the forces to defend the place, whilst himself with the other part took the field to harrass the enemy. In these capacities the two brothers acted so well, Jonathan by cutting off several of the enemy's parties, and now and then falling on the outskirts of their army employed in the siege; and Simon, by making frequent sallies, and burning the engines they had brought against the place, that Bacchides grew weary of the undertaking, and considering the renegado Jews as the occasion of his return and disgrace, he was so enraged that he ordered several of them to be put to death.

When Bacchides found the forces under Jonathan and his brother Simon too powerful for him, he was almost distracted at the thoughts of failing in an attempt in which he had imagined himself sure of success; but his greatest concern was how to draw off his army without disgrace either to himself or his sovereign. While he was deliberating in what manner to act, Jonathan sent a messenger to him with proposals for a league of mutual friendship on the condition of an exchange of prisoners. Bacchides saw in those proposals so fair an opportunity of abandoning the siege without disgrace, that he immediately acceded thereto; in consequence of which the prisoners were exchanged on both sides, and the respective commanders bound themselves, by a solemn

oath, that no farther hostilities should take place between them. This agreement being ratified, Bacchides returned to Antioch, and so strictly did he preserve the treaty of peace made with Jonathan, that he never after returned into the country of Judea.

The wars being thus happily over, Jonathan retired to Machmas, a town situated about nine miles to the north of Jerusalem, where he governed the people according to law, cut off all those who had apostatized from their religion and country, and, as far as in him lay, reformed all abuses both in church and state.

While Jonathan remained in this peaceable situation, his power was greatly increased by a very unexpected incident that took place in Syria. Alexander, a son of the late Antiochus Epiphanes, laid claim to the Syrian empire; and, being well supported by foreign powers, made himself master of Ptolemais, a city of Palestine, where he concerted the most likely measures for carrying on his design against Demetrius, and divesting him of the sovereignty.

As soon as Demetrius was informed of the proceedings of his rival, he thought it expedient immediately to make his court to Jonathan, and to obtain him as an ally. To this purpose he dispatched messengers with letters to Jonathan, by which he constituted him General of all Judea, with full authority to raise forces, and to provide them with arms; commanding likewise that all those hostages who had been committed prisoners to the fortress of Jerusalem by Bacchides should be immediately set at liberty.

On the receipt of these dispatches Jonathan left Machmas, and repaired to Jerusalem, in order to execute the commands of Demetrius. As soon as he arrived in the city, he publicly read the contents of the king's letters to the soldiers and people, who were greatly surprized at so sudden a turn of fortune in his favor. Having done this he proceeded to make his levies, and gave liberty to the hostages in the fortress of Acra, strictly ordering that they should be permitted to return in safety to their friends. He now resolved to fix his residence at Jerusalem, and in consequence thereof thoroughly repaired the city, fortified it on every side, and rebuilt those walls

round the temple which had been destroyed during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes.

In the mean time Alexander (who was no stranger to the valor and courageous actions of Jonathan) assembled his friends together, and represented to them how advantageous it would be to his cause could he form an alliance with him, which there was great reason to think might take place, if proper application was made, on account of the insults he had received from Demetrius, and Bacchides, the general of his forces. The friends of Alexander unanimously agreeing with him in opinion, he immediately dispatched an embassy to Jonathan with a letter to the following purport:

“ Alexander the king, to Jonathan his brother, greeting.

“ Having long been informed of your character for honor, faith and courage, and deeming you every way worthy our best regard, we have dispatched ambassadors to offer you our friendship and alliance, and have commissioned them to treat for the same: and by these presents, and our royal authority, we constitute and ordain thee high-priest of the Jews, and rank thee in the number of the king’s friends; and we likewise present thee with a crown of gold and a purple robe, entertaining no doubt of a proper return being made by you for this instance of our regard and esteem.”

The emissaries of Demetrius, having got intelligence of this message being sent by Alexander to Jonathan, immediately informed their master of what had passed; upon which Demetrius, resolved, if possible, to gain over Jonathan, by outbidding his rival, dispatched a messenger to him with a letter to the following purpose:

“ Demetrius the king, to Jonathan, and the Jewish people, greeting.

“ As we have already entered into a treaty of alliance with you, we would wish to fix it on a lasting and uninterrupted foundation. Wherefore it is our pleasure that your tributes be remitted, and we hereby remit all the taxes formerly paid to our predecessors or ourselves;

" (exclusive of the salt and crown taxes, with the thirds  
" of your corn and fruits) and these duties we give up for  
" all future times, as well as the poll-tax on the inhabi-  
" ants throughout Judea, and the three governments of  
" Galilee, Samaria, and Peræa. It is our pleasure like-  
" wise that Jerusalem and its dependencies be exempted  
" from all tenths and tributes, be deemed holy, and have  
" the privileges of a sanctuary. Let the citadel be de-  
" livered to Jonathan the high-priest, with permission to  
" place in it a garrison of such of his friends as he may  
" think proper. We farther command that, immediately  
" on receipt hereof, liberty be given to all Jewish prisoners  
" in every part of our dominions, without any fees im-  
" posed, even on their cattle: that their sabbaths and  
" solemn festivals, and three days preceding each, shall  
" be deemed days of freedom to the Jews throughout our  
" dominions, that they may live at peace, and unmolested.  
" That thirty thousand Jews, if so many shall be willing,  
" may bear arms in our service, and receive the same pay  
" as our own troops: that they be entrusted in garrisons,  
" and near our person; and that our royal family receive  
" the better sort of them as domestics. In Jerusalem, and  
" the three dependent provinces, the Jews shall freely  
" exercise their own laws; but the high priest must take  
" care that the temple of Jerusalem be the only one in  
" which the Jews worship. Fifteen thousand shekels of  
" silver we also grant annually towards the expence of  
" their sacrifices; and we remit the ten thousand drachms  
" formerly paid to our predecessors by the priests and  
" officers attending the service of the temple. We farther  
" order that all debtors repairing to the temple of Jerusa-  
" lem, or the liberties thereof, on account of debt, shall  
" remain unmolested both in person and property. We  
" also permit and require that the temple be repaired;  
" that fortifications be made round it, and that such  
" strong places as the Jews think proper to fortify shall  
" have garrisons stationed in them: and all this shall be  
" done at our own expense."

The advantageous indulgencies offered to Jonathan and his people by the two rival princes were so great, that for some time he knew not on which side to convey

his interest. At length, after consulting the heads of the Jews, who could not forget what a bitter enemy Demetrius had been to all who adhered to the true interest of their country, and suspecting at the same time that his offers proceeded only from the necessity of his affairs, which would certainly be revoked as soon as the storm was blown over, it was resolved to enter into a league with Alexander; in consequence of which, Jonathan, accepting of his grant of the high-priest's office, did, on the Feast of Tabernacles, which soon after ensued, put on the pontifical robes, and officiated as high-priest, after that office had been vacant four years, namely, ever since the death of the wicked Alcimus.

In the mean time the two contending parties, having drawn together all their forces, resolved to adjust the dispute between them by one decisive battle. The army of Alexander was composed partly of such as had gone over to him from Demetrius, and partly of his own troops, who had assisted him in taking possession of Ptolemais. Soon after the battle commenced, the right wing of Alexander's forces was pressed hard by the left of Demetrius, who pushed their advantage even to the plundering of the camp; but Alexander's forced the opposite column, where Demetrius fought in person, till it was totally routed. Demetrius did wonders, killing and pursuing his enemies, and defending himself, for a considerable time, till at length his horse plunging into a bog, and he being oppressed with multitudes, was obliged to yield, though not till his body was covered with darts and arrows. Thus died Demetrius king of Syria, after having enjoyed the sovereignty of that empire about eleven years.

On the death of Demetrius, Alexander became master of the whole Syrian empire, and was placed on the throne by the unanimous voice of the people. Soon after this he wrote a letter to Ptolemy Philometer, king of Egypt, proposing a match between himself and his daughter, and intimating that there would be no disgrace in such an alliance, after the conquest of Demetrius, and the recovery of a kingdom, which was his own in right of his father.

This proposal was highly satisfactory to Ptolemy, who sent a letter to Alexander, congratulating him on his late success, promising to bestow his daughter on him in marriage, and that he would meet him at Ptolemais, where, if he thought proper, the nuptials should be celebrated.

Ptolemy, agreeable to his engagement, went soon after with his daughter to the place appointed, where Alexander attending, the parties were married, and he received as a wedding portion, a sum becoming the dignity of the father. To this wedding Jonathan the high-priest was invited, and was received by both the kings with great favor and respect, especially by Alexander, who, to do him a particular honor, caused him to be clothed in purple, and to take place near himself among the first princes of his kingdom; besides which he made him general of all his forces in Judea, and gave him an office of great honor and profit in his palace.

Alexander now thought himself arrived at the summit of happiness, and that he should enjoy a life of uninterrupted tranquility; but he soon found himself mistaken. A short time after, Demetrius, the son of the late Demetrius, resolving to revenge his father's death, and recover his kingdom, went to Crete (where he and his brother Antiochus had been concealed during the late troubles) and, with an army of mercenaries, landed in Cilicia. This alarmed Alexander, who instantly marched from Phoenicia to Antioch to secure his affairs there before the arrival of Demetrius. In the mean time Demetrius had gained over to his interest Apollonius the governor of Cœlo-Syria, who, to oblige Jonathan to quit Alexander's party, and join with Demetrius, marched with an army as far as Jamnia, from whence he sent a challenge to Jonathan, defying him to meet him with his sword in the open field, and putting the issue on their single contest; boasting likewise that he was at the head of a number of the bravest men in the empire, whose valor had frequently made his ancestors yield to their superior power.

Irritated at this daring message, Jonathan, accompanied by his brother Simon, left Jerusalem at the head of ten thousand men, and encamped near Joppa, the gates of which were shut by a garrison belonging to Apollonius.

Jonathan demanded entrance, which being refused he immediately made the necessary preparations for attacking the place; when the garrison, knowing themselves too weak to make any opposition against so formidable a body of forces, quietly surrendered.

As soon as Apollonius was informed that Jonathan was in possession of Joppa, he marched with his army and encamped in the fields near that place. Hereupon Jonathan advanced to give him battle; but when the armies came near each other, Apollonius thought proper to make a retreat. Jonathan, however, continued to advance, till his antagonist having got him to a spot of ground which he thought particularly advantageous, faced about, and prepared to engage. He planted a thousand horse to attack Jonathan in the rear; but the latter being aware of this disposition, formed his men into a square figure, so that they might be enabled to engage the enemy on all sides at the same time.

Before the battle began Jonathan encouraged his soldiers to behave themselves like men, and cautioned them to forbear falling in with the enemy at first, but to receive their arrows with their shields till the enemy had spent them, and then to fall on. Apollonius's horse, on whom he chiefly depended, began a distant fight, discharging continued flights of arrows for a considerable time; till at length Simon, seeing them weary with shooting, and their arrows spent, fell on them with his party, and routed them, whilst Jonathan engaged the main body, of which he killed great numbers, and put the rest to flight. The broken forces of Apollonius's army hastened with all expedition to Azotus, where they took shelter in a famous temple dedicated to the idol Dagon; but Jonathan pursuing them, no sooner entered the town than he set fire to the temple and reduced the whole place to ashes, so that the number of those who were slain in the battle, and perished in the flames, amounted to no less than eight thousand.

Having thus destroyed the army of Apollonius, Jonathan, after serving several places belonging to the enemy in like manner as he had done Azotus, marched with his army to Askalon, and encamped near that city with a

design of laying siege to it. But the inhabitants, instead of attempting to make any opposition, brought many valuable presents as a testimony of their submission, which Jonathan readily accepted, and then returned, laden with the spoils of the enemy, in triumph to Jerusalem.

As soon as Alexander heard of the success of Jonathan over his general Apollonius, he sent messengers to Jerusalem to congratulate him on the occasion, and to assure him that the conduct of Apollonius took place without his knowledge. In token of his approbation of what Jonathan had done he sent him a buckle of gold, such as none but the royal family were permitted to wear, and at the same time made him a present of the city of Ecron, together with all the territories thereunto belonging.

About this time Ptolemy Philometer arrived in Syria with a considerable body of forces in order to assist his son-in-law Alexander. Agreeable to the king's order he was received with great respect by the people of all the cities and towns through which he passed, except at Azotus, where the inhabitants complained to him of the burning of the temple of Dagon, and reviled Jonathan for having ravaged their country with fire and sword. Ptolemy gave them a patient hearing, but fearful of disobliging Jonathan, did not think proper to do any thing in their favor without his knowledge.

As soon as Jonathan heard that Ptolemy was arrived in Syria, and advanced as far as Joppa, he went thither to pay his compliments to him, and was received with the greatest marks of honor and friendship; after which he conducted Ptolemy as far as the river Eleutherus, where he took his leave, and returned to Jerusalem.

As Ptolemy was on his way to the city of Ptolemais, he fortunately discovered a plot which had been concerted by Ammonius, a great favorite of Alexander, for taking away his life, though no reason could be assigned for such diabolical intentions. In consequence of this discovery, on his arrival at Ptolemais, he wrote to Alexander, demanding that justice might be done on the traitor; but Alexander refusing to give him up, Ptolemy was fully convinced that the king was concerned in the plot, and

therefore entertained an implacable hatred against him, which soon terminated in his ruin.

The first step Ptolemy took to shew his resentment on this occasion was, to take his daughter Cleopatra from Alexander, and give her to his rival Demetrius, with assurance that he would restore him to his father's throne ; after which he marched with his army to Antioch.

At this time Ammonius, the king's favorite, who had concerted the plot, in conjunction with Alexander, for the destruction of Ptolemy, was at Antioch ; and no sooner did the Antiochians hear of Ptolemy's approach than they determined to execute their resentment on Ammonius, whom they had long detested for his cruelty and oppression. They therefore rose in a body, and slew him in one of the streets in the city ; soon after which Ptolemy arriving they opened their gates to him, and unanimously proclaimed him king of Syria.

Ptolemy was a man of honor, discretion and temperance, and so conducted himself in all public affairs, as to afford satisfaction to his own people, without giving any offence to the Romans. The offer made him by the people of Antioch was very inducive, but his honor giving way to interest, he modestly declined the compliment, and having called a council of the heads of the people, he advised them to receive Demetrius, the true heir to their crown, as their sovereign. He told them that he hoped all past enmity would be forgotten ; that he would himself be bound for his faithfully executing the trust reposed in him ; and desired that, with respect to himself, he might be permitted to content himself with the government of his own dominions. This modest address had the desired effect : the people with one voice received Demetrius as their king, admitted him into the city with great pomp, and placed him on the throne of his ancestors.

When Alexander, who was at this time in Cilicia, heard of what had passed at Antioch, he marched with all his force to meet Ptolemy, wasting the country through which he passed with fire and sword. On his approach near Antioch, Ptolemy and his new son-in-law met him and gave him battle, the issue of which was that Alexander's army was totally routed, and himself forced to fly

into Arabia, where Zabdiel, king of that part of the country, cut off his head, and sent it as a present to Demetrius at Antioch. Ptolemy was not a little pleased with the sight of the head of his treacherous antagonist; but his satisfaction on this account was of short duration, for at the expiration of five days he died of the wounds he had received in the battle, leaving his son-in-law Demetrius in quiet possession of the Syrian empire.

## CHAP. XIV.

*Jonathan, the high-priest, and governor of the Jews, lays siege to the fortress of Aera. He goes to Ptolemais, in obedience to the orders of Demetrius, to whom he makes many rich presents, and from whom he, in return, receives the promises of very distinguished favors. He sends an army to the assistance of Demetrius, who, after having his purposes answered, takes off those indulgences he had before granted to Jonathan. Tryphon (the governor of Antioch during the reign of Alexander) overcomes Demetrius, murders Jonathan and his two sons, together with Antiochus (son of the late Alexander, whom he had placed on the throne of Syria) and afterwards usurps the government to himself. Simon succeeds his brother Jonathan in the command of the Jewish forces, and taking the fortress of Aera, levels it with the ground. Antiochus Sidetes, brother to Demetrius, lays claim to the crown of Syria, and marches with a body of forces against the usurper Tryphon, who is taken and put to death. Antiochus, having got full possession of the throne, sends an army against Simon, who engages them and obtains a complete victory. Ptolemy, the son-in-law of Simon, causes him and two of his sons to be assassinated, after which he sends the same assassins to murder Hyrcanus, the youngest son of Simon, but he being apprized of their intentions, renders them abortive. Hyrcanus is made high-priest and appointed commander of the Jews in the place of his father Simon. He assists Antiochus Sidetes in his war against the Parthians; at the close of which Antiochus and his army are cut to pieces by the inhabitants of the country. Demetrius, after enduring a long imprisonment, is set at liberty, and recovers the kingdom of Syria, but is deposed and put to death. Hyrcanus enlarges his territories, and makes himself master of Samaria. He is greatly incensed against the Pharisees. His death and character.*

**JONATHAN**, being now grown considerable in power, resolved to make himself complete master of Jerusalem by possessing himself of the fortress of Aera, which was still in the hands of the Syrians. To effect this he laid siege to it with a considerable body of forces; but some of the garrison escaping by night, went to De-

metrius and acquainted him with the steps taken by Jonathan. In consequence of this intelligence, Demetrius left Antioch, and marched with a considerable army in order to relieve the place. On his arrival at Ptolemais he sent for Jonathan, who being desirous of keeping up friendship with him, immediately obeyed his orders, taking with him presents of gold and silver, fine robes, and other valuable effects, which he gave to Demetrius, being attended by the priests and elders of the people. The king was so pleased with this distinguished and interesting compliment, that he confirmed Jonathan in the office of high-priest, and instead of going to the assistance of the garrison of Aera, returned to Antioch.

Demetrius was hardly returned to his home, before Jonathan (encouraged by the favor he had so lately received) sent messengers to him, requesting that, on his paying three hundred talents annually, he might be excused from all tolls, taxes, and tributes under his government; upon which Demetrius immediately sent away dispatches to the following effect :

*“ Demetrius the king greets his brother Jonathan, and the rest of the Jewish nation.*

*“ You are hereby to understand that we have written a letter to our trusty and well-beloved cousin Lasthenes, a copy of which is herewith transmitted.*

*Demetrius the king, to his cousin Lasthenes, greeting.*

*“ Such is the sense we entertain of the return that our friends, the Jews, have, from time to time, made to our good will, that we are resolved to give them some distinguishing testimony of our particular esteem and regard for their welfare. Wherefore, we hereby command that the governors of Aphareima, Lydia, and Ramatha, with all the lands dependent on those places, be assigned to the use of Judea: and we exempt Jerusalem from all taxes heretofore paid to our ancestors, as well those called crown taxes, and on salt-pits, as those on corn and fruit; and we command that, for the future, nothing of the kind be demanded. Take care*

"that a copy of this letter be sent to Jonathan, and let it  
"be hung up in one of the most conspicuous parts of the  
"holy temple of Jerusalem."

Demetrius, being now in full and quiet possession of the throne, and having reason to think he should not be interrupted by any enemies, dismissed his army without giving them their full pay, and retained in his service only a number of mercenary troops, which had been collected in Crete and other adjacent islands. This discharge of the troops (and more especially without giving them their full pay for past services) alienated the affections of the people, his ancestors having been accustomed to keep them in pay in time of peace as well as war.

In the mean time, Jonathan was carrying on the siege of the fortress of Acra; but finding himself not likely to reduce it, he sent an embassy to Demetrius, requesting him to withdraw the garrison, it being out of his power to conquer them by force of arms. This, and much more Demetrius promised to do for Jonathan, provided he would but send him some forces to reduce the inhabitants of Antioch, who had taken up arms against him.

In compliance with this request, Jonathan immediately dispatched three thousand of his choicest men to the assistance of Demetrius, who, arriving at Antioch just as the people had beset the palace with intent to murder the king, immediately fell on them with fire and sword, and having burnt a great part of the city, and slain about 100,000 of the inhabitants, they obliged the rest to have recourse to the king's clemency, and sue for peace; after which, Demetrius sent back the troops to Jonathan, with acknowledgments that the subjugation of his rebellious subjects was entirely owing to their distinguished valor.

But these services were soon forgot by Demetrius, who, thinking he should not have any farther occasion to call in the assistance of Jonathan, broke the agreement he had made in exempting him from the payment of the usual taxes; and (though he had received three hundred talents in lieu of them) threatened him with military execution, unless he sent the same taxes and tributes which had been usually paid by his predecessors.

These threats Demetrius would have certainly carried into execution, had it not been for the intervention of a very singular and unexpected incident, which obliged him to employ his forces another way. One Tryphon (who had formerly served Alexander as governor of Antioch, but was laid aside in the reign of Demetrius) observing that the tyranny and oppression which was every where practised, the disbanding the Syrian soldiers, and retaining only foreigners in pay, together with many other grievances under which the people labored, had quite alienated their hearts, and made them ready for a general defection throughout the kingdom, he thought this the most favorable opportunity of putting in practice a scheme which he had long concerted, namely, to advance himself to the throne of the Syrian empire.

To this purpose Tryphon went into Arabia, and getting young Antiochus (son of the late Alexander) out of the hands of one Malchus, in whose care he had been placed, he took him into Syria, and on his arrival there, immediately proclaimed him king. The disaffection of the people to Demetrius was so great, that not only all the soldiers whom he had disbanded, but likewise others whom his ill conduct had made his enemies, flocked in great numbers to Tryphon, so that he soon found himself at the head of a very considerable army. Animated with this success, he immediately marched against Demetrius, when a severe battle took place, which terminated in favor of Tryphon, the army of Demetrius being totally routed, great numbers killed, and himself obliged to fly into Cilicia for safety. After the battle was over, Tryphon marched with his victorious army into Antioch, and immediately placed Antiochus on the throne, amidst the universal acclamations of the people.

By the direction of Tryphon, together with the advice of his friends about him, Antiochus, soon after his accession, sent an embassy to Jonathan, complimenting him with the title of friend and ally, confirming him in the office of high-priest, together with those places and dignities he had formerly held, and granting him many very distinguished privileges. He likewise appointed Simon, the brother of Jonathan, governor of all those parts of

the country which reached from Tyre to the frontiers of Egypt. These compliments and indulgences were highly pleasing to Jonathan, who sent messengers back to Antiochus and Tryphon, with assurance of his friendship, and that he would readily join them against Demetrius as the common enemy.

Jonathan having received a commission from Antiochus to raise forces, left Jerusalem, and went into Syria and Phoenicia for that purpose. When he came to Askalon, he was received in great form by the people, who made him many valuable presents, and whom he invited, as he had done those in the other cities through which he had passed, to give up Demetrius, and espouse the cause of Antiochus, which request they unanimously agreed to.

Jonathan having thus got over the people of Askalon, and raised a great number of forces in the city, proceeded from thence to Gaza, where he met with a quite different reception, for, contrary to his expectation, they shut their gates against him, and declared for Demetrius. In consequence of this, Jonathan laid siege to the place, and in order to terrify them into submission, sent a detachment of his forces to destroy the adjoining towns and villages with fire and sword. The inhabitants of Gaza, having no reason to expect assistance from Demetrius, and seeing nothing before them but destruction, sent deputies to make submission to Jonathan, who received them in the most friendly manner. He readily accepted the conditions they offered, and having received hostages for the fulfilment of the same, and sent them to Jerusalem, he quitted Gaza, and proceeded with his forces towards Damascus.

In the mean time, Demetrius had encamped with a large army near Cades, a place bordering on Tyre and Galilee, with a view of enticing Jonathan out of his way, and defeating him. But Jonathan continued his route, leaving the care of Judea to his brother Simon, who, assembling together what forces he could, marched and attacked the strong fortress of Bethsura, then in possession of the partizans of Demetrius. The people of the garrison, being apprehensive they should all be put to the sword, requested Simon's permission to march unmolested.

ed to Demetrius; which he readily granted, and placed another garrison of his own people in their stead.

By this time, Jonathan had advanced with his forces, which he had greatly increased on the way, as far as the plain of Nasor, where he encamped unsuspicuous of any danger; but Demetrius, having notice of his situation, dispatched one of his parties to lay in ambush behind a mountain, while the main body advanced to attack Jonathan on the plain. As soon as Jonathan found himself thus beset, he gave the best orders to his soldiers the shortness of time would permit; but the Jews seeing the party of Demetrius, who were placed in ambush, and fearful of being surrounded by the enemy, the greater part of them threw down their arms, and precipitately fled. So general was the terror that only a very small party remained with Jonathan, who were encouraged to stand against the enemy by means of their leader, together with the two captains, Mattathias, the son of Absalom, and Judas the son of Calphi. These charged the front of the enemy in so desperate a manner, that their lines were soon broke, which being seen by those who had deserted from Jonathan, they immediately returned, and fell on with such fury, that Demetrius's army was entirely routed, no less than 3000 being killed on the spot, and the rest obliged to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

After this victory, Jonathan returned to Jerusalem, from whence he dispatched ambassadors to Rome to renew former alliances, giving them directions to come back by the way of Lacedemon, on business of a similar nature. The Romans received the ambassadors with the highest respect, and dismissed them with letters, recommending that a safe passage might be granted them by the potentates of every dominion through which they might have occasion to pass. On their return, they delivered the following letter to the Lacedemonians.

*Jonathan, the high-priest, and the elders of the nation, and the priests, and the other people of the Jews, to the Lacedemonians their brethren, send greeting.*

“By a letter of very antient date from your king Arcus, “to our high-priest Onias (a copy of which we have en-“closed) we find that we are nearly allied to you in “blood; and by the testimony we there gave to Arcus, “it appears how happy we were in the ratification of such “an alliance. Now we would inform you that we should, “ere this time, have claimed your friendship, but we left “the honor of giving the example to you. From the first “ratification of your friendship to the present time, we “have constantly prayed to God that you might live in “health and prosperity, and vanquish your foes. In all “our distresses and misfortunes from the malice of ambi-“tious neighbors, we have been cautious not to trouble “you, or other allies: but Divine Providence having put “an end to our wars, and our affairs being more at ease, “we have dispatched Numenius, the son of Antiochus, “and Antipater, the son of Jason (both men of honor and “senators) with letters to the Romans, and to your-“selves, for renewing and strengthening the league of “friendship between us. Return what answer you think “proper; but let us know how we may serve you, that “we may testify our affectionate regard by every means “in our power.”

A short time after the return of the ambassadors, Jonathan, being informed that the forces of Demetrius (which were now greatly augmented) were advancing towards him, he hastened with all expedition to meet them at Amathis, being fully resolved, if possible, to prevent their entrance into Judea. He encamped about fifty furlongs from the camp of Demetrius, from whence he sent spies to discover the design of the enemy; who, taking some prisoners, learnt from them it was intended to surprise him in his encampment. In consequence of this intelligence, Jonathan made every necessary preparation for overthrowing the designs of the enemy, by fixing centinels at the out-posts, and keeping his men under arms all night, previously acquainting them with what

was intended. In the mean time, Demetrius's commanders understanding that their plan had been discovered, were puzzled how to act, knowing themselves too weak to make an open attack; and, therefore, at length formed the resolution of decamping in the night, which they accordingly did, and covered their retreat with a number of fires. At day-break Jonathan marched to attack them, when finding their camp abandoned, he pursued them with the utmost expedition; but these endeavors proved fruitless, the enemy having retreated to a secure place beyond the river Eleutherus. In consequence of this, Jonathan pursued his course to Arabia, where he plundered the country of the Nabatheans, took great numbers of their cattle, and made many of the inhabitants prisoners, whom he conducted to Damascus, and there sold for slaves.

In the mean time Simon proceeded with his forces through Judea and Palestine to Askalon, fortifying all the defensible places he came to in his way. From Askalon he went to Joppa, of which he soon made himself master and placed a proper garrison in it, to prevent its falling into the hands of Demetrius.

Jonathan, and his brother Simon, having taken the necessary measures to prevent any injury from the enemy abroad, returned to Jerusalem, and the people, being summoned to the temple by the high-priest, he made a proposition to repair the walls of the city, fortify them with towers, and to cut off the communication between the city and the castle by another wall: likewise to put the whole country in a state of defence by placing proper garrisons in such parts of it as were thought best for the security of the people. This proposition being unanimously approved of, Jonathan took the care of the city upon himself, and committed the country department to his brother Simon.

During these transactions the treacherous and base Tryphon, who had no other views in getting young Antiochus into his hands than to answer his own wicked purposes, was concerting the completion of his plan for possessing himself of the throne of Syria; and he now resolved to make one bold push for accomplishing his

wishes. He knew that while Jonathan was in the interest of Antiochus he could not possibly execute his design, and therefore, the first business was to curtail him of his power; but as he was sensible he could not do this by force, the only measure he had to fly to was stratagem. To this purpose he went to Basan, where, at his request, Jonathan met him with an army of 40,000 men. On his arrival, Tryphon made him many presents and compliments, directed the officers of his own army to obey Jonathan as himself, and proceeded, with great artifice, from one subtlety to another. At length he told Jonathan, that as the war was over, and Demetrius, from his low condition, was no longer able to trouble him, he might disband his army, keeping only a proper body guard, and attend him to Ptolemais, which place, with all the adjacent towns, he was resolved to put into his possession.

Attracted by these arguments and promises, Jonathan dismissed all his army except three thousand men, two of which he left in Galilee, and went with Tryphon to Ptolemais with the other thousand. As soon as he had entered the city, the inhabitants, who had received previous instructions from Tryphon how to act, immediately shut the gates, killed his thousand men, and made him prisoner.

Tryphon, having thus far succeeded in his design, dispatched a party of his army into Galilee, with orders to destroy the two thousand men which Jonathan had left in that part of the country. These, however, having received information of the manner in which Jonathan had been treated at Ptolemais, were prepared to receive them, and facing them in order to engage, so intimidated them that they thought proper to avoid a battle, and returned to Ptolemais without executing the business on which they were sent.

When the inhabitants of Jerusalem heard of the imprisonment of Jonathan (for whom they had the highest regard) and the massacre of their brethren, they were greatly afflicted, and universal lamentations prevailed throughout the city. While he was their leader they had no fears, but now he was gone, they were apprehensive of the utmost danger from their enemies, whose power

they now thought it was impossible for them to withstand. To dissipate these disagreeable apprehensions, and to remove that gloom which not only hung on the minds but the countenances of the people, Simon, having summoned them together for the purpose, addressed them in words to this effect :

“ It is unnecessary, friends and countrymen, for me to  
“ say that my father, brothers and myself, have been al-  
“ ways ready to expose ourselves for the common liberty :  
“ the defence of law and religion has been the business of  
“ our family ; nor am I so lost to the authority of example  
“ as to think of preserving my life by the forfeit of my  
“ honor. Seek not, therefore, for another commander,  
“ since I am willing to lead you wherever great and glori-  
“ ous actions shall call us. I count not myself greater  
“ than my brethren, nor value my life more than they did  
“ theirs. Never shall it be said that I have departed from  
“ the dignity of my family. I have no doubt but God  
“ will, by my hands, avenge you of your enemies, deliver  
“ you, your wives and children, from those who oppress  
“ you, and secure the holy temple from defilement.”

This speech so animated the people, and dispelled their fears, that they unanimously exclaimed, “ Simon alone ought to succeed his brothers Judas and Jonathan : let Simon be our general and we will obey his commands.” Simon, being thus elected leader of the Jews, the first step he took was, to order the walls of the city to be repaired and fortified ; having done which he dispatched his friend Jonathan, the son of Absalom, to Joppa, to clear that town of its inhabitants, being fearful lest they should deliver it into the hands of Tryphon.

Soon after this Tryphon, at the head of a considerable army, marched into Judea, having with him Jonathan as his prisoner. Simon, being aware of his approach, headed his forces, and proceeded to meet him, which he did on a mountain that overlooked the plain near the city of Adida. As soon as Tryphon saw the Jewish army, and understood that Simon had been chosen their leader, he did not think proper to engage them, and therefore resolved, instead of force, to endeavor to obtain his ends by stratagem and deceit. To effect this he dispatched one of

his principal officers to Simon with a message to the following effect: "That he had seized Jonathan only because he owed an hundred talents to the king; but that, 'in case he would send the money and Jonathan's two sons, to be hostages for their father's fidelity, he would again set him at liberty.'

Simon had not the least doubt of there being a deception intended by this message; but he thought, that if he refused the money as a ransom, or the sons as hostages, it might cost Jonathan his life, and that his death would consequently be imputed to him. He therefore summoned a council of the principal people, to whom he intimated his suspicion of treachery; but at the same time observed, that he thought it would be most proper to send both the young men and the money, as otherwise the people might think him indifferent with respect to his brother's safety. This being unanimously agreed to, the hostages and money were sent to Tryphon, who, instead of fulfilling his agreement by delivering up Jonathan, retained both him and his sons. He then marched with his army to different parts of the country, and would have ravaged and laid waste the principal places in his way, had it not been for Simon, who watched his motions so closely as to prevent his carrying his designs into execution.

At length Tryphon arrived with his army at Adora, a city of Idumea, where he received intelligence that the garrison of Acre were in great want of provisions, and that they earnestly requested he would immediately go to their assistance. In consequence of this, Tryphon ordered his horse to march early the next morning to Jerusalem; but so deep a snow fell in the night, that there was no possibility of his commands being executed. He, therefore, returned to Cœlo Syria, and passed through Galaad, near the city of Bascama, where he basely caused Jonathan and his two sons to be put to death.

Tryphon, thinking there was not any thing now to obstruct his main design, proceeded to Antioch, where he had not been long before he caused young Antiochus to be privately murdered, giving it out that he lost his life by an accident which happened in his exercises. This report being credited, Tryphon, by his artifices and deceit,

so wrought on the minds of the people, that they unanimously chose him for their king, and immediately placed him on the Syrian throne.

In the mean time Simon was returned to Jerusalem, where hearing of his brother Jonathan's death, and that he was buried at Bascama in the land of Galaad, he sent for his remains, which he deposited in his father's sepulchre at Modin, and ordered a general mourning to be held on the occasion. He afterwards erected a stately monument over the sepulchre, the whole of which was of white marble polished, and curiously wrought with a variety of figures.\*

When Simon heard of the death of Antiochus, and the treachery of the base usurper Tryphon, he sent to Demetrius, (who was then at Laodicea in Phrygia) a crown of gold, and ambassadors to treat with him on terms of peace and alliance. The king granted to Simon a confirmation of the High-Priesthood and principality, and to the people a release of all taxes, tolls and tributes, on condition that they would join with him against the usurper Tryphon. In consequence of this treaty, by which Simon was made sovereign prince of Judea, and the land freed from all foreign yoke, the Jews, from this time, instead of dating their instruments and contracts by the years of the Syrian kings (as hitherto they had done) dated them by the years of Simon and his successors.

Being thus fully invested with sovereign authority, and freed from all foreign wars, Simon took a progress through Judea, to inspect the most material parts, and to supply what was most wanted for the security of the whole. He

\* This edifice, being erected on an eminence, was conspicuous a considerable distance at sea; and, on that coast, was particularly noticed as a good sea-mark. Adjoining to the monument Simon placed seven pyramids, two for his father and mother, four for his brethren, and the seventh for himself, and then encompassed the whole with a stately portico supported by marble pillars, each of one entire piece, and on which were engraved ships, and arms, with other military ensigns. Josephus tells us, that the whole of this fabric was entire in his days, and that it was considered as a very curious and excellent piece of architecture. Eusebius likewise mentions it, and says that it was complete in his time, which was two hundred years after the death of Josephus.

repaired all those fortifications that were decayed, and erected new ones in such places as he thought necessary. He likewise reduced several cities possessed by the heathens in different parts, particularly Gazara, and Jamnia, and having routed the inhabitants, placed some of his own people in their stead. On his return he would have laid siege to the fortress of Acra, had not the garrison (from their great distress for want of provisions) readily surrendered the place. In consequence of this, Simon, wisely considering how much the city of Jerusalem had been injured by that citadel, pulled it down to the ground, that it might no longer be a retreat for the seditious and factious; and, to prevent its being rebuilt, he levelled the hill on which it was situated, so that there was now no eminence left about Jerusalem, except the Mount on which stood the temple.

In the mean time the base and perfidious Tryphon, having possessed himself of the throne of Syria, began to display that turpitude of heart by which he had been distinguished while in a private character. His point was no sooner gained than he threw off the mask, and proved that the name of Tryphon (which signifies a desolate wretch) was an epithet he justly merited. His disposition and conduct proved so disagreeable to the soldiers in particular, that they deserted in great numbers, and fled to Cleopatra, the wife of Demetrius,\* who was at this time in retirement with her children in Seleucia, while Antiochus (the brother of Demetrius) was in an obscure situation in Crete.

\* Demetrius was at this time a prisoner in Parthia. After retreating from the army of the Jews under Jonathan, he went into Mesopotamia, proposing to ravage that country, and reduce Babylon. His plan was to fix the seat of war in the upper provinces, the Greek and Macedonian inhabitants of which had invited him thither, with promises of obedience, and offers of assistance, against Arsaces, king of Parthia. Encouraged hereby, and thinking that after he had conquered the Parthians, it would be no difficult matter to drive Tryphon out of Syria, he accepted their offers, and marching into their country, was cheerfully received by a large army, at the head of which he attacked Arsaces, who totally routed him, took him prisoner, and destroyed the greater part of his forces.

Cleopatra, encouraged by the advice of her friends, and the appearance of the soldiers who had deserted from Tryphon, as well as urged by the fears she had lest the people of Seleucia should deliver up the place to the usurper, dispatched a messenger to Antiochus, offering him the crown of Syria if he would but come and join his interest with her's against Tryphon. This offer Antiochus readily accepted, and soon after arriving in Syria, the people flocked to him in such prodigious numbers that he soon found himself at the head of a very considerable army. With these forces he marched against Tryphon, conquered him in battle, drove him from Syria to Phœnicia, and at length pent him up in the strong fortress of Adora. Antiochus carried on the siege for some time, till at length Tryphon made his escape, and after flying from one place to another, endeavored to shelter himself in Apamea, his place of nativity, but an universal disgust prevailing against him among the inhabitants, they seized him and put him to death. This put an end to his usurpation, and Antiochus became fully possessed of his brother's throne.\*

Antiochus, previous to his going into Syria on the late expedition, in order to get Simon over to his interest, had written a letter to him, in which he made him many grants, and promised the most distinguished privileges to the Jews should he succeed in his enterprize. But no sooner was he settled on the throne than he forgot all the promises he had made, and sent ambassadors to Simon, demanding him to deliver up Joppa and Gazara, with several other places, or otherwise immediately to remit him a thousand talents of silver.

Simon, thinking these conditions too unreasonable, positively refused to comply with either; upon which Antiochus sent an army, under the command of his general Cendebeus, to enforce them, giving him orders, if Simon persisted in his disobedience, to ravage the country of Judea, and bring him prisoner to Antioch.

\* After Antiochus obtained the crown of Syria, he received the additional name of Sidetes, from his being remarkably fond of the diversion of hunting; the word Sidetes, in the Syrian language, signifying, *the Hunter*.

The thoughts of this base perfidy in Antiochus so irritated Simon, that, though now far advanced in years, he, with a juvenile courage, made the necessary preparations for giving Cendebeus a warm reception. Having gathered together his forces he dispatched two divisions of them before under the command of two of his sons Judas and John (the latter of whom was afterwards called Hyrcanus) while himself took a circle with the main body of the army, planting ambuscades in different parts of the country. As soon as Judas and his brother, with their respective forces appeared, Cendebeus's army fled, which being seen by Simon and the ambuscaders, they all pursued them together, and the enemy not chusing to face about, or make any attempt to defend themselves, the greatest part of them were put to the sword.

After this victory Simon renewed his alliance with the Romans, and continued in peace till the eighth year of his government, when he was barbarously murdered by the treachery of his son-in-law Ptolemy, whom he had appointed governor of the plains of Jericho. This execrable villain, who was rich and ambitious, had laid a design for usurping the government of Judea to himself; but this could not well be done without the destruction of Simon and his family. As Simon, therefore, with two of his sons (Judas and Mattathias) were making a progress through the cities of Judea, when they came to Jericho, Ptolemy invited them to an entertainment which he had prepared for them in a castle of his own building: but while they were drinking and making merry, he caused not only them, but likewise all their attendants, to be assassinated. Having thus far succeeded in his design, the treacherous and base Ptolemy dispatched a party to Gazara, where at that time John Hyrcanus (Simon's third son) resided, with orders to put him to death. It luckily happened that Hyrcanus had heard of the fate of his father and brethren, and had received intelligence of Ptolemy's farther design of cutting him off. He was therefore prepared to receive his intended murderers, and on their arrival at Gazara, had them immediately dispatched, after which he retired for safety to the city of Jerusalem.

When the fate of Simon was known at Jerusalem, Hyrcanus was declared high-priest and prince of the Jews in the place of his father, whose death was universally lamented, and a general mourning throughout the whole country was observed on the melancholy occasion.\*

With respect to the base and perfidious Ptolemy we have no farther account of him in any history, except that written by the celebrated Josephus, who gives us the following relation. That after the murder of his father-in-law Simon, he seized his wife and two of her children, and with them betook himself to the castle of Dagon in the neighborhood of Jericho. As soon as Hyrcanus understood the place to which he had retreated, he immediately marched thither and laid siege to it. In the prosecution of this enterprize the greatest difficulty Hyrcanus had to surmount was, a natural tenderness towards his mother and brethren, whom Ptolemy caused to be whipped, and otherwise publicly tormented, on the battlements, threatening to throw them down unless he immediately raised the siege. This terrible menace abated the resolution of Hyrcanus, who thought that if he prosecuted his design, the consequence would be an aggravation of

\* The author of the first book of Maccabees, in the encomiums he bestows on Simon, tells us, that he *sought the good of the nation in every thing, so that his authority always pleased them well:* that, during his administration, whilst Syria, and other neighboring kingdoms, were almost destroyed by wars, the Jews lived quietly, every man under his own vine and fig-tree, enjoying without fear the fruits of their labors, and beholding with pleasure the flourishing state of their country. Their trade was increased by the reduction of Joppa and other maritime places; their territories enlarged; their armies well disciplined; their towns and fortresses well garrisoned; their religion and liberties secured; their land freed from heathen enemies and Jewish apostates; and their friendship courted by all the nations about them, even by the Romans and Lacedemonians. He observes farther, that this Simon was no less zealous for the service of God, in extirpating apostacy, superstition, idolatry, and every thing else that was contrary to the laws of God: that he was a great protector of the true Israelites, and a friend to the poor; and that he restored the service of the temple to its ancient splendor. It is not therefore to be wondered at that the Jewish Sanhedrim should think no dignity or honor while he lived, nor no grief or lamentations when he was dead, too great for a man of such distinguished merit.

cruelty to his relations. His mother, observing his embarrassment, called aloud, urging him not to consider the sufferings of herself and sons, but to avenge the injury his family had received, and expressed a willingness to expire under the most excruciating torments, on condition that the barbarous and unnatural tyrant Ptolemy should meet with a punishment proportioned to the enormity of his guilt. This instance of generosity and fortitude animated Hyrcanus to make a vigorous assault; but observing that in proportion to the force he exerted for reducing the fort, additional cruelty was exercised upon his mother, and his desire of revenge yielding to filial tenderness, the siege was protracted till the coming on of the sabbatical year, wherein the Jews were obliged to rest; so that Ptolemy, by these means, being delivered from the war and the siege (after having slain the mother and brothers of Hyrcanus) withdrew to the tyrant Zeno, surnamed Cotyla, who, at that time, had usurped to himself the government of Philadelphia.

As soon as Antiochus heard of the deaths of Simon and his sons, he resolved to make one bold attempt, which was, to reduce the whole body of the Jews, and make them subject to the government of the Syrian empire. To effect this he marched, at the head of a considerable army, into Judea, and having committed great devastation in various parts of the country, at length obliged Hyrcanus to shut himself up in Jerusalem. Antiochus immediately laid siege to the place, which he encompassed by dividing his forces into seven bodies. The siege was carried on with great resolution, and the defence of the place gallantly supported, for some time, till at length Hyrcanus, being distressed for want of provisions for so great a number of people as was then in the city, sent a messenger to Antiochus to sue for peace. Antiochus returned for answer that he would readily comply with his request, provided he agreed to the following conditions; namely, that the besieged should deliver up their arms; that Jerusalem should be dismantled; that tribute should be paid to the king for Joppa, and the other towns which were held by the Jews out of Judea, and lastly, that a garrison of Syrians should be constantly kept in Jerusalem.

Hyrcanus agreed to all these articles, except to the last, to which he objected on account of the great inconvenience that must take place from the mixing of strangers; but to compound for this matter, he offered to pay Antiochus five hundred talents, three hundred down, and to give hostages for the payment of the other two in a reasonable time. Antiochus, accepting of this offer, and the treaty being concluded, Hyrcanus invited him and his army into the city, when he gave them a splendid and most magnificent reception, and, before his departure, formed an alliance with him, engaging to give him such assistance as laid in his power whenever it should be demanded.

It was not long after this before Hyrcanus was called upon to fulfil his engagement. Antiochus had formed the resolution of rescuing his brother Demetrius from the hands of Phraortes, king of Parthia, who had long detained him a prisoner; but thinking his own forces too weak for such an enterprize, he sent to Hyrcanus, requesting him to come immediately, with a body of troops, to his assistance.

In consequence of this request, Hyrcanus, who was a man of the strictest honor, immediately left Jerusalem, and marched, at the head of a considerable army, to Antioch. On his arrival there, the two armies, having formed a conjunction, proceeded on the intended enterprize, each under the command of their respective leaders; and such was their success that they defeated the Parthians in three pitched battles, and recovered Babylonia, Medea, and several other provinces, that had formerly belonged to the Syrian empire.

After these successes, Antiochus, thinking himself sufficiently strong, and that he should have no farther occasion for the assistance of Hyrcanus, dismissed him, who accordingly returned with his forces to Jerusalem. Antiochus, however, resolved to continue with his army in the enemy's country during the winter, that he might be ready to complete his conquests the ensuing spring. But this resolution proved fatal both to him and his people; for the inhabitants of the country having entered into a general conspiracy, they unexpectedly rose in one

night throughout the country, and falling on the army of Antiochus, put the greater part of them to the sword, the king himself falling among the slain.\*

In the mean time Demetrius, being set at liberty by Phraortes, returned to Syria, and, on his brother's death, recovered the kingdom. He did not, however, long enjoy the possession of the sovereignty, for he governed in so tyrannical a manner, and pursued such vicious and wicked practices, that he became universally detested by the people, who, uniting in a confederacy against him, sent proper messengers to Ptolemy Physcon, king of Egypt, requesting that he would send to them a descendant of the house of Seleucus, whom they would immediately invest with the sovereignty.

Ptolemy, who was no friend to Demetrius, readily complied with the request of the Syrians, to whom he sent Alexander, surnamed Zabina (who pretended to be the son of the late Alexander) attended by a very considerable army. In consequence of this a desperate battle took place between Alexander and Demetrius, the latter of whom being defeated, fled to Ptolemais, where Cleopatra his wife then resided. He made no doubt of finding protection here, but soon found himself mistaken, for, on his arrival, he was denied entrance into the city. Thus disappointed he betook himself for refuge to Tyre, where, falling into the hands of his enemies, they first made him a prisoner, and then put him to death.

\* It is to be observed that Antiochus's forces (which amounted in number to near 400,000) being dispersed all over the country, were quartered at too great a distance from each other to be able, in any moderate time, to gather together in a body; and as they had grievously oppressed the people in all places where they lay, the inhabitants took the advantage of this their disposition, and formed a conspiracy, at one and the same time, to fall upon them in several quarters, and cut their throats. This conspiracy was accordingly carried into execution with success, and when Antiochus, with the forces he had about him, hastened to the assistance of the quarters that were near him, he was overpowered and slain; so that out of his numerous army very few escaped. Phraortes, however, (who was then king of Parthia) caused the body of Antiochus to be taken from among the dead, and having put it into a coffin, sent it to Antioch, in order that he might be honorably interred in the sepulchre of his ancestors.

Alexander Zabina, on the defeat and death of Demetrius, ascended the throne of Syria; but he did not long enjoy this high dignity, for Ptolemy Physeon (expecting that he should hold it in homage from him, which the other refused to do) resolved to pull him down as precipitately as he had set him up. To effect this he married his daughter Tryphœna to Antiochus Gryphus, the son of the late Demetrius, whom he furnished with a considerable army to oppose Zabina. Antiochus immediately marched into Syria, and after demolishing several principal places in his way, met Zabina at the head of his forces, whom he attacked with great resolution, killed prodigious numbers of his men, and obliged the rest to save themselves by a precipitate flight. Zabina being among the slain, the conqueror marched with his victorious army to Antioch, where, not meeting with any opposition, he took immediate possession of the Syrian throne.

During these disturbances and revolutions in Syria, Hyrcanus took the opportunity not only of enlarging his own territories, but of shaking off the Syrian yoke likewise, and making himself wholly independent. He took several cities which were unprovided with garrisons, owing to the great draughts of men made by the kings of Syria for their foreign expeditions. He subdued Sichen, the principal seat of the Samaritans, and destroyed their temple at Mount Gerezim, which Sanballat had built in compliment to his son-in-law Manasseh, the brother of Jaddus the high-priest. He likewise reduced the principal cities in Idumea, and prevailed on the people of the country to become proselytes to the Jewish religion, so that from thenceforward they were incorporated into the same church and nation, and, in time, lost the name of Idumeans, or Edomites.

After Hyrcanus had possessed himself of these places, and had made the necessary regulations for the security of them in future, he returned to Jerusalem, from whence he dispatched ambassadors to Rome to renew the league which his father Simon had made with the Senate. By these ambassadors he complained that the late Antiochus Sidetes had made war upon the Jews, contrary to what the Romans had, in their behalf, decreed in that league;

that the Syrians had taken from them several cities, and made them become tributary for others, and had likewise forced them to a dishonorable peace by besieging Jerusalem.

The Senate received the ambassadors with the most distinguished respect, and after having heard the complaint of Hyrcanus against the Syrians, decreed as follows: That whatever had been done against the Jews, since the time of the late treaty with Simon, should be all null and void; that all the places, which had either been taken from them, or made tributary by the Syrians, should be restored, and made free from all homage, tribute, and other services; that, for the future, the Syrian kings should have no right to march their armies through the Jewish territories; that, for all the damages which the Syrians had done the Jews, reparation should be made them; and that ambassadors should be sent from Rome to see this decree put in execution.

Thus was the alliance between Hyrcanus and the Romans renewed in the most ample manner, and by which the Jews obtained more advantageous privileges than they had ever enjoyed since they became subject to the Syrian monarchy.

A short time after this Hyrcanus sent his two sons, Aristobulus and Antigonus, to lay siege to Samaria. Though they were both very young, yet they set about the business with the judgment of experienced warriors, and in the prosecution of it displayed the greatest courage and magnanimity. The Samaritans defended the place with such resolution, that the siege continued for a whole year, at the close of which the besieged, being distressed for want of provisions, and having no reason to expect relief from any quarter, surrendered. In consequence of this Hyrcanus gave orders that the place should be totally demolished, which was accordingly done; after which he caused trenches to be dug in various parts across the ground where it stood, that it might not be afterwards rebuilt.

The destruction of Samaria was the last act of an hostile nature committed by Hyrcanus, who enjoyed the remainder of his life in full quiet from all foreign wars:

but, towards the conclusion of it, he met with some trouble from the Pharisees, a prevailing sect among the Jews.\* The popularity of these people was so great, from their pretences to extraordinary strictness in religion, that they had obtained the most distinguished reputation and interest among the multitude, whose conduct they could direct even in opposition to the sentiments of the high-priest and the heads of the nation.

This gave some uneasiness to Hyrcanus, who having been educated among the Pharisees, and being fearful lest their popularity might, in time, produce some disagreeable consequences, used various means to gain their esteem and affection. Among other measures to effect this, he one day invited several of their leading men to a splendid entertainment; and when his hospitality had caused a circulation of good humor, he arose from his seat, and addressed them in words to this effect: "Since (says "he) that I profess your principles, it is scarcely necessary to observe, my friends, that my most sanguine wish is, to render myself acceptable to the Almighty, by observing a strict justice to my neighbor. If I have violated my duty, it is your business to admonish me, and it shall be mine to effect a reformation of my conduct."

As soon as Hyrcanus had finished his address, the greater part of the company respectively praised him for his administration, and gave him all the encomiums due to a brave man and worthy governor. But one of the company, named Eleazar, a man of a malignant disposition, and who had hitherto been silent, rising from his chair, deliberately addressed Hyrcanus as follows: "Having declared yourself an advocate for truth and plain dealing, you cannot be offended if I recommend a

\* At this period the Jews were divided into three sects, called Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. The opinion of the Pharisees was, that, in some instances, men were left to their own will, and in others, over-ruled by a particular fate. The Sadducees held that a man's condition was in all cases determined by his own conduct, without any interference of the deity; while the Essenes contended that an irrevocable fate over-ruled every action. In the contentions between these sects, the Sadducees were supported by the people of quality and wealth, and the Pharisees by the multitude.

"resignation of the high-priesthood, and that you apply  
"yourself only to the discharge of your civil authority."

Surprized at this, Hyrcanus asked Eleazar what reason he had for giving him such advice: "Because  
"(said he) we are assured, from the testimony of the An-  
"cients among us, that your mother was a captive taken  
"in the wars, and being, therefore, the son of a strange  
"woman, you are incapable of the office and dignity of  
"high-priest."

As this allegation was known to be totally void of truth, the company resented it with a just indignation. Hyrcanus, in particular, was so exasperated, that he vowed revenge against the person who had uttered so base a calumny. While he was in this disposition, one Jonathan, an intimate friend of his (but a zealous Sadducee) took the opportunity of endeavoring to set Hyrcanus against the whole sect of the Pharisees, and to bring him over to that of the Sadducees. To effect this he suggested to him that it was not the single act of Eleazar, but a thing concerted by the whole party; that Eleazar, in speaking it out, delivered the sentiments of the rest; and that the truth of his observation would be confirmed on demanding what punishment was due to the man who had uttered so vile a falsehood, and had slandered the prince and high-priest of his nation.

Hyrcanus took the advice of his friend Jonathan, and consulting the leaders of the Pharisees what punishment should be inflicted on the calumniator, they returned for answer, "that being a people disposed to mercy, they  
"did not adjudge defamation to be an offence deserving  
"death, and that they were of opinion imprisonment and  
"whipping would be sufficient punishment."

This answer fully convinced Hyrcanus that what Jonathan had suggested was true, and from that very moment he became a mortal enemy to the whole sect of the Pharisees. He immediately abrogated their traditional constitutions, and enjoined a penalty on all who should observe them; at the same time renouncing their party, and going over to that of the Sadducees.

Having quelled this dissension, Hyrcanus enjoyed the remaining part of his life in uninterrupted peace and hap-

piness; after having had the administration of all public affairs, both in church and state, for the space of twenty-nine years, he paid the debt of nature, leaving the high-priesthood and sovereignty to his eldest son Judas Aristobulus, who was the first that took upon him, in a formal manner, the title of king (by putting a diadem on his head) since the Babylonish Captivity.

Hyrcanus was a most excellent governor, and from his prudent management, obtained more privileges to the Jews than they had ever enjoyed since their captivity by the Babylonians. He was a strict preserver of justice, a man of distinguished probity and virtue, and directed his conduct with such prudence and impartiality in all matters of a public nature, that he justly acquired the general esteem of the people whom he governed; so that he lived respected, and died lamented.

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## CHAP. XV.

*Aristobulus succeeds his father Hyrcanus in the government of Judea. He imprisons his mother and three of his brethren, the former of whom he causes to be starved to death. He makes war with the Iturens, whom he subdues, and brings over to the Jewish religion. He causes his brother Antigonus to be put to death, the reflection of which, added to the murder of his mother, so affects his mind and body that he dies miserably, after having reigned only one year. He is succeeded by his brother Alexander Jannæus, who releases his other two brothers from confinement, the elder of whom he causes to be put to death. He lays siege to Ptolemais, but abandons the enterprize. He enters into a treaty with Ptolemy Lathyrus, the expelled king of Egypt, but proving perfidious, Ptolemy engages his army, defeats him, and lays waste a great part of his territories. He forms an alliance with Cleopatra (the mother of Ptolemy) queen of Egypt. He marches into Cælo-Syria, and takes Gadara, with the fortress of Amathus, but is afterwards defeated by Theodorus, the son of Zeno, prince of Philadelphia. He lays siege to Gaza, which, by the treachery of Lysamachus, he*

*reduces, puts all the inhabitants to the sword, and totally destroys the place. He returns to Jerusalem, and is insulted by his subjects, who enter into an open rebellion against him. He marches against the Ammonites and Moabites, whom he subdues, and makes them become tributary. He is capitally defeated by one Thedas, an Arabian prince, and narrowly escapes with his life. A civil war takes place between him and his subjects, the latter of whom apply to Demetrius Euchærus, king of Damascus, for assistance. Demetrius accordingly enters Judea with a considerable army, and engaging Alexander obtains a complete victory. Alexander flies, with his scattered forces, to the mountains for safety, where, being joined by a great number of those Jews who were in arms against him under Demetrius, the latter, fearful that the rest may do the like, retires into Syria. Alexander, having taken eight hundred of his rebellious subjects, prisoners, carries them to Jerusalem, where he orders them all to be crucified, and their wives and children massacred before their faces. He dies at the siege of Ragaba, but, previous to his death, gives a political piece of advice to his queen, who, in consequence thereof, is afterwards settled in the supreme government of the nation.*

ON the death of Hyrcanus, his eldest son Aristobulus succeeded him both in the high-priesthood and sovereignty, and, putting a diadem on his head, assumed the title and dignity of king. He was naturally of a very cruel and suspicious disposition, and, therefore, began his reign with acts that would have been disgraceful to the basest of human beings. He had, indeed, a particular regard for his next brother, whose name was Antigonus, and, therefore, admitted him to some share in the government; but his mother, whom he considered as his rival in the sovereignty (Hyrcanus having bequeathed to her all that was in his power to leave) he ordered into close confinement, and his three younger brethren (for Hyrcanus had five sons in all) he consigned to the same fate. So horribly cruel and unnatural was he, that he actually starved his mother to death in the prison he had placed her in, and (as will appear hereafter) from some malignant and groundless insinuations, sacrificed the life of his favorite brother Antigonus.

A short time after Aristobulus had been seated on the throne of Judea, he engaged in a war with the Ituræans,\* and having subdued the greater part of the country, he compelled the inhabitants to become proselytes to the Jewish religion, in the same manner as his father had done to the Idumeans. While he was on this expedition he was taken exceeding ill, and being obliged to return to Jerusalem, left his brother Antigonus in Ituræa, with orders fully to complete the business he had so successfully begun. Antigonus strictly obeyed his brother's orders, and, after thoroughly completing the work, returned in triumph to Jerusalem, just at the time when the people were celebrating the feast of the Tabernacles.

As soon as Antigonus entered the city, the first thing he did was to enquire after the welfare of his brother; and understanding that he was still exceeding ill, he immediately repaired to the temple, attended by his guards (all of whom, as well as himself were dressed in armor just as they had come from the wars against the Ituræans) in order to supplicate heaven for the restoration of his brother's health.

This being made known to the enemies of Antigonus, (among whom his sister-in-law the queen was one of the most inveterate) they immediately repaired to the king, telling him it was high time to look to himself; that his brother was gone into the temple in a dress far from becoming a private man; and that, in all probability, it would not be long before he would come with a troop of his armed soldiers, and, by force of arms, divest him of the sovereignty.

Aristobulus did not give credit to all that was reported concerning his brother, but supposing there to be some foundation for a part, he determined to provide for his own safety. He immediately sent a messenger to his brother, with orders that he should put off his armor,

\* The country of Ituræa, where these people dwelt, was a part of Cælo-Syria, situated to the north-east of Judea, and lying between the inheritance of the half tribe of Manasseh beyond the river Jordan, and the territories of Damascus. Philip, one of Herod's sons, was tetrarch of Iturea when St. John the Baptist first entered upon his public ministry.

and come to him, concluding that if, pursuant to his orders, he came unarmed, there was no mischief intended; but that, if he did otherwise, there might be something in what had been suggested to him. As a necessary precaution, however, before he dispatched the messenger to Antigonus, he placed his guards in a subterraneous passage that led from the palace to the temple, and through which his brother was to come to the king's apartment, ordering them, that if they saw him unarmed they should let him pass, but if otherwise, they should instantly fall on him and put him to death.

These orders being given in the presence and hearing of the base and perfidious queen, she prevailed with the messenger (whom Aristobulus sent to bid his brother come unarmed) to tell Antigonus that the king, being informed of his having a beautiful suit of armor which he had brought with him from the wars, was desirous of seeing it, and, therefore, required that he would come to him fully equipped in his martial dress. Antigonus, not suspecting any treachery, immediately left the temple, and proceeded towards the palace completely armed, in obedience (as he thought) to the king's commands. But as soon as he came to the place where the guards were posted, they, seeing him dressed in his armor, obeyed their orders, by immediately falling on him and putting him to death.

When Aristobulus heard of the death of Antigonus, he began seriously to repent of his cruelty in having given orders for taking away his life. The reflection of having lost a good brother, brought to his remembrance the barbarous murder of his mother, and his conscience flew in his face for both at the same time. The horrors of his mind increased the distemper of his body; and so great were both, that he could find no ease for the one, nor any cure for the other. After languishing a short time in this dreadful and irremediable state, during which he expressed the most bitter accusations against himself, he at length died in the utmost agonies, just one year after he had obtained the sovereignty of Judea.\*

\* Josephus tells us that the distemper of Aristobulus (after reflecting on the murders of his mother and brother) was increased by

Aristobulus was succeeded on the throne by his brother Alexander Jannæus, who had been kept in prison during the whole of the late reign; but on the decease of Aristobulus, his widow Soloma released him and his other two brothers from their confinement, and Alexander, being the eldest, she advanced to the regal dignity.

Alexander had not long been seated on the throne before he discovered that the elder of his two brothers had formed a design of supplanting him in the sovereignty. But this design he soon rendered abortive, by ordering him to be immediately put to death. The other brother, whose name was Absalom, being of a quiet and peaceable disposition, he took into his favor and protection, and having no farther emulation than that of leading a private life, he provided for him in a manner suitable to the dignity of the brother of a king.

Alexander, being now fully established on the throne of Judea, resolved to make war with the people of Ptolemais. He accordingly marched with his forces from Jerusalem for that purpose; and meeting with the army of the enemy in the way, a desperate battle ensued, in which Alexander proved victorious, having killed great numbers, and obliged the rest to fly to Ptolemais for refuge. Alexander, however, pursued his conquest,

a violent vomiting of blood; after which he relates the following incident. That as an attendant was conveying some of the blood away in a vessel, he spilt a part of it on the very spot where Antigonus had been slain, and where the stains of his blood were still to be perceived. The spectators, imagining this to be the effect of design, and intended as an oblation to the manes of the deceased prince, so loudly expressed their surprize as to be overheard by the king, who instantly inquired the cause; but as he became anxious to be informed, the people about him were the more desirous of concealing it. However, by the force of threats and entreaties, he at length prevailed on them to tell him; but his desire was no sooner complied with, than, shedding abundance of tears, and fetching a deep sigh, he broke out into the following exclamation: "The all-seeing power hath detected my iniquity, and my brother's murder hath called down the vengeance of heaven upon me. How long shall I hold that life which is forfeited to the blood of a mother and a brother? Rather, why do I not expire on a sudden than thus yield my life drop by drop, as if the severest punishment was inadequate to my guilt?" Soon after uttering these words he gave up the ghost.

and closely following with his army shut them up in the city, to which he immediately laid siege.

The city of Ptolemais, with Gaza, the Tower of Stratton, and the fortress of Dura (the latter of which was possessed by one Zoilus, a considerable officer belonging to the Syrian army) were the only places on the coast that did not belong to the territories of Judea; and of those Alexander resolved, if possible, to possess himself before he returned to Jersualem. To effect this he separated his forces into different divisions, one of which he left to continue the siege of Ptolemais, and with the others he proceeded to ravage the territories of Gaza, and those belonging to Zoilus.

The people of Ptolemais defended themselves with great resolution, and for some time rendered all the efforts of Alexander's forces abortive. The latter, however, persevering with uncommon intrepidity, they were fearful of being at length compelled to submit, unless they could procure assistance from some foreign power. They had no hopes of relief but from Egypt, and their principal dependance was upon Ptolemy Lathyrus,\* who having been compelled to evacuate his kingdom by his mother Cleopatra, had retired to Cyprus. They accordingly sent ambassadors to Ptolemy, requesting his assistance against Alexander, at the same time assuring him there was every reason to believe the people of Gaza and Ptolemais would declare in his favor immediately on his entering Syria, and that he would be supported by Zoilus, the Sydonians,

\* Ptolemy Lathyrus was made king of Egypt by his mother Cleopatra, but by his attempting to reign without her, he so far incurred her displeasure, that she procured his expulsion, which (according to Justin) she effected by the following artifice. She caused some of her eunuchs to be wounded, and bringing them out before the people pretended that they had suffered this from Lathyrus in defence of her person against him, and therefore accused him of having made an attempt on her life. By these means she so far incensed the people against Lathyrus, that they rose in a general uproar against him, and would certainly have put him to death had he not fled for safety. Hereupon Cleopatra sent for Alexander, her younger son, who for some time had reigned in Cyprus, and having made him king of Egypt, forced Lathyrus to be content with the government of the place which had been left by his brother.

and other neighboring people. Ptolemy sent word by the ambassadors that he would comply with their request, and gave immediate orders for all possible dispatch to be made in the equipment of a fleet for this enterprize.

While the ambassadors were gone to execute this business, one Demenetus, a man of considerable interest among the people of Ptolemais, reflecting that the steps they had taken might be productive of ill consequences, assembled the people together, whom he addressed in words to this effect: "The point in question (said he) is, "whether it will be most eligible to abide the event of "the war, or to accept of the relief we have requested; "for if we put ourselves under the protection of Ptolemy, "inevitable slavery must be the consequence. Danger is "also greatly to be apprehended from Egypt, for it is "not to be imagined that Cleopatra will remain inactive "while Ptolemy is preparing for war. She will send a "powerful army to pursue and attack him unprepared. "Besides, the queen is determined to drive him out of "Cyprus; and when she finds him engaged in strength- "ening his interest with the neighboring provinces, she "will seize the opportunity to effect her purpose. To "give the argument another turn, let us suppose that "Ptolemy will be driven back to Cyprus; we shall then "be left without succor, and he will have dangers to en- "counter that he may not at present apprehend."

This address destroyed the hopes that had been entertained by the people of the success of their embassy, and of which Ptolemy was informed during his passage; but notwithstanding this he resolved to proceed on his voyage, and engage in the enterprize to which he had been invited.

Ptolemy disembarked his forces at a place called Sicamin, from whence he marched, at the head of about thirty thousand horse and foot, towards Ptolemais. When he came within some distance of the place, he dispatched ambassadors to inform them of his arrival and situation, but, to his great surprize, they refused to receive the message, or to hold any intercourse either with him or his agents. This disappointment greatly embarrassed Ptolemy, who, while he was considering what measures were the most eligible to pursue, received a message from Zoi-

Ius and the people of Gaza, requesting that he would immediately come and assist them against Alexander, who was committing great depredations in their territories, and whose forces were too powerful for them to subdue.

This solicitation was very agreeable to Ptolemy, who immediately marched his army to their relief; but Alexander, not thinking it advisable to hazard an engagement with them, withdrew his army, and placed them in winter quarters.

Alexander, though he had raised the siege of Ptolemais, and had got with him all his troops, knew he was unable to cope with Ptolemy, and therefore thought of effecting that by policy, which he could not attain by force. To this purpose he entered into a treaty with Lathyrus, engaging to pay him four hundred talents of silver on condition that he would deliver Zoilus and his territories into his hands. This Lathyrus agreed to do, and accordingly, soon after, got Zoilus into his custody; but being informed that, at this very time, Alexander was clandestinely treating with his mother Cleopatra, to bring her upon him with all her forces, detesting his double dealing, broke off all friendship with him, and resolved, in future, to consider him as a perfidious man, and a dangerous enemy, and to do him all the injury that laid in his power.

In consequence of this dissension, Ptolemy marched with his forces into Galilee, and possessed himself of several principal places belonging to Alexander. Among these was Asochis, which he took by assault, and from whence he acquired a very immense booty.

Having subdued Asochis, Ptolemy, elated with success, made an assault upon Sepphoris, but in this attempt he was defeated and sustained great loss. He then led his army against Alexander, whom he met with in the neighborhood of Asopus, a small distance from the banks of the river Jordan, and pitched his camp opposite to that of the enemy. The van of Alexander's army was composed of eight thousand men provided with brazen bucklers. In the front of Ptolemy's forces were some warriors equipped in the same manner; but his followers were not in general so well armed as their adversaries, and were therefore the less anxious to come to an engage-

ment. Philostephanes, a man of great military skill and experience, and the chief officer under Ptolemy, seeing the greater part of the forces appeared intimidated, gave them all the encouragement he could, telling them that if they behaved courageously there was no doubt but they would easily conquer their adversaries, and that their attempts would be crowned with every wish-for success.

Ptolemy now crossed the river Jordan at the head of his forces; and to this movement Alexander, who was stationed on the opposite shore, made no opposition, judging that he should with less difficulty obtain a conquest if he could attack the enemy while they were in a situation from which the river behind must render a precipitate retreat utterly impracticable. When the two armies met, a most desperate battle ensued, which, for some time, was sustained with great bravery by both parties. At length, on a body of Ptolemy's troops giving way, victory seemed to favor Alexander; but on the arrival of Philostephanes with a reinforcement, the Jews were entirely routed, no less than 30,000 being slain on the spot, and the rest compelled to save themselves by a precipitate flight.\*

The conquest obtained by Ptolemy over Alexander's army, and the ravages he made both before and after in different parts of the Jewish territories, coming to the ears of Cleopatra, the mother of Ptolemy, she was fearful lest so much success should make him powerful enough, and his ambition direct his inclinations, to attempt invading Egypt. To stop him, therefore, in time, she set out with a large fleet and a numerous army, which she landed in Phœnicia, and immediately proceeded to Ptolemais, not doubting but the people would readily open their gates to her; but finding the contrary, she immediately invested the place, resolved to reduce them by force of arms.

\* We are told, both by Strabo and Nicolaus, that after this shocking carnage, Ptolemy went to some villages belonging to the Jews, and commanded his soldiers to murder the women and children, and then put their bodies into vessels of water which were to be placed over fires: and that he had recourse to this bloody stratagem in order to strike terror into those who had escaped by flight, by making them think that his army was accustomed to feed on the flesh of the enemy.

Ptolemy no sooner heard of this, than imagining it would be no difficult matter to recover Egypt in the absence of his mother and her army, he left Syria, and made all the haste he could upon that expedition; but meeting with more opposition than he expected (owing to the prudent management of those with whom his mother had entrusted the government during her absence) he was obliged to return to Gaza, where he passed the winter, and, in the beginning of the ensuing spring, not chusing to engage in any farther enterprize, he returned to Cyprus.

In the mean time Cleopatra continued the siege of Ptolemais, and at length made herself mistress of it by assault. As soon as Alexander was informed of this, he immediately repaired to her with many valuable presents, and was kindly received, the queen considering him as an unhappy prince, who had no other person but her to fly to for protection. Some of the principal persons about the queen observed that she had now an excellent opportunity of seizing both on Alexander and his dominions, and strongly advised her to embrace it. This advice she would certainly have followed, had it not been for Ananias, one of her generals, who by birth was a Jew, and by descent a relation to Alexander. He represented to her the great danger, as well as injustice, of such a procedure; how injurious it would be to her own honor, which, on no consideration whatever, ought to be tarnished; how prejudicial to her interest by provoking all the Jews in the world against her; and how contrary to the rules of faith and common honesty (which should be observed among all mankind) it would be to treat a friend and ally with such perfidy. These arguments had the desired effect: the queen immediately laid aside all thoughts of such a procedure, and instead thereof concluded an amicable alliance with Alexander, immediately after which she returned with her army to Egypt.

Alexander, being no longer in dread of the power of Ptolemy, marched with his army into Cœlo-Syria, and invested Gadara, which, after a siege of ten months, he subdued. He then proceeded to Amathus, the strongest fortress on that side the river Jordan, and where Theo-

dorus, the son of Zeno, prince of Philadelphia, had deposited all his treasure. This place he likewise reduced, and possessed himself of all the riches of Theodorus; but the latter, falling on him by surprize, as he was returning from the conquest, totally routed his army, slew ten thousand of his men, and not only recovered his treasures, but likewise obtained a considerable booty by Alexander's baggage, which, from the danger that threatened him, he was obliged to leave in the field of battle.

Alexander, however, was far from being discouraged at this misfortune. The next year he marched with his forces over the river Jordan, and after taking several neighboring places, laid siege to Gaza, with a design, if he took it, severely to punish the inhabitants, in revenge for their having formerly solicited Ptolemy to assist them in repulsing him. Apollodotus, who commanded the town, made a gallant defence, and from his courage and conduct, the army of Alexander nearly escaped being totally destroyed. He one night made an intrepid sally, at the head of ten thousand men, on the camp of the enemy, who, (supposing Ptolemy had come to the relief of the besieged) were greatly disconcerted, and in their confusion many were slain; but when day-light discovered their mistake, they immediately rallied, and charged Apollodotus with such fury, that great numbers of his men were slain, and he, with the rest, obliged to fly with all expedition into the city.

Notwithstanding this defeat, together with being threatened with a famine, the people of Gaza were determined to encounter all difficulties rather than submit to the enemy; and they were encouraged to persist in this resolution by Aretas, an Arabian prince, who had promised to come, at the head of a large body of forces, to their assistance. But before his arrival the place was reduced, owing to the base treachery of Lysimachus, brother to Apollodotus, who, envying the credit and esteem which his brother had gained in the defence of the place, first murdered him, and then treacherously delivered up the city to Alexander.

As soon as Alexander entered the city, he gave full license to his soldiers to kill, plunder and destroy all that fell in their way, so that the most dreadful scene of bar-

barity took place that can be conceived. The inhabitants, finding they were to have no quarter, stood upon their defence, and sold their lives at so dear a rate, that in the general carnage Alexander lost nearly as many of his own men as he killed of the enemy. Some of the inhabitants set fire to their own houses that they might not be plundered by the troops of Alexander; and some went even so far as to kill their wives and children, rather choosing that they should die in freedom than live in bondage. The senators who were in council when Alexander entered the city, fled to the temple of Apollo for sanctuary, in which they were all cruelly put to death, and the temple reduced to ashes. In short, the whole was one continued scene of the most horrid destruction and barbarity, and before Alexander left the place he had the horrid satisfaction of seeing this ancient and famous city reduced to utter ruin and desolation.

During these transactions some material revolutions took place in the court of Syria; the first of which was the death of Antiochus Gryphus, who was assassinated by one Horaclean, (a principal officer of his army) in the twenty-ninth year of his sovereignty, and forty-fifth of his age. He was succeeded in the government by his son Seleucus, who, soon after his accession, engaged in a war with his uncle Antiochus Cyzicenus, whom he defeated in battle, and afterwards put to death. After the decease of Cyzicenus, his son Antiochus, surnamed Eusebes, being greatly beloved by the people, was crowned king of Arad. He immediately declared war against Seleucus, whom he defeated and drove out of Syria. Seleucus fled to Cilicia, and notwithstanding he was received in the most friendly manner by the people, who readily admitted him as their sovereign, yet he treated them with great tyranny, and laid on them the most oppressive taxes, at which they were so incensed that they set fire to the palace, and he and his attendants perished in the flames; so that Antiochus Eusebes was left sole monarch of the Syrian empire.—But to return to Alexander.

After the destruction of Gaza, Alexander returned with his forces to Jerusalem, where he found things in a very

different situation to what he had expected, for the people, being incensed at his conduct, were ripe for an open rebellion, of which they very soon gave him a demonstrative instance. It happened, soon after his return, to be the time for celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, during which it was a custom among the Jews to carry in their hands branches of palm and lemon-trees. While Alexander was offering the usual sacrifices as high-priest, the people, who were assembled in the temple, had the insolence to throw citrons at him, and to make use of very opprobrious language, telling him he was a slave, and unworthy to go up to the holy altar to offer solemn sacrifices.

This treatment enraged Alexander to such a degree, that he immediately left the temple, and ordering his soldiers to fall on the people, no less than six thousand were instantly put to death. After this he caused the court of the priests (in which stood the altar and temple) to be surrounded with a wooden partition, to prevent the people from coming near him while he was officiating as high-priest; and, to secure his person against all future attempts, (not daring to trust to his own countrymen) he took guards into his pay from Pisidia and Cilicia, the number of whom amounted to six thousand.

Having by these means, in some measure, put a stop to the tumults at home, Alexander marched with his forces in pursuit of new conquests, and in a short time reduced most of the principal places belonging to the Moabites and Ammonites, whom he obliged to enter into articles for being tributary to him and his successors. After this Alexander resolved to make another attempt to reduce the strong fortress of Amathus, and for that purpose marched with his forces towards the place; but Theodorus, being apprized of his intentions, and not choosing to hazard a contest with him, removed all his treasure, and withdrew the garrison before his arrival; so that Alexander, finding it in a defenceless state, and uninhabited, immediately laid it in ruins.

The next expedition Alexander took was against Thebas, one of the Arabian kings, who had encamped with a considerable army near Gadara, which afforded the

most advantageous situations for ambuscades. In this place Alexander was attacked by surprize, and being driven into a valley of considerable depth, the greater part of his army was cut to pieces, and it was with the utmost difficulty himself escaped falling a sacrifice.

This defeat greatly added to the hatred which the Jews had already conceived against Alexander, who no sooner returned with the remains of his army to Jerusalem, than they immediately flew into an open rebellion against him. In consequence of this a civil war commenced that continued for six years, during which, in most encounters, Alexander had the advantage of his subjects, and (according to Josephus) in the course of that time no less than 30,000 Jews were put to death.

Alexander, now reflecting on the state of affairs, began to be exceeding uneasy, being conscious to himself that repeated conquests over his subjects must necessarily weaken him against the power of the common enemy. He therefore determined to decline all farther endeavors to bring his subjects to obedience by the force of arms, and to adopt the more gentle methods of argument and persuasion. But this change of conduct served only to encrease the popular enmity; and, upon his asking the people one day what conduct they would wish him to pursue, whereby he might give them satisfaction and procure their friendship and esteem, they, with one voice, replied, "That he should cut his own throat, for upon no other terms would they be at peace with him; and well it would be (they said) considering the great mischiefs he had done them, if they would be reconciled to him, even after he was in his grave."

In short, the people would not hearken to any mode of accommodation whatever; but, on the contrary, were universally determined to oppose Alexander with all their might, and, if possible, do themselves justice by force of arms. To effect this, they sent deputies to Demetrius Eu-chærus, who was then king of Damascus, requesting that he would send them succors to oppose their sovereign, and promising him, should they succeed, to invest him with the most distinguished privileges.

In conformity to this request Demetrius marched with a considerable army into Judea, where being joined by that of the Jews, he encamped in the neighborhood of Sichar, the whole number of his forces amounting to 3000 horse, and 40,000 foot. Alexander marched against this formidable army with only one thousand horse, six thousand mercenary foot, and about ten thousand Jews, who still maintained their allegiance. While the two armies were encamped within sight of each other, they both made use of the same kind of means to take advantage, and increase their strength. Demetrius endeavored to induce Alexander's mercenaries to desert and join him; and Alexander was equally solicitous to gain over the Jews in the army of Demetrius, but neither party was able to prevail. At length a desperate battle took place, which was supported with great courage and resolution for some time, when victory declared in favor of Demetrius. All the foreign troops of Alexander were lost to a man, and the greatest part of his other forces were so miserably broken, that he was obliged to fly with them for shelter to the adjacent mountains.

The event of this victory, however, was contrary to the expectations of both kings; for six thousand of the Jews, who had fought against Alexander, being now moved to compassionate his sufferings, fled to, and joined their king, in the mountains, whither he had retreated for refuge. This circumstance proved exceedingly alarming to Demetrius, who, apprehending that the rest of the Jews in his army might follow the example of those who had deserted, and being content with the first advantage he had gained, abandoned all thoughts of continuing the war; and, drawing off his forces, retired into Syria, leaving the Jews to combat with their king without his assistance.

After the departure of Demetrius, the Jews continued to prosecute the war against Alexander, and in most encounters that took place the latter was victorious, notwithstanding which he could not, by any means whatever, bring them to listen to terms of accommodation. At length, however, he came to a decisive battle with them, cutting off the greater part, and obliging the rest to fly for safety to a place called Bethome, which was fortified

both by nature and artifice. Alexander laid close siege to the place, which the Jews, for some time defended, with great resolution, till at length, through the perseverance and intrepidity of Alexander's forces, they were compelled to submit; great numbers were killed, many others saved themselves by flight, and eight hundred were made prisoners, whom Alexander immediately conducted to Jerusalem.

As soon as Alexander arrived at Jerusalem with his rebellious captives, he caused such a scene to be exhibited that shewed what excess of passion men may be hurried into when they cease to make the principles of piety, honor and virtue, the rule of their conduct. The eight hundred men, whom he had brought prisoners from Bethome, he caused to be crucified all in one day, and, to increase the horrors of the dreadful scene, he ordered their wives and children to be put to death before their faces, while they were undergoing their sufferings. He likewise made an entertainment for his wives and concubines within sight of the spot where this dismal tragedy was exhibited, with an intent not only to feast himself, but them likewise, with the horrid sight. This savage and unheard-of cruelty was so noticed even by the people of his own party, that they branded his name with infamy, and he was justly considered, by all his subjects, as a monster, who, instead of being suffered to have the government of a people, ought, in the most ignominious manner, to be deprived of his existence.

The civil wars being over, Alexander led his forces against Antiochus king of Damascus, who had entered Judea with an army of eight hundred horse and eight thousand foot. They met near a place called Antipatris, where a most bloody battle ensued, in which Antiochus had so much the advantage that he thought himself secure of victory. But in this he was mistaken; for, observing one of the wings of his troops in danger of being overpowered, he eagerly pressed to its relief, and was killed in the attempt, at which his troops were so dispirited that they threw down their arms and fled, leaving Alexander master of the field.

A short time after this Aretas (whom the people of Damascus had elected king instead of Antiochus) entered Judea with a considerable army, and encamped in the neighborhood of Adida. Alexander marched with his forces against him, and a battle ensued, which lasted for some time, but was terminated without any complete victory being obtained on either side. After the battle was over, Aretas offered terms of accommodation to Alexander, which being accepted, a treaty of peace was concluded between them, and they separated their armies, Aretas returning to Damascus, and Alexander marching his forces in pursuit of new conquests.

The first place Alexander subdued after this was the city of Dion, which he took by assault. From hence he proceeded to Gerasa, a very strong town fortified by a triple circumvallation. He laid siege to the place with great violence, and the inhabitants defended it, for some time, with amazing resolution; but at length they were obliged to submit. This conquest was of great advantage to Alexander, who found in the town immense treasures which had been deposited there for safety by Theodorus, the son of Zeno, prince of Philadelphia.

After the reduction of Gerasa, Alexander marched his forces against Gaulana and the strong fortress of Gamala, both of which he conquered by storm. He then took several other strong places in the neighboring territories, and, after an expedition of three years continuance, returned to Jerusalem. The successes he had met with during his excursion were highly pleasing to the multitude, and in consequence thereof, the disgust they had before held against him subsided, so that, on his entrance into the city, they received him with the loudest acclamations of joy.

After this Alexander became violently addicted to intemperance, and having at a certain time drank to great excess, he fell sick, and was afterwards seized with a quartan ague, which was so powerful as to baffle the skill of his most eminent physicians. He was afflicted with this distemper for three years, during which time he not only continued his attention to the affairs of government, but likewise prosecuted several military under-

takings, till, being at length quite exhausted, he was forced to submit to fate while he was besieging the castle of Ragaba, in the country of the Garasens.

At the besieging of this place, his queen Alexandra attended him on account of his illness; and when she found he drew near his end, she was greatly perplexed in her mind on account of the ill state in which she and her children must be inevitably left after his decease. She knew how much Alexander had exasperated the Pharisees, then a powerful sect among the Jews, and what hatred great numbers of the principal people among the other sects, at their instigation, had contracted against him; and, therefore, she had no other expectations, or prospect before her, but that herself and family would be given up to destruction, and made victims to the public rage of the people. In the height of these melancholy reflections, and while she was sitting by the bed-side of her dying husband, she broke out into the following exclamation: "My beloved husband (said she) "what will be the fate of your wife and children if we "are deprived of your protection, and left to the mercy "of your inveterate foes!"

These words afflicted the soul of the dying Alexander, who, after having so far recovered himself as to be able to speak, gave his wife the following advice, and which were the last words he was heard to utter. "I particularly request (said he) that you strictly follow the directions I am now about to give you. As the only effectual means to secure a peaceable succession to yourself and children, keep my decease a profound secret from the army till the castle shall be subdued: then repair in triumph to Jerusalem with the news of victory; and let your principal care be to ingratiate yourself into the esteem of the Pharisees, for your future welfare will depend principally on the interest you form with that sect, to whose opinions those of the multitude are entirely subservient. The popular clamor against me has been raised by an opposition to them. On your arrival at Jerusalem, send for the principal men among the Pharisees, expose my dead body before them, and say, that from a veneration for their piety and justice,

“you resign the body, either to be allowed the ceremony  
“of interment, or to be treated with contempt and indig-  
“nity, as their discretion shall dictate; and at the same  
“time assure them that in this and all other matters of a  
“public nature, you will observe an implicit obedience  
“to their authority. Follow this counsel, and there is  
“no doubt but my remains will be favorably interred,  
“and yourself and offspring be established in the digni-  
“ties of the royal station.”

Soon after Alexander had given this advice to his queen, he gave up the ghost, in the 49th year of his age, and 27th of his sovereignty.

It was not long after the death of Alexander, before the castle of Ragaba was entirely reduced; upon which the queen, in conformity to the advice of her deceased husband, immediately repaired to Jerusalem, and delivered his body to the Pharisees to be disposed of as they should think expedient; at the same time submitting the administration of all public affairs to their discretion. This conduct acquired Alexandra the warmest friendship of the Pharisees, who had hitherto been her most inveterate enemies. They harangued the multitude in her favor, at the same time extolling the merits of the late king; which had such an effect on the multitude, that instead of the usual invectives against him, nothing was heard but the highest encomiums. In short, all deplored the loss of so valiant a prince, and honored his funeral with more than ordinary pomp and solemnity. All approved of the Queen-Dowager, who, in conformity to her husband's will, was quietly settled in the supreme government of the nation.

## CHAP. XVI.

*Alexandra, the Queen-Regent of Judea, appoints her eldest son Hyrcanus to the High-Priesthood. The Pharisees, having the ascendancy over the queen, direct the principal management of all public affairs. They abolish the decree of John Hyrcanus against their traditionalist constitutions, and persecute the friends and adherents of the late king. Aristobulus, the brother of Hyrcanus, goes, with some of the most eminent men, to remonstrate with the queen against the conduct of the Pharisees, in consequence of which, at their request, she gives them possession of several strong places. The Jews are greatly alarmed on being invaded by Tigranes, king of Armenia, but their fears are soon removed, for, on their making him presents, he withdraws his forces. Aristobulus leads an army against his brother Hyrcanus, but on their meeting a treaty is formed between them, by which Hyrcanus resigns the office of high-priest, together with the sovereignty, to his brother Aristobulus. Hyrcanus, assisted by Aretas, king of Arabia, defeats Aristobulus, after which they both make their appeal to Pompey. Aristobulus takes up arms against Pompey, who reduces Jerusalem, restores Hyrcanus to the sovereignty, and carries Aristobulus, with his family, prisoners to Rome. Gabinius, the Roman governor in Syria, confirms Hyrcanus in the high-priesthood, and takes the civil administration out of the hands of the Sanhedrim. Aristobulus, having made his escape from Pompey, goes into Judea, and attempts to raise fresh disturbances, but is taken prisoner and again sent to Rome, where he dies by poison. Julius Cæsar confirms Hyrcanus in the government of Judea, and restores the civil administration into the hands of the Sanhedrim.*

WHEN Alexander Jannæus died, he left two sons, the eldest of whom was named Hyrcanus, and the other Aristobulus; but he did not appoint either of them as his successor in the sovereignty, leaving that to his queen Alexandra. Hyrcanus, on account of his seniority, she promoted to the dignity of high-priest; and as he was naturally of an indolent and yielding disposition, she thought she might advance him to the throne without danger; but Aristobulus, the younger brother, being of

an active and enterprizing disposition, she deemed it most prudent to keep in a private station.

Alexandra was well skilled in the arts of government, and had abilities equal to the greatest undertakings. She augmented the militia to the full complement, kept two armies of regular troops, and had a considerable body of foreign auxiliaries in constant pay; so that by these means she became powerful at home, and formidable to the neighboring nations.

But notwithstanding this prudent management, Alexandra was little more than a mere tool in the hands of the Pharisees; for though she had the name of sovereign, the administration of all public affairs was conducted at their discretion. The queen was very rigid in her religious principles, and entertained a high degree of veneration for the Pharisees, on account of the reputed sanctity of their lives. By a plausibility of conduct, they so far insinuated themselves into her favor, as to engross all the privileges and powers of sovereignty, and secure to themselves all the lucrative commissions and distinguished employments, leaving the queen to provide for the expenses and encounter the cares and difficulties of government.

The Pharisees having obtained this power, and knowing that their conduct would not be impeached by Alexandra, proceeded to acts both of a tyrannical and a cruel nature. The first thing they did, was to abolish the decree which had been made by John Hyrcanus (father-in-law of the queen) against their traditional constitutions. They next released all the prisoners, and recalled all the exiles, who had been concerned with them in the late civil wars; after which they demanded justice of the queen against all those, at whose instigation and advice the eight hundred rebels had been crucified in Jerusalem.

The infatuated queen readily complied with every request made by the Pharisees; in consequence of which they exhibited articles of impeachment against one Diogenes, a noted confidant of the late king, whom they condemned and executed. They proceeded in like manner against several others, and, under the pretext of justice, put all those to death who were so unfortunate as to

incur their displeasure. At length the leading men among them who had been the late king's friends and adherents, seeing no likelihood of there being an end to such persecutions, and not knowing how soon they themselves might become victims to the rage of the Pharisees, went in a body to the queen, with Aristobulus, her younger son, at the head of them, to remonstrate against such proceedings.

The adherents of Aristobulus, having obtained an audience of the queen, laid before her their grievances in the most pitiable and affecting manner, while Aristobulus manifested by his countenance the abhorrence he entertained of the public measures. They represented to her that, in the utmost extremity of danger, they had preserved an uniform loyalty to their late sovereign, who had generously rewarded their services; and therefore earnestly begged, that since they had escaped the perils of war, they might not be sacrificed to the malevolence and treachery of their domestic enemies. They told her, that if their persecutors would proceed no farther in their sanguinary purpose, they would, from a respect to their superiors, suppress future complaints on what had been already perpetrated. They observed, that to countenance the declared enemies of her deceased consort, at the expense of his approved friends, would be a severe reproach upon her honor; and Aretas, the Arabian king, and several other hostile princes, would enjoy a peculiar pleasure in hearing that she had driven from her court those men who had once been so powerful that their very names had formerly struck a terror into their enemies. They concluded by saying, that if she was determined to yield every consideration to the ambition of the Pharisees, and that no regard was to be paid to their past services, they had only one request to make, and that was that they might be permitted to retire into the different fortresses of the kingdom, where they would terminate a miserable existence, honorably sharing the common calamities which seemed to await the friends of the deceased king.

These expostulations greatly embarrassed the queen, who, for some time, knew not how to act, being fearful, if she should give countenance to the petitioners, she might

obtain the ill-will of the Pharisees, of whom she continually stood in dread. At length, however, she resolved on complying with their last request, and therefore ordered them to retire to the several garrisons and places of strength throughout the kingdom; but with this restriction, that they should not enter Hyrcania, Alexandria, or Macheras, because in those places she had deposited her jewels and other valuable treasures.

While affairs were in this situation, Alexandra received intelligence that Tigranes, king of Armenia, had marched with a considerable army into Syria, and that his design was to penetrate into Judea. In consequence of this alarming intelligence the queen immediately dispatched ambassadors to Tigranes with considerable presents, hoping thereby to procure his friendship and avert the impending danger that threatened her dominions. The ambassadors found him laying close siege to Ptolemais, which, after some time, he reduced. Being introduced to Tigranes in form (for he was a man of great pride and state) they were very favorably received: he readily accepted their presents, assuring them of his good inclinations, and said he considered himself highly honored by the queen's sending an embassy to him at so great a distance. But the true reason of all this civility was, his having received advice that Lucullus, the Roman general, had entered Armenia, and was putting the country under military contributions; so that he was obliged immediately to draw his forces from Ptolemais, and return with all expedition in order to take the necessary measures for the better security of his own dominions.

Some time after this Alexandra being seized with a dangerous illness, Aristobulus thought it a favorable opportunity for him to carry into execution the design he had long formed of supplanting his brother Hyrcanus, both in the priesthood and sovereignty, the former of which he then enjoyed, and the latter must of course fall to him on the death of his mother. Having communicated his design to his wife (whom with his children he left in Jerusalem) he one night privately left the city, attended only by one servant; and, having visited all the castles in which his father's friends had been placed in garrison, he in the

course of fifteen days, secured to his interest twenty of those fortresses, and thereby, in a manner, made himself master of the rest of the strength of the kingdom.

On the day after Aristobulus left Jerusalem his absence was known by Alexandra, who, however, did not entertain any idea of his intentions, till she was informed that several fortresses had submitted to him; for, when one place had accepted his proposals, the example was readily followed by the rest.

As soon as the queen and her party received intelligence of the proceedings and success of Aristobulus, they were thrown into the greatest consternation, judging him, from his great abilities, and naturally aspiring disposition, to be a man qualified to succeed in the enterprize he had undertaken; and they were farther alarmed by the dreadful apprehension that they should be called to a severe account for the barbarities they had exercised upon his friends. The first step Hyrcanus and his adherents took was, to seize the wife and children of Aristobulus, whom they confined under a strong guard in the citadel next the temple. They then repaired to the queen, requesting that she would give them directions what farther measures they should pursue at so critical a juncture. They informed her of the great power of Aristobulus, and told her that though their situation was desperate, and ruin likely to ensue, yet they would not, by any means, act without her concurrence. She replied, that the state of her mind and body rendered her wholly incapable of the cares of government, which she resigned entirely to their management; adding, that there was no deficiency either of men or money. Soon after having said this, Alexandra gave up the ghost, in the 73d year of her age, and ninth of her reign, leaving all her wealth and possessions, together with the sovereignty, to her son Hyrcanus.

In the mean time Aristobulus was become exceeding powerful, and such prodigious numbers of people flocked to him from all quarters, that he had got together a considerable army. The inhabitants of Mount Libanus, Trachonitis, and other neighboring places, were readily inclined to support his party, from the expectation of the advantages they should derive, by assisting in the estab-

lishment of a new king, who, they had reason to expect, would remove that tyranny and cruelty which had been exercised in the late reign.

Hyrcanus, by the advice of his friends, determined, if possible, to reduce the usurper by force, for which purpose he left Jerusalem at the head of a considerable body of forces, and the two armies met on the plains of Jericho. The necessary preparations were made on both sides to determine the contest by the sword; but just as they were ready to engage, the greater part of Hyrcanus's forces deserted and went over to Aristobulus. In consequence of this the two brothers entered into a treaty of accommodation, the terms of which were that Hyrcanus should make a resignation of the crown and high-priesthood to Aristobulus, who was to allow him the privileges, honors, and dignity, to which he had a right by virtue of his relationship to the king. This agreement was ratified in the temple, in the presence of the people, after which Aristobulus retired to the palace, and Hyrcanus to the apartments which had been before occupied by his brother.

Hyrcanus was naturally a very quiet and peaceable man, and an admirer of ease and retirement; so that his resignation of the crown was not so great a grievance to himself as it was to many of his friends, particularly one named Antipater, who had long entertained a violent hatred against Aristobulus. Antipater was a native of Idumæa, and, in point of family and wealth, one of the most considerable men of the country. He told Hyrcanus that so long as he continued in Judea his life would be in danger, and that he had no other choice left but either to reign or die; and therefore advised him to make his escape to Aretas king of Arabia, and with him to stipulate for the assistance of forces to enable him to recover his kingdom.

The natural timidity of Hyrcanus's temper made him not listen to the advice of Antipater with that liveliness which might have arisen from a man of a more aspiring disposition, though at the same time he did not make any absolute refusal. Antipater, however, was determined if possible to carry his point, and therefore did that for Hyrcanus which he could not have done for himself. He im-

mediately repaired to Aretas, to whom (from his great power and influence) he was readily admitted, and kindly received. To this prince he represented Aristobulus as a most abominable character, and recommended Hyrcanus as a man of the most extraordinary merit: he exhorted him not to deny succor to a prince who was most cruelly oppressed, observing at the same time that he would obtain great honor from generously affording Hyrcanus relief, and that kings were reciprocally bound to support each other in their legal claims and privileges. Aretas promised to comply with his request, on condition that Hyrcanus, in case of victory, should restore those towns which had been taken from his father Alexander; upon which Antipater took his leave and returned to Jerusalem.

Antipater, having prepared Hyrcanus to petition, and Aretas to comply with his request, conducted the latter out of the city by night, and accompanied him to Petra, where the royal palace of Arabia was situated. On his arrival there, he introduced Hyrcanus to the king, and strongly recommended him to his protection. The king received him very kindly, and Hyrcanus giving him his word to comply with the conditions he had mentioned to Antipater, Aretas promised to use his utmost endeavors for restoring him to the regal dignity.

Aretas was as good as his word, for he soon after entered Judea with an army of fifty thousand men, who, being joined with the Jews that were of Hyrcanus's party, gave battle to Aristobulus, and having obtained a complete victory, pursued him to Jerusalem. On his arrival there he laid close siege\* to the city and temple (in the

\* While Aretas laid before Jerusalem he suffered many acts to be committed of a very outrageous and barbarous nature, one of which is thus related by Josephus. There lived at Jerusalem one Onias, a man of great reputation for the sanctity of his life, and who, by his prayers, had been thought to have once obtained rain from heaven in an extremity of drought. The besiegers having heard this, and imagining that his curses might be as prevalent as his prayers, brought him into the camp, and there pressed him to curse Aristobulus and all that were with him. He opposed their request as long as he could; but at length, finding no rest from their importunities, and that they were resolved to mal-treat him unless

latter of which Aristobulus took shelter) and would certainly have taken it, had it not been for the following incident.

At this time a war was subsisting between Pompey the Great and Tigranes, king of Armenia. The former ordered Scaurus, one of his lieutenants, to lead the army under his command from Armenia into Syria. Scaurus obeyed the orders of his master, but on his arrival at Damascus he found that Metellus and Lellius had reduced the place and drawn off their forces. In consequence of this, and having received intelligence of the situation of affairs in Judea, he thought it most advisable to lead his army into that country, which he accordingly did. On his way he was met by two ambassadors, one from Aristobulus, and the other from Hyrcanus, who were commissioned to supplicate the Romans to espouse the cause of their respective masters. The ambassador from Aristobulus presented Scaurus with four hundred talents, which sum prevailed above all the arguments that could be used by the other ambassador in favor of Hyrcanus. In consequence of this Scaurus dispatched messengers to Hyrcanus and Aretas, commanding them, in the name of Pompey the Great and the Roman Senate, immediately to raise the siege and draw off their troops, threatening them with a declaration of war in case of refusal. Aretas, dreading the indignation of so powerful a people as the Romans, immediately raised the siege, and marching his forces through Judea retired to Philadelphia, while Scaurus returned with his troops to Damascus. Aristobulus, however, was of too enterprizing a disposition to repress the desire of conquest, because the departure of the enemy had left him in a state of security. He therefore collected together his troops, and pursued Hyrcanus and Aretas to a

he complied, he lifted up his hands to heaven, and, as he was standing in the midst of them, said, "O Lord God, Ruler of the universe, "since both we that stand before thee are thy people, and they that "are besieged in the temple are thy priests, I humbly beseech thee "not to hear the prayers of either of them against the other." On the good man's saying this, those who had brought him to the place were so enraged that they immediately fell upon him and stoned him to death.

place named Papyron, where, falling on their rear, he put about seven thousand to the sword, among whom was Cephalon, the brother of Antipater.

A short time after this, Pompey himself went into Syria, and took up his residence at Damascus, where he received ambassadors from the princes of several nations, soliciting his friendship and protection. Among the rest Hyrcanus and Aristobulus sent their deputies, requesting that he would be pleased to determine the controversy that had so long subsisted between them, with respect to the right of sovereignty over the Jewish nation.

When Pompey had heard what the ambassadors had to say in favor of their respective masters, he ordered that the two brothers should appear in person before him, that he might be the better able to enquire into the merits of the cause, and determine it in such a manner as might be most consistent with reason and justice.

In consequence of this, the two brothers waited on Pompey to receive his decision; and at the same time great numbers of the chief men of the Jews went to remonstrate against them both. On their arrival at Damascus, Pompey thought proper first to hear the sense of the people, who being accordingly admitted to him for that purpose, they pleaded as follows: "That it had been formerly the usage of their nation to be governed by the high-priest of the God whom they worshipped, who, without assuming any other title, administered justice to them, according to the laws and constitutions transmitted down to them from their forefathers. They owned, indeed, that the two contending brothers were of the sacerdotal race, but then they alledged that they had changed the old, and introduced a new form of government, and, therefore, they prayed that they might not be governed by a king."

Pompey, having heard the sense of the people, next gave audience separately to the two contending brothers. The first that appeared was Hyrcanus, who pleaded, "That though he was the elder brother, Aristobulus had usurped his rank and estate, contrary to justice, had robbed him of his birth-right, and reduced him to a dependence on his own bounty. That, as a man born for

"mischief, he practised piracy at sea, and rapine and depredation on land, upon his neighbors; and that it was the violence of his disposition, which had occasioned the people to be so enraged against him." Having said this, he called upon a great number of the principal Jews (who being admitted) confirmed the truth of what he had asserted.

Hyrcanus and his party having withdrawn, Aristobulus was next admitted into the presence of Pompey. The plea he made was, "That Hyrcanus was not superceded in the government through any ambition of his, but by reason of his incapacity to rule; and that his natural sloth and inactivity had brought upon him the contempt of the people. For my part (said he) I had no other choice than either to assume the government, or suffer it to be transferred into another family; and, with regard to the title of king, I held it only as I received it from my father Alexander." As a testimony of the truth of what he said, he produced several young gentlemen of the Jewish nation, who, by the gaudiness of their dress, and the levity of their carriage, did no great credit to the cause which they endeavored to espouse.

After Pompey had heard both parties, he seemed to be of opinion that Aristobulus had been too hasty in his proceedings; but, for the present, he dismissed them with fair words, and referred the full determination of the matter until he should come to Jerusalem, which he said he would not fail to do, as soon as he had finished the war with the Arabians.

Aristobulus, from the manner of Pompey's behavior, easily perceiving that his inclinations were directed in favor of his brother Hyrcanus, quitted Damascus, without taking leave of Pompey, and immediately returned to Judea, where he took every measure he could project to prepare himself against those consequences, which, from his proceedings, he might reasonably expect would afterwards take place.

The abrupt and disrespectful departure of Aristobulus so highly offended Pompey, that he resolved to take the part of Hyrcanus, without paying any farther attention to

their respective complaints. He accordingly marched in pursuit of him with the Roman troops and a considerable body of Syrian auxiliaries. Having passed Pella and Scythopolis, he came at length to Corele, where he learnt that Aristobulus had shut himself up in the castle of Alexandrion, which was a strong fortress built by his father on a high mountain that stood at the entrance of the country of Judea, towards the Samaritan side. Pompey immediately marched his army to the place, and having encamped before it, he sent a messenger to Aristobulus to come down to him. Aristobulus, considering this message as an insult, at first refused to comply; but the people expressing great dissatisfaction at his conduct, and his friends representing the impossibility of withstanding so formidable an enemy as the Romans, he was at length prevailed upon to leave the place, and accordingly went to Pompey, accompanied by several of his principal adherents.

Pompey had been privately informed that Aristobulus had commanded his governors to observe such orders only as were given under his own hand; and, therefore, as soon as Aristobulus appeared, he insisted upon his writing to the respective officers in the fortress, authorizing them immediately to surrender the place. Aristobulus judged it necessary to comply with this injunction; but he was so exasperated at the imperious conduct of Pompey, that he immediately departed to Jerusalem, with a full resolution of there opposing him with all his strength.

In order to deprive Aristobulus of the opportunity of making preparations for war, as soon as Pompey knew of his departure, he immediately marched after him, and encamped at Jericho, from whence, the next morning, he proceeded towards Jerusalem. Aristobulus was astonished at the expedition, and alarmed at the appearance of Pompey: he now repented of his conduct, and, to prevent fatal consequences, went to meet him, which he had no sooner done, than he offered him a considerable sum of money, with the command of the city, and whatever else he should request, provided he would but withdraw his forces. These terms were accepted by Pompey, who

(retaining Aristobulus) immediately dispatched Gabinius, one of his generals, with some troops to the city to receive the offered money; but when they came there, the persons who commanded in the town, in the name of Aristobulus, refused them admittance, telling them they would not stand to any such agreement.

This was a kind of treatment the Roman general could not digest, and, therefore, after ordering Aristobulus to be put in chains, he marched with his army to Jerusalem, and immediately proceeded to reconnoitre the place, in order to form a judgment which was the most likely part to make a successful assault.

No sooner did Pompey appear before Jerusalem, than an insurrection took place between the two parties respectively attached to Aristobulus and Hyrcanus. The adherents of the former were for attempting to rescue their king by force of arms, while the other party were equally strenuous for admitting Pompey into the city; and the majority of the people, conscious of the superior power of the Romans, were friends to the latter measure. The partizans of Aristobulus took possession of the temple, and cut away the bridge of communication between that and the city, being fully resolved to defend themselves to the last extremity. The other party admitted great numbers of the Romans into the town, upon which Pompey dispatched one of his general officers to take possession of the palace. Finding that the Jews who had retired into the temple were absolutely determined not to submit, he gave over all thoughts of a compromise, and made the necessary preparations for an assault, in which he received every possible assistance from Hyrcanus and his adherents.

Pompey resolved to begin the attack on the wall of the north side of the temple, which was surrounded by a very deep and broad ditch. As a necessary preparation he ordered this ditch to be filled up, in doing of which the Jews had the greatest opportunity of annoying the enemy from above. Pompey seeing this ordered his soldiers to employ themselves in the work on the sabbath-day, when the Jews (notwithstanding it had been long deemed lawful for them to use their utmost endeavors for their own

security at such times and on such occasions) preserved their superstitious notions to such a degree, that they would not permit the least interruption to take place, or even perform any kind of work, except what was indispensably necessary for the immediate support or defence of their lives.

The ditch being at length filled up, and the ground levelled, Pompey caused strong towers to be erected thereon; and every necessary preparation being made, the assault was commenced with a species of engines of war that had been brought from Tyre.

The besieged defended themselves with great resolution, but there was no possibility of long withstanding the power of a Roman army. After a siege of three months the temple was taken by assault, and such of the people who attempted to escape, or offered resistance, were instantly put to death. Several priests, who were employed in the duties of their office at the time, paid no regard to their personal safety even when the swords of the enemy were pointed to their breasts, but yielded up their lives while exercising the duties of their profession. The Jews attached to Pompey felt no compassion for those who espoused the cause of Aristobulus; so that a most dreadful carnage took place, in which not less than twelve thousand Jews were put to the sword.

Amidst the general calamity of the Jews on this occasion, what most sensibly afflicted them was, the unprecedented event of the Holy of Holies being exposed to profane eyes. To this place only the high-priest was to be admitted; but it was entered by Pompey and his attendants, who saw the candlesticks, lamps, tables for incense, and other articles used in the performance of Divine service. He likewise visited the treasuries, where he found two thousand talents of silver, besides vessels of gold and other things of great value. He would not, however, suffer a single article to be touched, but left them entire for the sacred uses to which they were appropriated; and the next day he ordered the temple to be purifi-

ed, and that the oblations and other ceremonies of religion should be performed as usual.\*

Pompey, having thus possessed himself of the city and temple of Jerusalem, proceeded to make such regulations as he thought necessary previous to his departure. All those people among the Jews whom he discovered to have been the promoters of the late insurrection, he condemned to the loss of their heads; but such as had signalized themselves in the prosecution of the siege, he liberally rewarded. Among these was Hyrcanus, whom he not only restored to the high-priesthood, but likewise made him prince of the country, though he would not permit him to preserve the regal dignity by wearing a crown. He laid the country of Judea under an annual tribute; deprived the Jews of the cities they had gained in Cœlo-Syria, and, by annexing them to the jurisdiction of the Roman government, reduced the possessions of the Jews to their former limits. He appointed Scaurus, one of his generals, to the government of Judea, Cœlo-Syria, and all the country of Egypt to the borders of the Euphrates, giving him likewise the command of two legions, that he might be the better enabled to discharge the trust reposed in him.

Having made these regulations, Pompey left Jerusalem, and set forward on his journey home, taking with him Aristobulus, his two sons Alexander and Antigonus, and two of his daughters, as captives, whom he purposed should be led before him when he made his triumphal entry into his capital.—From this period we may justly date the destruction of Jerusalem, and the subjection of the Jewish nation to the Roman yoke, having been compelled to restore to the Syrians what they had taken in the course of a long war, as well as to submit to the loss of the sovereign authority.

\* Though Pompey was thus modest, yet Crassus (who succeeded Gabinius in the lieutenancy) coming to Jerusalem some time after, not only extorted the two thousand talents, and a large bar of gold by way of bribe, to restrain him from farther plunder; but, contrary to the promise which he had given upon oath, ransacked the temple all over, and robbed it of every thing he thought worth taking away, insomuch that the whole of his sacrilegious plunder amounted to the value of ten thousand talents.

While Pompey was on his way to Rome after the reduction of Jerusalem, Alexander (one of the sons of Aristobulus) found means to effect his escape. He continued in obscurity for the space of three years, at the expiration of which he went into Judea, and, having gathered together a great number of forces, possessed himself of several principal places in different parts of the country. Gabinius, the Roman governor in Syria, hearing of the proceedings of Alexander, resolved to march with his army against him, upon which the latter, being informed of his intentions, increased his troops to ten thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, and strongly fortified Alexandrion, Hyrcanian, and other places near the mountains of Arabia. In the interim Gabinius dispatched one of his principal officers with a body of chosen troops, who were joined by a considerable number of Jews under the command of Malicus, a brave and experienced officer; and soon after Gabinius himself followed with the main body of his army.

As soon as Alexander found Gabinius was proceeding towards him with a force which he well knew he was by no means able to withstand, he thought it most prudent to make a retreat, which he did with all possible expedition. Gabinius, however, closely followed, and overtook him in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, where a battle took place, in which three thousand of Alexander's troops were put to the sword, the like number taken prisoners, and the rest (among whom was Alexander) obliged to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

After this defeat Gabinius went to Jerusalem, and confirmed Hyrcanus in the office of high-priest; but the civil administration he took from the Sanhedrim, and put it into the hands of such magistrates as he thought proper. He likewise divided the land of Judea into five provinces, in each of which he appointed a court of justice, that the people of the different districts might have the convenience of being righted in all matters of a contentious nature.

A short time after this Aristobulus (with his other son Antigonus) escaped from Rome, and going into Judea was joined by a great number of Jews, some of whom were influenced to countenance him merely from a desire of

changing their situation, and others from a principle of fidelity and affection. He made an attempt to repair the fortress of Alexandrion; but on receiving information that Gabinius had dispatched an army in pursuit of him, he retreated to Macherus, where he dismissed the useless part of his followers, retaining only eight thousand men, whom he thought capable of properly bearing arms, and who had resolution enough to stand a contest. In a short time the Roman army arrived, and a general battle took place, in which Aristobulus and his adherents fought with astonishing bravery; but they were at length compelled to yield to the superior power of the enemy with the loss of five thousand men. Two thousand of the remainder gained a hill, and made some farther resistance, while Aristobulus, with the other thousand, cut a passage through the Roman army, and retired to Macherus. Aristobulus flattered himself that Gabinius would consent to a suspension of hostilities, whereby he might be enabled to reinforce his army, and put the place in a better posture of defence. But he soon found himself mistaken; for the Romans immediately proceeded to assault the place, which was defended with great bravery for two days, when a complete victory was gained over Aristobulus, who, with his son Antigonus, were put in chains, and sent prisoners to Rome. The Senate sentenced the father to perpetual imprisonment; but the son, through the mediation of Gabinius, was set at liberty, and permitted to return to his own country.

Not long after this a difference took place between Cæsar and Pompey, which occasioned a distraction in the Roman affairs, and a general contention among the people throughout the empire. Pompey had left some forces in Syria, to oppose which Cæsar had set Aristobulus at liberty, and proposed to have sent him with two legions into Judea, in order to secure that province; but, before he could get out of Rome, he was poisoned by some of Pompey's party. His body laid there embalmed for a considerable time, till at length it was removed by Mark Antony, who caused it to be carried into Judea, and there honorably interred in the royal sepulchre.

The fate of Alexander, the elder son of Aristobulus, was no less deplorable than that of his father; for Pompey having sentenced him to death for seditious practices against the Romans, sent an order to Scipio to see it immediately put in execution, which was accordingly done at the city of Antioch.

Some time after this Pompey died, which putting an end to the war, Cæsar proceeded on his return home, in the way to which he made a short stay in Syria. While he was here, Antigonus, the second son of Aristobulus, met him, and laid his complaints before him relative to the murder of his father and brother, who he said were cruelly put to death by the contrivance of the friends of the late Pompey. He uttered the most bitter invectives against Hyrcanus and Antipater, whom he represented as the cause of himself and brethren being cruelly driven from their native country; and at the same time charged them with having oppressed the public for the sake of indulging their own private passions and desires. He farther said, that the assistance they had rendered him proceeded rather from fear than respect, and was only meant to make some compensation for their former attachment to Pompey.

Antipater, one of the parties thus accused by Antigonus, was at this time with Cæsar, and in order to destroy the intended effect of these reproaches, he exposed his wounds, as the best testimony he could give of his loyalty to Cæsar; having done which, he spoke as follows: “It is a matter of astonishment (said he) that this man, the son of a declared enemy to the state of Rome, and inheriting the rebellious principles of his father, should have the effrontery thus to accuse the most zealous of Cæsar’s subjects, and to arrogate a merit to himself, when his conduct has rendered him deserving of death.”

Cæsar, having heard both parties, instead of giving the least countenance to Antigonus, immediately conferred the pontificate upon Hyrcanus; and for that purpose issued the following decree, which he caused to be circulated throughout all Judea, and the neighboring provinces :

“ Julius Cæsar, *Emperor, the second time Dictator, and*  
“ *Pontifex Maximus, &c.*

“ Forasmuch as Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander, a  
“ Jew, has, at all times, as well in war as peace, approved  
“ himself to be our good and trusty friend and ally, as  
“ appeareth by several attestations of unquestionable  
“ credit, &c. These services and good offices duly con-  
“ sidered, I do hereby confirm and establish, to him and  
“ his heirs, the perpetual government of the Jews, both as  
“ their prince and high-priest, after the manner and  
“ method of their own laws; and, from this day forward,  
“ enrol them among the number of my trusty and well-  
“ beloved friends, and ratify an affinity with them as my  
“ associates. I order likewise, that all the legal pontifical  
“ rights and privileges be devolved upon him and his  
“ sons for ever; and that, in case any controversy shall  
“ arise among the people concerning the Jewish disci-  
“ pline, himself and his family, in the course of suc-  
“ cession, shall be the only persons to determine such  
“ disputes.”

Cæsar, having thus established Hyrcanus in the high-priesthood and sovereignty, and restored the civil administration to the Sanhedrim, which had been taken from them by Gabinius, was next inclined to bestow some distinguished favor on Antipater. He therefore desired him to mention any commission he wished to enjoy, and it should be readily granted. Antipater submitted the matter entirely to the pleasure of Cæsar, who appointed him procurator, or sub-governor of Judea, under Hyrcanus, and, as a farther instance of his favor, granted him permission to repair the walls of Jerusalem, which had been greatly damaged at the time Pompey laid siege to the place. Antipater made all proper acknowledgments to Cæsar for the distinguished favors he had been pleased to bestow on him; and, after accompanying him to the frontiers of Syria, took his leave, Cæsar returning to Rome and Antipater to Jerusalem.

## CHAP. XVII.

*Antipater the sub-governor of Judea, repairs the walls of Jerusalem, and exhorts the people to pay a proper submission to Hyrcanus. He promotes his two sons, Phasael and Herod, the first to the government of the country round Jerusalem, and the latter to that of Galilee. Herod makes a prisoner of Hezekias, the ring-leader of an outrageous banditti, whom, with several of his associates, he puts to death. The enemies of Antipater envy the prosperity of his sons, and occasion Herod to be brought before the Sanhedrim to answer for his conduct. He accordingly appears, upon which Hyrcanus, fearful of the consequences, adjourns the court, and advises Herod, in the mean time, to make his escape from Jerusalem. Herod takes this advice, and retires into Syria, where he is countenanced by Sextus Cæsar, who appoints him to the government of Cælo-Syria. Herod resolves to march to Jerusalem, and depose Hyrcanus; but, by the expostulations of his father and brother, he is prevailed on to relinquish his design. A civil war takes place among the Romans, in which Sextus Cæsar is basely murdered by means of Cecilius Bassus. Julius Cæsar is assassinated in the senate-house at Rome. Antipater is poisoned by Malicus, and his death revenged by his son Herod. Felix declares war against Herod and his brother Phasael, the latter of whom proves victorious, and all the attempts of Felix are rendered abortive. A considerable body of the Jews apply to Mark Antony against Herod and his brother, but without success. Antigonus (the younger son of the late Aristobulus) by the assistance of the Parthians, gains the kingdom of Judea. Hyrcanus and Phasael are taken prisoners and sent to Antigonus, the former of whom has his ears cut off, and the latter puts an end to his own existence. Herod goes to Rome, and by means of Antony and Augustus, obtains from the Senate a grant of the kingdom of Judea. He is opposed by Antigonus, and indifferently assisted by the Romans. He lays siege to Jerusalem, takes Antigonus prisoner, and prevails with Antony to have him put to death.*

**ANTIPATER**, being appointed to the sub-government of Judea by Julius Cæsar, immediately on his return to Jerusalem set about the duties of his office, by making such regulations as he thought necessary for the

advantage of his master, and the general good of the people. The first thing he did was, to repair the walls both of the city and temple, which had been greatly damaged by Pompey. Having done this, he took an excursion into different parts of the province, in order to establish good order and tranquility among the people. He told them that if they observed a due obedience to Hyrcanus they should enjoy plenty and happiness; but, if they sought to gratify their private interests at the expense of the public, he would himself prove a rigid governor, and they would find in the person of Hyrcanus, instead of a gracious and mild prince, a cruel and unrelenting tyrant.

But though Antipater, for political reasons, recommended great deference from the people to Hyrcanus, yet he was conscious of his incapacity to discharge the duties of his office, and was therefore determined to take every necessary precaution against any dangers that might arise in consequence thereof. To this purpose he appointed his eldest son Phasael, who was a captain of the guards, as superintendant over Jerusalem and the adjoining country, and his younger son Herod he appointed to the government of Galilee.

Herod, though only fifteen years of age, was of a pregnant genius, and enterprizing spirit; nor was it long before he discovered himself to be capable of great undertakings. There happened at this time to be a gang of desperate robbers, who infested Galilee, with the neighboring parts of Cœlo-Syria, committing the most horrid depredations wherever they went. Herod resolved, if possible, to remove so great an evil, and for this purpose marched at the head of a body of men, in pursuit of them. After some days search he came up with them, and a desperate affray took place, in which Herod proved victorious. Hezekias, the ring-leader, with the greater part of his associates, he took prisoners, all of whom, as a terror to those who escaped, and to prevent their committing the like depredations in future, he put to death.

This enterprize procured Herod a very distinguished share of reputation; and the Syrians in general considered him as the man to whom they were indebted for the

secure and happy enjoyment of their lives, liberties and possessions. It likewise made him known to Sextus Cæsar, cousin to Cæsar the Great, who at that time held the government of Syria.

While Herod was distinguishing himself as a man of courage, and well adapted for military exploits, his brother Phasael was equally endeavoring to obtain public favor by the uprightness of his conduct. And so moderate was he in the exercise of that power with which he was invested, and so strictly observant of the principles of justice, that he gained the general approbation and respect of the people.

The reputation gained by Herod and his brother Phasael contributed not a little to increase that of the father, who experienced as high a degree of veneration as he could have done had he actually been the sovereign of the people; and so far was he from being transported beyond the bounds of moderation by his great success, that he preserved, in the strictest manner, his fidelity and respect towards Hyrcanus.

The wealth, power and grandeur of Antipater, the dignity of his family, and the veneration in which the people held him and his sons, created him many enemies among the leading men of the Jews, more especially when they found he was a favorite with the emperor, as well as with the common people of Rome. They therefore endeavored to traduce his character, and bring upon him the popular odium; to effect which, they insinuated that he had embezzled considerable sums of money which he had received from Hyrcanus for the use of the Romans. But the principal thing which they alledged as the cause of their dissatisfaction was, the violent, daring, and ambitious temper of Herod; insomuch that, in the heat of their indignation, they went in a body to Hyrcanus, whom they haughtily addressed in words to this effect: “Why will you be negligent while every thing is going to destruction? Do you not perceive that Antipater and his sons divide the prerogatives and emoluments of the royal power, while you are a prince only in title and name? Be cautious ere matters proceed too far; for depend on it, your government and life are equally in

"danger. If you consider those youths as your deputies,  
"you are mistaken, for, in fact, they are masters. Herod's  
"treatment of Hezekias and his companions was a viola-  
"tion of public justice, it being murder to put a man to  
"death without the ceremony of trial, however atrocious  
"his crimes may have been; but Herod has exercised an  
"arbitrary power without the least pretence of authority  
"for so doing, and therefore ought to be rendered amen-  
"able to justice for the iniquities he has committed."

In consequence of these complaints, Hyrcanus cited Herod to appear before the council at Jerusalem to answer for his conduct. By the advice of his father, after securing his garrisons in Galilee, he proceeded to obey the sovereign mandate; and, unwilling to offend Hyrcanus, went to Jerusalem, attended only by such a company of soldiers as he thought necessary for the security of his person. Sextus Cæsar, having conceived a great esteem for Herod, was greatly concerned when he heard of his being ordered to appear before the council at Jerusalem, lest, when in the power of his enemies, some fatal event might happen to him. He therefore interposed in his behalf, by immediately dispatching messengers to Hyrcanus, requesting, in the most earnest manner, that he would dismiss the complaint exhibited against him.

When Herod arrived at Jerusalem he immediately made his appearance before the Sanhedrim, at the head of whom sat Hyrcanus. He was dressed in a purple robe, and being surrounded with his guards, he so overawed that great council, that they all sat mute for a considerable time, no person whatever attempting to lay the least accusation against him; till at length one Simeas, who was more courageous than the rest, arising from his seat, addressed the court in words to this effect: "I never  
"(said he) before saw a prisoner at the bar behave in so  
bold and daring a manner, and I believe your observa-  
tion and experience will hardly furnish you with  
such another instance. It has been formerly customary  
for people in such a situation to appear, by their dress  
and behavior, resigned to the legal enquiry that awaits  
them: but here is a culprit who seems to pride himself  
in his dress and attendants, which makes it appear as

“ if public justice was more to be dreaded by the court  
“ than the criminal. Yet I censure not him for consulting  
“ his own safety rather than the respect due to the laws,  
“ so much as I do the king and the judges, who have  
“ permitted him to act in this matter. But remember that  
“ God is just and powerful; and the time is advancing  
“ when this man, whom you screen from the justice of  
“ the laws, will be a scourge to you all.”

After Simeas had finished this speech, Hyrcanus, judging from the countenances of the people in general, that Herod was in danger, adjourned the court till the following day, and in the mean time advised him to save himself by a private retreat. Herod took the advice of Hyrcanus, and immediately repaired to his friend Sextus Cæsar, who was then at Damascus, but with a full resolution that if he should be a second time cited to Jerusalem, not to appear on any account whatever.

As soon as the enemies of Herod understood that he had fled from Jerusalem, they used all the means they could to enrage Hyrcanus against him. They told him that he had departed in anger, and that he had certainly resolved on some desperate means of revenge: that there was not the least doubt but that Herod had already concerted his destruction; and though the matter was sufficiently evident, and himself must be convinced of it, yet so pusillanimous was he, that he had not courage to take the necessary means to prevent it.

Hyrcanus was greatly embarrassed in his mind at this representation; but, on receiving information that Sextus had appointed Herod to the command of his troops in Syria, his fears increased to such a degree that he was continually tortured by the imagination that Herod was leading an army to depose him. Nor was he wrong in his conjecture; for Herod, violently enraged at having been treated as a criminal, raised a powerful body of forces, and proceeded towards Jerusalem, with a resolution of depriving Hyrcanus of the government. This enterprize he would certainly have carried into execution, had it not been for the interposition of Antipater and his brother Phasael, who, knowing his intentions, met him on the way, and by their arguments dissuaded him from so

imprudent a proceeding. “They besought him by no means whatever, to think of offering any violence to the king, to whose favor and countenance he was indebted for the dignified station he enjoyed. They told him that his indignation at being accused should, in a great measure, be appeased by the friendly advice of the king: that if he prided himself in his power, he should consider that the measure he was about to pursue was not only unjust, but likewise unprofitable: that the Divine protection could not be expected by that man who revolted against his legal sovereign: that the prince he meant to oppose was his sincere friend and generous benefactor, and one who had in no instance wronged him, except when irritated by the injurious suggestions of his enemies.” These arguments had the desired effect: Herod repressed his indignation, waved the design of proceeding to hostilities, and immediately returned with his army to Galilee.

At this time a civil war broke out among the Romans in the neighborhood of Apamia; during which Cœcilius Bassus caused Sextus Cæsar to be put to death, and afterwards assumed the command of his troops. In revenge for the murder of Sextus, the party attached to Julius Cæsar opposed Bassus with their utmost power; and from a veneration towards the surviving Cæsar, and the memory of the deceased, Antipater dispatched considerable succors to the avengers of the murderers of Sextus, under the command of his two sons Herod and Phasael.

Julius Cæsar was at this time making preparations for an expedition against the Parthians, but was prevented from executing his design by being barbarously assassinated in the senate-house at Rome. The baseness of this act was considerably heightened by the persons who concerted it, the principal authors being Marcus Brutus, Decimus Brutus, Cassius, Trebonius, and some others on whom Cæsar had conferred the highest favors. The manner in which they executed this horrid deed was as follows: As soon as Cæsar entered the senate-house, Attilius Cimber, who was one of the conspirators, presented himself (as it had been previously agreed among them) before Cæsar, demanding, in a peremptory manner, the pardon of his brother, who had been banished. Cæsar,

thinking that such a favor ought rather to be asked with humility than demanded with authority, refused to comply; upon which Attilius immediately laid hold of the bottom of his robe, and pulled him with such force as to throw him into a reclining posture, when another of the conspirators, named Casca, drawing his dagger, plunged it into Cæsar's shoulder. The wound, however, being slight, Cæsar fell upon the assassin, but, while they were scuffling together, another of the conspirators came behind, and stabbed Cæsar in the side, while Cassius at the same time wounded him in the face, and Brutus pierced his thigh. Cæsar still defended himself for some time, till at length, being greatly weakened with the loss of blood, he went to the foot of Pompey's statue, where he fell, and expired, after having held the government little more than three years.

The death of Julius Cæsar occasioned the most shocking contentions and disorders among the subjects of the Roman empire. The heads of the people were divided into factions, and, regardless of the public welfare, acted according to their respective interests and passions. Cassius (one of the principal conspirators against the life of Julius Cæsar) obtained the command of the army in Syria, which was then before Apamia; and having soon brought over to his interest Marcus and Bassus, with some others, he raised the siege. He then proceeded from one place to another, collecting men, money and arms wherever he went; but the place he most oppressed was Judea, on which he levied a tax of no less than seven hundred talents of silver.

During this confusion Antipater committed the care of gathering part of the money fixed on Judea to his two sons, while Malicus (who was the next to him in power and secretly his enemy) was concerned with others in collecting the rest. The first sum, amounting to an hundred talents, was gathered by Herod in Galilee, and his expedition in the business obtained him great favor with Cassius; but the other agents being negligent in their duty so exasperated Cassius that he entirely destroyed several cities under their jurisdiction, and sold the inhabitants for slaves. He was particularly incensed against

Malicus, and, for his neglect, formed the design of putting him to death, which he would certainly have done had it not been for Antipater, who pacified him with a present of an hundred talents out of his own coffers.

Malicus repeatedly acknowledged himself indebted to Antipater for the preservation of his life; but no sooner had Cassius left Syria with the treasures he had collected, than Malicus concerted measures for the destruction of his generous benefactor, whom he considered as the only obstacle to his ambitious views.

Antipater, knowing Malicus to be a man of an artful and disingenuous temper, entertained a suspicion of his design. He, therefore, as a necessary precaution, crossed the river Jordan, and placed himself at the head of as large a body of Jews and Arabians as he could collect together. Malicus, who was bold and artful, finding himself suspected, immediately went to Antipater (whose sons were then with him) and solemnly swore to his innocence. “Can it be imagined (said he) that I should be “so weak as to think of a plot or conspiracy, when I “knew that Herod had the command of the arms and “magazines, and that Phasael had the command of Je-“rusalem?” In consequence of this, and other forcible arguments, the two sons of Antipater were induced to think their father had been wrong in his conjectures, and at their instigation Antipater was prevailed on to form a reconciliation with Malicus.

At this time a war commenced between Antony and the younger Cæsar (afterwards called Augustus) on the one part, and Brutus and Cassius on the other. In consequence of this, Cassius, being sensible of the distinguished qualities of Herod, nominated him to the government of Cœlo-Syria, and for his security appointed him a strong body guard both of horse and foot; promising, at the same time, that after the war was over, he would promote him to the sovereignty of Judea.

The advancement of Herod proved of fatal consequence to his father; for Malicus, thinking Antipater would become still more powerful on that account, resolved, by some means or other, to have him dispatched, and was continually laying plots for that purpose. At length he

hit upon one that succeeded to his wishes; for, taking the opportunity of Antipater's one day dining with Hyrcanus, he bribed the butler to put poison into his wine, of which he instantly expired, and Malicus with an armed force, (which he had prepared for the purpose) immediately seized on the government of Jerusalem.—Such was the end of Antipater, a man of consummate wisdom, and undaunted resolution, and by whose means Hyrcanus was advanced to the sovereignty of Judea. He was of the greatest uprightness and probity, a friend to the distressed, and a true lover of his country.

As soon as the death of Antipater was publicly known, the people (who had the greatest veneration for him) suspecting that it was occasioned by Malicus, were exasperated against him to the highest pitch of extravagance, and would certainly have murdered him, had he not, in the most solemn and public manner, declared himself totally innocent of the accusation laid against him. It was very natural for Malicus to apprehend that Phasael and Herod would seek revenge for the death of their father; and therefore, to avoid the consequences, he assembled together a considerable body of troops, and by that means put himself into a condition of making a proper defence should he be suddenly attacked.

When Herod and his brother heard of the death of their father, they were greatly incensed against Malicus, whom, in their own minds, they were convinced was the author of it. Herod was desirous of wreaking instant vengeance on the abominable traitor; but his brother Phasael, dissuading him from that measure, from an unwillingness to disturb the public peace, they permitted him to make a defence, and assumed the appearance of being perfectly satisfied of his innocence; after which they proceeded to the interment of their father, the ceremonies of which they caused to be performed with the most distinguished magnificence.

Herod now went to Samaria in order to quell some disturbances which then prevailed in that part of the country. The first solemn day after his arrival at Samaria he went the preceding evening to Jerusalem, attended by his guards, in order to assist in the usual devotions on

that occasion. As soon as Malicus heard of his coming, being under great apprehension from Herod, he immediately repaired to Hyrcanus, and prevailed with him to expostulate with Herod on the impropriety of being attended by strangers, by whom the holy religion would be profaned, and the people interrupted in their devotional exercises. Herod treated the matter complained of by Hyrcanus with contempt, and in the night gained admittance, with his attendants, into the city. Malicus did not chuse to make any farther objections to Herod's guards being in the city, or to take any measures that might be likely to produce a disturbance among the people, whom he knew to be warmly attached to Herod. On the contrary, he treated Herod with great apparent respect, and pretended to be exquisitely afflicted at the fate of Antipater. Herod saw through his iniquitous hypocrisy, but, dissembling his rage for the present, appeared to believe him sincere; and the next day, taking his leave, returned with his guards to Samaria.

Herod could now no longer contain his resentment against Malicus, and therefore, while he was at Samaria, he wrote a letter to Cassius, requesting that justice might be done upon the murderer of his father. Cassius, who already entertained an enmity against Malicus, readily consented that Herod should seek revenge, and for that purpose dispatched private orders to the different commanders of his troops, authorizing them to grant such assistance as he should require.

Malicus, conscious of his guilt, and suspecting that Herod was concerting some plot for his destruction, formed a plan for getting his son from Tyre (where he then resided in quality of an hostage) and retreating with him into Judea, hoping by those means the Jews might revolt, and his strength be thereby greatly increased; but reflecting on the desperate situation of his affairs, and the little probability of succeeding in the attempt, he at length gave it up, and, instead thereof, suggested an enterprize of a much more dangerous nature. He determined to take advantage of Cassius being engaged in the war against Antony, and to spirit up the whole Jewish nation to an insurrection against the Romans; imagining that, if he

could but effect his point, he might easily depose Hyrcanus, and, without any difficulty, obtain possession of the government of Judea.

But all the designs of Malicus were frustrated by means of Herod, whose patience being now worn out in not having obtained revenge for the death of his father, concerted a scheme for taking away the life of his treacherous murderer. He invited Hyrcanus and Malicus to an entertainment which he had appointed to be held on a certain day. In the mean time he sent one of his most confidential domestics to the officers of the Roman troops, with orders, that they should send a body of men to a certain spot which he mentioned, and which the two visitors were obliged to pass, and that as soon as they saw Malicus, they should immediately fall on him and put him to death, but by no means to do the least injury to Hyrcanus. The Roman commanders, in obedience to the directions sent them by Cassius, readily complied with the request of Herod, and sending a body of men at the time and place appointed, as soon as Malicus appeared, they strictly obeyed their orders, by immediately falling on and putting him to death. This alarming and sudden event so affected Hyrcanus, that he fainted away, and remained totally insensible for some time. At length, recovering himself, he enquired by whom Malicus had been slain, and was answered by the Roman commander that he had been put to death by order of Cassius. "Then, said Hyrcanus, I acknowledge Cassius to be the preserver of my life and kingdom, the destruction of both which has been long meditated by the traitor Malicus." Hyrcanus, however, certainly spoke this not as the real sentiments of his mind, but from the impulse of fear, as appears from his conduct after the transaction took place.

No sooner was the death of Malicus, and the manner of it, known in Jerusalem, than a party of his friends rose in arms to revenge it on the sons of Antipater; and having gained Hyrcanus, and Felix the commander of the Roman forces on their side, put the whole city into confusion. Herod was then at Damascus with Fabius the governor; and an indisposition rendered him incapa-

ble of leading his troops to join his brother. Phasael, however, weathered the storm with great success, for, with his own forces, he drove Felix, and all his tumultuous party, out of Jerusalem; but not being able to pursue them, they soon possessed themselves of several strong places, not only in different parts of Judea, but likewise in Galilee.

Phasael reproached Hyrcanus, in the most spirited terms, for his ingratitude in espousing the cause of Felix, and giving the brother of Malicus possession of Massada, the strongest fort in the country, besides several other castles. He was, indeed, so irritated at the conduct of Hyrcanus, that he would, doubtless, have resented it with some severity, had it not been for a match at this time on foot (and which was soon after consummated) between his brother Herod and Mariamne,\* the grand-daughter of Hyrcanus; on which account he suffered his resentment to subside, and all differences were made up between them.

In the mean time Herod, having recovered from his illness, left Damascus, and marching against the enemy soon retook the places they had conquered. He reduced three strong castles that had been taken by Marion, king of the Tyrians (who, by the favor of Cassius, had obtained not only the command of Tyre but all Syria) and drove that monarch out of Galilee. He shewed great lenity to the Tyrians whom he made prisoners, by not only sparing their lives, but likewise complimenting many with presents, by which means he made them friends to his cause.

But Herod had now a more powerful enemy to subdue, for Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, having entered into a design of opposing him, for that purpose raised a

\* She was the daughter of Alexander, the son of king Aristobulus, by Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus II. She was a lady of extraordinary beauty and distinguished virtue, and, in all other laudable qualifications, accomplished beyond most women of her time: but the real motive for Herod's desiring to make her his wife was, because the Jews, at that time, had a very zealous regard for the Asmonean family (that is, the descendants of the Maccabees) and therefore he thought that by marrying this lady, he should the more easily obtain the general affections of the people.

powerful army, and, by a considerable bribe, engaged Fabius, the governor of Damascus, to join him. They accordingly marched to the borders of Judea, where, being met by Herod, a desperate battle ensued, in which the latter proved victorious, the army of Antigonus being totally routed, great numbers slain, and the rest, with their conjunctive leaders, obliged to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

After this conquest Herod returned in triumph to Jerusalem, where he was received with the greatest acclamations of joy. In a few days the marriage was consummated between him and Mariamne, the grand-daughter of Hyrcanus, on which account those persons who had before been his enemies, now became his friends, and used every means in their power to promote his interest.

During these transactions a decisive battle took place near Philippi, in Macedonia, between the Roman armies under the command of Brutus and Cassius on the one part, and Mark Antony and Cæsar Octavianus on the other, in which the latter proved victorious. The two armies consisted of near 100,000 men each, and the contest lasted for some days. Brutus and Cassius both commanded in the action, but Cæsar Octavianus being sick in his tent, the command of the other army fell wholly upon Antony. The forces commanded by Cassius were soon repulsed so that he retired to a hill, in order to wait for an account of that part of the army which was commanded by Brutus; but in the confusion and dust, not being able to perceive what was doing, his mind misgave him that Brutus was overcome, and thereupon he commanded his servant Pindarus to cut off his head. Brutus, on the first day of the action, was so successful, that he made the enemy retire, and took Octavianus's camp; but, in a few days after, coming to a second general engagement, he was entirely routed, and being unwilling to fall into the hands of the enemy, he prevailed with his friend Strabo to dispatch him; which put a final close to the contest.

The two conquerors having thus subdued their enemies, separated their armies, Antony going with his forces into Asia, and Cæsar Octavianus retiring to Italy.

When Antony arrived at Bithynia he was waited on by ambassadors from most princes and states in that part of the world to congratulate him on his late success, who sent considerable presents to him in order to secure his future friendship. The factious Jews took this opportunity of endeavoring to raise fresh disturbances. They sent several principal people of the Jewish nation to Antony, exhibiting violent complaints against Phasael and Herod, whom they accused of having usurped, and arbitrarily exercised, the sovereign authority of Judea, leaving Hyrcanus only the name of king. But Herod, by his artful management, defeated all their designs, for knowing on what business they were gone, he dispatched messengers to Antony with a considerable sum of money as a present, which had so powerful an effect, that Antony would not pay any regard to the complaints laid against him.

When Antony arrived at Ephesus, Hyrcanus, and such of the principal Jews who were in his interest, sent ambassadors to him with a crown of gold, and various other presents, at the same time requesting that their countrymen, who were carried away prisoners by Cassius, contrary to the rules of war, might be set at liberty, and restored to those possessions of which they had been unjustly deprived.

Antony, being pleased with the compliment paid him, and thinking the request made by the Jews strictly just and reasonable, readily complied; and in consequence thereof wrote to Hyrcanus as follows:

“ Marcus Antonius, Emperor, to Hyrcanus the High-priest and Prince of the Jews, greeting.

“ Forasmuch as we have been assured of the regard  
“ that you and your people entertain for us (agreeable to  
“ what we have formerly experienced) by your ambassa-  
“ dors at Ephesus, who have honorably discharged their  
“ commission; and forasmuch as we are convinced of  
“ your sincerity, piety and virtue, by better proofs than  
“ verbal professions, we accept your friendship, and  
“ readily agree to your proposals. We will take care  
“ that you and your people participate in the same en-

“joyments with us; and for this purpose have already  
“sent orders that the Jews, who have been made slaves  
“by Cassius, or his order, be immediately set at liberty.  
“And we farther command that all the privileges granted  
“by us be peaceably enjoyed by you and your heirs,  
“forbidding the Tyrians from molesting you, directing  
“that they restore all the goods and estates of which the  
“Jews have been deprived; and declaring our accept-  
“ance of the crown and presents you have been pleased  
“to transmit to us by the hands of your ambassadors.”

At the same time that Antony sent this letter to Hyrcanus, he dispatched messengers to the heads of the Tyrians, with an edict to the following effect:

“The Emperor Marcus Antonius to the senate, magis-  
trates and people of Tyre, greeting.

“Whereas the ambassadors of Hyrcanus, high-priest  
“and prince of the Jews, have signified to us at Ephesus,  
“that when our enemies had usurped possession of this  
“province, you seized the lands of many of those  
“people to our use: now know ye, that as we embarked  
“in the late war for the public welfare, and promotion  
“of religion, against the rebels, we hereby command  
“that you not only live in friendship with our allies the  
“Jews, but return to the proprietors whatever was  
“seized by the enemies, to whom the senate not having  
“given right of possession, they could not transfer any  
“right to others, as what they possessed was in conse-  
“quence of unlawful seizure. Having now subdued our  
“adversaries, we judge it expedient to re-establish our  
“friends in the possession of their estates and properties:  
“wherefore, if you at present possess any lands or  
“estates, heretofore the property of Hyrcanus prince of  
“the Jews, which were seized during the invasion of  
“Cassius, we command that they be immediately de-  
“livered to the persons who originally owned them; and  
“if any doubts or difficulties arise, we will enquire into  
“them when we come into your country, and see that  
“justice is equally administered.”

Notwithstanding the great protection Hyrcanus, and consequently Phasael and Herod, together with all those

Jews who were in their interest, obtained from these decrees of Antony, and notwithstanding the rebuff that their enemies had met with in their application to Antony at Bithynia, yet they were still resolved to make another attempt for obtaining their ends. Accordingly, Antony going to Daphne, near Antioch, no less than one hundred of the most considerable people among the factious Jews repaired to him in a body, in order to repeat the charges which had been before exhibited against Phasael and Herod; and the most eloquent speakers were appointed to urge their complaints. Antony now thought proper to give them a hearing; and the defence was undertaken by Massala and Hyrcanus, the latter being induced to plead on account of his relationship to the parties accused. Antony, having heard both parties, demanded of Hyrcanus whom he considered as the most perfectly qualified for public administration. To which he replied, that he knew no persons so capable of the government as Phasael and Herod. This declaration was highly satisfactory to Antony, who still held in grateful recollection the friendly reception and liberal entertainment he had received from their father Antipater at the time Gabinius invaded Judea. He therefore, by way of acknowledgment for past favors received from Antipater, made his two sons, Herod and Phasael, tetrarchs,\* and committed all the affairs of Judea to their administration. This he confirmed by letters to the Jews; and, to oblige them to obey what he had done, he detained fifteen out of the hundred as hostages, whom he would have put to death had it not been for the intercession of Herod.

The benevolence of Herod, however, had little weight with his enemies, who were no sooner dismissed than

\* The word *tetrarch*, which sometimes occurs in Scripture (as in Matt. xiv. 1. Luke iii. 1, 19. ix. 7. Acts xiii. 1.) and is frequently used among the descendants of Herod the Great, signifies a lord that has the fourth part of a state, province or kingdom, without wearing a diadem, or bearing the title of a king. But it must not be always understood in a rigorous sense, because the name of *tetrarch* was given to him who possessed sometimes an *half*, and sometimes a *third* part, of any principality; nay, frequently the name of *king* was given to him who was but a *tetrarch*, and that of a *kingdom*, to a *tetrarchy*.

they concerted new schemes to destroy him. When Antony arrived at Tyre they dispatched no less than a thousand of their principal men to him with accusations of the like nature as before against Herod and Phasael. These people were so outrageous that Antony commanded the magistrates of the city to disperse them, and in every respect to maintain the authority of the tetrarchs he had established. Herod and Hyrcanus, who had likewise gone to Tyre on this occasion, went to the deputies, and in a friendly manner expostulated with them on the dangerous tendency of their conduct, and exhorted them to moderation, lest the ruin of themselves and their whole nation should be the consequences. But these remonstrances only tended to increase their insolence and resentment; and Antony, finding himself under the necessity of reducing them by force of arms, some were killed, and many wounded. Hyrcanus caused the slain to be decently interred, and ordered all necessary care to be taken of such as were wounded. But this beneficence had no effect upon those who escaped: they continued their outrageous proceedings, and committed various acts of violence, at which Antony was so irritated that he ordered the fifteen hostages, who had been left with him at Daphne, to be put to death, and threatened a severe revenge against the rest unless they instantly dispersed. This had the desired effect, the remaining deputies immediately leaving Tyre, and returning to Jerusalem.

Not long after this, Herod and his brother found they had enemies to contend with who were much more powerful than those with whom they had hitherto been engaged. Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, after being defeated by Herod on the borders of Judea, retired to Parthia, where he was kindly received and protected by the prince of that country. After he had been some time here, and established an interest among the most considerable persons of that nation, he engaged to pay them a thousand talents, and present them with five hundred of the finest women in the country, if they would assist him in the recovery of his father's kingdom.

The Parthians readily accepted the proposal of Antigonus, and the king sent his general with him, at the

head of a very powerful army, to invade Judea. As soon as they entered the country, great numbers of the Jews joined them in their march, and when they came to Jerusalem the faction that hated the two brothers immediately declared for Antigonus. Herod and Phasael, together with Hyrcanus, having planted themselves, with their respective forces, in different parts of the city, held out for some time with great resolution, till at length, Hyrcanus and Phasael being taken prisoners by the Parthians, and Herod, on that account, not being able to defend the city alone, made his escape by night. He took with him his mother Cypros and his sister Salome, Mariamne his wife, and Alexandra his mother-in-law, together with a great number of his principal friends; and with them he made the best of his way to Massada, a prodigious strong fortress, built on the top of a very high mountain near the west side of the lake Asphaltites.

As soon as the Parthians understood that Herod had fled from the city, they immediately marched into it, and plundered the houses of the principal people who had left them for the safety of their persons. They made booty of all the property they could find, and even seized the treasure of the royal palace; but the spoil was not so considerable as they expected, for Herod, being sensible of their rapacious disposition, had the precaution to remove his most valuable treasure, and his example was followed by all those who attended him to Massada.

Having plundered Jerusalem and the adjacent country, the Parthians declared Antigonus king of Judea, and then delivered to him Hyrcanus and Phasael in chains. Phasael, knowing that his death was determined, put a voluntary end to his life and sufferings; and not having the liberty of his hands to dispatch himself, such was his resolution, that he beat out his brains against the walls of the prison.\* As for Hyrcanus, Antigonus ordered that

\* Josephus tells us a report was circulated that Phasael had repented of having offered violence to himself, and that Antigonus sent a physician to him, who administered poison to his wound, and by these means put an end to his existence. He farther says, that Phasael, previous to his decease, being informed by a woman that his brother had escaped, declared he should die happy, since he should leave a friend who would revenge his injuries.

both his ears should be cut off, in order that he might be incapacitated from ever after becoming high-priest, no blemished, or maimed person, being deemed eligible to the pontifical dignity.—See Levit. xxi. 18.

After the Parthians had placed Antigonus on the throne of Judea, they laid claim to the offers he had first made them for their assistance, namely, the thousand talents, and the five hundred fine women. The former of these Antigonus readily paid, but the latter he could not comply with, Herod having seized most of the fine women, and sent them away with his wife and family, to Massada. This defeat occasioned some disturbances, but at length the matter was settled to the satisfaction of both parties, and the greater body of the Parthians departed, taking with them Hyrcanus as their prisoner.

In the mean time, Herod so far from sinking under his misfortunes, seemed but the better disposed to encounter them. Having furnished the fortress of Massada with provisions for several months, he then left his mother, and the other women of quality whom he had taken with him from Jerusalem, under the care of a younger brother named Joseph, and proceeded to Petrea in Arabia, in hopes of procuring some assistance from Malchus, who had succeeded Aretas as king of that country.

At this time Herod was unacquainted with the death of his brother, and his principal view in going to the king of Arabia, was to obtain from him a sum of money for his ransom. He rested his expectations of success on the ancient friendship that had subsisted between the Arabians and his father Antipater, and proposed to resign the son of Phasaël, who was then only seven years of age, as a security for the return of the money. But all his expectations proved abortive, for before he reached Petrea, he received a message from Malchus, desiring him immediately to depart his dominions, he being afraid, that should he receive him, it would give offence to his neighbors the Parthians.

Herod, having received this unworthy treatment from Malchus, after sending messengers to him with a severe reply, proceeded in his way to Egypt. In the evening of the first day he met with a number of people, who had

taken shelter in a castle in his way, and were friends to his interest; and the following day he arrived at Rinocorura, where he received the first information of the ill treatment of Hyrcanus, and the death of his brother Phasael.

In the mean time Malchus, being touched with remorse at his ill-treatment of Herod, dispatched messengers after him soliciting his return; but as he had by this time reached Pelusium, Malchus was sensible of his ingratitude too late to repair the injury.

The inhabitants of Pelusium refused Herod the liberty of embarking from that place, in consequence of which he applied to the magistrates of the town, who granting him permission to take what course he pleased, he set sail for Alexandria. Cleopatra, who was at this time there, and preparing for an important enterprize, gave him an honorable and magnificent reception, with a view of inducing him to accept of a military command in her service. But Herod was so desirous of proceeding to Rome, that the earnest entreaties of the queen, the extremity of the season, and the danger of the seas, were not sufficient to make him change his purpose. He accordingly left Alexandria, and, after a voyage of no small danger and difficulty, at length landed at Rhodes, where he found public affairs in a very embarrassed state. He was received here in a very generous and hospitable manner by two friends, named Saphinias and Ptolemy; and though he was greatly distressed for want of money, yet he procured a vessel to convey him to Brundusium, from whence he repaired, with all possible expedition, to Rome.

As soon as Herod arrived at Rome, he went immediately to Antony, whom he made acquainted with the miserable state of his affairs in Judea, and at the same time earnestly intreated he would give him some assistance, that he might recover that right which himself had bestowed on him, and of which he had been unjustly and cruelly deprived by his enemies.

Antony, recollecting the former friendship that had subsisted with his father Antipater, and afterwards with him; and at the same time being exasperated against Antigonus, whom he always considered as an enemy to the Romans,

not only warmly espoused his cause himself, but engaged likewise Octavianus (who was afterwards called Augustus) so closely in his interest, that, by the help and influence of these two men, the Senate unanimously decreed that Herod should be king of Judea, and that Antigonus should be declared an enemy to the commonwealth.

Herod, having in the short space of seven days dispatched his affairs thus prosperously, left Rome, and landing at Ptolemais, began to raise forces with a design to march against Antigonus, who, almost ever since his departure, had been besieging the fortress of Massada. With these, and such Roman auxiliaries as he received from Ventidius, Antony's general, and Silo, his lieutenant in Palestine, he soon made himself master of the greatest part of the country, took Joppa, relieved Massada, and, taking the castle of Ressa in his way, marched directly to Jerusalem, and encamped his forces on the west side of the city.

Antigonus had provided the place with all kinds of warlike ammunition, and had likewise got a good garrison, who, with darts and stones from the walls, together with flying parties frequently making excursions, greatly annoyed Herod's army. Herod, in hopes of making easy work of it, caused an herald to make proclamation round the walls of the city, setting forth that he had no other view in the present expedition, but the security of the city, and the general welfare of the people, at the same time promising an act of indemnity to all who would quietly submit. Antigonus, on the contrary, directing himself to Silo, and the Romans, complained of the injustice they did him, in transferring the sovereignty of Judea from him, who was of royal descent, to a Plebeian, and half a Jew, as Herod was; and from these, and such like reproaches on both sides, they came at length to acts of open hostility, in which Antigonus and his men behaved so valiantly, that they soon drove the assailants from the walls, and they were obliged to retreat some distance from Jerusalem.

Ventidius, indeed, had left his lieutenant Silo in Judea, to assist Herod in the reduction of Jerusalem; but in his manner of managing the war (which was to get sums from

Herod to promote his interest, and greater from Antigonus to hinder it) he did more harm than good. He not only took all the measures he could project to drain the coffers of Herod, but likewise encouraged his soldiers to mutiny, on pretence of the want of forage and provisions, more commodious quarters, and better pay. These seeming inconveniences and obstacles gave great uneasiness to Herod, who thought it prudent to apply, not only to Silo's officers, but likewise the common soldiers, being fearful lest a general revolt should take place, and his expedition, instead of being attended with success, should prove destructive to him and his adherents. He accordingly represented to them that he had received his commission from Cæsar, Antony and the senate, and requested that they would wait with patience one day, and all their demands should be satisfied. He then gave orders for supplies of provisions, which were immediately sent to the people in great abundance; and in order to guard against a scarcity in future, he wrote for cattle, corn, oil, wine, and other necessaries to be sent from Samaria, which was then under his protection. But notwithstanding all this he found some inconveniences from the treachery of Silo, who giving notice to Antigonus of all that passed, he, with flying parties and ambuscades, frequently intercepted and cut off the convoys that were designed for the united army.

Herod, unwilling to remain inactive, and finding it impossible, at least at present, to possess himself of Jerusalem, left the main army, and, with five companies of Romans, five of Jews, and a small party of horse, proceeded towards Jericho. On his arrival there he found the city entirely abandoned, and that five hundred of the inhabitants, with their wives and families, had sought refuge among the mountains. After stationing a garrison in the town, he marched with his forces into Galilee, and recovered all those places which had been taken by Antigonus. He then employed himself for some time in ridding that part of the country of those gangs of thieves\*

\* These thieves had so sheltered themselves in the caves and holes of the mountains, that it was no easy matter to come at them,

and banditti with which it had been long infested, to the great satisfaction and tranquility of the inhabitants.

When Herod returned to the main part of his army he renewed the siege of Jerusalem, but perceiving the Roman generals were very cool in his interest, he resolved to go again to Antony (who was then besieging Samosata, a city upon the Euphrates) in order to make a representation of their behavior. During his absence he left his brother Joseph to command in Judea, giving him strict orders not to put any thing to the hazard, or engage in any enterprize, till he should return. But Joseph, disregarding his brother's orders, marched his own troops, with five companies of horse, towards Jericho, where a party of Antigonus's forces were encamped. This proved fatal to Joseph, who being surrounded by the enemy, he was slain himself, and most of his forces cut to pieces; which gave those who were disaffected to Herod, both in Galilee and Idumea, an opportunity of revolting.

In the mean time Herod was making the best of his way to Antony, who no sooner heard of his approach than he drew out his army to receive him, and, during his stay, shewed him all the marks of friendship and esteem. He would willingly have assisted him in person, had he not at this time made an engagement to pay a visit to

because the steepness and cragginess of the mountains made it almost impossible, either to scale them from below, or from above to get down to them by any passage; and therefore (to ferret them out of their dens) Herod bethought himself of the following expedient. He caused several large cases, or chests of wood, to be made, and filling them with soldiers, let them down into the entrances of the caves by chains from engines he had fixed above; by which means he either destroyed all that lurked in them, or else reduced them to terms of submission.

Josephus tells us, that Herod, being desirous that some of the robbers should be saved, ordered a herald to make proclamation that the lives of those who surrendered should be preserved; but that they all rejected the offer, and that even those who were made prisoners, preferring death to the loss of liberty, put an end to their lives. He farther says, that the wife and seven sons of an aged man having entreated his permission to surrender themselves to the enemy, the old man complied, and that as they approached him, one by one, at the entrance of the cave, he put them all to death. That Herod beheld this shocking scene, and being greatly affected, he en-

Cleopatra,\* queen of Egypt. He left his army with his principal commander Socius, whom he ordered to assist Herod on all occasions against his enemies. Having done this, Antony took his leave of Herod, and departed to Egypt; after which Socius, in obedience to his master's orders, gave Herod two legions for the guard of his person, with which he marched before, and Socius soon followed with the rest of his forces.

When Herod arrived at Daphne he received an account of his brother Joseph's defeat and death, upon which he resolved, if possible, to seek revenge on the enemy. For this purpose he hastened, with all expedition, to Mount Libanus, where he raised eight hundred of the natives, and with these, and the Roman forces, he marched towards Galilee, where the enemy, during his absence, had committed the most violent depredations. As soon as he came up with them, a battle ensued, in which Herod proved victorious, the enemy being entirely routed, and obliged to save themselves by flying to a strong castle which they had left the preceding day. This fortress Herod laid siege to, and the enemy defended themselves with great bravery for some time, till at length Herod's

deavored by signs and entreaties to divert the man from his purpose, but without effect: and that after he had slain his wife and sons, he first upbraided Herod, and then, in his presence, put a period to his own existence.

\* Antony had been for some time enamored with Cleopatra, who, by the charms of her beauty and wit, had drawn him into those snares, which held him enslaved to her as long as he lived, and, in the end, caused his ruin. She was a woman of great parts, and spoke several languages very fluently. She was, however, a person greatly addicted to all kinds of vices, and of such insatiable avarice and ambition, that she would do any thing, however base and perfidious, that was likely to promote her interest. Her brother, a youth about fifteen years of age, she caused to be dispatched, and prevailed with Antony to have her sister Arsinoe cut off at Ephesus, even in the temple of Diana. Antony, indeed, was a man of a very agreeable temper, had a generous disposition, was an eloquent speaker, and a complete master in all military abilities. But he was a great libertine in his way, and so eager in the pursuit of his unlawful pleasures, that he stuck at nothing to obtain them, by which means he brought himself so absolutely under the command of this wicked and voluptuous woman, that (as Josephus expresses it) *she seems not only to have captivated, but bewitched him*.

forces being joined by another company sent from Socius, the garrison were thrown into the utmost consternation, and not chusing to make any farther resistance, made their escape by the favor of the night.

Herod, impatient to revenge the death of his brother Joseph, now hastened, with all expedition, towards Jericho, in his way to which he met with a very unexpected accident. A party of six thousand of the enemy came suddenly down from the mountains, and resolutely falling on Herod's forces, the Romans were thrown into such a consternation that they immediately retreated: the enemy seeing this immediately pursued them, and a warm engagement took place, but no material victory was obtained on either side, only that Herod, during the action, received a slight wound by a random dart from the enemy.

A few days after this, Antigonus, hearing that Herod was hastily marching to Jerusalem, dispatched Pappus his general, with the main strength of his forces, to meet him and give him battle. The two armies accordingly met, when a desperate encounter ensued, in which Pappus's forces were entirely routed, himself, among many others, slain, and the rest obliged to seek their safety by a precipitate flight. The next day Herod caused the head of Pappus, by whom Joseph had been slain, to be cut off and sent to Pheroras, with a view of affording him some degree of consolation for the common loss they had sustained in the death of their brother Joseph.

Herod was so elated with this success, that he would have immediately led his victorious troops to Jerusalem, had not that expedition been rendered impracticable by the severity of the winter season; which was the only obstacle to his then obtaining a complete conquest over his enemies, and effectually ruining Antigonus, who was at that time (as afterwards appeared) actually making preparations for abandoning the city and kingdom.

On the opening of the next spring Herod marched with all his forces against Jerusalem, with a full resolution of either subduing it, or perishing in the attempt. His own army consisted of about 30,000 men, to which

Socius brought eleven legions\* of foot, and six thousand horse, besides the auxiliary troops of Syria. On his arrival before the city, he resolved to assault it in that quarter where Ptolemy, king of Egypt, had formerly made a successful attempt. He therefore assigned the officers their respective stations and duties, nominated a certain number of men to posts in the suburbs, ordered three ramparts to be raised before the walls, and strong towers to be erected thereon. Having made these preparations, and given the necessary commissions to persons, in whose diligence, courage and fidelity he knew he could confide, he began the assault on the northern quarter of the city, next the temple. Herod founded his right of making the attempt to divest Antigonus of the city of Jerusalem, and sovereignty of Judea, on the decree of the Roman Senate, by which he had been constituted king; and Socius urged that he was authorized, by the commission of Antony, to support Herod in the war.

Herod and Socius began the assault with such violence that the utmost consternation prevailed among the Jews throughout the city: great numbers of them assembled about the temple, lamenting their unhappy fate, while those who possessed more courage, paraded the town and places adjacent, seizing all the articles that were proper for the support of the soldiers, who were busily employed in counteracting the operations of the assailants.

During the siege the Jews surmounted every danger with the greatest alacrity, and, fearless of death, sustained a most resolute opposition; but it must be acknowledged that they were greatly surpassed by the Romans in point of military skill and address. By mining, in which they greatly excelled, and by surprizes, they frequently distressed the enemy where it was least expected: when their fortifications had received any injury they made the necessary reparations with surprizing dili-

\* It is generally thought that a legion was composed of ten cohorts; a cohort of fifty maniples; a maniple of fifty men, and, consequently, that a legion was a body of six thousand soldiers; but others are of opinion, that a legion was an uncertain number, and contained sometimes *four*, sometimes *five*, and sometimes *six* thousand men.

gence; and, in short, with undaunted resolution they opposed fatigues, danger and difficulty, firmly persisting in their resolution of defending themselves to the last extremity.

After Herod's numerous army had continued the siege for nine months, a breach was made in the walls, and a select party of his most resolute troops, seconded by some of Socius's centurions, effected an entrance into the city. They immediately surrounded the temple, and in the mean time the rest of the army arriving, a general massacre ensued: no respect was paid either to sex or age, nor were even the lives of those spared who sought refuge in the temple. Herod enjoined his people, on their allegiance, to withhold their rage; but they were so irritated by the hardships they had sustained during the siege, that, abandoning every sentiment of humanity, they still continued the slaughter; and death triumphed in the most horrid forms.

The conduct of Antigonus was unworthy his exalted station. As soon as he saw that all was lost, he descended from the tower called Baris, and meanly threw himself at the feet of Socius, imploring mercy. Socius, considering his conduct as the highest act of meanness, and displaying a total want of courage, first treated him with contempt, and then put him in chains as his prisoner.

Though Herod had gained a complete victory over his enemies, yet he had still some more difficulties to encounter. The foreign auxiliaries, from a curiosity to see the things dedicated to God, violently crowded into the temple; upon which Herod remonstrated with them on the impropriety of their conduct, and besought them to desist from entering so sacred a place. But neither entreaties nor menaces had the least effect, upon which Herod was under the necessity of using force to repress their insolence, deeming it necessary, in this particular, to disappoint their designs, since if conquest was to prove the cause of the sacred privacies being exposed to common view, it would be a more unhappy event than if he had been defeated.

Herod being desirous that the city should not be plundered, informed Socius that, if the treasure was seized

and the town depopulated, he should be sovereign of a desert; and that he would not purchase the government of the universe at the expense of sacrificing the lives of his subjects. Socius told him, that after what the troops had undergone they would naturally expect some part of the pillage. Herod admitted the force of Socius's plea, and declared that every man should be duly recompenced out of his own private coffers. According to his promise, Herod rewarded the private soldiers, and the officers, in proportion to their respective stations and deserts, and presented Socius with gifts worthy the regal character: in short, the liberality and munificence he displayed on this occasion afforded universal satisfaction.

Socius, after making a handsome present for the service of the temple, departed from Jerusalem, taking with him the pusillanimous Antigonus, as his prisoner, to Antony, and leaving the courageous Herod in full possession of the sovereignty of Judea.

Antony had no design of taking away the life of Antigonus, but Herod not thinking himself safe in his kingdom so long as this remainder of the royal family continued alive, so repeatedly solicited Antony to put him to death, that he at length complied with his request, and sentenced Antigonus to the loss of his head.

With this prince ended the reign of the famous and illustrious house of the Asmoneans (illustrious in itself for the long continuance of the regal and sacerdotal succession in it, and no less famous for the many signal services which they and their ancestors had, from time to time, done the public) after it had subsisted from the beginning of Judas Maccabeus to the death of Antigonus, which was a space of one hundred and twenty-eight years.

## CHAP. XVIII.

*Herod, after getting possession of Jerusalem, and the sovereignty of Judea, revenges himself on his enemies. He promotes a person of mean birth to the pontificate, but afterwards deposes him at the instigation of his relations, and places Aristobulus in his stead. Hyrcanus is treated with great respect by the king of Parthia, who gives him his liberty and he returns to Jerusalem. Herod confines Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus, causes Aristobulus, the high-priest, to be drowned, and puts to death his uncle Joseph. He marches with an army to assist Antony against Cæsar Octavianus, but, by Antony's orders, he makes war with the Arabians. A dreadful earthquake happens in Judea. The Arabians take advantage of this, and after murdering the Jewish ambassadors, march with great resolution against Herod. A battle ensues, in which Herod proves victorious, and the Arabians are totally reduced. Antony is defeated and killed at the battle of Actium. Herod, fearful that Hyrcanus should supplant him in the sovereignty, causes him to be put to death. He submissively applies to Cæsar, who now assumes the surname of Augustus. He meets with a favorable reception, and is confirmed in the government of Judea. He is greatly perplexed by domestic troubles on his return to Jerusalem. He goes a second time to Cæsar, and on his return puts to death his wife Mariamne. He repents of his conduct, and, from the horrors of his mind, is seized with a dangerous disease. On his recovery he rebuilds the temple of Jerusalem, which is the last memorable occurrence previous to the incarnation of Our Blessed Saviour, the Prince of Peace, and Redeemer of Mankind.*

THE conquest of Jerusalem having established Herod in the sovereignty of Judea, he began his reign by revenging himself on all those whom he knew to have been his enemies. Among these were the members of the Sanhedrim, all of whom he caused to be put to death, except two, the one named Pollio, and the other Samaes. These two, during the whole course of the siege, were for delivering up the city to Herod, while the rest strongly opposed the motion, and did all in their power to excite

the people to that fierce and obstinate resistance, which made the siege of such long duration.

The unfortunate Hyrcanus was at this time a prisoner in Parthia; and as the people wanted an high-priest, Herod thought it most advisable to chuse a man of obscurity to that office, who, having no credit or interest at Jerusalem, might not be capable (notwithstanding his high station and dignity) to interfere with the royal authority. He therefore sent for one Ananel from Babylon (who was, indeed, of the pontifical family, but of no farther merit than having an acquaintance with Herod) and him he immediately constituted high-priest of Jerusalem.

The promotion of this mean person greatly disgusted Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus, and mother of Aristobulus, (brother to Mariamne the wife of Herod) to whom, by right of birth, the office of high-priest belonged. She therefore, in order to resent the contempt offered her family, in setting aside her son, and obtruding a foreigner into the pontificate, wrote to Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, (who had an absolute ascendancy over Antony) to bestow that honor upon her son. Her application succeeded to her utmost wishes. Herod, having heard of the steps she had taken, at first affected resentment, but being persuaded of the great influence the Egyptian queen had over Antony, he soon formed a reconciliation with Alexandra, deposed Ananel, and made Aristobulus (who was then only seventeen years of age) high-priest in his stead.

During these transactions the old king of Parthia died, and was succeeded in the government by his son Phraortes. This prince no sooner heard of Hyrcanus's character and quality, than he treated him with the greatest respect, and, by his conduct, evinced how much he wished to prove himself his friend and protector. He ordered him to be released from his chains, and allowed him the whole city of Babylon (which was then a part of the Parthian empire) as the bounds of his confinement. There were at this time in Babylon great numbers of Jews, all of whom were greatly pleased at the indulgence given to Hyrcanus, and testified their satisfaction by paying him that reverence which was due to him both as an high-priest and a monarch.

But notwithstanding the situation of Hyrcanus was thus rendered agreeable through the benevolence of the Parthian king, yet he was dissatisfied in his mind, and discovered a fond desire to his native country, vainly imagining that former services (he having been the preserver of Herod's life when he was arraigned before the Sanhedrim, and indeed the founder of his fortunes) would secure him the favor of the king. On the other hand Herod, having heard of the indulgence given to Hyrcanus, and his desire to return to Jerusalem, was as anxious to get him into his power as he was willing to come. He therefore not only invited him with great earnestness, and still greater promises, but sent an embassy to Phraortes to solicit his return. Phraortes readily complied with the inclinations of the one, and the request of the other; upon which Hyrcanus left Babylon and returned to Jerusalem, where, for some time, he was treated by Herod with all the outward tokens of kindness and respect due to his character.

Though Herod had formed a seeming reconciliation with Alexandra the daughter of Hyrcanus, yet he detested her in his heart, and as she had, by the interest of Cleopatra, got her son into the high-priesthood, he was fearful that she might, by the same means, procure her father the sovereignty. In consequence of these fears, he took an opportunity of quarrelling with her, forbade her to concern herself with any affairs of a public nature, confined her to the court, and set spies to watch even her domestic economy.

This base treatment so exasperated Alexandra, that she again applied to Cleopatra, and having received an invitation from that princess, she made the necessary preparations for departing to Egypt; intending to take with her Aristobulus her son. To conceal her design from Herod she had procured two biers, in which the servants were to carry them to the sea side, where a vessel lay in readiness to convey them to Egypt. But this stratagem miscarried owing to the treachery of one of the servants, who communicated the whole scheme to a man named Sabbion. This person had been suspected of assisting in the death of Antipater, the father of Herod, and there-

fore, in order to obviate the consequences that might follow, he divulged the whole secret to Herod. The king suffered them to go some way from the city, and then surprized and brought them back; but, fearing the power and influence of Cleopatra, he suspended his resentment, and, making a virtue of necessity, pretended, with great clemency, to pardon in both what he dared not punish in either. But it was not long before he embraced the opportunity of taking a fatal revenge on the young Aristobulus.

The Feast of Tabernacles was now approaching, and Aristobulus was to officiate as high-priest. He was very beautiful in person, tall, well shaped, and in the eighteenth year of his age. During the time of his officiating he discharged himself with so becoming a reverence, and the splendor of the pontifical robes added such a lustre to the gracefulness of his person, that by both these he captivated the affections of the people, who could not help expressing their approbation of him in terms of the most respectful nature. This raised Herod's jealousy to such a degree, that he immediately meditated a scheme for taking away the life of Aristobulus, which he effected as follows.

As soon as the Feast of Tabernacles was over, Herod invited Aristobulus to an entertainment at Jericho, and when, after dinner, several of his attendants bathed themselves in a fish-pond, Aristobulus was prevailed upon to bear them company; but no sooner was he plunged into the water than those who were in it before (according as they were directed by Herod) ducked and dipped him (by way of sport and play as they pretended) so long under water, that he was at length actually drowned. Thus was this accomplished youth taken off through the base devices of a wicked king, who immediately restored his creature Ananel to the pontifical dignity.

Herod, in order to wipe off all suspicion of so foul a deed, visited Alexandra, and, to give his abominable hypocrisy an air of sincerity, affected the most poignant grief for the fate of Aristobulus, whom he represented to have lost his life by an unhappy accident. He expended

a large sum in a splendid funeral for him, and himself acted the part of chief mourner.

This hypocrisy, however, was easily seen through, and justly detested, by all about the court, but by none more than Alexandra, who was inconsolable for the loss of her beloved Aristobulus; nor could she have survived it but for the hopes of obtaining revenge on the perfidious murderer. To this purpose she again had recourse to Cleopatra, whom she acquainted with the untimely death of her son, and the manner in which it was effected. She represented the villainy of Herod in such a light, and pictured her own distress on the occasion in such feeling terms, as moved the queen's compassion, and made her resolve to do the utmost in her power to procure some redress. She accordingly made immediate application to Antony, to whom she related the whole story, and besought him to punish Herod for his baseness and perfidy. Antony would willingly have avoided interposing in this matter, but Cleopatra was determined that Herod should be brought to account for his infamous conduct; nor did she cease her solicitations to Antony, till at length she prevailed with him to call Herod to account. He therefore repaired to Laodicea, where he cited Herod to appear before him in order to clear himself of the imputation laid to his charge for the death of Aristobulus.

Herod was too sensible of his guilt to trust to the merits of his cause, and dreading the influence of Cleopatra, who had incensed Antony against him, he was greatly perplexed in what manner to proceed at so critical a juncture. He, however, well knew that it was in vain to dispute the will of the powerful Antony, and therefore made the necessary preparations for obeying his commands. He had, on former occasions, experienced the prevailing influence of gold, and therefore, having provided himself with a considerable sum of money as a present, he repaired with confidence of success, to Laodicea. This had the desired effect, for by means of the present, and the smooth and insinuating tongue of Herod, he so wrought upon Antony, that he not only exonerated him from every imputation of his having been accessory to the murder of Aristobulus, but gave him repeated

tokens of his favor: nay, he even told Cleopatra, that it was beneath the dignity of a king to render an account of his conduct to any person whatever.

Herod, having averted this danger, and secured his interest with Antony, took his leave, and returned to Jerusalem, where he caused it to be propagated about the city, that Antony had conferred on him the highest honors, and that he was the most generous and noble monarch throughout the universe.

When Herod left Jerusalem in order to go to Laodicea to obey the mandate of Antony, he entrusted his uncle Joseph with the administration of the government during his absence, and gave him a particular charge (which he likewise enjoined him to keep a profound secret) that, in case Antony should put him to death, he should not suffer his wife Mariamne to survive the news of it, that none (as he pretended) might enjoy the company of so rare a beauty, and so accomplished a woman, but himself. During Herod's absence some disagreeable words arose between Mariamne and his sister Salome, wherein the queen reproached her with the meanness of her original, in comparison of the royal stock of the Asmoneans from whom she descended. This the other was resolved to revenge; and, therefore, as soon as Herod returned, she accused Mariamne of having had too great a familiarity with Joseph, her husband, whom she was willing to sacrifice, rather than not obtain her revenge on the innocent Mariamne.

This accusation threw Herod into the utmost rage of wrath and jealousy, so that it was with the greatest difficulty he could restrain his passion within the bounds of discreet moderation: however, on cool recollection, he took Mariamne aside, and closely examined her respecting her intimacy with Joseph.

Mariamne, in vindication of herself, said every thing that it might be supposed innocence could dictate; insisting, that as for any thing which might look criminal or dishonorable in her conduct, she was not only innocent with regard to Joseph, but (except himself) to all mankind.

Herod, enamored with the charms of his wife, and overcome by the extremity of his own passion for her,

relaxed by degrees from the violent rage into which he had been thrown, and not only absolved her from all suspicion of the crime that had been imputed to her, but confessed himself perfectly convinced that she had not given the least cause of offence. He likewise repeatedly entreated her pardon for that inconsiderate haste which induced him to give credit to a report by which she had been so vilely traduced; and, with tears and embraces, besought her to pardon him for his indiscreet conduct.

Notwithstanding all this appearance of affection, Mariamne had some doubts of the reality of Herod's regard for her; but the more she seemed, by her expression and manner, to entertain this notion, the more anxious was he to give her every testimony he could of his sincerity. At length, however, she exclaimed, "Yes, truly, you give "an abundant proof of the tenderness of your regard as "a husband, by ordering an innocent wife to be put to "death, in case you should happen to die first." No sooner had she spoken these words than Herod broke from her arms in the utmost rage, and cried out, with all the fury of a madman, "It is now evident, beyond a "doubt, that the purity of my wife has been corrupted by "Joseph; for nothing less than the confidence arising "from such an intimacy could have induced him to give "up so important a secret, which had been committed to "his care, with such solemn injunctions not to reveal it." In the first impetuosity of his passion Herod had almost determined to put Mariamne to death on the spot; but, after some violent struggles on his part, the warm affection that lay in his heart prevailed for her preservation. With regard to Joseph, however, he gave instant orders for his being put to death, even without suffering him to speak a word in his own defence; and directed that Alexandra, whom he considered as the author of all the mischief, should be committed to close confinement.

During these transactions at Jerusalem, the Roman state was involved in civil broils, owing to a difference that took place between Antony and Cæsar Octavianus. Each made some pretence for their conduct, but the real cause of their disagreement was, that both, not being content with *half* of the Roman empire, were each resolved

all, and accordingly agreed to determine the dispute by the sword.

As soon as Herod knew the dissension that had taken place between Cæsar and Antony, he thought it his duty to give what assistance he could to the latter, as an acknowledgment for the many distinguished favors he had received at his hands. He accordingly raised a very powerful army, with which he immediately marched to the assistance of his patron; but Antony, instead of accepting his services against Cæsar, appointed him to proceed against the Arabians, whom he knew to be a false and faithless people, and from whom he had reason to expect some danger.

In obedience to this appointment, Herod marched back with his army, and soon arrived in Arabia, having under his command a very considerable number both of horse and foot. The Arabians, having received intelligence of Herod's motions, were waiting to give him battle near a place called Diospolis, towards which he immediately directed his march. As soon as the two armies met, a battle took place, which, for some time, was preserved with great obstinacy on both sides, till at length victory declared in favor of the Jews, great numbers of the Arabians being killed, and the rest put to flight.

A short time after this the Arabians assembled another considerable army at a place called Canatha, in Cœlo-Syria, of which Herod having received authentic information, and being advised that they were on their march, advanced with the main body of his troops to that part of the country, intending there to encamp and fortify himself till he should have a favorable opportunity of attacking the enemy with a good prospect of success. As soon as Herod saw the enemy, and of what prodigious strength they were, he thought it necessary to make use of a more than common precaution on the occasion, and therefore gave orders that the camp should be surrounded with a wall; but his soldiers were so elated with the consideration of their former victory, that they besought Herod not to suffer so much time to be lost: they told him they were in the best condition they could be for making an attack on the enemy, and therefore desired they might be per-

mitted to proceed immediately to battle; nay, such was their impatience that they were ready to break through all the bounds of discipline to obtain their desires.

This uncommon ardor and alacrity of the troops gave Herod so much satisfaction, that he was determined to encourage their humor, and not to check that eagerness of disposition, which he thought might, most probably, lead on to victory. He therefore immediately put himself at the head of his troops, grasped his sword in his hand, gave the word of command to march and begin the attack, and told them only to follow the example of his valor. Hereupon they marched forward to the combat with such a determined warmth of bravery that the Arabians were astonished at their courage before the encounter began. For a little time, indeed, they made some faint shew of a slight resistance, but soon after the first onset, they gave way, and the greater part of them fled in the utmost confusion. This circumstance would, in all probability, have occasioned the total destruction of the Arabian army, had it not been for an officer named Athenion, who having been long an inveterate enemy to Herod, led a considerable body of the natives of Canatha to the relief of the fugitives. In consequence of this they resumed their courage, returned to the charge, routed Herod's forces, pursued them through woods, and other places of difficult passage, and put great numbers to the sword.

After this melancholy issue of the contest, Herod was compelled to have recourse to the making depredations and incursions on the Arabians, as opportunity would admit, and, by many small victories, gained some compensation for the capital defeat his army had sustained. He was, however, obliged to seek refuge in the secure places of the mountains of Judea, being afraid to expose his army again to the event of another battle. But the time thus spent was not absolutely thrown away; for his troops (more especially those with which he had reinforced his army) were hereby kept in perpetual exercise, instructed in the duties of military discipline, inured to hardships and fatigues, and in some degree qualified to redeem their lost honor at some future period.

The hopes of Herod in being able to conquer his enemies was greatly checked by a dreadful earthquake that happened in Judea, by which prodigious numbers of cattle were destroyed, and, by the falling of the buildings in the several towns and villages, it was computed that not less than ten thousand people lost their lives; but the soldiers who were in the open fields, escaped with much less injury, for though most of their tents were thrown down, yet little other damage took place than some being maimed, and the whole greatly frightened.

Though this Providential calamity was sufficiently terrible in itself, yet it was greatly magnified by report; and the Arabians, imagining Judea to be utterly ruined, cherished the flattering idea that no difficulty would attend their possessing themselves of a province, which now had not a sufficient number of inhabitants to sustain a defence.

The Jews, in the height of their distress, dispatched ambassadors to the Arabians, humbly soliciting terms of accommodation, and that a peace might be established between them; but the Arabians not only put the ambassadors to death, but, in a short time after, marched with a powerful army into Judea, in full confidence of making themselves masters of that country.

As soon as the Jews understood that the Arabians had entered Judea, they were thrown into the utmost consternation. Their spirits were greatly depressed by the reflection of their late calamities, and they despaired of being able to make any resistance against their enemies. Herod seeing this, did all in his power to raise their spirits, begged of them to dismiss their unreasonable anxiety, and entreated an exertion of as much courage as might be necessary to prepare themselves for their own defence. Some of the more distinguished of Herod's people felt their misfortunes so severely, that while the sense of them was recent in their minds they could not easily be prevailed on to attend to the arguments of prudence and wisdom; but Herod, having prepared them to listen to what he had to say for their emolument and satisfaction, addressed himself to them, and the whole army, in words to this effect:

" It is certainly reasonable to lament the afflictions we  
" suffer from the late Providential calamity; but I must  
" observe that, from a dread of the power of man, to  
" sink into despondency, argues a degree of pusillanimity  
" unworthy the character you have hitherto maintained.  
" Notwithstanding our late affliction, I am so far from  
" considering our enemies as objects of fear, that I am  
" inclined to suppose the shocking event was intended  
" by Providence as a temptation to draw the Arabians  
" into our power, that we may take a proper vengeance  
" for the numerous wrongs they have done us: they do  
" not depend on the number or courage of their troops,  
" but rest all their hopes of success in the idea of our  
" being reduced to a state of misery. What hopes can  
" be more deceiving than those which wholly rely on the  
" distresses of our adversaries, instead of being founded  
" on our own virtues? In human affairs nothing can be  
" more uncertain than success and adversity, and in  
" evidence of this assertion it is only necessary to men-  
" tion the late engagement: we were elated with the idea  
" of a complete victory, and the next hour subjected to  
" the mercy of the enemy. The foundation of your fears  
" is to me an assurance of success; for great confidence  
" renders people unwary. Our late defeat must be at-  
" tributed to your inconsiderate and rash behavior in so  
" uncautiously attacking the enemy, which afforded  
" Athenion the opportunity of turning the event of the  
" battle in favor of his friends. Our deliberations are  
" now conducted with judgment and temper; and hence  
" we may reasonably entertain the hope of victory. Let  
" us preserve our spirits till we come into the field, and  
" then proceed to convince the iniquitous foe that our rep-  
" utation is infinitely dearer to us than our lives: let us  
" bravely encounter every danger and difficulty rather  
" than yield to the Arabians, whom we have so frequently  
" subjected to our power.

" But whence this consternation on account of the  
" earthquake? Such contentions of the elements arise in  
" the common course of nature, and are to be considered  
" in themselves as calamities, and not as the presages of  
" misfortunes. Signs may, perhaps, appear to predict

" pestilence, famine, or earthquakes; but when these  
" events arrive, the more violent they are, the shorter is  
" their duration. Suppose we do not succeed in this war,  
" can our sufferings be greater than those we experienced  
" from the earthquake? What fate but ruin can these  
" people expect, who, in violation of all laws, both  
" human and Divine, have barbarously murdered our  
" ambassadors, and impiously offered sacrifices on so  
" melancholy an occasion? Can these betrayers of public  
" faith hope to escape the vengeance of Divine justice?  
" Let them rather tremble at the impending destruction  
" that (animated by the glorious spirit of our ancestors)  
" we shall speedily hurl upon them. Re-assume your  
" courage, my brave friends and brother warriors, and let  
" us proceed, not to defend our wives or children, but to  
" avenge the deaths of our ambassadors: the very idea of  
" fighting in the cause of those murdered heroes will ani-  
" mate us to greater exploits than the utmost efforts of  
" the surviving commanders. Cheerfully follow where I  
" lead, and I shall be satisfied. But one caution, how-  
" ever, is necessary: be not rash and precipitate; and  
" rely on my assurance that victory will be the reward of  
" our bravery."

This speech had the desired effect, the soldiers shaking off all despondency, and resuming their natural courage and alacrity. Herod, after having offered up sacrifices, crossed the river Jordan, and encamped his army at Philadelphia, at no great distance from the enemy. Between the two armies was a castle, of which the contending parties were equally desirous to get possession. A party of the Arabians attempted to gain the castle, but the Jews, without much difficulty, repulsed them, and soon after took possession of the hill. Herod daily arranged his men in order of battle, and took every possible method to provoke the enemy to an engagement. In point of numbers the Arabians had the superiority, but the Jews were by far the most courageous and intrepid. A general consternation appeared in the Arabian army, and Altenus, their general, was particularly alarmed. Herod, being unable to draw the enemy out, attacked them in their entrenchments, and the whole army was thrown into the

utmost disorder. During the battle the slaughter was not great; but Herod proving victorious, prodigious numbers of the enemy were slain in the pursuit, and others being trampled to death by their own people, the loss of men amounted to about five thousand. The rest were driven into their camp, where they were soon surrounded and closely besieged by Herod's forces. Being in great distress from want of water, they sent ambassadors to offer Herod fifty talents, on condition of his putting a period to the war; but he treated the ambassadors with the utmost contempt, not even condescending to hear the terms they were commissioned to propose. Their thirst at length became so intolerable that, in the space of five days, no less than four thousand surrendered themselves to Herod; and on the sixth day, in the extremity of despair, the rest engaged in battle. On the first attack, seven thousand of the Arabians were slain, by which the rest were taught that Herod was a skilful commander; and being thus effectually humbled, they submitted themselves to the protection of the conqueror.

The reduction of the Arabians highly gratified the ambitious Herod; but this sunshine of prosperity was greatly eclipsed by his receiving intelligence of the defeat of Antony at the battle of Actium, by his competitor Cæsar Octavianus. Herod was conscious to himself of the services he had rendered Antony, and was therefore fearful lest the conqueror, on that account, should deprive him of his kingdom, and perhaps again restore Hyrcanus, who had once reigned under the protection of the Romans. These reflections greatly embarrassed Herod, who at length resolved to remove his own fears by taking away the life of him whom he now considered as his rival in the sovereignty.

While Herod was ruminating on this horrid design, the very family of Hyrcanus furnished him with an opportunity of executing his purposes. Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus, seeing her father careless and unconcerned at the miseries of his family, represented to him the disgrace of suffering the indignities which Herod daily put upon them, and advised him to apply to Malchus, king of Arabia, who would not fail to assist

him, adding, that if Cæsar should call Herod to account for his former friendship to Antony, which might reasonably be expected, the crown would certainly devolve to him.

Hyrcanus at first turned a deaf ear to the solicitations of his daughter, but her importunities at length prevailing, he wrote a letter to Malchus, the care of which he committed to one Dositheus, whom he considered as a confidential friend, and whom he believed to be a most inveterate foe to Herod. But in these suggestions he was greatly mistaken, for Dositheus no sooner received the letter than he carried it to the king, thinking it would be more to his interest to solicit his protection than faithfully to discharge the business in which he was engaged by Hyrcanus. As soon as Herod read the letter, he made his acknowledgments to Dositheus for his diligence, and requested that he would carry the letter to Malchus, and bring back his answer, as it would give him the highest satisfaction to know how he would act in so interesting a business; but at the same time strictly cautioned him to keep the whole a profound secret.

Thus directed, Dositheus set forward on his journey, and having delivered Hyrcanus's letter to Malchus, he brought back an answer to the following purport: "That "he was willing to give entertainment to Hyrcanus and "his family: that if he chose to bring with him all those "Jews who remained true to his interest, they should "likewise be received in the most hospitable manner: "that he was ready to send a proper force to conduct "them in safety; and heartily disposed to give Hyrcanus "all possible assistance in any way he should require."

On the receipt of this letter, Herod sent for Hyrcanus, and demanded of him whether or not he held any correspondence with Malchus, king of Arabia. Hyrcanus answered in the negative, upon which Herod produced the letter, and ordered it to be publicly read before the whole assembly. This was accordingly done, and Hyrcanus being thus self-convicted, Herod ordered him to instant death, at which time he was in the 81st year of his age.

"Thus (says Josephus) ended the life of Hyrcanus; a life long and troublesome, and chequered with a vast variety of fortune. He was promoted to the high-priest-

hood during the reign of his mother Alexandra, and continued to discharge the duties of it nine years, at the end of which his mother died, and he assumed the reins of government. He had not, however, been in possession of the sovereignty above three months, when he was expelled by his brother Aristobulus. After this he was restored to his former station by Pompey, who put him in possession of all his dignities, and for the space of forty years he continued in the enjoyment of them; but was at length dethroned by Antigonus, suffered the pain and disgrace of having his ears cut off, and was carried away prisoner among the Parthians. After remaining some time in this situation, he obtained his liberty, and returned home, flattering himself with great advantages from the friendship of Herod; but in this hope he was so disappointed, that the latter caused him to suffer an ignominious death at a most advanced age, after having experienced so many of the malicious turns of fortune. He was distinguished by the candor and moderation of his disposition, as well as by his regard to the laws of equity. He was remarkable for his love of ease, and generally entrusted the administration of public affairs to the care of others, from a conviction that he was himself ill-calculated for the management of them. This easiness of disposition laid the principal foundation of the fortunes of Antipater and Herod; yet, in the end, it so happened, that he fell a sacrifice to that very goodness of temper which ought to have been his protection."

Herod, having obviated all grounds of fear by the death of Hyrcanus, prepared to wait on Cæsar, who, with the assent of the senate and people of Rome, had now assumed the title of emperor, and surname of Augustus. Though he had no reason to expect any indulgence from the emperor, yet he determined to apply to him, but, lest his mother-in-law Alexandra might, in his absence, occasion some tumult, he committed the care of the government to his brother Pheroras. His own relations he sent to the castle of Massada, laying strong injunctions on his brother that if any misfortune should arise to them, he should resolutely support his authority, and protect them in his name. His wife Mariamne and her mother he se-

cured in the castle of Alexandrion, with a strong guard under the command of Sohemus, to whom he gave the like kind of order he had before left with his uncle Joseph; namely, that if any violence was offered to his person by Cæsar, he should immediately put the women to death, and use his utmost endeavors that his brother and sons might be rendered secure in the government.

Herod, having given these, and some other directions, respecting what he would have done in his absence, left Jerusalem, and proceeded with all expedition to wait on Cæsar who was at this time at Rhodes. On his arrival at that city, he immediately made application for being permitted to an audience of the emperor, which being granted, before he entered into his presence he laid aside his diadem, but did not disrobe himself of any other part of his dress that was an ensign of royalty. As soon as he saw Cæsar, disdaining to make needless apologies and idle excuses for what he had to say, he boldly delivered his sentiments to him in words to this effect:

“ Illustrious Cæsar (said he) I wait not upon you to  
“ disavow the sincerity of a friendship I have always en-  
“ tertained for Antony; and I must be free enough to  
“ declare, that if it had been in my power to have made  
“ him master of the world, he had not wanted that distin-  
“ guished station. I acknowledge, great prince! that I  
“ am indebted to Antony for the regal state I at present  
“ enjoy; and had not my duty called me against the  
“ Arabians, I would have manifested my gratitude by  
“ being personally with him in the last battle. I did,  
“ however, my utmost to serve him, by supplying him  
“ with soldiers, provisions and money. Notwithstanding  
“ the unfortunate event at Actium, I still entertained for  
“ Antony the greatest warmth of friendship, and venerated  
“ him as a generous patron. Though I could not attend  
“ him in person, yet I gave him such advice that, had he  
“ pursued it, would have been of the most material ad-  
“ vantage. I urged him to abandon Cleopatra, telling  
“ him that while his connection with her subsisted he  
“ would be in continual danger; but he chose to proceed  
“ in another mode, and has promoted your interest rather  
“ than his own, for want of an exertion of that prudence

“ which his situation demanded. Now though you may  
“ have conceived the less favorably of me, because I at-  
“ tached myself to the interest of Antony, at a time when  
“ you was his professed enemy, yet I shall not, on that  
“ account, hesitate to make known and defend the ser-  
“ vices I have done him, and the perfect esteem I have  
“ ever had for him. If you will, for a moment, advert to  
“ his rank, and the friendship I bore him, without retro-  
“ spect to the peculiarities of his situation, I conceive that  
“ you will see so much of gratitude and good faith in my  
“ conduct, that you may think the acceptance of my  
“ friendship worthy your notice; for the dignity of my  
“ character will suffer no alteration whether I vow this  
“ friendship to Cæsar or to Antony.”

Herod delivered this speech with such an air of magnanimity, and accompanied it with so graceful an action, that Cæsar, who possessed a natural greatness and benevolence of disposition, was most wonderfully charmed with it. He treated Herod with particular marks of generosity and regard, directed him to re-assume his crown, and continue to be as sincere a friend to him in future, as he had before been to Antony. “ Preserve (said he) the sovereignty which you have hitherto enjoyed with so much honor, and still be happy. Rest assured that your crown shall be more safely secured to you; for the man who is capable of such exalted friendship, must necessarily be qualified for the sovereign authority. Let your friendship for the successful be as steady as it has been to the unfortunate; and from the natural dignity of your mind I shall promise myself great advantages. I can scarcely censure Antony for rejecting your counsel respecting Cleopatra, since it is to that act of imprudence that I am indebted for my late successes. Be happy in the assurance that you shall be confirmed in the possession of your kingdom; and that my friendship will amply compensate for your unhappiness on account of the fate of Antony.”

These generous expressions of Cæsar were immediately followed by the most substantial effects; for, putting the crown on Herod’s head, he confirmed him in the sovereignty of Judea, the possession of which was farther

secured to him by a decree of the senate. This very singular favor, which was granted to Herod through the immediate influence of Cæsar, was a circumstance that gave him equal surprize and joy, it being a favor that far exceeded his most sanguine expectations.

Herod, having thus obtained the favor and interest of the greatest monarch then on earth, returned to Judea, loaded with honor and power. The Jews, on his departure, had considered him as a ruined man, and they were now so astonished at his returning with a greater degree of reputation and splendor than that with which he had left them, that they looked upon him as one whom Providence protected in a peculiar manner, and turned to his advantage all those circumstances which appeared to lead him only into disgrace and danger.

The satisfaction which Herod felt in consequence of his very great success in his late expedition, was greatly eclipsed by the disturbances he found among his own family on his arrival at Jerusalem. Mariamne, his beloved wife, as well as his mother in-law, had been very unhappy on account of the situation in which he had left them at his departure, considering themselves rather as prisoners in the castle of Alexandrion (which was really the case) than being lodged there for the security of their persons. Mariamne's mind was filled with the idea that the whole of Herod's professions of regard to her had no farther views than the consulting of his own convenience. The sanguinary tendency of the orders which Herod had before given to his uncle Joseph engrossed all her attention, and being apprehensive that he might have left the like orders with Sohemus, she tried various means to discover if her suspicions were justly founded. For some time Sohemus remained true to his trust, but on Mariamne's treating him with great complaisance, and presenting him with several very valuable articles, he began to recede by degrees, and at length discovered the whole secret with which Herod had entrusted him.

Mariamne was so shocked with these conditional orders, which her husband had repeatedly given respecting her, that she conceived the greatest antipathy against him; and such was the horror and dread of her mind at

the thoughts of living with a man who could entertain such sentiments, that she made it the subject of her daily prayers that he might never return to her alive: and, at a future period, when she had it not in her power to conceal her sentiments any longer, she acknowledged this circumstance in the most open and explicit manner.

As soon as Herod returned from Cæsar, he immediately repaired to his beloved wife Mariamne, and delivered to her the happy tidings of his success, at the same time embracing her with the most tender affection. But while he was relating the circumstances of events which he thought would afford her the greatest satisfaction, she looked about her with an air of the most perfect indifference, without paying the least kind of attention to his narrative. She was, in fact, perfectly unreserved in her neglect; and being a woman who prided herself in acting without disguise, she took no pains to assume a look foreign from her heart, but gave Herod the opportunity of reading in her countenance that his good news and endearments afforded her much more pain than satisfaction.

This apparent aversion in Mariamne tortured the mind of Herod, who, partly through the indignation he felt at finding his love rejected, and partly through his confusion from the transports of his rage, was, for a time, almost distracted. He saw not how to gratify his love without offering violence to his resentment; and at the same time he dreaded giving a scope to his vengeance more than the opposite extreme, for he felt a principle of self-love in his breast, which told him, that should he take vengeance on his wife, the most unhappy consequences would arise to himself, when future experience should convince him that life was not to be supported without the endearments of her conversation.

This restless anxiety of Herod's mind leaving him in doubt how he should conduct himself with regard to Mariamne, his mother and sister Salome thought this a fit opportunity of increasing the difference between them, by doing all kinds of ill offices, and propagating every species of calumny that might tend to promote that hatred which was already growing apace in the breast of Herod. In consequence of this, Herod became daily more and

more discontented in his mind, and behaved with a greater degree of severity to his wife. On the contrary, Mariamne took not the least pains to disguise the discontent which rankled in her heart; so that the violent regard that Herod had entertained for her, was, by degrees, converted to the utmost rancor and hatred, and it is probable she might have fallen an immediate sacrifice to his resentment had it not been for the following unexpected incidents.

Just at this juncture Herod received intelligence of the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra, and that Egypt was then in the possession of Cæsar. On the receipt of this information, Herod lost not a moment in repairing to his patron, leaving his family in the greatest disorder, and once more committing Mariamne to the care of Sohemus, to whom he had made some acknowledgments for his former services.

When Herod arrived in Egypt, he was received by Cæsar with the greatest respect and kindness; and having, in his return, accompanied him to Antioch, he so far ingratiated himself with Cæsar on the way, that he granted him several places in augmentation of his dominions, and, for ever after, of all the tributary princes in the Roman empire, gave him the first place in his favor.

But how prosperous soever Herod was in his affairs abroad, on his return he found nothing but trouble and vexation at home. Mariamne still retained her resentment for the cruel commission given to Sohemus; so that when Herod offered her his caresses she not only rejected them with the utmost aversion, but reproached him in the most bitter terms, for the deaths of her relations, which enraged Herod to such a degree that he could hardly forbear laying violent hands on her. This fit of rage Salome (the sister of Herod and most implacable enemy to Mariamne) took the advantage of, and sent in the king's butler (whom she had before suborned for the purpose) to accuse the queen of having tempted him to give him poison. Herod had heretofore met with sufficient cause of vexation; but the astonishment with which he was struck at this information drove him to the very verge

of distraction. As soon as he had a little recovered himself, he ordered Mariamne's favorite eunuch (without whose privity he knew she would not do any thing that was of a material nature) to be put to the torture. Obedience being paid to this order, the eunuch was strictly questioned; but nothing could be extorted from him till, in the extremity of his anguish, he dropped some words, intimating, that the uneasiness of Mariamne arose from something that had been communicated to her by Sohemus. The sufferer had hardly pronounced these words, when Herod burst into the most passionate exclamation, declaring that "Sohemus, who had hitherto been so "loyal a subject, and approved himself so true a friend "both to his king and country, never could have betrayed "a secret of so important a nature as that with which he "had been entrusted, but in the confidence of illegal familiaries with Mariamne." He therefore gave immediate orders that Sohemus should be put to death; having done which he directed that his wife should be summoned to take her trial before a court of justice, and appointed for her judges a number of persons devoted to his will.

When the day of her trial arrived, the charge exhibited against her was, having conspired to poison the king. Herod was more violent against her, both by his words and actions, than was consistent with the conduct of any man in a court of justice, and the judges, observing the disposition of the king, followed his example, and Mariamne was pronounced guilty of the charge exhibited against her. Herod, however, relenting of his conduct, observed that it would be more prudent to spare her life, and detain her in prison, than put her to death; which proposition was approved of not only by the judges, but the greater part of the assembly. But this was over-ruled by Salome and her adherents, who were violent to the most extreme degree in their exclamations for immediate justice; and in consequence of what they urged, that a revolt would happen among the people if the queen's life was spared, Herod was prevailed on to agree to her execution, and a day was accordingly appointed for the tragical scene.

As soon as Alexandra found to what extremity the proceedings against her daughter had been carried, she had every reason to apprehend that her own life was in danger. In order, therefore, to avoid the dreadful consequence, she descended to a conduct that was altogether derogatory to the dignity of her character. Her fears at this juncture induced her to go such lengths, and she was so desirous of not being thought to have combined with her daughter, that she sought every opportunity of traducing her character, representing her as the most base and ungrateful of women, and extolling the justice of that sentence which had doomed her to death for conspiring the destruction of a husband to whose tenderness she lay under such unbounded obligations.

Alexandra carried this hypocritical behavior to such a degree that she became universally despised, as one who could condescend to insult her daughter during the extremity of her misfortunes; but Mariamne, even while she was conducting to the place of execution, spoke not a word in answer to all she had heard of her mother's unnatural behavior, though her countenance testified the sense she entertained of the shameful part that her mother had acted. In short, Mariamne maintained her spirits with the greatest degree of firmness and constancy, not exhibiting, even by the change of her complexion, that she was in the least terrified at the thoughts of approaching death. In a word, she died in the same manner she had lived, a pattern of courage, disdaining fear, and proving herself capable of sustaining the most severe trials\*.

\* The character Josephus gives of this amiable princess is to the following effect: "She was (says he) a woman who would have been "superior to all her sex, but that she had too great a mixture of "passion and pride in her disposition. Her beauty was so great, the "graces of her person so extraordinary, and the charms of her con- "versation so singular, as not simply to render her superior to all "other women, but so much so, as not to admit of any degree of com- "parison. Now these super-eminent gifts and qualifications tended "in a great degree to the advancement of her misfortunes, by oc- "easioning the unhappy life she led with her husband. He was en- "amored of her beyond all description: he neither opposed her will "nor denied her any thing, but permitted her to do what she pleased,

After the death of Mariamne, the passion which Herod had entertained for her in her life-time displayed itself with redoubled violence. When he came to reflect upon the sentence which he had ordered to be carried into execution, he broke out into the strangest and most unmanly exclamations, frequently repeating the name of Mariamne, and saying, that her blood cried aloud for vengeance. The agonies of his mind increased to such a degree that he sought to divert his melancholy by drinking, feasting, keeping much company, and a variety of other entertainments; but all these endeavors proved fruitless, and instead of finding any relief he grew delirious, talked in a raving manner, and, while the fits of phrenzy were on him, would frequently call for Mariamne, and direct that she should be brought before him.\*

Herod's disorder daily increasing on him, he retired to a private country seat near Samaria, hoping that the difference of air, and being detached from the noise of the court, might do him some service. Before, however, he had been long in this retreat, he was attacked with an illness much more violent than the former, and attended with such a racking pain and inflammation in the head, that he was not master of his own conduct. The prescriptions applied for his relief were found to do him more injury than service, so that his case was considered as no other than hopeless. The difficulties that arose in the attempt to conquer this disease, the peculiar situation of the patient, and the impossibility of relieving him in

"and indulged her in every gratification she chose. This, perhaps,  
"might give rise to those frequent and inconsiderate reproaches  
"which she cast upon Herod, without reflecting that she was there-  
"by destroying her own happiness: for by this kind of conduct she  
"rendered herself obnoxious to the mother and sister of her hus-  
"band, and finally to himself, whose affection she conceived to be  
"so excessive, that it could not, by any circumstance whatever, be  
"alienated, more especially to such a degree as to affect her life."

\* While Herod was in this distracted state a most dreadful plague broke out in Jerusalem, which raged with such prodigious violence, that persons of all ranks and degrees fell sacrifices to its rigor, and many thousands were taken off in a very short space of time. This dreadful calamity was universally considered by the people as a just judgment consequent on the murder of the unfortunate and innocent Mariamne.

the regular way, being considered, the physicians reflected that it would be in vain to interpose their advice any longer, and therefore left him entirely to his own management, and the event to Providence, only commanding that he might be gratified in every thing he desired.

The wretched situation of Herod being made known to Alexandra, who was then at Jerusalem, she, after reflecting on the circumstance, began to consider whether or not it might be possible for her to obtain possession of some of the strong fortresses about Jerusalem. She was particularly desirous of becoming mistress of two above the rest, one of which was situated in the city, and the other close adjoining to the temple, being assured that the people must be altogether at the mercy of the party who should be in possession of those two towers. In order to accomplish her design, she made application to the governors of these respective fortresses, whom she addressed in words to this effect: "I need not (said she) "inform you of the very deplorable state of the king's "health; wherefore I entreat you that the two fortresses "may be given up to the possession of the mother of the "king's wife and the children of Herod and Mariamne, "lest, in case of his death, a different family should succeed to the throne; and even if the king should recover, "the hands of his nearest relations are those in which "the government may with most safety be trusted."

The governors (one of whom was named Achiab, and nephew to Herod) partly from a sense of their duty, but chiefly from an enmity they had to Alexandra, refused to acknowledge the force of her arguments for delivering up the towers, telling her it would ill become them to make a kind of prejudication of the king's life, for whom, during many years, they had entertained the most perfect friendship and loyalty. No sooner was their conversation ended, than Achiab immediately repaired to his uncle, and gave him a particular account of the proposal that had been made by Alexandra. Herod, who was at this time much recovered from his illness, was enraged to the highest degree, and without admitting Alexandra into his presence, or suffering her to say any thing in her own defence, sent immediate orders that she should be put to

death. These orders were accordingly executed, and thus did Alexandra meet with a just punishment for the perfidy and baseness with which she had treated her own daughter in the height of her misfortunes.

Soon after this, Herod quite recovered of his illness, but it produced a very strange and singular alteration both in his body and mind, particularly the latter. His disposition was totally altered, and he became so extravagantly cruel and ferocious, that the least trifle that ruffled his temper incited him to acts of singular barbarity, and either friends or foes were equally the objects of his vengeance.

Herod had two sons by his wife Mariamne, the one named Alexander, and the other Aristobulus, both of whom he sent to Rome for the benefit of their education. These two youths, on their return home, (which was soon after Herod had recovered from his illness) fell under their father's displeasure by the arts of the very same people who had been the cause of their mother's death. They unwarily let fall some rash words expressive of their resentment at their mother's hard usage, with threats of revenge upon those who had been the authors of it. All this was carried to their father, with such malicious glosses and comments on it as made him believe that they were hatching ill designs against his person. He was naturally of a jealous temper, and this was so improved by the artifices of Pheroras and Salome, his brother and sister, that he resolved to inflict some severe punishment on his two sons, and for that purpose had them seized, and placed under confinement.

But before Herod took any step towards executing his design upon his sons, he thought proper to write a letter to Cæsar, in which he told him of their undutiful behavior, that they had laid a plot against his life, and designed to have made an escape out of his dominions; and therefore begged he would be pleased to give him advice in what manner he should act on the occasion.

The advice Cæsar gave Herod, was to call together a council at Berytus, in Phœnicia, and enquirein to the nature of the offence his sons had committed. This Herod accordingly did; but when he came into the assembly, which consisted of an hundred and fifty persons whom

Cæsar had appointed (except Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, who being father-in-law to Alexander, was thought by Herod too much engaged by that relationship to be an impartial judge in this matter) he began to accuse his sons with great vehemence and passion, and after having spoken in terms very unbecoming a father, he said. "That not only Cæsar had made him master of his sons' "destiny, but that the very laws of the Jews declared "that, if a son was accused by his parents, and they put "their hands upon his head, all who were present should "stone him and put him to death; and therefore, though "he might treat his sons in this manner after the crimes "whereof they stood convicted, yet he chose rather to "have their opinions upon the matter, not doubting but "that they would join with him in giving an example to "future ages, of that just severity which ought to be ever "used upon unnatural children."

Saturninus, a man of a consular dignity, who was at the head of the council, was for punishing Alexander and Aristobulus, though not with death, and his three sons, who were present with him, concurred in the same opinion; but Volumnius pronounced that they were worthy of death, which the majority of the assembly too readily agreeing to, the dreadful sentence was accordingly passed.

On this occasion the greater part of the people pitied the two princes, but no one durst speak plainly for fear of incurring the king's displeasure, except an old officer named Tyro, who had a son about the age of Alexander that had been honored with the friendship of the young prince. This man made no scruple to speak his mind with freedom, nor hesitated to deliver those truths which were concealed by others. He made frequent and public declaration that all sense of honor and justice were banished from the face of the earth; that chicanery and ill-will had usurped their places, and so deluded the minds of the public that all ideas of right and wrong, of good and evil, were equally confounded. This freedom of behavior attracted the notice of all the hearers, and those who would have been fearful of proceeding so far themselves could not but esteem the man who risked his life in

the public cause, by openly speaking those truths which others took the greatest pains to conceal.

Old Tyro could not be satisfied with what he had spoken to the people, and therefore resolved to communicate the sentiments of his mind, with equal freedom, to the king himself. He accordingly made application for a royal audience, which being granted, he addressed himself to the king in words to this effect: "If, Sir, I do not give vent to the sentiments of my heart, I must be wretched indeed. I am not insensible of the danger of the office I have undertaken, nor of the language I am about to utter. The danger will be my own; but service and advantage will accrue to Herod if he pleases to pay a proper regard to what I have to say. Will you give me leave to ask, Sir, if you retain your former understanding, and the sense of things you heretofore entertained? Where is that greatness of mind, that dignity, that resolution, whieh carried you through great difficulties in times past? Do you recollect what is become of your friends and relations? Are they all lost! For it is impossible that I should include in that number those who can behold the accumulating miseries of your court and family, once so happy, and express no concern for the melancholy change of affairs! Are you totally blind, Sir, to your own interest? Cannot you perceive what an unhappy turn your circumstances are taking? Are you determined on the destruction of the children of a wife who was once so dear to you, and who have themselves so many virtues to recommend them? Do you not perceive, by the utter silence, and profound astonishment of the people, that your own conduct is tacitly condemned, and the fate of your sons lamented by the public? And let me inform you, Sir, that with regard to the military in general, officers and common soldiers included, they have the utmost commiseration for the fate of the young princes, and are perpetually cursing those to whom they conceive their distresses are owing."

While Tyro was representing the treachery of the conduct of those who ought to have served him with fidelity, Herod heard him with a tolerable degree of patience; but

thinking he exceeded the bounds of discretion, and violated the laws of good manners, by the bold, intrepid, and expostulatory manner of his discourse, his freedom became very disagreeable to the king. Herod, resenting the supposed insult, demanded to know the names of those officers and soldiers in particular who had spoken with the freedom that Tyro had mentioned. Tyro made no scruple of giving up their names; on which the king gave immediate orders that not only the informer, but all the persons accused, should be apprehended and committed to prison.

Some days after this event had taken place, Tryphon, the king's barber, went to Herod, and offered himself as an evidence against Tyro, declaring that he had, in the name of Alexander, repeatedly made him offers of money on condition that, when he went to shave the king, he would take an opportunity of cutting his throat. Hereupon orders were given that Tyro and his son should be put to the torture, which was accordingly done, but they both denied every thing that was charged against them. On this Herod ordered an increase of Tyro's torments, till the son, commiserating his father's sufferings, promised the king a full discovery if he might be pardoned. In consequence of this he was taken from the torture, when he declared that his father had resolved to murder Herod with his own hands as he had private access to him; and that he was determined to do this for the service of Alexander, whatever might be the consequence to himself.

This story was credited by some, while others supposed it was only a contrivance of the youth to get his own pains remitted. But be this as it may, the confession so enraged and intimidated Herod, that he sent his two sons immediately to Sabaste (formerly called Samaria) and there ordered them to be strangled; which dreadful sentence was accordingly executed, and their bodies afterwards deposited in a sepulchre at Alexandrion.—Thus ended the lives of these two unfortunate brothers, who, by too much expressing their resentment for their mother's death, provoked those who had been the chief authors of it, by the like artifices, to procure theirs.

Besides these two sons of Mariamne, Herod had another (which was the eldest and named Antipater) by Doris, a woman of no quality, and whilst himself was a private man; for which reason he kept him and his mother, for some time, at a distance from court. But when he began to take offence at Alexander and Aristobulus, his two sons by Mariamne, he thereupon treated Antipater with particular distinction, and, in a full assembly of the people, declared him his immediate heir to the crown.

After the deaths of Mariamne's sons, Antipater (whose ambition had long made him desirous of getting the sovereignty into his own hands) finding he had nothing that impeded his wishes but the life of his father Herod, he resolved, with all expedition, to remove that obstacle. To effect this he formed a conspiracy with his uncle Pheroras, (who at this time was in some disgrace with his brother the king) to have him poisoned. But, that there might be no suspicion of his being concerned in this base and perfidious scheme, he procured some of his friends to send for him to Rome, on pretence of waiting on Cæsar, and during his absence Pheroras was to execute the intended design against the life of the king.

Antipater had not long left Jerusalem, when Pheroras died, and by some means or other the whole plot was discovered to Herod. In consequence of this, Herod wrote to his son, without giving the least hint of the discovery that had been made, to hasten home, lest something should happen in his absence that would be greatly prejudicial to his interest. Antipater no sooner received these orders, than (not having the least suspicion of what had passed) he immediately left Rome, and repaired, with all expedition, to obey the royal mandate.

As soon as Antipater arrived at Jerusalem he immediately repaired to the palace, where Herod, with Quintilius Varus (who succeeded Saturninus in the government of Syria) happened to be together in council, and were in the actual discharge of public business. The servants who attended the gates of the palace no sooner saw Antipater approach, than they immediately threw them open, but he had no sooner entered than they instantly shut them to keep out his attendants. This ap-

peared strange to Antipater, but being in haste to see his father, he did not think proper to stop to enquire the cause. As soon as he entered the council-chamber he was proceeding to address himself to Herod with all the marks of filial duty and affection; but, as he approached, Herod extended his hand to stop him, and, with a look of indignation, exclaimed, “ Shall I submit to the embrace of a par-“ ricide? Cursed be that impiety which prompts thee to “ approach me till thou hast obviated the criminal charges “ against thee. For what purpose thinkest thou that “ Varus thy judge appears, but to pass sentence agreeable “ to thy deserts? Therefore be gone, and prepare for thy “ defence against to-morrow, for I shall not allow thee a “ longer period.” Astonished at these words, Antipater was unable to reply, and immediately retired in gloomy silence. His mother and wife going afterwards to him, informed him of every thing that had passed, by which he was in some degree recovered from his stupefaction, and enabled to prepare himself for the approaching solemnity.

On the following day a numerous council assembled, Varus presiding as judge, assisted by Herod and a great number of their friends. Herod immediately ordered all the witnesses to be brought in, among whom were several of the servants of Doris (the mother of Antipater) who had been long in confinement. These servants produced letters (which had been written though not sent) from the mother to her son, the substance of which was to this effect: “ Your father is informed of all that has passed; “ therefore be cautious how you come near him, unless “ you can absolutely rely on the protection of Cæsar.” Soon after these witnesses were introduced, Antipater came into the court, and, throwing himself at his father’s feet, said, “ I humbly entreat you, Sir, to hear me with “ impartiality: prejudge not my cause; and I have not a “ doubt of adducing the fullest proofs of my innocence.”

Herod, with an air of authority, commanded Antipater’s silence; after which, turning to Varus, he addressed himself to him as follows: “ I am assured Varus, or any “ other unbiased judge, must be convinced that Antipa-“ ter is deserving of death; but, in the interim, I dread “ the opinion you may form of my malignant fortune; as

"if my being the father of such children had brought  
"such calamities upon me. With regard to the young  
"men that are now no more, I had intended them for the  
"government, and caused them to be educated at Rome,  
"in the court, and under the auspices of Cæsar, that they  
"might be the better qualified to govern: yet, when I  
"had raised them to the envy of other princes, they be-  
"came the greatest enemies of my peace and safety.  
"Antipater, however, sought to profit by their ruin, by  
"securing the succession of the sovereignty to himself:  
"yet how am I requited by this monster of iniquity,  
"who has concerted schemes against my life, in return  
"for kindness! He thought, and he was grieved to think,  
"that I should live too long; nay, that I had already  
"done so. He could not be contented with the posses-  
"sion of the crown, unless he waded to it through the  
"blood of his father; and I must own that I laid the  
"foundation of this conduct, by bringing him to court  
"from a private condition, and declaring him my suc-  
"cessor, in preference to the sons born of Mariamne. I  
"must freely acknowledge to you, Varus, the error of my  
"proceedings. It was wrong in me to deprive my sons of  
"the succession in favor of Antipater; nor did I ever  
"shew them the favor I evinced towards him. The  
"united wickedness of all the rest of my family equals  
"not that of Antipater; the proofs against them fall very  
"short of what I have against him; yet has he the au-  
"daciousness to plead innocence, nor does he despair to  
"confound the truth by artifice. Be guarded, Varus.  
"He will recite his tale with plausibility; but I know  
"him in all his disguises, and am assured of the baseness  
"of his heart."

Herod, having finished this speech, requested Nicolaus of Damascus, his old and assured friend, whom he knew to be a perfect master of the whole subject, to proceed in the business that laid before them, by examining those witnesses whose evidence would tend to convict his son of the crime laid to his charge.

Antipater, however, interrupted him by beginning to make a defence of his conduct, in which he intimated that his father's kindness to him was a tacit acknowledgment

of his own merit; and assumed to himself the credit of having discharged his duty in every instance: "What probability (said he) can there be, that after having prevented the effects of the treachery of so many other people against my father, I should myself act the part of those very traitors whose conduct I had censured, and bring so much disgrace on a reputation obtained by so many acts of firm and unshaken loyalty? What wish, what ambition could I have to become greater or more distinguished than I was already? Is it to be supposed I could be so weak as, the dignity of my situation considered, to act the part of a villain, only to be a loser by such conduct? For the succession was already settled upon me, and ratified by all the forms that law could give it; and, through the goodness of the king, I was admitted to such a proportion of the exercise of the royal power, that I was in actual possession of the government, rather than in the view and expectation of it: nor did any person dare to control my actions, or presume to controvert my right. Why, then, should I causelessly struggle through imminent danger, for the obtaining of that which had already devolved to me, and of which I had the peaceable possession, in consequence of my superior virtue? Why should I expose myself, in the hope of an uncertain gain, to the utmost degree of certain infamy? It is still less likely that I should have acted thus, when I saw the consequences of false ambition, in the trial, conviction, and execution of my brothers. I acknowledge myself to have been accessory to their fate; and I pride myself in my conduct in that affair, of which I shall never repent, as I conceive it was the strongest proof that I could have given of my filial regard, and the inviolable love and duty that I bore to my father. With regard to my conduct while I was at Rome, I dare make my appeal to Cæsar himself, whose wisdom is such that he cannot be imposed on; and I could likewise appeal to a number of letters under his own hand, in my favor, which I am able to produce. Now I would wish to ask if it would not be a bad precedent to credit the calumnious reports of abandoned men, who are my professed enemies,

"against the authority of such respectable evidence? Men  
"who are a disgrace to their nature, and are never so  
"happy as when they are involving the royal family in  
"difficulties? These people have now taken the advan-  
"tage of my absence to propagate false and scandalous  
"reports to my prejudice, which would never have been  
"listened to, or had the least regard paid to them, if I had  
"been on the spot to have defended my own conduct."

When he had almost finished his speech, he made an observation on the absurdity of the custom of examining people by means of the torture, which he said was full as probable a method of extorting a falsehood as a truth: since the extreme pain that was inflicted on the sufferer would induce him to assert any thing the tormentor pleased; especially as the torments were continued till such confession was made. Notwithstanding this, Antipater himself offered to submit to the torture, and rest the credit of his cause on the event. He delivered his speech in so emphatical a manner, attended by such force of action and expression, and accompanied it with such a profusion of tears, that the council were greatly concerned, and those who were his most professed enemies seemed to lament his situation: even Herod himself appeared to be affected, and to pity his case, though he endeavored all he could to conceal the emotion of his mind.

Antipater having made his defence, and the witnesses given their evidence, Nicolaus of Damascus resumed the cause, enquired into every particular article, recited the names of the witnesses, summed up the proofs, and remarked on the confessions of those who had been put to the torture. He then proceeded to make remarks on the king's bountiful temper, the care and tenderness he had exhibited in the education of his children, and how ill that care had been requited. With regard to Alexander and Aristobulus, he said, that though they were not influenced by motives of interest, they were actuated by ambition, and impelled by the ardor of youth, and the heat of blood; it was therefore the less to be wondered at, if the evil advice and example of bad company had seduced them to a departure from the strict line of their duty: but with respect to the conduct of Antipater, he said that it

was worse than brutal; for that beasts, even of the most ferocious kinds, entertained a sort of mutual gratitude to those who fed and protected them: whereas the young man in question was so far from being influenced by the kindness and indulgence of a tender parent, that even the unfortunate examples that had been made of his brothers, could not deter him from copying their vices; but, on the contrary, he seemed to pride himself on the cruelty and exemplary wickedness of his conduct.

Nicolaus now addressed himself to Antipater in the following manner: "Was it not you that first discovered "the design of your brothers? Who but yourself was the "prosecutor? Did not you direct the sentence, and of "course occasion the punishment? I do not mean, in the "present instance, to reflect on that zeal and indignation "by which you might be supposed to be inspired in so "just a cause; but I am astonished to find that you "should have been so inveterate against your brothers, "for a crime of which you yourself are now guilty. This "is to me an undoubted proof that you did not so much "consult the preservation of the father, as the destruction "of the sons; that you sought, by acting the part of a "severe brother, to obtain the credit of an affectionate and "dutiful son, by which means you flattered yourself, that, "with the greater security, you might make an interest "with the king. And this, in fact, is the plot that you "have beenconcerting: else, how should it happen that "the brothers were doomed to death, while their accom- "plices were spared? What could be the intention, what "the view in this proceeding, if you and the accomplices "had not a perfect understanding of each other? That, "after they had assisted you in one scheme of villainy, "they might be at your command to lend their aid to- "wards the perpetration of another? By this mode of "proceeding you had a double pleasure in contemplating "the intended wickedness; for, in the first place, you "thought to make a most impious transaction pass through "the world, as an honorable deed of virtue and filial "piety: and, in the second instance, you intended to have "caused the execution of a horrid scene of barbarity, and "subjected suspected persons to that punishment which

“ would have been due to the actual perpetrators of the  
“ crime. If you had been a severe detester of the pro-  
“ posed malicious proceeding, you would not have been  
“ so ready to have given it the sanction of your imitation.  
“ However, you have had the address and contrivance to  
“ destroy those first whose enormities were less than  
“ your own, by which means you have disclaimed all  
“ competitors in the action, and determined to have  
“ neither rivals nor witnesses of your conduct: and this  
“ being done, it was your resolution to have added the  
“ murder of the father to that of the brothers; by which  
“ kind of management you thought not only to escape the  
“ punishment you merited, but to transfer the weighty  
“ consequence of your crimes to your parent, by the per-  
“ petration of such a parricide as is almost unexampled in  
“ the annals of history: for it was not your intention to  
“ have acted this horrid treason against a parent of only  
“ common feelings and humanity, but against one whose  
“ tenderness and indulgence had been manifested in a  
“ very superior degree: for you, the conspirator, had been  
“ already chosen to succeed to the government; you al-  
“ ready possessed a kind of half property in the crown;  
“ you had a previous share in the enjoyment of your  
“ father’s dignities, and his will had secured to you the  
“ reversion of the whole. But (continued Nicolaus) so  
“ immoderate and unreasonable were your desires, that it  
“ was impossible for his goodness to prescribe any bounds  
“ to them, since you meant to regulate them only by the  
“ measures of your own perverse will, and ungrateful  
“ sentiments. You could not be contented with your own  
“ half of the regal rights, without the possession of that  
“ which more immediately belonged to your father. You  
“ made an artful pretence of being his protector from the  
“ insults of others, when, in fact, your plot tended to work  
“ his immediate destruction. Nor was this horrid con-  
“ trivance to be carried into execution simply by your  
“ self; but your mother was to be made accessory to the  
“ scheme, your brothers were to be set at variance, and  
“ the whole family were to be involved in the bloody  
“ business.

“ Let me farther ask of you, what idea you can form of  
“ yourself after having called your father a beast, since  
“ by such language you gave no small proof of your  
“ own brutality? But the scandal and malice of your  
“ conduct seem to have been destined to reach your re-  
“ lations and benefactors. Nay, such has been the arti-  
“ fice of your management, that, as if your own ill-will  
“ was insufficient to incite to a proper degree of revenge,  
“ you have demanded the assistance of your guards and  
“ counsellors; you have suborned witnesses of both sexes,  
“ and all of you have united to seek the destruction of one  
“ ancient man. And now, after having caused so many  
“ of both sexes, free as well as slaves, to be put to the  
“ torture on your account, and after a variety of incon-  
“ testible evidence to your conviction, you are yet hardy  
“ enough to contradict the truth, and to add to the crime  
“ of attempting to take away the life of your father, that  
“ of denying the authority of those very laws by which  
“ criminals are punished: and this conduct of yours is  
“ not only an insult on the equity of Varus, your judge,  
“ but a contradiction to the principles of natural justice.  
“ For what reason should you discredit these testimonies  
“ that have been obtained by the force of torture, but that  
“ you would destroy the credit that is due to the proofs of  
“ your accumulated crimes, and which, at the same time,  
“ have tended to save your father’s life?”

Nicolaus then, addressing himself to Varus, the judge, said, “ Sir, I adjure you by the dignity of the Roman em-  
“ pire, and by that regard you would have to your own  
“ honor, that you vindicate our sovereign from the insults  
“ offered him by those of his own kindred, by adjudging  
“ to death this most atrocious hypocrite, who under the  
“ pretence of respect to his father, sought after the blood  
“ of his brothers, and if he had not now been detected be-  
“ fore his scheme was complete, would have devoted his  
“ father to destruction, to pave his own way to the pos-  
“ session of the regal dignity. I am sure I need not in-  
“ form you, Sir, that parricide is a crime of the deepest  
“ dye; that it is not only a private offence against the  
“ party immediately injured, but a public insult to the  
“ laws of life and existence. There seems to be so much

" of infamy even in the thought, as well as in the perpetration of this deed, that the very idea of permitting it to pass unpunished is an insult to human nature, and to those laws to which we are all equally indebted for the preservation of our existence."

Having said thus much, Nicolaus adverted to some idle words, which, in a disposition to talk at random, had fallen from the mother of Antipater, with regard to prognosticators and wizards that had been consulted, and sacrifices that had been offered, respecting the life of the king, and the knowledge who was to succeed to the crown. He then mentioned several circumstances relative to the debauched life which Antipater had lived in the family of Pheroras; his drunkenness, and his immoderate attachment to women. Many particulars were urged against the prisoner, every article of which was proved, some by voluntary evidence, some by extorted confession, and a third sort on the recollection of the accusing parties, who thought it their duty to stand forth on this occasion; and this sort of evidence was deemed of the most credible kind. Every circumstance now tended to the conviction of Antipater; and those spoke with freedom on this occasion, who while he was in power, did not dare to utter their sentiments. In a word, being universally detested by the people, they were free to reveal every ill action of his life.

The situation of Antipater was now wretched beyond description; but the horrors of his mind aggravated every other calamity; since, he had not only the murder of the brothers to answer for, but the malice and rancor that had prevailed through the family, and the proposed treason they were to have combined in committing. His interest seemed to direct all his actions, whether of friendship, or enmity, so that through the whole course of his life he was never known to gain or to lose a friend, but from motives that were selfish in the highest degree: and this contractedness of sentiment by which he was actuated was so well known, that he seemed to be opposed by every honest man, as if it had been a matter of the most absolute impossibility for virtue and Antipater to exist together.

Varus now demanded of Antipater what he had to urge in his own defence; to which he made no other reply, than that he was wholly innocent. Hereupon Varus called for the poison, which had been prepared by Pheroras, (and which it had been discovered was intended for Herod) and giving part of it to a person under sentence of death, he immediately expired. This was so plain a proof of Antipater's guilt, that it was out of his power to say any thing in justification of himself; the consequence of which was, that he was immediately loaded with irons and put into close confinement.

While Antipater was in prison a false report was circulated that Herod was dead, upon which he begged of his keeper to set him at liberty, and made him large promises if he would comply with his request. This, however, the keeper not only refused, but informed Herod of the offers that had been made by his son; upon which he was so enraged, that he sent for one of his guards, whom he ordered instantly to go to the prison and dispatch Antipater, which orders were accordingly obeyed.

The unfortunate fate of Herod's sons made a strong impression on the minds of the people, and was particularly noticed by the potentates of the neighboring nations. Cæsar Augustus himself was astonished at such singular catastrophes, and on that account frequently made use of this saying, *that it was better to be Herod's hog than his son.*

But whatever opinion Cæsar might have of Herod, it is certain that Herod had no small veneration for him, or, at least, that he carried his compliments to very great lengths. He not only built two stately cities,\* and called

\* One of these cities was called Sabaste, which signifies the same in Greek as Augustus does in Latin. It was situated on the same spot where stood Samaria, which Hyrcanus had destroyed, and was in part rebuilt by Gabinius when he was governor of Syria, but, as he was soon turned out of his government, it advanced no farther than a large village, until Herod undertook to finish it, and, in so doing, spared no cost to make it one of the richest and most beautiful cities in the kingdom.—The other was called Cesaria, though its former name was, the Tower of Straton. It stood by the sea-side on the coast of Phœnicia, upon the pass into Egypt, and the buildings in it, as well private as public, were all of marble.

them both by his name, but in the very city of Jerusalem built a theatre and an amphitheatre, and, in honor of Augustus, ordered games to be celebrated, and shows exhibited, agreeable to the custom of the Romans. Nay, to such lengths did he carry his complaisance that he not only set up the Roman ensign (which was the figure of an eagle) over one of the gates of the temple, but even built a sumptuous temple, all of white marble, in memory of the favors which Augustus had conferred on him. These proceedings, however, being inconsistent with the legal constitutions and religion of the Jews, they were greatly disgusted at Herod, and some plots were concerted for taking away his life.

Herod, finding the people were incensed against him for his conduct, resolved, as some amends for the breaches he had made in the laws, to endeavor to recover their good opinions by an act of a public nature. To effect this he formed the design of rebuilding the temple, which, by length of time, as well as the violence of enemies, was in a very decayed and ruinous condition. In the space of two years he got together all proper materials for the work, and in nine and a half more it was finished, and dedicated with all the usual forms and solemnities.

This temple was widely different from Solomon's, as also from that which was built after the captivity, as appears by the following description given of it by Josephus, in whose time it was begun and completed. "The front of this magnificent building (says he) was adorned with many rich spoils which the kings of the Jews had dedicated to God as the monuments of their victories. The middle of it, which was much higher than the two extremes, afforded a very agreeable prospect to the extent of several furlongs to those that either lived in the country, or were travelling to the city. The gate was a very curious piece of workmanship, and from the top hung a variety of rich tapestry of several colors, embellished with purple flowers. On each side of it stood a stately pillar, with a golden vine creeping and twining about it, whose branches were laden with a cluster of grapes, that hung down from the cornices. Round the temple were large galleries, answerable to the rest of the work in magnifi-

ence, and in beauty much exceeding all that had been before. The temple was surrounded by three courts or inclosures. The first inclosure, which was a square of a furlong on every side, had a gate on the east, another on the south, and another on the north side; but it had four towards the west; one leading to the palace, another into the city, and two more into the fields. It was secured without by a strong wall, and within was adorned with stately porticos, or galleries, sustained by no less than 162 columns. They supported a roof of cedar very curiously wrought, and made three galleries; the two outermost of which were of the same dimensions, *i. e.* thirty feet in breadth, fifty in height, and a furlong in length; but that in the middle was half as broad again as the other, and twice as high. The court or area before these galleries was paved with marble of several colors, and, at a little distance, was a second inclosure, formed by an handsome balustrade of stone, with pillars at equal distances, whereon were inscriptions in Greek and Latin, giving warning to all strangers not to proceed any farther, upon pain of death. To this inclosure there was but one entrance towards the east, but, towards the north and south, at equal distances, three. In the middle of these two inclosures, there was a third, which included the temple, strictly so called, and the altar of burnt sacrifices, which was fifty cubits high, and forty cubits wide every way, all built of rough stones, on which no tool had ever been used. Into this court (which none but the priests were permitted to enter) there were nine gates; one towards the east, four towards the south, and as many towards the north; but towards the west there was no gate, only one great wall ran all along from north to south. At the entrance of each gate within were large rooms in the form of pavilions, of thirty cubits square, and forty high, supported by a pillar of eighteen feet in circumference; and the whole was adorned with porticos sustained by two rows of pillars, to the east, north, and south, but towards the west there was nothing but the wall."

The re-building of the temple by Herod was the last remarkable occurrence in the history of the Jews, previous to the incarnation of our Blessed Redeemer, which, ac-

cording to most Chronologers, happened in the year of the world 4004, when Augustus Cæsar was Emperor of Rome, and Herod, under the Roman state, had governed the kingdom of Judea about twenty-four years.

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# NEW AND COMPLETE UNIVERSAL HISTORY OF THE HOLY BIBLE.

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## BOOK V.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE MOST REMARKABLE PROPHECIES RECORDED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, WHICH HAVE BEEN FULFILLED, AND STILL ARE FULFILLING IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD.

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### CHAP. I.

*The Prophecy of Noah, relative to the Descendants of his three Sons.*

HAVING, in the preceding sheets, given an accurate account of every material occurrence related in the Sacred Scriptures, from the creation of the world to the death of the prophet Nehemiah, and from thence to the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem by Herod, we shall, before we proceed to relate the life and transactions of our Blessed Redeemer, give a circumspect account of those remarkable prophecies contained in the Old Testament. The predictions of the different prophets have, indeed, been already noticed in the course of the work, but in so concise a manner (to prevent interrupting the history) as not to be fully displayed. It shall, therefore, be our business to make these the subject of the present book, in which we shall point out, first, in what a particular manner the most important events have

been foretold, and, secondly, with what punctuality each has been fulfilled.

The first prophecy we meet with in the sacred writings is that of Noah relative to his three sons, namely, Shem, Ham and Japheth. Noah had indiscreetly given a loose to indulgence by drinking too much wine, and, in consequence thereof, was found in a very indecent posture by his sons. Ham, who first saw him, ridiculed him on that account, and suffered him to continue in the unseemly situation he found him, but on calling his brothers, they, instead of approving of his conduct, covered the nakedness of their aged parent, and lamented that he should have been so indiscreet as to require their assistance on such an occasion.

Noah, in consequence of the different behavior of his three sons, was, as a patriarch, enlightened, and, as the father of a family who is to reward or punish his children, empowered to foretel the different fortunes of their descendants; this prophecy relating not so much to themselves as to their posterity. Noah was not tempted to do this either from the power of wine or the natural consequences of resenting an injury received; for neither of these could infuse into him the knowledge of events which were to happen many hundred years after. But the Almighty, being pleased to manifest his superintendence and government over the world, endued Noah with the spirit of prophecy, and enabled him, in some measure, to disclose the purposes of his Providence towards the future race of mankind.

As soon, therefore, as Noah found himself thus prophetically inspired, after being informed of the behavior of his sons, he called them into his presence, and immediately pronounced the following curse on Canaan the descendant of Ham: *Cursed (said he) be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.* Then turning himself to the other two, he said, *Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.*

At the same time that the latter part of this prophecy must afford great comfort and satisfaction to Shem and

Japheth for their reverence and tenderness to their father, so it must naturally have been a great punishment and mortification to Ham (for his indiscreet and wicked behavior) to hear of the malediction and servitude of some of his children, and that, as he was abandoned himself, so a wicked race should descend from him.

But the curse thus pronounced upon Canaan (who was the fourth son of Ham according to the order in which his children are mentioned, Gen. x. 6.) is not to be understood as absolutely fixed on him, but on his descendants. A more extensive meaning must be therefore affixed to it, and it must be understood not of a single person, but of whole nations, by means of which a more noble prospect will be opened to us of the wise dispensations of Providence. Neither the curse of servitude pronounced upon Canaan, nor the promise of blessing and enlargement made to Shem and Japheth, are to be confined to their own persons, but to extend to their whole race, and thither we must direct our attention for the full and perfect completion of the prophecy.

The curse upon Canaan was properly a curse upon his descendants, who were afterwards distinguished by the name of Canaanites. From the crime committed by Ham, the Almighty was pleased to commission Noah to pronounce a curse upon them, and to devote them to that service and misery which their more than common vices and iniquities would deserve. And this account was evidently written by Moses for the encouragement of the Israelites, to support and animate them in their expedition against a people, who, by their sins, had forfeited the divine protection, and, from the days of Noah, were destined to slavery.

From what has been already said, may be easily seen the purport and meaning of this prophecy: it therefore now remains that we proceed to point out the manner in which it was fully completed.

The Canaanites were certainly a most wicked and abandoned people, and for their great sins it was that the Almighty was pleased to inflict the punishment he did on the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, as also those of the adjoining cities and plain. (See p. 62. vol. i.) They

were not only addicted to idolatry, (which was then the case with the greater part of the world) but were guilty of the worst kinds of idolatry. Their religion was bad, and their morals worse; for corrupt religion, and corrupt morals usually generate each other. Was not, therefore, a curse, in the nature of things, as well as in the just judgment of God, deservedly entailed on such a people and nation as this! It was not for the righteousness of the Israelites that the Lord was pleased to give them the possession of the land of Canaan, but for the wickedness of the people did he drive them out of the country, and he would have driven out the Israelites in like manner had they been guilty of the like abominations. See Levit. xviii. 24, &c.

But the curse itself particularly implies servitude and subjection. *Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.* The descendants, therefore, of Canaan were to be subject to the descendants both of Shem and Japheth; and the natural consequence of vice, in communities, as well as in single persons, is subjection, slavery and death.

This part of the prophecy, however, was not fulfilled till several centuries after it was delivered by Noah, when the Israelites, who were the descendants of Shem, under the command of Joshua, invaded the country of the Canaanites, smote above thirty of their kings, took possession of their land, and made the Gibeonites and others, servants and tributaries; and the rest were afterwards subdued by Solomon. The Greeks and Romans, who were the descendants of Japheth, not only subdued Syria and Palestine, but also pursued and conquered such of the Canaanites as were any where remaining; as for instance the Tyrians and Carthaginians, the former of whom were ruined by Alexander and the Grecians, and the latter by Scipio and the Romans. From that period the miserable remainder of these people have been slaves, first to the Saracens, who descended from Shem, and afterwards to the Turks, who descended from Japheth; and under whose denomination great numbers of them remain to this day.

Having thus explained the fulfilment of that part of Noah's prophecy relative to the descendants of his son Ham, let us now consider the promises he made to Shem and Japheth. And he said, *Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.* The wickedness of men proceedeth from themselves, but their good from God; and therefore we find the old patriarch, in a strain of devotion, breaketh forth into thanksgiving to God as the author of all good to Shem. God can certainly bestow his particular favors according to his good pleasure, and salvation was to be derived to mankind through Shem and his posterity. By the Lord being called the *God of Shem*, is plainly intimated that the Lord would be *his God* in a particular manner. Accordingly we find the church of God was among the posterity of Shem for several generations; and of them, *as concerning the flesh, Christ came.* Rom. ix. 5.

The promise made to Japheth was this: *God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.* That Japheth was more enlarged than the rest is evident, he having much greater possessions, and a more numerous offspring than either of his brothers. The territories of Japheth's posterity were very large, for besides all Europe, great and extensive as it is, they possessed the Lesser Asia, Media, part of Armenia, Iberia, Albania, and those great regions towards the north, which were anciently inhabited by the Scythians, and at present by the Tartars.

That the progeny of Japheth was *enlarged*, as well as his territories, evidently appears from the 10th chapter of Genesis, wherein we find that Japheth had seven sons, whereas Ham had only four, and Shem only five. "And the *northern hive* (as Sir William Templeman denominates the descendants of Japheth) was always remarkable for its fecundity, and hath been continually pouring forth swarms, and sending out colonies into the more southern parts, both in Europe and in Asia, both in former and in latter times."

The expression *and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem*, is capable of a double construction; for thereby may be meant either that *God*, or that *Japheth shall dwell in the*

*tents of Shem.* Those who prefer the former construction found their authority on the literal sense of the words in the text, there being no other noun to govern the verbs in the period than the word *God*. The whole sentence, therefore, according to this, should run thus, *God will enlarge Japheth, and will dwell in the tents of Shem.*

But let the sense of this expression be taken either way, it is certain that the prophecy hath been most punctually fulfilled. In the former sense it was fulfilled literally when the Shechinah, or Divine Presence, rested on the Ark, and dwelt in the tabernacle and temple of the Jews. In the latter sense it was fulfilled first, when the Greeks and Romans, who sprung originally from Japheth, subdued and possessed Judea and other countries of Asia belonging to Shem; and again spiritually, when they were proselyted to the true religion, and those who were not Israelites by birth, became Israelites by faith.

This first prophecy of Noah's is certainly a most extraordinary one indeed. It was delivered near four thousand years ago, and yet hath been fulfilling through the several periods of time to this day. It is both wonderful and instructive; and is, as it were, an epitome of the history of the World.

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## CHAP. II.

*Of the Prophecies concerning Ishmael, the son of Abraham, by his maid Hagar.*

THE next great patriarch we meet with in the Old Testament after Noah, is the pious Abraham, who was favored with several Divine revelations. From him two very extraordinary nations descended, namely, the Ishmaelites and the Israelites, concerning each of which people there are some prophecies of the most extraordinary nature.

Ishmael was the son of Abraham by his hand-maid Hagar, who was an Egyptian; and though he was not properly the child of promise, yet he was distinguished by some express predictions for the comfort and satisfaction of both his parents.

When Hagar fled from the face of her mistress, Sarah, who had dealt hardly with her (see Gen. xvi.) the angel of the Lord found her in the wilderness, and said unto her, *Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.* And the angel of the Lord said unto her, *I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.* And the angel of the Lord said unto her, *Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath seen thy affliction.* And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

In the next chapter God promises Abraham a son by his wife Sarah, whom he should call Isaac; but notwithstanding this, he still reserved a blessing for Ishmael: *Behold* (said he) *I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.* After this, when Hagar and Ishmael were sent forth into the wilderness, God said unto Abraham, *And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed,* Gen. xxi. 13. And the same is repeated to Hagar, (ver. 18.) *I will make him a great nation.*

Now if we attend to the particulars mentioned in this prophecy, and trace the course of events which afterwards took place, we shall find the whole strictly fulfilled, and that a part of it is fulfilling even at this present period.

*I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.* And again, *Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly.* From these two passages it is manifestly evident that the prophecy does not so much relate to Ishmael himself, as it does to his descendants, whom it is foretold shall be exceeding numerous; and this part of the prediction was most amply verified.

The mother of Ishmael was an Egyptian, and when he grew to years of manhood he married a woman of the same country. In the course of a few years his own children and their descendants became so numerous, that they formed a considerable body of people, and were particularly distinguished for the great traffic they carried on in different parts of Egypt. See Gen. xxi. 21. After this Ishmael's descendants were greatly multiplied in the Hagarenes, who were probably so called from his mother Hagar: in the Nabathæans, who were so denominated from his son Nabaoth: in the Itureans, who were so called from his son Jetur or Itur; and in the Arabs, (especially the Scenites and Saracens) who over-ran a great part of the world; and his descendants the Arabs are at this day a very numerous people.

*Twelve princes shall he beget.* This part of the prophecy is of a very particular nature indeed; notwithstanding which it was most strictly fulfilled. The names of these princes are recorded by Moses, (Gen. xxv. 16.) who, after mentioning them, says, *These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations.* We are not however to understand by this expression that they were so many distinct sovereign princes; but only the heads of so many clans or tribes. Strabo frequently mentions the Arabian *phylarchs* (as he denominates them) or rulers of tribes; and Melo, an heathen historian, tells us, “That Ishmael had, by his Egyptian wife, twelve sons, who, departing into Arabia, divided the region between them, and were the first kings of the inhabitants; whence (even to our days, says he) the Arabians have had twelve kings of the same names as at the first.” After the time of Melo, the Arabs were governed by what was then called *phylarchs*, and lived in tribes; and this they still continue to do, as appears by the testimony of Thevenot, Middleton, and other modern travellers.

*And I will make him a great nation.* This part of the prophecy is repeated several times, and, as soon as the regular course of nature would admit, was fully accomplished. The descendants of Ishmael, in process of time,

grew up into a great nation; such they continued for several ages, and, when we consider the prodigious numbers of them that still inhabit the country, they may be still justly called *a great nation*.

*And he will be a wild man.* Ishmael and his posterity were to be wild, fierce, savage, ranging in the deserts, and not easily softened to society; and whoever has read the accounts given of these people by different travellers must know it to be a true and genuine character. It is said of Ishmael (Gen. xxi. 20.) that *he dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer*; and the same is no less true of his descendants than of himself. *He dwelt in the wilderness*; and his descendants still inhabit the same wilderness, and many of them, from the best accounts we have, both ancient and modern, are total strangers to agriculture, neither sowing or planting, but living entirely by plunder and rapine. *And he became an archer*; such were the Itureans and mighty men of Keder mentioned by Isaiah, chap. xxi. 17. and such the Arabs have been from the beginning to the present time. It was very late before they admitted the use of fire arms in their country, and the greater part of them are still strangers to that instrument of defence; they constantly practice the bow and arrow, and are esteemed the most skilful archers in the universe.

*His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him.* This part of the prophecy has been already explained, as the reader will find by referring to the note in page 55; and therefore we now proceed to the last part, namely, *And he shall dwell in the presence of his brethren*; that is, shall dwell in tents, as many of the Arabs still do, and are therefore called Scenites.

If we reflect on this part of the prophecy we shall, on the first view, think it very extraordinary, that *his hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him*, and yet that he should be able to *dwell in the presence of all his brethren*. But extraordinary as it was, this also hath been fulfilled, not only in the person of Ishmael, but likewise in his descendants. With respect to Ishmael himself, the sacred historian tells us, that *the years of the life of Ishmael were an hundred and thirty*

*and seven years, and he died in the presence of all his brethren.* Gen. xxv. 17, 18. As for his posterity, they dwelt likewise in the presence of all their brethren, and they still subsist a distinct people, and inhabit the country of their progenitors, notwithstanding the perpetual enmity between them and the rest of mankind.

It may be supposed by some that the reason why these people were never subdued by any other nation is, that the country was never worth conquering, and that its barrenness has ever been its preservation; but this is a mistake, for, by all the accounts we have, though the greater part of it be sandy and barren deserts, yet here and there are interspersed beautiful spots and fruitful vallies. One part of the country was anciently known and distinguished by the name of Arabia the Happy, which appellation it received on account of the natural fertility of the soil, in contrast to the barrenness of the other parts. The whole country of Arabia is, by the oriental writers, generally divided into five provinces, the chief of which is called Yaman, and is thus described by the learned Mr Sale in his preface to the Alcoran. “The province of Yaman (says he) has been famous from all antiquity for the wholesomeness of its climate, its fertility and riches. The delightfulness and plenty of it are owing to its mountains;\* for all that part which lies along the Red Sea is a dry barren desert, in some

\* The learned and celebrated Charles Theodore Middleton, esq. (in his New System of Geography lately published) describing the mountains in Arabia, says, “The chief mountains are those of Sinai, Gabel el Ared, and St. Catharine, the former of which deserves a particular description. It hath two summits, and is called by the Arabs, the mountain of Moses, because many remarkable things happened here to that prophet. It was here, they say, that the Almighty appeared to him in the burning bush; and the fathers show a bramble, which they affirm is of the same kind. Here Moses likewise fed the flock of his father-in-law Jethro; and not far off he struck the rock, out of which instantly gushed water: the stone is of a red granite, about fifteen feet long, ten broad, and twelve high; the opening does not resemble any thing done by a tool, and is somewhat like the mouth of a carved lion: into this aperture the Arabs put certain medicinal herbs, which they afterwards give to their camels, in case they are disordered, thinking them very salutary for any disease.”

" places ten or twelve leagues over, but in return bounded by those mountains, which being well watered, enjoy an almost continual spring, and yield great plenty and variety of fruits, and in particular excellent corn, grapes and spices. The soil of the other provinces is much more barren than that of Yaman, the greater part being covered with dry sands, or rising into rocks, interspersed here and there with some fruitful spots, which receive their greatest advantages from their water and palm-trees."

But, however fertile, or however barren and desolate this country might be, yet it was certainly the interest of the neighboring princes and states, at all hazards, to endeavor to root out such a pestilent race of robbers. This, indeed, (as we have already particularly observed in the note page 55) has several times been attempted, but never accomplished. They have, from first to last, maintained their independency, and, notwithstanding the most powerful efforts have been made to destroy them, they still *dwell in the presence of all their brethren*, and in the presence of all their enemies.

If we reflect on the respective particulars contained in this amazing prophecy, and the astonishing manner in which each article has been fulfilled, we must easily perceive that the whole, from beginning to end, was guided by the direction of Providence. The sacred historian tells us, that these prophecies concerning Ishmael were delivered partly by the angel of the Lord, and partly by God himself: and indeed who but God, or one raised and commissioned by him, could describe so particularly the genius and manners, not only of a single person before he was born, but of a whole people from the first founder of the race to the present time? It was certainly very wonderful, and not to be foreseen by human sagacity or prudence, that a man's whole posterity should so nearly resemble him, and retain the same inclinations, the same habits, and the same customs throughout all ages. The waters of the purest spring or fountain are soon changed and polluted in their course; and the farther still they flow, the more they are incorporated and lost in other waters. How have the modern Italiaus degenerated from

the courage and virtues of the old Romans? How are the French and English polished and refined from the barbarism of the ancient Gauls and Britons? In general men and manners change with the times; but in all changes and revolutions the Arabs have continued the same from the beginning. They still remain the same fierce, savage, untractable, unsocial people they were at first, following in every thing their great ancestor, and being entirely different from all other inhabitants on the earth.

The great affinity that still subsists between the present Arabs, and their progenitor Ishmael, from whom they descended, will appear evident from the following circumstances. Ishmael was circumcised, and so are his posterity to this day; and as Ishmael was circumcised when he was thirteen years of age, so (according to Josephus) were the Arabs at the same time. Ishmael was born of Hagar, who was a concubine; and the Arabs still indulge themselves in the use of mercenary wives and concubines. He lived in tents in the wilderness, shifting from place to place; and so do his descendants, particularly those heretofore called Scenites, and those now called Bedowees.\* He was an archer in the wilderness; and so are they. He was to be the father of twelve princes, or heads of tribes; and they live in clans or tribes

\* "The Bedowees (says Mr Middleton) have no settled place of abode, but fix at such places as will supply them with water, pasture and fruits, subsisting chiefly upon the flesh or milk of their herds and cattle. In this roving life centers all their happiness, and they look upon their more settled countrymen as abject slaves. They sleep in tents or huts, which they pitch in the evening in any spot prescribed either by fancy or convenience. These movable habitations, which are called *illymas*, from the shade they afford, are of an oblong form, and differ in size according to the number of the people who occupy them; they are covered with the skin of beasts, and supported, some by one pillar, some by two, and others by three, whilst a sort of curtain or carpet, made of skins, divides the tent into separate apartments. The pillars are straight poles eight or ten feet high, and four or five inches thick, serving not only to support the tent, but being full of hooks, they hang upon them their clothes, baskets, saddles, &c. When the people retire to sleep, they lay themselves down upon a mat or carpet placed either in the centre or a corner of the tent; and such as are married have a corner of the tent divided off by a curtain."

to this day. He was a wild man, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him; and they still live in the same state of war, their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them.

When we reflect on these strange circumstances, how wonderful does it appear to us that the same people should retain the same disposition for so many ages; but still how much more wonderful is it that, with this disposition, and this enmity against the whole world, they should still subsist an independent and free people. It cannot be pretended that no attempts were ever made to subdue them, for the greatest conquerors in the world have almost all, in their turns, attempted it, and some have been very near effecting it. Neither can it be pretended that the dryness or inaccessibleness of their country hath been their preservation; for their country hath been often penetrated, but could never be entirely subdued. Large armies have found the means of subsistence in their country: none of their powerful invaders ever desisted on this account; and therefore, the reason of their having withstood every effort to conquer them must be imputed to some other cause. This was certainly no less than the divine interposition, and which will evidently appear if we attend to the following very singular circumstances.

Alexander was preparing an expedition against them, when an inflammatory fever cut him off in the flower of his age. Pompey was in the career of his conquest, when urgent affairs called him elsewhere. CÆlius Gallus had penetrated far into the country, when a fatal disease destroyed great numbers of his men, and obliged him to return. Trajan besieged their capital city, but was defeated by thunder and lightning, whirlwinds and other prodigies, and that as often as he renewed his assaults. Severus besieged the same city twice, and was twice repulsed from before it; and the historian Dion (a man of rank and character, though an heathen) plainly ascribes the defeat of these two emperors to the interposition of a divine power.

Indeed, if we consider the whole matter in its proper light, we cannot fail being of the same opinion with

this heathen historian; for, without a divine interposition, how could a single nation stand out against the enmity of the whole world for any length of time, and much more for near four thousand years together? The great empires round them have all in their turns, fallen to ruin, while they have continued the same from the beginning, and are likely to continue the same to the end.

The Arabs are the only people, except the Jews, who have subsisted as a distinct people from the beginning; and in some respects they very much resemble each other, as will appear by the following comparisons:

1. The Arabs, as well as Jews, are descended from Abraham, and both boast of their descent from that father of the faithful.

2. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, are circumcised, and both profess to have derived that ceremony from Abraham.

3. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, had originally twelve heads of tribes, who were their princes or governors.

4. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, marry among themselves and in their own tribes. And

5. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, are singular in several of their customs, and are standing monuments, to all ages, of the exactness of the divine predictions, and of the veracity of Scripture History.

We have only one observation more to make on the fulfilment of the very singular particulars contained in the prophecy relative to Abraham and Ishmael; and that is, that they are so incontrovertible as to defeat every attempt that can be made to place them in a fallacious light. We know the predictions delivered to Ishmael to be daily verified in his descendants, and therefore have, as it were, ocular demonstration for our faith; which is proving, by plain matter of fact, that *the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men*, and that his truth, as well as his mercy, endureth for ever.

## CHAP. III.

### *Of the Prophecies concerning JACOB and ESAU.*

THE Almighty having been pleased to disclose unto Abraham the state and condition of his posterity by Ishmael, who was the son of the bond-woman, he was likewise pleased to predict some things of a much more important nature concerning the posterity of Isaac, who was the son of his wife Sarah. This son was properly the child of promise, and the prophecies relating to him and his family are much more numerous than those relating to Ishmael and his descendants.

Some time before the birth of Ishmael, the Almighty was pleased to make this promise to Abraham, *In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*, Gen. xii. 3. But after the birth of Ishmael by Hagar, and Isaac by Sarah, the promise was limited to Isaac; *for in Isaac shall thy seed be called*, Gen. xxi. 12. And accordingly to Isaac was the promise repeated, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*; which plainly intimated, that the Saviour of the world was not to come from the family of Ishmael, but that of Isaac.

The Almighty had been pleased to promise the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants four hundred years before they obtained possession of it, and it was afterwards promised to his son Isaac: *Sojourn in this land (says the Lord unto Isaac) and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father.*

This promise was strictly fulfilled soon after the death of Moses (which happened in the year of the world 1447) when the Israelites got possession of the land of Canaan through the assistance and protection of Joshua, who succeeded Moses in the government of the people. See page 285, vol. 1, &c. In pursuance of these prophecies they remained in possession for several ages; and afterwards, when for their sins and iniquities they were to be removed

from it, their removal also was foretold, both the carrying away of the ten tribes, and the captivity of the two remaining tribes for seventy years, as likewise their final captivity and dispersion into all nations, till, in the fullness of time, they shall be again restored to the land of their inheritance.

Abraham received a promise from God that his posterity should be multiplied exceedingly above that of others. *I will make of thee a great nation; and in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore.* See Gen. xii. 2. xxii. 17. The like promise was also continued to Isaac, *I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven*, Gen. xxvi. 4.

Not to mention the great increase of the other posterity of Abraham and Isaac, how soon did their descendants by Jacob grow up to a mighty nation, and how numerous were they formerly in the land of Canaan? How numerous were they likewise (according to the accounts we have from Philo and Josephus) in various other parts of the world? And after innumerable massacres and persecutions which they have undergone, how numerous are they still in their present dispersion among all nations? Mr Basnage (who has written an history of the Jews as a supplement and continuation of the history of Josephus) says, “It is impossible to fix the number of persons this “nation is composed of. But yet we have reason to be “lieve, there are still near three millions of people, who “profess the Jewish religion; and, as their phrase is, “are witnesses of the unity of God in all the nations of “the world.”

Isaac had two sons, the one named Jacob, and the other Esau. The descendants of these sons did not incorporate themselves together as one people, but separated into two different nations; and therefore as it had been before specified which of the two, Ishmael or Isaac, was to be heir of the promises made to Abraham, so there was a necessity now for the same distinction to be made between Esau and Jacob.

This was accordingly done, and that in the most ample and clear manner. When Rebecca, their mother, had

conceived, the children struggled together within her, Gen. xxv. 22. and she received the following Divine revelation: *Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger,* Gen. xxv. 23.

The same Divine spirit influenced and directed their father to give his final benediction to the like purpose; for thus did he bless Jacob: *God give thee of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.* Gen. xxvii. 28, 29. And thus did he bless Esau: *Behold thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.*

But for greater clearness and certainty a more express revelation was afterwards made to Jacob; and the land of Canaan, a numerous progeny, and the blessing of all nations, were promised to him in particular. *I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Israel: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee, and in thy seed, shall the families of the earth be blessed.* Gen. xxviii. 13, 14.

This prophecy, as well as those before mentioned, was not to be verified in the persons of Esau and Jacob, but in those of their posterity. Jacob was so far from bearing rule over Esau, that he was forced to fly his country for fear of him. He continued abroad several years, and when he returned he sent a servant before with a supplicatory message to his brother Esau, requesting that he might find grace in his sight. When he heard of Esau's coming to meet him with four hundred men, he was greatly afraid and distressed, and cried unto the Lord,

*Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau.* Gen. xxxii. 41. He sent a magnificent present before him to appease his brother, calling him his *lord* and himself his *servant*. When he met him, he *bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.* And after he had found a gracious reception, he made this acknowledgment: *I have seen thy face as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.*

At this time Jacob had no temporal superiority over his brother Esau; and therefore we must look for the completion of the prophecy among their descendants. The prophecy itself mentions plainly *two nations*, and *two manner of people*, and comprehends these several particulars; that the families of Esau and Jacob should grow up into two different people and nations; that the family of the elder should be subject to that of the younger; that in situation and other temporal advantages they should be much alike; that the elder branch should delight more in war and violence, but yet should be subdued by the younger; that however there should be a time when the elder should have dominion, and shake off the yoke of the younger; but in all spiritual gifts and graces the younger should be greatly superior, and be the happy instrument of conveying the blessing to all nations.

By the first part of the prophecy, *Two nations are in thy womb, &c.* we find that they (that is, their posterity) were not only to grow up into two nations, but into two very different nations. And have not the Edomites (who were descended from Esau) and the Israelites, (who were descended from Jacob) been all along two very different people in their manners, customs and religions, which made them to be perpetually at variance with each other?

*And the children struggled together within her.* This was a token of their future disagreement, and was fully evinced when they grew up to a state of manhood by their different dispositions and inclinations. Esau was a *cunning hunter*, and delighted in the sports of the field; but Jacob was more mild and gentle, *dwelling in tents*, and minding his sheep and cattle. Esau slighted his birth-right and those sacred privileges of which Jacob was de-

sirous, and is therefore called the *profane* Esau, (Heb. xii. 16.) but Jacob was a man of better faith and religion. The like diversity ran through their posterity. The descendants of Jacob were strict observers of the Jewish religion; but those of Esau, (whatever they were at first) became, in process of time, the grossest idolaters. From these religious differences, and on other accounts, there was a continual grudge and enmity between the two nations. The king of Edom would not suffer the Israelites, in their return out of Egypt, so much as to pass through his territories, (See page 258, vol. 1.) and the history of the Edomites after is little more than the history of the wars between them and the Jews.

*And the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger.* The family of Esau was the elder, and for some time the greater and more powerful of the two, there having been dukes and kings in Edom, *before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.* Gen. xxxvi. 31. But David and his captains made an entire conquest of the Edomites, slew several thousands, compelled the rest to become his tributaries and servants, and planted garrisons among them to secure their obedience. See 2 Sam. viii. 14.

After the Edomites were reduced to subjection by David and his captains, they continued in a state of servitude for about an hundred and fifty years, and, instead of having a king of their own, were governed by viceroys or deputies appointed by the kings of Judah. In the days of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, they revolted, recovered their liberties, and *made a king over themselves,* 2 Kings, viii. 20. But after this they were again reduced by several of the princes of Judah at different periods, and most of their principal places destroyed. Judas Maccabeus, attacked and defeated them several times, killing no less than twenty thousand at one time, and upwards of the like number at another. He likewise took their chief city Hebron, and destroyed all the towers and fortresses about it. At length Hyrcanus, the nephew of Judas Maccabeus, took what few cities they had left, and reduced them to the necessity of either embracing the Jewish religion, or of leaving their country and seeking new habita-

tions elsewhere. They thought proper to chuse the former, in consequence of which they submitted themselves to be circumcised, became proselytes to the Jewish religion, and were ever after incorporated with those very people whom they had before considered as their enemies, and with whom they were perpetually at variance.

In one part of this remarkable prophecy it is predicted that, in point of situation, and other temporal advantages, Esau and Jacob should be much alike. It was said to Jacob, *God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.* And much the same was said to Esau, *Behold, thy dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.* The spiritual blessing, or the promise of the blessed seed, could be given only to one; but temporal good things might be given to both. Jacob's situation was in a very fertile and pleasant country; nor was that of Esau's less so. Mount Seir and the adjacent country, was at first in the possession of the Edomites; after which they extended themselves farther into Arabia, as also into the southern parts of Judea. But in whatever part they were situated we find that the Edomites, in temporal advantages, were little inferior to the Israelites, having cattle, and beasts, and substance in abundance. At the time that the Israelites were on their return from Egyptian bondage, the country in which the Edomites then lived abounded with the most fruitful fields and vineyards, as evidently appears from the manner of the request then made by the Israelites for permission to pass through those territories: *Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country; we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells.*

It was predicted, in another part of the propheey, that Esau should delight more in war and violence than his brother, but that he should be subdued by Jacob: *And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother.* Esau himself might be said to live much by the sword, for he was a *cunning hunter, a man of the field.* He and his posterity obtained possession of Mount Seir by force and violence, by destroying and expelling from thence the

Horites, who were the former inhabitants. By what means they spread themselves farther into Arabia we are not informed; but it appears that, upon a sedition among them, which occasioned a separation, the greater part seized upon the south-west parts of Judea during the Babylonish captivity, and afterwards made that their fixed place of residence.

Both before and after this the Edomites were almost continually at war with the Jews, and upon every occasion were ready to join with their enemies. Even long after they were subdued by the Jews, they still retained the same violent spirit, as appears by the character thus given of them by Josephus. "They were (says he) a "turbulent and disorderly nation, always ready for com- "motions and rejoicing in changes; at the least request "of those who besought them beginning war, and hasten- "ing to battles as it were to a feast." This character given them by Josephus appears very just, for, a little before the last siege of Jerusalem, they went, at the entreaty of the zealots, to assist them against the priests and people, and there, together with the zealots, committed the most unheard-of cruelties, and barbarously murdered Ananus the high-priest.

There was, however, to be a time when the elder should have the dominion, and shake off the yoke of the younger. *And it shall come to pass when thou shalt have dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.* It is not here said or meant that the Edomites should have dominion over the seed of Jacob, but simply have dominion, as they had when they appointed a king of their own. The whole of this sentence is, in the Jerusalem Targum, thus paraphrased: "And it shall be when the "sons of Jacob attend to the law, and observe the pre- "cepts, they shall impose the yoke of servitude upon thy "neck; but when they shall turn away themselves from "studying the law, and neglect the precepts, behold then "thou shalt shake off the yoke of servitude from thy "neck."

It was David who imposed the yoke on the Edomites (at which time the Jewish people strictly observed the law) and it was very galling from the first. Towards the

latter end of Solomon's reign, Hadad the Edomite, of the blood royal, who had been carried into Egypt in his childhood, returned into his own country, and raised some disturbances, but was not able to recover his throne, his subjects being over-awed by the garrisons which David had placed among them; and in the reigns of the succeeding princes of Judea, they were totally subdued.

We come now to the last part of the prophecy, which predicts that in all spiritual gifts and graces the younger should be greatly superior to the elder, and be the happy instrument of conveying the blessing to all nations. *In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed:* and hitherto are to be referred in their full force those expressions, *Let people serve thee, and nations bow down unto thee;* *Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.* The same promise was made to Abraham in the name of God, *I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee:* Gen. xii. 3. and it is here repeated to Jacob, and thus paraphrased in the Jerusalem Targum, "He who "curseth thee shall be cursed, as Balaam the son of "Beor; and he who blesseth thee shall be blessed, as "Moses the prophet, the lawgiver of Israel."

It evidently appears that Jacob was a man of more religion, and believed the Divine promises more than Esau. The posterity of Jacob likewise preserved the true religion and the worship of one God, while the Edomites were sunk into idolatry. Of the seed of Jacob was to be born the Saviour of the world. This was the peculiar privilege and advantage of Jacob, to be the happy instrument of conveying these spiritual blessings to all nations: This was his greatest superiority over Esau; and in this sense St. Paul understands and applies the prophecy, *the elder shall serve the younger.* Rom. ix. 12.

In tracing this prophecy, as we have done, from the beginning, the whole of it appears to have been most strictly fulfilled. We find that the nation of the Edomites were several times conquered by, and made tributary to the Jews, but never the nation of the Jews to the Edomites; and the Jews have been the more considerable

people, more known in the world, and more famous in history. We have, indeed, very little more of the history of the Edomites than what is connected with that of the Jews: and where is the name or the nation at this time? They were swallowed up and lost, partly among the Nabathæan Arabs, and partly among the Jews; and, about a century after the birth of Christ, the very name of them was abolished and disused.

Such was the fate of the Edomites for insulting and oppressing their brethren the Israelites, and hereby were fulfilled the prophecies of the other inspired men. See Jeremiah xlix. 7, &c. Ezekiel xxv. 12, &c. Joel iii. 19. Amos i. 11, &c. and lastly, the prophet Obadiah. At this very time we see the Jews subsisting as a distinct people, while the Edomites are no more; and thus is amply fulfilled the words of the latter prophet: *For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.* And again, *there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau, for the Lord hath spoken it.* See Obadiah, ver. 10 and 18.

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## CHAP. IV.

*Of the Prophecies of Jacob concerning his posterity, but particularly his son Judah.*

IN the blessing bestowed on Jacob, we have two promises, the one temporal, and the other spiritual. The first was the promise of the land of Canaan, and the second the promise of the seed in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed. These promises were first made to Abraham, then repeated to Isaac, and afterwards confirmed to Jacob, who, a short time before his death, bequeathed them to his children.

The temporal blessing or inheritance of the land of Canaan might be shared and divided among all his sons, but the blessed seed could descend only from one. Accordingly, Jacob assigned to each a portion of the promised

land, but limited the descent of the blessed seed to the tribe of Judah, and at the same time sketched out the characters and fortunes of the different tribes into which the people were to be divided.—See p. 151, vol. i.

As Joseph was the favorite son of Jacob, he adopted his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim for his own, but foretold that the younger should be the greater of the two. This prediction was fulfilled in a very ample manner, for the tribe of Ephraim grew to be so numerous and powerful, that it was sometimes put for all the ten tribes of Israel.

Of Reuben, the elder son of Jacob, it is said, *Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel*, Gen. xlix. 4. And what is recorded great or excellent of the tribe of Reuben? In number and power they were inferior to several other tribes.

Of Simeon and Levi it is said, *I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.* And was not this eminently fulfilled in the tribe of Levi, who had no portion or inheritance of their own, but were dispersed among the other tribes? Neither had the tribe of Simeon any inheritance properly of their own, but only a portion in the midst of the tribes of Judah, from whence several of them afterwards went in search of new habitations, and were thereby divided from the rest of their brethren.

Of Zebulun it is said, *He shall dwell at the haven of the sea, and shall be for an haven of ships.* And accordingly the tribe of Zebulun extended from the Sea of Galilee to the Mediterranean, where they had commodious havens for shipping. And how could Jacob have foretold the situation of any tribe, which was determined two hundred years after by casting of lots, unless he had been directed by that Divine Spirit, who disposeth of all events?

Of Benjamin it is said, *He shall raven as a wolf;* and was not that a fierce and warlike tribe, as appears in several instances, and particularly in the case of the Levite's wife, when they alone waged war against all the other tribes, and overcame them in two battles. See Judges xx.

In like manner Jacob characterises all the other tribes, and foretels their temporal condition, and that of Judah

as well as the rest. But to Judah he particularly bequeaths the spiritual blessing, and delivers it in much the same form of words as it was delivered to him. Isaac had said to Jacob, *Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee*, Gen. xxvii. 29. And here Jacob saith to Judah, *Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee*. And for greater certainty it is added, *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be*.

The explanation of the greater part of this prophecy hath been already related, as well as the fulfilment of it, in a former part of our work, as the Reader will see by referring to the note in page 151, vol. i. It only remains, therefore, that we here take notice of such parts of it as are not there fully explained. And first, with respect to the expression,

*Until Shiloh come.* This evidently means, (as is agreed by almost all interpreters, both ancient and modern) till the coming of the Messiah. And however some may explain the word, and whatever resource they may have for its explanation to the contrary, the Messiah is incontestibly the person intended. The Vulgar Latin translates it, *He who is to be sent*; and to favor this version the following passage in St. John's Gospel is usually cited, *Go wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation sent*: And who was ever sent with such power and authority from God as the Messiah, who frequently speaketh of himself in the Gospel under the denomination of *him whom the father hath sent*. The Seventy translate it, *the things reserved for him*, or, according to other copies, *he for whom it is reserved*. And what was the great treasure reserved for Judah, or who was the person for whom all things were reserved, but the Messiah? In the Samaritan text and version it is translated *the peacemaker*. And to whom can this, or any the like title, be so justly applied as to the Messiah, who is emphatically stiled the *prince of peace*, Isaiah ix. 6. and at whose

birth was sung that heavenly anthem, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.* Luke ii. 14.

These are the principal interpretations of the Hebrew word *Shiloh*; and from the whole there cannot be the least doubt but that, by the *coming of Shiloh*, was meant the *coming of the Messiah*.

*And unto him shall the gathering of the people be.* If we understand this of Judah, that the other tribes should be gathered to that, it was in some measure fulfilled by the people going up so frequently as they did to Jerusalem, which was in the tribe of Judah, in order to obtain justice in difficult cases, and to worship God in his holy temple.

Upon the division of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, the tribe of Benjamin, and the priests and Levites, and several out of all the other tribes, went over to Judah, and were so blended and incorporated together, that they are more than once spoken of as one tribe. And it is expressly said (*1 Kings, xii. 20.*) *there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only;* all the rest were swallowed up in that tribe, and considered as parts and members of the same.

In like manner, when the Israelites were carried away captive into Assyria, it is said, *there was none left but the tribe of Judah only;* and yet we know that the tribe of Benjamin, and many of the other tribes, then remained, but they are reckoned as one and the same tribe with Judah. Nay, at that very time there was a remnant of Israel that escaped from the Assyrians, and went and adhered to Judah; for we find afterwards that in the reign of Josiah there were some of Manasseh and Ephraim and of the remnant of Israel, who contributed money towards repairing the temple, as well as Judah and Benjamin, *2 Chron. xxxiv. 9.* and at the solemn celebration of the passover some of *Israel were present as well as all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.* When the people returned from the Babylonish captivity, then again several of the tribes of Israel associated themselves, and returned with Judah and Benjamin. In short, at so many different times, and upon such different occasions, were the other

tribes gathered to that of Judah, that the latter became the general name of the whole nation; and after the Babylonish captivity, they were no longer called the *people of Israel*, but the *Jews*, or *people of Judah*.

Again, if we understand this of Shiloh, or the Messiah, that the people, or Gentiles, should be gathered to his obedience, it is no more than what is foretold in many other prophecies of scripture; and it began to be fulfilled in Cornelius the centurion, whose conversion (Acts x.) was, as we may say, the first fruits of the Gentiles, and the harvest afterwards was exceeding plenteous. In a few years the gospel was disseminated, and *took root downward, and bare fruit upward*, in the most considerable parts of the then known world; and in Constantine's time, it might with great propriety be said, *the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and he shall reign for ever and ever.* Rev. xi. 15.

If we join these last observations with the words preceding *until Shiloh come*, we shall find two events specified as fore-runners of the sceptre departing from Judah, namely, the coming of the Messiah, and the gathering of the Gentiles to him; and these together point out, with great exactness, the precise time of the sceptre's departure.

Now it is certain that before the final destruction of Jerusalem, and the dissolution of the Jewish commonwealth by the Romans, the Messiah was not only come, but great numbers of the Gentiles were converted to him. The very same thing was predicted by Our Saviour himself, Matt. xxiv. 14. *This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come*, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the Jewish constitution. The Jews were not to be cut off till the Gentiles were grafted into the church; and, in fact, we find that the apostles and their companions preached the gospel in all the then known parts of the world. *Their sound (as St. Paul expresses it) went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.* Rom. x. 48. And *then the end came*, then was an end put to the Jewish polity both in church and state. The government of the tribe of Judah had subsisted in some form or other from the death of

Jacob to the last destruction of Jerusalem; but then it was utterly broken and ruined; then the sceptre departed, and hath been departed from that time to the present.

It may not be improper here to add a just observation made on the subject by that learned prelate bishop Sherlock. "As the tribe of Benjamin (says he) annexed itself to the tribe of Judah as its head, so it ran the same fortune with it; they went together into captivity, they returned home together, and were both in being when Shiloh came. This also was foretold by Jacob, *Benjamin shall raven as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.* The morning and night here can be nothing else but the morning and night of the Jewish state; for this state is the subject of all Jacob's prophecy from one end to the other; and consequently it is here foretold of Benjamin, that he should continue to the very last times of the Jewish state. This interpretation is confirmed by Moses's prophecy, for the prophecy of Moses is in truth an exposition of Jacob's. *Benjamin, saith Moses, shall dwell in safety; the Lord shall cover him all the day long.* Deut. xxxiii. 12. What is this *all the day long?* The same certainly as *the morning and night.* Does not, therefore, this import a promise of a longer continuance to Benjamin than to the other tribes? And was it not most exactly fulfilled?"

All we have farther to say relative to this prophecy is that the completion of it (which has been clearly demonstrated) furnishes us with an invincible argument, not only that the Messiah has come, but that our Blessed Redeemer is the very person. The sceptre was not to depart from Judah until the Messiah should come; but the sceptre hath long been departed, and consequently the Messiah hath been long come. The sceptre departed at the final destruction of Jerusalem, and hath been departed now more than seventeen centuries, and consequently the Messiah came a little before that period; so that prejudice itself cannot long make any doubt concerning the reality of the person. Every man, therefore, of serious reflection, must say as Simon Peter said to Jesus, *Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.* John vi. 68, 69.

## CHAP. V.

*Of the Prophecy of Moses, concerning a Prophet like unto himself.*

AMONG the different prophecies transmitted to posterity by the great legislator Moses, who was not only a valuable writer, but a most distinguished prophet, the most memorable is, that of another prophet to be raised like unto himself.

At the time of this prediction Moses was about to leave his people, and therefore, to give them some comfort, he promises them another prophet. *The Lord thy God* (says he) *will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken.* Deut. xviii. 15. The same is repeated in the name of God, *I will raise them up a prophet, from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him,* ver. 18. It is likewise farther added, in the next verse, *And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of you.*

In order to explain the meaning of this amazing prophecy, as well as to point out the full and ample completion of it, it is necessary to consider three things:

First, who the prophet was that is here particularly meant.

Secondly, that this prophet resembled Moses in a much greater degree than any other person ever did. And

Thirdly, that the people have been, and still are severely punished for their infidelity and disobedience to this prophet predicted by Moses.

And first, we shall consider who the prophet was that is here particularly meant. It has been the opinion of some that Joshua was the person, because he is said to have been the *successor of Moses in prophecies,* Ecclesiasticus xlvi. 1. And as the people were commanded to hearken unto this prophet, so they said unto Joshua, *Ac-*

*cording as we have hearkened unto Moses in all things so will we hearken unto thee,* Joshua, i. 17. Some again have imagined that the prophet here meant was Jeremiah, because (say they) he frequently makes use of the words of Moses; and Abarbinel, in his preface to his commentary upon Jeremiah, reckons up fourteen particulars wherein they resemble each other, and observes that as Moses prophesied forty years, so likewise did Jeremiah.

There are others again, and those by far the much greater number, who do not imagine the prophet meant to be either Joshua or Jeremiah, or indeed, any single person whatever, but a succession of prophets to be raised up like unto Moses; because (say they) the Jews being prohibited from going after *enchanters* and *diviners*, they could not have been effectually secured from following them, but by having true prophets of their own whom they might consult upon particular occasions.

But notwithstanding this difference in opinion among those who have written on the subject, yet the very favorers themselves of each respective construction agree generally in this; that though Joshua, or Jeremiah, or a succession of prophets, was *primarily* intended, yet the main end, and ultimate scope of the prophecy, was the Messiah; and indeed there are many sufficient reasons for understanding it of him principally, if not solely, besides the preference of a literal and typical interpretation.

Towards the conclusion of the book of Deuteronomy we find the following passage, which evidently refers to this prophecy, and totally refutes the notion of Joshua's being the prophet like unto Moses. *And Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses. And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face: In all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do, &c.* See Deut. xxxiv. 9, &c.

At what time, or by what hand, this addition was made to the sacred volume, cannot be certainly told; but it must have been made after the death of Moses. The expression, *there arose not a prophet since in Israel,*

plainly implies that this addition must have been made some time after Joshua succeeded to the government of the people, and consequently the Jewish church had no conception of a perpetual succession of prophets to be raised up like unto Moses. And if we suppose this addition was made (as it is generally believed to have been) by Ezra after the Babylonish captivity, then it is evident, beyond all contradiction, that neither Jeremiah, nor any of the ancient prophets, was esteemed like unto Moses.

Let us now consider what are the peculiar marks and characters, wherein it is said that none other prophet had ever resembled Moses. *There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses.* And which of the prophets ever conversed so frequently and familiarly with God? Which of them ever wrought so many and such astonishing miracles? It must be answered that not any one of all the prophets who succeeded Moses was ever equal or comparable to him, except the Messiah, the great Saviour and Redeemer of mankind.

It is undeniably evident, from the declaration which God was pleased to make on occasion of the sedition raised by Miriam and Aaron (see page 244, vol. 1.) that there was not to be any prophet in the Jewish church, much less a succession of prophets, like unto Moses. Miriam and Aaron grew jealous of Moses, and mutinied against him, saying, *Hath the Lord, indeed, spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?* Numb. xii. 2. The controversy, indeed, was of such importance, that God himself was pleased to interpose, and put an end to it. *If (said he) there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses.*

By this is clearly seen not only the great difference which God was pleased to make between Moses and other prophets, but likewise in what respect that difference lay. God revealed himself unto other prophets in dreams and visions, but with Moses he conversed more

openly, that is, *face to face*. These were privileges and prerogatives of the most singular nature, and which evidently distinguished Moses from all the other prophets of the Jewish dispensation. And yet there was a prophet to be raised up like unto Moses; but who ever resembled him in those superior advantages, except the Messiah?

It is, moreover, implied, that this prophet should be a lawgiver. *A prophet like unto thee*; not simply a prophet, but a prophet like unto Moses, that is, (as Eusebius explains it) a second lawgiver. The reason, too, that is assigned for sending this prophet, will evince that he was to be vested with this character. The people had requested that the divine laws might not be delivered to them in so terrible and awful a manner as they were in Horeb. God was pleased to approve of their request, and therefore promised that he would raise up unto them a prophet like unto Moses, a lawgiver who should speak unto them his commands in a familiar and gentle way. The prophet, therefore, here meant was to be a lawgiver; but there were not any of the Jewish prophets lawgivers in all the intermediate time between Moses and Christ.

If we take a farther view of this matter, we shall find, from the most indubitable authority, that there never was any prophet, and much less a succession of prophets, whom the Jews esteemed like unto Moses, from his death to the coming of the Messiah. The highest degree of inspiration is termed by them Mosaical, and they enumerate several particulars in which *that* hath the pre-eminence and advantage above all others. There was, indeed, in consequence of this prophecy, a general expectation of some extraordinary prophet to arise, which particularly prevailed about the time of our Saviour's coming on earth. The Jews then, as well as since, understood and applied this prophecy to the Messiah, the only prophet whom they will ever allow to be as great, or greater than Moses.

When our Saviour had fed five thousand men, by a miracle like that of Moses who fed the Israelites in the wilderness, then those men said, *This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world*, John vi. 14. St. Peter and St. Stephen likewise directly apply the

prophecy to him, Acts iii. 22, 23. viii. 37. and they may very well be justified for so doing; for he fully answers all the marks and characters, which are here given of the prophet like unto Moses. He had immediate communication with the deity, and God spake to him *face to face*, as he did to Moses. He performed *signs and wonders* as great or greater than those of Moses. *I will raise them up a prophet*, saith God; and the people glorified God, saying, *That a great prophet is risen up among us*. Luke viii. 16. *I will put my words in his mouth*, saith God; and our Saviour saith, *I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me*. John xviii. 8. *He shall speak unto them all that I shall command him*, saith God; and our Saviour saith, *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: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak*. John xii. 49, 50.

Having thus clearly pointed out who the person was meant in Moses's prophecy, we are now to take some notice of the great and striking likeness between Moses and Christ, and how far the latter resembled the former in more respects than any other person ever did.

We have already given some instances wherein they resemble each other; namely, of God's speaking to both *face to face*, of both performing *signs and wonders*, of both being *lawgivers*; and in these respects none of the ancient prophets were like unto Moses. None of them were lawgivers; they only interpreted and enforced the laws of Moses. None of them performed so many and such great wonders. None of them had such clear communications with God: they all saw visions, and dreamed dreams. Moses and Christ are the only two who perfectly resembled each other in these respects. The comparison between them (as given by Eusebius) we have already shewn in a former part of our work, as the reader will find by referring to page 283, vol. 1. But farther to illustrate this material part of the prophecy, we shall preserve some very curious observations on the subject made by the Rev. Dr Jortin, in his *Remarks on ecclesiastical History*.

"Moses (says he) fled from his country to escape the hands of the king of Egypt; so did Christ when his parents went into Egypt. Afterwards the *Lord* said to Moses in Midian, *Go, return into Egypt; for all the men are dead which sought thy life*, Exod. iv. 19. so the angel of the Lord said to Joseph in almost the same words, *Arise, and take the young child, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young child's life*; Matt. ii. 20. pointing him out as it were for that prophet, who should arise, like unto Moses.

Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, chusing rather to suffer affliction; Christ refused to be made king, chusing rather to suffer affliction.

Moses, says St. Stephen, *was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*, and Josephus says that he was a very forward and accomplished youth, and had wisdom and knowledge beyond his years. St. Luke observes of Christ, that *he increased (betimes) in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man*, and his discourses in the temple with the doctors, when he was but twelve years old, were a proof of it.

Moses was not only a lawgiver, a prophet, and a worker of miracles, but a king and a priest: in all these offices the resemblance between Moses and Christ was singular.

Moses brought darkness over the land; the sun withdrew his light at Christ's crucifixion: And as the darkness which was spread over Egypt was followed by the destruction of their first born, and of Pharaoh and his host; so the darkness at Christ's death was the forerunner of the destruction of the Jews.

Moses foretold the calamities which would befall the nation for their disobedience; so did Christ.

The spirit which was in Moses was conferred in some degree upon the seventy elders, and they prophesied; Christ conferred miraculous powers upon his seventy disciples.

Moses was victorious over powerful kings and great nations; so was Christ by the effects of his religion, and by the fall of those who persecuted his church.

Moses conquered Amalek by holding up both his hands; Christ overcame his and our enemies when his hands were fastened to the cross.

Moses interceded for transgressors, and caused an atonement to be made for them, and stopped the wrath of God; so did Christ.

Moses ratified a covenant between God and the people by sprinkling them with blood; Christ with his own blood.

Moses desired to die for the people, and prayed that God would forgive them, or blot him out of his book; Christ did more, he died for sinners.

Moses instituted the passover, when a lamb was sacrificed, none of whose bones were to be broken, and whose blood protected the people from destruction; Christ was the paschal lamb.

Moses lifted up the serpent, that they who looked upon him might be healed of their mortal wounds; by properly looking up to Christ all will be healed.

All Moses's affection towards the people, all his cares and toils, on their account, were repaid by them with ingratitude, murmuring, and rebellion; the same returns the Jews made to Christ for all his benefits.

Moses was ill used by his own family, his brother and sister rebelled against him; there was a time when Christ's own brethren believed not in him.

Moses had a very wicked and perverse generation committed to his care and conduct, and to enable him to rule them, miraculous powers were given to him, and he used his utmost endeavor to make the people obedient to God, and to save them from ruin; but in vain; in the space of forty years they all fell in the wilderness except two: Christ also was given to a generation not less wicked and perverse, his instructions and his miracles were lost upon them, and in about the same space of time, after they had rejected him, they were destroyed.

Moses was very meek above all men that were on the face of the earth; so was Christ.

The people could not enter into the land of promise till Moses was dead; by the death of Christ the kingdom of heaven was open to believers.

In the death of Moses and Christ there is also a resemblance of some circumstances; Moses died, in one sense, for the iniquities of the people; it was their rebellion which was the occasion of it, which drew down the displeasure of God upon them and upon him; Moses went up, in the sight of the people, to the top of mount Nebo, and there he died, when he was in perfect vigor, when *his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated*: Christ suffered for the sins of men, and was led up, in the presence of the people, to mount Calvary, where he died in the flower of his age, and when he was in his full natural strength.

Neither Moses, nor Christ, as far as we can collect from sacred history, were ever sick, or felt any bodily decay or infirmity, which would have rendered them unfit for the toils they underwent; their sufferings were of another kind.

Moses was buried, and no man knew where his body lay; nor could the Jews find the body of Christ.

Lastly, as Moses, a little before his death, promised *another prophet*; so Christ, before his death, promised *another comforter*."

Such are the comparisons made by Dr Jortin relative to the great resemblance between Moses and Christ; but the greatest similitude consists in their both being *law-givers*, which no other prophet ever was. They may resemble each other in many other circumstances, and a fruitful imagination may strike upon a likeness, where, in reality, there is not any to be found. But, as the same excellent writer concludes, "Is this similitude and correspondence in so many things between Moses and Christ the effect of mere chance? Let us search all the records of universal history, and see if we can find a man who was so like to Moses as Christ was, and so like to Christ as Moses was. If we cannot find such an one, then have we found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of God."

We come now to consider the last part of the prophecy, in doing of which it will be no very difficult matter to prove, that the people have been, and still are, severely

punished for their infidelity and disobedience to this prophet.

The words in this part of the prophecy are very clear and express. *Unto him ye shall hearken: And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.* That is, I will severely punish him for it; or, as the Seventy translate it, *I will take vengeance of him.*

This prophecy, as we have clearly proved, evidently relates to Christ. God himself, in a manner, applies it to him; for when he was transfigured, there came a voice out of the cloud, which said, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him,* Matt. xvii. 5. This manifestly alludes to the words of Moses, *Unto him ye shall hearken,* and clearly points out that Christ alone was the prophet like unto Moses. The apostle St. Peter directly applies it to our Saviour. *For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you: And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people,* Acts iii. 22, 23.

And hath not this terrible denunciation been fully executed upon the Jews? Was not the complete destruction of that incredulous nation (soon after Christ had finished his ministry among them, and his apostles had likewise preached in vain) the fulfilling of the threat for not hearkening unto him? We may be the more certain of this application, as our Saviour himself not only denounced the same destruction, but also foretold the signs, the manner, and the circumstances of it with the greatest exactness. Such, indeed, of those Jews who believed in his name, by remembering the caution, and following the advice which he had given them, escaped from the general ruin of their country; but the main body either perished in their infidelity, or were carried captives into other nations, and by persisting in the same infidelity, they have ever since been a vagabond, distressed and miserable people.

The wise dispensations of Providence are in no respect more amply displayed than in the fulfilment of this part of the prophecy. We must be blind not to see it; and seeing, we cannot but admire and adore it. What account can the Jews themselves give of their long captivity, dispersion and misery? Their former captivity, for the punishment of their wickedness and idolatry lasted only seventy years; but they have lived in their present dispersion, even though they have not been idolaters, upwards of seventeen hundred.

But though they have thus long labored under these calamities for the enormity of their crimes, yet, it is to be hoped that, upon a proper faith and repentance, they will, in time, become objects of the Divine mercy. We shall, therefore, conclude with the words of the apostle St. Paul, *Our hearts' desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved*, Rom. x. i.

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## CHAP. VI.

### *Of the Prophecies of Moses concerning the Jews.*

BESIDES the great and amazing prophecy related in the preceding chapter, Moses, a short time before his death, delivered many others to the Jews, in which he predicted the great blessings that would be bestowed upon them, if they paid a proper attention to the laws he had given them, and, on the contrary, the heavy curses that would unavoidably fall upon them if they became refractory and disobedient to the Divine will.

These prophecies are contained in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, and the greater part of them relate to the curses that should fall on the Jews in case of their disobedience, all which have been since most strictly fulfilled, as will appear from the following observations.

The first on the head begins at the 49th verse, in which it is said, *The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the*

*eagle flieſt, a nation whose tongue thou ſhalt not understand.* This was fulfilled in the Chaldeans, who may be justly ſaid to have come from afar, in comparison with the Moabites, Philistines, and others, who frequently invaded Judea, and committed depredations in various parts of the country.

The like description of the Chaldeans is given by the prophet Jeremiah, *Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, ſaith the Lord: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they ſay,* Jeremiah v. 15. He likewife compares the enemies of the Jews to eagles, *Our persecutors (says he) are ſwifter than the eagles of the heaven: they pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness,\* Lam. iv. 9.*

In the 50th verſe of the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy the people who were to be the persecutors of the Jews are thus farther characterized. And they ſhall be a nation of fierce countenance, which ſhall not regard the person of the old, nor ſhew favor to the young. Such were the Chaldeans; and the ſacred historian expressly ſaith, that, for the wickedneſs of the Jews, God brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who ſlew their young men with the ſword, in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that ſtooped for age; he gave them all into his hand. 2. Chron. xxxvi. 17.

The Romans were no less the persecutors of the Jews than the Chaldeans, of which Josephus gives us the following instances. He ſays, that when Vespasian entered the city of Gadara (which was for a long time strongly defended by the Jews) “ he ſlew all, man by man, the Romans not ſhewing mercy to either age or sex; and that they did this out of hatred to the nation, and remem-

\* This description, however, cannot be applied to any nation with ſuch propriety as to the Romans, who, from the rapidity of their conqueſts, and the deſtruclion they made among the Jews, might very justly be compared to eagles, and, perhaps, not without an allusion to the ſtandard of the Roman armies, which was the figure of that bird: their language also was much more unknown to the Jews than that of the Chaldees.

brance of their former injuries." The like slaughter was made at Gamala, "for no person escaped except two women who concealed themselves, and thereby avoided the rage of the Romans. They did not so much as spare young children; but every one, at that time, snatching up many, cast them down from the citadel."

According to the prophecy of Moses, the enemies of the Jews were to besiege and take their cities: *And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land.* This was accordingly fulfilled, for *Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them,* 2 Kings, xviii. 13. and Nebuchadnezzar and his captains took and spoiled Jerusalem, burnt the city and temple, and *brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about,* 2 Kings, xxv. 10.

The Romans likewise (according to what we read in Josephus's history of the Jewish wars) demolished several fortified places before they besieged and destroyed Jerusalem. And the Jews who inhabited that city may very justly be said to have *trusted in their high and fenced walls*, for they seldom ventured a battle in the open field. They confided in the strength and situation of Jerusalem, as the Jebusites (the former inhabitants of the place) had done before them: *Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitation?* Jeremiah xxi. 13.

Jerusalem, indeed, was a very strong place, and (according to the description given of it by Tacitus and Josephus) was wonderfully fortified both by nature and art. And yet, how many times was it taken previous to its final destruction by Titus? It was taken by Shishak king of Egypt, by Nebuchadnezzar, by Antiochus Epiphanes, by Pompey, by Socius, and, lastly, by Herod.

The Jews, in these sieges, were to suffer great hardships, but more particularly by famine. Accordingly, when the king of Assyria besieged Samaria, there was a great famine in that city; *and behold they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for four pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dores dung for five pieces of silver,* 2 Kings vi. 25. When Nebuchadnezzar be-

sieged Jerusalem, *the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land*, 2 Kings, xxv. 3. And in the last siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, there was a most dreadful famine in the city, as appears by the following melancholy account given of it by Josephus: He saith particularly, “that, so great were the “distresses of the people, that women snatched the very “food out of the mouths of their husbands, and sons of “their fathers; and, what was most miserable, mothers “of their infants.” In another place he says, “In every “house, if there appeared any semblance of food, a “battle immediately took place, and the dearest friends “and relations fought with each other, snatching away “the miserable provisions of life.”—Thus was literally fulfilled the words of Moses, who says, *the man's eye shall be evil towards his brother, and towards the wife of his bosom, and towards his children, because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates;* and, in like manner, *the woman's eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter.* See Deut. xxviii. 54, &c.

According to another part of this prophecy, great numbers of the Jews were to be destroyed. *And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude.* Deut. xxviii. 62. Not to mention any other of the calamities and slaughters which they have undergone, there was in the last siege of Jerusalem (according to the account given by Josephus) an infinite multitude that perished by famine. He computes that, during the whole siege, the number of those who were destroyed by the famine and sword amounted to eleven hundred thousand, the people being then assembled from all parts to celebrate the passover. There certainly is not a nation upon the earth that hath been exposed to so many massacres and persecutions as the Jews. Their history abounds with them; and if God had not been pleased to have given them a promise of a numerous posterity, they must, many hundred years ago, have been totally extirpated.

The prophecy farther saith, that they should be carried into Egypt, and there sold for slaves. *And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again, with ships: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bond-women.* Deut. xxviii. 68. They had, indeed, come out of Egypt triumphant, but now they were to return thither as slaves. They had, on their coming out, walked through the sea as on dry land, but now they were to be carried thither in *ships*. They might be carried thither in the ships of the Tyrian or Sidonian merchants, or by the Romans, who had a fleet in the Mediterranean; and this was certainly a much safer way of conveying so many prisoners than sending them by land.

That this part of the prophecy was fulfilled evidently appears from the account given us by Josephus, who says, that in the reign of the two first Ptolemies many of the Jews were sent into Egypt as slaves. And when Jerusalem was taken by Titus, he sent the greater part of those captives who were upwards of seventeen years of age to the works in Egypt: such as were under that age he sold for slaves, but so little care was taken of them that no less than eleven thousand perished for want. This is confirmed by St. Jerome, who says, that "after their last overthrow many thousands of them were sold; that those who could not be sold were transported into Egypt, and perished by shipwreck or famine, or were massacred by the inhabitants."

*And ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it,* Deut. xxviii. 63. This was amply fulfilled when the ten tribes were carried into captivity by the king of Assyria, and other nations were planted in their stead; and when the two other tribes were carried away captives to Babylon, besides other captivities and transports of the people at different periods. Afterwards, when the emperor Adrian had subdued the rebellious Jews, he published an edict, in which he not only forbade them, on pain of death, from setting foot in Jerusalem, but prohibited them from even entering into the country of Judea. From that time to the present Judea has been in the possession of foreign lords and masters, few of the Jews dwelling in it, and those only

of a very low and servile condition. This has been clearly proved by several modern travellers, and particularly Mr Sandys, who, in speaking of the Holy Land, says, “it is for the most part now inhabited by Moors and Arabians; the one possessing the vallies, and the other the mountains. Turks there be few; but many Greeks with other Christians of all sects and nations, such as impute to the place an adherent holiness. Here are also some Jews, yet they inherit no part of the land, but live as aliens in their own country.”

Thus have the Jews been *plucked from off the land which they possessed*. But this was not all, for, according to the prophecy, they were to be dispersed into all nations. *And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth unto the other.* Deut. xxviii. 64. These words were partly fulfilled in the Babylonish captivity; but they have been more amply fulfilled since the great dispersion of the Jews by the Romans. What people, indeed, have been scattered so far and wide as they? and where is the nation which is a stranger to them, or to which they are strangers? They swarm in many parts of the East, and are spread through most of the countries in Europe and Africa. In short, they are to be found in all places where there is a circulation of trade and money, and may, properly speaking, be called the brokers of the whole world.

It was likewise foretold by Moses, that though they should be so dispersed, yet they should not be totally destroyed, but should still subsist as a distinct people. *And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them,* Levit. xxvi. 44. This part of the prophecy hath been most strictly fulfilled, for (as Mr Basnage says) the Jewish nation, like the bush of Moses, hath been always burning, but never consumed. And what an astonishing thing it is to think, that after so many wars, battles and sieges; after so many fires, famines and pestilences; after so many rebellions, massacres and persecutions; after so many years of captivity, slavery and misery, they have not been utterly destroyed, but are

still scattered among all nations, and subsist as a distinct people?

They were to suffer greatly in their dispersion, and not to rest long in any place. *And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest,* Deut. xxxiii. 65. This likewise hath been amply fulfilled; for so far have they been from finding rest that they have been banished from city to city, and from country to country. In many places they have been banished, and recalled, and then banished again. Of these there are numerous instances; but we shall here only mention their great banishments in modern times, and from countries well known. Towards the latter end of the thirteenth century they were banished from England by Edward I. and were not permitted to return and settle again till Cromwell's time. In the latter end of the fourteenth century they were banished from France by Charles VI; and ever since they have been only tolerated, they have not enjoyed entire liberty, except at Mentz, where they have a synagogue. In the latter end of the fifteenth century they were banished from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella; and (according to Mariana the Spanish historian,) there were an hundred and seventy thousand families, or (as some say) eight hundred thousand persons who left the kingdom. They paid dearly to John II. for a refuge in Portugal, but within a few years were expelled from thence also by his successor Emanuel. And in our own time, within these few years, they were banished from Prague by order of the queen of Bohemia.

But they were not only to be banished from their own country, and dispersed into various parts throughout the world, but likewise, wherever they went, were to be *oppressed and spoiled evermore*, and their *houses* and *vineyards*, their *oxen* and *asses* to be taken from them, Deut. xxviii. 29, &c. That this has been strictly fulfilled will evidently appear when we consider the very frequent and great seizures that have been made of their effects in almost all countries. How often have heavy fines been laid on them by the princes of the different nations in which they have dwelt; and how often have they been obliged

to secure their lives by the forfeiture of their possessions? Of this there have been innumerable instances, and some even in our own country. King Henry III. of England always laid a heavy tax on the Jews at every low ebb of his fortunes. "One Abraham (says a celebrated writer) who was found a delinquent, was forced to pay seven hundred marks for his redemption. Aaron, another Jew, protested, that the king had taken from him, at times, thirty thousand marks of silver, besides two hundred marks of gold. And in like manner he used many others of the Jews." And when they were banished, in the reign of Edward I. all their estates were confiscated to the crown.

*Their sons and daughters shall be given unto another people,* Deut. xxviii. 32. This has been likewise fulfilled, for, in several countries, but more particularly in Spain and Portugal, their children have been taken from them, by order of the government, to be educated in the popish religion. Mr Basnage (in his history of the Jews) tells us, that "the council of Toledo ordered all their children to be taken from them, lest they should partake of their errors, and that they should be shut up in monasteries to be instructed in the christian truths." And when they were banished from Portugal, "the king (says Mariana) ordered that all their children, who were under fourteen years of age, should be taken from them and baptized."

*And they should be mad for the sight of their eyes which they should see,* Deut. xxxviii. 34. That this part of the prophecy has been most amply fulfilled we have the clearest evidence; for, into what madness, fury and desperation have they repeatedly been driven by the cruel usage, extortions and oppressions they have undergone? Of this we shall only mention two particular instances, one from ancient, and the other from modern history. The first is related by Josephus, who says, "After the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, some of the worst of the Jews took refuge in the castle of Masada, where, being closely besieged by the Romans, they, at the persuasion of Eleazar their leader, first murdered their wives and children, after which ten men were chosen by lot to slay the rest. This being done, one of the ten was chosen, in like manner, to kill the other nine, which

" having executed, he set fire to the place, and then  
" stabbed himself; there were nine hundred and sixty  
" who perished in this miserable manner, and only two  
" women and five boys escaped, which they effected by  
" hiding themselves in the aqueducts under ground."

The other instance is recorded by Mr Basnage, who says, " In the reign of Richard I. of England, when the people were in arms to make a general massacre of the Jews, fifteen hundred of them seized on the city of York to defend themselves; but being besieged, they offered to capitulate, and to ransom their lives with money. This offer being refused, one of them cried out in despair, that it was better to die courageously for the law, than to fall into the hands of the Christians. In consequence of this every man immediately took his knife and stabbed his wife and children. The men afterwards retired into the king's palace, which they set on fire, and in which themselves were consumed."

The prophecy farther tells us, that they *should become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word to all nations,* Deut. xxviii. 37. And do we not hear and see this part of the prophecy fulfilled every day? Is not the avarice, usury, and hard-heartedness of a Jew grown proverbial? and are not their persons generally odious among all sorts of people? Mahometans, Heathens, and Christians, however they may disagree in other points, yet generally agree in vilifying, abusing, and persecuting the Jews. In most places where they are tolerated, they live in a separate quarter by themselves, and wear some badge of distinction. Their very countenances commonly distinguish them from the rest of mankind; and they are, in all respects, treated as if they were of another species.

Lastly, *their plagues should be wonderful, even great plagues, and of long continuance,* Deut. xxviii. 59. And have not their plagues continued upwards of seventeen hundred years? What nation has suffered so much, and yet continued so long? What nation hath subsisted as a distinct people in their own country so long as these have done in their dispersion into all countries? And what a standing miracle is thus exhibited to the view and observation of the whole world?

These astonishing prophecies were delivered upwards of three thousand years ago, and from the fulfilment of them, which we see every day taking place in the world, are the strongest proofs that can be given of the Divine legation of Moses. They are truly, as Moses foretold they would be, *a sign and a wonder for ever*. Moreover, *all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenest not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments, and his statutes which he commanded thee: And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever*, Deut. xxviii. 45. 46.

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## CHAP. VII.

*Containing the Prophecies of JEREMIAH, ISAIAH, MICAH, EZEKIEL, and other Prophets, relative to the Jews.*

THE punishment to be inflicted on the Jews for their manifold transgressions was not only foretold by their great legislator Moses, but likewise many other persons, who received the spirit of inspiration. These prophecies were delivered at different periods, and were designed to reform the Jews from the wicked course of life to which they were naturally addicted; but, as they continued inflexible, the prophecies denounced against them were strictly fulfilled.

Among others of the prophecies it was foretold that the ten tribes of Israel should be carried away captives by the king of Assyria, and that the two remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin should be made captives to the king of Babylon; but with this difference, that the two tribes should be restored and return from their captivity, but the ten tribes should be lost and dissolved in theirs.

The time when the captivity of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin was to take place, as also that of their restoration, was foretold by the prophet Jeremiah. *This*

*whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years, Jer. xxv. 11. And again, Thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place, Jer. xxix. 10.*

This prophecy was delivered in the fourth year of *Je-hoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Jer. xxv. 1.* In the same year the prophecy began to take place, for Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judea, besieged and took Jerusalem, made Je-hoiakim his subject and tributary, transported the finest children of the royal family and of the nobility to Babylon to be brought up as slaves in his palaces. He likewise destroyed the temple, carried away the sacred vessels, and placed them in the temple of his idol Bel at Babylon. The whole number carried into captivity amounted to ten thousand, there being only a few left of very poor and mean condition to till and cultivate the land.

In this situation they remained for seventy years, when Cyrus, king of Babylon, issued a proclamation for the restoration of the Jews, and for the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem. In consequence of this the Jews immediately returned to their own country, and dispersed themselves into the respective cities they had formerly inhabited. The temple was begun and carried on with great assiduity for some time, but by the great interruption they met with from the Samaritans, was not finished till the reign of Darius, when all things were again restored to their former state. And thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah relative to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

The prophecy against the ten tribes of Israel was much more severe than that against the other two. The tribe of Ephraim, which was the chief of these, is often put for the whole ten, and it was predicted that *within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken that it be not a people, Isaiah vii. 8.* This prophecy was delivered in the first year of Ahaz king of Judah, when Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, formed

a conjunction to reduce Jerusalem; and it was to comfort Ahaz and the house of David in these difficulties and distresses, that the prophet Isaiah was commissioned to assure him, that the kings of Syria and Israel should remain only the heads of their respective cities; that they should not prevail against Jerusalem, and that within sixty and five years Israel should be so broken that it should be no more a people.

The fulfilment of this prophecy commenced in the reign of Ahaz, when Tiglath-pilezer took many of the Israelites, even the *Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive into Assyria, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan.* 1 Chron. v. 26. 2 Kings, xv. 29. His son Shalmaneser, in the reign of Hezekiah, took Samaria and carried away still greater numbers unto *Assyria, and put them in Holah and in Habor, by the river of Gozan* (the same places where their brethren had been carried before them) *and in the cities of the Medes,* 2 Kings, xviii. 11. His son Sennacherib came up also against Hezekiah, and all the fenced cities of Judah; but his army was miraculously defeated, and he himself was forced to return with shame and disgrace into his own country, where he was murdered by two of his sons, 2 Kings, xvii. 19. Another of his sons, Esarhaddon, succeeded him in the throne, but it was some time before he could recover his kingdom from these disorders, and think of reducing Syria and Palestine again to his obedience: and then it was, and not till then, that he completed the ruin of the ten tribes, carried away the remains of the people, and, to prevent the land from becoming desolate, *brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Hava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria, instead of the children of Israel,* 2 Kings, xvii. 24. Ephraim was broken from being a kingdom before, but it was now broken from being a people. And from that time to this what account can be given of the people of Israel as distinct from those of Judah? Where have they subsisted all this time? And where is their situation, or what their present condition?

At their first dispersion they were carried into Assyria and Media, and if they subsisted any where it is reasonable to imagine they might be found there in great abundance. But this is not the case, neither are they to be found in any of those parts where it has been asserted, by different Jewish writers, they took up their residence. It is the opinion of some that they returned into their own country, with the other two tribes after the Babylonish captivity. The decree, indeed, of Cyrus extended to *all the people of God*, Ezra i. 3. and that of Artaxerxes to *all the people of Israel*, vii. 13. and no doubt but many of the Israelites took advantage of these decrees, and returned with Zerubbabel and Ezra to their own cities: but still the main body of the ten tribes remained behind; and if the whole did not return at this time, they cannot be supposed to have returned in a body at any time after, for we do not read of any such circumstance in history, neither of the time or occasion of their return. The celebrated Dean Prideaux says, “the ten tribes of Israel, which “had separated from the house of David, were brought to “a full and utter destruction, and never after recovered “themselves again. For those who were thus carried “away (excepting only some few, who joining them- “selves to the Jews in the land of their captivity return- “ed with them) soon going into the usages and idolatry “of the nations among whom they were planted (to “which they were too much addicted while in their own “land) after a time became wholly absorbed, and swal- “lowed up in them, and thence utterly losing their name, “their language and their memorial, were never after “spoken of.”

But if the whole race of Israel became thus extinct and perished for ever, it may be asked how can the numerous prophecies be fulfilled which promise the future conversion and restoration of Israel as well as Judah? The truth we conceive to lie between these two opinions. Neither did they all return to Jerusalem, nor did all who remained behind comply with the idolatry of the Gentiles, among whom they lived. But whether they remained, or whether they returned, this prophecy of Isaiah was still fulfilled; the kingdom, the commonwealth, the state of

Israel was utterly broken; they no longer subsisted as a distinct people from Judah, they no longer maintained a separate religion, they joined themselves to the Jews from whom they had been unhappily divided, they lost the name of Israel as a name of distinction, and were thenceforth all in common called Jews.

It appears from the book of Esther, that there were great numbers of Jews in all the hundred and twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, or Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia, and they could not all be the remains of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who had refused to return to Jerusalem with their brethren; they must, at least many of them, have been the descendants of the ten tribes whom the kings of Assyria had carried away captive; but yet they are all spoken of as one and the same people, and all, without distinction, are denominated Jews.

We read in the acts of the Apostles, that there went to Jerusalem, to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, *Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia*, Acts ii. 9. These men came from the countries wherein the ten tribes had been placed, and, in all probability, were therefore some of their posterity; but yet these, as well as the rest, are stiled *Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven*, Acts ii. 5. Those likewise of the ten tribes, who returned to Jerusalem, united with the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and formed but one nation, one body of Jews. They might, perhaps, for some ages, have preserved their genealogies; but they are now incorporated together, and the distinction of tribes and families is, in a great measure, lost among them, and they have all, from the Babylonish captivity to this day, been comprehended under the general name of Jews.

There were many persons of all the ten tribes in being during the time of St. Paul's ministry; for he speaketh of *the twelve tribes hoping to attain to the promise of God*, Acts xxxvi. 7. and St. James addresses his epistle to *the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad*, James i. 1. And there is no doubt but there are many of the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel still in being, though they can-

not be separated from the rest. They are all confounded with the other Jews, and there is no difference between them. The Samaritans, indeed, (of whom there are still some remains at Sichem, and the neighboring towns) pretend to be the descendants of the children of Israel, but they are really derived from those nations which Esar-haddon, king of Assyria, planted in the country, after he had carried thence the ten tribes into captivity. And it is for this reason that the Jews call them by no other name than Cuthites, which was the name of the principal person of those nations. They exclaim against them as the worst of heretics, and, if possible, have a greater aversion to them than to the Christians.

It may, perhaps, be asked by some, what could be the reason that such a material difference and distinction should be made between the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin and the ten tribes of Israel. Why the latter should be, as it were, lost in their captivity, and the former restored, and preserved several ages after. To this it is answered, that the ten tribes had totally revolted from God to the worship of the golden calves in Dan and Bethel; and for this, and their idolatry and wickedness, they were suffered to remain in the land of their captivity. The Jews were restored, not so much for their own sakes as for the sake of the promises made unto their fore-fathers, namely, the promise to Judah that the Messiah should come of his tribe, and the promise to David that the Messiah should be born of his family. It was therefore necessary for the tribe of Judah, and the families of that tribe, to be kept distinct until the Divine dispensation should be accomplished. But since these ends have been fully answered, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin are as much confounded as any of the rest: all distinction of families and genealogies is lost among them; and (as Bishop Chandler observes) the Jews themselves acknowledge as much in saying, that when the Messiah shall come, it will be part of his office "to sort their families, restore their genealogies, and set aside strangers."

In what an astonishing manner does it engage the attention of the most serious, when they reflect on the preservation of the Jews through so many ages, notwithstanding

standing the great efforts that have been made, at different periods, totally to extirpate them, and that, instead of themselves, all their enemies have been finally reduced. But wonderful as these events may appear, they are still made much more so by their being signified beforehand by the spirit of prophecy, as we find particularly in the prophet Jeremiah, *Fear not thou, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee, for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, but I will not make a full end of thee.* Jer. xlvi. 28.

Of all the astonishing things we meet with both in ancient and modern histories, there is not certainly any to be found so remarkably singular as that of the preservation of the Jews to the present period of time. They have been dispersed among all nations, and yet they are not confounded with any. They flow into all parts of the world, mix with all nations, and yet keep separate from all. They still live as a distinct people, and yet they do not live any where according to their own laws: they neither elect their own magistrates, nor enjoy the full exercise of their religion. Their solemn feasts and sacrifices are limited to one certain place, and that hath been now, for many ages, in the hands of strangers and aliens, who will not suffer them to come thither. No people on the whole face of the earth have continued unmixed so long as they have done. The northern nations have come in great multitudes into the more southern parts of Europe; but where are they now to be discerned and distinguished? The Gauls went forth in great bodies to seek their fortune in foreign parts; but what traces or footsteps of them are now remaining any where? In France, who can separate the race of the ancient Gauls from the various other people, who, from time to time, have settled there? In Spain, who can distinguish exactly between the first possessors, the Spaniards, and the Goths and Moors, who conquered and kept possession of the country for some time? In England, who can pretend to say with certainty which families are derived from the ancient Britons, and which from the Romans, or Saxons, or Danes, or Normans? The most ancient and honorable pedigrees can be traced up only to a certain period, and

beyond that there is nothing but conjecture and uncertainty, obscurity and ignorance. But the Jews can go up higher than any nation: they can even deduce their pedigree from the beginning of the world. They may not know from what particular tribe or family they are descended, but they know certainly that they all sprung from the stock of Abraham. And yet the contempt with which they have been treated, and the hardships which they have undergone in almost all countries, should, one would think, have made them desirous to forget or renounce their original; but they profess it, they glory in it: and after so many wars, massacres, and persecutions, they still subsist, they still are very numerous: and what but a supernatural power could have preserved them in such a manner as none other nation upon earth hath been preserved?

At the same time that we behold with astonishment the wise dispensations of Providence in having protected the Jews even to the present period, we cannot, without equal astonishment, reflect on the circumstance of his having been pleased likewise utterly to destroy their enemies. The first oppressors of the Jews were the Egyptians, who detained them from their own land, compelled them into captivity, treated them with great cruelty, and kept them for many years in bondage. The Assyrians carried away captives the ten tribes of Israel, and the Babylonians afterwards the two remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The Syro-Macedonians, especially Antiochus Epiphanes, cruelly persecuted them; and the Romans utterly dissolved the Jewish state, and dispersed the people so that they have never been able to recover their city and country ever since.

And where are now these great and famous monarchies, which, in their time, subdued and oppressed the people of God? Are they not vanished, and not only their power, but almost even their very names lost on the earth? The Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians were overthrown, and entirely subjugated by the Persians; and the Persians (it is remarkable) were the restorers of the Jews, as well as the destroyers of their enemies. The Syro-Macedonians were swallowed up by the Romans; and the

Roman empire, great and powerful as it was, was broken into pieces by the repeated incursions of the northern nations; while the Jews are subsisting as a distinct people to this day. And how wonderful is it to think that the vanquished should so many ages survive the victors, and the former be spread all over the world while the latter are no more.

The Divine vengeance hath not only punished nations for their cruelties to the Jews, but hath likewise pursued even single persons who have been their persecutors and oppressors. The first born of Pharaoh was destroyed, and he himself, with his host, drowned in the Red Sea. Most of those who oppressed Israel in the days of the Judges came to an untimely end. Nebuchadnezzar was stricken with madness, and the crown was soon transferred from his family to strangers. Antiochus Epiphanes died in great agonies, with ulcers and vermin issuing from his body, so that the filthiness of him not only became intolerable to his attendants, but even to himself. Herod, who was a cruel tyrant to the Jews, died in the like miserable manner. Flaccus, governor of Egypt, who barbarously plundered and oppressed the Jews of Alexandria, was afterwards banished and slain. And Caligula, who persecuted the Jews, for refusing to pay Divine honor to his statues, was murdered in the flower of his age, after a short and wicked reign.

But, since the Jews have absolutely rejected the gospel, and been no longer the people of God, there have not been any visible manifestations of a Divine interposition in their favor. As a punishment for their infidelity they have, for many years past, been dispersed all over the world without having either a temporal or a spiritual protector. They are detested in all parts where they inhabit, and are the universal scoff and ridicule of the people of all nations.

Another most distinguished and memorable instance of the truth of prophecy is, the desolation of Judea. This prophecy was foretold so long ago as the time of Moses, *I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste,* Levit. xxvi. 33. It was likewise foretold by

the prophet Isaiah, who (speaking as prophets frequently did, of things future as present) says, *Your country is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city,* Isaiah i. 7, 8, 9. This last passage may immediately relate to the times of Ahaz and Hezekiah; but it must have a farther reference to the devastations made by the Chaldeans, and especially by the Romans. In this sense it is understood by most ancient interpreters; and the following words imply no less than a general destruction, and almost total excision of the people, such as they suffered under the Chaldeans, but more fully under the Romans: *Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.*

The same thing is expressed or implied in other places; and hath not the state of Judea now for many ages been exactly answerable to this description? That a country should be depopulated, and desolated by the incursions and depredations of foreign armies, is nothing wonderful; but that it should lie so many ages in this miserable condition is more than man can foresee, and could be revealed only by the Divine will.

The long wretchedness of the land of Judea in being forsaken by its original inhabitants and left desolate and uncultivated, has furnished some arguments for such as are enemies to the christian religion. They say that, so barren a country could never have been *a land flowing with milk and honey*, nor have supplied and maintained such multitudes as it is represented to have done. But they do not see or consider, that hereby the prophecies are fulfilled; so that it is rather an evidence for the truth of our religion, than any argument against it.

If we may believe the concurrent testimony of those who best know it (namely, the people who inhabited it) the land of Judea was formerly a good and fertile country. Both Aristeas and Josephus speak largely in commendation of its fruitfulness; and though something may be al-

lowed to national prejudices, yet they would hardly have had the confidence to assert a thing, which all the world could easily contradict and disprove. Nay there are even heathen authors who bear testimony to the fruitfulness of the land; though we presume, that after the Babylonish captivity it never recovered to be again what it was before. Strabo describes indeed the country about Jerusalem as rocky and barren, but he commends other parts, particularly about Jordan and Jericho. Hecataeus (quoted by Josephus) giveth it the character of one of the best and most fertile countries. And Tacitus saith, that it raineth seldom, the soil is fruitful, fruits abound as with us, and besides them the balsam and palm trees.

And notwithstanding the long desolation of the land, there are still visible such marks and tokens of fruitfulness, as may convince any man that it once deserved the character which is given of it in the sacred writings.

To satisfy those who may be doubtful of the truth of this assertion, we shall take notice of the observations made by Mr Maundrell and Dr Shaw, two ingenious travellers of our own nation. The first of these says, "All along this day's travel from **Kane Lebanon** to **Beer**, "and also as far as we could see round, the country dis- "covered a quite different face from what it had before; "presenting nothing to the view in most places, but "naked rocks, mountains and precipices. At sight of "which, pilgrims are apt to be much astonished and "baulked in their expectations; finding that country "in such an inhospitable condition, concerning whose "pleasantness and plenty they had before formed in their "minds such high ideas from the description given of it, "in the word of **God**: insomuch that it almost startles "their faith when they reflect how it could be possible for "a land like this, to supply food for so prodigious a "number of inhabitants, as are said to have been polled "in the twelve tribes at one time; the sum given in by "Joab, 2 Sam. xxiv. amounting to no less than thir- "teen hundred thousand fighting men, besides women "and children. But it is certain that any man, who is "not a little biassed to infidelity before, may see, as he "passes along, arguments enough to support his faith

“against such scruples. For it is obvious for any one to  
“observe, that these rocks and hills must have been an-  
“ciently covered with earth, and cultivated, and made to  
“contribute to the maintenance of the inhabitants, no less  
“than if the country had been all plain: nay perhaps as  
“much more; forasmuch as such a mountainous and un-  
“even surface affords a larger space of ground for culti-  
“vation, than this country would amount to, if it were all  
“reduced to a perfect level. For the husbanding of these  
“mountains their manner was to gather up the stones, and  
“place them in several lines, along the sides of the hills,  
“in form of a wall. By such borders they supported the  
“mold from tumbling or being washed down; and formed  
“many beds of excellent soil, rising gradually one above  
“another, from the bottom to the top of the mountains.  
“Of this form of culture you see evident footsteps,  
“wherever you go on all the mountains in Palestine.  
“Thus the very rocks were made fruitful. And perhaps  
“there is no spot of ground in this whole land, that was  
“not formerly improved, to the production of something  
“or other, ministering to the sustenance of human life.  
“For than the plain countries nothing can be more fruit-  
“ful, whether for the production of corn or cattle, and  
“consequently of milk. The hills, though improper for  
“all cattle except goats, yet being disposed into such  
“beds as are before described, served very well to bear  
“corn, melons, gourds, cucumbers, and such like garden  
“stuff, which makes the principal food of these countries  
“for several months in the year. The most rocky parts  
“of all, which could not well be adjusted in that manner  
“for the production of corn, might yet serve for the plan-  
“tation of vines and olive trees; which delight to extract,  
“the one its fatness, the other its sprightly juice, chiefly  
“out of such dry and flinty places. And the great plain  
“joining to the dead sea, which by reason of its saltiness  
“might be thought unserviceable both for cattle, corn,  
“olives and vines, had yet its proper usefulness for the  
“nourishment of bees, and for the fabric of honey; of  
“which Josephus gives us his testimony, De Bell.  
“Jud. Lib. 5, Cap. 4. And I have reason to believe  
“it, because when I was there, I perceived in many

“ places a smell of honey and wax, as strong as if one  
“ had been in an apiary. Why then might not this coun-  
“ try very well maintain the vast number of its inhabi-  
“ ants, being in every part so productive of either milk,  
“ corn, wine, oil, or honey, which are the principal food  
“ of these eastern nations? the constitution of their bodies,  
“ and the nature of their cline, inclining them to a more  
“ abstemious diet than we use in England, and other  
“ colder regions.”

In the description which Dr. Shaw gives he asserts, that “ were the Holy Land as well peopled and cul-  
“ tivated, as in former times, it would be still more fruit-  
“ ful than the very best part of the coast of Syria and  
“ Phoenice; for the soil itself (says he) is generally much  
“ richer, and all things considered, yields a more prefera-  
“ ble crop. Thus the cotton that is gathered in the plains  
“ of Ramah, Esdraelon and Zebulon, is in greater esteem,  
“ than what is cultivated near Sidon and Tripoly; neither  
“ is it possible for pulse, wheat or any sort of grain, to  
“ be more excellent than what is commonly sold in Jeru-  
“ salem. The barrenness or scarcity rather, which some  
“ authors may either ignorantly or maliciously complain  
“ of, does not proceed from the incapacity or natural un-  
“ fruitfulness of the country, but from the want of in-  
“ habitants, and the great aversion there is to labor and  
“ industry in those few who possess it.

“ There are besides such perpetual discords and dep-  
“ redations among the governors, who share this fine  
“ country, that allowing it was better peopled, yet there  
“ would be small encouragement to sow, when it was  
“ uncertain who should gather in the harvest. Otherwise  
“ the *land is a good land*, and still capable of affording  
“ its neighbors the like supplies of corn and oil, which  
“ it is known to have done in the time of Solomon. The  
“ parts particularly about Jerusalem, being described to  
“ be rocky and mountainous, have been therefore sup-  
“ posed to be barren and unfruitful. Yet granting this  
“ conclusion, which is far from being just, a kingdom is  
“ not to be denominated barren or unfruitful from one  
“ part of it only, but from the whole. Nay farther, the  
“ blessing that was given to Judah, was not of the same

" kind with the blessing of Asher or of Issachar, that *his bread should be fat, or his land should be pleasant*, but " that *his eyes should be red with wine, and his teeth should be white with milk*, Gen. xliv. 12. Moses also " maketh milk and honey (the chief dainties, and subsistence of the earlier ages, as they continue to be of the Bedoween Arabs) to be *the glory of all lands*: " all which productions are either actually enjoyed, " or at least might be by proper care and application. The plenty of wine alone is wanting at present; " yet from the goodness of that little, which is still made " at Jerusalem and Hebron, we find that these barren " rocks (as they are called) might yield a much greater " quantity, if the abstemious Turk and Arab would permit a further increase and improvement to be made of " the vine, &c."

The prophets Jeremiah, Isaiah and others, not only foretold the desolation of the country of the Jews, and their dispersion through all parts of the world, but likewise their infidelity in disbelieving the Messiah, and what would be the consequences that would result therefrom. Of this there are numerous instances; but it will be sufficient to produce one or two passages from the prophet Isaiah. *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Isaiah liii. 1. These words both St. John and St. Paul have expressly applied to the unbelieving Jews of their time. The prophet likewise assigns the reason why they would not receive the Messiah, namely, because of his low and afflicted condition; and it is certain that they rejected him on this account, having all along expected him to come as a temporal prince and deliverer in great power and glory.

Isaiah had been commissioned to declare unto the people the judgments of God for their infidelity and disobedience. And he said, *Go ye and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the hearts of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* Isaiah vi. 9, &c.

In the style of scripture the prophets are said to do what they declare will be done: and in like manner Jeremiah is said to be set over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant: (Jer. i. 10.) because he was authorized to make known the purposes and decrees of God, and because these events would follow in consequence of his prophecies. *Make the heart of this people fat*, is therefore as much as to say, *Denounce my judgments upon this people, that their heart shall be fat, and their ears heavy, and their eyes shut; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* This prophecy might relate in some measure to the state of the Jews before the Babylonish captivity; but it did not receive its full completion till the days of our Saviour; and in this sense it is understood and applied by the writers of the New Testament, and by our Saviour himself.

The prophet is then informed, that this infidelity and obstinacy of his countrymen should be of long duration. *Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate: And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.* What a remarkable gradation is here in the denouncing of these judgments! Not only Jerusalem and the cities should be wasted without inhabitants, but even the single houses should be without man, and not only the houses of the cities should be without man, but even the country should be utterly desolate; and not only the people should be removed out of the land, but the Lord should remove them far away; and they should not be removed for a short period, but there should be a great or rather a long forsaking in the midst of the land.

And hath not the world seen all these particulars exactly fulfilled? Have not the Jews labored under a spiritual blindness and infatuation in hearing but not understanding, in seeing but not perceiving, the Messiah, after the accomplishment of so many prophecies, after the performance of so many miracles? And in consequence of their refusing to convert and be healed, have

*not their cities been wasted without inhabitant, and their houses without man? Hath not their land been utterly desolate? Have they not been removed far away into the most distant parts of the earth? And hath not their removal or banishment been now upwards of 1700 years duration? Do they not still continue deaf and blind, obstinate and unbelieving?*

At the time of the delivery of this prophecy the Jews gloried in being the peculiar people of God, and would any Jew of himself have either thought, or said, that his nation would, in process of time, become an infidel and reprobate nation, infidel and reprobate for many ages, oppressed by man, and forsaken by God? It was more than 750 years before Christ, that Isaiah predicted these things; and how could he have so done, unless he had been illuminated by the divine vision: or how could they have succeeded accordingly, unless the spirit of prophecy had been the Spirit of God?

Of the like nature are the prophecies concerning the calling and obedience of the Gentiles. How could such an event be foreseen hundreds of years before it happened? But the prophets are full of the glorious subject, and speak with delight and rapture of the universal kingdom of the Messiah: that *God would give unto him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession*, Psal. ii. 8. That *all the ends of the world should remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations should worship before him*, Psal. xxii. 27. That *in the last days the mountain of the House of the Lord should be established in the top of the mountains, and should be exalted above the hills, and all people should flow unto it*, Micah iv. 1. (which passage is also to be found in Isaiah, ii. 2.) That *from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts*, Malachi i, 11.

But the prophet Isaiah is more copious upon this as well as other evangelical subjects; and his 49th and 60th chapters treat particularly of the glory of the church in

the abundant access of the Gentiles. *It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth,* Isaiah xlix. 6. And again, *Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee, &c.* Isaiah lx. 1, 3, 5, &c.

The Jews have applied these prophecies to the proselytes whom they have gained in the different nations unto which they have been dispersed; but this is no less absurd than vain. The number of their proselytes was very inconsiderable, and nothing to answer these pompous descriptions. Neither was their religion ever designed by its founder for an universal religion, their worship and sacrifices being confined to one certain place, whither all the males were obliged to repair thrice every year; so that it was plainly calculated for a particular people, and could never become the religion of the whole world. There was indeed to be a religion, which was to be designed for all nations, to be preached in all, and to be received in all; but what prospect or probability was there that such a generous institution should proceed from such a narrow-minded people as the Jews, or that the Gentiles should ever receive a religion from the very people whom they most hated and despised? Was it not much more likely that the Jews would be corrupted by the idolatrous nations around them, and be induced to comply with the maxims of their powerful neighbors, than that they should be the happy instruments of reforming the world, and converting some of all nations to the worship of the true God?

It is farther intimated by the prophet, that this revolution (the greatest that ever happened in the religious world) should be effected by a few people of low rank and education. *A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation,* Isaiah lx. 22.

The commission given by our Blessed Saviour to his apostles was, *Go, teach all nations.* And who were the persons to whom this commission was given? Was it to those who might have been thought best qualified to carry it into execution, such as the rich, the wise, the mighty of this world? No: they were chiefly a few poor fishermen, of low parentage and education, of no learning or eloquence, of no policy or address, of no worldly repute or authority, despised as Jews by the rest of mankind, and as the meanest and worst of Jews by the Jews themselves. These were the persons (strange and wonderful as it may appear) who were to contend with the prejudices of all the world, the superstitions of the people, the interests of the priests, the vanity of philosophers, the pride of rulers, the malice of Jews, the learning of Greece, and the power of the Roman empire.

This great revolution was not only to be brought about by a few persons of mean birth, but it was likewise to be effected in a very short space of time. *I the Lord will hasten it in his time,* Isaiah Ix. 22.

After the ascension of our Saviour the number of the disciples together was about *an hundred and twenty*, Acts i. 15. but they soon increased and multiplied. The first sermon preached by St. Peter added unto them *about three thousand souls*, Acts ii. 41, and the second made up the number *about five thousand*, Acts iv. 4.

In the space of forty years, previous to the final destruction of Jerusalem, the gospel had been so spread, that it was preached in almost every region of the then known world. In the reign of Constantine the Great, Christianity became the religion of the empire; and after having suffered a little under Julian, it entirely prevailed and triumphed over paganism and idolatry, and still does prevail in the most civilized and improved parts of the earth. All this was more than man could foresee, and much more than man could execute; and we experience the good effects of these prophecies to this day.

The speedy propagation of the gospel could not have been effected by persons so unequal to the task, if the same Divine Spirit who foretold it had not likewise assisted them in it, according to the promise, *I the Lord will hasten*

*it in his time.* In short, we may be as certain as if we had beheld it with our own eyes, that the matter really was as represented by the Evangelist, *They went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following*, Mark xvi. 20.

But neither the prophecies concerning the Gentiles, nor those concerning the Jews, have yet received their full and entire completion. Our Saviour hath not yet had *the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession*: Psal. ii. 8. *All the ends of the earth have not yet turned unto the Lord*: xxii. 27. *All people, nations, and languages, have not yet served him*: Dan. vii. 14. These things have hitherto been only partially, but they will, in time, be even literally fulfilled. Neither are the Jews yet made *an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations*, Is. lx. 15. The time is not yet come, when *violence shall no more be heard in the land, wasting nor destruction within their borders*, ver. 18. God's promises to them are not yet fulfilled to the extent. *Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, even they and their children, and their children's children for ever, and my servant David shall be their prince for ever*. Ezekiel, xxxvii. 21, 25. *Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, who caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen; but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them, for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God*, Ezek. xxxix. 28, 29.

However, what hath already been accomplished is a sufficient pledge and earnest of what is yet to come: and we have all imaginable reason to believe, since so many of these prophecies have been fulfilled, that the remaining ones will be fulfilled also: that there will be yet a greater harvest of the nations, and the yet unconverted parts of the earth will be enlightened with the knowledge of the Lord; and that the Jews will, in God's good time, be converted to Christianity, and, upon their conversion, be again restored to their native country.

The prophecy of Hosea we have already seen fulfilled in part, and there is not the least reason to believe but that the whole will be amply fulfilled in a proper course of time. *The children of Israel, says he, shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image (or altar) and without an ephod (or priest to wear an ephod) and without teraphim (or Divine manifestations.) Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days,* Hosea, iii. 4, 5.

Thus have we taken a summary view of those prophecies contained in the Old Testament which more immediately relate to the present state and condition of the Jews; and what stronger or more convincing arguments can be given of the truth both of the Jewish and the Christian religion?

The Jews were once the peculiar people of God; and (as St. Paul saith) *Hath God cast away his people? God forbid,* Rom. xi. 1. We see that after so many ages they are still preserved, by a miracle of Providence, a distinct people; and why is such a continual miracle exerted but for the greater illustration of the divine truth, and the better accomplishment of the divine promises, as well those which are yet to be, as those which are already fulfilled.

The great empires and powers which have heretofore, in their turns, subdued and oppressed the people of God, are all come to ruin; because, though they executed the Divine purposes in oppressing the Jews, yet that was more than they knew, and their intentions in acting as they did were only to gratify their own pride and ambition, their own cruelty and revenge. And since such hath been the fatal end of the enemies and oppressors of the Jews, in former times, it should serve as a warning to all those who may, at any time, or upon any occasion hereafter, be inclined to raise a clamor and persecution against them.

That the Jews are blamable for still persisting in their infidelity, after so many means have been taken to bring them to a sense of conviction, there is not the least

doubt; but this does not authorize us to proscribe, abuse, injure and oppress them, as Christians of more zeal than either knowledge or charity have, in all ages, been inclined to do. *Charity is greater than faith;* and it is worse in us to be cruel and uncharitable, than it is in them to be obstinate and unbelieving. Persecution is the spirit of popery, and in the worst of popish countries the Jews are the most cruelly used; but the spirit of protestantism is toleration and indulgence to weaker consciences.

It may be observed by some that shewing compassion to these unhappy people would be a means of defeating the fulfilment of the prophecies. But this is far from being the case; they were to be harrassed and oppressed only by wicked nations; the good were to shew mercy on them; and we should chuse rather to be the dispensers of God's mercies than the executioners of his judgments.

If we read the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, we shall there see what that great apostle of the Gentiles (who certainly understood the prophecies better than any of us can pretend to do) saith of the infidelity of the Jews. Some of the Gentiles of his time valued themselves upon their superior advantages, and he reproves them for it, that they who *were cut out of the olive-tree, which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree,* should presume to boast against the natural branches, Rom. xi. 18. 24. But what would he have said, if they had made religion an instrument of faction, and had been for stirring up a persecution against them?

Christians of all denominations should consider and reflect, that it is to the Jews we owe the oracles of God, the scriptures of the New Testament as well as the Old. We should consider, that *the glorious company of the apostles,* as well as the *goodly fellowship of the prophets,* were all Jews. We should consider, that *of them as concerning the flesh Christ came,* the Saviour of the world; and surely some thing of kindness and gratitude is due for such infinite obligations.

Though the Jews are now broken off, yet they are not utterly cast away. *Because of unbelief,* as St Paul

argueth, they were broken off, and thou standest by faith; be not high-minded, but fear, Rom. xi. 20. There will be a time when they will be grafted in again, and again become the people of God; for as the apostle proceeds, *I would not brethren that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved*, Rom. xi. 25, 26.

And which now, it may be asked, is the most likely method to contribute to the conversion of these unhappy people? which are the most natural means of reconciling them to us and our religion? Is it to be effected by prayer, argument, long suffering, gentleness and goodness; or by noise, invective, injury and outrage, the malice of some, and the folly and madness of more? They certainly cannot be worse now than when they crucified the Son of God, and persecuted his apostles. But what saith our Blessed Saviour himself? *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*, Luke xxiii. 34. and what saith his apostle St. Paul? *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved*, Rom. x. 1.

In conformity to these blessed examples our church hath also taught us to pray for them; and how can prayer and persecution consist and agree together? Those who encourage persecution of any kind are only pretended friends to the church, but real enemies to religion. All true members of the church, all true protestants, all true christians, will, as the apostle adviseth, *put away all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, with all malice*, Ephes. iv. 31. And they will all join heart and voice in that excellent collect—*Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word: and so fetch them home, Blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

## CHAP. VIII.

*Of the Prophecies concerning the ancient city of NINEVEH,  
once the metropolis of the Assyrian empire.*

THE first great prophecies contained in the Old Testament, are those which more immediately relate to the Jews themselves who were once the peculiar people of God; and the principal subjects of those prophecies are the various changes and revolutions that were to happen in the Jewish church and state. But the spirit of prophecy is not confined to the Jews alone: there are other subjects occasionally introduced; and, for the greater manifestation of Divine Providence, the fate of other nations is also foretold, and more especially those which lay in the neighborhood of Judea, and had intercourse and connection with the Jews.

It is much to be lamented, that of these eastern nations, and of these early times, we have no regular histories, but only a few fragments which have escaped the general shipwreck of time. From these, however, we see enough to make us admire these wonders of Providence; and from these are clearly shown that the condition of cities and kingdoms hath been such as was long ago foretold by the prophets.

The first prophecies we shall notice on this subject are those relative to the ancient city of Nineveh, once the metropolis of the Assyrian empire, and whose inhabitants not only destroyed the kingdom of Israel, but likewise greatly oppressed the kingdom of Judah.

The prophet Isaiah, in denouncing the judgments of God against the Assyrians, says, *O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation*, Isaiah x. 3. It was the will of Providence that those people should be employed as the ministers of his wrath, and executioners of his vengeance, against the perverse and obstinate Jews. *I will send him against an hypocritical nation; and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the*

*prey, and to tread them down like the mire in the streets,* Isaiah x. 6. But it was far from any intent of the Assyrians to execute the Divine will, or to chastise the vices of mankind; they only meant to extend their conquests, and establish their own dominion upon the ruins of others: *Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off nations not a few*, ver. 7. Wherefore when they shall have served the purposes of Divine Providence, they shall be severely punished for their pride and ambition, their tyranny and cruelty to their neighbors: *Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks*, ver. 12.

There was no prospect of such an event as this, while the Assyrians were in the midst of their successes and triumphs; but still the word of the prophet prevailed; and it was not long after the calamities they brought upon the Jews, when the Assyrian empire (properly so called) was overthrown, and Nineveh destroyed.

The city of Nineveh was one of the largest and most ancient cities in the world. According to the best chronologers it was built not long after the Flood, and very soon after the tower of Babel, by Nimrod; but being afterwards greatly enlarged by Ninus, from him it received its name. It was situated on the banks of the Tigris, and (according to the description given of it by Diodorus Siculus) was, in length, an hundred and fifty stadia; in breadth fourscore and ten; and in circumference, four hundred and seventy; which, being reduced to our measure, make it about twenty-one miles long, nine broad, and fifty-four round. How great the number of its inhabitants was, we may learn from *the six score thousand children who could not discern between their right hands and their left*, Jonah iv. 11. And, according to a proportionate computation, there must have been in the whole not less than six hundred thousand persons.

The inhabitants of Nineveh, like those of other great cities, abounding in wealth and luxury, became very corrupt in their morals. In consequence of this, God was

pleased to commission the prophet Jonah to preach unto them the necessity of repentance, as the only means of averting their impending destruction: and such was the success of his preaching, that both the king and people repented and turned from their evil ways, and thereby, for a time, escaped the execution of the Divine judgments.

But this repentance of the Ninevites, we may reasonably presume, was of no long continuance; for not many years after we find the prophet Nahum foretelling the total and entire destruction of the city. Indeed, the whole of his prophecy relates to this single event; and the city was accordingly destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians, who, uniting together, subverted the whole Assyrian empire.

It is remarkable that the prophet Nahum not only foretold the destruction of Nineveh, but likewise the manner in which it was to be effected. He foretold that the Assyrians should be taken while they were drunken. *For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble full dry,* Nahum i. 10. And Diodorus Siculus says, “it was while all the Assyrian army were feasting “for their former victories that those about Arbaces (the “general of the Median forces) being informed by some “deserters of the negligence and drunkenness in the “camp of the enemy, assaulted them unexpected by “night, and falling on them while they were in the ut-“most disorder, and unprepared, became masters of the “camp, slew many of the soldiers, and drove the rest “into the city.”

The prophet Nahum foretels, that *the gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved,* Nahum ii. 6. And Diodorus tells us, “there was an old “prophecy, that Nineveh should not be taken till the “river became an enemy to the city; and in the third “year of the siege, the river being swoln with continued “rains, overflowed part of the city, and broke down the “wall for twenty furlongs; that the king, thinking the “oracle was fulfilled, and the river become an enemy to “the city, built a large funeral pile in the palace, and col-“lecting together all his wealth, and his concubines and

"eunuchs, burnt himself and them in the palace; and the  
"enemy entered the breach that the waters had made,  
"and took the city."

Thus we find that what the prophet had predicted was literally fulfilled, *With an overflowing flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof*, Nahum i. 8. He likewise promises the enemy much spoil of gold and silver, *Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold; for there is no end of the store, and glory out of all the pleasant furniture*, Nahum ii. 9. And we read in Diodorus Siculus, that Arbaces carried many talents of gold and silver to Ecbatane, the royal city belonging to the Medes.

According to the prophecy of Nahum the city was to be destroyed partly by water and partly by fire, *Behold, the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars*, Nahum iii. 13. And we find by Diodorus that this literally took place, for after the Medes and Babylonians had possessed themselves of the city, they set fire to it, and reduced the greater part to ashes.

The prophet Nahum was the principal person who foretold the total and entire destruction of the ancient city of Nineveh. *The Lord (saith he) with an over-running flood will make an utter end of the place thereof; he will make an utter end; affliction shall not rise up the second time*, chap. i. 8, 9. Again, *Where is the dwelling of the lions?* (meaning Nineveh, whose princes ravaged like lions:) *behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard*, chap. ii. 11, 13. And again, *Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day; but when the sun ariseth, they flee away, and their place is not known. Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; thy nobles shall dwell in the dust; thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them: there is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous; all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?* chap. iii. 17, 18, 19.

The prophet Zedekiah likewise, in the days of Josiah king of Judah, foretold the same melancholy event. *The Lord will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria, and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness: and flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations; both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds; for he shall uncover the cedar work: this is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me; how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss and wag his hand.* Zeph. ii. 13, &c.

It is not to be wondered at that when those prophecies were at first delivered, the people should think it very unlikely they would ever be fulfilled. What probability, indeed, was there to think that so great a city, and which contained so many thousand inhabitants, should ever be totally destroyed? And yet, so totally was it destroyed, that even the place where it stood is now scarcely known.

It has been already observed that Nineveh was taken and destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians; and what we may reasonably suppose contributed to complete its ruin and devastation was, Nebuchadnezzar's soon afterwards enlarging and beautifying of Babylon. From that time no mention is made of Nineveh by any of the sacred writers; and the most ancient of the profane authors, who have occasion to say any thing about it, speak of it as a city that once was great and flourishing, but now destroyed and desolate.

Tho' same accounts are given of it by all our modern travellers, and particularly by Thevenot, on whose authority Dean Prideaux relates, that, "Mosul is situated "on the west side of the river Tigris, where was ancient- "ly only a suburb of the Old Nineveh, for the city itself "stood on the east side of the river, where are to be seen "some of its rubbish of great extent even to this day."

Another modern traveller says, "In this country the "famous city of Nineveh once stood, on the eastern bank "of the river Tigris, opposite to the place where Mosul "now stands. There is nothing now to be seen but heaps

"of rubbish, almost a league along the river Tigris, opposite to Mosul, which people imagine to be the remains of this vast city."

Such hath been the fate of the once great city of Nineveh; in the destruction of which is most amply manifested the great truths of the Divine predictions!

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## CHAP. IX.

### *The Prophecies concerning the City of BABYLON.*

AFTER the destruction of Nineveh, the city of Babylon became not only the greatest and most magnificent metropolis in the east, but in the whole world. It is said by some to have been first built by Semiramis queen of Assyria, while others assert that it was built by Belus the successor of Nimrod. But whoever was the first founder, we may reasonably suppose that it received very great improvements afterwards, and Nebuchadnezzar, in particular, enlarged and beautified it to such a degree, that he may in a manner (as himself boasts) be said to have built it. *Is not this (says he) great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?* Dan. iv. 30. By one means or other Babylon became so great and famous a city as to give name to a very large empire. It is called in scripture, *great Babylon; the glory of kingdoms; the beauty of the Chaldees excellency; the praise of the whole earth, &c.* And its beauty, strength and grandeur, its walls, temples and palaces, are described with such pomp and magnificence by profane authors, that it must deservedly have been reputed one of the wonders of the world.

It might naturally have been imagined that such a city as this was in no danger of ever being abandoned, and much more of its coming to destruction. Such a city as this might surely, with less vanity than any other, boast

that she should continue for ever, which, indeed, was the case. *I shall be a lady for ever; I am, and none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children,* Isaiah xlvi. 7, 8. But this was a presumptive construction, for great as it then was, the time did come when all its splendor was laid aside, and the whole became one continued scene of ruins.

The inhabitants of Babylon were no less enemies to the Jews than those of Nineveh. The one subverted the kingdom of Israel, and the other the kingdom of Judah; It is therefore not to be wondered at that there should be several prophecies relative to these two cities, and that the fate of Babylon should be foretold as well as that of Nineveh. *Israel is a scattered sheep, the lions have driven him away; first the king of Assyria hath devoured him, and last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones; Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts the God of Israel, Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria.* Lament. l. 17, 18.

The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah very plainly, and in a particular manner, foretold the destruction of this great city. They both lived during the declension of the kingdom of Judah. As they predicted the captivity of the Jews, so they likewise foretold the downfall of their enemies; and they speak with such assurance of the event, that they describe a thing future as if it were already past. *Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground,* Isaiah xxi. 9. *Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed; howl for her, take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed,* Jeremiah li. 8.

Cyrus, who was the conqueror of Babylon, and transferred the empire from the Babylonians to the Medes and Persians, was particularly foretold by name many years before he was born, Isaiah xliv. 28. xlv. 1. He is honored with the appellation of the *Lord's anointed*, and the *Lord* is said to *have holden his right hand*, and to *have girded him*. He was certainly a person of very extraordinary abilities, and was raised up to be the instrument of Providence in executing great and wise purposes.

It was foretold that Cyrus should be a great conqueror, that he should *subdue nations before him: and I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut*, Isaiah xlvi. 1. This was strictly fulfilled, for Cyrus subdued several kings, and took several cities, particularly Sardes and Babylon, and extended his conquests over all Asia, from the river Indus to the Ægean Sea.

It was likewise foretold that Cyrus should find great spoil and treasure among the nations he should conquer. *I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places*. Isaiah xlvi. 3. And the riches which Cyrus found in his conquests were of prodigious value, as appears from the accounts given us by Pliny. Nor can we wonder at it, when we consider that those parts of Asia, at that time, abounded in wealth and luxury. Babylon had been heaping up treasures for many years; and the riches of Crœsus king of Lydia, whom Cyrus conquered and took prisoner, are, in a manner, become proverbial.

The prophet Jeremiah not only foretels the destruction of the great city of Babylon, but likewise points out the time when it is to be effected. *These nations (says he, speaking of the Jews) shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years: and it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, saith the Lord*, Jer. xxv. 11, 12. This prophecy was delivered, as appears from the first verse of the chapter, *in the fourth year of Jehoiukim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon*; from which time there were seventy years to the taking of Babylon, and the restoration of the Jews from captivity. Nebuchadnezzar, after taking Jerusalem, transplanted the Jews to Babylon in order to strengthen the place: their removal from thence must, therefore, have greatly weakened it; after which it became more and more distressed, till at length it was finally destroyed.

It was foretold that various nations should unite against Babylon. *The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the king-*

*doms of nations gathered together; the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle,* Isaiah xiii. 4. And particularly it was foretold, that the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz (that is, the Armenians, Phrygians and other nations) should compose part of his army. *Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Ashchenaz,* Jer. li. 27. And accordingly Cyrus's army consisted of various nations; and among them were those very people whom he had conquered before, and now obliged to attend him in this expedition.\*

It was foretold that the Babylonians should be terrified, and hide themselves within their walls. *The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight, they have remained in their holds, their might hath failed, they became as women,* Jer. li. 30. And accordingly we find that, after a battle or two, the Babylonians never recovered their courage to face the enemy in the field again: they retired within their walls, and the first time that Cyrus came with his army before the place, he could not provoke them to venture forth and try the fortune of arms, even though he sent a challenge to the king to fight with him in single combat; and the last time that he went, he consulted with his officers about the best method of carrying on the siege, “since, saith he, they do not come forth and fight.”

It was likewise foretold that the river should be dried up, before the city should be taken. This appeared very extraordinary indeed, the river being more than two furlongs broad, and deeper than the height of two men standing one upon another; so that the city was thought

\* Among those who voluntarily assisted Cyrus in this undertaking were the people of Elam, who, though subject to Babylon, rose up against it; and the reason of their so doing is thus accounted for by Xenophon. Abradates was viceroy or governor of Susa, or Shushan, and Shushan was the capital of the province of Elam, Dan. viii. 2. His wife Panthea, a lady of the most exquisite beauty, happened to be taken prisoner by the Persians. Cyrus treated her with such generosity, and preserved her with such strict honor safe and inviolate for her husband, as won the heart of the prince, so that he and his people revolted to Cyrus, and fought against the Babylonians.

to be stronger and better fortified by the river than by the walls. But notwithstanding this, the prophets predicted that the waters should be dried up, (see Isaiah xliv. 27. Jer. l. 38. li. 36.) And accordingly Cyrus turned the course of the river Euphrates which ran through the midst of Babylon, and, by means of deep trenches and the canals, so drained the waters that the river became easily fordable for his soldiers to enter the city; and by those means Babylon (which was otherwise impregnable) was taken.

It was foretold that the city should be taken by surprise during the time of a feast. *I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware, thou art found and also caught, Jer. l. 24. In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the Lord, Jer. li. 57.* And accordingly the city was taken in the night of a great annual feast, while the inhabitants were dancing, drinking, and revelling, and not having the least suspicion that any immediate danger was at hand.

Such were the very extraordinary circumstances that attended the reduction of Babylon; and how could any man foresee or foretel such singular events, such remarkable circumstances, without revelation and inspiration from God!

If we examine still farther into these mysterious affairs, we shall see how these and other prophecies have, by degrees, been fulfilled, for in the very nature of the thing, they could not be fulfilled all at once. As the prophets often speak of things to be in future as if they were already effected, so they speak often of things to be brought about in process of time as if they were to succeed immediately. The past, present, and to come, are all alike known to infinite wisdom; but it is probable that the intermediate time was not revealed to the minds of the prophets.

The prophet Isaiah addresseth Babylon by the name of a *virgin*, as having never before been taken by an enemy. *Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground, Isaiah xlviij. 1.* And Herodotus saith expressly, that this was the first time Baby-

Ion was taken. After this it never more recovered its ancient splendor: from an imperial, it became a tributary city; from being governed by its own kings, and governing strangers, it came itself to be governed by strangers; and the seat of empire being transplanted to Shushan, it decayed by degrees, till it was at length reduced to utter desolation.

We are told by Berossus, that when Cyrus had taken Babylon, he ordered the outer walls to be pulled down, because the city appeared to him very difficult to be taken on that account. And Xenophon informs us, that Cyrus obliged the Babylonians to deliver up all their arms upon pain of death, distributed their best houses among his officers, imposed a tribute upon them, appointed a strong garrison, and compelled the Babylonians to defray the charge, being desirous to keep them poor as the best means of keeping them obedient.

But notwithstanding these precautions, they rebelled against Darius, and, in order to hold out to the last extremity, they took all their women, and each man choosing one of them out of his own family, whom he liked best, they strangled the rest, that unnecessary mouths might not consume their provisions. “And hereby (saith Dean Prideaux) was very signally fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah against them, in which he foretold, *That two things should come to them in a moment, in one day, the loss of children and widow-hood, and that these shall come upon them in their perfection, for the multitude of their sorceries, and the great abundance of their enchantments,* Isaiah xlvi. 9. And in what greater perfection could these calamities come upon them, than when they themselves thus upon themselves became the executioners of them?” They sustained the siege and all the efforts of Darius for twenty months, and at length the city was taken by stratagem. As soon as Darius had made himself master of the place, he ordered three thousand of the principal men to be crucified, and thereby fulfilled the prophecies of the cruelty which the Medes and Persians should use towards the Babylonians, Isaiah xiii. 17, 18. Jer. 1. 42. He likewise demolished the wall and burnt the gates, by which was remarkably fulfilled the prophecy

of Jeremiah, *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burnt with fire, Jer. li. 58.*

When Xerxes returned from his unfortunate expedition into Greece, partly out of religious zeal (being a professed enemy to image worship) and partly to reimburse himself after his immense expenses, he seized upon the treasures, and plundered or destroyed the temples and idols in Babylon, thereby accomplishing the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah: *Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground: Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, Isaiah xxi. 9. lxvi. 1. Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces, her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up, Jer. l. 2. li. 44, &c.* This part of the prophecy was most literally fulfilled, when the vessels of the House of God which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem, and placed in the temple of Bel, were restored by order of Cyrus, and carried back to Jerusalem.

After the destruction of Babylon by the Persians, Alexander intended to have made it the seat of his empire, and actually set men at work to rebuild the temple of Belus, to repair the banks of the river, and to bring back the waters into their own channel. But if these designs had taken effect, how could the prophecies have been fulfilled? And what providence therefore was it, that his designs did not take effect, and that the breaches were never repaired? He met with some difficulties in the work, and death soon after put an end to this and all his other projects; and none of his successors ever attempted it. Seleucia being built a few years after in the neighborhood, Babylon, in a little time, became *wholly desolate*, Seleucia not only robbing it of its inhabitants, but (according to Pliny) even of its name.

That the prophecies relative to the fate of this ancient and once magnificent city have, in the most strict manner, been fulfilled, appears from accounts given of it by a variety of authors both ancient and modern. Among the former, Diodorus Siculus describes the buildings as ruin-

ed or decayed in his time, and says that only a small part of the city was then inhabited, the greatest part within the walls being tilled. Strabo, (who wrote not long after Diodorus) says, that one part of the city was demolished by the Persians, and the other by time and the neglect of the Macedonians, and especially after Seleucus Nicator had built Seleucia on the Tigris in the neighborhood of Babylon, and he and his successors removed their court thither: and now (saith he) Seleucia is greater than Babylon, and Babylon is much deserted, so that one may apply to this what the poet said of Magalopolis in Arcadia, *the great city is now become a great desert*. Pliny, in like manner, affirms, that it was reduced to solitude, being exhausted by the neighborhood of Seleucia, built for that purpose by Seleucus Nicator. Maximus Tyrius mentions it as lying neglected and forsaken; and Lucian intimates, that in a little time it would be sought for, and not found. In the time of Jerome (who lived in the fourth century after Christ) it was converted into a chace to keep wild beasts within the compass of its walls, for the hunting of the later kings of Persia. “ We have learned (saith he) from a certain “ Elamite brother, who, coming out of those parts, now “ liveth as a monk at Jerusalem, that the royal huntins “ are in Babylon, and wild beasts of every kind are con-“ fined within the circuit of the walls. And a little after “ he saith, that excepting the brick walls, which, after “ many years, have been repaired for the inclosing of “ wild beasts, all the space within is entire desolation.”

Of later authors the first who mentions any thing concerning Babylon is Benjamin of Tudela, a Jew who lived in the twelfth century. In his Itinerary, he says, “ ancient Babylon is now laid waste, but some ruins are “ still to be seen of Nebuchadnezzar’s palace, and men “ fear to enter them on account of the serpents and “ scorpions which are in the midst of it.” And Taxeira, a Portuguese, in the description of his travels from India to Italy, says, “ of this great famous city there is nothing “ but only a few vestiges remaining, nor in the whole “ region is any place less frequented.”

Such are the accounts given us of the state of Babylon by ancient authors; and let us see what relation is given of it by the writers and travellers of modern date. The first we shall quote of these is one Rauwolf, a German traveller, who passed that way in the year 1574, and whose account of these ruins of this once famous city is as follows: “The village (says he) of Elugo now lieth on the place where formerly old Babylon, the metropolis of Chaldea, was situated. The harbor is a quarter of a league’s distance from it, where people go ashore in order to proceed by land to the celebrated city of Bagdat, which is a day and a half’s journey from thence eastward on the Tigris. This country is so dry and barren, that it cannot be tilled, and so bare that I could never have believed that this powerful city, once the most stately and renowned in all the world, and situated in the pleasant and fruitful country of Shinar, could have ever stood there, if I had not known it by its situation, and many antiquities of great beauty, which are still standing hereabout in great desolation. First by the old bridge which was laid over the Euphrates, whereof there are some pieces and arches still remaining built of burnt brick, and so strong that it is admirable.— Just before the village of Elugo is the hill whereon the castle stood, and the ruins of its fortification are still visible, though demolished and uninhabited. Behind it, and pretty near to it, did stand the tower of Babylon.—It is still to be seen, and is half a league in diameter, but so ruinous, so low, and so full of venomous creatures, which lodge in holes made by them in the rubbish, that no one durst approach nearer to it than within half a league, except during two months in the winter, when these animals never stir out of their holes. There is one sort particularly, which the inhabitants in the language of the country (which is Persian) call Eglō, the poison whereof is very searching: they are larger than our lizard.”

Petrus Vallensis (a noble Roman) who was at Bagdat in the year 1616, and went to see the ruins (as they are thought to be) of ancient Babylon, informs us that, “in the middle of a vast and level plain, about a quarter of

“ a league from the Euphrates, which in that place runs westward, appears an heap of ruined buildings, like a huge mountain, the materials of which are so confounded together, that one knows not what to make of it.—Its situation and form correspond with that pyramid which Strabo calls the tower of Belus; and is in all likelihood the tower of Nimrod in Babylon, or Babel, as that place is still called.—There appear no marks of ruins, without the compass of that huge mass, to convince one so great a city as Babylon had ever stood there: all one discovers within fifty or sixty paces of it, being only the remains here and there of some foundations of buildings; and the country round about it so flat and level, that one can hardly believe it should be chosen for the situation of so great and noble a city as Babylon, or that there were ever any remarkable buildings on it; but for my part I am astonished there appears so much as there does, considering it is at least four thousand years since that city was built, and that Diodorus Siculus tells us that it was reduced almost to nothing in his time.”

Monsieur Tavernier, a very celebrated traveller, tells us that, “at the parting of the Tigris, which is but a little way from Bagdat, there is the foundation of a city, which may seem to have been a large league in compass. There are some of the walls yet standing, upon which six coaches may go abreast: they are made of burnt brick, ten feet square, and three thick. The chronicles of the country say, here stood the ancient Babylon.” Tavernier, however, did not think the ruins he saw to be those of Nebuchadnezzar’s palace or of the tower of Babel, as some have supposed they were. He adopts the opinion of the Arabs, and supposes them rather to be the remains of some tower built by one of their princes for a beacon to assemble his subjects in time of war; which, in all probability, was the real state of the case.

The observations made by Mr Salmon (in his Modern History) relative to Babylon, are certainly very just and pertinent. “What (says he) is as strange as any thing that is related of Babylon is, that we cannot learn with

“certainty, either from ancient writers, or modern travellers, where this famous city stood, only in general, that it was situated in the province of Chaldea, upon the river Euphrates, considerably above the place where it is united with the Tigris. Travellers have guessed from the great ruins they have discovered in several parts of this country, that in this or that place Babylon once stood; but when we come to examine nicely the places they mention, we only learn that they are certainly in the wrong, and have taken the ruins of Seleucia, or some other great town, for those of Babylon.”

The last traveller we shall mention that takes notice of the ruins of Babylon is Mr Hanway, who, previous to his giving an account of the siege of Bagdat by Nadir Shah, prefaces it in these words: “Before we enter upon any circumstance relating to the siege of Bagdat, it may afford some light to the subject, to give a short account of this famous city, in the neighborhood of which formerly stood the metropolis of one of the most ancient and most potent monarchies in the world. The place is generally called Bagdat or Bagdad, though some writers preserve the ancient name of Babylon. The reason of thus confounding these two cities is, that the Tigris and Euphrates, forming one common stream before they disembogue into the Persian gulf, are not unfrequently mentioned as one and the same river. It is certain that the present Bagdat is situated on the Tigris, but the ancient Babylon, according to all historians, both sacred and profane, was on the Euphrates. The ruins of the latter, which geographical writers place about fifteen leagues to the south of Bagdat, are now so much effaced, that there are hardly any vestiges of them to point out the situation. In the time of the emperor Theodosius there was only a great park remaining, in which the kings of Persia bred wild beasts for the amusement of hunting.”

How evidently does it appear, from all these accounts, with what great punctuality time hath fulfilled the predictions of the prophets concerning Babylon! When it was converted into a chase for wild beasts to feed and breed there, then were exactly accomplished the words

of the prophets, that *the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands should dwell there, and cry in their desolate houses.* One part of the country was overflowed by the river having been turned out of its course and never restored to its former channel, and thence became boggy and marshy, so that it might literally be said to be *a possession for the bittern and pools of water,* Isaiah xiv. 23. Another part is described as dry and naked, and barren of every thing, so that thereby was also fulfilled another prophecy, *Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby,* Jer. li. 43. The place thereabout is represented as overrun with serpents, scorpions, and all sorts of venomous and unclean creatures, so that *their houses are full of doleful creatures, and dragons cry in their pleasant palaces;* and *Babylon is become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing without an inhabitant.* For all these reasons *neither can the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither can the shepherds make their folds there.* And when we find that modern travellers cannot now certainly discover the spot of ground, whereon this renowned city was once situated, we may very properly say, *How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations? Every purpose of the Lord hath he performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant;* and the expression is no less true than sublime, that *the Lord of hosts hath swept it with the besom of destruction.*

Thus have we represented, in the most clear and undeniable light, the amazing prophecies which were foretold and fulfilled concerning the fate of the once magnificent city of Babylon. How wonderful are such predictions compared with the events; and what a convincing argument it is of the truth and divinity of the Holy Scriptures! Well might God represent this as a memorable instance of his prescience, and challenge all the other false gods, and their votaries to produce the like. *Who hath declared this from ancient time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me, a just God and a Saviour, there is none beside me:* Declaring the

*end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,* Isaiah xlvi. 21. xlvi. 10. And indeed, where can we find a similar instance, but in Scripture, from the beginning of the world to the present time?

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## CHAP. X.

*Of the Prophecies concerning the City of TYRE.*

THE destruction of Tyre is another memorable instance of the great truth of prophecy. The inhabitants of this city, as well as those of Nineveh and Babylon, were great enemies to the Jews; but it was not altogether on this account that they were punished with the divine vengeance. It was owing to their pride and self-sufficiency, both of which were founded on their great riches obtained by traffic, and for which they were more famous than any other people at that time on the earth.

The fate of this city was predicted by the prophets many years before it happened, and particularly by Isaiah and Ezekiel. But it hath been a matter of doubt among the learned which of the Tyres was the subject of the prophecies, whether Palætyrus, or Old Tyre, that was seated on the continent, or New Tyre, that was built on an island nearly opposite. But the best answer to be given to this, and the most incontestable observation is, that the prophecies manifestly appertain to both, some expressions being applicable only to the former, and others only to the latter.

In one place Tyre is described as *situate at the entry of the sea*, Ezek. xxvii. 3; in others as *in the midst of the sea*, ver. 4 and 25. Sometimes it is represented as besieged *with horses and with chariots*, Ezek. xxvi. 7, &c. and at other times it is expressly called *an island, and the sea, even the strength of the sea*, Ezek. xxiii. 2. It is said, *By reason of the abundance of his horses their*

*dust shall cover thee, thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach.* Ezek. xxvi. 10. It is afterwards said, *They shall break down thy walls, and destroy the pleasant houses, and they shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust in the midst of the water,* Ezek. xxvi. 12. And again, *They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas,* Ezek. xxviii. 8.

From these expressions, it is evident that the insular Tyre, as well as the Tyre on the continent, is included in these prophecies: they are both comprehended under the same name, and both spoken of as one and the same city, one part being built on the continent, and the other on an adjoining island.

It was usual with the prophets, when they denounced the downfall and desolation of a city or kingdom, to describe, by way of contrast, its then flourishing condition, to show, in a stronger point of view, how Providence changeth the scene, and ordereth and disposeth all events. The prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel observe the same method with regard to Tyre. Isaiah speaketh of it as a place of great antiquity, *Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days?* Isaiah xxiii. 7. And it is mentioned as a strong place so early as in the days of Joshua, *the strong city of Tyre,* Josh. xix. 29. Nay, there are even heathen authors who extol the great antiquity of the place. The Greek geographer Strabo saith, that after Sidon, the greatest and most ancient city of the Phœnicians was Tyre, which was a rival to Sidon in greatness, and lustre, and antiquity.

Ancient, however, as this city was, it was the *daughter of Sidon*, as it is called by the prophet Isaiah, xxiii. 12. and the *merchants of Sidon, who pass over the sea, replenished it,* ver. 2. Sidon was the eldest son of Canaan, Gen. x. 15. and the city of Sidon is mentioned by the patriarch Jacob, Gen. xl ix. 13. In the days of Joshua it is called *great Sidon*, Josh. xi. 8. And in the days of the Judges the inhabitants of Laish are said to have dwelt

*careless and secure after the manner of the Sidonians,*  
Judges xviii. 7.

But though Tyre was the daughter of Sidon, yet the daughter soon equalled, and, in time, excelled, the mother, and became the most celebrated place in the world for its trade and navigation, being the seat of commerce and the centre of riches. It is therefore called by the prophet Isaiah, *a mart of nations, the crowning city whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth*, Is. xxxiii. 3, 8. And Ezekiel (as it were commenting on the words of Isaiah, *a mart of nations*) recounts the various nations whose commodities were brought to Tyre, and bought and sold by the Tyrians, Ezek. xxvii.

In this wealthy and flourishing condition was Tyre when the prophets foretold its destruction, one of whom (Isaiah) mentions it at least 125 years before it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. An extensive and beneficial trade in any city soon produces luxury and pride. So it fared with the Tyrians; and for these, and their other vices, as well as for their insults and injuries done to the Jews, the Divine vengeance was denounced upon them by the prophets.

The prophet Isaiah mentions the pride of the Tyrians as being the principal occasion of their fall. *The Lord of Hosts (saith he) hath proposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth*, Is. xxiii, 9. Ezekiel describes at large their luxury, and particularly censures the pride of the king of Tyre in arrogating to himself divine honors. *Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God, Behold, therefore, I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations; and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness*, Ezek. xxviii. 6, &c.

The prophets Joel and Amos had before denounced the Divine judgments on the Tyrians for their wickedness in general, and in particular for their cruelty to the children of Israel, and for buying and selling them like cattle in the markets. Thus saith the Lord by the prophet Joel, *Because ye have taken my silver and my gold and have*

*carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things ; the children also of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border ; Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head, Joel iii. 5, &c.*

The prophet Amos speaketh to the same purpose, *Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four I will not turn away the punishment thereof : because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant, Amos 1. 9.* By the latter part of these words the prophet means the league and alliance between Hiram king of Tyre on the one part, and David and Solomon on the other.

The royal psalmist reckons the Tyrians among the most inveterate and implacable enemies of the Jewish name and nation. *The tabernacles of Edom (says he) and the Ishmaelites, of Moab, and the Hagarenes, Gabal, and Ammon, and Amalek, the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre, Psal. lxxxiii. 6, 7.*

Ezekiel also begins his prophecy against the Tyrians with a declaration that the judgments denounced against them were occasioned by their domineering over the Jews, and insulting them, after the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. *Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, A ha, she is broken that was the gates of the people : she is turned unto me, I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste ; Therefore thus saith the Lord God, behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up, Ezek. xxvi. 2, 3.*

These were the circumstances which occasioned the prophecies against Tyre ; and by carefully considering and comparing them together, we shall find that they include the following particulars, viz.

1. That the city should be taken and destroyed by the Chaldeans, or Babylonians.

2. That the inhabitants should pass the Mediterranean into the islands and countries adjoining, and even there should not find a quiet settlement.

3. That the city should be restored after seventy years, and return to her gain and her merchandize.
4. That it should be taken and destroyed again.
5. That the people should, in time, forsake their idolatry, and become converts to the true religion and worship of God; and
6. That the city should be totally destroyed, and become a place only for fishers to spread their nets upon.

On a proper examination into these respective particulars we shall find that they were not only distinctly foretold, but likewise exactly fulfilled.

1. The city should be taken and destroyed by the Chaldeans. This is expressly foretold by the prophet Ezekiel, who says, *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people;—he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground,* Ezek. xxvi. 7—11. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, had besieged Tyre without success; but Nebuchadnezzar was to prevail. The prophet Ezekiel not only foretold the siege, but he likewise mentions it afterwards as a past transaction, *Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus; every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled,* Ezek. xxix. 18.

We are informed by Josephus (whose authority is founded on the Phœnician annals translated by Menander the Ephesian) that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre thirteen years when Ithobal was king there, and that he subdued all Syria and Phœnicia. As the siege continued so long, the soldiers must consequently have endured many hardships, so that hereby we better understand the justness of Ezekiel's expression, that *Nebuchadnezzar caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus; every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled* —such light doth profane history cast upon sacred. It farther appears, from the Phœnician annals quoted by the same historian, that the Tyrians received their kings afterwards from Babylon, which plainly evinces that

some of the blood royal must have been carried thither captives. The Phœnician annals likewise (as is clearly shewn by the learned Dr. Prideaux) agree exactly with Ezekiel's account of the time and year wherein the city was taken. Tyre, therefore, according to the prophecies, was subdued and taken by Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans; after which we hear little more of that part of the city which stood upon the continent.

2. That the inhabitants of Tyre should pass over the Mediterranean into the islands and countries adjoining, and even there should find no quiet settlement. This is plainly signified by the prophet Isaiah, *Pass ye over to Tarshish* (that is, to Tartessus in Spain) *howl ye inhabitants of the isle*, Is. xxiii. 6. And again, *Arise, pass over to Chittim*, (that is, the islands and countries bordering upon the Mediterranean) *there also shalt thou have no rest*, ver. 12. What the prophet here delivers by way of advice is to be understood as a prediction. Ezekiel intimates the same thing, *The isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure*, Ezek. xxvi. 18.

The Phœnicians were the best navigators of antiquity, and the Tyrians in particular were celebrated for their shipping, and having colonies in different parts of the world. In this respect Tyre exceeded Sidon; she sent forth colonies into Africa and Spain, and Quintus Curtius saith, that her colonies were diffused almost over the whole world. The Tyrians, therefore, having planted colonies at Tarshish, and upon the coasts of Chittim, it was natural for them, when they were pressed with dangers and difficulties at home, to fly to their friends and countrymen abroad for refuge and protection. That they really did so is asserted by St. Jerome, whose authority is founded on the Assyrian histories, which have been since lost. "We have read (says he) in the histories of "the Assyrians, that when the Tyrians were besieged, "after they saw no hope of resisting the enemy, they "went on board their ships, and fled to Carthage, or to "some islands of the Ionian and Ægean Sea." And in another place he saith, "when the Tyrians saw that the "works for carrying on the siege were perfected, and the "foundations of the walls were shaken by the battering

" of the rams,' whatsoever precious things in gold, silver, " clothes, and various kinds of furniture the nobility had, " they put them on board their ships, and carried to the " islands; so that the city being taken, Nebuchadnezzar " found nothing worthy of his labors."

It must certainly have been very mortifying to Nebuchadnezzar, after so long and laborious a siege, to be disappointed of the spoil of so rich a city; and therefore Ezekiel was commissioned to promise him the conquest of Egypt for his reward: *Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it.* Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey, and it shall be the wages for his army, Ezekiel xxix. 18, 19.

But though the Tyrians should pass over to Tarshish and to Chittim, yet even there they should find no quiet settlement, *there also shalt thou have no rest.* Megasthenes, who lived about 300 years before Christ, and was employed by Seleucus Nicator in an embassy to the king of India, wrote a history of that country, in which he mentions Nebuchadnezzar as a man of the most distinguished valor and military prowess. This historian is quoted by several ancient authors, and he is particularly cited by Strabo and Josephus, for saying that Nebuchadnezzar surpassed Hercules in bravery and great exploits; that he subdued great part of Africa and Spain, and that he proceeded as far as the pillars of Hercules.

It is reasonable to suppose that after Nebuchadnezzar had subdued Tyre and Egypt, he carried his arms farther to the westward, and if he proceeded so far as Megasthenes reports, the Tyrians might well be said to *have no rest*, the conqueror pursuing them from one country to another. But besides this, and after this, the Carthaginians and other colonies of the Tyrians, lived in a very wretched state. Their history consists of little more than wars and tumults. Sicily and Spain, Europe and Africa, the land, and their own element the sea, were theatres of

their calamities and miseries, till at length not only the New, but Old Carthage likewise, was utterly destroyed. As the Carthaginians sprang from the Tyrians, and the Tyrians from the Sidonians, and Sidon was the first-born of Canaan (see Gen. x. 15.) so the curse upon Canaan seemeth to have pursued them to the most distant parts of the earth.

3. The city should be restored after seventy years, and return to her gain and her merchandize. This circumstance is expressly foretold by the prophet Isaiah, *And it shall come to pass in that day that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king:* (or kingdom, meaning the Babylonians, which was to continue seventy years) *after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot. Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten, make sweet melody, sing many songs that thou mayest be remembered. And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth,* Isaiah xxiii. 15, 16, 17. The plain meaning of these figurative expressions is, that Tyre should lie neglected of traders and merchants for seventy years, as long as the Babylonian empire lasted, and after that she should recover her liberties and her trade, and draw in several of all nations to deal with her, and particularly the kings of the earth to buy her purples, which were worn chiefly by emperors and kings, and for which Tyre was more famous than any other place in the universe.

The time prefixed for the duration of the Babylonian empire was seventy years. So long were the nations to groan under that tyrannical yoke, though these nations were subdued, some sooner and some later than others. *These nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years; And it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations,* Jer. xxv. 11, 12. And accordingly, at the end of seventy years, Cyrus and the Persians subverted the

Babylonian empire, and restored the conquered nations to their liberties.

Tyre was taken by Nebuchadnezzar in the 32d year of his reign, seventy years from which time brings us down to the 19th of Darius Hystaspes. At that time it appears from history that the Ionians had rebelled against Darius, and the Phoenicians assisted him with their fleets: and consequently it is reasonable to conclude that they were now restored to their former privileges. In the succeeding reign we find that they, together with the Sidonians, furnished Xerxes with several ships for his expedition into Greece. And by the time of Alexander the Great, the Tyrians were grown to such power and greatness, that they stopped the progress of that rapid conqueror longer than any part of the Persian empire besides. But all this is to be understood of the insular Tyre; for as the old city flourished most before the time of Nebuchadnezzar, so the new city flourished most afterwards, and this is the Tyre that henceforth is so much celebrated in history.

4. The city should be taken and destroyed again. *Howl ye inhabitants of the isle, Isaiah xxiii. 6. What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?* Ezek. xxvii. 32. *They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas,* xxviii. 8. These expressions can imply no less than that the insular Tyre should be destroyed as well as that upon the continent; and as the one was accomplished by Nebuchadnezzar, so was the other by Alexander the Great. But the same thing may be inferred more directly from the words of Zechariah, who prophesied in the reign of Darius (probably Darius Hystaspes) many years after the former destruction of the city, and consequently he must be understood to speak of this latter. His words are these: *And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. Behold the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire,* Zech. ix. 3, 4. That Tyrus did build herself a strong hold is very certain; for her situation was exceeding strong in an island, and

besides the sea to defend her, she was fortified with a wall of 150 feet in height, and of a proportionable thickness. *She heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets,* being the most celebrated place in the world for trade and riches, *the mart of nations* as she is called, conveying the commodities of the east to the west, and of the west to the east. But yet *Behold the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea,* and she shall be devoured with fire. Ezekiel had likewise foretold that the city should be consumed with fire, *I will bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, in the sight of all them that behold thee,* Ezek. xxviii. 18. And accordingly Alexander besieged, and took, and set the city on fire. The ruins of old Tyre contributed much to the taking of the new city: for with the stones, and timber and rubbish of the old city, Alexander made a bank, or causeway from the continent to the Island, thereby literally fulfilling the words of the prophet, *They shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust in the midst of the water,* Ezek. xxvi. 12. Alexander was seven months in completing this work, but the time and labor were well employed, for by means thereof he was enabled to storm and take the city.

At the time Alexander reduced Tyre, great numbers of the inhabitants, as in the former siege, passed over the Mediterranean to the islands and countries adjoining. Both Diodorus Siculus and Quintus Curtius testify that they sent their wives and children to Carthage; and upon the taking of the place the Sidonians secretly conveyed away fifteen thousand more in their ships. Happy were they who thus escaped, for of those who remained behind the conqueror slew eight thousand in storming and taking the city, caused two thousand afterwards to be crucified, and thirty thousand he sold for slaves. They had before sold some of the captive Jews, and now it was returned upon them according to the prediction of Joel, *The children also of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold; Behold I will return your recompence upon your own head, and will sell your sons and your daughters,* Joel iii. 6, 7, 8.

When the old city was taken, the Tyrians received their kings afterwards from Babylon; but when the new one was conquered by Alexander, their king held the sovereignty by his appointment. The cases are, in many respects, alike; but the city recovered much sooner from the calamities of the last siege than the first. In the space of nineteen years it was able to withstand the fleets and armies of Antigonus, and sustained a siege of fifteen months before it was taken: a plain proof (as Dean Prideaux observes) "of the great advantage of trade: for "this city being the grand mart where most of the trade "both of the east and west did centre, by virtue hereof "it was that it soon after revived to its pristine vigor."

5. There should come a time when the Tyrians would forsake their idolatry, and become converts to the true religion and worship of God. The Psalmist is thought to have hinted as much in saying, *The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift*, Psal. xlv. 12. And again, *The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents*, Psal. lxxii. 10. Zechariah, when he foretels the calamities which the Tyrians and neighboring nations should suffer from Alexander, at the same time predicts their conversion to the true God; *but he that remaineth, even he shall be for our God*, Zech. ix. 7. This prediction is more fully expressed by the prophet Isaiah, who says, *And her merchandize and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured, nor laid up: for her merchandize shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing*, Isaiah xxiii. 18.

The Tyrians were greatly addicted to the worship of Hercules, as he was called by the Greeks, or of Baal, as he is denominated in scripture. But in process of time, by means of some Jews and proselytes living and conversing among them, many were converted to the Jewish religion; so that *a great multitude of people from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon came to hear our Saviour and to be healed of their diseases*, Luke vi. 17. And when St. Paul, in his way to Jerusalem, came to Tyre, he found disciples there who were inspired and prophesied; and with them he tarried seven days, Acts xxi. 4.

During the time of Dioclesian's persecution, the Tyrians were such sincere converts to christianity that many of them suffered the most horrid deaths, and died martyrs to the religion they then professed.\* After the storm of persecution was blown over, they (under their bishop Paulinus) built an oratory, or rather a temple, for the public worship of God, the most magnificent and sumptuous in all Palestine and Phoenicia. On this occasion Eusebius, on commenting on the passage of Isaiah, *And her merchandize and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord,* says, " Since a church of God hath been founded in Tyre, as well as in other nations, many of its goods gotten by merchandize are consecrated to the Lord, being offered to his church, (as he afterwards explains himself) for the use of the ministers of the altar or gospel, according to the institution of our Lord, that they who wait at the altar should live of the altar." In like manner speaks St. Jerome, " We may behold churches in Tyre built to Christ: we may see their riches that they are not laid up, nor treasured, but given to those who dwell before the Lord. For the Lord hath appointed, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

To these proofs we shall only add, that as Tyre consecrated its merchandize and hire unto the Lord, so it had the honor not only of being created into an arch-

\* Those who may be desirous of being fully acquainted with the particulars of these persecutions, as well as those exercised, in different ages, and in all parts of the world, on the christians, are referred to an excellent work lately published, entitled, *The NEW BOOK OF MARTYRS; or COMPLETE CHRISTIAN MARTYROLOGY.* Containing an authentic and genuine Historical Account of the many dreadful Persecutions against the Church of Christ, in all Parts of the World, by Pagans, Jews, Turks, Papists and others, from the earliest ages of the Church to the present period. By the Rev. Henry Southwell, L. L. D. Author of the *Universal Family Bible.* This Work is published in 40 numbers, (Price Six pence each) every one of which is adorned with one or more beautiful copper plates, representing either the mode of torturing and tormenting Christians for their constancy, putting them to death for their faith, or displaying some general scene, in which Pagan Barbarity, and Popish Cruelty are exhibited in the most striking manner. Printed for J. Cooke, No. 17, Pater-noster Row.

bishopric, but was the first archbishopric under the patriarchate of Jerusalem, having fourteen bishops under its primacy; and in this state it continued several years.

6. But, after all, Tyre was to be totally destroyed, and become a place only for fishers to spread their nets upon. When the prophets denounced the destruction of any city or country, it was not intended that such denunciation should take effect immediately. It was threatened that Babylon should become a desolation without an inhabitant, but many ages passed before it was reduced to that condition; it decayed by degrees, till at length it came to nothing. In like manner Tyre was not to be ruined and desolated all at once. Many events were to happen previous to its final destruction, and before the prophecies of Ezekiel could be fully accomplished. *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up; And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock: it shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God, Ezek. xxvi. 3, 4, 5.* And again, *I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more; though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, ver. 21.*

The prophecies of Tyre, like those relative to most other places, were to receive their completion by degrees. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the old city, and Alexander employed the ruins and rubbish in making his causeway from the continent to the island, which henceforwards were joined together. “It is no wonder, therefore, (as Bishop Pocock observes) that there are no signs of the ancient city; and, as it is a sandy shore, the face of every thing is altered, and the great aqueduct in many parts, is almost buried in the sand.” So that as to this part of the city, the prophecy hath been literally fulfilled. *Thou shalt be built no more; though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again.*

It may be questioned whether the new city ever arose to that height of power, wealth, and greatness, to which

it was elevated in the times of Isaiah and Ezekiel. It received a great blow from Alexander, not only by his taking and burning the city, but much more by his building of Alexandria in Egypt, which in time deprived it of much of its trade, and thereby contributed more effectually to its ruin. It had the misfortune afterwards of changing its masters often, being sometimes in the hands of the Ptolemies, kings of Egypt, and sometimes of the kings of Syria, till at length it fell under the dominion of the Romans. It was taken by the Saracens about the year of Christ 639, in the reign of Omar the third emperor. It was retaken by the christians during the time of the holy war in the year 1124, Baldwin, the second of that name, being then king of Jerusalem, and assisted by a fleet of the Venetians. From the christians it was again taken in the year 1289 by the Mamelucs of Egypt, under their Sultan Alphix, who sacked and razed this and Sidon and other strong towns, that they might not ever again afford any harbor or shelter to the Christians. From the Mamelucs it was again taken in the year 1516 by Selim, the ninth emperor of the Turks; and under their dominion it continues at present. But, alas! how fallen, how changed from what it was formerly! Instead of being the centre of trade, and frequented by the merchant ships of the east and west, it is now become an heap of ruins, and visited only by a few poor fishermen. So that as to this part likewise of the city the prophecy hath been literally fulfilled, *I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon.*

The description given of this once opulent and magnificent city by Mr Maundrell, in his journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, is as follows: "This city (saith he) standing in the sea upon a peninsula, promises, at a distance, something very magnificent. But when you come to it, you find no similitude of that glory for which it was so renowned in ancient times, and which is described by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xxvi. &c. On the north side it hath an old Turkish ungarrisoned castle; besides which you see nothing here but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, &c. there being not so much as one entire house left: its present inhabitants are only a

“ few poor wretches harboring themselves in the vaults,  
“ and subsisting chiefly on fishing, who seem to be pre-  
“ served in this place by Divine Providence, as a visible  
“ argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning  
“ Tyre, viz. *that it should be as the top of a rock, a place*  
“ *for fishers to dry their nets on.*”

This account of Mr Maundrell's is corroborated by Mr Middleton in his New System of Geography lately published. “ This powerful city (says he, speaking of “ Tyre) once the capital of Phœnicia, the emporium of “ commerce, and mistress of the sea, equally famed for “ its trade, beauty and opulence, and for many ages “ deemed impregnable, both from its almost inaccessible “ situation, and the strength of its fortifications made by “ art, is now a mere desert, and cannot boast of one house “ left entire. Its present inhabitants are only a few very “ poor people, who dwell in caverns, and subsist by “ fishing.”

Such hath been the fate of the once famous city of Tyre, on which the Divine vengeance was denounced for the great pride of its inhabitants; and in the destruction of which we have an additional instance to those already mentioned of the great truth of the Divine predictions, as spoken by the mouths of the prophets.

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## CHAP. XI.

### *Of the Prophecies concerning EGYPT.*

THE kingdom of Egypt is one of the most ancient in the world, it having been in a very flourishing state even during the days of Abraham; and the inhabitants of it were distinguished for having more wisdom than any other people at that time on the face of the earth. It was (as we may call it) the great academy of the earlier ages. Hither the wits and sages of Greece, and other countries, repaired, and received their learning at this fountain. It is mentioned to the commendation of Moses, that he was

*learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,* Acts vii. 22. and the highest character given of Solomon's wisdom is, that it *excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt,* 1 Kings, iv. 30. But with this wisdom it was early corrupted, and was as much the parent of superstition as it was the mistress of learning; and the one, as well as the other, were from thence propagated and diffused over other countries. It was, indeed, the grand corruptor of the world, the source of polytheism and idolatry to several of the eastern, and to most of the western nations, and at length degenerated to such a degree as not to be equalled by any other country in the universe.

While the Israelites remained in Egypt during their state of bondage, they acquired many of the maxims of the natives, and retained a fondness for the Egyptian idols ever after. Several of Moses's laws and institutions were evidently calculated to wean them from, and to guard them against, the manners and customs of the Egyptians. But still in their hearts and affections they were much inclined to return into Egypt. Even Solomon married a woman from that country; and, on many occasions, the Israelites courted the friendship and alliance of Egypt in preference to any of the neighboring powers. This prejudice is the more extraordinary, as the Egyptians generally treated them not only with disrespect, but took every advantage they could of doing them the greatest injuries. They oppressed them with the most cruel servitude during their state of bondage. They at length gave them leave to depart, and then pursued them as fugitives. Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and plundered it, 1 Kings, xiv. 25, 26. And in all their leagues and alliances Egypt was to the Israelites as *a broken reed, whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it,* Isaiah xxxvi. 6.

When we consider these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that Egypt should be the subject of several prophecies; and we shall find on examination, that these prophecies consisted of the principal revolutions that were to happen in that kingdom, and which were to take place

from the days of the prophets, and continue to the present time.

The first great revolution that happened in Egypt (after the prophecies denounced against it) was the conquest of it by Nebuchadnezzar, which was particularly foretold by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. These two prophets have employed several sections or chapters upon this occasion. Jeremiah was carried into Egypt, where he foretold the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon: and some of his prophecies are entitled *The word that the Lord spake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon should come and smite the land of Egypt*, Jer. xlvi. 13. Ezekiel also declares, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon: He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations shall be brought to destroy the land; and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain*, Ezek. xxx. 10, 11. The conquest of this kingdom was promised to Nebuchadnezzar as a reward for his services against Tyre, which after a long siege he took and destroyed, but was disappointed of the spoil, as we have already observed in the foregoing chapter.

That this prophecy was strictly fulfilled appears from the testimonies of Megasthenes and Berossus, two heathen historians, one of whom expressly affirms that Nebuchadnezzar conquered the greatest part of Africa; and the other affirms it in effect, by saying, that when Nebuchadnezzar heard of the death of his father, having settled his affairs in Egypt, and committed the captives whom he took there to the care of some of his friends to bring them after him, he hasted directly to Babylon.

The testimonies of these two are confirmed by Josephus, who says, that Nebuchadnezzar, having subdued Cœlo-Syria, waged war against the Ammonites and Moabites: and having conquered them he invaded Egypt, slew Pharaoh-Hophra their king, and appointed another in his stead. This monarch is represented by Ezekiel as an arrogant, impious prince; he calls him *the great dragon (or crocodile) that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, my river is my own, and I have made it for*

*myself;* Ezekiel xxix. 3. Agreeable to this Herodotus informs us, that he proudly and wickedly boasted of having established his kingdom so surely, that it was not in the power of God himself to dispossess him of it. For this presumption he was justly cut off, and the prediction foretold by Jeremiah was fully accomplished, *Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give Pharaoh-Hophra, king of Egypt, into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life,* Jer. xliv. 30.

It was foretold by the prophet Ezekiel, that the country should be desolate forty years, and the people carried captives into other countries, *I will make the land of Egypt desolate forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries,* Ezek. xxix. 12. Though it cannot, indeed, be proved from heathen authors, that this desolation of the country continued exactly forty years, yet there is not the least doubt but this, as well as the other conquered countries, labored under the Babylonish yoke till the time of Cyrus. We are assured, by Berosus, that Nebuchadnezzar took several captives from Egypt, and carried them to Babylon: and from Megasthenes we learn, that he transplanted, and settled others in Pontus. So true it is that they were *scattered among the nations, and dispersed through the countries;* and the greater part of them might, probably, after the dissolution of the Babylonish empire, return to their native country.

The next memorable revolution that happened in Egypt was, the invasion and subduction of it by Cambyses and the Persians, which is the principal subject of the 19th chapter of the prophet Isaiah. Some parts, indeed, of this prophecy have a near affinity with those of Jeremiah and Ezekiel concerning the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar; but this prophecy, as well as several others, might admit of a double completion, and be fulfilled at both those periods. This prophecy of Isaiah is a general representation of the calamities that should befall the nation: it includes various particulars, and is applicable to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians, as well as to Cambyses and the Persians. They might, therefore, be both intended and comprehended in it; but the latter, it

is most reasonable to imagine, were principally meant, and for this reason; because the deliverance of the Egyptians by some great conqueror, and their conversion afterwards to the true religion, which are foretold in the latter part of this chapter, were events consequent to the dominion of the Persians, and not to that of the Babylonians.

Isaiah begins his prophecy against Egypt with declaring that the conquest of it should be swift and sudden, and that the idols of Egypt should be destroyed. *Behold, (says he) the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it,* Isaiah xix. 1. The same thing is foretold of Nebuchadnezzar by the prophet Jeremiah, *And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt—And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt, and he shall burn them, and carry them away captives—He shall break also the images of Bethshemesh, that is in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire,* Jer. xliii. 11, &c. And again the prophet Ezekiel, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph, or Memphis,* Ezek. xxx. 13.

The first attempt made by Cambyses was upon Pelusium, a strong town at the entrance of Egypt, and the key of the kingdom; and he succeeded by the stratagem of placing before his army a great number of dogs, sheep, cats, and other animals, which being held sacred by the Egyptians, not one of them would cast a javelin, or shoot an arrow that way; and so the town was stormed and taken in a manner without resistance. He treated the gods of Egypt with great contempt, laughed at the people, and chastised the priests for worshipping such deities. He slew Apis, or the sacred ox (which the Egyptians worshipped) with his own hand; and burnt and demolished their other idols and temples; and would likewise, if he had not been prevented, have destroyed the famous temple of Jupiter Ammon. Ochus too, who was another king of Persia, and subdued the Egyptians again after they had revolted, plundered their temples, and caused

another Apis to be slain and served up at a banquet he had appointed in consequence of his victories.

It was also foretold, by the prophet Isaiah, that they should be miserably distracted with civil wars, *And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians; and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom.* Isaiah xix. 2. Egypt was divided into twelve prefectures, or provinces, over each of which presided a petty prince, or governor. These disagreeing with each other, civil wars took place, and, for a considerable time, the whole kingdom was one continued scene of anarchy and confusion. It is, therefore, little to be wondered at that in such distractions as these the Egyptians, who were naturally a cowardly people, should be destitute of counsel, and that *the spirit of Egypt should fail in the midst thereof*, as is foretold by the prophet in ver. 3. and that being also a very superstitious people, *they should seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.* But their divination was all in vain; it was their fate to be subdued and oppressed by cruel lords and tyrants, *And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord. the Lord of Hosts,* ver. 4. This is a very essential part of the prophecy, and may with the greatest propriety and justice, be applied to the Persians, and especially to Cambyses and Ochus, the former of whom put the yoke on the necks of the Egyptians, and the latter rivetted it. Ochus was the cruellest and worst of all the kings of Persia, and was so destructive and oppressive to Egypt in particular, that his favorite eunuch Bagoas, who was an Egyptian, in revenge of his injured country, poisoned him. No other allegation is wanting to prove, that the Persian yoke was more galling and intolerable to the Egyptians than their frequent revolts and rebellions, which instead of being any benefit to them, only served to enslave them the more, and augment their misery.

The prophet, after denouncing these judgments against the Egyptians, next proceeds to set forth, in figurative language, the consequences of this subjection and slavery,

the poverty and want, the mourning and lamentation, the confusion and misery, which should be entailed on them and their posterity; after which he recounts the immediate causes of these evils, the folly of the princes and rulers who valued themselves upon their wisdom, and the cowardice and effeminacy of the people in general. These things will plainly appear to any one who attentively peruses the history of that nation, the particulars of which are too considerable to be here admitted. It may, however, in general, be said, that Egypt would not have become a prey to so many foreign enemies, had it not been for the excessive weakness of the people both in counsel and in action. They had not the courage even to defend themselves. They trusted chiefly to their Grecian and other mercenaries, who, instead of defending, were often the first to betray them.

The next memorable revolution was effected by Alexander the Great, who subverted the Persian empire in Egypt as well as in other places; and this event is particularly pointed out in the same 19th chapter of the prophet Isaiah. It is also foretold, that about the same time several of the Egyptians should lay aside their idolatry, and be converted to the worship of the true God. *In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign, and for a witness unto the Lord of Hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour and a great one, and he shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation, yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it, Isaiah xix. 19, &c.*

The prophet then proceeds to show, that Assyria and Egypt, which used to be at great enmity with each other, should be united in the same worship by the intermedia-tion of Israel, and that those three should be a blessing on the earth. *In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the*

*third with Egypt, and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land; whom the Lord shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance, ver. 23, &c.*

It is clearly foretold by the prophet, that a *great prince*, from a foreign country, should *deliver* the Egyptians from their Persian *oppressors*, and *heal* their country, which was *smitten of God*, and afflicted. And who could this be but Alexander, who is always distinguished by the additional epithet *the Great*, and whose first successor in Egypt was called the *great Ptolemy* and *Ptolemy Soter*, or *the Saviour*? When Alexander went first into Egypt the people all cheerfully submitted to him out of hatred to the Persians, so that he became master of the country without any opposition. For this reason he treated them with great humanity and kindness, built a city there, which, after his own name, he called Alexandria, appointed one of his own country for their civil governor, and permitted them to be governed by their own laws and customs. By these changes and regulations, and by the prudent and gentle administration of some of the first Ptolemies, Egypt revived, trade and learning flourished, and, for a time, the land was blessed with peace and plenty.

The prophet likewise foretels, that about the same time the true religion, and the true worship of the God of Israel, should begin to spread, and prevail in the land of Egypt; and what event was ever more unlikely to happen than the conversion of a people so sunk and lost in superstition and idolatry of the worst and grossest kind? But that it did happen will appear from what follows.

It is certain that many of the Jews, after Nebuchadnezzar had taken Jerusalem, fled into Egypt, and with them went Jeremiah the prophet, who there delivered most of his prophecies concerning the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar. From thence some knowledge of God, and some notices of the prophecies, might easily be received by the Egyptians. This alteration was to take place principally in *five cities*, which accordingly came to pass. The first city in which the true worship of God was received was *Heliopolis*; the second *Migdol*, or

Magdolum; the third, *Tahpanhes*, or Daphne; the fourth, *Noph*, or Memphis; and the fifth, *in the country of Pathros*, or Thebais; all of which are particularly mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xliv. 4.

In these cities, at that time, many Jews resided; and though they were, in general, very wicked men, and disobedient to the word of God, yet no doubt, some good people were mingled among them, who might relate to them the prophecies of Jeremiah, and they themselves, when they saw them fulfilled, might embrace the Jewish religion. This, however, is not to be understood of all the inhabitants of those places, but only of some, which is sufficient to justify the expression of *five cities speaking the language of Canaan, and swearing by the Lord of Hosts*. The prediction of the prophet Zephaniah is to the same effect: *Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent*, Zeph. iii. 9.

After Alexander the Great had made a conquest of Egypt, he transplanted many of the Jews into his new city of Alexandria, and allowed them many privileges and immunities equal to those enjoyed by the Macedonians. Ptolemy Soter carried more of them into Egypt, and they received such indulgencies that many others followed them of their own accord. Ptolemy Philadelphus redeemed and released the captive Jews; and in his reign, or his father's, the books of Moses were translated into Greek, and afterwards the other parts of the Old Testament. The third Ptolemy, called Euergetes, having subdued all Syria, did not sacrifice to the idols of Egypt in acknowledgment of his victory; but going to Jerusalem made his oblations to God after the manner of the Jews, and his example, no doubt, was followed by many of his subjects. The sixth Ptolemy, called Philometer, committed the whole management of his kingdom to two Jews, Onias, and Dositheus, who were his chief ministers and generals, and had the principal direction of all affairs, both civil and military. This Onias obtained a license from the king to build a temple for the Jews in Egypt, like that at Jerusalem, alledging for the purpose this very prophecy of Isaiah, that there should be an altar to the

*Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt;* and the king and queen in their edict make honorable mention of the law and of the prophet Isaiah, and express a dread of sinning against God. The place, chosen for the building of this temple, was in the prefecture of Heliopolis, or *the city of the sun*, which place is likewise mentioned in the prophecy. It was built after the model of the temple at Jerusalem, but not so sumptuous and magnificent. Philometer himself was made high-priest; other priests and Levites were appointed for the ministration; and Divine service was daily performed there in the same manner as at Jerusalem. By these means *the Egyptians must have known the Lord*; and without doubt there must have been many proselytes among them. Amidst those who came up to the feast of Pentecost, there are particularly mentioned *the dicellers in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, Jews and proselytes*, Acts ii. 10.

Thus were the Jews settled and encouraged in Egypt; nor were they less favored by the kings of Syria. Seleucus Nicator made them free of the cities which he built in Asia and the Lower Syria, and even of Antioch, the capital of his kingdom; and granted the same rights and privileges to them as to the Greeks and Macedonians. Antiochus the Great published several decrees in favor of the Jews, both of those who inhabited Jerusalem, and of those who dwelt in Mesopotamia and Babylon. And thus, by means of the Jews and proselytes dwelling in Egypt and Syria, Israel, Egypt and Syria, were, in some measure, united in the same worship. But this was more fully accomplished when the inhabitants of these countries became Christians, and were made members of the church of Christ. And it is to be seriously hoped and believed, that the prophecy will still receive its most perfect completion in the latter days, when Mahometanism shall be rooted out and christianity shall again flourish in these countries, when *the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved*.

The fate of Egypt, from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the present period, is predicted, in a most remarkable manner, by the prophet Ezekiel. He foretels, that after the desolation of the land, *it should be a base kingdom*; it

*shall be the basest of the kingdoms, neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations,* Ezek. xxix. 14, 15. *And again, I will sell the land into the hand of the wicked, and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt,* Ezek. xxx. 12. 13.

In order to point out the great truth of the fulfilment of this remarkable prophecy, we must advert to, and make a short deduction from the Egyptian History, at least that part of it which contains the various circumstances that took place from the subdiction of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, to the present period.

After Nebuchadnezzar had conquered the Egyptians, he appointed Amasis for their king; and as he held his crown by the permission and allowance of the Babylonians, there is not the least doubt but he paid them tribute for it. Berossus, the Chaldean historian, speaketh of Nebuchadnezzar's reducing Egypt to his obedience, and afterwards of his settling the affairs of the country, and carrying away captives from thence to Babylon. By his settling the affairs of Egypt nothing less could be meant than his appointing the governors, and the tribute that they should pay to him; and by carrying some Egyptians captives to Babylon, he certainly intended not only to weaken the country, but also to have them as hostages to secure the obedience of the rest, and the payment of their tribute.

After the fall of the Babylonish empire, Cyrus established the Persian on its ruins; and it is affirmed, by that faithful and elegant historian Xenophon, that Cyrus also conquered Egypt, and made it part of his empire. But whether this was so or not, it is universally allowed that Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, did conquer Egypt, and deprived Psammenitus (the then king) of his crown, to which he had newly succeeded upon the death of Amasis. Cambyses purposed to have made Psammenitus administrator of the kingdom under him, as it was the custom of the Persians to do to the conquered princes; but Psammenitus forming schemes to recover the kingdom, and being convicted thereof, was put to death. The

Egyptians groaned under the yoke near forty years. They then revolted towards the latter end of the reign of Darius the son of Hystaspes; but his son and successor Xerxes, in the second year of his reign, subdued them again, and reduced them to a worse condition of servitude than they had been in under Darius, and appointed his brother Achæmenes governor of Egypt. About twenty-four years after this (when the Egyptians heard of the troubles in Persia about the succession to the throne after the death of Xerxes) they revolted again at the instigation of Inarus king of Lybia; and having driven away the Persian tribute-collectors, they constituted Inarus their king. Six years were employed in reducing them to obedience, and all Egypt submitted again to king Artaxerxes Longimanus, except Amyrtæus, who reigned in the fens, whither the Persians could not approach to take him. Inarus, who was the author of these evils, being betrayed to the Persians, was taken and crucified. They, however, permitted his son Thianyra to succeed his father in the kingdom of Lybia; and Egypt continued in subjection all the remaining part of the long reign of Artaxerxes. In the tenth year of Darius Nothus they revolted again under the conduct of Amyrtæus, who sallied out of the fens, drove the Persians from Egypt, and made himself master of the country. Amyrtæus was succeeded by his son Pausiris, who (according to Herodotus) obtained the kingdom by the favor of the Persians, from whence it appears that the Persians had again subdued Egypt, or, at least, that the king was not established without their consent and approbation. It is certain, however, that after this the Egyptians gave much trouble to the Persians. Artaxerxes Mnemon made several efforts to reconquer the country, but they all proved ineffectual. It was not totally and finally subdued till the ninth year of the following reign of Ochus, about 350 years before Christ; when Nectanebus the last king fled into Ethiopia, and Ochus became absolute master of the country, and having appointed one of his nobles, named Pherendates, to be his viceroy and governor of Egypt, he returned with great glory, and with immense treasures to Babylon. Egypt from that

time hath never been able to recover its liberties: It hath always been subject to strangers, and never governed by a king of its own, whereby hath been amply fulfilled that part of Ezekiel's prophecy, in which it is said, *there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt.*

After the Persians, Egypt came into the hands of the Macedonians. It submitted to Alexander the Great without attempting the least resistance; and on his death it fell to the share of Ptolemy, one of his four famous captains, and was governed by his family for several generations. The two or three first of the Ptolemies were wise and potent princes, but most of the rest (of which there were eleven in number) were prodigies of luxury and wickedness. It is observed by Strabo, that all after the third Ptolemy governed very ill; but those who governed worst of all were the fourth, the seventh, and the last, called Auletes. The persons here alluded to by Strabo were, Ptolemy Philopater, or *the lover of his father*, so called by way of irony, because he was a parricide, and murdered both his father and mother: Ptolemy Physcon, who affected the title of *Euergetes*, or the *benefactor*, but the Alexandrians more justly named him Kakhergetes, or the *malefactor*, on account of his distinguished wickedness; and Ptolemy Auletes, or *the piper*, so denominated because he spent much of his time playing on the pipe, and used to contend for the prize in the public shows. This kingdom of the Macedonians continued from the death of Alexander 294 years, and ended in the famous Cleopatra, who, as the celebrated Mr Middleton observes, was one of the most ambitious and wicked princesses that ever sat upon a throne.

After the downfal of the Macedonians, Egypt fell under the dominion of the Romans. They had, indeed, either by virtue of treaties, or by force of arms, obtained great authority there, and were, in a manner, arbiters of the kingdom before. But after the death of Cleopatra, Octavius Cæsar reduced it into the form of a Roman province, and appointed Cornelius Gallus the first prefect or governor. It remained in this state, with little variation, till the year 641 after Christ, that is, 670 years in the whole, from the reign of Augustus Cæsar to that

of the emperor Heraclius. It was at that period that the Saracens, in the reign of Omar their third emperor, and under the command of Amrou, invaded and conquered Egypt, took Misrah (formerly called Memphis, but now Cairo) by storm, and also Alexandria, after they had besieged it fourteen months, and had lost no less than 23,000 men. But the greatest loss in the destruction of the latter place was the famous library, founded by the first Ptolemies, and so much enlarged and improved by their successors, that the books contained in it amounted to 700,000 volumes, all of which were committed to the flames. Before this event, Egypt was frequented by learned foreigners from almost all parts, and it produced several learned natives; but afterwards it became more and more *a base kingdom*, and sunk into the greatest ignorance and superstition. Mahometanism was established there instead of Christianity, and the government of the caliphs and sultans continued till about the year 1250 after Christ.

It was about this time that the Mamalucs\* usurped the royal authority. Their government began with the Sultan Ibeg in the 648th year of the Hegira, and the year of Christ 1250; and continued through a series of twenty-four Turkish and twenty-three Circassian Mamaluc Sultans, ending with Tumanbai, in the year of Christ 1517. At that time Selim, the ninth emperor of the Turks, conquered the Mamalucs, hanged their last Sultan, Tumanbai, before one of the gates of Cairo, and put an end to their government. He caused five hundred of the chiefest Egyptian families to be transplanted to Constantinople, as likewise great numbers of the wives and children of the Mamalucs, besides the Sultan's treasure and other immense riches; and annexed Egypt

\* The word Mamalue signifies, in general, a slave bought with money, but it is appropriated in particular to those Turkish and Circassian slaves, whom the sultans of Egypt bought very young, trained up in military exercises, and made them the choicest officers and soldiers, and by them controlled their subjects, and subdued their enemies. These slaves, finding how necessary and useful they were, grew at length insolent and audacious, slew their sovereigns, and usurped the government to themselves.

to the Ottoman empire, whereof it hath continued a province from that day to this. It is governed by a Turkish Basha with twenty-four *beys* or princes under him, who are advanced from servitude to the administration of public affairs; a superstitious notion possessing the Egyptians, that it is decreed, by fate, that captives shall reign, and the natives be subject to them. But it is not merely a superstitious notion, but a notion in all probability at first derived from some tradition of these prophecies, that *Egypt should be a base kingdom, and that there should be no more a prince of the land of Egypt.*

Such are the events which have taken place in Egypt, and such has been the fulfilment of the prophecy of Ezekiel, relative to the destruction of this once flourishing and important kingdom. At the time this prophecy was delivered, who could pretend to say, upon human conjecture, that so great a kingdom, so rich and fertile a country, should ever after become tributary and subject to strangers? It is now more than two thousand years since this prophecy was first delivered; and what likelihood or appearance was there, that the Egyptians should, for so many ages, bow under a foreign yoke, and never, in all that time, be able to recover their liberties, and have a prince of their own to reign over them? But as is the prophecy, so is the event: for not long after it was delivered, Egypt was conquered by the Babylonians, and after the Babylonians by the Persians; and after the Persians it became subject to the Macedonians, and after the Macedonians to the Romans, and after the Romans to the Saracens, and then to the Mamalucs; and it is now a province to the Turkish empire.

We have now beheld in what manner the cities of Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre and Egypt (four of the greatest kingdoms during their respective flourishing states in the universe) were visited by Divine vengeance for their enmity to, and persecution of, the Jews, the chosen people of God. But besides this sin, all these nations were guilty of many others. Egypt, in particular, was so severely threatened for her idolatry, her pride, and her wickedness. The Egyptians have generally been more wicked than other nations. Ancient authors describe

them every where as superstitious and luxurious, as an unwarlike and unserviceable people, as a faithless and fallacious nation, always meaning one thing and pretending another, as lovers of wine and strong drink, as cruel in their anger, as thieves and tolerating all kinds of theft, as patient of tortures, and though put to the rack, yet choosing rather to die than to confess the truth. Modern authors paint them still in blacker colors. The famous Thevenot is very strong and severe: "The people of "Egypt (says he, generally speaking) are all swarthy, "exceeding wicked, great rogues, cowardly, lazy, hypo- "crites, liars, robbers, treacherous, so very greedy of "money, that they will kill a man for a *maiden* or three "halfpence." Bishop Pocock's character of them is not much more favorable, though not so harsh and opprobrious: "The natives of Egypt (says he) are now a sloth- "ful people, and delight in sitting still, hearing tales, "and indeed seem always to have been more fit for the "quiet life, than for any active scenes. They are also "malicious and envious to a great degree, which keeps "them from uniting and setting up for themselves; and "though they are very ignorant, yet they have a natural "cunning and artifice as well as falsehood, and this "makes them always suspicious of travellers. The "love of money is so rooted in them, that nothing is to "be done without bribery. They think the greatest vil- "lainies are expiated, when once they have washed their "hands and feet. Their words pass for nothing, either "in relations, promises, or professions of friendship, &c."

Such is the state of the Egyptians at the present period, and such has been the punishment inflicted on them for their manifold sins and transgressions, whereby that excellent political aphorism of the wisest of kings is fully verified, *righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach and ruin to any people*, Proverbs xiv. 34.

## CHAP. XII.

*The Prophecies of DANIEL, and his Interpretation of the remarkable Dream of NEBUCHADNEZZAR king of BABYLON.*

THE first prophecy of Daniel, and on which, indeed, all the succeeding ones were founded, was his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. This monarch, in the second year of his reign, having subdued all his enemies, and firmly established his throne, was thinking upon his bed what should come to pass hereafter; what should be the future success of his family and kingdom, and whether any, or what families and kingdoms, might arise after his own; and as our waking thoughts generally give some tincture to our dreams, he dreamed of something to the same purpose, which astonished him, but which he could not rightly understand. The dream greatly affected him at the time; but, awaking in confusion, he had but an imperfect remembrance of it. He therefore called for the magicians and astrologers, and as absurdly as imperiously demanded of them, upon pain of death and destruction, *to make known unto him both the dream and the interpretation thereof*. They answered with great reason that no king had ever required such a thing, that it transcended all the powers and faculties of man, and that God alone, or only beings like him could disclose it. *There is not a man upon earth that can show the king's matter; therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean: And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the God, whose dwelling is not of the flesh*, Dan. ii. 10. 41.

But the pride of absolute power cannot listen to reason, or bear any control. Nebuchadnezzar was so incensed at this reply, that he ordered all the magicians and wise men of Babylon to be destroyed. *For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon*, ver. 12. Daniel and his companions would have been involved in the same fate as the

rest ; but by their joint and earnest prayers to God, the secret was revealed unto Daniel in a night vision ; and Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

Daniel, having received these instructions, was desirous to save the lives of the wise men of Babylon, who were so unjustly condemned, as well as his own. He therefore went unto Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, whom the king had ordered to destroy the wise men of Babylon, and said thus unto him, Destroy not the wise men of Babylon ; bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation, ver. 24, &c. The captain of the guard immediately introduced him to the king, saying, I have found a man of the captives of Judah that will make known unto the king the interpretation, ver. 25. Daniel was far from assuming any merit to himself; he modestly told Nebuchadnezzar that this secret, which the wise men, astrologers, magicians and soothsayers could not shew unto the king, was not revealed to him for any wisdom that he had more than others ; but (says he) there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days, Dan. ii. 27, &c. Having said this, Daniel not only told him what he saw in his dream, but also what he thought within himself before his dream. As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind, upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter ; and he that revealeth secrets maketh known unto thee what shall come to pass.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream was of a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before him, and the form thereof was terrible. It appears, from ancient coins and medals, that cities and people were often represented by figures of men and women. A great terrible figure was therefore not an improper emblem of human power and dominion ; and the various metals of which it was composed, not unfitly typify the various kingdoms which should arise. It consisted of four different metals, gold and silver, and brass and iron with clay ; and these four metals, according to Daniel's own interpretation, mean so many kingdoms ; and the order of their succession is clearly denoted by the order of the

parts, the head and higher parts signifying the earlier times, and the lower parts, the latter times. From hence, it is conjectured by Calvin, the poets drew their fables of the four ages of the world, namely, the golden, the silver, the brazen, and the iron age.

These different kingdoms will naturally constitute the different heads of our discourse on Daniel's prophecy and interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream; in the explanation of which we shall follow the best commentators on the subject, but at the same time shall not regard any commentator so much as the truth of history, the evidence of reason, and the analogy of scripture.

*This image's head was of fine gold,* Dan. ii. 32. which the prophet thus interprets, *Thou art this head of gold,* ver. 38. thou, and thy family, and thy representatives. The Babylonian, therefore, was the first of these kingdoms; and it was fitly represented by *the head of fine gold*, on account of its great riches; and Babylon, for the same reason, was called by Isaiah, *the golden city*, Is. xiv. 4.

Daniel addresseth Nebuchadnezzar as a very powerful king, *Thou, O king, art a king of kings,* ver. 37. Nebuchadnezzar might, perhaps, think, like some of his predecessors, that his conquests were owing to his own fortitude and prudence; but the prophet assures him his successes must be primarily imputed to the God of heaven, *For the God of heaven* (saith he) *hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.*

Though almost all the ancient eastern histories are lost, yet there are some fragments preserved, which speak of this mighty conqueror and his extended empire; Berosus saith, that he held in subjection Egypt, Syria, Phœnicia, Arabia, and, by his exploits, surpassed all the Chaldeans and Babylonians who reigned before him. Josephus (who has quoted Berosus on this occasion) subjoins, that in the archives of the Phœnicians there are written things consonant to those which are said by Berosus concerning Nebuchadnezzar, namely, that he subdued Syria and all Phœnicia. Megasthenes, in the fourth book of his Indian history, endeavors to show throughout that Nebuchadnezzar exceeded Hercules in fortitude and greatness of exploits; and positively affirms that he

subdued the greatest part of Lybia and Spain. Strabo likewise asserts, that this king, among the Chaldeans, was more celebrated than Hercules, and led his army out of Spain into Thrace and Pontus. But his empire, though of great extent, was yet of no long duration; for it ended in his grand-son Belshazzar, not seventy years after the delivery of this propheey; and this may be the reason of Daniel's speaking of him as the only king, *thou art this head of gold, and after thee shall rise, &c.* Dan. ii. 38, 39.

*His breast and his arms of silver,* which Daniel thus interprets, *And after thee shall rise another kingdom, inferior to thee.* It is very well known (from what has been already said in a former prophecy relative to Babylon) that the kingdom which arose after the Babylonian was the Medo-Persian. The two hands and the shoulders (saith Josephus) signify that the empire of the Babylonians should be dissolved by two kings. The two kings were, the kings of the Medes and Persians, whose powers were united under Cyrus, who besieged and took Babylon, put an end to that empire, and on its ruins erected the Medo-Persian, or the Persian (as it is more usually called) the Persians having soon gained the ascendancy over the Medes.

The Persian empire is said to be *inferior*, as being *less* than the Babylonian; and it is certain that neither Cyrus, or any of his successors, ever carried their arms into Africa or Spain, at least as far as Nebuchadnezzar is reported to have done. The Persian empire may likewise be called *inferior* as being *worse* than the former, for (as Dean Prideaux justly observes) the kings of Persia were certainly “the worst race of men that ever governed an empire.” This empire, from its first establishment by Cyrus, to the death of the last king Darius Codomannus, lasted not much above two hundred years. And thus far it is agreed by all commentators, that the two first kingdoms represented in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, were the Babylonian and the Persian.

*His belly and his thighs of brass,* which is interpreted by Daniel, *And another third kingdom of brass which shall bear rule over all the earth.* It is well known that Alexander the great subverted the Persian empire. The

kingdom, therefore, which succeeded to the Persian was the Macedonian; and this kingdom was fitly represented by brass, for the Greeks were famous for their brazen armor, their usual epithet being *the brazen-coated Greeks*. The third kingdom is also said to bear rule over all the earth. Alexander the Great commanded that he should be called *the king of all the world*; not that he really conquered, or nearly conquered the whole world, but he had considerable dominions in Europe, Asia and Africa, that is, in all the three parts of the world then known; and Diodorus Siculus, and other historians, mention ambassadors coming from almost all parts of the world to congratulate Alexander upon his successes, or to submit to his empire.

That this third kingdom, therefore, was the Macedonian, there is not the least doubt. St. Jerome saith expressly, “the third kingdom signifies Alexander, and the “kingdom of the Macedonians, and of the successors of “Alexander. Which is rightly named brazen, saith he; “for among all metals brass is most vocal, and tinkles “louder, and its sound is diffused far and wide, that it “portended not only the fame and power of the kingdom, “but also the eloquence of the Greek language.” After the death of Alexander the kingdoms of the east were divided among his successors, but the whole still retained the name of the Macedonian empire; and Justin reckons Alexander the same to the Macedonians, as Cyrus was to the Persians, and Romulus to the Romans.

*His legs of iron, his feet part of iron, and part of clay.* This is interpreted by Daniel as follows: *And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces, and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron; the kingdom shall be divided, but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay; so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they*

*shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay,* Dan. ii. 40; &c.

This fourth kingdom is described as stronger than the three preceding. As iron breaketh and bruise all other metals, so this was to break and subdue all the former kingdoms. The metal here is different, and consequently the nation was to be different from the preceding. The four different metals must signify the four different nations; and as the gold signified the Babylonians, the silver the Persians, and the brass the Macedonians, so the iron must necessarily denote some other nation; and that this nation was no other than that of the Romans will evidently appear from what follows.

The Romans succeeded next to the Macedonians, and therefore, in course, were next to be mentioned. The Roman empire was stronger and larger than any of the preceding. The Romans brake in pieces, and subdued, all the former kingdoms. Josephus says, that as the two arms of silver, denoted the kings of the Medes and Persians, so we might say, in like manner, that the two legs of iron signified the two Roman consuls. The iron was *mixed with miry clay*, and the Romans were defiled with a mixture of barbarous nations. The Roman empire was at length divided into ten lesser kingdoms, answering to the ten toes of the image. These kingdoms retained much of the old Roman strength, and manifested it upon several occasions; so that *the kingdom was partly strong and partly broken*. They mingled themselves with the seed of men. They made marriages and alliances one with another; but no hearty union ensued; reasons of state are stronger than those founded on the ties of blood, and interest will always avail more than affinity.

The Roman empire, therefore, is represented in a double state, first, with the strength of iron, conquering all before it, *his legs of iron*; and then weakened and divided by the mixture of barbarous nations, *his feet part of iron, and part of clay*. It subdued Syria, and made the kingdom of the Seleucidæ a Roman province in the year 65 before Christ; it subdued Egypt, and made the kingdom of the Lagidæ a Roman province in the year 30 before Christ: and in the fourth century after Christ it be-

gan to be torn in pieces by the incursions of the barbarous nations.

St. Jerome lived to see the incursions of the barbarous nations; and his comment is, “that the fourth kingdom, “which plainly belongs to the Romans, is the iron that “breaketh and subdueth all things; but his feet and toes “are part of iron, and part of clay, which is most mani-“festly proved at this time: For as in the beginning “nothing was stronger and harder than the Roman em-“pire, so in the end of things nothing is weaker; since “both in civil wars, and against divers nations, we want “the assistance of other barbarous nations.” He hath given the same interpretation in other parts of his works; and it seemeth that he had been blamed for it, as a reflection upon the government; and therefore he maketh this apology for himself: “If (saith he) in explaining the “statue and the difference of his feet and toes, I have in-“terpreted the iron and clay of the Roman kingdom, “which the scripture foretels should be first strong, and “then weak, let them not impute it to me; but to the pro-“phet; for we must not so flatter princes, as to neglect “the verity of the holy scriptures, nor is a general dis-“putation an injury to a single person.”

All ancient writers, both Jewish and Christian, agree with St. Jerome in explaining the fourth king to be the Roman. The celebrated Mr Mede, who was as able a judge as any person whatever in these matters, has made the following very just observation: “The Roman em-“pire (says he) was believed to be the fourth kingdom “of Daniel by the church of Israel both before and in “our Saviour’s time; received by the disciples of the “prophets, and the whole Christian church for the first “300 years, without any known contradiction. And I “confess, having so good a ground in scripture, it is with “me little less than an article of faith.”

Exclusive of this wonderful image, Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream *a stone cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces: Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the threshing-floors, and*

*the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth:* Which is thus interpreted and explained by Daniel, *And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever:* **Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold,** ver. 44, 45.

By this was evidently meant the kingdom of Christ, which was set up during the days of the last of the before mentioned kingdoms. The *stone* was totally a very different thing from the *image*, and the kingdom of Christ is totally different from the kingdoms of the world. *The stone was cut out of the mountain without hands,* and was to be a *building of God, an house not made with hands.* This the fathers generally apply to Christ himself, who was miraculously born of a virgin without the concurrence of a man; but it should rather be understood of the kingdom of Christ, which was formed out of the Roman empire, not by number of hands, or strength of armies, but without human means, and the assistance of second causes. This kingdom was *set up by the God of heaven;* and from hence the phrase of *the kingdom of heaven* came to signify the kingdom of the Messiah; and so it was used and understood by the Jews, and so it is applied by our Saviour in the New Testament. Other kingdoms were raised by human ambition and worldly power; but this was the work not of man but of God; this was truly as it is called *the kingdom of heaven*, and *a kingdom not of this world;* its laws, its powers, were all divine. This kingdom was *never to be destroyed*, as the Babylonian, the Persian, and the Macedonian empires have been, and, in a great measure, also the Roman. This kingdom was to *break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms*, to spread and enlarge itself, so that it should comprehend within itself all the former kingdoms.

In short, it was to *fill the whole earth*, to become universal, and to *stand for ever*.

As the fourth kingdom, or the Roman empire, was represented in a twofold state, first strong and flourishing *with legs of iron*, and then weakened and divided *with feet and toes part of iron and part of clay*; so this fifth kingdom, or the kingdom of Christ, is described likewise in two states, which Mr Mede very justly distinguishes by the names of *the kingdom of the stone*, and *the kingdom of the mountain*; the first, when *the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands*; the second when it became itself *a mountain and filled the whole earth*. *The stone was cut out of the mountain without hands*; that is, the kingdom of Christ was first set up while the Roman empire was in its full strength *with legs of iron*. The Roman empire was afterwards divided into ten lesser kingdoms, the remains of which are still subsisting. The image is still standing upon his feet and toes of iron and clay; the kingdom of Christ is still *the stone cut out of the mountain*; this stone will one day smite the image upon the feet and toes, and destroy it utterly, and will itself become *a great mountain and fill the whole earth*: or, in other words, *the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever*, Rev. xi. 15. We have, therefore, seen the kingdom of the *stone*, but we have not yet seen the kingdom of the *mountain*. Some parts of this prophecy still remain to be fulfilled; and from the exact completion of the other parts there is not the least doubt but that the rest, in due season, will be fully accomplished.

This interpretation of the fifth kingdom is consonant to the sense of all ancient writers, both Jews and Christians. Jonathan Bell Uzziel, who made the Chaldee Targum, or paraphrase upon the prophecies, lived a little before our Saviour. He did not, indeed, make any Chaldee version of Daniel, but he applies his prophecies in his interpretation of those of other prophets. Thus, in a paraphrase upon Habakuk, he speaketh of the four great kingdoms of the earth, that they should, in their turns, be destroyed, and be succeeded by the kingdom of

the Messiah. “For the kingdom of Babylon shall not continue, nor exercise dominion over Israel; the kings of Media shall be slain, and the strong men of Greece shall not prosper; the Romans shall be blotted out, nor collect tribute from Jerusalem. Therefore because of the sign and redemption which thou shalt accomplish for thy Christ and for the remnant of thy people, they who remain shall praise thee,” &c.

Josephus, in speaking of this kingdom, says, “The kingdom of the *stone* shall bruise the Jews that stumbled at Christ’s first coming; but the kingdom of the *mountain*, when manifested, shall beat the feet of the monarchical statue to dust, and leave no remains of the fourth monarchy in its last and degenerate state.”

The same opinion was prevalent among the ancient Christians, as well as among the Jews. St. Jerome, and all the fathers, who have occasion to comment upon this passage, give the same interpretation; but it will be sufficient here to preserve the testimony of that elegant historian Sulpicius Severus, who, after having given an account of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, and all the particulars relating to it, subjoins an exposition of it agreeable to Daniel’s interpretation. “The image (says he) is an emblem of the world. The golden head is the empire of the Chaldeans; forasmuch as that was the first and most wealthy. The breast and arms of silver signify the second kingdom, which was that of the Persian under Cyrus. In the brazen belly the third kingdom is declared to be portended; and that we see fulfilled: Forasmuch as the empire taken from the Persians was given by Alexander to Macedonia. The iron legs are the fourth kingdom; and that is the Roman, the strongest of all the kingdoms before it. But the feet, part of iron and part of clay, prefigure the Roman empire to be so divided as that it should never unite again; which is equally fulfilled. Forasmuch as the Roman territory is occupied by foreign nations or rebels;—and we see (saith he, and he lived at the beginning of the fifth century) barbarous nations mixed with our armies, cities, and provinces.—But in the stone cut out without hands, which brake in pieces the gold, the silver, the

“ brass, the iron and the clay, we have a figure of Christ: “ for he shall reduce this world, in which are the king-“ doms of the earth, to nothing, and shall establish a “ kingdom that will last forever.”

Thus did it please God to reveal unto Daniel, and by Daniel unto Nebuchadnezzar, the great and most signal events of this world, as Daniel said unto Nebuchadnezzar at the time he interpreted his dream, *The great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof is sure*, Dan. ii. 45. The king, hearing his dream related with such exactness, might be better assured of the truth of the interpretation, and of the great events which should follow. And from hence we are enabled, in some measure, to account for Nebuchadnezzar's prophesying a little before he died. Abydenus wrote the history of the Assyrians. It is not well known in what age he lived, and his history is lost; but there is a fragment of it preserved by Eusebius, wherein it is asserted that Nebuchadnezzar, just before his death, was inspired, and that he prophesied in this manner: “ I Nebuchadnezzar fore-“ tel unto you, O Babylonians, an imminent calamity, “ which neither Belus my progenitor, nor queen Beltis “ can persuade the fates to avert: A Persian mule shall “ come assisted by your demons, and impose servitude “ upon you; whose coadjutor shall be a Mede, the boast “ of the Assyrians.”

This prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar was afterwards thus interpreted: Cyrus was the mule; he was born of parents of different nations, the mother the better, and the father the meaner; for she was a Mede, and a daughter of the king of the Medes, but he was a Persian, and subject to the Medes. If, therefore, any such prophecy was uttered by Nebuchadnezzar a little before his death, if any such oracle was received and believed of Cyrus and the Persians subduing Asia, it may very justly be supposed to have been derived originally from the prophecy of Daniel, which being solemnly delivered to a great king, and published in Chaldee, might come to be generally known in the east; and the truth of it was soon evinced by the event that followed.

It was likewise from this prophecy of Daniel that the distinction first arose of the four great empires of the world, which hath been followed by most historians and chronologers in their distribution of times. As these four empires are the subject of this prophecy, so likewise have they been the subject of the most celebrated writers both in former and in later ages. The histories of these empires are the best written, and the most read, of any; they are the study of the learned, and the amusement of the polite; they are of use both in schools, and in senates: from hence examples, instructions, laws and politics are derived for all ages; and very little in comparison is known of other times, or of other nations.

It may be observed by some that there have been empires as great as these, such as those of the Tartars, the Saracens and the Turks; and it may, perhaps, be thought that they are as well deserving of a place in this succession of kingdoms, and were equally worthy to be made the objects of prophecy, being as eminent for the wisdom of their constitutions, the extent of their dominions, and the length of their duration. But these four empires had a particular relation to the church and people of God, who were subject to each of them in their turns. The fate of them was therefore particularly predicted; and we have in them, without the intermixture of others, a line of prophecy (as it may be justly called) from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the full and complete establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah.

The great arbiter of kingdoms, and governor of the universe, can reveal as much of their future revolutions as he pleaseth; and he hath revealed enough to manifest his Providence, and to confirm the truth of religion. What Daniel, therefore, said on the first discovery of these things, may be very justly applied after the completion of so many particulars: *Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are his. And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding. He revealeth the deep and secret things: he know-*

*eth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him,* Dan. ii. 20, &c.

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### CHAP. XIII.

#### *Of Daniel's Vision concerning the four great Empires.*

IN the first year of the reign of Belshazzar, (the last sovereign of the Babylonish empire) the same things were revealed unto Daniel concerning the four great empires of the world, as had been revealed unto Nebuchadnezzar in the second year of his reign, which was a space of about forty-eight years. All the difference between these revelations is, that what was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in the form of a great image, was represented to Daniel in the shape of great wild beasts; which difference is accounted for by Mr Lowth, who says, "this image appeared with a glorious lustre in the imagination of Nebuchadnezzar, whose mind was wholly taken up with admiration of worldly pomp and splendor; whereas the same monarchies were represented to Daniel under the shape of fierce and wild beasts, as being the great supporters of idolatry and tyranny in the world."

In Daniel's vision the first kingdom is represented by a beast, that was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: and I beheld till the wings thereof were pluckt, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it, Dan. vii. 4. This is the kingdom of the Babylonians; and the king of Babylon is, in like manner, compared to a lion by the prophet Jeremiah, *the lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way,* Jer. iv. 7. and he is said to fly as an eagle, *Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab,* xlvi. 40. And he is also compared to an eagle by the prophet Ezekiel, *Thus saith the Lord God, A great eagle with great wings,* &c. Ezek. xvii. 3.

The lion is the king of beasts, and the eagle the king of birds; and therefore the kingdom of Babylon, which is described as the first and noblest kingdom, and was the kingdom then in being, is said to partake of the nature of both. The eagle's wings denote its swiftness and rapidity; and the conquests of Babylon were very rapid, that empire being advanced to its height within a few years by a single person, namely, by the conduct and arms of Nebuchadnezzar. It is farther said that *the wings thereof were plukt*. Its wings were beginning to be plukt when Daniel's prophecy was first delivered, for at that time the Medes and Persians were encroaching upon it: Belshazzar, the then reigning king, was the last of his race; and in the seventeenth year of his reign Babylon was taken, and the kingdom was transferred to the Medes and Persians.

*And it was made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.* The meaning of this passage is supposed to be an allusion to the case of Nebuchadnezzar, when, in his madness, *a beast's heart was given unto him*, and, after he was restored to his senses, *a man's heart was given to him again*. It evidently appears, that after the Babylonian empire was subverted, the people became more humane and gentle; their minds were humbled with their ill fortune; and those who vaunted as if they had been more than men, now found themselves to be but men. They were, in short, brought to such a sense as the psalmist wishes such persons to have, *Put them in fear, O Lord; that the nations may know themselves to be but men*, Psl. ix. 20.

The second kingdom is represented by another beast like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it; and they said thus unto it. Arise, devour much flesh, Dan. vii. 5. This is the kingdom of the Medes and Persians; and for their cruelty and greediness after blood they are compared to a bear, which is a savage and voracious animal. The learned Bochart recounts several particulars wherein the Persians resembled bears; but the chief likeness consisted in what has been already mentioned; and this likeness was principally intended by the prophet, as evident.

ly appears from the words of the text itself, *Arise, devour much flesh.*

*And it raised up itself on one side, or, it raised up one dominion.* The Persians were subject to the Medes at the conquest of Babylon, but soon after raised themselves above them.

*And it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it.* By these are meant the three kingdoms of the Babylonians, Medes and Persians, which were reduced into one kingdom. They might properly be called ribs, as the conquest of them much strengthened the Persian empire; and they might be said to be between the teeth of the bear, as they were much grinded and oppressed by the Persians.

*And they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.* This, as we have before observed, was said, to denote the natural cruelty of the Medes and Persians. They are also represented very cruel by the prophet Isaiah, chap. xiii. 18. Cambyses, Oehus, and others of their princes, were, indeed, more like bears than men. Instances of their cruelty abound in almost all the historians who have written of their affairs. Ammianus Marcillinus describes them as being proud, cruel, and exercising the power of life and death over slaves and obscure plebeians. “They “pull off the skin (says he) from men alive by pieces or “altogether; and they have abominable laws, by which, “for one man’s offence, all the neighborhood is de-“stroyed.”

The third kingdom is represented by *another beast like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.* This is the kingdom of the Macedonians or Grecians, who, under the command of Alexander the Great, overcame the Persians, and reigned next after them; and it is fitly compared to a leopard on several accounts. The leopard is remarkable for swiftness; and Alexander and the Macedonians were amazingly swift and rapid in their conquests. The leopard is a spotted animal; and was therefore a proper emblem (according to Bochart) of the different manners of the nations which Alexander commanded, or, (according to Grotius) of the

various manners of Alexander himself, who was sometimes merciful, and sometimes cruel; sometimes temperate, and sometimes drunken; sometimes abstemious, and sometimes incontinent. The leopard (as Bochart observes) is of small stature, but of great courage, so as not to be afraid to engage with the lion and the largest beasts; and so Alexander, a little king in comparison, of small stature too, and with a small army, dared to attack Darius, whose kingdom was extended from the Ægean Sea to the Indies.

*The beast had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl.* The Babylonian empire was represented with two wings, but this is described with four. For (as St. Jerome saith) nothing could be swifter than the victories of Alexander, who ran through all the countries, from Illyricum and the Adriatic Sea, to the Indian ocean and the river Ganges, not so much fighting as conquering, and in twelve years subjugated part of Europe, and all Asia to himself.

*The beast had also four heads;* to denote the four kingdoms into which this same third kingdom should be divided, as it was divided, after the death of Alexander, into four kingdoms, Cassander reigning over Macedon and Greece, Lysimachus over Thrace and Bithynia, Ptolemy over Egypt, and Seleucus over Syria.

*And dominion was given to it.* This (as St. Jerome says) sheweth, that it was not owing to the fortitude of Alexander, but proceeded from the will of the Lord. And, indeed, unless he had been directed, preserved, and assisted by the Supreme Power, how could Alexander with 30,000 men have overcome Darius with 600,000, and, in so short a time, have brought all the countries, from Greece as far as to India, into subjection?

The fourth kingdom is represented by a *fourth beast, dreadful and terrible; and strong exceedingly;* and it had great iron teeth; it devoured, and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it, and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it. Daniel was particularly desirous to know what this might mean; upon which he was thus answered by the angel, who had explained to him the former part of his vision: *The fourth*

*beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces,* Daniel vii. 19, 23.

This fourth kingdom can be none other than the Roman empire. The fourth beast was so great and horrible, that it was not easy to find an adequate name for it; and the Roman empire was *dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly*, beyond any of the former kingdoms. It was *diverse from all kingdoms*, not only in its republican form of government, but likewise in strength and power, and greatness, length of duration, and extent of dominion. *It devoured, and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it.* It reduced Macedon into a Roman province about 168 years, the kingdom of Pergamus about 133 years, Syria about 65 years, and Egypt about 30 years, before Christ. And besides the remains of the Macedonian empire, it subdued many other provinces and kingdoms; so that it might very justly be said to *devour the whole earth, and to tread it down, and break it in pieces*; and it became, in a manner, what the Roman writers delighted to call it, namely, *the empire of the whole world.*

A celebrated Greek writer, who flourished in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, hath a remarkable passage, which is very pertinent towards illustrating the fulfilment of this part of the prophecy. In speaking of the great superiority of the Roman to all former empires, he saith,  
“The Macedonian empire having overturned the force of  
“the Persians, in greatness indeed of dominion exceeded  
“all the kingdoms which were before it; but yet it did not  
“flourish a long time. After the death of Alexander it be-  
“gan to grow worse and worse, and being divided into  
“several principalities by his successors, it was weaken-  
“ed by itself, and at last was destroyed by the Romans.  
“Notwithstanding its once great power, yet it did not re-  
“duce all the earth and sea to its obedience. For neither  
“did it possess Africa, except that part adjoining to  
“Egypt; neither did it subdue all Europe, but only north-  
“wards it proceeded as far as Thrace, and westwards it  
“descended to the Adriatic Sea. But the city of Rome

"ruleth over all the earth, as far as it is inhabited; and  
"commands all the sea, not only that within the pillars  
"of Hercules, but also the ocean, as far as it is naviga-  
"ble, having first and alone of all the most celebrated  
"kingdoms, made the east and west the bounds of its em-  
"pire; and its dominion hath continued not a short time,  
"but longer than that of any other city or kingdom in  
"the world."

Another remarkable property of this fourth beast is, that *it had ten horns*: and, according to the angel's interpretation, *the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings*, or kingdoms, *that shall arise*; which was accordingly fulfilled when the Roman empire was divided into ten different states or kingdoms.

But besides these ten horns or kingdoms of the fourth empire, there was to spring up among them another little horn. *I considered the horns* (saith Daniel) *and behold there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns pluckt up by the roots.* Daniel was eager to know the meaning of this part of the vision; upon which the angel informed him, that as *the ten horns out of this kingdom were ten kings*, or kingdoms, *that should arise*, so likewise that *another shall rise after them, and he shall subdue three kings, or kingdoms.*

We have already seen that the Roman empire was divided into ten horns or kingdoms; and among them we may, on a proper examination, find another little horn or kingdom, answering in all respects to the character here given. The celebrated Machiavel (in his history of Florence) after having shewn how the Roman empire was broken and divided by the incursions of the northern nations, says, "About this time the bishops of Rome began to take upon them, and to exercise greater authority than they had formerly done. At first the successors of St. Peter were venerable and eminent for their miracles, and the holiness of their lives; and their examples added daily such numbers to the christian church, that to obviate or remove the confusions which were then in the world, many princes turned christians, and the emperor of Rome being converted among the rest, and

"quitting Rome, to hold his residence at Constantinople, "the Roman empire began to decline, but the church of "Rome augmented as fast." He then proceeds to give an account how the Roman empire declined, and the power of the church of Rome increased, first under the Goths, then under the Lombards, and afterwards by the calling in of the Franks.

Here, then, is a little horn springing up among the other ten horns. The bishop of Rome was respectable as a bishop long before, but he did not become a *horn* properly (which is an emblem of strength and power) till he became a temporal prince. He was to *rise after* the other, that is, *behind them*; so that the ten kings were not aware of the growing up of the little horn, till it had overpowered them. *Three of the first horns* (that is, three of the first kings or kingdoms) *were to be pluckt up by the roots*, and to *fall before him*. These three are very fully explained both by Mr Mede and Sir Isaac Newton; but, as there is very little variation between them, we shall only quote the words of the latter. "Kings (saith he) are put "for kingdoms, and therefore the little horn is a little "kingdom. It was a horn of the fourth beast, and rooted "up three of his first horns, and therefore we are to look "for it among the nations of the Latin empire, after the "rise of the ten horns.—In the eighth century, by rooting "up and subduing the exarchate of Ravenna, the king- "dom of the Lombards, and the senate and dukedom of "Rome, the bishop acquired Peter's patrimony out of "their dominions; and thereby rose up as a temporal "prince or king, or horn of the fourth beast." Again, "It was certainly by the victory of the see of Rome over "the Greek emperor, the king of Lombardy, and the "senate of Rome, that she acquired Peter's patrimony, "and rose up to her greatness."—That this explanation of Sir Isaac Newton's is justly founded will appear from what follows.

First, the exarchate of Ravenna, which of right belonged to the Greek emperors, and was the capital of their dominions in Italy, having revolted at the instigation of the pope, was unjustly seized by Aistulphus king of the Lombards, who thereupon thought of making him-

self master of Italy. The pope, in this exigency, applied for help to Pepin king of France, who marched into Italy, besieged the Lombards in Pavia, and forced them to surrender the exarchate and other territories, which were not restored to the Greek emperor as in justice they ought to have been, but, at the solicitation of the pope, were given to St. Peter and his successors for a perpetual succession. Pope Zachary had acknowledged Pepin usurper of the crown of France, as lawful sovereign; and now Pepin in his turn bestowed a principality, which was another's property, upon Pope Stephen II. the successor of Zachary. "And so, as Platina says, the name of the exarchate, "which had continued from the time of Narses to the "taking of Ravenna by Aistulphus, an hundred and "seventy years, was extinguished." This (according to Siginus) was effected in the year 755; and henceforward the popes, having become temporal princes, did no longer date their epistles and bulls by the years of the emperor's reign, but by the years of their own advancement to the papal chair.

Secondly, the kingdom of the Lombards was often troublesome to the pope. King Disiderius invaded the territories of pope Adrian I. upon which the latter was obliged to have recourse to the king of France, and earnestly invited Charles the Great, the son and successor of Pepin, to come into Italy to his assistance. He accordingly went with a great army (being ambitious also himself of enlarging his dominions in Italy) and conquered the Lombards, put an end to their kingdom, and gave great part of their dominions to the pope. He not only confirmed the former donations of his father Pepin, but also made an addition of other countries to them, as Corsica, Sardinia, the Sabin territories, the whole tract between Lucca and Parma, and that part of Tuscany which belonged to the Lombards; and the tables of these donations he not only signed himself, but caused them to be signed by the bishops, abbots, and other great men then present, and laid them so signed upon the altar of St. Peter. And this was the end of the kingdom of the Lombards, in the 206th year after their possessing Italy, and in the year of Christ 774.

Thirdly, the *state of Rome*, though subject to the popes in things spiritual, was yet, in things temporal, governed by the senate and people, who, after their defection from the eastern emperors, still retained many of their old privileges, and elected both the western emperor and the popes. After Charles the Great had overthrown the kingdom of the Lombards, he went again to Rome, and was there by the pope, bishops, abbots, and people of Rome, chosen Roman patrician, which is the degree of honor and power next to emperor. He then settled the affairs of Italy, and permitted the pope to hold under him the duchy of Rome with other territories; but after a few years, the Romans, desirous to recover their liberty, conspired against pope Leo III. accused him of many great crimes, and imprisoned him. His accusers were heard on a day appointed before Charles and a council of French and Italian bishops; but the pope, without pleading his own cause or making any defence, was acquitted, his accusers were slain or banished, and he himself was declared superior to all human judicature. And thus the foundation was laid for the absolute authority of the pope over the Romans, which was completed by degrees; and Charles in return was chosen emperor of the west. However, after the death of Charles the Great, the Romans again conspired against the pope; but Lewis the Pious, the son and successor of Charles, acquitted him again. Some time after this pope Leo was taken dangerously ill, which as soon as the Romans, his enemies knew, they rose again, plundered and burnt his villas, and thence marched to Rome to recover what things they complained had been taken from them by force; but they were repressed by some of the emperor's troops. The same emperor Lewis the Pious, at the request of pope Paschal, confirmed the donations which his father and grandfather had made to the see of Rome. Sigonius has recited the confirmation; and therein are mentioned Rome and its duchy containing part of Tuscany and Campania, Ravenna with the exarchate and Pentapolis, and the other part of Tuscany and the countries taken from the Lombards; and all these are granted to the pope and his suc-

cessors, that they should hold them in their own right, principality and dominions to the end of the world.

These were *the three horns, three of the first horns*, which fell before the little horn; and the pope hath, in a manner, pointed himself out for the person by wearing the *triple crown*. In other respects too the pope fully answers the character of the little horn; so that if exquisite fitness of application may assure us of the true sense of the prophecy, we can no longer doubt concerning the person. He is *a little horn*; and the power of the popes was originally very small, and their temporal dominions were little and inconsiderable in comparison with others of the ten horns.

*He shall be diverse from the first*: that is, his kingdom shall be of a different nature and constitution; and the power of the pope differs greatly from that of all other princes, he having not only an ecclesiastical, but likewise a civil and temporal authority.

*And behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man.* This denotes his cunning and foresight, his looking out and watching all opportunities to promote his own interests; and the policy of the Roman hierarchy hath almost passed into a proverb.

*He had a mouth speaking very great things.* And who hath been more noisy and blustering than the pope, especially in former ages, boasting of his supremacy, thundering out his bulls and anathemas, excommunicating princes, and absolving subjects from their allegiance?

*His look was more stout than his fellows.* And the pope assumes a superiority not only over his fellow bishops, but even over crowned heads, and requires greater honors to be paid to him than are expected even by kings and emperors themselves.

*And he shall speak great words against the Most High; or, he shall speak great words as the Most High.* And has he not set himself up above all laws divine and human, arrogating to himself godlike attributes and titles of *holiness* and *infallibility*, exacting obedience to his ordinances and decrees in preference to, and in open violation of, both reason and scripture?

*And he shall wear out the saints of the Most High.* This he has done by wars, massacres and inquisitions, persecuting and destroying the faithful servants of Christ, and the true worshippers of God, who have protested against his innovations, and refused to comply with the idolatry practised in the church of Rome.

*And he shall think to change times and laws.* This he has done by appointing fasts and feasts, canonizing saints, granting pardons and indulgencies for sins, instituting new modes of worship, imposing new articles of faith, enjoining new rules of practice, and, in short, reversing at pleasure the laws both of God and men.

Such is the power of the pope even at the present period, and such is the little horn that was to arise out of the ten horns, or kingdoms, into which the Roman empire was divided.

But the four kingdoms represented in Daniel's vision were to be followed by a fifth, namely, the kingdom of the Messiah. *I beheld, saith Daniel, till the thrones were cast down, and the ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him; and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened,* Dan. vii. 9. 10. These metaphors and figures are taken from the solemnities of earthly judicatories, and particularly of the great Sanhedrim of the Jews, where the father of the consistory sat, with his assessors seated on each side of him in the form of a semicircle, and the people standing before him; and from this was taken the description of the day of judgment as given in the New Testament.

*I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke; I beheld, even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame, ver. 11.* The beast will be destroyed because of the great words which the horn spoke, and the destruction of the beast will also be the destruction of the horn; and consequently the horn is a part of the fourth beast, or

of the Roman empire. *As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.* When the dominion was taken away from the other beasts, their bodies were not destroyed, they were suffered to continue still in being; but when the dominion shall be taken away from the fourth beast, his body shall be totally destroyed; the other kingdoms succeeded each other, but none other earthly kingdom shall succeed to this.

*I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.* Here was evidently displayed the coming of the Messiah. From hence the son of man came to be a known term for the Messiah among the Jews. From hence it was taken and used so frequently in the gospel; and our Saviour intimates himself to be this very son of man: *Hereafter (says he) shall ye see the son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven,* Matth. xxvi. 64, 65. And for saying this he was charged by the high-priest with having spoken blasphemy.

*And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed,* Dan. vii. 14. All these kingdoms shall, in time, be destroyed, but the kingdom of the Messiah shall stand for ever; and it was in allusion to this part of the prophecy that the angel said of Christ, before he was born, *He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end,* Luke i. 33.

In what manner these great changes will be effected, we cannot pretend to say, as God hath not been pleased to reveal it unto us. We see, however, the remains of the ten horns which arose out of the Roman empire. We see the little horn still subsisting, but, it is to be hoped, on the decline, and tending towards a dissolution. And having seen so many of these particulars accomplished,

we can have no reason to doubt but that the rest also will, in due season, be amply fulfilled.

If we compare the prophecies of Daniel in interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream, with those revealed to Daniel in his vision, and interpreted by the angel, we shall find such a close similarity as must naturally strike us with astonishment. What was represented to Nebuchadnezzar in the form of a *great image*, was represented again to Daniel by *four great wild beasts*; and the beasts have degenerated as the metals grew worse and worse.

*This image's head was of fine gold, and the first beast was like a lion with eagle's wings;* and these answer to each other; and both represented the powers then reigning, or the kingdom of the Babylonians; but it appeared in splendor and glory to Nebuchadnezzar, as it was then in its flourishing condition; the *plucking of its wings*, and its humiliation were shown to Daniel, as it was then drawing near to its fatal end.

*The breast and arms of silver, and the second beast like a bear,* were designed to represent the second kingdom, or that of the Medes and Persians. The *two arms* are supposed to denote the two people; but some farther particulars were hinted to Daniel, of the one people rising up above the other people, and of the conquest of three additional kingdoms. To Nebuchadnezzar this kingdom was called *inferior*, or worse than the former; and to Daniel it was described as very cruel, *Arise, devour much flesh.*

The third kingdom, or that of the Macedonians, was represented by *the belly and thighs of brass*, and by *the third beast like a leopard with four wings of a fowl*. It was said to Nebuchadnezzar, that *it should bear rule over all the earth*, and in Daniel's vision *dominion was given to it*. The *four heads* signify Alexander's four successors; but the *two thighs* can only signify the two principal of them, namely, the Seleucidæ and Lagidæ, that is, the Syrian and Egyptian kings.

*The legs of iron, and the fourth beast with great iron teeth,* exactly correspond; and as *iron breaketh in pieces* all other metals, so the fourth beast *devoured and brake in pieces*; and they were, therefore, both equally proper

representatives of the fourth kingdom, or the Roman, which was stronger and more powerful than either of the former kingdoms. The *ten toes* too, and the *ten horns*, were alike fit emblems of the ten kingdoms, which arose out of the division of the Roman empire; but all that relates to the *little horn* was revealed only to Daniel, as a person more immediately interested in the fate of the church.

The *stone*, that was *cut out of the mountain without hands, and became itself a mountain and filled the whole earth*, is explained to be a kingdom, which shall prevail over all other kingdoms, and become universal and everlasting. In like manner, *one like the son of man came to the Ancient of days*, and was advanced to a kingdom, which shall prevail likewise over all other kingdoms, and become universal and everlasting.

Such is the great concord and agreement between these prophecies of Daniel, which, remarkable as they are in many things, are not more so, than that they comprehend such distant events, and extend through so many ages, from the reign of the Babylonians, to the consummation of all things. They are truly (as Mr Mede calls them) "the sacred calender and great almanac of prophecy, a prophetical chronology of times measured by the succession of four principal kingdoms, from the beginning of the captivity of Israel, until the mystery of God shall be finished."

Daniel was much troubled, and his countenance changed in him at the foresight of the calamities that were to be brought on the church by the little horn; but he kept the matter in his heart. Much more may good men be grieved at the sight of these calamities, and lament the prevalence of popery and wickedness in the world; but let them keep it in their hearts, that a time of just retribution will certainly come. The proof of this may be drawn from the moral attributes of God, as well as from his promise: *The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High,*

*whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominion shall serve and obey him,* Daniel vii. 26, 27.



## CHAP. XIV.

## DANIEL'S Vision of the RAM and HE-GOAT.

THE first vision Daniel had was that of the four great beasts, representing the four great empires of the world, and which happened in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon. In the third year of the same king's reign he had another vision, which, though in form of a different nature, pertained, in a very great degree, to the same tendency. *In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar, a vision appeared unto me, even unto me, Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first.* It was exhibited to him in the palace of Shushan, and by the side of the river Ulai, or Euleus, as it is called by the Greeks and Romans. *And I saw in a vision, and it came to pass when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river Ulai.* Such was the time and place of the vision; and the vision itself consisted of a ram and a he-goat.

In the former vision there appeared four beasts, because four empires were there represented; but here are only two, because here we have a representation of what was transacted chiefly within two empires. The first of the four empires (that is, the Babylonian) is here wholly omitted, for its fate, at this time, was sufficiently known, and it was now drawing very near to a conclusion. The second empire, therefore, in the former vision, is the first in this; and what was there compared to a bear, is here prefigured by a ram. *Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last,* Dan. viii. 3. This ram with two horns, according to the explica-

tion of the angel Gabriel, was the empire of the Medes and Persians. *The ram which thou sawest having two horns, are the kings (or kingdoms) of Media and Persia,* ver. 20.

This empire, therefore, which was formed by the conjunction of the Medes and Persians, and is often called the Medo-Persian, was not unfitly represented by a ram *with two horns*. Cyrus, the founder of this empire, succeeded to both crowns, and united the kingdoms of Media and Persia. It was a coalition of two very formidable powers, and therefore it is said, that *the two horns were high; but one, it is added, was higher than the other, and the higher came up last*. The kingdom of Media was the more ancient of the two, and more famous in history. Persia was of little note or account till the time of Cyrus; but under him the Persians gained and preserved the ascendancy.

The great exploits of the ram are afterwards recapitulated by the prophet, who says, *I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward, so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand, but he did according to his will, and became great*, Dan. viii. 4. Under Cyrus himself the Persians pushed their conquests *westward* as far as the Ægean Sea and the bounds of Asia: *northward* they subdued the Armenians, Cappadocians, and various other nations; and *southward* they conquered Egypt, if not under Cyrus, yet most certainly under his son Cambyses. In the prophecy there is not any mention made of their conquests in the *east*, the reason of which is, that these countries lay very remote, and were of little concern or consequence to them.

The ram was strong and powerful, *so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand*; that is, none of the neighbouring kingdoms were able to contend with the Persians, but all fell under their dominion. *He did according to his will, and became great*; and the Persian empire was increased and enlarged to such a degree, that it extended from *India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven*

*and twenty provinces,* Esther i. 1. So that seven provinces were added to the hundred and twenty which it contained in the time of Cyrus, Dan. vi. 4.

After the Ram appears the He-goat. *And as I was considering,* saith Daniel, *behold, an he-goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth,* and touched not the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes; which is thus interpreted by the angel Gabriel: *The rough goat is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king, or kingdom.* A goat is very properly made the type of the Grecian or Macedonian empire, because the Macedonians at first, about two hundred years before Daniel, were denominated *Ægeadæ, or the goat's people;* and the reason of their being so called is thus accounted for by heathen authors. Caranus, their first king, going with a great multitude of Greeks to seek new habitations in Macedonia, was commanded by the oracle to take the goats for his guides to empire; and afterwards seeing a herd of goats flying from a violent storm, he followed them to Edessa, and there fixed the seat of his empire, made the goats his ensign, or standards, and called the city *Ægeæ or the goat's town,* and the people *Ægeadæ or the goat's people.* To this it may be added, that the city *Ægeæ* was the usual burial-place of the Macedonian kings, and it is also very remarkable, that Alexander's son by Roxana was named Alexander *Ægus, or the son of the goat;* and some of Alexander's successors are represented in their coins with *goat's horns.*

This he-goat *came from the west on the face of the whole earth;* that is, he carried every thing before him in all the three parts of the then known world. *And he touched not the ground;* his marches were so swift, and his conquests so rapid, that he might be said, in a manner, to pass over the ground without touching it. For the same reason the same empire in the former vision was likened to a *leopard,* which is a very swift and active animal; and, to denote the greater quickness and impetuosity, *to a leopard with four wings.*

*And the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.* This horn, saith the angel, *is the first king, or kingdom*

of the Greeks in Asia, which was erected by Alexander the Great, and continued for some years under his brother Philip Aridaeus, and his two sons Alexander Ægus and Hercules. Dean Prideaux, in speaking of the swiftness of Alexander's marches, hath a passage which is very pertinent to our present purpose. "He flew (says he) with "victory swifter than others can travel, often with his "horse pursuing his enemies upon the spur whole days "and nights, and sometimes making long marches for "several days one after the other, as once he did in pur- "suit of Darius, going near forty miles a day for eleven "days together. So that by the speed of his marches he "came upon the enemy before they were aware of him, "and conquered them before they could be in a posture "to resist him. This exactly agreeth with the descrip- "tion given of him in the prophecies of Daniel some ages "before, he being in them seth forth under the similitude "of a panther or leopard with four wings; for he was "impetuous and fierce in his warlike expeditions, as a "panther after his prey, and came on upon his enemies "with that speed as if he flew with a double pair of "wings. And to this purpose he is, in another part of "those prophecies, compared to an he-goat coming from "the west with that swiftness upon the king of Media "and Persia, that he seemed as if his feet did not touch "the ground. And his actions, as well in this compari- "son as the former, fully verified the prophecy."

In the next part of this vision we have an account of the Persian empire being overthrown by the Grecians. *And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns, and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him; and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand, Dan. viii. 6, 7.*

The ram had before pushed westward, and the Persians, in the reigns of Darius Hystaspes and Xerxes, had poured down with great armies into Greece; but now the

Grecians, in return, carried their arms into Asia, and the he-goat invaded the ram that had invaded him.

*And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power.* These words strongly point to our imagination the army of Darius standing and guarding the river Granicus, and that of Alexander's on the other side plunging in, swimming across the stream, and rushing on the enemy with all the fire and fury that can be conceived. It appeared to be a strange and mad attempt of Alexander to attack the army of Darius, which was considerably more than five times the number of his own; but he was successful in the undertaking, and this success diffused a terror of his name, and opened his way to the conquest of Asia.

*And I saw him come close unto the ram.* He had several close engagements, or set battles, with the king of Persia, and particularly at the river Granicus in Phrygia, at the Straits of Issus in Cilicia, and in the plains of Arbela in Assyria,

*And he was moved with choler against him.* That was for the cruelties which the Persians had exercised towards the Grecians; and for Darius's attempting to corrupt sometimes the soldiers of Alexander to betray him, and sometimes his friends to destroy him; so that he would not listen to the most advantageous offers of peace, but he determined to pursue the Persian king, till he sought his destruction.

*And he smote the ram, and brake his two horns.* He subdued Persia and Media, with the other provinces and kingdoms of the Persian empire; and it is remarkable that in Persia he barbarously sacked and burned the royal city of Persepolis, the capital of the empire; and in Media Darius was seized and made a prisoner by some of his own traitor-subjects, who not long afterwards basely murdered him.

*And there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him.* He conquered wherever he went, routed all the forces, took all the cities and castles, and entirely subverted and ruined the Persian empire.

*And there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.* Not even the numerous armies of the king of Persia could defend him; though his forces at the battle of Issus amounted to 600,000 men, and at that of Arbela to 10 or 1,100,000, whereas the whole number of Alexander's was not more than 40,000 in either battle. So true is the observation of the psalmist, *there is no king saved by the multitude of an host*, Psal. xxxiii. 16. And especially when God hath decreed the fall of empires, then even the greatest must fall. The fortune of Alexander was totally directed by Divine Providence.

There is not any thing fixed and stable in human affairs; and the empire of the goat, though exceeding great, was, perhaps, for that reason, the sooner broken in pieces. *Therefore the he goat waxed very great, and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones, towards the four winds of heaven.* Which the angel thus interprets: *Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power*, Dan. viii. 22.

The empire of the goat was in its full strength when Alexander died at Babylon. He was succeeded on the throne by his natural brother Philip Aridaeus, and by his own two sons Alexander Aegus and Hercules; but in the space of about fifteen years they were all murdered, and then the first *horn*, or kingdom, was entirely *broken*. The royal family being thus extinct, the governors of provinces, who had usurped the power, assumed the title of kings; and by the defeat and death of Antigonus, they were reduced to four, namely, Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy and Seleucus, who parted Alexander's dominions between them, and divided and settled them into four kingdoms. These four kingdoms are the *notable horns*, which came up in the room of the first great horn; and are the same as the *four heads of the leopard* in the former vision.

*Four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power:* they were to be kingdoms of Greeks, not of Alexander's own family, but only of his nation; and neither were they to be equal to him in power and dominion, as an empire united is certainly more powerful

than an empire divided, and the whole is greater than any of the parts. They were likewise to extend *toward the four winds of heaven*; and in the partition of the empire, Cassander held Macedon, and Greece, and the *western* parts; Lysimachus had Thrace, Bithynia, and the *northern* regions; Ptolemy possessed Egypt, and the *southern* countries; and Seleucus obtained Syria, and the *eastern* provinces. Thus were they divided *toward the four winds of heaven*.

As in the former vision a little horn sprang up among the ten horns of the Roman empire, so here a little horn is described as rising among the four horns of the Grecian empire. *And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land*, Dan. viii. 9. This little horn can only be applied to the Romans, who were a new and different power, who rose from small beginnings to an exceeding great empire, who first subdued Macedon and Greece, the capital kingdoms of the goat, and from thence spread and enlarged their conquests over the rest. When they first got footing in Greece, then they became a horn of the goat. Out of this horn they came, and were at first a little horn, but in process of time they overtopped the other horns, and became predominant. The strength of the other kingdoms consisted in themselves, and had its foundation in some part of the goat; but the Roman empire, as a horn, or kingdom of the goat, was not mighty by its own power, was not strong by virtue of the goat, but drew its nourishment and strength from Rome and Italy. There grew the trunk and body of the tree, though the branches extended over Greece, Asia, Syria and Egypt.

The remainder of this prophecy chiefly relates to the persecuting and oppressing the people of God. *And he waxed great even to the host of heaven* (or *against the host of heaven*) *and he cast down some of the host, and of stars to the ground, and stamped upon them*: that is, the Jewish state in general, or the priests and Levites in particular, who are called *stars*, from their being eminent for their station, and illustrious for their knowledge; and *the host of heaven*, as they watched and served in the temple,

and their service is denominated *a warfare*, Numbers vii. 24.

*He shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people; and through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand.* When the city of Jerusalem was besieged and taken by the Romans, the number of captives amounted to ninety-seven thousand, and of the slain to eleven hundred thousand. The Romans too carried their conquest and revenge so far as to put an end to the government of the Jews, and entirely to take away their place and nation.

It is farther added, that *he shall also stand up against the prince of princes.* By the *prince of princes* is undoubtedly meant the Messiah. It was by the malice of the Jews, and the authority of the Romans, that he was put to death; and he suffered the punishment of the Roman malefactors and slaves. The Romans not only crucified our Saviour, but also persecuted his disciples for above three centuries; and when at length they embraced the Christian religion, they soon corrupted it; so that it may be questioned whether their favor was not as hurtful to the church as their enmity. As the power of the Roman emperors declined, that of the Roman pontiffs increased; and may it not with equal truth and justice be said of the latter, as of the former, that they *cast down the truth to the ground, and practised, and prospered?* The persecuting power of Rome, whether exercised towards the Jews, or towards the christians, or by the emperors or popes, is still *the little horn.* The tyranny is the same; but exerted in Greece and the east it is the little horn of the he-goat, or third empire; as exerted in Italy and the west, it is the little horn of the fourth beast, or fourth empire.

But the little horn, like other tyrannical powers, was to come to a remarkable end: *he shall be broken without hand.* As the stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was *cut out of the mountain without hands*, that is, not by human, but by supernatural means; so the little horn *shall be broken without hand*, that is, not fall by the hands of man, but perish by a stroke from heaven. And this agrees perfectly with the former predictions of the fatal catastrophe

of the Romans. *The stone (that is, the power of Christ) smote the image upon his feet of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces, Dan. ii. 34. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake ; I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame, Dan. vii. 11. And again, the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume, and to destroy it unto the end, ver. 26.* All which implies that the dominion of the Romans shall finally be destroyed with some extraordinary manifestations of the Divine power.

Daniel was much affected with the misfortunes and afflictions which were to befall the church and people of God. *And I Daniel fainted and was sick certain days ; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business, and was astonished at the vision, but none understood it, Dan. viii. 27.* That Daniel was thus affected can only be ascribed to his foreseeing that the future distress and misery of the Jews would greatly exceed all they had before sustained. And indeed the calamities which they suffered under the Romans were much greater than the evils brought on them by Nebuchadnezzar. But they expect, and we expect, that at length *the sanctuary will be cleansed*, and that God's promise will, in time, be fully accomplished. *I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down ; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up : that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things, Acts xv. 16, 17.*

This concern of Daniel, and affection for his religion and country, show him in a very amiable light, and give an additional lustre to his character. But not only in this instance, but in every other, he manifests the same public spirit, and appears no less eminently a patriot than a prophet. Though he was torn early from his country, and enjoyed all the advantages that he could enjoy from foreign service, yet there was not any thing that could make him forget his native home ; and in the next chapter (chap. ix.) we see him pouring out his soul in prayer,

and most earnestly and devoutly supplicating for the pardon and restoration of his captive nation.

It is, therefore, a gross mistake to think that religion will ever extinguish or abate our love for our own country. The scriptures will rather excite and encourage it, exhibit several illustrious examples of it, and recommend and enforce this, as well as all other moral and social virtues; and especially when the interests of true religion and of our country are so blended and interwoven, that they cannot well be separated the one from the other. This is a double incentive to the love of our country; and with the same zeal that every pious Jew might say formerly, every honest Christian may say now, with the royal psalmist: *O pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness within thy palaces. For my brethren and companion's sake I will wish thee prosperity: Yea, because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek to do thee good,* Psal. cxxii. 6, &c.

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## CHAP. XV.

### *Of the JEWISH RITUAL, or CEREMONIAL LAW.*

IN the preceding chapters of this book we have given an ample account of the respective prophecies contained in the Old Testament, the greater part of which have been already fulfilled, some are still fulfilling, and, no doubt, the rest will be fulfilled when the appointed time shall arrive. In this chapter we shall take some notice of the religious laws and ceremonies of the Jews, as also the means whereby they became acquainted with learning and literature.

The constitution of the Mosaic law consisted of three parts, namely,

1. Of Political and Judicial laws.
2. Of Moral Precepts, such as the Ten Commandments.

3. Of Rites and Ceremonies, such as Circumcision, Sacrifices, Washings, Purifications, the use of certain garments, &c. and divers Rites by the priests in the tabernacle.

We shall observe in general, that the design of these ceremonies was, to convey religious and moral instructions to the people; and the method of their receiving these instructions was, in many instances, by Hieroglyphics. Thus the government of the world by Divine Providence, and his extraordinary interposition in favor of good men, is represented by a ladder standing on the earth, and reaching to heaven, with the angels ascending and descending on it, to receive and execute orders from God above, who ruleth over all, Gen. xxviii. 12, 13. In the stile of this hieroglyphic our Lord himself speaks, *Hereafter shall ye see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man*, John i. 51.

The exaltation of *Joseph* above the rest of his family, was represented by the hieroglyphic of his sheaf standing upright, and the eleven sheaves of his brethren standing round about, and bowing to it. As also of the Sun, and Moon, and eleven Stars, making obeisance to him, Gen. xxxvii. 7, 9.

The tribe of *Judah* is represented by a young lion; *Issachar*, by a strong ass; *Dan*, by a serpent lurking in the road; *Naphtali*, by a hind; *Joseph*, by a fruitful bough; *Benjamin*, by a ravening wolf; Gen. xl ix. 9. 14, &c.

A rod or staff, as it is an instrument of striking or beating down, is the hieroglyphic of power exerted in conquering, punishing and ruling, Isa. x. 5, 24. With such a rod *Moses* and *Aaron* appeared before *Pharaoh*, as hieroglyphically representing the power and authority of God, in whose name they demanded the release of the *Israelites*, Exod. vii. 15. Thus they appeared as men of learning, and acted agreeable to the literature of the age in which they lived.

A horn represented temporal power and dominion, 1 Sam. ii. 10. Psalm lxxix. 24.

A yoke, such as slaves carried upon their shoulders, represented servitude or bondage. Gen. xxvii. 37, 40.

This may serve to explain the nature of hieroglyphics, a sort of language to which the Jews were accustomed; being the learning of that age, which they could understand much better than abstract reasonings, about moral truths and duties.

We may, therefore, on this account, well admit, that the rites and ceremonies of their religious institutions were hieroglyphic, and intended, by external representations, to give them useful instructions in true religion and real goodness.

If we consult the prophets and apostles, who were well acquainted with their meaning, we shall find so much evidence of the moral and spiritual intention of so many, as may induce us to believe this was the sense and spirit of all the rest.

The Jews were enjoined frequent and various ablutions, or washings with water; the common use of which is to discharge the body from all dirt and filth, and to keep it clean. This was a very easy representation of purity of mind, or of an heart purged from filth and sin. In this manner the prophets understood it, *Wash me from mine Iniquity*, Psal. li. 2. *Wash me, and I shall be clean*, ver. 7. *Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings*, Isaiah i. 6.

Anointing with oil, or ointment, by which the head was beautified, and the countenance exhilarated, had the signification of honor, joy, holiness, and inspiration, Psal. xlv. Acts x. 38. The priests officiated in garments of fine linen, Exod. xxxix. 27. meaning, that the priests should be clothed, or have their minds adorned with righteousness.

Burning of incense, whose smoke riseth up with a pleasant scent, was an hieroglyphic representation of acceptable prayer, Psal. cxli. 2. Luke i. 10.

Circumcision had relation to the heart and soul, or to the retrenching all inordinate affections and inclinations, Lev. xxvi. 41. Rom. ii. 29.

The sprinkling of blood, and of the water of separation (Numb. xix. 13, 19.) was hieroglyphic and had a

**moral signification, See Heb. ix. 13, 14. 1 Pet. 4. 2. As had likewise the muzzled mouth of the ox, Deut. xxv. 4. compared with 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18.**

Some persons have indulged their fancies more than they ought, and pretended to have found more mysteries in the Hebrew ritual, than were really designed; but these instances, explained by authentic evidence, may convince us, that the whole had a spiritual meaning; and as we are taught in the gospel every thing necessary to faith and practice, in the plainest manner, we need not give ourselves much trouble about discovering the meaning of the other rites, which are not explained by the prophets and apostles.

But the affair of sacrifice, so often mentioned in the Old Testament, was a type of the great Redeemer, and will be best explained by a careful attention to the Life, Sufferings and Death of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which will be the subject of the succeeding part of our Work.

A

**NEW AND COMPLETE  
UNIVERSAL HISTORY  
OF THE  
HOLY BIBLE.**

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**PART II.  
CONTAINING THE HISTORY OF THE  
NEW TESTAMENT.**

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**BOOK I.**

FROM THE BIRTH OF CHRIST, TO HIS ASCENSION  
INTO HEAVEN.

[INCLUDING A PERIOD OF 33 YEARS.]

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**CHAP. I.**

*Containing, by way of Introduction, a summary View of the great difference between the law as delivered by Moses and the Prophets, and the Gospel under Christ and his Apostles.*

THE historical part of the New Testament is contained in the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and, in a very particular manner, claims the most serious attention of every Christian, as it conveys to us the blessed tidings of our recovering that happy state which our first parents forfeited in paradise.

All those excellencies, which in general belong to the *Old Testament*, may, in a more peculiar manner, be claimed by the *New*; for (as St. Augustine says) “What “the law and the prophets only foretold, the Gospel “plainly demonstrates to have been completed.” If, therefore, the good and holy men under the dispensation of the law (which was but a shadow of what hath since come to pass) were encouraged to undergo the severest persecutions in hopes of a reward to come, how much greater encouragement had the saints under the Gospel to suffer extremity, when the reward was gone before them? From hence the church, in all ages, hath received the most distinguished benefits; hence the martyrs, in the midst of their agonies, took magnanimity, looking up with confidence to the great Author of their reward. Thus the proto-martyr St. Stephen, in the midst of a shower of stones, was comforted with the sight of the Son of God. Hence the Holy Apostles, and the rest of our Saviour’s followers, enforced the doctrines of their Lord, not from the distant relations of others, but from the more immediate dictates of his mouth, whence, by a sacred and certain tradition, they have been handed down to the present time.

It is from our Blessed Saviour’s more immediate example that we are made properly acquainted with humility and meekness, he having been pleased, though the Son of God, to condescend to take upon him the vile condition of sinful man. From him we learn patience in adversity, and equanimity in the most elevated state of life; and whatever blemishes, by the corruptions of nature, may stain our profession, his word is our rule and guide to set us right again, and restore religion to its primitive purity. For this reason our Blessed Lord calls himself *the light of the world*; of which his holy gospel is the happy instrument of conveying it to mankind, who, till his incarnation, sat in darkness. And hence the prophet Isaiah, foretelling the coming of our Saviour, says, *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined*, Is. ix. 2.

From the pre-excellence of the Gospel conveying this light to us, the scriptures of the New Testament have acquired such reverence and veneration, that some of the greatest people of the world, and in the earliest ages of the church, have thought them worthy their highest esteem and regard. Constantine the Great had the gospels bound up in a cover of gold set with most valuable jewels. Theodosius the emperor transcribed the gospels with his own hand, and spent great part of every night in reading them. The general councils of Nice, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, placed the book of the gospels in the midst of their assemblies, that the holy fathers might have respect to them as to the person of Christ. In short, the theologists of all ages have deservedly, and with a general consent, stiled this part of holy scripture most necessary and useful; and, indeed, if we pay a proper attention to the subject-matter, Author and method, or manner of them, we shall see those epithets justly appropriated to the writings of the New Testament.

With respect to the subject-matter of the Gospels, it is of God himself, whether we consider him either as God or man. The Gospels describe to us the words and actions of our Blessed Redeemer, by which he taught us to believe and do our duty, as also what methods we ought to take to obtain eternal happiness, plentifully furnishing us, from his own mouth, with Divine precepts and counsel, instructing us in the perfection of a Christian life, explaining to us Faith, Hope, Charity, the Doctrine of the Trinity, Institution of the Sacraments, and, in general, all theological subjects; painting Virtue to us in its most amiable aspect, and describing Vice in its most horrid appearance, with the dreadful consequences which must naturally follow such a course of life.

As to the Author himself, he is no less than the Divine Wisdom, who chiefly both speaks and acts in the most material and grand occurrences related in the Gospels; for before (as the apostle to the Hebrew says) "God formerly spake to our fathers by the prophets, but in these later days by his son, whom he hath made heir of all things, and by whom he made the world." So that not Moses, or the prophets, but the only begotten Son of God, hath, by

the Divine will of the Father, discovered to us the secrets of the Divine Wisdom, and communicated them to us in the holy gospels; in which those sacred mysteries, concealed from ancient times, and barely shadowed out in the typical expressions of the law and the prophets, are plainly discovered, and made intelligible to the weakest of human beings.

The method or manner of speaking and reasoning in the Holy Gospels is particularly to be admired, more especially in those parts wherein it is symbolical. The elegance of the metaphors, the aptness of the similitudes, and significancy of the parables, were truly delightful and instructing. One time the Son of God compares himself to a king celebrating the nuptials of his son; another time, to a great man calling his son to account for his conduct; now, to a general waging war; then to a master of a family, an husbandman, a shepherd, a fisherman, &c. In all which the comparisons are so proper, that he represents himself to our capacities, not so much by words as by the things themselves; so that in the Gospel we may be said to be instructed as much by the actions, as the words of Christ; and truly, as St. Gregory says, *every action of Christ is our instruction.*

But the method of the Evangelical Wisdom claims another excellency; for it is so disposed by the Holy Ghost, that the most simple and ignorant are not destitute of advantage in the reading it; and at the same time there are sufficient difficulties and obscurities to exercise the genius of the most sublime wit. It is, indeed, plain and easy, to the sincere, humble and willing; but to the confident, proud and indolent, difficult and obscure. *I thank thee (says our Blessed Lord) O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise, and hast revealed them unto babes,* Matt. xi. 25. In short, the Gospel, with respect to the rest of the Scriptures, is like the sun that communicates light to the planets, which, at their best, shine but with borrowed rays.

But the excellence of the Gospel will yet appear more conspicuous, if we draw a parallel between that and the law.

The author of the law was Moses, mere man; but the author of the Gospel was Jesus Christ, both God and man. The law, indeed, was ordained by the ministry of angels in the hand of a mediator, who was Moses, the mediator between God and the Israelites; but Christ, the Son of God, first promulgated the Gospel with his own mouth. The apostle to the Hebrews points out the great disparity between Moses and Christ in the most elegant and expressive words: *Christ (says he) being the brightness of his glory, (meaning the glory of God) and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?* Heb. i. 3, &c.

The angels, indeed, as ministering spirits, were the first publishers of the Gospel, as in the messages of Gabriel the archangel to the Virgin Mary, and to Zacharias the father of St. John the Baptist; but Christ himself was the founder of it, and clothed his divinity with our flesh, through which he dictated to us the words of his Gospel. *The law (says St. John) was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.* All the authorities, both of the Old and New Testament, do agree, that Christ, being the Author of the Gospel, it is justly called *His Gospel*, and not improperly termed, *The Book, Philosophy and Theology of Christ*, in which, with his own mouth, he declared much more noble and sublime things than were delivered by Moses and the prophets: wherefore, when we read or hear the Holy Gospel, we may be said to read or hear the very express words of the Son of God himself.

Upon a farther examination we shall find many other striking particulars in which the doctrine of the Gospel greatly exceeds what we find in Moses and the law. The law fixes one God to be believed and worshipped by us; but the Gospel, one God in essence, and three in

person, to be loved and adored: *Go, (says our Lord) and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, Matth. xxviii. 19.

The prophets, at a great distance of time, foretold the birth, life, passion and ascension of Christ, the Mission of the Holy Ghost, and the conversion of the Gentiles; but the Gospel positively and clearly lays down the Pre-science, Providence, Omnipotence, immense Charity, and other attributes of God. *No man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared him*, John i. 18. That is, Christ leaving his immortal state for a time, condescended to the condition of vile mortality, that he might discover to us the secrets of his Father, which were known to him only.

The law is, as it were, the shadow; but the gospel is the very substance itself. Thus the acts of the patriarchs, the oracles and symbolic visions of the prophets, the sacrifices, ceremonies and decrees of the laws, which received their sanctions by the blood of animals, were types and preludes which enigmatically represented Christ to the people; but the Gospel manifestly and clearly exhibits to us Christ, his Mysteries and Sacraments. This is positively affirmed by St. Paul, who says, *We all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. And in confirmation of this, the same apostle begins his epistle to the Romans thus: “Paul a servant of Jesus Christ called “to be an apostle, set apart to preach the Gospel of “God, which he had promised before by his prophets in “the Holy Scriptures concerning his Son, &c.

The law was a messenger of fear and terror; but the Gospel, of Love and Peace: the one threatened death to transgressors, the other, rewards to believers. By the law all were servants; but by the gospel all are free. Agreeable to this are the words of St. Paul: “God hath “made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of “the Letter, but of the Spirit; for the Letter killeth, but “the Spirit giveth life. For if the ministration of death,

"(that is, the Law threatening death) written with letters, and on stones, was glorious, &c. how shall not the ministration of the spirit be more glorious?" From whence we may justly define the gospel to be a law of liberty, a law of the spirit, a law of beneficence and charity.

The promises of the law were of a temporary nature, subject to vicissitudes; but the gospel promises are celestial and eternal. In the law were promised the good things of the earth, such as plenty of oil, wine, cattle, &c. but in the gospel, the enjoyment of the company of Christ, and everlasting happiness. Joshua conducted the Israelites to a land flowing with milk and honey, but it was to the land of the dying: Christ hath brought us into the land of the living, a land shining with and abounding in grace and glory. Besides, the law was burthensome in respect of its threefold division into Moral, Ceremonial and Judicial, many parts of which decreed death to transgressors; but the obligations laid on the professors of the gospel are easy and pleasant. *Come unto me (says our Blessed Saviour) all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burthen is light.* Math. xi. 28, &c.

The law was an introduction to Christ and the gospel; but the gospel is the boundary and end of the law. St. Paul says, *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,* Rom. x. 4. Wherefore St. Bernard very justly calls Christ the fruit of the promises of the law, alluding to the seminal virtue of plants: "for fruit (says he) is the purpose to which seeds tend, and in which they terminate."

The pre-excellence of the gospel will yet appear much greater if we consider that the law was limited to the Jews only; whereas the gospel was to be diffused all over the world. The law was likewise imperfect with respect to its duration; for it was only temporary, being to continue no longer than the coming of the gospel, at which time it was to cease. This is expressly affirmed by the apostle to the Hebrews, who says, *For there is*

*verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God,* Hebrews vii. 18, 19.

If we consider the whole texture and composition of the gospel, we shall find it very happily adapted to all ages, degrees and conditions; and that it may be justly called an universal library of wisdom and knowledge, wherein every one may see their duty, and learn to put it in practice. If we attentively examine the conduct of the great Founder of the Gospel, while on earth, we shall plainly see that his whole life was one continued series of moral discipline; and that what he taught to others, himself practised, enforcing his precepts by his own example. While the world were anxiously seeking after the pernicious bait of wealth, he was content and calm in the midst of poverty. Impatient man could not brook an affront; but he patiently submitted to the vilest reproach. Corporal pains were terrible to human nature; but he bore whipping and scourging without the least lamentation. Nothing so shocking to poor mortality as the bare apprehension of its dissolution; but he quietly submitted himself to the most ignominious death—even the death of the cross.

That the law was imperfect we have already made appear; but there is not any thing which so clearly points out its imperfections and deficiencies as does Christ himself, in that admirable parallel which he draws between the Old Testament and the New, and which is contained in the 5th chapter of St. Matthew. He there sets both in a true light: shews the necessity of reforming and improving some decrees of the law, and instituting a better and more useful system of virtue and piety. The precepts of the law were positive and conformable to nature; but the commands of the Gospel transcend them: they are far more instructing, and furnish us with the most wholesome counsel, and the most beneficial admonitions. *A new commandment (says our Blessed Saviour) I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you,* John xiii. 34.

If we address ourselves, as we ought, to the practice of that system of Evangelical Theology contained in the 5th chapter of St. Matthew, we may, from thence, draw such demonstrable inferences as will direct us in the performance of our duty, and crown our obedience with rewards. From the beatitudes in the beginning of this chapter, we are assured, from our Blessed Lord's own mouth, that if we are poor in spirit, we shall gain the kingdom of heaven: if we mourn here, we shall be comforted: if we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we shall be satisfied. For this reason St. Augustine says, "The happiness of this life consists in the Holy Gospel, "and the rest of the Sacred records, without which we "cannot come to the knowledge of God." All true knowledge, virtue and perfection, that a Christian can desire, or attain to, are contained in the Gospels. There Christ teaches us, that righteousness and holiness consist in the inward purity and integrity of the mind, not in the outward shew of works—in a conscience void of offence; not in the pompous applause of men—in humility; not in ostentation—in contempt, not in pursuit of worldly honors—And he likewise teaches us to love our enemies as well as our friends.

The law layeth down a naked precept to the understanding of man; but the Gospel, at the same time that it instructs, inspires his will with grace to perform what is commanded him. Christ, in his Gospel, does not express himself externally to our ears, but internally to our minds, where, by his persuasive spirit, he inclines us to believe and practice what he teaches: *My words, says he, are spirit and life,* John vi. 63. And to this purpose the apostle to the Hebrews cites the prophet Jeremiah: "This is the Testament that I will make unto them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," Jer. xxxi. 33.

From these distinguished excellencies of the Gospels, and the preference deservedly given them to all other sacred writings, there can be no motive so pressing to incite us to the study of them as their own worth; and, next to that, our interest, which we cannot be said more

really to pursue, than by a strict and religious observance of the duties contained in them.

The heavens declare thy glory, Lord ;  
In every star thy wisdom shines ;  
But when our eyes behold thy word,  
We read thy name in fairer lines.

The rolling sun, the changing light,  
And nights and days thy power confess ;  
But the vast volume thou hast writ  
Reveals thy justice and thy grace.

Sun, moon and stars convey thy praise  
Round the whole earth, in one large band ;  
So when thy truth began its race,  
It touched and glanced on every land.

Nor shall thy spreading Gospel rest,  
Till through the world thy truth has run :  
Till Christ has all the nations bless'd  
That see the light, or feel the sun.

Great Sun of Righteousness arise,  
Bless the dark world with heavenly light ;  
Thy Gospel makes the simple wise,  
Thy Laws are pure, thy Judgments right.

Thy noblest wonders here we view,  
In souls renewed, and sins forgiven :  
Lord, cleanse our minds, our souls renew,  
And make thy word our guide to heaven.

## CHAP. II.

*Presage of the birth of John the Baptist. Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the angel Gabriel. The Holy Virgin visits her cousin Elizabeth. Birth of John the Baptist. Conception of the Virgin Mary. Augustus Cæsar issues a decree for a general taxation. Birth of Christ, and his manifestation to the shepherds. His Circumcision and presentation in the temple. His manifestation to the wise men of the east. Herod, king of Judea, seeks to destroy him, but his intentions are frustrated. The flight of Joseph into Egypt. Horrid massacre of the infants at Bethlehem. Death of Herod.*

THE temple of Janus was shut\* at Rome—Peace was within the walls of Jerusalem—and the time approaching, when the Great Creator of the Universe was about to fulfil the covenant he had long before made to his chosen people, by sending into the world his only son in order to recover mankind from the wretched state into which they had been so long involved by the sins of their first parents.

In pursuance of this, and for the completion of many other promises which God, by his holy prophets, from the beginning, had made to his people, he was pleased first to send his harbinger to prepare the way before the Saviour of the World, who was now about to make his public entry into it. And that the fulfilling of these prophecies might be still the more wonderful, the concep-

\* It was the custom, in times of war, for the gates of the temple of Rome to be laid open, but shut in times of peace; and it was now the fifth time, since the building of that city, that the gates of the temple had been shut. The first time was in the reign of Numa: the second, after the end of the first Punic war: the third, after Augustus's victory over Antony: the fourth, upon his return from the Cantabrian war in Spain: and the fifth now, in the 26th year of his reign, and the 23d of Herod's; when a general peace (which lasted for twelve years together) prevailed over the world, and was a proper prelude for ushering in the Advent of the *Prince of peace*, even *Christ, our Lord*, who, according to the most general computation, was born in the 4004th year of the world's creation.

tion of John the Baptist, the harbinger,\* or forerunner of Christ, was introduced with a distinguished miracle; whereby God not only displayed his Omnipotence (which is not always circumscribed within the bounds of scanty nature) but at the same time excited the minds of men to an expectance of something extraordinary from such supernatural means.

Towards the latter end of the reign of Herod the Great, king of Judea, there lived at Jerusalem a certain priest named Zacharias, who was of the tribe of Levi, as was also his wife Elizabeth. They were both of peculiar descent, he being a priest of the course of Abiah (which was the eighth according to the division of David) and she lineally descended from the daughters of Aaron.

\* There are two places referred to in the prophets, wherein the Baptist is described under this character. The first is in the prophet Isaiah: *The voice of one crying in the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord, make strait in the desert an highway for our God*, chap. xl. 3. The latter, which is much more plain and express, is in Malachi, *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, &c.* chap. iii. 1. Both these passages allude to *harbingers*, and such other officers as, upon the journeys of princes, were employed to take care that the ways should be levelled, and put in order, and all such obstructions removed, as might interrupt their passage, or render it less commodious: and the manner in which the Baptist thus prepared the way of the Lord, was by his *Preaching*, and by his *Baptism*. By his preaching, he endeavored to bring the Jews to a due sense of their sins; and to forewarn all those of the dreadful effects of God's anger, who did not *bring forth* fruits worthy of *repentance*. And by his Baptism, when administered to such persons as were under the obligation of the law, he plainly shewed, that he was therein admitting them to some *privileges*, which they had not enjoyed before, viz. the remission of their sins upon their faith and obedience to him, who was the *Messenger of the Covenant*. Since, therefore, the Baptist was not only born, but entered upon his ministry, six months before our Saviour, and since his baptism referred every one to Christ for acceptance and salvation, he is very properly said to be his *harbinger, a messenger sent to prepare his way before him*, or to set all things in readiness for his approach, by putting an end to the *old*, and making an entrance into the *new* dispensation. In this sense he is represented by the Fathers, as a kind of *middle partition* between the Law and the Gospel: of the *law*, as a thing now come to a period; and of the *gospel*, as commencing under him, who was shortly to make his appearance on earth for the redemption of lost mankind.

Nor were their characters inferior to the excellency of their extraction, they being just before God, and unblamable in their conversation. Hitherto God had not been pleased to bless them with an issue; and both being far advanced in years they had not any reason to hope for, or expect, any offspring. But the peculiarity of their descent, and the innocence of their lives, recommended them to the particular care and protection of God, who was pleased to make them the instruments of his glory, by exercising on them his Omnipotence in a manner of the most extraordinary nature.

While Zacharias was one day executing his priestly office before God, in the order of his course, (which was to burn incense in the temple) the very same angel, who had appeared to Daniel the prophet with a certain information as to the period of the Messiah's coming, as well as his transactions in this lower world, suddenly appeared before him, and foretold that a child should spring from him and his wife Elizabeth (notwithstanding their very advanced age) who should be endowed with extraordinary gifts from heaven, and should be honored with being the forerunner of the great Saviour of the World.

The good old priest was no less astonished at the subject of the mission, than he was at the appearance of the messenger. The sense of his own great age, as well as his wife's long sterility, had made him express a kind of diffidence in his promise, and, for his farther satisfaction, desire some miracle in confirmation of it. It is true he was not insensible that the authority of the angel was derived from the Divine Majesty above. But, as it is the lot of humanity to err, he had, at that time, forgot that nothing was impossible to Omnipotence, as well as that it would not be the first time that the aged were caused to conceive, and bear a child. The least reflection would have reminded him, that Sarah conceived, and bare Isaac, when she was far advanced in years; and that Samuel was born of a woman, who had been long reputed, and even called, barren.

But these things Zacharias had forgot; and therefore, when he asked for some sign of a confirmation of the promise made by the Divine messenger, the angel told

him, that he was no less than Gabriel, a special attendant on God's throne, and dispatched on purpose to inform him of his great happiness; but that since he was so incredulous as to require a sign, he should have such an one as would be both a punishment of his unbelief, and a confirmation of his faith; for, until the birth of the child, he should be totally deprived of his speech. *Behold, (said he) thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that those things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.*

It was not long before the denunciation of the angel was fulfilled, for no sooner did Zacharias leave the temple, than he was instantly deprived of his speech. When, therefore, he saw the people (who waited without to receive his benediction) he made signs to them that he was not able to speak, from whence they concluded that he had seen some extraordinary vision within. Zacharias now returned home, soon after which his wife Elizabeth (according to the prediction of the angel) found herself with child, though her modesty made her conceal it for the space of five months.

Thus was the reproach of barrenness taken off from Elizabeth, in her old age, by her conception of the Baptist; soon after which the birth of the Messiah was ushered into the world by no less wonderful, but rather more extraordinary means. That a woman, generally esteemed barren, and far advanced in years, should bear a child, was within the verge of possibility; but that a virgin, who had never known man, should conceive and bear a child, exceeded all natural reason and credibility, and could only arise from the great wisdom and dispensations of the Divine Being. This the Almighty had promised, and now most punctually performed. Within six months after Elizabeth's conception, the same angel Gabriel was sent to Nazareth,\* a city of Galilee, to a

\* Nazareth was a city of the Lower Galilee, situate in the south part of that province, and, therefore, not far from the confines of Samaria, to the south, and nearer to the territories of Tyre and Sidon, to the north-west. It is at present, only an inconsiderable village, lying in a kind of concave valley. Mr Maundrell says, "Here

virgin named Mary (a near relation to Elizabeth, and of the house of David) who had, a short time before, been espoused\* to one Joseph, a person of the same pedigree, but of no higher profession than that of a Carpenter.

As soon as the angel entered the house where the virgin abode (for as yet she had not been taken to her espoused husband) he saluted her with this heavenly benediction: *Hail! thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women!* The sudden appearance of the Angel struck Mary with amazement and surprize, to remove which the angel farther said unto her, *Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.* The Holy Virgin, conscious of her own virtue, and yet surprized at this uncommon salutation, began to expostulate with the heavenly messenger on the impossibility of the thing, since she had all along lived in a strict state of virginity. But the angel, to satisfy her in this particular, told her, that this wonderful work was to be effected by the invisible power and operation of the Holy Ghost; and, to convince her that nothing was impossible with the Almighty, gave her to understand that her cousin Elizabeth (notwithstanding her old age, and former sterility) was at that time six months with child. In consequence of this information, and in reverence to the person who delivered

"is a Convent built over what is said to be the place of the Annunciation, or where the Blessed Virgin received the joyful message "brought her by the angel."

\* Espousing or betrothing was nothing more than a solemn promise of marriage made by two persons, each to the other, at such a distance of time as was agreed upon between them. After such espousal was made (which was generally when the parties were young) the woman continued with her parents several months, if not some years, before she was taken home, and the marriage consummated. This was the case with the Blessed Virgin, who was discernably with child before she and her intended husband came together. The custom of espousing or betrothing in this manner was instituted, that the parties contracted might have some intermediate time to think seriously of the great change they were going to make in their condition; to discourse more freely together on their domestic affairs; and to implore God's blessing and protection over them and theirs, in all the changes and chances of this mortal life,

it, the Holy Virgin humbly acquiesced in whatever God was pleased to do with her; and as soon as the angel was departed, she made the necessary preparations for going to Hebron in order to pay a visit to her cousin Elizabeth, and to congratulate her on the joyful news she had received from the angel relative to her being six months gone with child.

As soon as Mary arrived at Zacharias's house, she informed her cousin of what had been told her by the angel; upon which Elizabeth felt the child move within her; and, being inspired with the Holy Ghost, she exclaimed, *Blessed art thou above thy sex! Blessed is the fruit of thy body! And how great is my felicity to be visited by the mother of my Lord!* Nor did her extacy cease with this token of humility and joy on the important event, in the ardor of which she evinced that prophetic influence, which, while it amazed the Blessed Virgin, could not fail of establishing her belief in what the angel had foretold; for she repeated the very words expressed by the Divine Messenger in his salutation of the Holy Virgin, *Blessed art thou among women.* The happy Virgin, catching the holy flame from the aged Elizabeth, broke out into a rapture of thanksgiving to God, wherein she recounted his mercies, and the promises which he had made to the people of Israel, and which, by making her the blessed instrument of them, he was now about to fulfil.

The Blessed Virgin continued with her cousin Elizabeth about three months, at the expiration of which time she departed, and returned to Nazareth. A short time after this Elizabeth was delivered of a son; and on the eighth day, when the child was to be circumcised and named, his relations and friends, were not a little surprised to hear that he was to be called John, as there was not any of the family who bore that name. But how much greater was their surprize when they found that, upon this occasion, his father's speech was immediately restored to him, which he employed in the praises of Almighty God, for the wonderful prodigies he had wrought among them.

And now the time was at hand, when the great joy that the birth of the Baptist had occasioned was to be aug-

mented by the more miraculous birth of the Saviour of Mankind, which was to be the perfect completion of what the angel Gabriel had promised to both their mothers.

After the Holy Virgin had returned to Nazareth she concealed, as long as she could, the great mystery (which God had wrought in her) from her espoused husband, till at length her pregnant symptoms plainly discovered it; and though her deportment had been exceeding chaste and modest, yet Joseph might be well assured she was with child. This raised no little concern in his breast; but being a merciful good man, and unwilling either to expose the honor of her family, which he thought she had stained, or to inflict public punishment on her according to the sentence of the law, he resolved upon a separation with the utmost privacy. But before he could put his design into execution, an angel from heaven appeared to him in a vision, informing him that his wife's conception was the immediate work of the Holy Ghost. *Joseph (said the Divine messenger) thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sin.* Matt. i. 20, 21.

The pious Joseph was strictly obedient to the heavenly vision. The next day he took home the Holy Virgin, with whom, to all outward appearance, he lived in conjugal love, though he never knew her till after she was delivered of her first born, the great Saviour and Redeemer of Israel.

A short time before the birth of our Blessed Saviour, Augustus Cæsar issued out a general edict, that the names of all persons subject to the Roman empire, with their estates and conditions, should be registered at certain appointed places, according to their different provinces, cities and families, and that a tax should be paid by all in proportion to their respective circumstances. In consequence of this decree, Joseph and his wife Mary, being both of the tribe of Judah, and family of David, were obliged to go as far as Bethlehem, which was the north-city of their tribe, in order to have their names and estates enrolled. From the great conflux of people as-

sembled on this occasion, all the inns, and public places of reception were filled, so that no better places could be found for their lodging than a stable. In this lowly tenement the Blessed Virgin brought forth her first-born Son, whom she wrapped in swaddling clothes, and, having no better convenience, laid him in a manger.

But, notwithstanding the great Redeemer of mankind was born in this obscure manner, yet there were several very extraordinary circumstances and occurrences that attended it, which plainly bespeak him the Son of God. On the very night of his birth the wise Disposer of all things was pleased, by his holy angel, to make it known to some shepherds, who were attending their flocks on the plain of Bethlehem. The radiance which shone around the angel, terrified the astonished peasants; but to dissipate their fears, and confirm their joy, the Divine messenger addressed them in these words: *Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger,* Luke ii. 10, &c. Immediately after the holy angel had delivered the joyful tidings, an innumerable company of the same celestial choir broke out into this triumphant doxology: *Glory be to God on high, Peace on earth, and good will towards men.*

As soon as this heavenly concert was ended, the overjoyed shepherds, remembering the sign which the angel, before he disappeared, had given them, immediately hastened to Bethlehem, where they found the Virgin-Mother, and Joseph the supposed father, attending the God-like babe, whom, in humble reverence they adored, and then returned, praising and extolling the mercies of God, and, to the great amazement of all that heard them, publishing in all places what they had seen and heard concerning the child.

On the eighth day after our Blessed Saviour's birth, his parents, in obedience to the Mosaic law, had him circumcised; and, in conformity to the order which the angel had given to his mother before her conception, they

called his name JESUS. As soon as forty days were elapsed after his birth, two other ceremonies were performed, viz. the Purification of his mother, and the Presentation of her first-born in the temple. Though, from the immaculate conception of her son there certainly needed not the former ceremony, yet the Holy Virgin was determined to show her humility and obedience to the Mosaic institution. She therefore went up with Joseph to Jerusalem, there to offer the sacrifice prescribed by the law for her own purification, and there also to present her Son to the Lord, by delivering him into the priest's hand, and redeeming him again for five shekels.

While the Blessed Virgin was performing this last ceremony, there entered the temple a pious and venerable man, named Simeon, who, with all the devout, had waited day and night for the consolation of Israel, and to whom it had been revealed, by the spirit of truth, that he should not depart this life till he had seen the Lord of life and salvation. Accordingly, it was signified to him by the Holy Ghost (at whose instance he went at the precise time into the temple) that the child there presented was the long expected Messiah, even the Redeemer of Israel. He, therefore, no sooner saw the Blessed Infant, than he immediately took it into his arms, and in an heavenly extacy, praised God for the completion of his promises, in letting him live to see the Saviour of the world, before he quitted it. *Lord, said he, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.* Luke xi. 29, &c.

No sooner had Simeon finished his Divine rapture, than an ancient woman of the tribe of Asher, named Anna, who was remarkable for her piety and devotion, serenity of life, and constantly frequenting the public worship, entered the temple, and being herself likewise excited by a prophetic spirit, gave God thanks for his infinite mercies; testifying, at the same time, that the Blessed In-

fant was the true Messiah, and, on her departure, declared the glad tidings to all the faithful in those parts.

Having thus, in every respect, complied with the ceremonies and rites contained in the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary, with the child Jesus, left Jerusalem, and went to their own city of Nazareth in Galilee. But here they abode only a very short time, for as soon as they could conveniently adjust their domestic affairs, they went to Bethlehem, thinking the place of our Lord's nativity the most proper spot for their fixed residence.

Soon after Joseph and Mary had left Jerusalem, there appeared in that city certain strangers, who came from afar off, and were of a rank and character somewhat extraordinary. The Omnipotent Being, in order to notify the birth of his son, as well to the Gentiles as to the Jews, had caused an uncommon star to rise in the east, which three wise men, or astronomers in those parts observing, and understanding withal that it was to signify the birth of the Messiah promised to the Jews, travelled to the metropolis of Judea, in order to find out this new-born prince, that they might testify their homage and adoration of him.

The public character and appearance of these three strangers, together with their openly calling the Divine Infant the *king of the Jews*, not only threw Herod\* into the greatest consternation, but likewise occasioned a general commotion throughout the whole city of Jerusalem. Herod, however, being resolved to destroy this supposed rival in his kingdom, assembled the whole body of the Sanhedrim, and (not yet knowing of our Blessed Saviour's nativity) demanded of them the very place where the Messiah should be born. They told him that Bethlehem

\* The ambitious and cruel Herod, who was naturally of a very jealous and suspicious temper, knew well that himself was hated by the Jews, and that the Jews were then in full expectation of the Messiah (a Prince that was to subdue all other nations) to come and reign over them. He had, therefore, great reason to fear that the rumor of a king being born among them, confirmed by such extraordinary means as persons coming from a far country, and conducted to Jerusalem by the guidance of a wonderful star, might be a means of exciting sedition among the people, and might, perhaps, occasion a revolution in the government.

(in the land assigned to the tribe of Judah) was the very spot which the Holy Spirit, by the prophet Micah, had marked out for this great event. In consequence of this intelligence Herod immediately dismissed the assembly, and sending for the three strangers with the utmost secrecy, he enquired of them the exact time of the appearance of the star. Being resolved this question, he then dispatched them to Bethlehem, with orders to make diligent search for the young prince, and, when they had discovered where he was, to bring him word to Jerusalem, that he, in like manner, might go and pay homage to him. But this was mere pretence, and vile hypocrisy: for so far was Herod from entertaining any religious regard for the Divine Infant, that he had determined in his heart to destroy him as soon as he should be found. He considered him in the light of a temporal prince, who might expel him, or his descendants, from the throne, instead of a prince whose kingdom was wholly spiritual, and whose throne was not to be established upon earth, but in the heavenly Jerusalem.

The three strangers, having received these instructions from Herod, immediately left Jerusalem, and set forward for Bethlehem. In their way they were very agreeably surprized with the sight of the same miraculous star they had seen in their country, which (like the fiery pillar in the wilderness) went before, and directed them to the very house where the Blessed Jesus and his mother abode. As soon as they entered in, they fell prostrate on the ground, according to the Eastern custom, and, having in this manner adored the child, they then presented him with the richest products of their country, such as gold and precious odors, but more particularly frankincense and myrrh.

The Eastern strangers, having thus performed their homage to the Blessed Jesus, intended to return to Jerusalem, and acquaint Herod with the happy discovery they had made; but they were diverted from carrying their design into execution by a vision they had that very night, which apprized them of Herod's cruel intentions, and at the same time directed them, for their own safety, to pursue another course than that they had come to their

own country. These directions were strictly attended to by the strangers, and thereby was defeated the wicked intention of the malicious Herod.

Not long after this an angel was sent to Joseph to acquaint him with Herod's intended cruelty against the child, and at the same time to order him to retire into Egypt with him and his mother. Joseph instantly obeyed the Divine command, and, for fear of discovery, taking the advantage of the night, he, with all possible expedition, set forward for Egypt—*And was there (with the child and his mother) until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet: Out of Egypt have I called my son.*

In the mean time Herod waited impatiently for the return of the eastern sages; but at length finding himself deluded, and his most secret and subtle designs frustrated, he fell into a most violent rage, and resolved to effect by cruelty what he had been disappointed of doing by policy. To this purpose he ordered a large party of soldiers to go throughout the city of Bethlehem, and the adjoining villages, and massacre all the children they could find therein that were two years old and under; thinking that the infant JESUS, whom as a prince he both envied and dreaded, would fall in the general slaughter. But God had provided the heavenly missionary with a safe retreat. The shrieks, however, of tender mothers for their innocent babes, and the groans of expiring infants, which, on this occasion, filled the skies, were inexpressible: death and remediless despair raged in every place, and the surface of the earth was crimsoned with innocent blood. But it was not long before the Divine vengeance overtook the author of this dreadful scene, he being afflicted with a most uncommon and dreadful distemper, which, in a short time, put a period to his existence.\*

\* It is clearly evident, from the nature of Herod's disease, and the misery he suffered under it, that it was inflicted on him by Providence as a punishment for his horrid cruelty to the innocent and harmless children. Josephus tells us, that not long after the massacre of the infants at Bethlehem, his distemper daily increased, and that he labored under the most loathsome and tormenting complaints. "He had (says he) a lingering and wasting fever, and

Herod, some time before his death, had made a will, which was, in some measure, confirmed by Augustus; and in it he settled his dominions upon his sons and his

"grievous ulcers in his entrails and bowels; a violent cholice, an insatiable appetite, a venomous swelling in his feet, convulsions in his nerves, an almost perpetual asthma, and stinking breath, rottenness in his joints, accompanied with prodigious itchings, crawling worms, and intolerable scents, so that he was a perfect hospital of incurable diseases. And thus he died in horrid pain and torment, being smitten by Providence for his many enormous iniquities."

There certainly never was a more wicked man, or complete tyrant than Herod. He suppressed, and changed the high-priest's office as he thought fit, and even profaned the temple itself. He caused the legal king of the Jews to be slain; extirpated all the race of the Maccabees, removed the whole Sanhedrim, and placed others in their stead. Nor was his rage confined to the Jews, but descended to his own family and nearest relations, even to the executing his beloved wife Mariamne, and his own sons Alexander and Aristobulus, upon slight and trivial occasions. As he was conscious to himself of the wickedness of his life, so he had great reason to imagine, that, instead of any true lamentation at his death, there would be much rejoicing throughout the whole kingdom of Judea; and, therefore, to prevent this, he framed a project, which was one of the most horrid that ever entered into the mind of man. He summoned all the nobility and most considerable men in every city, town and village in Judea, upon pain of death, to meet together at Jericho, where he then lay sick. As soon as they were assembled, he ordered his soldiers to shut them all up in a spacious place, called the Hippodrome; after which, calling to him his sister Salome, and her husband Alexas, with some choice friends, he told them, "That he was sensible of the hatred of the Jews to his person and government, and that his death would be a high satisfaction to them: that his friends, therefore, ought to procure him some solace in the midst of his bitter anguish, which if they performed according to his order, the mournings and lamentations at his death would be as great and magnificent as ever any prince had. The substance of this order was, that on the same hour when he expired, the soldiers should surround the Hippodrome, put all the inclosed persons to the sword, and then publish his death, which (as he said) would cause his exit to be doubly triumphant; first, for the posthumous execution of his commands, and secondly, for the quality and number of his mourners." But Salome and Alexas, not being wicked enough to do what they had been made solemnly to promise, chose rather to break their obligation, than make themselves the executioners of so bloody a design; and, therefore, as soon as Herod was dead, they ordered the Hippodrome to be opened, and permitted all that were shut up in it to return to their respective habitations.

sister. He made Archelaus his successor in that part of his kingdom which included Judea, Idumaea, and Samaria: to Philip he gave Auronitis, Trachonitis, Panea, and Batauea: to Herod Antipas, Galilee and Peræa; and to his sister Salome, some particular cities, with a considerable sum of money.

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### CHAP. III.

*Joseph returns out of Egypt, and takes up his residence at Nazareth in Galilee. Archelaus, who succeeds Herod in the government of Judea, is deposed by the emperor Augustus. Our Blessed Saviour, at twelve years of age, is found disputing with the doctors in the temple. Death of Augustus Cæsar. The preaching of John the Baptist, and the manner of his life. Baptism of Christ, and visible descent of the Holy Ghost on that occasion. Commencement of our Saviour's ministry. His temptation in the wilderness. His first miracle of turning water into wine at the marriage feast.*

AS soon as the tyrant Herod was no more, his death was notified to Joseph by an heavenly messenger, who directed him immediately to leave Egypt, and return, with the child and its mother into the land of Israel. Joseph readily obeyed the Divine command; but, when he arrived at Judea, hearing that Archelaus succeeded Herod in that part of the country, and being apprehensive that the cruelty and ambition of the father might be entailed upon the son, he was fearful of settling in his dominions. But these disagreeable apprehensions were soon removed by his receiving a visit from another heavenly messenger, who directed him to retire to Nazareth in Galilee, which was under the government of Herod Antipas, a mild and benevolent prince, and where the particular circumstances which attended the birth of our Blessed Saviour were not generally known.

The precise circumstances of our Lord's childhood and life, previous to the time of his public ministry, are not

noticed in the writings of the Evangelists, which can alone be relied on as authentic. All we can gather from those inspired men is, that our Blessed Saviour's parents annually repaired with him to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover; and that, as his body increased in stature, so more especially the faculties of his soul were enlarged, and highly replenished with the grace of God. As his parents were poor he had not the advantage of a finished education, and seems to have received no other instruction than what his parents gave him, in conformity to the Jewish laws. But supernatural abilities amply compensated for the deficiency of natural acquirements, and he gave instances, in his earliest years, of the most amazing penetration, and extensive wisdom.

In the mean time Archelaus, king of Judea, following the steps of his cruel father Herod, made himself so obnoxious to the Jews, that the principal men among them, joining with those of Samaria, drew up a complaint against him, which they laid before Augustus Cæsar, emperor of Rome. The emperor, after a full hearing on both sides the question, deprived Archelaus of his government, confiscated all his goods, banished him to Vienna, a city in Gaul, and reduced his dominions to the form of a Roman province, which, ever after, was ruled by a governor sent from Rome, who was called by the name of Procurator, but, in some cases, was subject to the President or Governor of Syria.

While Judea was reduced to this wretched state, our Blessed Saviour was advanced to the twelfth year of his age, at which time he went up with his parents, as usual, to celebrate the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem. His parents, after staying the whole seven days, and having performed the usual ceremonies on the occasion, were now returning, with great numbers of their neighbors and acquaintance, towards Galilee; and supposing that the Blessed Jesus had joined himself with some of the company, they travelled on a whole day's journey. But, when night came on, and they could not, among their relations and particular friends, hear any tidings of him, they were thrown into the utmost consternation, and im-

mediately returned to Jerusalem in order to find him out, and take him with them to Nazareth.

After a most anxious search of three days they found him in one of the rooms of the temple (probably in that of the grand Sanhedrim) sitting among the learned doctors and masters of Israel, hearing them discourse, and propounding such questions to them as raised the admiration of all that heard him, and made them astonished at his unbounded penetration.

The surprize of our Blessed Saviour's parents in finding him within the walls of so sacred a place, and in such sublime employment, was beyond expression. His pious mother, notwithstanding the pleasure she received in having found him, could not help shewing the concern which his absence, without her knowledge, had occasioned. *Son, said she, why hast thou dealt thus with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.* To this question our Saviour replied in words to this effect: that their surprize at his absenting himself was groundless and absurd, as they must have been assured, from his extraordinary birth, and the wonderful circumstances attending it, that his heavenly Father was no less than the God of Israel: that himself assumed human nature to promote his glorious will; and therefore, as his errand was of such moment, they must not imagine he could always reside with them. *How is it, said he, that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* These words were not clearly understood by the Blessed Virgin, but they struck such an impression on her mind that she ever after retained them in her memory.

Our Blessed Saviour, being thus happily found by his parents, returned with them to Nazareth, and lived with them in the most dutiful subjection, thereby affording a most glorious example for the imitation of all children, who certainly are bound to yield obedience to their parents, more especially since the Son of God himself, when on earth, set them the example.

In this humble state did the Blessed Jesus continue for some time, during which he greatly advanced both in knowledge and stature; and, by his extraordinary quali-

ties, attracted the regard and admiration of all who either saw or heard him.

Being happily free from those inordinate, disquieting desires which disturb and distract mortals, he was always in temper calm and sedate, which, added to a pleasing countenance, enabled him to prove the strength of his moral faculties, and the natural goodness of his disposition. He was also an excellent orator, being endued with a most nervous and persuasive elocution, insomuch that his hearers, frequently astonished at the substance and manner of his address, would suddenly call out, *Never man spake like this man.* And though, considered in his Divine nature, he was far superior to human nature, yet, during the time in which he lived thus humbly with his parents, he condescended to assist his father in his business of a carpenter, thereby learning us a most shining example both of industry and humility.—Thus obscurely did the Blessed Jesus live till the time of his public ministry, nor did he, till then, shew any miracles, or perform any actions to distinguish himself from the rest of mankind; his Divine nature, and annexed properties, during the time of his private life, being concealed under the veil of his human nature.

While our Blessed Saviour continued in this obscure state, and when he was in the eighteenth year of his age, Augustus Cæsar, the Roman emperor, died at Nola in Campania (after a reign of near forty-four years) to the inexpressible grief of his subjects. He was succeeded by Tiberius, the son of his wife Livia by a former husband, who was a prince of a quite contrary disposition to his predecessor. In the second year of his accession to the Roman empire, he recalled Rufus from the government of Judea, and sent Valerius Gratus (who was the fourth governor in those parts since the banishment of Archelaus) to succeed him. Gratus, after continuing some time in his office, was recalled, and Pontius Pilate, a person like his master Tiberius, of a fierce and irreconcilable spirit, and of a cruel and covetous disposition, was appointed governor in his stead.

A short time after Pontius Pilate was appointed to the government of Judea, John the Baptist began to open his

commission for the preparation of our Saviour's way before him, by preaching *the Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of sins*. From his infancy till the time of his public ministry, he had been bred up in the wilderness of Judea, resembling the ancient prophet Elijah in the coarseness of his clothing, and the plainness of his diet. His dress consisted of a loose coat made of camel's hair, and fastened with a leathern girdle, which was the only garb he wore; his food was the spontaneous productions of the wilderness, such as locusts and wild honey; and his drink the pure water of some chrystral spring. His course of life was, indeed, admirably adopted to inculcate the doctrines of Repentance and Reformation. By his free and resolute preaching, joined to his great severity of life, he soon obtained a prodigious number of proselytes, not only in Judea, but also from Jerusalem. Persons of all ranks and qualities flocked to him, confessed their sins to God, were baptized in the river Jordan, and submitted to whatever he prescribed as necessary towards their obtaining an inheritance in the mansions above.

Among the great multitudes who went to hear the preaching of John the Baptist, were many Pharisees and Sadducees, whose confidence and immorality he sharply reproved; while at the same time he exhorted the common people to works of charity; the publicans to avoid oppression and injustice; the soldiers to abstain from plunder and violence; and, in short, he cautioned every one to beware of those crimes to which they were most exposed by their respective occupations and employments in life.

The Baptist, throughout the whole of his ministration, happily adapted his discourses to the circumstances and capacities of the various people he addressed; and took every pious means to prepare them for the coming of the long promised Messiah, who was shortly to appear amongst them in the glorious character of a Saviour and Redeemer of Israel.

Thus by a life of inflexible virtue, discourses nervous and pathetic, exhortations sincere and fervent, and rebukes honest and courageous, the Baptist became renowned throughout the whole kingdom of Judea. Indeed, the

greater part of his followers were so enraptured with his doctrine and manner of life that they began to consider him as the promised and long expected Messiah; but, to remove all thoughts of this kind, he freely declared to them, that he only baptized them with Water to Repentance and a new life; but that there was one coming, and ready to appear among them, who would baptize them with the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and who so far exceeded him in power and excellency, that he was not worthy to do for him the meanest or most servile office. *I, indeed, baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose,* Luke iii. 16. These were the doctrines which John preached, and this the testimony which he gave of the Blessed Jesus, even before he had the happiness of personally knowing him.

After John had continued in his ministry for several months, our Blessed Lord thought fit to remove from his obscure situation at Nazareth. Accordingly, after taking leave of his parents, he went into Judea, and from thence to Bathabara, on the banks of the river Jordan, where John was at that time baptizing. It is certain that He, who was innocence and purity itself, had no need of the Baptism of Repentance; but our Blessed Lord, being inclined to honor and sanctify the Institution, offered himself to John for Baptism. John, being at this instant Divinely inspired, knew him, and thereupon endeavored to decline the office, but the Blessed Jesus gave him such reasons for the expediency of the thing, as made him no longer hesitate; and he immediately baptized him in the presence of numerous spectators.

As our Blessed Saviour needed not the instructions usually given on the occasion, as soon as the ceremony was performed, he went straitway out of the water, and kneeling on the bank of the river, fervently prayed to his Almighty Father for an abundant effusion of his Holy Spirit, as he was now about to enter upon his public ministry, the end of which was the salvation of mankind. His prayers were heard, his request was granted, and an immediate attestation of the Divine pleasure given. The sky, on a sudden, was divided by a great radiancy, and

the Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove, descended upon his sacred head, at which time an audible voice from heaven was heard to pronounce these words: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Our Blessed Lord having complied with the Institution of Baptism, and received the most convincing testimony that could be given of his heavenly Father's approbation, by the miraculous descent and effusion of the Holy Ghost upon him, began to prepare himself for the discharge of his prophetic office, he being now arrived at the age of thirty years, which was the time allowed, according to the Mosaic law, for the commencement of inspired ministration.

As soon as it was known that our Blessed Saviour was about to enter upon his public ministry, the people in general imagined that he would first repair to Jerusalem, the seat of power and grandeur, in order to display to the great and the learned his miraculous abilities and effulgent glories. But, averse to human parade, the heavenly-minded Jesus preferred solitude to the noise and hurry of mortal life. He therefore retired into the wilderness of Judea, in order to prepare himself, by fasting, meditation and prayer, for the important work on which he was entering, namely, the salvation of mankind.

In this dreary situation the Great Redeemer, as Moses and Elijah had done before him, fasted forty days and forty nights, held an incessant communion with his heavenly Father, digested the doctrine he was about to deliver, and the obedience he came to perform; and by a total abstinence from food for forty days and forty nights evinced the divinity of his mission, or, in other words, proved, that he was *a teacher come from God.*

But the melancholy solitude of a desert, and the sense of hunger and thirst, were but a small part of our Saviour's sufferings in the wilderness. Satan, that implacable foe to mankind, was permitted to interrupt him with the most insinuating wiles, and assail him with the most alluring temptations. This was an evident display of the Divine wisdom, and no doubt, permitted that our Redeemer, being personally acquainted with the artifices of the deceiver, might become a faithful and compassionate

high-priest, know how to succor his people in times of adversity, and pity them when they fall into temptation. Indeed, if we consider the matter in its true light, it appears highly proper, in order that our Blessed Lord and Master might both enter upon, and prosecute his ministry, with more glory to himself, and advantage to mankind, that he should previously overcome the most subtle arts of that deceiver, who, under the mask of the serpent, seduced our first parents, and involved them and their posterity in one common ruin.

Whether or not the old serpent made use of any devices to trepan the Son of God during the time of his fasting we cannot say, as no mention is made of it in holy writ. But, at the expiration of the forty days, when the Blessed Jesus had endured the keenest hunger, the tempter, in a haughty and insolent manner, demanded why he bore such sensations; telling him at the same time, that if he was the Son of God he must certainly have power to change even the stones of that dreary wilderness into bread; and that by so marvellous a transmutation he would give him the satisfaction of knowing the truth of what was said concerning him at his baptism. This device our Blessed Saviour repelled by citing the words of Moses, which implied, that God, whenever it seemed good in his sight, could, by extraordinary means, provide for the support of the human race. *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*

The deceiver, being defeated in this effort, endeavored to put in execution another device. Having conducted our Lord some distance from the spot where he had made the first attempt, he placed him on the pinnacle of a temple, and insolently urged him to prove the truth of his mission, by casting himself down from thence, citing, as an encouragement for him to comply with his desire, the following text from the Psalms: *If thou be the son of God cast thyself down; for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.* This second attempt our Blessed Saviour frustrated by using these words: *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* That is, thou shalt not provoke

the Lord, either by disobeying his command, or by an impertinent curiosity to know more concerning his will than he is pleased to reveal.

The tempter resolved, if possible, to obtain his ends, hit upon another device, which was to tempt our Saviour with the charms of ambition. To effect this, he conducted him to the top of a very high mountain, where he shewed him a bright view of the kingdoms of the world, with their dazzling glories, promising him universal empire over the whole, if he would bow down, and yield to him the honor of the benefaction. This was such an evidence of blasphemy, as well as insolence, that our Blessed Lord, exerting his Divine authority, peremptorily commanded him to be gone, but with this memento, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* On his saying these words, Satan, finding all his efforts ineffectual, departed for that time, and an host of angels, sent from heaven, came to our Saviour, and supplied him with necessary refreshments, after his victory over the great enemy and deceiver of mankind.

During the time of our blessed Saviour's fasting and temptation in the wilderness, his faithful forerunner John the Baptist, being assured (both from the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the voice heard from heaven) that Jesus was the true and long expected Messiah, made full and open declarations of it to all the multitude that came near to him. In consequence of this the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, prompted by curiosity, sent a deputation of their priests and Levites (who were of the sect of the Pharisees) to demand of him who he was, whether he was the Messiah, or Elias, who was to rise from the dead, and precede the Messiah, the powerful prince so earnestly expected by the whole nation of Israel?

The Baptist very frankly acknowledged that he was not the Messiah whom they expected, nor Elias, who (as they imagined) would personally appear among them, nor any other prophet risen from the dead; but at the same time he gave them to understand, that though he was not Elias himself, yet he was the person spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, and of whom he prophesied in these words: *The voice of him that crieth in the wilder-*

ness, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord; Make strait in the desert an highway to our God.* Isaiah xl. 3.

The deputies, not sufficiently satisfied with this reply, asked him why he assumed the power of baptizing the people, if he was neither the Messiah nor Elias, nor any of the ancient prophets risen from the dead? In answer to this John told them, that his baptism was only of water, to shew the great necessity of repentance; but that the efficacy of it depended upon one among them, whom they knew not; *one who succeeded him, indeed, in time, but so far surpassed him in dignity, that he was not worthy even to be his servant.*

With this answer the Pharisees appeared satisfied, and, taking their leave, departed; the very next day after which our Blessed Lord left the wilderness, and repaired to Bethabara, where John was at that time baptizing, and preaching the doctrine of repentance.

As it was the grand business of the Baptist to direct all persons to the Messiah for life and salvation in and through him, he embraced this seasonable opportunity of pointing him out to the multitude: *Behold (said he) the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world!* Having said this, John declared to the people that he was the very person, of whose superiority, both in dignity and existence, he had before spoken, and whom, by certain tokens, he knew to be the Son of God. *I saw,* (said he) *the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God.* John i. 32, &c.

The very next day after the Baptist had made this public declaration, happening to stand on the bank of the river Jordan with two of his most strenuous followers, and our Blessed Saviour passing by at the same time, he pointed him out to them, and, in a pious rapture, repeated the words he had made use of the preceding day to the multitude, *Behold the Lamb of God!* Animated with an arduous desire of hearing, as well as seeing, this ex-

traordinary person, they immediately left John, and followed Jesus, who, conscious of their design, turned about, and, with the utmost affability, gave them an invitation to the place of his residence. One of these disciples,\* who was named Andrew, had been long a follower of the Baptist, and therefore had not the least doubt of the truth of what he had said, and the doctrine he had propagated; but, after having had some conversation with the Blessed Jesus himself, he was fully satisfied that he was indeed the promised Messiah, the great Saviour and Redeemer of lost mankind.

Andrew, happy in having found out his divine master, went and discovered it to his elder brother Simon Peter, who, in like manner, immediately became one of our Saviour's disciples. The next day they were joined by two others, namely, one Philip, an inhabitant of the city of Bethsaida, and an intimate friend of his named Nathaniel, a native of Cana in Galilee. The latter, at his very first coming, upon our Saviour's expressing some tokens of his Omiscience, made a very liberal confession of his knowing him to be the Messiah, the son of God: *Rabbi*, said he, *thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel!*

Nathaniel having made this exclamation, our Blessed Lord told him, he should hereafter have much stronger testimonies of the divinity of his mission, when he should be an eye-witness to what the old patriarch Jacob had before seen in a vision, the angels *ascending* and *descending*, to attend the person, and execute the commands of the *Son of Man*. This appellation the Blessed Jesus was pleased to apply not only in consideration of his humanity, but in order more directly to fulfil the remarkable prediction of the prophet Daniel concerning him. *I saw in the night-visions, and behold, one like the son of*

\* Though the name of the other disciple is not mentioned, yet there is not the least doubt but it was John, the beloved Apostle and Evangelist, because he so punctually describes the circumstances of the time and conversation that passed; but in this, and several other places of his Gospel it evidently appears (though for what reason is unknown, unless it was from his great sense of modesty) that he chose to conceal his name.

*man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. His dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

Dan. viii. 13, &c.

Our Blessed Redeemer, having attested the divinity of his mission by many incontestible evidences, and made five disciples, left Bethabara, and went into Galilee, where, soon after his arrival, he was invited, together with his mother and followers, to a marriage feast at Cana, a place situated not far from the city of Nazareth.

At the celebration of these nuptials there happened to be a scarcity of wine, and his mother (who interested herself in the management of the feast, and was therefore desirous that every thing should be done with decorum) applied to her son hoping he might be able to remedy the defect.

It is not to be doubted but the holy Mary was thoroughly sensible of her son's supernatural and distinguished powers, and was therefore desirous that he would give some proof of his abilities in the presence of her friends who were assembled at the marriage feast. Addressing herself therefore to her Son, she said, *they have no wine.* Our Lord greatly reproved her in these words: *Woman what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come;* meaning, that the time or period, of his public ministry was not yet arrived.

But notwithstanding this reproof, Mary still entertained an opinion that he would interest himself in behalf of her and the company, and therefore ordered the servants punctually to obey his commands.

The Blessed Jesus, being assured that working a miracle would greatly tend to confirm the faith of his young disciples, resolved to comply with the request of his parent. He therefore ordered the servants to fill six pots with water, which was no sooner done than it was immediately changed into excellent wine. This done, he ordered them to draw, and bear to the governor of the feast, who being ignorant of the miracle that had been wrought,

and astonished at the preference of this wine to that which had been served up at the beginning of the feast, addressed himself to the bridegroom in the hearing of the whole company, telling him that, contrary to the usual custom, he had reserved the best wine to the last, at the same time commending so judicious a practice, it being a plain proof of the approbation he entertained of his friends who were present at the entertainment. *Every man (said he) at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.* The bridegroom was not less astonished at the address of the governor, than he was at the occasion of it, and all were struck with amazement at a matter which they knew could only have been effected by the most wonderful and supernatural means.

This was the first miracle wrought by our Blessed Saviour in any public manner, and which proved both a manifestation of his own divinity, and a confirmation of the faith of his disciples.

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#### CHAP. IV.

*Our Blessed Saviour goes to Capernaum, and from thence to Jerusalem. Removes the public abuse and profanation of the temple. Discourses with Nicodemus, a principal person of the Sanhedrim. Baptizes in Judea. John the Baptist is thrown into prison. Our Saviour instructs a poor woman of Samaria. Miraculously cures the son of a Nobleman. Goes to Nazareth, but being ill-treated by the people, removes to Capernaum. The wonderful draught of fishes. Our Saviour performs many astonishing cures in Galilee and other parts. He calls Matthew, a rich publican, to be one of his disciples, who immediately leaves his employment, and afterwards becomes an Apostle and Evangelist.*

AFTER our Blessed Lord had performed his first miracle at Cana, he went to Capernaum, the place where he afterwards usually resided; but his stay there at this

time was not long, because his purpose was to go to Jerusalem, in order to attend the celebration of the Feast of the Passover.

As soon as our Blessed Saviour arrived at Jerusalem, the first thing he did was, to reform the public abuse and profanation that had crept into the temple, occasioned by the shops which money-changers had set up, and the beasts, which the dealers used to bring into the court of the Gentiles. This our Lord's zeal for his heavenly Father's honor could not brook; and therefore, with a scourge made of cords, he drove all the sellers and barterers from the sacred ground, overturned the tables of the money-changers, and commanded all those, who dealt in doves and pigeons, to take them immediately away. *Take these things hence, (said he) Make not my Father's house an house of merchandize.*

This extraordinary procedure greatly incensed the Jews, and a council being assembled, they immediately went to our Saviour, and demanded of him by what authority he did these things, and to give them some evidence of his having a commission so to do. But to this our Blessed Saviour made no other reply than by foretelling his own resurrection, which he expressed in the metaphor of the temple. *Destroy, says he, (laying his hand on his breast) this temple, and I will raise it up in three days.* The rulers, mistaking his meaning, imagined that he referred to the superb and lofty temple finished by Herod, and therefore told him such a relation was highly improbable, nor had they the least reason to think he could possibly rebuild, in three days, that magnificent structure which had been finished at an immense expense, and was the labor of many years.

Our Blessed Saviour did not think proper to explain his meaning to these mighty men among the inhabitants of Jerusalem; upon which, without asking any farther questions, they immediately departed, though far from being satisfied at what they had heard.

During the time of the Passover our Saviour wrought several miracles in the presence of the common people, in order to confirm the doctrines he delivered, and prove the divinity of his mission. As there had not been any

miracles wrought among them for a considerable time, though many were recorded in their sacred books, they beheld our Blessed Lord with amazement and veneration; and great numbers were satisfied that he was the long promised Messiah, so often foretold by the ancient prophets. He did not, however, publicly discover himself to be the Great Prophet, as he knew that the faith of numbers was yet but weak, and that it was likely many would desert his cause when they found he was opposed by the Sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, and did not set up a worldly kingdom, as they thought the expected Messiah was to do.

But the miracles wrought by the Blessed Jesus during his stay at Jerusalem did not excite the wonder and astonishment of the common people alone. One Nicodemus (a considerable man in the Sanhedrim, and of the sect of the Pharisees) reflecting on our Saviour's wondrous works, so astonishing in their nature, so demonstrative in their proof, so salutary in their effect, so happily adapted to the confirmation of his doctrines, and so perfectly agreeable to the attributes of the Deity, as well as the predictions of the ancient prophets concerning the Messiah, thought that nothing less than Omnipotence itself could produce such wonders, and that Jesus was, of a truth, the Son of God. But still some scruples arose in his mind when, on the other hand, he considered the obscurity of his birth, and the meanness of his appearance, so different from the exalted notions the Jews always entertained concerning this powerful prince, who (as they thought) was to erect his throne in the mighty city of Jerusalem, and make subject to his dominion all the states and kingdoms of the earth.

Nicodemus, in order to obviate these scruples, and remove these perplexing doubts, resolved on an interview with the Blessed Jesus; but chusing to conceal his visit from the other members of the Sanhedrim, who were greatly averse both to his person and doctrine, he chose the night as being most convenient for answering his purpose. As soon as he beheld the mighty Redeemer of Israel, he saluted him in these words: *Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can*

*do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.* Which was as much as to say, “*Rabbi, I am sufficiently convinced that thou art immediately sent as a teacher from on high; for nothing less than power divine could enable thee to perform the miracles which thou hast wrought in the presence of multitudes.*”

Our Blessed Saviour told Nicodemus that his belief was not the only qualification requisite for him to become his disciple; and then proceeded to instruct him in the great mystery of Regeneration; *Verily, verily, (said he) I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* Which was as much as to say, *Verily, verily, I declare unto thee, as a truth of the last importance, that unless a man be regenerated in the spirit of his mind, have his will and affections transferred from earthly to spiritual objects, he cannot see the kingdom of God, which is holy and spiritual, both in its nature and enjoyments.*

This was a mysterious system to Nicodemus, whose religious views extended no farther than rites and ceremonies, and were bounded by time and space: besides, he thought the very position of our Lord an absurdity in terms: *How (said he) can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

To these questions our Blessed Redeemer replied, *Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* The regeneration which I preach unto you is not of a natural, but of a spiritual, nature. Unless a man embraces the religion and doctrine I preach (whose initiating ordinance is baptism and Divine Grace) he cannot be the subject of Divine glory, which consists not in earthly splendor, and the gratification of the meaner passions, but in an exemption from whatever is earthly, sensual and devilish, and the prosecution of whatever is heavenly, holy and spiritual. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.* *Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.* The doctrine I preach is designed to inform you, first, that you derive no excellence from your boasted descent from Abraham, being as such

subject to sins and infirmities of every kind; and secondly, to shew that you must undergo a spiritual moral regeneration, a renovation of the heart, which changes the whole man, and fits him for the participation of heavenly blessedness. This important work is likewise spiritual in its operation, unseen by mortal eyes, being wrought on the mind or heart of man by the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, which changes its nature, and, with respect to things eternal, makes him another, a new creature. *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

Having said this, our Blessed Saviour proceeds to tell Nicodemus that the doctrine of Regeneration was no more, in respect of other mysteries of the Gospel, than the earth is in comparison of the heavens, and then acquaints him with several matters of the most sublime nature, but particularly the blessing of that Redemption which he came into the world to accomplish. He instructs him in the Love of the Father, the Mission of the Son, the Rewards of Faith, and the Glories of Eternity. He upbraids the unbelieving and impenitent, and declares the difference between a pure and corrupt conscience, the shame and fears of the one, and the confidence and serenity of the other.

This is the substance of our Blessed Saviour's discourse to Nicodemus, who, in consequence thereof, became a convert, and ever after constantly espoused his cause in the great council of the nation.

As soon as the Feast of the Passover was ended, our Blessed Lord, accompanied by his disciples, left Jerusalem, and retired into the remote parts of Judea, where he continued a considerable time, preaching the kingdom of God. In every place where he went he made many proselytes, whom he principally caused to be baptized by the hands of his disciples, his own time being chiefly taken up in teaching the people, and relieving their necessities.

At this time John the Baptist had removed his station from Bethabara to Aenon, a place remarkable for springs

and various currents of water, and therefore of great convenience for performing the ceremonies of baptism. While he was here, a dispute arose between his followers and certain Jews who were present, which of the Baptisms, that of John, or that of Jesus, was to be preferred? Being unable to decide the dispute among themselves, they referred it to the opinion of John, who told them, that the person, of whom he had given such honorable testimony, received proselytes (and that in prodigious numbers) by the same ceremony of Baptism as he did. He then repeated the testimony he had before given of his Divine master, and reminded his followers how frequently he had told them, that the person of whom they spake was the Messiah, whom God had sent into the world for the salvation of mankind, and himself no more than his herald; and that his ministry, therefore, was now going to decline, even as, upon the approach of the sun, the glory of the morning star decreased. John said many other things of the like nature to prove our Blessed Saviour to be the Son of God, and concluded his harangue with these important words: *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

The Baptist, having publicly preached the great doctrine of salvation throughout the wilderness of Judea, where he had continued a considerable time, departed from thence, and went into the territories of Herod Antipas in Galilee. As Herod esteemed both his preaching and person, John frequently went to his court, and having naturally a great freedom of speech, as well as being desirous of faithfully discharging his ministry, he one day reproved Herod for his wicked course of life, and particularly for his cohabiting with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, who was still living. Herod, being weak enough to inform Herodias of what John had said, she was exasperated against him to such a degree that, though Herod had some esteem and reverence for him, yet, from her malicious insinuations, she prevailed on Herod to put John into prison, intending, no doubt, when a convenient opportunity should offer, to have him destroyed.

During these transactions in Galilee, our Blessed Lord continued preaching and baptizing in the wilderness of Judea. But understanding that the Pharisees began to be envious of him on account of the great numbers of people that resorted to him, he resolved to leave that part of the country, and pass into Galilee, in order to enter upon the more solemn part of his ministerial function. In the course of his journey it was necessary for him to pass through Samaria ; and as he travelled on foot, and the weather was exceeding hot, when he came within a small distance of Shechem, he sent his disciples into the city to buy provisions, and sat himself down by the side of a famous spring called Jacob's Well.

After our Blessed Lord had sat a short time by the well side, there came a woman of a loose life and conversation from the city with a pitcher to draw water. As soon as our Lord saw her, he requested of her to give him to drink ; upon which the woman perceiving him to be a Jew, asked him how he could make any such request to a Samaritan, since there were such great feuds, and so little dealings, between them and the Jews ? Little did the woman know the excellency of the person who asked her so small a favor ; but, in some measure to convince her, our Lord took occasion from hence, under the metaphor of water, to discourse with her on spiritual blessings, and to make her sensible of his Omnipotence. He told her, " That all who drank of the water of Jacob's Well would thirst again, being but a temporal allay of a desire incident to human nature ; whereas those who drank of the water which he was ready to disperse, should never thirst, because that water flowed from the inexhaustible fountain of Divine Grace." He then reminded her of some remarkable incidents that had occurred to her in the course of her life, particularly of her having been five times divorced for adultery, and that she at that very time lived in a state of fornication.

These undeniable truths greatly alarmed the woman, who, to evade the present subject of discourse, which filled her with a degree of awe and fear, as supposing he could be no less than a prophet, propounded to him a question which had afforded great controversy between

the Jews and Samaritans, viz. Which was the proper place of public worship, Mount Gerezim, or Jerusalem? To this our Blessed Lord replied, that it was not the place, but the manner, in which adoration was offered to the Father of Spirits, that rendered religious worship acceptable; telling her likewise, that the time was approaching when all sacrifices, and ceremonial rites, should cease, and when God, who was a Spirit, would be worshipped in a more humble and spiritual manner than he had hitherto been.

In consequence of this answer, which apparently referred to things spiritual and eternal, the woman informed the Blessed Jesus of her expectation of the arrival of the promised Messiah, who would punctually satisfy them with respect to those things which had been so long and undecisively contested. Our Blessed Lord, being now pleased to make himself known to her, replied, *I that speak unto thee am he.* This intelligence greatly astonished the woman, who immediately left her pitcher, and ran into the city to publish to the people the glad tidings, that the great deliverer of mankind was then sitting by the side of Jacob's Well.

Just as our Blessed Saviour had made himself known to the woman, and she had departed from the spot, his disciples returned from the city, and immediately sat before their master, the provision they had purchased; but he, wholly absorbed in meditation, refused the refreshment they had brought, telling them, *he had meat to eat that they knew nothing of.* This unexpected answer surprized his disciples, who, taking his words in a literal sense, thought some person or other had, during their absence, supplied him with provisions. But our Blessed Lord soon explained the mystery, by telling them, that he did not mean natural, but spiritual food; that, to execute the commission he had received from his Father was far better than meat or drink; and the satisfaction he was going to receive from the conversion of the Samaritans much greater than any sensual enjoyment.

In the mean time the woman, having returned to the city, proclaimed aloud that she had met with a person who had told her all the secrets of her life, and that he

could be no other (as he had told her himself) than the long promised Messiah. This report astonished the Samaritans, and, at the same time, roused their curiosity to see a person foretold by Moses and the prophets, and of whose appearance there was then so universal an expectation. Accordingly, great numbers of them repaired to Jacob's Well, and no sooner did they see our Blessed Saviour than, being fully persuaded that he could be no other person than the great Messiah, the first request they made was, that he would deign to take up his residence in their city. Our Lord so far complied with their request as to continue with them two days, an interval which he spent in preaching to them the kingdom of God; so that the greater part of the people embraced the doctrine of the Gospel, and, at his departure, said unto the woman, *Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

From Shechem our Blessed Lord proceeded to Cana, where he changed the water into wine, and where the Galileans (who, at the Passover, had seen the miracles which he did at Jerusalem) received him with the greatest respect and reverence. During his stay here, a nobleman of Capernaum came, and addressed himself to him with great humility, desiring that he would be pleased to go thither, and heal his son, who was then just at the point of death. Our Blessed Saviour readily complied with the latter part of his request; but to remove a prejudice which had been conceived that it was necessary for him to be personally present in order to restore the sick person to health, as well as to shew the great excellency of his power, he refused to go to Capernaum, and therefore dismissed the nobleman with assurance that his son was restored to health: *Go thy way; (said he) thy son liveth.* As the believing father was joyfully returning home, he was met on the way by some of his servants, who congratulated him with the welcome news of his son's recovery. In consequence of this he required of them the hour when the child began to mend; and by the answer they gave him he perceived that it was at the very instant, when our Lord had declared to him, *thy son*

*liveth.* Whereupon not only the nobleman, but likewise his whole family, being convinced of our Saviour's divinity, became converts to the Christian faith.

After our Blessed Saviour had spent some days in the city and neighborhood of Cana, he went to Nazareth, the place where he received his education, and where he had resided till he came to years of maturity. On the sabbath-day he went, as was his constant custom, into the synagogue, and standing up, read (as it was usual for lay-men then to do) a passage in the prophet Isaiah, beginning with these words: *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the Poor, &c.* He spoke on this subject with so much gracefulness as to attract, in a very particular manner, the attention of the whole congregation. Many of them admired his discourse, but the greater part, who had known him in his youth, and the manner in which he had been brought up by his parents, treated it with disrespect, and contemptuously intimated the insignificant light in which they looked upon him, on-account of the meanness of his extract, as if he had been no more than a carpenter's son. On this our Blessed Lord took occasion to upbraid them with their ingratitude and insensibility, upon which they were so provoked, that they hurried him out of the synagogue, and took him to the brow of a hill on which the city was built, with a design to have him thrown down from thence, and destroy him, which they would certainly have done, had he not, by a miraculous power, imperceptibly withdrawn himself from them, and quitted their city.

In consequence of this ill treatment from the Nazarenes, our Blessed Saviour took up his residence at Capernaum, the capital of Galilee, which, from its being built on the borders of the lake Genesareth, was a place highly convenient for his designs. For, besides the numerous inhabitants of that city, the trading towns on the lake were crowded with people, who, after hearing the doctrine of the Gospel preached by the great Redeemer of mankind, could not fail to spread, in their respective countries, the happy tidings of salvation.

Our Blessed Saviour had not been long at Capernaum before his great fame was spread throughout the adjacent country, and multitudes of people flocked daily to see him and hear his doctrine. As he was one day walking by the side of a lake, surrounded by a croud of people, he saw two fishing vessels, one belonging to Peter and the other James and John (who were all partners and companions in that business) and, stepping into Peter's ship, he desired him to put a little from the shore, that from thence he might preach to the multitude.

As soon as our Blessed Saviour had concluded his discourse, he turned himself to Peter, desiring him to launch his vessel farther from the shore, and let down his net. Peter modestly told him that he and his companions had been toiling all the night without meeting with any success; but nevertheless, in obedience to him, he would make one trial more. This he accordingly did, and such was the success attending it that they were obliged to call to their partners in the other ship to come to their assistance in drawing up the nets, which being done they contained such a multitude of fishes as to load both vessels, and that so deep that they were in some danger of sinking before they could reach the shore.

This wonderful success so astonished Peter, that, falling down at the feet of the Blessed Jesus, he cried out, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.* He was conscious of the many sins he had committed, and therefore afraid of being in the company of so Divine a person, lest some infirmity or offence might have subjected him to more than ordinary chastisement. But our Blessed Saviour soon removed his fears, by bidding him be of good comfort; telling him at the same time, that he had a much better work and employment for him, if he would attach himself to him, namely, *the gaining of men's souls to salvation.* Our Lord then gave the like invitation to James and John, both of whom obeyed his call, and, leaving their vessels, nets, relations and employment, became, and continued ever after, his constant and inseparable disciples.

After the performance of this miracle our Blessed Saviour returned with his new disciples into the city, and

on the next sabbath-day went into the chief synagogue to preach to the people. This he did with such gracefulness, and in a manner so widely different from their usual teachers the Scribes, that all were astonished at him. To increase their astonishment, one of the congregation, whose body was possessed with an unclean spirit, hideously cried out, *Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy one of God.* But Jesus, who wanted not the testimony of any such confessors, commanded the evil spirit to be silent, and depart out of the poor man's body, which, to the great surprize and amazement of the whole congregation, was immediately effected.

Our Blessed Saviour, after having performed this astonishing miracle in the synagogue, retired to Peter's house, where his wife's mother at that time lay sick of a fever; but on his taking her by the hand she was immediately restored to her former health, and arose from the bed, and *ministered unto him.*

The fame of this miracle, together with that performed in the synagogue, was soon spread throughout the city of Capernaum; and as soon as the sabbath was over, which ended at the setting of the sun, the people of the city gathered together, in prodigious multitudes, about Peter's house. Among them were great numbers afflicted with various diseases, the sight of whom excited the pity of the heavenly physician, who, in the presence of the whole assembly, immediately healed them of their respective complaints, either by a touch of his finger, or a gentle pressure of his hand.

The prodigious concourse of people which continued to surround Peter's house, greatly disturbed our Lord, so that to avoid their noise and importunities, as well as to have the opportunity of praying to his heavenly Father, he, early the next morning, left Capernaum, and retired to a private place in the adjoining wilderness. But even in this solitude he was soon found out; and therefore, to disengage himself from such a crowd of attendants, as well as to discharge his mission by the circulation of his doctrine, he, accompanied by his disciples, privately left

the place, and made a progress into Galilee, preaching in all the public synagogues in his way, and curing all such as applied to him of their respective diseases.

In one of the cities of Galilee through which our Blessed Saviour passed, he was met by a man afflicted with a leprosy, who immediately *fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* It was the custom in Judea for the priests to banish from society those persons who were afflicted with a contagious species of leprosy. The disease, therefore, of this person was of a less pestilent kind, as he was suffered to enjoy the conversation of men. His case, however, excited the pity of the compassionate Jesus, who, with one touch, immediately healed him, but at the same time gave him a strict charge not to discover it to any one till he had presented himself before the priest in the temple at Jerusalem, and had offered a sacrifice in testimony of the great benefit he had received. But the poor man, from the great abundance of his joy, could not refrain from publishing, in every place through which he passed, the wonderful miracle which had been performed upon him. This increased our Saviour's fame to such a degree, that he thought it most advisable not to return openly into the city of Capernaum, lest the multitude of his followers should give some umbrage to the state; and therefore, having finished his progress through Galilee (which lasted near three months) he retired into a desert place, in order to refresh his body with rest, and his spirit with prayer and meditation.

After our Blessed Lord had been some time in this state of retirement, he left it, and went privately into Capernaum. It was not, however, long, before he was discovered, the consequence of which was, that such throngs of people gathered together from all parts, that the house where he was, and all the court-yard about it, were not sufficient to contain them. Within the house were many Pharisees and Doctors of the law from Jerusalem and Judea, as well as Galilee, who, led thither by curiosity, sat day after day hearing his discourses, and observing the miracles he performed, which were of so wonderful a nature as, it might have been reasonably

imagined, would have effectually removed every doubt and scruple they could have possibly entertained relative to the truth of his mission.

Among other instances our Blessed Saviour gave at this time of his Divine power, was that of restoring a man to perfect health who had long been afflicted with the palsy, and was reduced by that terrible disease to the most melancholy condition. This miserable object was carried in his bed by four persons, who being unable to enter at the front, conveyed him to the top of the house,\* and by means of ropes let him down through the trap-door into the midst of the company before Jesus, who, seeing the faith of the friends of the diseased, had immediate compassion on him, saying aloud, *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.* The haughty Scribes and Pharisees, taking offence at this expression, called out, *this man speaketh blasphemy,* for he appropriates that to himself, which is solely the property of God. They were ignorant that the person who uttered such healing words was the Son of God, and consequently had the power of forgiving the sins of the human race. But our Lord who had recourse to the most secret recesses of the heart, and was willing to shew them that he was really endued with the Spirit of God, said to them,

\* It is here to be observed, that the houses in Judea were for the most part (as they are even at this day) low built, flat roofed, and surrounded with a battlement about breast-high, according to the direction given by Moses, Deut. xxii. 8. so that to go up to the tops of their houses, the Jews had two ways; one, by a pair of stairs *within* the house, leading up to the trap-door, which lay even with the roof; and the other on the *outside* of the house, by a ladder, or rather pair of stairs, either fixed or movable, by which they could ascend to the roof when they pleased, without going into the house itself. Since, then, this was the fashion of Jewish houses, the bearers of the sick man, finding they could not get at the door by reason of the crowd, went round a private way, and coming to the stairs which stood on the outside of the house, ascended them, and gained the top; but finding the trap-door (or, as the Jews call it, *way of the roof*) shut against them, they immediately went to work, and forcing it open (which St. Mark calls *uncovering* or *breaking up the roof*) they conveyed the sick man lying on his bed into the room where our Blessed Saviour was then expounding the doctrine of the Gospel to the people.

*Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk?* This was a question that could only be resolved of the latter, it being doubtless easier to forgive sin than remit that which is inflicted as its punishment. But these incorrigible mortals held their peace; and the Blessed Jesus only added, that the miracles he was going to perform would sufficiently demonstrate, that he had not usurped what did not, in the strictest manner, belong to him. And turning himself from these bigotted teachers of Israel towards the sick of the palsy, he said unto him, *Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thine own house.* No sooner was this Divine mandate given, than the sick man was restored to his former health and strength; and, to the astonishment of all present arose, took up his bed, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. The whole congregation (the Scribes and Pharisees excepted) being convinced by their eyes of the efficacy of our Saviour's last words, were perfectly satisfied that he had also the power of forgiving sins; they then glorified God who had manifested such power on earth, and being filled with reverential fear, declared, *they had that day seen strange and wonderful things.*

After our Blessed Saviour had wrought this miracle, he repaired to the sea-side, and there preached to a prodigious concourse of people. When his discourse was ended he returned to the city, in his way to which, seeing one Matthew (otherwise named Levi) a rich publican, sitting at the door of the receipt of customs, he said unto him, *Follow me.* Matthew readily obeyed the Divine summons, immediately forsook his gainful employment, and afterwards became both an Apostle and Evangelist.

A few days after Matthew's conversion he invited our Blessed Saviour and his disciples to a feast, and, among others, all he knew of the profession which he had forsook, hoping that the latter, by hearing the heavenly conversation of Christ, might also repent, and embrace the doctrine of the Gospel. The Scribes and Pharisees, who accounted all in a manner sinners, except themselves, (but more especially the publicans) were highly offended

that so many of them should be present, and asked our Saviour's disciples, how it came to pass that their master, who set himself up for a preacher of righteousness, and a reformer of others, came to be so intimate with those lewd and lost wretches, as to sit and eat with them at the same table? Our Saviour, hearing this artful question, told the Scribes and Pharisees that the sick only had need of a physician, and desired them to reflect seriously on the prophet Hosea's declaration: *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.* The turning sinners into the paths of righteousness is far more acceptable to God than all the ceremonies of the law of Moses, so highly magnified by your fraternity, who, on many occasions, observe them at the expense of charity; adding, *I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

However satisfactory this answer might have been to an unprejudiced person, it was far from being so to the Scribes and Pharisees, who demanded of our Saviour, why his disciples wholly neglected to fast, a duty often performed both by the rulers of Israel, and the disciples of John? In reply to this the Blessed Jesus told them, it was not a proper season for the friends of the bridegroom to fast and afflict themselves while they enjoyed his company: *but (said he) the days shall come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast.* As if he had said, "I am the Bridegroom, and my church is my Bride: as long as I am here the marriage-feast continues, and my disciples are the children or friends of the bridegroom, and therefore are not to mourn, but to rejoice with me, while the time lasts: But, at my death and departure, this bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then it will be time for them to fast and to mourn." Our Lord farther told them that it would be as imprudent and preposterous a thing to impose rigorous austerities on his disciples (at a time when he was employing them to preach the gospel) as it would be to sew a piece of new cloth upon a rotten garment, which, upon any stress, would make the rent worse: or to put new wine into old leather bottles, which, upon the least fermentation, would both burst the bottles, and destroy the liquor. He then concluded his reply with an observation on the great

prevalence of custom: *None (said he) having drank old wine desireth new; for he saith, the old is better.*

These arguments, however, were far from being satisfactory to the Scribes and Pharisees, who, not thinking proper to ask any farther questions, at this time, took their leave and departed.

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## CHAP. V.

*Our Blessed Lord goes to Jerusalem, and performs a miraculous cure at the pool of Bethesda. He reproves the Jews for their superstition, in condemning the performance of necessary works on the Sabbath-day. Vindicates his disciples for eating ears of corn on the Sabbath, and himself for curing a man on the same day, of a withered hand. The Pharisees conspire against his life; upon which he retires with his disciples towards the sea-side, and, in his way, cures a great number of diseased people. He chuses his twelve apostles, and preaches to a numerous audience his excellent and well-known sermon on the Mount.*

THE feast of the Passover being near at hand, our Blessed Saviour repaired to Jerusalem, whither he had no sooner arrived than he went to the public bath or pool, called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, that is, *the house of mercy*, on account of the miracles wrought there, by the salutary effects of the water, at certain seasons. This bath was surrounded with five porches, or cloisters, in which those who frequented the place were sheltered both from the heat and the cold; and were particularly serviceable to the diseased and infirm, who crowded thither to find relief in their afflictions. These porches were at this time filled with “a great number of impotent “folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving “of the water; and whosoever then first after the troub-“ling of the water stepped in was made whole of what-“soever disease he had.” John v. 3, 4.

At what period of time this miraculous effect of the water took place cannot be determined; but it is almost

universally agreed that it could not be long before the coming of our Saviour. The gift of prophecy and of miracles had ceased among the Jews for many years; and therefore to raise in them a more ardent desire for the coming of the Messiah, and to induce them to be more circumspect in observing the signs of his coming, God was pleased to favor them with this remarkable sign at Bethesda.

The pool was situated near the gate of victims, which were figures of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, that they might be convinced God had yet a regard for the posterity of Abraham, and the worship which he himself had established; and might thus support themselves with the pleasing hope of the coming of the Messiah, the great fulfiller of the covenant, to his temple. And as this miracle of the angel descending from heaven began when the coming of the Messiah was at hand, to advise them of the speedy and near approach of that promised salvation; so Christ entered these porches, which were situated without the temple, and performed a most astonishing miracle, to indicate what was the true intent of this gift of healing, namely, to lead men to himself, who was *the fountain opened for the removal of all sin and uncleanness.*

Among the wretched objects that filled the porches of Bethesda at the time our Blessed Saviour visited it, (which was on the sabbath-day) was a poor paralytic, who had labored under his infirmity thirty-eight years. The length and greatness of this man's affliction, which were well known to the Son of God, were sufficient to excite his tender compassion, and make this long-wretched being the happy object to demonstrate that his power of healing was infinitely superior to the salutary virtue of the water. Our Blessed Lord, approaching the man whom he had singled out as the person on whom to manifest his power, asked him whether he was desirous of being made whole? A question, which must induce the man to declare publicly his melancholy case in the hearing of the multitude, and, consequently, render the miracle more conspicuous. The wretched mortal, looking, with a sorrowful countenance, up to the Blessed Redeem-

er, and understanding that he meant his being healed by the virtue of the water, answered, *Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming down, another steppeth down before me.* The compassionate Jesus, however, soon convinced him that he was not to owe his cure to the salutary nature of the waters, but to the unbounded power of the Son of God; and accordingly he said unto him, *Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.* Nor was the heavenly mandate any sooner uttered, than it took effect: the impotent man, to the astonishment of the whole multitude, *was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.*

This astonishing miracle could not fail of having a proper effect on the minds of the spectators; and the poor man carrying his bed on the sabbath-day, which the Jews considered as a profanation of that day of rest, tended greatly to spread the fame of the miracle over the whole city. Nor did the man hesitate obeying the commands of his Divine physician: he was conscious in himself that the person who had the power of working such miracles must be a prophet, and, consequently, that his injunctions could not be sinful. When, therefore, many of the Jews told him it was not lawful to carry his bed on the sabbath-day, the answer he made was, *He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk.* He that restored my strength in an instant, and removed, with a single word, a disease that had many years afflicted me, commanded me at the same time, to take up my bed and walk; and surely a person possessed of such power would not have ordered me to do any thing but what was strictly right.

A short time after our Blessed Saviour had performed this miracle, he was met in the temple by the very man he had healed; and thereupon took the opportunity of reminding him, that as he was now freed from an infirmity he had brought on himself by irregular courses, he should be careful to abstain from them for the future, lest an affliction should fall on him of a more dreadful nature. The man, overjoyed at having found the Divine physician, who had relieved him from his wretched and melancholy state, ran to the Scribes and Pharisees, and,

with a heart overflowing with gratitude, told them it was Jesus who had performed on him so astonishing a cure, imagining, no doubt, that they would rejoice at beholding the person who had performed so great a miracle. But, alas! this was far from being the case: instead of being pleased with the account they received of his wondrous mercy and kindness, they tumultuously seized him in the temple, and immediately took him before the Sanhedrim, with a design to take away his life as an open prophaner of the Sabbath.

After the Scribes and Pharisees had laid their accusation before the Sanhedrim, our Blessed Saviour vindicated himself in words to this effect: “That, since God “(from whose rest they took the observation of the Sab-“ bath) did, on that day, and all others, exercise the “works of Providence, Preservation, and Mercy, there “could be no reason why he, who was his son, and in-“ vested with full authority from him, might not employ “himself on the Sabbath, as well as any other day, in “actions of the like nature.”

But the Jewish prejudice could not be overcome by argument. Instead thereof it only increased their malice, and they now accused him not only of being a Sabbath-breaker, but likewise a blasphemer, in having asserted that he was the Son of God, and co-equal with him. In answer to this, our Blessed Saviour told them that he acted agreeable to the will of God, and did whatsoever he saw done by his Father. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth; and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.* John v. 19, 20.

Though nothing could more fully evince the character of our Lord than these assertions, yet he did not require his hearers to believe them merely on his own testimony: he appealed to that of John, who was a burning and a shining light, and in whom, for a time, they greatly rejoiced, because the prophetic spirit, which had so long ceased in Israel, was revived in that holy man. Nay, he

appealed to a much greater testimony than that of John, even that of the God of Jacob himself who was continually bearing witness to the truth of his mission, by the many miracles he empowered him to perform; and who, at his baptism, had, in an audible voice from the courts of heaven, declared him to be his beloved Son; a voice which multitudes of people had heard, and, probably, even some of those to whom he was then speaking.

The Jews had long expected the coming of the Messiah; but they had expected him to appear as a temporal prince, who would not only restore the former lustre of the throne of David, but infinitely augment it, and even place it over all the kingdoms of the earth. And hence they were unwilling to acknowledge Jesus for the Messiah, notwithstanding the proofs of his mission were so undeniable, because they must, in so doing, have abandoned all their grand ideas of a temporal kingdom. Our Blessed Saviour, therefore, desired them to consult their own scriptures, particularly the writings of the prophets, where they would find the character of the Messiah so visibly displayed, as would convince them they were all fulfilled in his person. He likewise gave them to understand, that the proofs of his mission were as full and clear as possible, being supported by the actions of his life, which, in all things, agreed with his doctrine: for he never sought the applause of men, or affected secular power, but was always inoffensive and humble, though he well knew that these virtues made him appear little in the eyes of those who had no idea of a spiritual kingdom, but expected the Messiah would appear in all the pomp of secular authority. He concluded by telling them, that he himself would not be their accuser to the God of Jacob for their infidelity, but that Moses, their great legislator, in whom they trusted, would join in that unwelcome office; for by denying him to be the Messiah, they denied the writings of that prophet. *Had ye (said he) believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me; but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?*

What the result of our Saviour's defence before the Sanhedrim was we cannot tell, because none of the

Evangelists have acquainted us; but the sequel of the history informs us, that it no ways abated the malice of the Pharisees; for, on the very next sabbath-day, upon his disciples plucking a few ears of corn as they passed through the fields, and (from mere hunger) eating the grain after rubbing it out in their hands, they began again to clamor against this violation of the Sabbath. But our Blessed Saviour soon convinced them of their error, by shewing, both from the example of David, and the constant practice of their own priests (who never omitted the necessary works of the temple on the sabbath-day) "that works of necessity were sometimes permitted, "even to the breach of a ritual command: that acts of "mercy were the best and most acceptable method of "serving God upon any day whatever: that it was invert-  
ing the order of things to suppose, that *man was made for the Sabbath, and not the Sabbath for the benefit of man*; but, even if it were not so, that he, as the "Son of God, and, consequently *Lord of the Sabbath*, had a power to dispense with the *ceremonial* laws con-  
cerning it." Thus did our Blessed Saviour prove, that works of mercy should not be left undone, though attended with the violation of some of the Mosaic institutions.

A short time after our Blessed Saviour had this dispute with the Scribes and Pharisees, he went, on the sabbath-day, into one of the synagogues at Jerusalem; and while he was preaching to the people, there stood before him a man whose right hand was shrunk and withered. The Pharisees, observing the compassionate Jesus advancing towards the man, did not doubt but he would attempt to heal him; and, therefore, watched him attentively, that they might have something to accuse him with to the people. The Saviour of the world was not unapprized of their malicious intentions. He knew their designs were to exercise every art they were masters of in order to put him to death. But, defying their impotent power, he bade the man stand up in the midst of the assembly as an object of public commiseration, and, turning himself to these superstitious observers of the sabbath, put the question to them, whether *they thought it lawful, on the sabbath-day, to do good, or ill; actually to save life, or*

*negligently to destroy it? As if he had said, “ Is it not more lawful for me, on the sabbath-day, to save men’s lives, than for you to seek my death, without the least provocation?”*

The force of this question was so great, and the arguments so undeniable, that they could not make any answer, and therefore pretended not to understand his meaning. On this our Blessed Saviour made use of an argument which stupidity itself could not fail of understanding, and which these hypocritical sophists, with all their arts, were unable to answer. *What man (said the Blessed Jesus) shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath-day.* Matt. xii, 11, 12.

In answer to the former question the Pharisees only said that they did not understand our Lord’s meaning, but the last argument effectually silenced them, though they were determined not to be convinced. This unconquerable obstinacy greatly displeased the humble Jesus, who, looking at them with some marks of anger for their perverseness, commanded the poor man to stretch out his hand, which he had no sooner done, than it was restored whole as the other.—This astonishing miracle performed in the midst of a congregation, many of whom, doubtless, knew the man while he labored under his infirmity, and in the presence of some of his most inveterate enemies, must certainly have had a great effect on the minds of the people, more especially as they saw that it had effectually silenced the Pharisees, who had not any thing to offer either against the miracle itself, or the reasonings and power of him who had performed it.

But though the Pharisees were silenced by our Blessed Saviour’s arguments, and astonished at his miracles, yet they were so far from abandoning their malicious intentions, that they joined in consultation with the Herodians (though a sect quite opposite to them in principles) how they might take away his life, thinking, that if he continued his preaching, and working of miracles, the people

would wholly follow him, and their own power would soon become not only insignificant, but also contemptible.

The Blessed Jesus, knowing the evil intentions of his enemies, left Jerusalem, and retired, with his disciples, towards the sea-side; but which way soever he went, his name was now grown so famous, that prodigious multitudes, not only out of Galilee, but also from Jerusalem, from the provinces of Judea and Idumæa, and all the country about Jordan, as far as the Mediterranean Sea, to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, hearing of his miraculous power in curing all diseases either with a word from his mouth, the touch of his hand, or barely the touch of his garment, came with their sick and possessed for help, and, as fast as they came, he cured them. Nay, to such a degree was his fame increased, that the very unclean spirits publicly confessed that he was the Son of God, till upon all occasions, they were restrained, and compelled to silence.

Our Blessed Saviour, finding great inconvenience in the numbers of people that came to him for relief, retired to a solitary mountain, where he continued all night in prayer, intending, the next morning, to make an election of some particular persons, who, after his departure out of this world, were to be his vicegerents upon earth, founders of his church, and propagators of his gospel.

Having spent the whole night in this pious exercise, our Blessed Redeemer lost no time in putting his beneficent design into execution; for no sooner had darkness withdrawn her sable veil, and the blushing rays of the morning adorned the chambers of the east, than the benevolent Redeemer of mankind called his disciples to him, and chose twelve, whom he ordered to be constantly with him, that they might learn from his own mouth the doctrines they were to preach to the whole world; that they might *see his glory*, the transcendant glory of the virtues which adorned his human life; and that they might be witnesses of all the wondrous works he should perform during his residence on earth, and by which his mission from the courts of heaven was to be fully demonstrated.

The names of the twelve disciples whom our Blessed Saviour selected from the rest were as follow:

Simon (who is likewise named Peter) and Andrew.

James (commonly called the Great) and John.

Philip and Bartholomew.

Matthew and Thomas.

James (commonly called the Less) and Simon the Canaanite.

Judas, the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, who afterwards so justly deserved the title of Traitor.

After our Blessed Saviour had made choice of these twelve disciples (to whom he gave the name of Apostles) perceiving the multitude gather round him, he called them nearer to him than the rest, and then preached to the people that most excellent discourse, commonly called the *Sermon on the Mount*; the substance of which is to the following effect.

The subject with which our Blessed Lord opened this inimitable discourse was that of happiness. He told his hearers that the highest happiness of men consisted in the graces of the Spirit, because, from the possession and exercise of them, the purest pleasures resulted; pleasures which satisfied even the Almighty himself. The rich, the great, the proud (said the great Redeemer of Mankind) are not happy, as you imagine; they are always wishing for what they cannot obtain; and their disappointments are poisoned arrows festering in their breasts. On the contrary, the poor in spirit, who discharge the duties of their station, whatever it be, with virtue and integrity, are the truly happy: they bless the Omnipotent hand that guards them from all dangers in this humble vale of sorrow and distress; and though they are excluded from enjoying an earthly kingdom, yet they have a much better reserved for them, eternal in the heavens. *Blessed are the poor in Spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Nor are the jocose and flighty to be placed among the happy race of mortals; but on the contrary the afflicted, provided they rightly improve their afflictions; that is, if they are excited by them to mourn for their sins, and forsake their wicked courses. In this case, they shall here enjoy the consolation that their sins will be forgiven, and, after passing through the valley of the shadow of death, the fruition of eternal joys. *Blessed are they that mourn;*

*for they shall be comforted.* The truth of this heavenly aphorism is very evident; for what has so great a power to turn the feet of the sons of men into the path of virtue as affliction? Has not affliction a natural tendency to give mankind a distaste to the pleasures of the world, and convince them they are nothing more than *vanity and vexation of spirit?* Affliction awakens the most serious thoughts in the mind; composes it into a grave and settled frame, very different from that levity which is occasioned by prosperity; gives it a fellow-feeling of the sorrows of others; and makes it thoroughly sensible of the danger of departing from God, the source and centre of all its joys.

Nor are the passionate happy, but, on the contrary, the meek and humble: those who have subdued their tempers can patiently bear provocation, and are strangers to that destructive passion, envy. The meek shall inherit the choicest blessings of this life; for, indeed, they principally flow from that benevolent and heavenly temper of mind. Meekness consists in the moderation of our passions, which renders a person lovely in the eyes of his fellow-mortals, and thence he possesses their sincere esteem; while the passionate and envious man is considered as despicable, though adorned with the robe of honor, and dignified with the most ample possessions. *Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.*

Men, through vanity and blindness, consider those happy who enjoy the pleasures of this life by rioting in luxury and excess. But this is far from being the case: on the contrary, those are the truly happy who have the most vehement desire of treading in the paths of virtue and religion. Such, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, shall obtain every thing they desire: they shall be happy here in the practice of righteousness, and, after this transitory life is ended, shall be received into the blissful mansions of the heavenly Canaan. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.*

The forgiveness of injuries, not the resenting them, is a spring of happiness. The man who is of a humane and beneficent disposition will rejoice when he can perform a

benevolent action to his fellow-mortal in distress. The merciful shall see themselves recompensed even in this life: for they shall find, after many days, the bread they have cast upon the waters of affliction returned tenfold. *Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.*

The tyrants and conquerors of the earth, who disturb the peace of mankind, are far from happy; it falls to the share of those who love their fellow-creatures, and do all in their power to promote peace and harmony among the children of men. For they imitate the greatest perfection of their Maker; and therefore shall be acknowledged by him for his children, and participate of his happiness. *Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

Nor does happiness consist in liberty and ease, if those privileges are purchased at the expence of virtue; it is the consequence of a persecution for conscience sake; for those who have suffered the severest trial that human nature is capable of sustaining, shall be honored with the highest rewards in the blissful mansions of eternity. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Contentment is not to be expected from the applause of the world; but will be the portion of those who are falsely reviled for their righteousness, and share in the affronts offered to God himself; for by these persecutions the prophets of all ages have been distinguished. *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.* Matth. v. 11, 12.

Having thus shewn in what true happiness consisted, our Blessed Lord addressed himself to his new chosen Apostles, and explained to them their duty as teachers appointed by him to conduct others in the paths that lead to eternal felicity. He enjoined them, in the most forcible manner, to be diligent in dispensing the salutary influence of their doctrine and example, that their hearers might honor and praise the great Creator of heaven and earth, who had been so kind to the children of men. And, in

consideration of the frailties of human nature, he taught them that excellent form of prayer, which has been used by Christians of all denominations to the present time.

*Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.* This is emphatically called the Lord's Prayer, because delivered by the Son of God himself: and therefore we should do well to understand it thoroughly, that when we enter the temple of the Lord, and address him in solemn prayer, we may have hopes that he will grant our petitions. And, above all, not to harbor in our breasts the least envy or malice against any who may have offended us; for it is only on a supposition that we have forgiven others, that we have the least reason to hope for obtaining forgiveness ourselves.

The Divine Preacher now proceeded to consider the great duty of fasting, in which he directed them not to follow the hypocrites in clothing themselves in the melancholy weeds of sorrow; but to be chiefly solicitous to appear before God as those who truly fasted. He told them that in this case his heavenly Father, who was acquainted with even the most secret thoughts of their hearts, would openly bestow on them the rewards of a true penitent, whose mortification, contrition, and humility, he could discern without the external appearances of sorrow and repentance. It must, however, be remembered, that our Blessed Saviour is here speaking of private fasting, and to this alone his directions are to be applied; for when we are called upon to mourn on account of public sins and calamities, it ought to be performed in the most public manner.

The next virtue inculcated by the Blessed Jesus was heavenly-mindedness, which he recommended with a peculiar earnestness, because the Jewish doctors were, in general, strangers to it. This virtue our Lord most beautifully displayed, by shewing the deformity of its opposite, Covetousness, which has only perishable things for its object. *Lay not up for yourselves* (says he) *treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will*

*your heart be also.* More solid happiness will accrue from depositing your treasures in the chambers of the courts of heaven, than in this earthly habitation of clay, where they are subject to a thousand disasters; and even, at best, can remain only for a short series of years; whereas, those laid up in the heavenly Jerusalem are permanent, subject to no accident, and will purchase *a crown of glory that fadeth not away eternal in the heavens.* Nor let any man be so foolish as to think he can place his heart on the happiness of a future life, when his treasures are deposited in this vale of misery; for wherever are laid up the goods which his soul desireth, there his heart and affections will also remain. If, therefore, ye are desirous of sharing in the joys of eternity, you must lay up your treasures in the mansions of my father's kingdom.

But, lest they should imagine it was possible to be both heavenly-minded and covetous at the same time, our Lord assured them that such a thought would be full as absurd, as to imagine a person could, at the same time, serve, and divide his affections equally, between two masters of opposite characters. *No man* (said he) *can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.* *He cannot serve God and Mammon.* To strengthen this doctrine he added a few plain and evident instances of the power, perfection, and extent of God's Providence, in which his tender care for the least and weakest of his creatures shines with a remarkable lustre, demonstrating the wise and parental attention of the Deity to all the creatures of his hand. He desired them to observe the birds of the air, the lilies, and even the grass of the field; leading his most illiterate hearers to form a more elevated and extensive idea of the divine government than the philosophers had attained, who, though they allowed, in general, that the world was under the government of God, had very confused notions of his providence with regard to every individual creature and action. He taught them that the Almighty Father of the whole was the guardian and protector of every being in the universe; that every action was subject to his will, and nothing left to the blind determination of chance.

Our Blessed Lord next proceeded to point out to them the little reason there was for being anxious about the necessities of this life, more especially if they directed their conduct agreeable to the Divine will. *Behold* (says he) *the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feedeth them. Are not ye much better than they?* Are not the fowls of the air, who have no concern for future wants, fed and nourished by the beneficent hand of your heavenly Father? And can ye doubt that man, whom he hath made lord of the whole earth, shall be destitute of his tender care? *And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.* Consider the lilies that so finely adorn the adjacent fields: how beautiful their form! how lively their colors! how fragrant the scent that comes from them! Even Solomon himself, dressed in his splendid robes of royalty, was but meanly adorned in comparison of these. And surely, if Omnipotence thus beautifully clothes the promiscuous productions of the fields, whose duration is remarkably transient and uncertain, you have not the least reason to doubt, but he will bless your honest endeavors, and send you proper clothing. Are ye not of infinitely more value than they? Be ye anxiously solicitous to obtain the happiness of the life to come; and all the good things of this life shall, in the course of Divine Providence, be added unto you.

Having said this, our Blessed Lord next proceeded to speak against all rash and uncharitable censure, either with regard to the characters of others in general, or of their actions in particular, lest by so doing, both God and man should resent the injury. *Judge not* (said he) *that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measures ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

If you judge charitably, making proper allowances for the frailties of human nature, and are ready to pity and pardon their faults, both your heavenly Father and your fellow-creatures will deal with you after the same manner.

But if you always put the harshest construction on every action, and are not touched with a feeling of your brother's infirmities, nor shew any mercy in the opinion you form of his character and actions, no mercy will be shewn you either from Omnipotence, or the sons of men. God will inflict on you the punishments you deserve, and the world will be sure to retaliate the injury.

Our Blessed Lord having represented to the multitude the great principles of the Christian religion, next directed his discourse in a particular manner, to his apostles, who were to be the teachers of the Gospel of peace. He was apprehensive they might think that the precepts he laid down were not to be attained by human nature, and therefore directed them to apply to God for the assistance of his Spirit, together with all the other blessings necessary to their salvation. He assured them, that if they asked with earnestness and perseverance, the Father of mercies would not fail to answer their requests, and give them whatever they desired; adding the noblest precept of morality that was ever delivered by any teacher. *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do you even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.*

Having laid down several other precepts and instructions, as well for the benefit of his teachers in particular, as the multitude in general, our Lord concluded his discourse with this admonition: *That whoever heard, believed, and practised the things contained in his discourses, would, in the end, be like a wise builder, who laid the foundation of his house upon a rock, not to be affected by wind or weather; but that he, who heard and practised them not, would be like a man, who built his house upon the sand, soon to be blown down by the winds, and washed away by the floods.*

The grace and majesty with which our Blessed Saviour delivered this discourse gained him universal applause, and the people readily declared the great sense they had of the difference between such Divine discourses, and the common harangues of their ordinary teachers the Scribes. And to confirm his doctrine by the testimony of miracles, our Blessed Lord, on his descent from the mount, healed

a leper, and then remitted him to the priest to make his oblation in acknowledgment of the great benefit he had received at his hands.

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## CHAP. VI.

*Our Blessed Lord goes to Capernaum, and heals the servant of a Roman Centurion. He raises to life a widow's son. Passes great encomiums on John the Baptist. Absolves a woman from her sins. Cures a demoniac at Capernaum, and reprobates the Pharisees. Instructs the multitude in parables. Cures a woman of a bloody flux. Restores the daughter of Jairus to life, and performs other great miracles. Goes to Nazareth, and is ill treated by the people. Sends out his Apostles, and gives them their commission. The death of John the Baptist.*

AFTER our Blessed Saviour had preached his sermon on the mount, he repaired to Capernaum, attended by his disciples and a prodigious concourse of people. As he entered the city he was met by a Roman centurion, who represented to him, in the most pathetic manner, the deplorable condition of his servant, who was grievously afflicted with the palsy. The compassionate Redeemer of mankind listened attentively to his complaint, and immediately told him, he would come and heal him. The centurion thought this too great a condescension to one who was not of the seed of Jacob, and therefore told him, that he did not mean he should give himself the trouble of going to his house, as that was a condescension he had not the least reason to expect, besides which he was perfectly satisfied that his word alone would be sufficient to effect the cure, the removal of diseases being as much subject to his command as the Roman soldiers were to him.

Our Blessed Lord was greatly surprized at the distinguished confidence of his humble suppliant; not that he was a stranger to his faith, or the basis on which it

was built; he well knew the thoughts of his heart before he uttered his request; but he was filled with admiration at the exalted idea the Roman officer had conceived of his power, and to make this faith the more conspicuous, he gave it the praise it so justly deserved. *Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.*

This exalted faith induced the Blessed Jesus to declare the gracious intentions of his Almighty Father with regard to the Gentiles, namely, that he would as readily accept their faith as that of the Jews, and place them with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while those who boasted of being the offspring of these great patriarchs, but fell far short of many others in their faith, should be excluded from the blissful seats of paradise. *And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Having thus addressed the multitude, the Blessed Jesus turned himself to the centurion, and said, *Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.* Though the idea thou hast conceived of my power is just, though remarkably great, as a reward for thy faith, I grant the petition thou hast asked. And the Evangelists add, *his servant was healed in the self-same hour.*

After our Blessed Saviour had performed this miracle, he went to Nain, a town situated about two miles south of Mount Tabor, attended by many of his disciples, and a great multitude of people. Just as they were about entering the town, *Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.* The poor woman, both by her words and actions, expressed the highest sense of her affliction, turning a deaf ear to such of her friends as endeavored to mitigate her grief by the force of argument. She was now deprived of her son, her only son, in the flower of his youth, who might have lessened his mother's toils, and been to her in the place of a husband; of that husband she had long since lost, and whose loss was supportable only through the comfort of this child, the surviving image of his departed

father, the balm of all her grief, the hope of her afflicted soul. Who now shall administer consolation to this solitary widow, to this lonely parent, bereaved of her husband, deprived of her child? What misery can be more complicated? What can be more natural, than that she should *refuse to be comforted*, that she should *go down to the grave, with mourning*, and visit the chambers of death, the residence of the beloved remains of her husband, and her son, with sorrow?

Towards the receptacle of mortality, that dreary waste of forgetfulness, the mournful funeral was now with slow and solemn pomp advancing, when the compassionate Redeemer of mankind met the melancholy procession, composed of a long train of her weeping neighbors and relations, who pitied her distress, sympathized with her in this great affliction, and were melted with compassion at her deplorable circumstances; but sighs and tears were all they had to offer, relief could not be expected from a human being; their commiseration, though grateful to her oppressed soul, could neither restore the husband, nor the son; submission and patience were the only lessons they could preach, or this afflicted daughter of Israel could learn.

But though man was unable to relieve the distresses of this disconsolate widow, the Saviour of the world, who beheld the melancholy procession, was both able and willing to do it. There was no need of a powerful solicitor, to implore assistance from the Son of God, his own compassion was abundantly sufficient: *When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her*; he both sought the patient, and offered the cure, unexpectedly. *Weep not*, said the Blessed Jesus to this afflicted woman! Alas! it had been wholly in vain to bid her refrain from tears, who had lost her only child, the sole comfort of her age, without administering the balm of comfort to heal her broken spirit. This our compassionate Redeemer well knew; and, therefore, immediately advancing towards the corpse, *he touched the bier*; the pomp of the funeral was instantly stopped, silence closed every mouth, and expectation filled the breast of every spectator. But this deep suspense did not long continue; that glorious voice,

that shall one day call our dead bodies from the grave, filled their ears with these remarkable words: *Young man, I say unto thee, arise.* Nor was this powerful command uttered without its effect. *He spake, and it was done;* he called with authority, and immediately *he that was dead sat up, and began to speak; and he restored him to his mother.* He did not shew him around to the multitude; but, by a singular act of modesty and humanity, delivered him to his late afflicted, now astonished and rejoicing, mother, to intimate, that, in compassion to her great distress, he had wrought this stupendous miracle.

The numerous spectators, who saw this miracle performed, were so astonished, that they immediately glorified God on the occasion, and publicly declared, that *a mighty prophet was sprung up among them; and that God had visited his people.*

We have taken notice, in a foregoing chapter, that Herod Antipas, being incensed at the honest freedom of John the Baptist in reproving his adulterous commerce with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, had cast him into prison; and in this state he still continued, though his disciples were suffered to visit and converse with him. In one of these visits they had given him an account of our Saviour's having elected twelve apostles to preach the Gospel, as also of the great miracles he had performed, particularly that of his having raised to life the son of the widow of Nain.

In consequence of this intelligence, the Baptist dispatched two of his disciples to our Lord, to ask him this important question: *Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?* When the two disciples came to the place where our Lord was, they found him amidst a prodigious number of people, employed in working miracles, curing *the deaf, the blind, the lame, &c.* Having told him from whence they came, and asked the question as directed by their master, the Blessed Jesus, instead of giving a direct reply, bade them return, and inform John of what they had seen. *Go your way (said he) and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached.* Go tell

your master that the very miracles the prophet Isaiah so long since foretold should be wrought by the Messiah, you have yourselves seen performed.

It is certain the Baptist well knew who Jesus was, and consequently, he did not send his disciples to ask this question in order to solve any doubt in his mind concerning the Saviour of the world. But it may be asked, what else could induce him to ask such a question? To this it may be answered by some, that he had no other intention than to satisfy his disciples that Jesus was the Messiah so long expected among the Jews, and to engage them to follow a more perfect master, especially as he himself was now about leaving the world.

This solution is, doubtless, in a great measure, right, but to remove the whole difficulty, it will be necessary to pay attention to the following observations. The Baptist, on hearing that Jesus had chosen twelve illiterate people to preach the gospel, and furnished them with powers to perform so great a work, while he was suffered to remain in prison, began to think himself neglected, and his services disregarded. He therefore sent two of his disciples to ask him this question, *Art thou he that should come; or, look we for another?* Not that he entertained any doubt of his being the true Messiah, intending nothing more, by making the demand, but to complain, that Jesus had not acted the part which he thought the Messiah should have done; and that this was really the case seems sufficiently plain from the caution added by our Blessed Saviour himself. *And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.* As if he had said, "When you have informed your master of what you have seen and heard, tell him that he would do well not to be offended, either at the choice I have made of the Apostles, or that no miracle has been wrought for his release.

From this circumstance it appears evident, that impatience on account of his long confinement, was the true reason for the Baptist's sending his disciples with this question to Jesus; and that the purport of the answer was, to teach him submission in a case that was highly above the reach of his judgment.

But, lest the people, from what they had heard, should imbibe any opinion prejudicial to the character of the Baptist, our Blessed Saviour thought proper to place it in a proper point of view. He praised his invincible courage and constancy, which was not to be overcome, or like a reed to be shaken by the winds. He described his austere and mortified life: for he was not clothed in fine raiment, like those who wait in the palaces of kings: adding, that he was a prophet, nay, more than a prophet. *For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*

Having said thus much in favor of the Baptist, our Blessed Saviour next proceeded to upbraid the people of the several cities, where his most wonderful works had been wrought, for their perverseness and impenitence. Though they had heard him preach many awakening sermons, and seen him perform the most astonishing miracles, yet so great was their obstinacy, that they persisted in their wickedness notwithstanding all he had done to convert them from the evil of their ways. In consequence of this their great impiety, our Blessed Saviour denounced on them the following judgment: “Wo unto thee, Chorazin! Wo, unto thee Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which have been done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented, long ago, in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee.”

After our Blessed Saviour had denounced these judgments on the cities which had neglected to profit by his mighty works, he addressed himself to the multitude, and having declared that the mysteries of the Gospel Revelation were better adapted to the humble and modest, than to the proud and worldly-wise, he concluded

his discourse with the following heavenly invitation: *Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

Here is an invitation that surely cannot fail engaging the most serious attention of every reader; if the greatness of the speaker, the importance of his request, or the affectionate manner of his address, have any weight, have any force, to affect the soul. The person who invites is Christ, the son of the Most High; he into whose hands, as our mediator, all things are delivered of his Father: he unto whom all power is given in heaven; even he who shall come in the clouds of heaven to judge all the inhabitants of the earth. It is this wonderful person who speaks, declaring at once his great willingness to receive, and his own supreme power to give, that rest and peace to the soul, which is the pursuit of every son of Adam, and is the gift only of the religion of Christ.

That nothing may prevent our accepting this benevolent offer, the Great Redeemer of mankind invites, with the most affectionate tenderness, not the great, the powerful, the merry-hearted, and the sons of joy, but *all that labor and are heavy laden*, all that are under affliction and the bondage of sin; and those he calls, not with a desire to expose their miseries, to punish their offences, or to display his own glory, but solely with a view to render them happy. *Come, says he, come to me; I entreat you to come; I will give you rest.* I myself will release you from your heavy burdens: come to me, and you shall find perfect rest and peace to your souls. *Take my yoke upon you, for it is easy; and my burden, for it is light.*

Is it possible that creatures of a day like us; can it be possible that "mortals who have but a short time to live, and are full of misery, who come up and are cut down like a flower, who flee as it were like a shadow, and never continue in one stay;" can it be possible that they should reject and disregard a call, so full of love, so full of affection, of so much infinite consequence, of such unspeakable advantage? Can they reject the love of him

who gave them rest, took their burthens upon himself; and who, after all his sufferings, desires them only to *come*, to exchange their own oppressive burthens for his lightsome yoke; to abandon their sins and sorrows, and become his disciples; to love and obey him, and thence to be happy? Can we possibly despise such grace, refuse such offers, fly from such rest, thus freely proposed to us, and prefer the heavy yoke of sin, and the cruel pangs of a wounded conscience?

No sooner had our Lord finished his discourse, than a rich Pharisee, named Simon, went up to him, and desired he would *eat with him*. The Blessed Jesus, accepted the invitation, and, accompanying Simon to his house, after the necessary preparations were made, sat down to refresh himself. He had not been long at the table, when a woman, who had left the paths of vice for those of virtue, placed herself behind him, and, from a deep conviction of her former crimes, and the obligation she owed the Saviour of mankind for bringing her to a sense of them, shed such quantities of tears, that they trickled down on his feet, which, according to the custom of the country, were then bare. But observing that her tears had wet the feet of her beloved instructor, she immediately wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed them with the most ardent affection, and then anointed them with precious ointment.

Simon (who still retained something of the censorious spirit of his sect) seeing the woman thus busy in expressing her love and veneration for the Blessed Jesus, began to think within himself that he could not possibly be a prophet; otherwise, he would have known the woman to be infamous, and, consequently, not suffered her to touch him. But our Lord, who well knew Simon's thoughts, in order to convince him that he was a prophet, and that he was acquainted not only with the characters of men, but knew even the secret thoughts of their hearts, immediately conversed with him on the very subject he had been revolving in his mind. He did not, indeed, expose him before the company, by relating what he had thought in secret, but with remarkable delicacy pointed out to him, by way of parable, the unreasonableness of his thoughts.

" Simon (said he) I have something to say to thee. " There was a certain creditor who had two debtors : the " one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And " when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them " both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him " most?" Simon answered, " I suppose that he to whom " he forgave most." To this our Blessed Lord replied, *thou hast rightly judged.* He then applied this short parable to the subject of the woman, on which the Pharisee had so unjustly reasoned with himself, and commended the conduct of the woman in the following words : " Simon (said he) seest thou this woman : I entered into " thine house, and thou gavest me no water for my feet ; " but she hath washed my feet with her tears, and wiped " them with the hair of her head. Thou gavest me no " kiss ; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath " not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou " didst not anoint ; but this woman hath anointed my feet " with ointment."

Our Blessed Lord, having thus commended the conduct of the woman to the company, and rebuked, with great delicacy, the unjust suspicions of Simon, turned himself to the woman, and, in the kindest manner, assured her, that *her sins were forgiven.* But the power he took upon himself of forgiving sins greatly offended the principal part of the company, who, not being acquainted with his divinity, considered the expression he had last used as derogatory to the honor of God. The Blessed Jesus, however, contemned their malicious murmurs, and repeated his assurance to the woman that her sins were forgiven, telling her that her faith had saved her, and bidding her *depart in peace.*

Soon after this our Blessed Lord took a tour into different parts of Galilee, accompanied by his apostles, and several devout women, whom he had cured of sundry diseases, and who, in gratitude for the benefits received, attended his person, and, out of their own substance, administered to his earthly necessities. After an excursion of some months, our Lord returned to Capernaum, which was no sooner known than such multitudes of people resorted to him, that neither he, nor his disciples, could

find time to eat. But *his meat was to do the will of God*, by healing the sick, and relieving the distressed. Among the great number of afflicted brought before him at this time, was a *dumb man possessed with a devil*. So moving a sight could not fail of attracting particular and compassionate notice from the Saviour of the world. He immediately cast out the evil spirit, on which the dumb man recovered the use of his speech, and spoke in a very rational manner to the multitude, who in general, declared, that such wonderful works could be done by no other person than the promised Messiah.

The Pharisees, however, and Doctors of the law, who came from Jerusalem, gave another turn to this miracle. They ascribed it to be the power of the Devil, even to Beelzebub, the chief of devils. So blasphemous a declaration could not be supposed to escape a proper censure from the Son of God, who, addressing himself both to them and the people, demonstrated the absurdity of the calumny, by an argument drawn from the common affairs of life. *Every kingdom (says he) divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself, shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: how then shall his kingdom stand?* Your calumny is malicious and absurd: it is malicious because your own consciences are convinced of its falsehood; and it is absurd, because Satan cannot assist me in preaching the kingdom of God, and destroying all the works of darkness, unless he be divided against himself, and destroy all the works of his own kingdom. Adding, *And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.* Ye did not impute the miracles of your prophets to Beelzebub, but received them as from the messengers of God. But ye reject me, who work greater and more numerous miracles than they, and impute them to the power of evil spirits. These prophets, therefore, shall be your judges: they shall condemn you. But as it is true that I cast out devils by the assistance of the Almighty, it follows that the kingdom of God, so long expected, is

going to be established. The time is coming, when the Son of Man shall be raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Ghost, the gifts of miracles showered down on all believers, and the nature of the Messiah's kingdom more fully explained, in order to remove the foundation of your prejudice, namely, the expectation of a temporal prince. But if you then shut your eyes, and speak evil against the Holy Ghost, by affirming that his gifts and miracles proceed from the prince of darkness, it shall never be forgiven you: because it is a sin you cannot possibly repent of, as no greater means of conviction will be offered; but you shall be punished for it, both in this world, and that which is to come. "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come."

But notwithstanding these arguments and threats, the perverse Pharisees, instead of being affected by them, continued obstinate, and demanded of our Saviour some new sign or miracle in evidence of his mission. But as he had given them a sufficient number of these already, he told them they should have no other sign than what they every day beheld, namely, the sign of the prophet Jonas, who, by living three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, was a type of the Son of God, who should continue three days and three nights in the chambers of the tomb. He then told them, that the Ninevites repented at the preaching of the prophet Jonas, and the queen of Sheba undertook a long journey to Jerusalem to hear the wisdom of Solomon; but that they refused to attend to the doctrines of an infinitely greater prophet than Jonas, or listen to one much wiser than Solomon.

While our Blessed Lord was continuing his discourse to the perverse Pharisees, word was brought him that his mother and kindred were at the door, desiring to speak with him. In all probability they were fearful the continued fatigue of preaching would injure his health, and

were therefore desirous of taking him with them that he might refresh himself. But our Lord, being displeased with their unseasonable interruption, took occasion to inform the people, that all worldly relations were of less consideration than the ties of duty and religion; that the names of mother and brother, which were sanctified by the laws of God and nature, were made more sacred when a spiritual kindred intervened; and then, turning to his disciples, he declared, that those were his truest relations, who heard the word of God, and practised it. *Behold (said he) my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*

On the very same day our Blessed Lord left the house where he usually abode, and, for the greater convenience of teaching the people, repaired to the sea-shore. He was immediately followed by such prodigious multitudes that, in order to avoid interruption, he went on board a vessel, and from thence taught them in parables (an usual way of instruction among the Jews) thereby to engage the attention, and accommodate himself to the different capacities of those that heard him.

Our Blessed Lord began his discourse with the parable of the *Sower*, in which he represented the different successes of the Gospel, according to the different dispositions of its hearers. He then proceeded to the parable of the *Tares* growing with the *good seed*, in which he pointed out the mixture of the wicked and godly under the same profession of Christianity. By the grain of *Mustard-seed* and the little piece of *leaven*, he represented the wonderful increase and propagation of the Gospel from small beginnings. By the *treasure* in the field, and the *pearl* of great price, he showed the great benefits that would accrue to the profession of religion; but told them that the profession of it would include a *mixed* multitude, and be, therefore, like a *net* cast into the sea, which incloses fishes of all kinds, some good and some bad, the *good* to be preserved, but the *bad* cast away.

This is the explication which our Lord gave his disciples of these several parables; and when, by their answers, he perceived that they understood them all, he

concluded his discourse with a simile to this effect: "That every Gospel-Teacher ought to resemble a well-furnished house-holder, who brings all things out of his repository, both old and new, according to the occasions of his guests."

After our Blessed Saviour had thus preached to the people by way of parable, he formed the resolution of crossing the Lake, or Sea of Galilee, and for that purpose gave orders to his disciples to prepare a vessel for him. A certain Scribe, on hearing these orders given, offered to attend him wherever he went; but when he understood that no temporal emolument was to be obtained by such attendance, he retracted from his engagement. One of his disciples also, at the same time, desired leave to bury his father before he went with him; upon which our Lord commanded him to follow him, and to leave such offices to the children of this world. Another of his disciples asked permission, before he went, to take leave of his family, and dispose of his effects; upon which our Lord told him, "that whoever laid his hand on the plough, and looked back, was not fit for the kingdom of God."

Every necessary preparation being made for the voyage, the disciples took on board their master, and departed for the other side of the lake; soon after which the Blessed Jesus, being fatigued with the labors of the day, sat himself down at the stern of the ship, and fell asleep. The weather, which, at their embarking, and for some time after, was calm and serene, suddenly changed. A terrible storm came on, and the rising waves dashed impetuously against the ship, threatening every moment to bury them all in the bowels of the deep. The darkness of the night increased the horrors of the tempest. At one time they were carried on the top of a mountainous wave, and seemed to touch the skies; then plunged, as it were, to the bottom of the deep, while the foaming billows roared horribly above them. In vain did the disciples exert their utmost strength; the storm continued to increase, and baffled all the efforts of human beings. The waves broke over the ship, the waters rushed in, and she began to sink. All hopes of escaping were

vanished; despair seized every individual, and they were on the brink of perishing, when they ran to Jesus, and cried out, *Master, Master, we perish!* Their vehement cries roused him from his sleep; upon which, raising his hand, which had been so often employed in acts of mercy and benevolence, he, with a stern and awful voice, rebuked the boisterous element. The raging sea instantly obeyed his command. The aerial torrent stopped short in its impetuous course, and became silent as the grave, while the mountainous waves sunk at once into their beds, and the surface of the deep became as smooth as polished marble.

The disciples had before seen their great master perform many miracles, and therefore had abundant reason to rely wholly on his power and goodness. They should have considered that he who could, by his word, restore the sick, and bring the inhabitants of the sea to their nets, could, with the same ease, have supported them on the surface of the deep, had the ship sunk beneath them, and carried them safe to the place whither they were going. But they seemed to have forgotten the power of their master; and when human assistance failed, to have abandoned all hopes of life. Well, therefore, might the Blessed Jesus, on this occasion, thus rebuke them: *Why are ye fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? Why should you doubt of my power to protect you?* The voyage was undertaken at my command; and therefore you should have been confident that I would not suffer you to perish.

It is, indeed, strange to think that the disciples should have been so remarkably terrified during the storm, and that they should afterwards make this singular reflection: *What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!* But it must be remembered, that the terror of the storm had deprived them of all presence of mind, so that they did not recollect the Divine power of their Master during the fury of the tempest; and the transition from a terrible storm to the most perfect calm, was so quick and astonishing, that they uttered this reflection, while their minds were in the most inexpressible state of confusion.

The next morning, as our Lord landed on the East side of the Lake, in that part of the province of Trachonitis, which is called the country of the Gadareens, two demoniacs, most grievously distracted, came running towards him, and fell at his feet, and worshipped him. They were both most hideous spectacles; but one, who was much fiercer than the other, made dismal outcries both day and night, cutting his flesh with sharp stones, and though he had been often bound with fetters and chains, yet he as often broke them to pieces, ranging, with his companion, among the rocks and tombs, and so furious and outrageous was he, that no traveller durst pass that way.

As soon as these two wretched objects approached our Lord, the devils (who spoke by their mouths) declared him to be the Son of God, and expressed their fear of his being come to *torment them before their time*. The apostate spirits well knew his power, and trembled lest he should immediately cast them into the torments prepared for them, and not suffer them to continue roving through the earth till the day of judgment, when they should be condemned to eternal punishments in the sight of the whole creation.

The Blessed Jesus, willing that the torments suffered by these miserable men should be known before he healed them, asked one of the devils his name, who answered, *Legion, for we are many*. Begging, at the same time, that he would not command them to repair into the deep, or bottomless pit, but suffer them to enter into a herd of swine that were feeding on the adjacent mountains. This request our Lord thought proper to comply with, and no sooner was the Divine permission granted, than the spectators beheld at a distance the torments these poor creatures suffered, with what amazing rapidity they ran to the confines of the lake, leaped from the precipices into the sea, and perished in the waters.

As soon as the keepers of the herd beheld this strange sight, they fled, in the utmost fright, to the city of Gadara, where they gave a circumstantial account of all that had happened. In consequence of this, prodigious numbers of people, not only from the city, but likewise the neighbor-

ing villages, immediately went to the place, where they found the man (who had been the more furious of the two) sitting at our Saviour's feet, clothed, and in his perfect senses. But, whether it was, that the people took amiss the destruction of the swine, or thought themselves unworthy of his Divine presence, so it was, that they entreated our Lord to depart out of their country. This request he was pleased to comply with, but, instead of permitting the man to go along with him, as he desired, he ordered him "to return to his house, and his friends, and "then to declare what wonderful things the Lord had "done for him."

As soon as our Blessed Lord had repassed the lake, and was returned to Capernaum, the people, as usual, came flocking round him in prodigious multitudes. While he was teaching them, one Jairus, a chief ruler of the synagogue, came running to him in all the agonies of grief, and, in the presence of the whole company, fell on the ground before him, beseeching that he would come and heal his daughter, who lay at the point of death. The forwardness of the ruler's faith claimed our Saviour's compassion and assistance; and therefore he immediately arose, and followed him. As he passed along the streets, a woman, who had for twelve years been afflicted with an issue, or flux of blood, and had spent her whole substance on physicians to no purpose, *came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment; for she said within herself, If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be whole.* Nor was she deceived; for no sooner had she touched the border of the garment of the Son of God, than *her issue of blood dried up;* and she felt, by the return of her health and strength, and other agreeable sensations, that the cure was fully completed. But this transaction could not be concealed; the Blessed Jesus knew the whole, and was perfectly acquainted with the secret thoughts of the woman before she put them in practice. Pleased, however, with the opinion she had entertained, both of his power and goodness, he would not, by any means, suffer it to pass unapplauded. Accordingly, he turned himself about, and asked this question: *Who touched me?* He well knew the person; but asked the question for the

fuller manifestation of the woman's faith, and that he might have an opportunity of instructing and comforting her. His disciples, being ignorant of what had passed, were surprized at the question: *Thou seest* (said they to their master) *the multitude thronging and pressing thee, and sayest thou who touched me?* They did not distinguish between the spiritual and corporal touch, nor knew that such efficacious virtue had gone out of their master. Jesus, however, persisted in knowing who it was that had done the thing; upon which the woman, finding it in vain to conceal what she had done any longer, went to him trembling, and told him all. Perhaps the uncleanness of her distemper was the cause of her fear, thinking he would be offended even at her touching the hem of his garment. But the Divine physician, so far from being angry, spoke to her in the kindest manner, and commended her faith. *Daughter, (said he) be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole.*

While our Blessed Lord stopped on this occasion, a messenger came to Jairus with news that his daughter was actually dead, and therefore there was no occasion to give our Saviour any farther trouble. This message was a terrible blow to the affectionate parent. His only daughter, who, a few days before, was in the bloom of youth, was now a pale and lifeless corpse; and with her all his joys and comforts were fled. But the Blessed Redeemer of mankind soon gave him relief; for, having overheard what the messenger said, he bid him not to fear, but only believe, and he should find the blessed effects of his faith in the recovery of his daughter.

When our Lord entered the house, he found the mourners already come, who were deplored her death with melancholy tones, and loud lamentations, according to the custom of those times; upon which, as he went in, he desired them to cease their funeral ceremonies, because, at that time, there was no occasion for them. Having said this, he entered the chamber where the damsel lay, but suffered none to follow him, except Peter, James and John, together with the father and mother of the damsel. As soon as he approached the bed where she lay, he took her gently by the hand, and, with

a low voice, said, *Maid, arise.* The heavenly command was instantly obeyed; the damsel arose, as from a sleep, and with all the appearance of health and vigor, to the great wonder and astonishment of all present. At our Saviour's departure, he ordered the parents to give her something to eat, and left a strict charge with them that they should keep the miracle a secret; but their joy was too great to *conceal*, what, in gratitude for so great a mercy, they thought they were obliged to *divulge*.

After our Blessed Lord had performed this miracle, and left the ruler's house, he was followed by prodigious numbers of people, and among them were two blind men, who, in the most piteous manner, implored his assistance. The Redeemer of mankind, ever ready to grant the petitions of those who apply to him for relief, listened to their request, and going with them into a house, to avoid the interruption of the multitude, he touched their eyes, and said, *According to your faith, be it unto you.* And immediately they received their sight.

No sooner were these two men departed, than the multitude brought to him *a dumb man possessed with the devil.* So moving a sight could not fail of attracting a compassionate regard from the Saviour of the world, who, being never weary of beneficent acts, immediately cast out the apostate spirit. The wretched object, being thus relieved, instantly recovered his speech, which being heard by the multitude, they unanimously acknowledged that the like had *never been seen in Israel.*

After a short stay at Capernaum, our Lord departed with his disciples, into some other parts of Galilee. He had, about a year before, been very ill-treated by the inhabitants of Nazareth, the place of his education; but notwithstanding this, he was resolved once more to make them a tender of his mercy. He accordingly repaired to their city, and entering their synagogue on the sabbath-day, preached to the people the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. They were, indeed, astonished at his doctrine, but so attached to the prejudice they had conceived against him, that they scandalized his person, and began to upbraid him with the meanness of his parentage and employment, as they had done before; upon which our

Lord, after finishing his discourse, retired from the synagogue, and left the city.

Upon our Lord's departure from Nazareth, he visited most of the cities and villages of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Gospel, and curing all kinds of diseases among the people. Observing one day the numerous throngs and multitudes that resorted to him, he looked upon them with an eye of pity and compassion, as so many sheep destitute of shepherds; and from thence formed the resolution of sending out his twelve apostles (two and two together) into the more distant parts of Judea, while himself continued preaching in Galilee, and the places adjacent. To this purpose he invested them with a full power to cure all diseases, eject devils, and even raise the dead. He gave them instructions in what manner they were to behave in the places whither they went; but at the same time forbade them to address themselves to any of the Gentiles, or Samaritans, but only to *the lost sheep of the House of Israel*. He told them the consequences of their ministry, which, (more especially after his death) instead of entitling them to *temporal advantages*, would expose them to sundry kinds of persecutions; but, for their encouragement, he acquainted them, that those who rejected their doctrine should be treated with severity at least at the righteous judgment of God; whereas those who received it kindly, and gave (were it but a *cup of cold water*) to the least of his disciples, for their Master's sake, *should in no wise miss of their reward*.

With this commission, and these instructions, the twelve apostles (two and two together) went into all the parts of Palestine that were inhabited by the Jews, where they preached the Gospel, and worked many miracles in confirmation of it; while their Blessed master was employed in the like offices in Galilee. The miracles which the apostles wrought raised the expectation of the people higher than ever; they were astonished to see the disciples of Jesus perform such wondrous works; and therefore concluded, that our Saviour must be greater than any of the old prophets, who could not transmit the power invested in them to any other person.

It was now about a year since Herod Antipas had cast John the Baptist into prison for his boldness in reproving him for the adulterous commerce in which he lived with his brother's wife. Herod himself both respected and feared him, knowing that he was highly and deservedly beloved by the people; he consulted him often, and, in many things, followed his advice. But Herodias, his brother's wife, with whom he lived in so shameful a manner, being continually uneasy lest Herod should be prevailed upon to set him at liberty, sought all opportunities to destroy him; and at length an incident happened, which enabled her to accomplish her wicked intentions.

Herod having, on his birth-day, made a great feast for his friends, Herodias sent her daughter, whom she had by Philip her lawful husband, into the saloon to dance before the king and his guests. Herod was infinitely pleased with her performance, insomuch that, in the height of his mirth and jollity, he promised, with the addition of an oath, to grant her whatever she should demand even though it amounted to half of his dominions. Unwilling to lose so fair an opportunity, she immediately consulted with her mother what favor to ask, who, being prompted by the height of her malice and revenge, named the head of John the Baptist to be given her; which the daughter accordingly demanded of the king in the presence of the whole assembly. *I will (said she) thou give me, bye and bye, in a charger, the head of John the Baptist.*

This strange and unexpected request threw a damp on all the company present, Herodias and her daughter excepted. The king's enjoyment was vanished: he was vexed and confounded. Being, however, unwilling to appear either fickle or false, before a company of the first persons in his kingdom for rank and character, he commanded the head to be given her. There was not one of the guests who had the courage to speak a single word in behalf of the innocent man, nor attempt to divert Herod from suffering his commands to be executed, though he gave them an opportunity of doing it, by signifying to them that he performed his oath merely out of respect to them. Thus Herod, through a misplaced regard to his oath, and his guests, committed a most unjust and cruel

act; an act that will for ever brand his memory with dis-honor, and render his very name detestable, to the latest posterity.

In a short time after Herod had given the fatal com-mand, the head of that venerable prophet, whose rebukes had struck him with awe in his loosest moments, and whose exhortations had often excited him to the perform-ance of good actions, was brought in a charger, and given to the daughter of Herodias, in the presence of all the guests. She eagerly received the bloody present, and carried it to her mother, who enjoyed the whole pleasure of revenge, and feasted her eyes with the sight of the head of him whom she had weakly and wickedly considered as her greatest enemy. As for the body of John, his dis-ciples, when they heard of his death, took care to bury it, and then went, and informed the Blessed Jesus of the tragical end that had befallen their master.

Thus died the great forerunner of our Blessed Saviour, about two years and three months after his entrance upon his public ministry, and in the 31st year of his age. The character given of him by Josephus, is as follows: " He " was, indeed, a man endued with all virtue, who ex- " horted the Jews to the practice of *justice* towards men " and *piety* towards God; and also to *Baptism*, which " would become acceptable to God if they renounced their " sins; and, to the *cleanness* of their bodies, added the " *purity* of their souls."

## CHAP. VII.

*Our Blessed Lord, after hearing of the death of John the Baptist, retires to the desert of Bethsaida, where he adds to the confirmation of his mission and doctrine by performing a most astonishing miracle. The people, struck with his distinguished power, propose raising him to the earthly dignity of king. Peter, by means of his Blessed Master, performs a miracle, by walking on the surface of the sea. Our Lord preaches to the people in the synagogue at Capernaum concerning spiritual food, in order to improve the miracle wrought in the desert of Bethsaida. He reprimands the Pharisees for their superstition. Continues to display his power and benevolence in relieving several distressed objects. Reasons with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and cautions his disciples to avoid their errors and fallacies. Cures a blind man at Bethsaida, and makes trial of his apostles' faith. Delegates a special power to Peter. He informs them of his future sufferings, and is afterwards transfigured on the Mount.*

ABOUT the time that our Blessed Lord heard of the death of John the Baptist, his own apostles returned from their respective excursions, and gave him an account of every transaction that had happened in the different parts whither they had travelled. After this, our Lord ordered them to prepare a vessel, wherein he, and they only, might cross the sea of Galilee, and retire, for a short time, from the multitude, to a desert near Bethsaida, in order that, by meditation and prayer, they might be refreshed, and thereby better enabled to prosecute their spiritual labors.

Though our Lord, with his apostles, retired privately for this purpose, yet the multitude attended so closely, that their departure was not long concealed; and great numbers of people resorted to the place where they supposed Jesus and his disciples had secluded themselves. Struck with the greatness of his miracles on those that were sick, and anxious to receive farther instructions from the mouth of so Divine a teacher, no difficulties were too

great for them to surmount, nor any place too retired for them to penetrate, in search of their admired preacher.

The sight of such a multitude of people so affected the compassionate Redeemer, that, though he went to the place for the sake of retirement, he could not withhold his presence from them; but, ascending a mountain, and taking his disciples with him, he first instructed them in several things concerning the kingdom of God, and afterwards cured such as were sick and diseased of their respective infirmities.

Our Blessed Lord was so attentively engaged in performing these beneficent acts, that he did not perceive the day was far spent, of which his disciples (too anxious about the things of this world) thought proper to inform him. "The day, said they, is now far advanced, and "the place a solitary desert, where neither food nor "lodging can be procured: it would, therefore, be con- "venient to dismiss the people, that they may repair to "the towns and villages on the borders of the wilder- "ness, and provide themselves with food and lodging, "for they have nothing to eat."

In answer to this our Lord told them, there was no necessity of sending the people away to procure victuals for themselves, as they might satisfy the hunger of the multitude, by giving them to eat. But, to shew what an opinion his disciples entertained of his power, he addressed himself to Philip, (whom he knew was well acquainted with the country) and said, *Whence shall we buy bread, that those may eat?* Philip, astonished at the seeming impossibility of procuring a supply for so great a multitude with the small sum of money which he knew was their all, and forgetting the extent of his master's power, answered, *Two hundred pennyworth is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.* Our Lord might now have put the same question to Philip that he did on another occasion: *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?* Hast thou beheld so many miracles, and art thou still ignorant that I can supply food not only for these people, but for all the sons of men? But he only gave him this short answer. *Give ye them to eat.*

The apostles, not yet comprehending our Lord's meaning, repeated the objection of Philip; but added, that they were willing to expend their whole stock, in order to procure as large a supply as possible. But this was by no means the design of their great Master, who, instead of agreeing to their proposition, asked, *How many loaves have ye?* How much provision can be found among this multitude? Go, and see. They readily obeyed the Divine command, and soon returning, Andrew informed him, that the whole stock amounted to no more than five barley loaves, and two small fishes; a quantity so inconsiderable, that it scarcely deserved notice. *What are they,* said Andrew, *among so many?* And what, indeed, would they have been among such a multitude of people, if they had not been distributed by the creating hand of the Son of God?

But notwithstanding the smallness of the quantity of provision, our Blessed Lord ordered it to be brought before him; which being done, he immediately commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, at the same time directing his disciples to range them in regular order, that the number might be more easily ascertained, and the people the more regularly supplied.

The multitude, in obedience to our Lord's command, sat down in the manner they were ordered, big with the expectation of what this uncommon preparation portended: while the great Master of the banquet stood ready to supply the necessities of all his guests; a banquet which, though they had no canopy but the azure sky, no table but the verdant turf, where their food was only coarse barley bread and dried fishes, and their drink only water from a bubbling fountain, yet displayed more real grandeur, by the presence of the Divine Master of it, than the royal feast of the great Ahasuerus, or the splendid entertainment of the imperious Nebuchadnezzar.

The multitude being seated, our Blessed Lord took the loaves and fishes into his hands in sight of all the people, that they might be convinced of the small quantity of provisions that were then before them, and that they could only expect to be fed by his supernatural power. But that hand, which had been the means of re-

peatedly sustaining nature, could easily multiply these five loaves and two fishes; for, as the Psalmist justly observes, *He openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness.* Accordingly, he looked up to heaven, and returned thanks to God, the liberal giver of all good things, for his infinite beneficence in furnishing food for all, and for the power he had conferred on him of relieving mankind by his miracles, particularly for that he was about to work. Having done, looking on the loaves and fishes, he blessed them; and so efficacious was his blessing, that they were multiplied into a quantity sufficient to supply the wants of five thousand men, besides women and children, who, on the most favorable supposition, must at least amount to an equal number. *And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.* After they were all satisfied our Lord ordered the fragments to be gathered up, which being done, so exuberant was the supply that they filled twelve baskets. Thus did the compassionate and powerful Redeemer feed many thousand people with five barley loaves and two small fishes, giving at once a magnificent proof both of his power and goodness.

This great and astonishing miracle made such an impression on the minds of the multitude, that they had not the least doubt of our Lord's being the long promised Messiah, and were therefore resolved to set him up for their king by main force. But he, knowing the mischief of such a design, constrained his disciples (who, perhaps, were forward enough to join with the multitude) immediately to take shipping, and sail for Capernaum. Having thus sent away the disciples, our Lord, after spending some time in delivering heavenly instructions to the multitude, dismissed them, and then retired to the summit of a mountain, where he spent the remainder of the night in meditation and prayer.

In the mean time the ship in which the apostles were, was so tossed about by a dreadful storm that they could make but little way towards their intended port. The waves ran so high, and the wind was so contrary, that,

when morning appeared, they had not got more than a league on their voyage. While they were in this distressed situation their heavenly Master (who had beheld them from the mountain) came to their assistance, walking on the foaming surface of the sea. As soon as they beheld him they were struck with astonishment, and, taking him for a Spirit, shrieked for fear. But our Lord soon removed the horrors of their minds, by informing them who he was. *Be of good cheer*, said he: *It is I; be not afraid.*

Peter, who was a man of a more warm and forward temper than the rest, beholding Jesus walking on the sea, was exceedingly amazed, and conceived the strongest desire of being enabled to perform so wonderful an action. Accordingly, without the least reflection, he immediately besought his Master that he would order him to come to him on the water. He did not doubt but that Jesus would gratify his request, as it sufficiently intimated that he would readily undertake any thing, however difficult, at his command.

To convince this forward disciple of the weakness of his faith, and render him more diffident of his own strength, our Blessed Lord was pleased to grant his request, by ordering him to come to him upon the water. Peter joyfully obeyed the Divine command; he left the boat, and walked on the surface of the sea. But the wind increasing made a dreadful noise, and the boisterous waves at the same time threatened every moment to overwhelm him. His faith was now staggered, and his presence of mind forsook him: he forgot that his Saviour was at his hand; and in proportion as his faith decreased, the waters yielded, and he sunk. In this extremity he looked around for his Master; and, when on the brink of being swallowed up, cried out, *Lord, save me!* His cry was not disregarded by his compassionate Saviour: *He stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* He then set him again upon the top of the water, and walked with him to the vessel, which they had no sooner entered, than the winds ceased, and the storm subsided. This miracle greatly astonished the rest of the

disciples, who, prostrating themselves before their great Master, acknowledged his Omnipotence, and admitted the divinity of his power and person, saying, *of a truth thou art the son of God.*

The vessel having gained the intended port, our Lord proceeded with his disciples to Capernaum, whither his arrival was no sooner known than he was followed by prodigious numbers of people from various parts of the country, who brought with them their sick and diseased to be healed. Our Lord, ever ready and willing to listen to the petitions of the distressed, immediately set about performing the like beneficent acts he had heretofore done; but the multiplicity of the supplicants was so great that it was inconvenient for him to bestow particular attention on each of them. In consequence of this they earnestly besought him, *that they might only touch the hem of his garment; and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.*

The multitude, whom our Lord had miraculously fed in the desert, were in expectation of finding him, the next morning, on the mountain: they had seen the disciples take shipping without their master, and no other vessel left for him, and therefore did not doubt but they should very readily meet with him. After searching for him some time in vain, they concluded he must, by some means or other, have followed his disciples, and having an opportunity of other vessels from Tiberias, the greater part of them embarked, and went over to Capernaum, where they found him teaching in the synagogue. Astonished at seeing him there, they desired to know of him *how he got thither?* But, instead of gratifying their curiosity, our Lord, who knew their corrupt expectations, and that they came after him, not so much from his miraculous gifts, as the gratification of their own appetites, took occasion from thence to discourse to them on a *certain food* different from what he had given them in the desert, a food which infinitely more deserved their notice, and whereof the manna in the wilderness was no more than a figure, or type. What this food was he signified to them, viz. the merits of his future death and passion,

which alone could be available for the obtaining of eternal life to such as believed in his Divine Mission.

But these sublime truths, which, for the present, our Lord thought proper to couch in figurative terms, so perplexed the intellects of the greater part of his hearers, that, mistaking the words in a *literal*, which he intended in a *spiritual*, sense, they immediately left the synagogue, and great numbers, who for a long time had been his strict followers, totally deserted him.

When our Lord saw so many of the people, whom he knew to have been long his followers, quit the synagogue, he began to call in question the fidelity of his very apostles; and therefore, turning himself to them, he said, *Will ye also go away?* To this Peter (in behalf of all the rest) answered, *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life!* *And we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* But, notwithstanding this liberal and frank confession, Our Lord gave them to understand, that they were not equally sound, for among the twelve whom he had selected, one of them should prove a traitor. By this he meant Judas Iscariot, who, from his conduct afterwards, justly deserved that epithet.

The season of the grand passover being near at hand, our Blessed Lord, accompanied by his disciples, went to Jerusalem to attend that ceremony. But while he was there, the Jews being offended at his discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum, formed a design against his life, of which our Lord being informed, after the festival was over, he left the city, and retired into Galilee.

Soon after our Lord's return into Galilee, a certain number of Scribes and Pharisees were sent thither from Jerusalem, in order to be spies upon his actions, and to scrutinize upon his doctrine. These men, observing, that, when he and his disciples were to eat, they frequently sat down without washing their hands, contrary to the common custom of the Jews, which (as they pretended) was founded upon a tradition, expostulated with him on the reason for so doing. But our Lord, instead of giving them any direct answer, put a question to them by way of recrimination, viz. *Why they, by their pretended tra-*

ditions, vacated the laws of God, particularly that so solemn a one of *honoring their parents*, and relieving them in their wants? Having put this question, our Lord, considering them as so many hypocrites with whom he did not chuse to hold any farther converse, turned himself to the multitude, and informed them, “ that true piety did not consist in *outward ceremonies*, but in a *sincere observance* of the laws of God; that no *pollution* could be in what *entered into* a man’s mouth, but only in what *proceeded from* it; for (as he afterwards explained it to his disciples) whatever we eat does not affect the mind, the only seat of *defilements*, for it passes into the stomach, and is thrown out of the body, so that, be it never so gross or unclean, it cannot pollute the eater. All the *pollution* is from within, from the corruption of the heart, such as impure thoughts, unchaste desires, unholy purposes, immodest and indecent speeches, &c. These are the things that leave a lasting *stain* upon the soul, which a thing, so merely external as omitting to wash before meat, cannot do.”

This was a doctrine which was far from being agreeable to the Pharisees; but they were a set of people, whose censure he justly despised, *blind leaders of the blind*, (as he very properly called them) whose vain traditions, as having nothing of Divine institution in them, it was his purpose to abolish.

From Galilee our Lord went to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, where he entered into an house, with a design of concealing himself from the multitude. He had not, however, been long there before a Syro-Phœnician woman, hearing where he was, went to him, and earnestly requested that he would cure her daughter, who was sadly tormented with a devil. Our Lord (for the trial of her faith) seemed, at first, to take no notice of her, until his disciples, to get rid of her importunities, besought him to grant her request, and dismiss her. Our Lord told them then his ministry was confined to the people of Judea, nor was he properly sent to any, but the *lost sheep of the House of Israel*. All this the poor woman heard, but so far was she from being discouraged, that, advancing nearer, she threw herself prostrate at the feet of Jesus, worshipped

him, acknowledged his divinity, and prayed, saying, *Lord help me.*

The compassionate Redeemer of mankind now condescended to speak to her, but with words seemingly sufficient to have discouraged every farther attempt; nay, to have filled her with bitter dislike to his person, though she had conceived such high and distinguished notions of his mercy and favor. *It is not meet (said he) to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.* It is not justice to deprive the Jews, who are the children of the covenant, the descendants of Abraham, of any part of those blessings which I came into the world to bestow, especially to you, who are aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel.

But, severe as this answer was, it neither shook the poor woman's humility, nor overcame her patience. She meekly answered, *Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.* As if she had said, "Let me enjoy that kindness which the dogs of any family are not denied; from the abundance of cures which thou bestowest on the Jews, drop this one to me, who am a poor distressed heathen: for they will suffer no greater loss by it, than the children of a family do by the crumbs which are cast to the dogs."

Our Blessed Lord having thus put the woman's faith to the most severe trial, and being convinced that she possessed a just idea of his power and goodness, as well as of her own unworthiness, wrought with pleasure the cure she solicited in behalf of her daughter; and, at the same time, gave her faith the praises it so justly merited. *O woman! (said he) great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

After performing this miracle, our Lord left the coast of Sidon, and proceeded eastward towards Decapolis, in his way to which he cured a poor man who was both deaf and dumb, by only touching his tongue, and putting two of his fingers into his ears. The fame of this miracle was spread through every part of the country; and therefore, to avoid the prodigious crowds of people that gathered to-

gether in consequence thereof, our Lord retired to a desert mountain near the Sea of Galilee. But the solitary retreats of the wilderness were unable to conceal this beneficent Saviour of the human race. The people soon discovered his retreat, and brought to him from all quarters the sick, the lame, the dumb, the blind, and the maimed; all of whom he graciously relieved from their respective complaints, to the great astonishment of the surrounding spectators. *The multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel.*

The various works performed by the Blessed Redeemer detained the multitude in the desert with him three days, during which time they consumed all the provisions they had brought into this solitary place. But Jesus would not send them away fasting, lest any who had followed him so far from their habitations should faint in their return home. Accordingly he again exerted his Almighty power, by miraculously feeding the whole multitude, which amounted to four thousand men (besides women and children) with only *seven loaves, and a few small fishes.*

After our Lord had thus miraculously fed the people, he dismissed them, and went, with his disciples, into a district called Dalmanutha, a part of the territories of Magdala. Here he was visited by many Pharisees and Sadducees, who having heard that he had a second time fed the multitude in a miraculous manner, were fearful that the common people would acknowledge him for the Messiah; and therefore determined openly and publicly to endeavor to confute his pretensions to that character. To effect this they boldly demanded of him a sign from heaven, whereby they might be convinced that he was the true and long promised Messiah.

If the minds of these obstinate people had been open to conviction, the proofs which our Lord was daily giving them would have been more than sufficient to have established the truth of his mission. But they were not desirous of being convinced; and to that alone, and not to want of evidence, or of capacity in themselves, it was

owing, that they refused to acknowledge our Saviour to be the person foretold by the prophets. Their disposition was absolutely incorrigible; which made our Lord declare that the sign they sought should never be given them, and that the only sign they were to expect was, that of the prophet Jonas, or the miracle of his own resurrection: a sign, indeed, much greater than any shewn by the ancient prophets, and consequently a sign which demonstrated that Jesus was far superior to them all. *A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it; but the sign of the prophet Jonas.*

After our Lord had reproved the impertinent curiosity of the Pharisees and Sadducees, he embarked with his disciples on board a ship, intending to go to Bethsaida. His disciples, in the hurry of their departure, had forgot to take bread with them; and therefore, when our Lord, on the passage, cautioned them to take care of the *leaven* of the Pharisees and Sadducees, they took the meaning of his words in a literal sense, and imagined he meant they should not purchase bread of those heathenish people. Upon this our Lord first gently reproved them for the blindness of their understandings and the shortness of their memories, in having so soon forgotten his miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes at two different times; and then gave them to understand that his words did not concern the leaven of bread, but the corrupt doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

As soon as our Blessed Lord landed at Bethsaida, the people brought unto him a blind man, earnestly requesting that he would be pleased to restore him to sight. The inhabitants of this city had, by their perverseness and infidelity, so offended our Lord, that when they presented this man to him for cure, he would not do it in the city in sight of the multitude; but, taking him out at the gate, he anointed his eyes with spittle, and then laid his hands on them. The man, at first, saw objects indistinctly, men like trees walking; but when our Lord laid his hands on him the second time, his sight was perfectly restored, and he *saw every man clearly.*

From Bethsaida our Lord retired into the territories of Cæsarea Philippi,\* where being inclined to make some trial of his apostles faith and proficience, he asked them this question: *Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?* To which they replied, *Some say, that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.* The people in general mistook the character of our Saviour, because he did not assume that outward pomp and grandeur with which they supposed the Messiah would be adorned. Our Lord was therefore desirous of knowing what idea his disciples formed of his character, as they had long enjoyed the benefit of his doctrine and miracles. He accordingly asked, *What they themselves understood him to be?* To which Simon Peter (in the name of the rest) replied, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* This confession our Lord not only allowed to be true, and what was confirmed by the attestation of God himself, but, in allusion to Peter's name (which signifies a rock) promised that he should have a principal hand in establishing his kingdom; and that the Christian church should be erected on his labors, as on a solid foundation, never to be destroyed. “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven;† and

\* This city was situated near the head of the river Jordan, and was, by the Canaanites, called Laish; but, being taken by some of the Danites, it was by them called Dan. Augustus Cæsar gave it (together with all the territories belonging to it) to Herod the Great. He, after rebuilding the place, gave it, (with the tetrarchy of Ituræa and Trachonitis to which it adjoined) to his youngest son Philip, who, when he had enlarged and beautified it, so as to make it the capital of his dominions, and chief place of his residence, gave it the name of Cæsarea Philippi, partly to compliment Tiberius Cæsar, who was then emperor; partly to preserve the memory of his own name; and partly, to distinguish it from another Cæsarea (mentioned in Acts x. 1.) situated on the Mediterranean, and which was built by his father in honor of his great benefactor Augustus Cæsar.

† Peter is here to be considered as one who acted in the name of all the rest of the disciples; and when Christ says, *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, he means no more, than that all

" whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

After delegating this power to Peter, our Lord strictly forbade all his disciples to tell any man that he was the Messiah; because it had been decreed, in the courts of heaven, that he should be rejected by the rulers of Jerusalem as a false Christ, and should suffer the pains of death; circumstances which (if generally known) could not fail of giving his followers great offence, as they did not yet understand the true nature of his kingdom.

The heavenly discourses which the apostles had repeatedly heard from their Divine Master had, no doubt, filled their minds with the most lofty imaginations; and therefore our Lord thought proper to acquaint them with the sufferings he was to undergo, in order to check any fond expectations they might entertain of temporal power. But this was a subject very disagreeable to the ears of Peter, who giving intimation thereof, our Lord sharply rebuked him, and then told him and his fellow apostles, that all who intended to share with him in the glory of the heavenly Canaan, must deny themselves; that is, they must be always ready to renounce every worldly pleasure, and even life itself, when the cause of religion required it. He also told them, that in this life they must expect to meet with troubles, and disappointments, and that whoever intended to be his disciple, must *take up his cross daily and follow him.*

In order to add to the weight of this argument, and enforce the necessity of self-denial, our Lord told his disciples that a day was fixed for distributing rewards and punishments to all the human race; that he himself was appointed by the Father as universal judge; so that his enemies could not flatter themselves with the hope of escaping the punishments they deserved, nor his friends be afraid of losing their eternal reward. He farther told them, that he should not appear to judge the world in his low and despised condition, but magnificently arrayed

those who followed his example should, in the end, reap the advantages arising from such virtuous and pious conduct.

both in his own and his Father's glory; that he should not be attended by twelve weak disciples, but surrounded by myriads of celestial spirits, with numberless hosts of mighty angels; nor should his rewards be the great offices and large possessions of a temporal kingdom; but the joys and comforts of immortality.

Thus did the Blessed Jesus fully explain to his disciples the true nature of his kingdom; but, lest his doctrine of being appointed the universal judge might appear incredible to them at that time, on account of his humiliation, he told them, that some who then heard him speak should not taste of death till they saw him coming in his kingdom. *Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.* There are some here present that shall not die till they see a faint representation of the glory in which I shall come at the last day.

It was not long before this Divine prediction was most amply fulfilled. About eight days after, our Lord being with the multitude in the country of Cæsarea Philippi, left them in the plain, and, accompanied only by his three most intimate apostles, Peter, James, and John, ascended a very high mountain, where, while he was employed in prayer, he was suddenly transformed into another kind of appearance. His face became radiant and dazzling, shining like the sun in his meridian clearness. His garment acquired a snowy whiteness, far beyond any thing human art could produce; a whiteness bright as the light, and sweetly resplendent, but in a degree inferior to the radiance of his countenance. And to heighten the grandeur and solemnity of the scene, Moses, the great law-giver of Israel, and Elias, appeared in the beauties of immortality, in the robes which adorn the inhabitants of the heavenly Canaan, and familiarly conversed with him on the subject of his future sufferings and death.

At the time this transfiguration took place our Lord's three disciples had fallen asleep, but waking while the three heavenly messengers were in converse, they were exceedingly surprized and terrified at the sight of so much glory and majesty. Peter, indeed, begged of his Master, that they might continue in that happy place: *Master*

(said he) *it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.* He imagined that Jesus had now assumed his proper dignity; that Elias was come according to the prediction of the prophet Malachi, and that the Messiah's kingdom was at length begun. He therefore thought it necessary to provide some accommodation for his master and his august companions, intending, perhaps, to bring the rest of the disciples, with the multitude, from the plains below, to behold his matchless glory.

But while Peter was talking and arguing with himself, on the sight before him (scarce knowing what he said in his fright and transport) a bright shining cloud came over them, and a voice from thence proclaimed, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased—hear ye him.* At the sound of these words, the apostles were struck with a much greater consternation than before, and prostrating themselves on the ground, continued in that posture for some time, till at length the blessed Jesus approached, and dispelled their fears, by saying, *Arise be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.*

Our Blessed Lord, after continuing all night with his three disciples on the mountain, returned, early the next morning, to the plain, charging them to conceal what they had seen till after he was risen from the dead. He well knew that the world, and even his own disciples, were not yet able to comprehend the meaning of his transfiguration, and that if it had been published before his resurrection, it might have appeared incredible, because nothing but afflictions and persecutions had hitherto attended him. *He was truly a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*

But the doctrine of the resurrection, to which the transfiguration alluded, was what greatly puzzled the apostles; besides which they were greatly surprized, at the sudden departure of Elias, and could not comprehend what the Scribes and Pharisees meant by having asserted that *that prophet was to come upon the earth before the Messiah.* They, therefore, after a long debating among themselves, asked their Master this question: *Why say the Scribes that Elias must first come?* To this our Lord answered,

that Elias should truly come first, according to the prediction of the prophet Malachi, *and restore all things*; but, at the same time he assured them, that he was, in effect, come already, and that he had received the like bad treatment from his countrymen, that himself, in a short time, had reason to expect. *But I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed: likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.* *Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.*

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### CHAP. VIII.

*Our Blessed Lord cures a youth who was dreadfully tormented with an evil spirit. He foretels his death to his disciples, to whom he recommends humility and forgiveness of injuries. Conforms to the custom of the country by paying the tribute, which he raises by a miracle. Refuses to destroy the city of Samaria, which would not receive him in his journey to Jerusalem. Harangues the multitude at the Feast of Tabernacles. Exempts the woman taken in adultery from the punishment annexed by the Jews to that crime. Preaches to the people the mysteries of Christianity, and promises eternal life to his disciples. Prefers Mary's choice, and both teaches and encourages his disciples to pray. Inveighs against the Scribes and Pharisees. Preaches against Covetousness, and exhorts the people to Watchfulness, a preparation for death and judgment, and for a timely repentance.*

AS our Blessed Lord was descending from the mount with his three disciples, after his transfiguration, he saw a great multitude surrounding the nine whom he had left in the plain, and on his nearer approach found that they and the Scribes were in deep debate together. The Blessed Jesus asked the Scribes what was the subject of their debate with his disciples; to which one of the multitude answered, “Master, I have a son who hath an “evil spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth “him; and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and

"pineth away; and I spake to thy disciples, that they  
"should cast him out, and they could not."

It was evident from this answer being made by one of the multitude, that the Scribes had been disputing with the disciples on their not being able to cure this afflicted youth. Perhaps their making this unsuccessful attempt had given the Scribes the opportunity of boasting, that a devil was at length found which neither they nor their Master were able to conquer. This seems to be indicated by the manner in which our Saviour addressed himself to these arrogant people. *Oh faithless generation (says he) how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?* Will no miracles ever be able to convince you? Must I always bear with your perverseness? You have surely seen sufficient demonstrations of my power, notwithstanding which ye still discover the most criminal infidelity.

After our Lord had spoken in this manner to the Scribes, he turned himself to the father of the young man, and said, *bring thy son hither.* The man instantly obeyed the divine command, but no sooner was the youth brought in sight of his deliverer than the evil spirit attacked him, as it were, with double fury, *the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.* Our Blessed Lord could easily have prevented this attack; but he permitted it, that the minds of the spectators might be impressed with a more lively idea of the distress of the youth. And for the same reason it was, that he asked the father, how long he had been in this deplorable condition? To which the afflicted parent replied, *Of a child. And oft times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters to destroy him; but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.*

The inability of our Lord's disciples to cast out this spirit had greatly discouraged the afflicted father, and the exquisite torture of his son, together with the remembrance of its long continuance, so dispirited him, that he began to fear this possession was even too great for the power of Jesus himself, as the Scribes had strongly asserted; and therefore he could not help expressing his doubts and fears on the occasion. But the Blessed Jesus,

to make him sensible of his mistake, said to him, *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* On which the father cried out with tears, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.* The vehement manner in which he spoke caused the people to gather together from every quarter, and in the presence of the whole multitude Jesus rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou dumb spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.* No sooner was the powerful exit pronounced, than the devil, with a hideous noise, and convulsing the suffering patient in the most deplorable manner, came out, leaving the youth senseless, and without motion: till Jesus, taking him by the hand, restored him to his senses, and delivered him perfectly recovered to his father.

During the whole of this transaction, the nine disciples remained totally silent. They were, doubtless, vexed to think, that they had lost, by some fault of their own, the power of working miracles, lately conferred upon them by their Master; and for this reason were afraid to ask him the cause of it in the presence of the multitude. However, as soon as they had retired to a private place, they besought our Lord to tell them, why they failed in their attempt to heal that remarkable youth? To which Jesus replied, *Because of your unbelief.* But, to give them some encouragement, he added, *If ye have faith, nothing shall be impossible unto you.* Nothing shall be too great for you to accomplish, when the glory of God, and the good of the church are concerned, provided you have a proper degree of faith.

From the Mount of Transfiguration our Lord proceeded through several parts of Galilee towards Capernaum, in the way to which he acquainted his apostles, the second time, with his approaching death and resurrection, at the same time desiring them to take particular notice of what he said. But the hopes of a temporal kingdom had so forcibly impressed their minds, that they found it very difficult to believe, or conceive, what he said, and yet they were afraid to ask him for an explanation.

Soon after this, and while they were still on their journey, there arose a dispute among the apostles which of them should have the chief place of dignity in their

Master's kingdom, still dreaming of a temporal sovereignty. This our Saviour, by his Divine Spirit, knew; and therefore, to give a proper check to their ambitious thoughts, he first informed them, that the only way for any man to become great in his kingdom, was to be lowly in his own esteem; and then calling a little child, and setting him in the midst of them, he proposed him as a pattern of meekness and humility. *Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Unless ye be humbled by the power of Divine grace, and brought to a due sense of the vanity of all earthly preferments, riches and honors, and become meek and humble in spirit, ye shall be so far from becoming the greatest in my kingdom, that ye shall not even enter its borders. But whosoever shall be satisfied with the station in which God has placed him, receive with meekness all the divine instructions, however contrary to his own inclinations, and prefer others to himself, that man is really the greatest in my kingdom. *Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself, as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.* He likewise cautioned them against doing the least injury, or giving any offence, to such as believed in him, even though they were little children. *Whosoever (said he) shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.* And to remove the occasion of all such offences, he exhorted them to mortify their inordinate affections, though they were as dear to them as an eye, an hand, or a foot, because his heavenly father (like a diligent shepherd that delights in the recovery of a stray sheep) would not that any believer should perish.

Having said thus much, our Lord next proceeded to lay before his apostles some excellent rules relative to brotherly reproof, church censures, and forgiveness of injuries. The more strongly to enforce the last duty, he related to them the parable of a certain king, who, calling his servants to account, found that one of them owed him an immense sum, no less than ten thousand talents, which, upon his insolvency, and humble petition, he freely

forgave. The wretch, who had received this indulgence, was no sooner out of the king's presence, than he seized upon his fellow-servant for a trifling debt of only an hundred pence, and cast him into prison, even though he had used the same pathetic intreaties to him, that himself had done to the king his master: which, when the king came to understand, he sent for the ungrateful monster, upbraided him with his baseness and cruelty, and, in a rage, ordered him to prison, till he should discharge the whole of his own debt. *And so likewise* (says our Lord in the application) *shall my heavenly father deal with all such as will not forgive their brother's trespasses.*

While our Blessed Lord was giving these instructions to his disciples, he was interrupted by James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, who informed him that a certain stranger had cast out devils in his name, but that he had forbidden him because he did not join himself to their company. Our Lord was far from approving of this their conduct, because he looked upon it as a sure argument, that whoever did miracles in his name could be no enemy to his person. *Forbid him not:* (says he) *for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.*

This interruption of James and John finished the discourse for the present, and our Lord, with his apostles, prosecuted their journey for Capernaum. They had no sooner arrived at that city, than the collectors of a certain tribute for the use of the temple came to Peter, and asked him if his master would pay it? Peter promised that their demand should be satisfied; but, on a more mature consideration, he was fearful of asking his master concerning his paying the tax on any pretence whatever. Our Lord was no stranger to what had happened, and the consequences arising therefrom, namely, Peter's fears for having made the promise of payment without having first mentioned it to his master. As soon, therefore, as our Lord saw Peter, he said unto him, *What thinkest thou, Simon?* *Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute?* *Of their own children, or of strangers?* Peter replied, *Of strangers.* Our Lord rejoined, *then are the children free;* meaning, that as he was him-

self the Son of the great King, to whom heaven, earth, and sea belong, he had no right to pay tribute to any earthly monarch whatever, because he held nothing by a derived right. But the Blessed Jesus was always careful to avoid giving any offence, and therefore resolved to acquiesce in the payment of the tribute demanded, which he obtained by means the most miraculous that can be conceived. He ordered Peter to take a line and hook, go to the sea, and throw it in, and that in the mouth of the first fish that came up he should find a piece of money equal to the sum demanded of them both. *Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them, for me and thee.*

The reason of our Lord's taking this extraordinary method of paying the tribute money was, because the miracle was of such a nature as could not fail demonstrating to the people that he was the Son of that God for whose services it was gathered. In the very manner, therefore, of paying this tribute, he shewed Peter that he was free from all taxes; and at the same time gave this useful lesson to his followers: that when their property was affected only in a small degree, it was better to recede a little from maintaining their just privileges, than to offend their brethren, or disturb the state, by an obstinate resistance.

The time was now approaching for the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, at which all the males of the Jewish nation capable of travelling repaired to Jerusalem, and, during the whole time of the feast, dwelt in tabernacles, or booths, made of the boughs of trees, in commemoration of their ancestors having had no other habitation during their forty years sojourning in the wilderness. To this feast some of our Lord's relations desired he would accompany them, and there shew himself openly to the heads of the Jewish nation. They did not themselves believe that he was the great prophet so long expected; and condemned the method he pursued in the discharge of his public ministry. They could not con-

ceive what were his reasons for spending so much time in the deserts, and remote corners of the kingdom, while he assumed so public a character as that of the Redeemer of Israel. Jerusalem, the seat of power, was, in their opinion, much the properst place for him to deliver his doctrines, and work his miracles. They thought that if he did this before the great and learned men of the nation, he might obtain their favor, which would have great weight in increasing the number of his followers, and might, in the course of time, induce the whole nation to own him for the Messiah.

Our Lord well knew the rancorous prejudice of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and therefore did not think proper to reside among them any longer than was absolutely necessary. They had more than once attempted his life, and therefore there was very little reason to imagine that they would believe his miracles, or embrace his doctrine; but, on the contrary, that they would, if possible, destroy him, before he had finished the work, for which he took upon him the veil of human nature, and, for a time, resided among the sons of men. *My time, (said the blessed Jesus to his unbelieving relations) is not yet come; but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast, for my time is not yet full come.* As if he had said, “It is not proper for me to go up before the feast begins; but you may retire to the capital whenever you please; the Jews are your friends, you have done nothing to displease them; but the purity of the doctrine I have preached to them, and the freedom with which I have reproved their hypocrisy, and other enormous crimes, have provoked their malice to the utmost height; and therefore, as the time of my sufferings is not yet come, it is not prudent for me to go so soon to Jerusalem.”

There was also another reason why our Lord did not chuse to accompany his relations to the Feast of Tabernacles: the roads were crowded with people, and as they would naturally have gathered round him, and accompanied him the whole way, it might have given fresh

offence to his enemies, and, in a great measure, have prevented his miracles and doctrines taking the desired effect. He, therefore, chose to remain behind till the multitude were all gone, when he set forward, in as private a manner as possible, for Jerusalem, accompanied by his twelve apostles, and many others, who had long been his most strenuous disciples.

The nearest way to go from Galilee to Jerusalem was through a principal part of the province of Samaria, the inhabitants of which entertained the most inveterate hatred against all those who went up to worship in Jerusalem. On their journey our Lord sent two of his apostles before him to a place in Samaria, that they might find a proper reception for him against his arrival thither. But when the prejudiced Samaritans found the intention of his journey was to worship in the temple of Jerusalem, they refused to receive either him or his disciples into their houses.

On the return of the two messengers with this intelligence, James and John were so exceedingly incensed, that they proposed to their master to call for fire from heaven to destroy such inhospitable wretches, alledging, in excuse for such violent proceedings, the example of the prophet Elijah. But our Blessed Lord, desirous of displaying examples of humility on all occasions, sharply rebuked them for entertaining so unbecoming a resentment for such an offence. *Ye know not* (said he) *what manner of spirit ye are of.* Ye are ignorant of the sinfulness of the disposition ye have now expressed; nor do ye consider the difference of times, persons and dispensations. The severity exercised by Elijah on the men who came from Ahab to apprehend him, was a just reproof to an idolatrous king and people; very proper for the times, and very agreeable to the characters, both of the prophet who gave it, and of the offenders to whom it was given; and at the same time not unsuitable to the Mosaic dispensation.

But the Gospel breatheth a very different spirit; and the intention of the Messiah's coming into the world was not to destroy, but to save the lives of the children of men. And (that he might prove his doctrine by his

practice) when ten leprous person, who came out of the neighborhood of that place, whose inhabitants had behaved to him with such disrespect, presented themselves with loud cries to him for help, his *compassion* was as ready to relieve, as their *necessity* was to ask; for, while they were going to shew themselves to the priest at Jerusalem (as he had directed) they all found themselves cured. But, see the great ingratitude of human nature! Of the ten who received this miraculous blessing, only *one* returned to give their benefactor thanks—and he was a Samaritan.

Our Blessed Lord having thus returned good for evil, and the greatest kindness for the most palpable affront, proceeded on his journey, and came to another place, the inhabitants of which being not of so inhospitable a disposition as those of the former place, they readily gave accommodation to Jesus and his disciples, who continued with them during the course of that night. Early the next morning they resumed their journey, which they prosecuted without meeting with any inconvenience or interruption from the people of the respective places through which they passed, all of whom treated them with the greatest civility and respect. Before our Lord arrived at Jerusalem he sent out seventy of his disciples two by two together (in the same manner as he had before sent out his twelve apostles) into those parts which he himself intended, in a short time to visit, and gave them instructions much of the same import with those which, upon the like occasion, he had given to his twelve apostles,

For some time after our Lord's arrival at Jerusalem, he did not appear in public, nor even till after the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles had commenced. This occasioned great disputes among the Jews concerning his character. Some affirmed that he was a true prophet, and that his absenting himself from the feast could be owing only to accident; while others as confidently asserted, that he was an impostor, who practised a variety of artifices to delude and deceive the people.

At length, about the middle of the time of celebrating the feast, our Blessed Lord appeared openly in the

temple, and preached to the people, delivering his doctrines with such strength of reason, and fluency of expression, that the generality of his hearers were astonished, particularly when they had recollect ed that he had never received the advantage of a learned education. *And the Jews marvelled, saying, how knoweth this man letters, hating never learned?*

In answer to this the great Redeemer told them, that his doctrine was not produced by human wisdom: that the sages of the world were not his instructors: that he received his knowledge from heaven; and that it was the doctrine of the Almighty, whose messenger he was. *My doctrine* (said he, that is, the doctrine I preach) *is not mine, but his that sent me.* Nor can he who is desirous of practising the doctrine I deliver, if he will lay aside his prejudices, and sincerely desire to be taught of God, be at a loss to know from whom my doctrines are derived; because he will easily discern whether they are conformable to the will of man or of God. It is no difficult matter to discover an impostor, because all his precepts will tend to the advancement of his own interest, and the gratification of his pride: whereas all the doctrines delivered by a true prophet have no other end than that of the glory of God. *He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*

But notwithstanding the strength of his argument, several of our Lord's most inveterate enemies asked, with sarcastical surprize, if the boldness of Jesus, and the silence of the rulers, proceeded from their being convinced that he was the Messiah; and at the same time, to deride his pretensions to that high character, said, that they were acquainted both with his parents and relations: but that no man, when Christ appeared, would be able to tell from whence he came, founding their opinion on these words of the prophet Isaiah, *Who shall declare his generation?* Isaiah liii. 8.

In answer to this our Blessed Lord told them, that their knowing his parents and relations was no reason against his having the prophetic character of the Messiah.

That he was not come of himself, but was sent from heaven by his Father, who had uttered nothing by his servants the prophets concerning the Messiah, but what was true, and would be amply fulfilled in him; but that they were totally ignorant of his gracious perfections and counsels, and had no inclination to obey his just commands. That they were really ignorant of what the prophets had delivered concerning the Messiah; for, had they understood their predictions, they would have known that one of his principal characters was, to understand the perfections and will of God more fully, and explain them to the sons of men more clearly, than any other messenger ever before sent from the Most High. And that would they attentively consider the doctrines he delivered, they would soon perceive that character remarkably fulfilled in him, and be convinced that he was the true and long promised Messiah.

Notwithstanding the power and solidity of these arguments, yet they were far from removing the malice and prejudice of our Lord's enemies. Many of the people, however, convinced by the many powerful miracles he had wrought, and the unanswerable reasons he had advanced in support of his character, believed in him, and affirmed publicly in the temple, that he was the Messiah. The Scribes and Pharisees were highly provoked at this attachment of the common people to Jesus; and, therefore, on the last and great day of the feast, they met in council, and resolved to send proper officers to apprehend him, and bring him before them, resolving, if possible, to find some accusation against him, whereby they might be empowered to put him to death.

While the heads of the Jewish nation were concerting these measures against our Lord, he was employed in preaching the doctrine of the Gospel to the people in the temple, the subject of which was the short time he had to remain on earth. He told them, that his ministry was drawing to a period, and therefore they should, during the short time it was to last, be very careful to improve every opportunity of hearing his word: that they should listen, with the greatest attention, to every discourse, in order that their minds might be stored with the truths of

the Almighty, before he returned to his Father; for that, after his departure, they should earnestly wish for the same opportunities of seeing him, and hearing his instructions, but that they should never obtain them. *Yet a little while (said he) am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come.*

The Jews, who did not understand that our Blessed Saviour alluded to his own death, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of the Majesty on high (whither their sins would not permit them to follow him) were struck with amazement at this part of his doctrine, and imagined, that he intended to leave Judea, and preach to their brethren dispersed among the Gentiles. But this supposition was not sufficient; because if he did go and preach among the Gentiles, they thought it was not impossible for them to follow him thither. Then said the Jews among themselves, *Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come.*

Just at the time the Jews were in this state of surprize and confusion at our Lord's mysterious expression, the water from Siloam was brought into the temple, according to the appointment of the prophets Haggai and Zachariah. One part of this water they drank with loud acclamations, in commemoration of the mercy shewed to their ancestors, who were relieved by a stream which miraculously flowed from a rock, and refreshed a whole nation, then ready to perish with thirst in a dry and sandy desert. The other part of the water they poured out as a drink offering to God, accompanying it with their prayers, for the former or latter rain to fall in its season, the whole congregation singing the following passage: *With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.* Isaiah xii. 3.

It was the custom of our Blessed Lord to deliver moral instructions in allusion to any occurrences that happened in the course of his peregrinations. Accordingly he took this opportunity of inviting, in the most affectionate man-

ner, all who were desirous of knowledge and happiness, to come to him and drink, alluding to the ceremony they were then performing. And to encourage all such as were desirous of believing in him, he promised them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which he represented under the similitude of a river flowing out of their belly. *If (said he) any man thirst let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* John vii. 37, 38.

While our Lord was thus preaching to the people in the temple, the officers from the council came to apprehend him; but finding that the topic of his discourse was of a very singular nature, and that he appeared to deliver himself with remarkable fervor, their curiosity induced them to listen to him with the most serious attention. The consequence of this was, that the rage with which they had come was melted away: the sweetness of his pronunciation, and the plainness and perspicuity of his discourse, elucidated the beauties of truth, and caused them to shine forth with the most distinguished lustre. His very enemies, therefore, who were come from the council on purpose to apprehend him, were astonished: the greatness of the subject, made, as it were, visible by the Divine speaker, filled their understandings: the warmth and tenderness with which he delivered himself, penetrated their hearts; they felt new and uncommon emotions, and being overwhelmed with the greatness of their admiration, were fixed in silence and astonishment: they condemned themselves for having undertaken the business on which they were sent, and returned without performing it.

As soon as the officers returned to the council, they were asked why they had not brought with them Jesus of Nazareth? They told them they could not execute their office, because, said they, *never man spake like this man.*\* This reply enraged the council, who reviled them

\* In this answer there are two things worthy of particular notice. 1st. The power of Christ's preaching to change the temper of men's minds; for these men went with hearts alienated from Christ, and with intent to apprehend and carry him before the council, but they

for presuming to entertain a favorable opinion of one whom they had pronounced an impostor. It is strange, said they, that you, who are not ignorant of our sentiments concerning this person, should entertain a favorable opinion of him. Has any person of rank, or celebrated for their knowledge of the laws, believed in him? Are not his followers the very dregs of the people, who are totally ignorant of all the prophecies concerning the Messiah?

The officers did not make answer to these railing accusations of their masters; but Nicodemus (who was one of the council, had conversed with our Lord, and was, indeed, a secret disciple of his) seeing with what violence his enemies were bent against him, could not forbear interposing in his behalf, by urging the unlawfulness of condemning a person without hearing; so that, after some reflections thrown upon *him*, as a favorer of our Lord, the assembly broke up without proceeding any farther against him, because, indeed, as yet *his time was not fully come.*

In the evening of the same day our Blessed Lord went to the Mount of Olives, about a mile from the city, and where he sometimes used to pass the night with his apostles. Early the next morning he returned to the temple, and as he was teaching the people that were gathered about him, the Scribes and Pharisees brought in a woman taken in the act of adultery, and desired him to give his judgment in the case. Their purpose was, to find an occasion of accusing him, either for assuming a judicial power if he condemned her, or, of nulling the law if he acquitted her. But our Lord (seeming as if he did not take notice of what they said) stooped down, and wrote something\* with his finger on the dust of the

returned with great admiration at his excellency and worth. 2dly. The honesty and integrity of these men is very remarkable: for they did not return with a pretence that they feared the multitude, and, therefore, thought it dangerous to apprehend him; but ingenuously confessed that they could not prevail with themselves to lay violent hands upon a person whose discourses were so excellent and divine.

\* It is generally agreed, that upon this occasion, our Lord wrote some memorable sentence, or other, but what the sentence was, the conjectures of learned men have been various. The two most general opinions are, first, that it was the reproof against a rigid and un-

pavement ; till, upon their importuning him for an answer, he raised himself up, and (looking steadfastly at them) said, *He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone;*\* after which he again stooped down, and wrote as before. This unexpected answer baffled the designs of these invidious accusers, who, being thoroughly convinced of their own crimes, retired one by one, and left the woman ; so that when our Lord raised himself up again, and found her only by him, he asked what was become of her accusers, and whether any one of them had condemned her. The woman answered in the negative ; upon which our Lord said to her, *Neither do I condemn thee. Go ; and sin no more.* The wisdom, knowledge and power of our Blessed Saviour, were eminently displayed on this occasion ; his wisdom in defending himself against the malicious attempts of his enemies ; his knowledge in discovering the secrets of their hearts ; and his power, in making use of their own consciences to render their artful intentions abortive.

After this interruption our Blessed Lord returned to the business of instructing the people, and in a sublime

charitable temper, which occurs in his Sermon on the Mount : *Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye ?* And secondly (which appears the most probable of the two) that it was the very words, which, upon his raising himself up, he pronounced to the woman's accusers : *He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone,* John viii. 7.

\* According to the laws of Moses, the punishment to be inflicted on a person convicted of adultery was, that he should be led out of the city, and stoned with stones till he died, and that the hands of the witnesses should be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people, Deut. xvii. 7. It is in allusion to this passage that our Saviour says, *Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone*, because it ill becomes those who are guilty either of the same, or greater crimes, to be so very zealous for the punishment of others. This, however, is not meant to prevent those magistrates, who are entrusted with the execution of the laws, from putting them in force against malefactors, even though themselves are not entirely exempt from sin ; but it still reminds them, that they should execute judgment with compassion and tenderness, and as much moderation as the law will allow them, considering that they themselves are not free from guilt, but as deserving of punishment for other sins, as those poor creatures are, who have fallen into crimes, which are punishable by human judicature.

discourse, opened several great mysteries of Christianity, particularly his Divine mission and co-equality with the Father. In displaying the first of these he made use of the following words: *I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* This assertion gave great offence to the Scribes and Pharisees, who told him he must be a deceiver because he boasted of himself. The reply our Lord made to this was to the following effect: You are not to suppose that I call myself the light of the world from a principle of pride and falsehood; the title justly belongs to me; nor would you yourselves refuse to acknowledge it, did you know from what authority I received my commission, and to whom, when I have executed it, I must return. But of these things ye are totally ignorant; you judge according to outward appearances, and condemn me, because I do not destroy those (as you vainly think the Messiah will do) who refuse to submit to his authority. But the design of the Messiah's coming is very different from your mistaken notions; he is not to destroy, but to save the children of men. *Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go: but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.* He added, that if he should condemn any person for unbelief, the condemnation would be just, because his mission was true, being confirmed by his own testimony, and that of his heavenly Father, by whose authority, and agreeable to whose will, all his sentences would be passed. *And yet if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.*

Our Blessed Lord, having thus asserted the divinity of his mission, and shewn that his judgment was just, next proceeded to inform them, that the Father himself bore witness to the truth of his mission. You surely cannot complain even if I should punish you for your unbelief, because you are, by your own laws, commanded to believe the testimony of two witnesses, that my mission is evidently true. The actions of my life, which are perfectly agreeable to the character of a messenger from heaven, bear sufficient witness of me, and the Father, by the

miracles he has enabled me to perform, beareth witness of me; ye are therefore altogether culpable in objecting to my mission. *It is written in your law, that the testimony of two is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me, beareth witness of me.* John viii. 17, 18.

Having said this, the Scribes and Pharisees asked our Lord where was the Father, the other witness to whom he appealed? In answer to this he told them, that their conduct sufficiently demonstrated that they were strangers both to him and his Father; for had they known who he was, they must have known who it was he called his Father. That had they been convinced he was the Messiah, they must also have been convinced that the Father was no other than that Omnipotent Being who created and upheld all things by the word of his power. *Ye neither know me (said he) nor my Father; if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.*

After our Lord had said thus much relative to his mission and co-equality with the Father, he proceeded to inform the people of the great abilities he had to give eternal life to his followers, and the necessity there was of believing in him, which he said would be more evident after his crucifixion; and thence taking occasion to expose the wickedness and degeneracy of those who sought to take away his life, and telling them how unlike to the behavior of the sons of Abraham (whom they boasted themselves to be) such causeless and inveterate malice was, he so provoked them with his severe reflections, and especially with the superiority which he claimed above Abraham, that they took up stones to cast at him; but our Lord, by a miraculous power, escaped their malice, and passing unhurt through the crowd, retired out of the temple.

Before our Lord left Jerusalem, the seventy disciples, whom he had sent to preach the Gospel, returned from their journey, and ministry, greatly rejoicing, because the very devils, by virtue of his name, had been subjected to them. *Lord (said they with extacy) even the devils are subject unto us, through thy name!* Upon this our Lord promised them still greater success, and invested them

with power to tread upon the most venomous beasts, and all the malignant instruments of Satan, without the least hurt to themselves. He at the same time gave them assurance of a blessing which was more peculiarly theirs, viz. that their names were recorded in heaven; after which he broke out into a rapture of joy, glorifying God for having revealed the mysteries of the Gospel to the simple and ignorant, and more particularly to his disciples, who, by virtue of that revelation, enjoyed an happiness which many of the wise and great had in vain desired.

As soon as our Blessed Lord had finished his discourse with his disciples, a certain scribe, a doctor of the law, stood up, and asked him, what was necessary to be done for the attainment of that eternal life which he was so very liberal in promising to his followers. In answer to this our Lord remitted him to the law, turning his own weapons against himself. He asked him what was written in the law, of which he professed himself a teacher? The scribe answered, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.* To this our Lord replied, *Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live.* Perform these commands, and thou wilt fulfil the duties of an Israelite: for on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets,

The scribe (who, in all probability, did not expect such an answer) being conscious of his own defects, and, that he did not possess the qualities necessary for obtaining eternal life, was willing (as the sacred historian informs us) to *justify himself*; that is, was willing to stifle the rising suggestions of his own conscience, and at the same time, to make a shew of his own devotion. In order to this he asked our Lord, *And who is my neighbor?* A question very natural to be asked by a bigotted Jew, whose narrow notions led him to despise all who were not of his own fold; all who were not the natural descendants of his ancestor Abraham.

But to remove the obstinate and uncharitable attachment of the Jews to their own principles, open their hearts to a more generous and noble way of thinking, and

shew them the only foundation of true love, and the extensive relation they and all mankind stood in to each other, our Blessed Lord answered the scribe's last question by delivering the following most beautiful and instructive parable.

A certain person in his journey from Jerusalem to Jericho, had the misfortune to fall into the hands of robbers, who not content with taking his money, stripped him of his raiment, beat him in a deplorable manner, and left him for dead. While he continued in this miserable condition, utterly incapable of assisting himself, a certain priest happened to travel the same road; *and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.* And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed on the other side. So little compassion had these ministers of religion for a brother in the most deplorable circumstances of distress, that they continued their journey, without offering to assist so miserable an object, notwithstanding their sacred characters obliged them to perform, on every occasion, the tender offices of charity and compassion. It was a brother, a descendant of Abraham in distress; and therefore those hypocrites could offer no reasons to palliate their inhumanity. Their stony hearts could behold the affectionate Israelite, lying in the road naked and cruelly wounded, without being the least affected with his distress.

Though these teachers of religion were hypocrites, and wholly destitute of grace and charity, compassion glowed in the heart of a Samaritan, who, coming to the spot where this helpless object lay, ran to him; and though he found him to be a person of a different nation, and one who professed a religion opposite to his own, yet the hatred which had been instilled into his mind from his earliest years, and every objection arising from the animosity subsisting between the Jews and Samaritans, were immediately silenced by the tender sensations of pity, awakened by the sight of such complicated distress; his bowels yearned towards the miserable object; though a Jew, he flew to him, and assisted him in the most tender manner.

It was the custom in these eastern countries for travellers to carry their provisions with them: so that this compassionate Samaritan was enabled, though in the desert, to give the wounded man a little wine to recruit his spirits. He also bound up his wounds, pouring into them wine and oil, placed him on his own beast, and walked himself on foot to support him. In this manner he conducted him to an inn, took care of him during the night; and in the morning, when business called him to pursue his journey, recommended him to the care of the host, left what money he could spare, and desired that nothing might be denied him; for whatever was expended he would repay at his return.

Having finished the parable, Jesus turned himself to the lawyer, and asked him, *Which now of those three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?* The lawyer, struck with the truth and evidence of the case, replied, without the least hesitation, *He that shewed mercy on him.* Upon which Jesus replied, *Go, and do thou likewise.* Perform all the good actions in thy power, extend thy kindness to every one, who stands in need of thy assistance, whether he be an Israelite, an Heathen, or a Samaritan. Consider every man as thy neighbor in respect to works of charity, and make no enquiry with regard to his country or religion; but only with regard to his circumstances.

A short time after this our Blessed Lord, accompanied by his apostles, left Jerusalem in order to return to Galilee. In the evening of the first day's journey, he stopped at a small village called Bethany, where he was joyfully received by a woman named Martha, who, with her sister Mary, and her brother Lazarus, were highly in favor with him. Martha was desirous of expressing her regard for the Divine guest, by providing for him and his disciples the best entertainment in her power: but her sister, who was of a more contemplative disposition, sat quietly at the feet of Jesus, listening, with the utmost attention, to his doctrine and heavenly instructions. Martha, being greatly fatigued with the burthen of the service, complained to Jesus of the little care Mary took to assist her. *Lord (said she) dost thou not care that my*

*sister has left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help me.* But Martha's officiousness incurred a reproof from our Lord, who, at the same time, commended Mary for her attentive application to his instructions. *Martha, Martha, (said he) thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.* Luke x. 41. 42.

Soon after our Blessed Lord had returned to Galilee, as he was one day praying with his disciples in a private place, they, taking it into consideration how necessary it was for them to be directed in the right performance of their duty, begged of him to compose a form of prayer for their use, as John the Baptist had done for his disciples. In compliance with this request, our Lord not only gave them the same excellent *form* (called the *Lord's Prayer*) which he had given them in his Sermon on the Mount, but encouraged them likewise, from the consideration of God's goodness and fatherly affection (far more indulgent to his children than any earthly parents were to theirs) to be constant in their petitions to him, telling them, that if they solicited with fervor, importunity, and an indefatigable perseverance, they need not doubt of a most gracious answer to their humble requests.

Not long after this, upon our Lord's curing a demoniac that was dumb, the Pharisees renewed their old senseless cavil of his ejecting devils by Beelzebub, which he confuted by the same arguments he had formerly used on a like occasion; and when they again demanded of him a sign from heaven, he again made them the same reply, namely, that no greater sign should be given them than the sign of the prophet Jonas, alluding to the time when he was to remain three days and three nights in the chambers of the tomb.

The next day, after our Lord had been preaching to the people, he sat himself down, with his disciples, to eat, without previously using the Jewish ceremony of washing the hands. This gave great offence to the Pharisees, upon which our Lord took occasion from thence (as he had before done) to speak severely against their

ridiculous superstition, in affecting outward neatness in their manner of living, while they neglected to cleanse their souls from internal pollution. He then proceeded to reproach both them and the Scribes, the teachers of the law, with their pride and prevarication, their hypocrisy and spirit of persecution, at which they were so exasperated, that they used all possible methods to ensnare him in his discourse, and to find some accusation, whereby they might destroy him.

One of the company, seeing with what authority our Lord reproved, and determined among the people, besought him to arbitrate between him and his brother concerning an estate which had lately fallen to them; but this office he chose to decline, and from thence took occasion to preach against covetousness, or placing our felicity in worldly possessions; and, to enforce this, he propounded the parable of a certain rich man, who, when he had acquired a very considerable estate, proposed indulging himself in voluptuousness, but was disappointed of his design by the intervention of sudden death.

He therefore exhorted his disciples not to be too anxious about the things of this world, but to place their dependence on God's Providence, who, having promised them a kingdom in heaven, would not fail of supplying them with what was necessary here. He then exhorted them to charity, to watchfulness, to preparation against the day of judgment, or the arrest of death, and (under the emblem of stewards, or governors, in great men's houses) recommended gentleness and temperance, and particularly cautioned them against indulging themselves in any kind of excess.

While our Lord was thus discoursing to his disciples and the multitude, news was brought him that Pilate, the Roman governor, had caused a great number of Galileans, to be massacred while they were offering their sacrifices at the altar;\* as also that another sad accident had hap-

\* It is generally imagined that this piece of history relates to the sedition which Judas Gaulonites raised against the Roman governor in Judea, when he, and one Saddueus, a Pharisee, possessed the people with a notion, "that taxes were a badge of their slavery; that they ought to acknowledge no sovereign but God himself, nor

pened at Jerusalem, where, by the falling of the tower of Siloam\* no less than eighteen persons were killed. The Jews thought these were Providential punishments on the sufferers for their having been greater sinners than their neighbors; but our Lord told them that was not the case, and that their sufferings tended only to lead others to repent, which if they did not do, they would, in all probability, meet with the like or worse judgments. He then, to engage them all to a speedy repentance, related to them the parable of the fig-tree, which the master of the vineyard ordered to be cut down, because, for three years, it had not borne any fruit; but, upon the gardener's promising to use a more than ordinary care and diligence about it, he was prevailed on to let it stand one year longer, but, with this determination, that, if it still continued *unfruitful*, he would not then fail to cut it down.

By this parable our Blessed Lord represented the goodness of God towards the Jews, in giving them the outward dispensations of religion, and informed them of the improvements they should make of these advantages, and the punishment that would be inflicted on them, in case they slighted such benevolent offers. He also represented by it, in a very beautiful manner, the unbounded mercies of the Almighty in sparing them at the intercession of his Son, and giving them a farther time of trial, and still greater advantages, by the preaching of him and his apostles; concluding with an observation, that if they

pay any tribute, but to his temple." It was very probably in Galilee, where this Judas first broached these sentiments, and there acquired such a multitude of followers and abettors, as made Josephus call him Galileus, as well as Gaulonites. And, indeed, his followers in general, though they were of different provinces by birth, obtained the same name. But when they came to Jerusalem, at one of the great festivals, and began to spread these seditious notions against Cæsar, Pilate, who was then the Roman governor, caused a considerable number of them to be slain in the temple, while they were sacrificing at the altar.

\* The fountain of Siloam rose at the foot of the wall of the east part of the city of Jerusalem. The tower, called after its name, was, doubtless, built upon the wall, not far from it; and, being now become ancient, might fall upon such a number of people, either passing by, or standing under it.

neglected this last opportunity, it would certainly be attended with the most fatal consequences.

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## CHAP. IX.

*Our Lord removes the complaint of a woman who had been deformed eighteen years, and confutes the ruler of the synagogue. Goes to Jerusalem, and there gives sight to a man, who had been born blind. The Pharisees endeavor to destroy the force of this miracle, and for that purpose strictly examine the person relieved, who boldly asserting it was Christ that had performed it, they excommunicate him from the synagogue. Our Lord shews the Pharisees to be false guides, and himself the true one; and, upon asserting his divinity, is in danger of being stoned. He leaves Jerusalem, and retires to Bethabara. Explains to the people the great difficulty of attaining salvation. Is warned to depart the country, in order to escape the resentment of Herod. Predicts the fate of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Cures a man of the dropsy, recommends humility, and represents the different success of the Gospel. Informs the people what qualifications are necessary for them to become Christians, and vindicates his own conduct in conversing sometimes with sinners. Shews the manner in which we are to employ our riches, and the miserable consequence of uncharitableness. Reminds his disciples of several duties, especially of humility, and cautions them against being deluded by false prophets.*

IT was the custom of our Blessed Lord to preach to the people on every sabbath, in one of the Jewish synagogues. While he was one day thus employed, he observed a woman, who, for the space of eighteen years, had labored under a great state of infirmity, by which her body was so bent that she was not able to raise herself upright. Here was a proper object for his compassion and power to exert themselves; and therefore calling the woman to him, he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she became strait, and glorified God.

This distinguished display of Divine power and goodness, instead of being considered by the master, or ruler

of the synagogue, in its proper light, so highly offended him, that he openly testified his displeasure, and reproved the people as sabbath-breakers, because they came on that day to be healed. *There are six days (said this surly ruler to the people) in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day.*

But our Lord soon silenced this hypocritical Pharisee, by shewing him that he had not deviated from their own avowed practice. They made no scruple of loosing their cattle and leading them to water on the sabbath-day, because the mercy of the action sufficiently justified them for performing it. And surely this action of loosing a woman, a rational creature, that had been bound by so afflicting a complaint during the tedious interval of eighteen years, was abundantly justified: nor could this bigotted ruler have thought otherwise, had not his reason been blinded by his superstition. *Thou hypocrite (said our Lord to him) doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed; and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.* Luke xiii. 15, &c.

The Feast of Dedication was now approaching, in consequence of which our Lord, after several removals, repaired again to Jerusalem, where, as he was walking in the streets on the sabbath-day, he saw a poor man who had been blind from his birth. The sight of so affecting an object could not fail of exciting the compassion of the benevolent Saviour of mankind: nor could the affronts and indignities he had received from the Jews hinder him from *working the works of him that sent him*, and dispensing blessings on that rebellious and ungrateful nation. Accordingly, he beheld this poor blind man, not with a transient view, but fixed on him the eyes of his Divine compassion, and presented him with the riches of his adorable love.

The disciples observing the affectionate regard of their Master, towards this object of compassion, and imagining that he was going to give another instance of his Divine goodness, asked him, whether the man's blindness was occasioned by his own sin, or the sin of his parents? They had often heard their Master say, that afflictions were generally the punishment of particular sins; and had learned, from the law of Moses, that sin was the fruitful source of evil, and that the Lord punished the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. Their Master kindly answered, that neither his own, nor the sins of his parents, were the immediate cause of this peculiar punishment; but that he was born blind, *that the works of God should be made manifest in him*; particularly his sovereignty in bringing him blind into the world, his power of conferring the faculty of sight upon him, and his goodness in bearing witness to the doctrine by which men were to be saved.—By this pertinent reply of the Saviour of the world, we may learn, that a curious enquiry into the afflictions of other men should be carefully avoided; and that we ought to suppose every calamity inflicted on mankind as directed by Providence for the advancement of his glory: that whatever miseries we behold in others, we must not impute them to their personal sins, lest, like the disciples in the case before us, we assign to sin what owes its origin to the glory of our Maker.

Our Blessed Lord, having assigned the cause of this person's blindness, namely, *that the works of God should be made manifest in him*, added, *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work*; intimating to his disciples, and all that were present, his unwearied labor in the work of his Almighty Father. In this he was employed day and night, during the time of his sojourning in the flesh. To this alone he directed all his thoughts and all his actions. This he esteemed even as his meat and drink; and for this he suffered the neglect of his ordinary food, that he might finish the blessed, the beneficent work of human salvation.

It was now the sabbath-day, and the Blessed Jesus was going to perform a miracle, in which there was to be

a small degree of servile work. He therefore told his disciples that they need not be surprized to see him work miracles of that kind on the sabbath; for though they should imagine that he might defer them till the day of rest was over, his time on earth was so short, that he was obliged to embrace every opportunity that offered of working miracles. He might, perhaps, chuse to perform this work on the sabbath, because he knew the Pharisees would, for that reason, enquire into it with the utmost attention, and, consequently, render it more generally known. But, be this as it may, our Lord took occasion, at this time, to speak of himself as one appointed to give light also to the minds of men involved in darkness. *As long as I am in the world* (said he) *I am the light of the world.* From this expression it evidently appears that our Saviour's miracles were designed not only as proofs of his mission, but also as specimens of the power he possessed as the Messiah. For example, by feeding the multitude with the meat that perished, he signified that he was come to quicken, and nourish mankind, with the *bread of life*, that sovereign cordial, and salutary nutriment of the soul. His giving sight to the blind was a lively emblem of the efficacy of his doctrine to illuminate the blinded understandings of men. His healing their bodies represented his power to heal their souls, and was a specimen of his authority to forgive sins. His casting out devils was an earnest of his victory over Satan and all his powers. His raising particular persons from the dead was the beginning of his triumph over death, and a demonstration of his ability to accomplish a general resurrection; and, in a word, his curing all promiscuously, who applied to him, shewed, that he was come, not to condemn the world, but to save, even the chief of sinners.

The great Redeemer of mankind, having declared the salutary purposes of coming into the world, proceeded to perform the great miracle he had designed in the presence of the people. *He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation sent.) He went his way,*

*therefore, and washed, and came seeing.* John ix. 6, 7. It is evident, from former examples, that our Blessed Lord could very easily have performed this miracle without the assistance of any external application. Indeed, the method made use of by the great Redeemer on this occasion was so far from being likely to effect a cure, that it seemed adapted to produce a quite contrary effect. We must, therefore, conclude that it was intended farther to display his Divine power, and to convince the unbelieving Jews that he was the true and long expected Messiah.

This astonishing miracle produced a general curiosity and surprize among the people, and induced those who had seen this blind man in his dark and deplorable condition, to be very particular in their enquiries into the means of so singular a miracle. It was, in short, the subject of general conversation, and it is natural to think might, therefore, have proved the means of a general conversion; but, as too frequently happens, a perverse curiosity prevented its salutary effects. Some of the poor man's neighbors readily believed it, while others, though they did not absolutely condemn it, yet could not get over their doubts. *The neighbors, therefore, and they which before had seen him, that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him; but he said, I am he.*

The poor man (transported with gratitude and joy for the great benefit he had received) finding his neighbors doubtful of the identity of his person, proclaimed himself to be the very same whom they had lately seen begging in total darkness. I am he, thus wonderfully blessed with sight, by the peculiar mercy of God! I am he who was blind from my birth, whom ye have all seen, and many relieved, in my miserable distress! I am he who was involved in total darkness, but now enjoy the enlivening light of day!

This ample and frank acknowledgment of the fact excited the curiosity of the people to know how the miracle was performed. They therefore asked him, *How were thine eyes opened?* To which he replied, *A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes,*

and said unto me, *Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight.* They then asked him where the person was, who had performed so great a work: to which the man answered, *I know not.* For Jesus had retired while the man went to wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam, probably, as was his general custom, to avoid the applauses which would naturally have been given him by the multitude.

The neighbors, either stimulated by envy, or excited by a desire of having the truth of this extraordinary event searched to the bottom, took the man before the council, thinking them the proper judges of so mysterious a circumstance. No sooner was the man placed before the assembly, and the particulars related of what had passed, than the Pharisees began to question him, *how he had recovered his sight.* To which the man boldly answered, *He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.* On hearing this, and knowing the day on which the miracle was performed, the Pharisees declared that the Author of it could not be a prophet sent from God, because he violated the sabbath; but others gave it as their opinion that no deceiver could possibly work a miracle of that kind, because it was too great and beneficial for any evil person to have either the inclination or power to perform.

The council being thus divided in their opinion with regard to the character of Jesus, they asked the man himself what he thought of the person who had conferred on him the blessing of sight? To which he boldly and plainly answered, *He is a prophet.* Such of the council who were averse to believe the miracle, or in hopes of making the affair look intricate, now sent for the parents of the man, and asked them these three questions: Whether he was their son? Whether he was born blind? And whether they knew how, and by whom he was cured? To the two first questions they answered directly that he was their son, and was born blind; but, as to the last, they referred them to him, who (as they told them) was of age to answer for himself; not daring to say any more for fear of the Sanhedrim, who had made an order to ex-

communicate any person who should acknowledge Jesus to be Christ.

The Pharisees, finding that all attempts either to discredit, or disprove the fact, useless, had recourse to their usual method of calumniating the author of it. After repeating the questions they had before asked the man, and received the like answers, in order to draw him from the good opinion he had conceived of his benefactor, they bade him ascribe the glory of his cure to God, and not to look upon Jesus with any veneration, because he was a sinner and a sabbath-breaker, and consequently could not be a prophet sent from God. In answer to this the poor man told them, that it was very strange they should not perceive from whence the person was, whom God had endued with such a miraculous power as that of opening the eyes of one born blind, a thing that was never heard of before since the world began; and that therefore it must be evidently manifest to every impartial person that if he were not sent, and Divinely inspired, he could never have done such wonderful cures.

The Pharisees were not ignorant that this argument was conclusive; they felt its whole force, and well knew that it could not be resisted. Accordingly they did not attempt to answer it, but had recourse to abusive language and punishment. *Thou wast altogether born in sins* (said they to the poor man) *and doest thou teach us?* Dost thou pretend to instruct, in a matter of this kind, the guides of the people, and those who have rendered themselves eminent for their knowledge in the law? After having thus upbraided him, *they cast him out*; that is, they passed on him the sentence of excommunication, which was the highest punishment they had power to inflict.

But though the poor man was cut off from the Jewish society, yet he was soon made ample amends by being admitted into one where no unjust sentences can ever be passed, nor any member separated from it, namely, the church of Christ. Soon after his being excommunicated from the synagogue, his Divine benefactor, meeting him in the street, declared himself to him to be the Messiah; upon which the poor man, believing on him, immediately fell prostrate at his feet, and worshipped him.

After our Blessed Lord had received the poor man's homage, he directed his discourse to the people, in which (under the allegory of a shepherd and his sheep) he proved the Pharisees to be no better than blind guides, nay, than thieves and robbers, who had climbed up into the sheepfold, or made themselves rulers and governors in God's church, without any proper commission from him. Upon the same grounds he condemned all those false Christs, who before him had usurped the title of the Messiah, and asserted his own right to it by an argument that no other shepherd durst produce, viz. *his laying down his life for his sheep*, which he said, were to consist of Gentiles\* as well as Jews, and all together make up one flock under one shepherd.

Before the Feast of Dedication was concluded, as our Lord was walking Solomon's Porch,† several of the Jews went to him, desiring that he would tell them, in positive terms, whether or not he was the Messiah? Our Lord, knowing they did not ask this question for information, but to gain an opportunity of accusing him to the Romans as a seditious person, told them that they must form a judgment of him from his actions. *I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. Your unbelief is the effect of your attachment to this world, being unwilling to receive the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven; because you must*

\* These our Saviour calls *his other sheep* (John x. 16.) by way of anticipation, because he foreknew that many of the Gentiles (when once his Gospel came to be tendered to them) would give it a ready reception, be converted, and be baptized; and because the ceremonial law (which was as it were, the partition wall between the Jews and Gentiles) was shortly to be broken down, and the Gentiles admitted to the same privileges with those Jews who believed in his name.

† This porch consisted of some stately cloisters on the east side of the temple, and not far from the Court of the Gentiles. It was called Solomon's, either to preserve the memory of that great prince, or because it was built according to the order of that which he erected. In this porch our Saviour was walking, because, at that time, it was winter, and, therefore, he here found a covering from the inclemency of the weather; whereas, in the summer season, it was customary for the Jews to walk in the open courts of the temple.

then renounce all your fond hopes of temporal power and advantages. But, on the contrary, those who are of a meek and humble disposition, and their minds free from worldly passions, easily perceive the truth of my doctrine and miracles, and consequently are readily disposed to become my disciples. Nor shall such persons lose their reward; for I will willingly receive them, and make them partakers of eternal life in my Father's kingdom. And however assiduous malicious men may be, in endeavoring to hinder others from believing on me, they shall never be able to effect their purpose, though assisted by all the powers of darkness. For my heavenly Father, who hath given them to me, is far greater than them all; nor is any able to contend with him; and this powerful, this Almighty Being, and I are one. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

The Jews were so incensed at this last expression, which they considered as blasphemous, that they took up stones to cast at him, in conformity to the Mosaic law, which commands all blasphemers to be stoned. Our Lord seeing this, asked them, which of the beneficent miracles he had wrought in confirmation of his mission deserved such treatment? *Many good works* (said he) *have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do you stone me?* As if he had said, I have fed the hungry in the desert, I have healed the lame, I have cleansed the leper, I have cured the sick, I have given sight to the blind, I have cast out devils, and I have raised the dead: for which of these works are ye going to stone me? The Jews answered, *For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* We are far from thinking that thou deservest punishment for any good work thou hast done in favor of the afflicted and distressed; the punishment is intended to chastise thee for thy blasphemous speeches: for thou, though a weak mortal like ourselves, arrogantly as-

sumest the power and majesty of the Most High, and by claiming the incommunicable attributes of the Deity, makest thyself God.

The reply our Blessed Lord made to this was to the following effect: Has not the scriptures expressly called those *gods* who were commissioned to govern God's people, on account of their high office, and the inspiration of the Spirit, which was, though sparingly, bestowed upon them? Can you, therefore, impute to that person whom the Almighty hath sanctified and sent into the world to save lost mankind, and pay the price of redemption for all the sons of men; Can you impute blasphemy unto him, for taking upon himself the title of the Son of God? If my own assertion be not sufficient to convince you of my personal dignity, you must surely think that the many miracles I have wrought abundantly prove that they are the works of the Most High, as Omnipotence alone could perform them; and, therefore, that the Father and I are so united, that whatever I say or do, is approved of by the Almighty. "Is it not written in your "law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, upon "whom the word of God came, and the Scriptures can- "not be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath "sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; "because I said I am the Son of God? If I do not the "works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, "though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye "may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I "in him."

This reply, instead of satisfying the Jews, rather tended to enrage them the more; upon which our Lord, not thinking proper to hold any farther argument with so obstinate and head-strong a people, miraculously got from them, and thereby escaped that punishment they intended to inflict on him. *Therefore they sought again to take him; but he escaped out of their hands.*

As soon as the Feast of Dedication was over, our Lord left Jerusalem, and, crossing the river Jordan, retired to Bethabara, where great multitudes resorted to him both to hear his instructions, and to be healed of their diseases. Here his ministry was attended with very great success;

for the inhabitants of the country, remembering what had been told them by John the Baptist concerning Jesus, and being sensible that the doctrine and miracles of our Saviour were fully equal to what the Baptist had foretold, firmly believed him to be the Messiah; so that he not only made a great number of proselytes, but likewise considerably increased the number of his disciples.

During our Lord's stay in this part of Galilee a certain person one day put a singular question to him concerning the number of those that should be saved: *Lord, said he, are there few that be saved?* From this question our Lord took occasion to admonish his hearers, by telling them, That they ought to use their utmost endeavors to enter in at the *strait gate* of salvation, because the number of those who should not attain it would be large, that they ought to do it with all expedition, because, when once the gate was shut, and the means of salvation withdrawn, all pretences of having heard the glad tidings of the Gospel, and of having been conversant with him upon earth, would gain them no admittance. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence ye are.* Luke xiii. 24, 25. Our Lord then told them, that all workers of iniquity should be utterly excluded; and therefore the Jews, in particular, would have cause to lament, when they should see many strangers, from all parts of the earth, possessed of the glories of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the ancient prophets, while themselves should be thrust out, and, instead of the first, become the last. *And behold, these are last which shall be first, and these are first which shall be last.*

While our Lord was discoursing to the people on this and other topics, some of the Pharisees, who could not any longer bear with patience the power and authority which he had gained among the people, in hopes of getting rid of him, went and suggested the danger he was in from Herod Antipas, so long as he continued in Gali-

lee, which was part of his dominions. In answer to this piece of information, our Lord told the Pharisees, that, having but a short time to live, he was determined to devote it to the relief of the distressed, the curing diseases, and casting out devils; and as to Herod's designs against his life, they were altogether superfluous, because he foreknew that he was to suffer death at Jerusalem, which was the place appointed (as it were) for the slaughter of all the prophets. He then broke out into a most pathetic exclamation against the inhabitants of that city, reproaching them with rejecting the kind offers of the Gospel, and with killing the messengers sent from God; and then denounced the sad calamity that would, in a short time, overtake them. *Oh! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, (said he) which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not? Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, ye shall not see me until the time come, when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* Luke xiii. 34, 35.

After our Lord had finished this awful exclamation and prediction against the inhabitants of Jerusalem, he went into the house of a Pharisee of distinction to eat bread. It happened now to be the sabbath-day, and our Lord had not been long in the Pharisee's house, before there was brought unto him a man afflicted with a dropsy. This, no doubt, was a scheme projected by the Pharisees, in order (as they thought) to involve our Saviour in this difficulty—That either, by forbearing to heal at that time, he would betray his fear, and strengthen their superstitions with regard to such ritual observances; or else that by doing it, he must incur the censure and odium of a sabbath-breaker and a contemner of the law. But our Lord so ordered the matter as to accomplish what he saw fit without any opportunity given for his enemies to compass their ends by it. As soon as the afflicted person appeared, our Lord, who knew the secrets of their hearts, asked the Pharisees whether it was *lawful to heal upon the sabbath-day?* But they not chusing to give any answer to the question, Jesus laid his hands upon the dis-

eased person, and immediately his complexion returned, his body was reduced to its ordinary dimensions, and his former health and strength were instantly restored.

So surprizing a miracle, it might reasonably be thought, would have convinced the Pharisees, that the Author must have been endued with power from on high; but, instead of being persuaded that he was a person sent from God, and labored only for the benefit of the children of men, they were contriving how they might turn this miracle to his disadvantage. Our Lord, however, soon disconcerted their projects, by proving that, according to their own avowed practice, he had done nothing but what was truly lawful. *Which of you, (said he) shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straitway pull him out on the sabbath-day?* If a misfortune happens to one of your beasts, you make no scruple of assisting it on the sabbath, though the action may be attended with considerable labor: and surely I may relieve a descendant of Abraham, when nothing more is requisite than touching him with my hand. This argument was conclusive, it being so plain, that the most stupid could not avoid feeling its force, nor were the most malicious able to contradict it.

When the entertainment was nearly at hand, the guests appeared very anxious to obtain the uppermost places at the table; which being particularly observed by our Lord, he endeavored to convince them how commendable it was for a man to seat himself in a place *below*, rather than *above*, his rank and condition, because daily experience shewed, that humility was a virtue, which was so far from debasing, that it raised and exalted the person who practised it. "When thou art bidden (said he) of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place, and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself, shall

be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted."

Our Lord, having thus addressed the guests in general, next directed his discourse to the Master of the house in particular, whom he found to be totally regardless of the poor and needy. He gave him (and in him all others) the good advice of inviting the poor, the blind, the lame, who could not make any requital, rather than his own friends or rich acquaintance, who were able to return the compliment, to his entertainments, telling him that in so doing he might depend upon a recompence from God in the kingdom of heaven. "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, (said he) call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a *recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind. And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompence thee: for thou shalt be recompenced at the resurrection of the just.*"

On hearing these last words one of the company called out, *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.*\* From hence our Lord took occasion to represent the different success of the Gospel, the rejection of it by the Jews, and the call of the Gentiles. This he delivered under the emblem of a feast, to which those that were invited, upon sundry pretences, refused to come, so that the master of the house was obliged to send out into the streets and lanes of the city, and into the highways, to collect a sufficient number of guests, being determined, *that none of those, who were first invited, should taste of his supper.*†

\* It appears, from the parable which follows, that the *kingdom of God* here does not signify the *kingdom of heaven* in its most exalted sense, but only the *kingdom of the Messiah*, whereof this worldly-minded Jew here speaks according to the received sense of his nation, as of a glorious *temporal kingdom*, in which the Jews should *lord it over* the Gentile world, enjoy their wealth, and be provided with all those earthly blessings and delights in which they placed their felicity.

† By this feast is represented the Gospel Dispensation, and the bounty and infinite love of God, are signified by the greatness of it, and the numbers invited. The *first bidding* implies all the previous

After our Lord had delivered this parable he departed from the Pharisee's house, and being followed by a prodigious concourse of people, he explained to them what they were to trust to if they intended to become his disciples. He told them that they must renounce even some of their most lawful *affections*, and prepare themselves to undergo the most unjust *persecutions*, if they thought of properly professing his religion ; and therefore (that they might not fail in the day of trial) he advised them to consider well beforehand what such a profession would cost them : " For, as he who begins to build, and has not " money to accomplish it, leaves his work imperfect, and " himself becomes ridiculous ; or as he that designs to go " to war, and has not men or money enough to go " through with it, had better never have engaged in it ; so " he that undertakes to be a Christian, must resolve to re- " nounce all that is *precious*, and to bear all that is " *afflictive* to him in this world, otherwise he will never " be able to hold out." *Whosoever he be of you that for-  
saketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

Among the great multitudes that daily resorted to our Saviour to hear his discourses, were many Publicans and Sinners. This gave great offence to the Scribes and Pharisees, who murmured at his condescending goodness in so freely conversing with (what they called) such infamous people. But, to vindicate himself in this respect, he compared his conduct to that of a man, who, having

notices of the Messiah, by which the law and the prophets were intended to prepare the Jews for the reception of him and his doctrine. The *second bidding*, when *all things were ready*, seems to import all that Jesus did, and taught, and suffered for their conversion and salvation, and all the testimonies and exhortations of his apostles, and other preachers of the Gospel, to the same purpose. The *excuses* sent for their absence, are the prejudices and passions, and worldly interest, which not only hindered those Jews from coming into the faith, but likewise disposed them to treat all attempts to win them over with the utmost obstinaey and contempt. The guests brought in from *abroad* to supply their places are the Gentile world, to whom (after the Jews had thrust it from them) the subsequent tenders of this grace and salvation were made. And he declarling that *none of those who were bidden should taste of this supper*, denotes the giving those Jews over to their own perverseness, and leaving them under that infidelity in which they have ever since continued.

an hundred sheep, left the ninety and nine in quest of the one which was gone astray: as also to that of a woman searching, with all diligence, for a piece of silver that was lost, and rejoicing exceedingly when she found it. By these comparisons he intimated the great care all prophets and pastors ought to take of those committed to their care, and the obligation they lay under of searching diligently for every wandering sinner, whose conversion is a grateful offering to the Almighty. *There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth.*

But to illustrate this doctrine still farther, and to shew that the greatest sinner, if convinced of his unworthy and lost condition in himself, might find grace and favor in the sight of God, upon a devout and serious repentance, he delivered a most beautiful parable, which is deservedly esteemed a master-piece of its kind; and the substance of which is to the following effect:

A certain man had two sons, the younger of whom, not content to live in his father's house, safe under his protection, and happy under his eye, desired his father to give him the portion of goods which fell to his share. The indulgent father did not hesitate to grant his request; but the ungrateful son had no sooner obtained what he asked of his parent, than he left the presence and neighborhood of so kind a father, and retired into a far country, where he had an opportunity of indulging, without restraint, his wicked inclinations; and there he wasted his substance in riotous living. Having thus consumed the portion given him by his indulgent parent, he began to feel the miseries of want, and, to add to his misfortunes, a terrible famine arose in the land; so that he soon became acquainted with the sharp stings of hunger. In this distressed condition, he hired himself to a citizen of that country, willing to try every expedient, rather than return to his kind, his merciful father, and humbly confess his faults. His master, from a just contempt of his former prodigality, employed him in the meanest and most contemptible offices; sending him into his field to feed swine. Behold here, ye sons of extravagance, a change indeed! Behold this thoughtless prodigal, reduced at once from a

life of voluptuousness and gaiety, a life of pleasure and excess, to a life of the most abject slavery, a life of penury and want! Nay, so great was his hunger, so prodigious his distress, that he would have been contented, in this miserable state, to have satisfied the cravings of hunger with the most indifferent kind of food; but no man relieved him, no man shewed the least compassion for him; so that the very swine were in a better condition than this wretched prodigal.

Thus miserably reduced, he was brought to himself; he had hitherto been in a state of utter forgetfulness; but now began to reflect on his happy condition, while he continued with his father, before he had deviated from the paths of virtue, and to compare it with his present deplorable condition. *How many hired servants of my father, said he to himself, have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger?* I will therefore, undeserving as I am, have recourse to his mercy and favor. *I will arise and go to my father, for such he still is, and I, though wretched and lost, am yet his son;* I will therefore say unto him, *Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son:* that happiness is too great for me to expect or desire; I have, by my behavior, forfeited all the right I once had in so endearing, so valuable a title: *Make me as one of thy hired servants.* I desire nothing more, than that thou wouldest mercifully receive me even in the humble state of a menial servant.

Having thus made a firm resolution of throwing himself at the feet of his father, and imploring forgiveness for his past offences, he did not delay to put it immediately into execution; he arose, and with the utmost expedition went to his father.

A scene of tenderness and affection, amazingly pathetic, now presents itself to our view! His kind, his affectionate father saw him while he was yet afar off; his bowels yearned towards him, he had compassion on his lost, his ruined child: paternal fondness would not suffer him to forbear, he ran to meet him, he fell on his neck, he kissed him. Encouraged by this kind reception, the son fell down at his father's feet, and began to make con-

session of his faults, to plead his own unworthiness, to request his father's pardon: *Father, said he, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son*—He was not suffered to proceed any farther, the love of his parent prevented the rest; he commanded his servant to bring the best robe, and put it on him, to put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and to kill the fatted calf, that they might eat and be merry. *For this, my son, said he, was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.*

During this transaction, the elder brother was in the field, properly employed in his father's business; but returning from thence, and hearing the sound of mirth, music, and dancing, he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant? The servant replied, that his younger brother was returned, and that his father had killed the fatted calf, because he had received him safe and sound. This news greatly displeased the elder son; he was very angry, and refused to go in, upon which his father came out and intreated him; but he replied, *Lo! these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends; but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.* Luke xv. 29, &c.

His father, with the most amiable condescending tenderness, replied, *Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine: it was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.* Though he hath been so indiscreet in his conduct, yet he is both thy brother and my son; thou shouldst not, therefore, be angry, because he has repented, and is returned, after we thought him irrecoverably lost.

Thus beautifully did our Lord represent the work of grace on the heart of man, from the first conviction of sin to the absolute confession of it; shewing at the same time there can be no true confession, without a thorough consciousness of guilt, a sense of our lost state, and an entire reliance on the mercy of God through Christ our Lord.

By this parable our Blessed Lord (in the character of the *elder brother*) reproves the unjust murmurings of the Pharisees, who were displeased at his conversing with sinners, though the salvation of such was the main end of his coming into the world.

Having thus exposed the pride and envy of the Pharisees, he next reproved them for their covetousness, and then proceeded to instruct his disciples in particular, and the multitude in general, what was the proper use they were to make of their riches; which he displayed by relating the following parable of the artful steward. "There was, (said he) a certain rich man, who had a steward, and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, how is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship? for thou mayest be no longer steward." This severe reprimand, and the inward conviction of his own conscience that the accusation was just, obliged the steward to reflect on his own ill mismanagement of his master's affairs, and in what manner he should support himself when discharged from his servitude. "What shall I do? (said he) for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed." In this manner did he deliberate with himself, and at length resolved on the following expedient, in order to provide for himself after being discharged from his servitude. "I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, how much owest thou unto my lord? and he said, an hundred measures of oil; and he said unto him, take thy bill and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, an hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, take thy bill, and write fourscore."

The instruction our Lord gave to his disciples from this parable was, not that they should imitate the *injustice*, but the *forecast* and *policy* of this steward, by employing his *earthly* riches to make them friends in the person of the poor, that, when they came to leave this *transitory*

world, they might, by these means, be received into everlasting habitations in heaven; and that the *children of light* might become as prudent in things relative to their salvation, as the *children of this world* were, in the management of their *temporal* affairs.

This discourse made little or no impression on the Pharisees: being stupefied and intoxicated with sensual pleasures, they were deaf to every argument, however powerful, provided it was levelled against their worldly enjoyments. In order, therefore, to illustrate this truth, confirm his assertion, and rouse these hypocritical wretches from their lethargy, our Lord delivered the following most beautiful parable of the rich man and the beggar.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed "in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every "day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, "which was laid at his gate full of sores, and desiring to "be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's "table; moreover (so great was his misery, so exquisite "his distress) the dogs came and licked his sores." Thus wretched in life, the Almighty, at last released him, *the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom*. Nor could the rich man's wealth rescue him from the same fate, *the rich man also died and was buried*. But behold now the great, the awful change! *In hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off*, and the late despised and afflicted Lazarus, *in his bosom*. In this agony of pain and distress, he cried to Abraham, begging that he would take pity on him, and send Lazarus to give him even the least degree of relief, that of dipping the tip of his finger in water, to cool his tongue, for his torment was intolerable. "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulph fixed; so that they which would pass from hence

to you, cannot: neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Luke xvi. 24, &c.

The miserable wretch, finding it impossible to procure any relief for himself, was desirous of preserving his thoughtless relations from the like distress: "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." This also was a petition that could not be granted. They may learn, said Abraham, the certainty of the immortality of the soul, from the books of Moses and the prophets, if they will give themselves the trouble to peruse them attentively. To which the miserable object replied, that the books of Moses and the prophets had been ineffectual to him, and he feared would be so to his brethren. But if one actually arose from the dead, and appeared to them, they would certainly repent, and embrace those offers of salvation they had before slighted. *Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.* But Abraham told him, that in this he was greatly mistaken; for that if they refused to believe the evidence of a future state, contained in the writings of Moses and the prophets, the testimony of a messenger from the dead would not be sufficient to convince them. *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.*

There certainly is not a more awakening and alarming example than this parable, throughout the whole of the gospel. It is drawn in such lively colors, that many, in all ages of the church, have considered it not as a parable, but as a real history; but however this be, the important truths delivered in it are equally clear, and equally certain. They are designed to point out the difference between this state and a future, between the children of this world and the children of light, the former having had the portion of happiness here, but that of the latter being reserved for a glorious one hereafter.

Among the great numbers of people who attended our Lord wherever he went, some came out of necessity, others out of curiosity; some out of a spirit of devotion,

and others out of a spirit of captiousness, and with an intent to ensnare him from what he might say in his discourses. Of this last sort were the Scribes and Pharisees, who, taking the question of divorces to be somewhat intricate, put it to our Saviour, who, limiting the permission of such separations to the case of adultery only, reminded them of that strict and natural union between man and wife, which God had appointed at their first creation, and, consequently, was not to be disannulled by any human institution.

Here the Pharisees, thinking they had got the advantage of the argument, mentioned the precept of Moses, wherein he permitted the husband, in many cases, to give a bill of divorce to the wife; but to this our Lord observed, that, though under the Mosaic dispensation, God, knowing their obstinacy and perverse inclinations, allowed a dispensation on this point, by suffering divorces; yet, according to the original institution of marriage, it was not so; and therefore, to reduce the matter to its primary establishment, he determined, that all divorces for any less cause than that of fornication were illegal, and, on both sides, attended with adultery. On hearing this some of the disciples (thinking the engagement of too rigorous a nature) began to express their dislike of marriage; upon which our Lord told them, that with those who had the gift of continency a single life was the more conducive towards the attainment of the kingdom of heaven; but that those who had it not, and thought proper to marry, ought, by all means, to adhere to the first institution.

After this our Lord reminded his disciples of several things he had instructed them in before, viz. of the impossibility of preventing scandals and offences; of the duty of forgiving our brother his repeated transgressions; of the necessity and efficacy of faith, in order to be heard in our requests to God; of humility in the performance of our duty, because at the best we are but unprofitable servants, and especially of humility in our addresses to God, for which he gave them a parabolical instance in the behavior of a Pharisee and Publican, who went at the same time to the temple to worship.

The Pharisee, having an high opinion of his own righteousness, went far into the court of the temple, and there offered up his praises to God in these words: *God (said he) I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.* Having thus wrapped himself up in his own righteousness, he cast a scornful look at the poor publican, and then departed the temple.

But how different was the behavior of the humble publican? Impressed with a deep sense of his own unworthiness, he would not even enter the courts of the temple; but stood afar off and smote upon his breast, and in the bitterness of his soul, earnestly implored the mercy of Omnipotence: *And the publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast: saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.* Luke xviii. 13.

Specious as the Pharisee's behavior may seem, his prayer was an abomination to the Lord; while the poor publican, who confessed his guilt, and implored mercy, was justified in the sight of God, rather than this arrogant boaster. The parable sufficiently indicates, that all the sons of men stand in need of mercy; both the strict Pharisee, and the despised publican, with the whole race of mankind, are sinners; and consequently all must implore pardon of their benevolent Creator. We must all ascend to the temple, and there pour forth our prayers before the throne of grace; for there he has promised ever to be present, and to grant the petitions of all who ask with sincerity and truth, through the Son of his love.

The Pharisees, who waited for the coming of the Messiah, and had formed a romantic notion that he would appear with the utmost glory of a temporal prince, demanded of our Lord *when the kingdom of God* (whereof he had told them so much) *was to appear?* In answer to this our Lord told them, "that it should not appear with any outward pomp or splendor, as they vainly imagined; and that, in truth, it was already begun among them, though they had no discernment of it."

Having thus answered the Pharisees, our Lord, turning himself to his disciples, strictly cautioned them not to be deluded by false Christs and false prophets, who would pretend to shew them the kingdom of God where it was not. He told them, that before he could enter into his glorified state, he was to suffer many things, and be rejected by the Jews; but that, after his death, he would give incontestable proofs of his power and dominion, by the wonderful propagation of his Gospel, and by the vengeance he should take on the Jewish nation. He therefore exhorted them not to imitate the security of the people in Noah's time, or of the inhabitants of Sodom, nor to express any concern for the destruction of their country as did Lot's wife for the burning of Sodom; but to use their utmost care and diligence (when they saw the Roman armies advancing) not to be involved in the general calamity. And because, in involving some, and preserving others, there would be much of God's distinguishing Providence concerned, he therefore exhorted them to pray without fainting, or being discouraged at any thing; and to this purpose he propounded to them a parable, the substance of which was to the following effect.

In a certain city lived a judge, who being governed by atheistical principles, had no regard to the precepts of religion, and being very powerful did not care what was said of him by man; so that all his decisions were influenced merely by passion or interest. In the same city was also a widow, who, having no friends to assist her, was absolutely unable to defend herself from injuries, or procure redress for any she had received. In this deplorable situation she had recourse to the unjust judge, in order to obtain satisfaction for some oppressive wrong she had lately received: but the judge was so abandoned to pleasure, that he refused, for a time, to listen to her request; he would not give himself the trouble to examine her case, though the crying injustice pleaded so powerfully for this distressed widow. She was not, however, intimidated by his refusal; she incessantly importuned him, till, by repeated representations of her distress, he was wrought upon to do her justice, merely to free himself from her importunities. "Though (said he to him-

“ self) I fear not God, nor regard man; yet, because this widow troubleth me, I will see her righted, lest, by her continual coming, she weary me.”

The sentiment conveyed by our Blessed Saviour, in this parable, is very beautiful. We hence learn, that the cries of the afflicted will, by being incessantly repeated, make an impression even on the stony hearts of wicked men, who glory in their impiety, and laugh at the precepts of justice, virtue and religion; and, therefore, cannot fail of being regarded by the benevolent Father of the universe, who listens to the petitions of his faithful servants, and pours on their heads the choicest of his blessings.

## CHAP. X.

*Our Lord leaves Galilee, and, crossing the river Jordan, enters Perea, where he cures great numbers of people afflicted with various disorders. He kindly receives the little children brought to him to partake of his Divine benediction. Shews to the people the great danger of riches, and the rewards of a faithful adherence to him and his religion; which he displays under the parable of laborers in a vineyard. Is applied to by Martha and Mary in behalf of their brother Lazarus, who is sick; upon which our Lord goes to Bethany. In his way he cures Bartimeus, a blind man, and dines with Zaccheus, a publican, at whose house he delivers the parable of the servants entrusted with their lord's money. He arrives at Bethany, and raises Lazarus from the dead, to the great astonishment of all the spectators. The news of this miracle reaching Jerusalem, the Sanhedrim form the resolution of having him put to death, upon which he retires, for a short time, to Ephraim, a small place belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. He leaves Ephraim, and proceeds towards Jerusalem, in his way to which he stops at Bethany, and sups with Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. During his stay, Mary testifies her obedience, humility and respect, by anointing his feet with odiferous perfume, and afterwards wiping them with the hair of her head. Judas Iscariot repines at the loss of the valuable ointment, for which our Lord, after commending Mary's conduct, rebukes him for his avarice. Our Lord makes his public entry into Jerusalem, amidst the universal acclamations of the people, and on his near approach to the city publicly laments its impending fate.*

AFTER our Lord had been, for some time, preaching the doctrine of salvation in different parts of Galilee, he removed to Perea, a most beautiful district, situated on the east side of the river Jordan. Here he was followed by prodigious multitudes of people, whom he both taught, and cured of the respective distempers with which they were afflicted. In consequence of this many persons, thinking, perhaps, that his power would be as great in preventing, as in removing, disorders, brought their children to him, requesting that he would put his hands

upon them, and bless them. Our Lord's disciples, thinking it below the dignity of their Master to be disturbed and interrupted by infants, at first refused admittance to those who brought them; which being observed by Jesus, he reproved them for so doing, and withal recommended the innocence and simplicity of those babes as a pattern for their imitation. *Suffer (says he) little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.* He then ordered the children to be brought before him, which being done, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them; and having given some beneficial instructions to the multitude, he dismissed them, and departed.

A short time after this, a young person of great distinction and wealth, and who was likewise a ruler of the synagogue, meeting with our Lord, desired to know of him what he was to do in order to attain eternal life. *Good Master (said he) what good things shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* Though this young ruler appeared to pay great honor to our Lord, yet he was far from being sincere in his heart; for though he stiled him *good*, yet he did not believe that he was sent from God, as sufficiently appears from his refusing to observe the counsel given him. Our Lord well knew his secret intentions, and was perfectly acquainted with the inmost recesses of his heart; and accordingly rebuked him for his hypocritical address before he answered his question. *Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.* But as he had desired the advice of our Lord, who never refused it to any of the sons of men, he readily answered his question, by telling him that he must pay a strict attention to all the moral precepts of the law, and in particular to the commandments of the second table, which would be a certain sign of his keeping those of the first. The young ruler replied, that all these he had made it his study to observe from his youth; upon which our Lord, who knew his covetous temper, and was willing to touch him to the quick, told him, that if he was desirous of aiming at perfection in religion, his only way would be to sell his estate, give it to the poor, and come and be one of his disciples. *If thou wilt be perfect (said he) go and sell*

*that thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.* But the young ruler's heart was so fixed upon his riches, that he could not listen to this advice; he therefore went away very pensive and melancholy, being loth to part with his then possessions for any treasure in reversion.

This melancholy instance of the pernicious influence of riches over the minds of the children of men, induced our Lord to caution his disciples against things of such injurious tendency; which he did by shewing them how very difficult it was for a rich man to procure a habitation in the regions of eternal happiness. *Verily (said he) 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.

This answer of the Blessed Jesus was, however, far from satisfying his disciples, who had, doubtless, often reflected with pleasure on the high posts they were to enjoy in their Master's kingdom. Peter, who appears to have been particularly disappointed, addressed his master in the name of the rest, begging him to remember that his apostles had actually done what the young ruler had refused. They had abandoned their relations, their friends, their possessions, and their employments, on his account; and therefore they desired to know what re-

\* The expression, *it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle*, was a common proverb among the Jews, to express the great difficulty of a thing. The meaning is not, that it is *impossible*, but that, comparatively speaking, it is *very difficult* for those who are continually surrounded with pleasure, and grandeur, and temptations of this world, to preserve that habitual virtuous disposition of mind, which is necessary to qualify men for the life to come. The *deceitfulness of riches* blinds the eyes of men; the *pleasures of life* steal from them their understandings; *power* is very apt to lead them into ambition and tyranny; *plenty* into intemperance; and continual *prosperity* into a careless spirit, and a neglect and forgetfulness of God.

ward they were to expect for these instances of their obedience.

In answer to this, our Blessed Lord told Peter that they should not fail of a reward even in this life, for immediately after his resurrection, when he ascended to his Father, and entered on his mediatorial office, they should be advanced to the honor of judging the twelve tribes of Israel; that is, of ruling the church of Christ, which they were to plant in different parts of the earth. *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.* Math. xix. 28.

Having given this answer to Peter, our Lord next mentioned the rewards his other disciples should receive both in this world and the next, which he expressed in words to this effect: Those who have given up all for my sake shall be no losers in the end: their benevolent Father will not fail to support them during their long and painful journey to the happy Canaan, and raise them up friends who shall assist them with those necessaries they might have expected from their relations, had they not left them for my sake. Divine Providence will take care that they have every thing valuable that could be given them by their relations, or they could desire from large possessions. They shall, indeed, be fed with the bread of sorrow; but this shall produce joys, to which all the earthly pleasures bear no proportion; and, in the end, obtain everlasting life. They shall leave this vale of sorrow behind them, and fly to the mansions of their heavenly Father, the fountain of life and joy, where they shall be infinitely rewarded for all the sufferings they have undergone in this world. *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.* Matth. xix. 29, &c.

But, lest the disciples should not perfectly understand what he meant by the expression *the first shall be last, and the last first*, he delivered to them the following

parable of the householder, who, at different hours of the day, hired laborers to work in his vineyard. "The kingdom of heaven (says our Blessed Lord) is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call 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 supposed 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 thou not 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."

Such is the parable of the householder as delivered by our Saviour, and, from the applications contained in it, may be thus interpreted. The dispensation of religion, which God gave to mankind, in different parts of the world, are represented by the vineyard. The Jews, who were early members of the true church, and obliged to

obey the law of Moses, are the laborers which the householder hired early in the morning. The Gentiles, who were converted at several times, by the various interpositions of Providence, to the knowledge and worship of the true God, are the laborers hired at the third, sixth and ninth hours. And the invitation given at the eleventh hour, implies the calling of persons in the eve of life to the knowledge of the Gospel. The law of Moses was a heavy yoke; and therefore the obedience to its precepts was very clearly represented by those who bore the heat and burthen of the whole day. But the proselyte Gentiles paid obedience only to some particular precepts of the law; bore but part of its weight; and were therefore represented by those who were hired at the third, sixth and ninth hours: while those who regulated their conduct by the law of nature only, and esteemed the works of justice, piety, temperance, and charity, as their whole duty, are beautifully represented as laboring only one hour. When the evening was come, and each laborer was to receive his wages, they were all placed upon an equal footing, these rewards being the privileges and advantages of the Gospel. The Jews, who had borne the yoke of the Mosaic ceremonies, murmured when they found the Gentiles were admitted to its privileges, without being subject to their ceremonial worship. But we must not urge the circumstance of the reward so far as to imagine that either Jews or Gentiles merited the blessings of the Gospel, by their having labored faithfully in the vineyard, or having behaved as they ought to have done under their several dispensations. The glorious gospel, with all its blessings, was bestowed entirely by the free grace of God, and without any thing in men to merit it; besides, it was offered promiscuously to all whether good or bad, and embraced by persons of all characters. The conclusion, therefore, of this beautiful parable deserves our utmost attention: we should often seriously meditate upon it, and be careful of endeavoring, by every means in our power, *to make our calling and election sure.*

The celebration of the feast of the Passover being near at hand, our Lord determined, in his own mind, to leave

Perea, and proceed towards Jerusalem, in order to be present at that ceremony. Before, however, he left Perea, he received a message from Martha and Mary, two sisters who lived at Bethany, informing him that their brother Lazarus, for whom our Lord had a peculiar respect, was dangerously ill, and that there were little hopes of his recovery. But our Blessed Lord did not, for wise reasons to himself, pay immediate attention to this message, by going with all haste to the relief of the person diseased. He intended, on this occasion, to manifest the glory of God, as well as his own Divine power and mission, by a greater miracle than that of a simple cure, and therefore delayed going until Lazarus was dead.

Two days after this our Lord left Perea, and proceeded towards Bethany, which was in the direct road to Jerusalem. On the way he called his apostles aside, told them where he intended to go, and what would be the consequence. He repeated the prophecies concerning his future sufferings; and added, that though they should put him to death, yet that circumstance, instead of weakening, should increase their faith, especially as he would rise again the third day from the dead. “Behold (said he) 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 mocked, and 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. 32, 33.

As this prediction manifestly tended to the confirmation of the ancient prophecies, it must have given the greatest encouragement to his disciples had they understood and applied it in a proper manner; but they were so unacquainted with the Scriptures, that they had not any idea of what he meant. *And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them; neither knew they the things which were spoken.*

James and John (the two sons of Zebedee) were in particular so ignorant that they thought their Master, by his telling them he would rise again from the dead, meant that he would then erect his empire; and therefore, at the

instigation of their mother, begged that he would confer on them the chief posts in his kingdom; which they expressed, by desiring to be seated, the one *on his right hand, and the other on his left.*

The two apostles, James and John, had, ever since our Lord's Transfiguration, conceived very high notions of his kingdom, and, possibly, of their own merit also, because they, in particular, had been admitted to behold that miracle. But Jesus told them, they were ignorant of the nature of the honor they requested; and since they desired to share with him in glory, asked them, If they were willing to share with him also in his sufferings: *Ye know not what ye ask; are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?* Matth. xx. 22.

These two disciples, ravished with the prospect of the dignity they were aspiring after, replied, without hesitation, that they were both able and willing to share any hardship their Master might meet with, in the way to the kingdom. To which he replied, that they should certainly share with him his troubles and afflictions; but that they had asked a favor which was not his to give. “*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.*” Matth. xx. 23.

This ambitious request of the two brothers raised the indignation of the rest of the disciples, who thinking themselves equally deserving the principal posts in the Messiah's kingdom, were highly offended at the arrogance of the sons of Zebedee. Jesus, therefore, in order to restore harmony among his disciples, told them that his kingdom was very different from those of the present world, and the greatness of his disciples did not, like that of secular princes, consist in reigning over others in an absolute and despotic manner. “*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 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." Matth. xx. 25, &c.

Our Blessed Lord having thus argued to undeceive his apostles relative to the notions they entertained of the kingdom he was about to establish, proceeded on his journey towards Jerusalem. As he drew near to Jericho, attended by a numerous company, one Bartimeus, a blind man (who had long sat by the way-side begging, the only method he had of supporting a wretched existence) hearing the noise of a prodigious concourse of people passing by, and being informed that Jesus of Nazareth was among them, called aloud that he would *have mercy upon him*. The people who accompanied our Lord, supposing that the man asked alms, bade him cease his noise; but the benefit which he desired was of greater moment, and therefore, raising his voice, he, with more importunity, cried, *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou Son of David.*

This important request, and the manner of its being made, had the desired effect. Our Lord stood still, and called him to him, that, by his manner of walking, spectators might be convinced he was really blind. As soon as he approached, our Lord asked him what he requested with such earnestness? To which the beggar answered, that he might receive his sight. *What will ye that I shall do unto you?* He said, *Lord, that my eyes may be opened.* Having said this, our Blessed Lord touched his eyes, which he had no sooner done than he immediately received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God.

As our Lord was passing through Jericho, a certain man, named Zaccheus, of great wealth and figure among the publicans, was very anxious to see him; but, as he was a man of low stature, and could not gratify his curiosity in the crowd, he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree, where he could not fail of having a full view of him. When our Lord approached the place where he was, *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.* Luke xix. 5.

The publican immediately obeyed the Divine command, expressed his joy at our Lord's great condescension, and taking him to his house, shewed him all the marks of civility and respect in his power. But when the people saw our Lord was going to the house of a publican, they condemned his conduct, as not being conformable to the character of a prophet. Zaccheus heard the unjust reflections the people threw on him; and therefore was willing to justify himself before Jesus and his attendants. *And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold.* And Jesus said unto him, *This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham.* Our Lord, farther to convince the people that the design of his mission was to seek and to restore life and salvation to lost and perishing sinners, added, *The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

While our Lord continued in the house of Zaccheus, he spoke a parable to his disciples, who knowing his intentions of going to Jerusalem, vainly imagined, on his arrival there, that he would seat himself upon his throne, and assume his regal authority. The parable, therefore, which he delivered at this time, and which was designed to remove all such thoughts from their minds, was to the following effect: "A certain great man, born heir to a kingdom, went into a far country to take possession of it; but before he departed, he called his servants together, and gave each a sum of money to trade withal, until he should return. The reason of his journey to this foreign land was, because his own countrymen over whom he had a right to reign were obstinately set against him, and disclaimed him for their king. When, therefore, he had obtained his new kingdom, and returned home, he first called his servants, with whom he had entrusted his money, to an account, rewarding the diligent with gifts proportionate to their improvements, and punishing the negligent; and then taking cognizance of such of his countrymen, who, upon his going to be enthroned in another kingdom, disclaimed all obedience to him, he or-

dered them, in his presence, to be put to death as so many rebels."

In this parable are delineated the characters of three different sorts of men; namely, the true disciples of the Messiah, the hypocrites, and the openly profane; and the treatment these servants met with, represent the final sentences that will be passed upon them by the awful judge of the whole earth. The true disciples shall be rewarded with the honors and pleasures of immortality; the hypocrites stripped of all the advantages they so often boasted, and loaded with infamy; and the open enemies of Christ shall suffer punishment severe in proportion to the degree of their guilt.

But though this is the general sense of the parable, yet it has also a particular relation to the time when it was spoken; and intended to teach the disciples, that though they might imagine the Messiah's kingdom was speedily to be erected, and that they were soon to partake of its happiness, yet this was not to take place till after the death of their Master; and that they themselves must perform a long and laborious course of services, before they received their eternal reward. That after his resurrection, when he had obtained the kingdom, he would return from his seat of majesty, and reckon with all his servants, and reward every one according to the improvements he had made in the trust committed to his care; and that he would execute, in an exemplary manner, his vengeance on those who rejected his government, and did all in their power to hinder the erection of his kingdom among others.

After our Lord had delivered this parable, he left the house of Zaccheus the publican, and prosecuted his journey towards Jerusalem. By the time that he arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had been dead and buried four days; and several friends and relations from Jerusalem were come to condole with the two sisters, Martha and Mary, for the loss of their brother. On the first news of our Lord's approach Martha went out to meet him, but Mary, who was of a more melancholy and contemplative disposition, sat still in the house. As soon as Martha came into the presence of Jesus, she poured forth her complaints in

these words: *Lord (said she) if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* She, doubtless, entertained an high opinion of our Saviour's power: she believed that death did not dare to approach his presence; and consequently, if Jesus had arrived at Bethany, before her brother's dissolution, he had not fallen a victim to the king of terrors. But she imagined that it was not in his power to heal the sick at a distance; though at the same time, she seemed to have some dark and imperfect hopes, that our Blessed Lord would still do something for her. *But I know, said she, that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.* She thought that Jesus could obtain whatsoever he desired by prayer; and therefore did not found her hopes on his power, but on the power of God through his intercession. She, doubtless, knew that the great Redeemer of mankind had raised the daughter of Jairus, and the widow's son at Nain, from the dead; but seems to have considered her brother's resurrection as much more difficult, probably, because he had been longer dead.

In order to give encouragement to Martha's imperfect faith, our Lord told her, *Thy brother shall rise again.* As these words were delivered in an indefinite sense, with regard to time, Martha understood them only as an argument of consolation, drawn from the general resurrection, and accordingly answered, *I know that he shall rise again at the resurrection, at the last day.* She was firmly persuaded of that important article of the Christian faith, *the resurrection of the dead;* at which time she believed her brother would rise from the chambers of the dust. And here she seems to have terminated all her hopes, not thinking that our Lord would, at this time, call her brother from the sleep of death. Jesus, therefore, to instruct her in that great truth, told her, *I am the resurrection and the life.* I am the author of the resurrection, the fountain and giver of that life they shall then receive; and therefore can, with the same ease, raise the dead now, as at the last day. *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?* To which Martha replied, *Yea, Lord; I be-*

*liere that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.* I believe that thou art the true Messiah, so long promised by the prophets, and therefore believe thou art capable of performing every instance of power thou art pleased to claim.

Martha now seemed to entertain some confused expectations of her brother's immediate resurrection, and, leaving Jesus, ran hastily to inform her sister of all that had passed. Mary no sooner heard that our Lord was so near, than she immediately left her relations and friends (who only increased the weight of her grief) and with her sister flew to her Saviour. The Jews, who suspected they were going to weep over the grave of their brother, immediately followed them, and were eyewitnesses of the great miracle performed on the deceased Lazarus.

No sooner did Mary approach the great Redeemer of mankind, than she fell prostrate at his feet, and, in a flood of tears, poured forth her complaint in the same words which had been before used by her sister: *Lord (said she) if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* No wonder the compassionate Jesus was moved at so affecting a scene; on his side stood Martha, pouring forth a flood of tears; at his feet lay the affectionate Mary, weeping and lamenting her dear departed brother; while the Jews who came to comfort the afflicted sisters, unable to confine their grief, joined the solemn mourning, and mixed their friendly tears, in witness of their love for the departed Lazarus, and in testimony to the justice of the sisters' grief for the loss of so amiable, so deserving a brother. Jesus could not behold the affliction of the two sisters, and their friends, without having a share in it himself; his heart was melted at the mournful scene: *he groaned in spirit and was troubled.*

In order to remove the doubts and fears of these pious women, our Lord asked them where they had buried Lazarus? To which they replied, *Lord come and see.* On this our Lord, to shew his compassionate disposition for the distressed, and to point out to us, that the tender affections of the human heart, when kept in due bounds, that friendly sorrow, when not immoderate, and when

directed to proper ends, is consistent with the highest sanctity of the soul, joined in the general mourning; which he testified by the shedding of tears.

When the Jews saw our Lord weep, they were convinced that he loved Lazarus exceedingly; but some of them interpreted this circumstance to his disadvantage, for, according to their mean way of judging, they imagined that he had suffered him to fall by the stroke of death for no other reason but for want of power to rescue him. And, thinking the miracle said to have been wrought on Bartimeus at least as difficult as the curing an acute distemper, they called the former in question, because the latter had been neglected. *Could not this man (said they) which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?*

The Blessed Jesus, regardless of their question, but grieving at the hardness of their heart, and blindness of their infidelity, groaned again within himself, as he walked towards the sepulchre of the dead. At his coming to the grave, he said, *Take away the stone;* upon which Martha answered, *Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days;* intimating that her brother's resurrection was not, on that account, to be expected. But Jesus gave her a solemn reproof, to teach her that there was not any thing impossible with God; and that his power is not to be circumscribed within the narrow bounds of human reason. *Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?* As if he had said, have but faith, and I will display before thee the wonderful works of Divine Providence.

Martha's objections being thus obviated, she, with the rest, waited the great event in silence; and, in pursuance of the command of the Son of God, took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. Jesus had, on many occasions, publicly appealed to his own miracles, as the proofs of his mission, though he did not generally make a formal address to his Father, before he worked those miracles. But being now to raise Lazarus from the dead, he prayed for his resurrection, to convince the spectators that it could not be effected, without an immediate interposition of the Divine power. *Father (said he)*

*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 may believe that thou hast sent me.* John xi. 41, &c. I entertained no doubt of thy empowering me to do this miracle, and therefore did not pray, for my own sake; I well knew that thou hearest me always. I prayed for the sake of the people, to convince them that thou lovest me, hast sent me, and art continually with me.

After our Blessed Lord had returned thanks to his Father for this opportunity of displaying his glory, *He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.* This efficacious call of the Son of God awakened the dead: the breathless clay was instantly re-animated; and he who had lain four days in the chambers of the tomb obeyed immediately the powerful mandate. *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.*

Had our Blessed Lord, by his powerful word, unloosed the napkin wherewith Lazarus was bound before he came out of the sepulchre, it might have lessened the strength of the miracle in the eyes of the spectators. But he brought him out in the same manner he had been lying, and ordered them to loose him, that they might be better convinced of the miracle; for, in taking off the grave-clothes they had the fullest evidence of his death and resurrection. On the one hand, the manner in which he was swathed must soon have killed him had he been alive when buried; which consequently demonstrated, beyond all exception, that Lazarus had been dead several days before Jesus called him again to life. On the other hand, by the appearance of his lively countenance when the napkin was removed, his fresh color, and his active vigor, those who came near, and handled him, must be convinced that he was in perfect health, and, therefore, had the opportunity of proving the truth of the miracle by the closest examination.

There is something exceeding beautiful in the manner of our Lord's behavior on this occasion. He did not utter one upbraiding word either to the doubting sisters,

or the malicious Jews; nor did he let fall one word of triumph or exultation. *Loose him and let him go*, were the only words we have recorded. He was in this, as on all other occasions, consistent with himself—a pattern of perfect humility and absolute self-denial.

Such was the astonishing work wrought by the Son of God at Bethany; and in the resurrection of Lazarus, who was corrupted, and thus raised by the powerful call of the Blessed Redeemer of mankind, we have a striking emblem, and a glorious earnest, of the resurrection of our bodies from the grave at the last day, when the same powerful mandate which spoke Lazarus again into being, shall collect the scattered particles of our bodies, and raise them to immortality.

This great and apparent miracle caused the utmost surprize and astonishment among all the spectators, and the greatest part of them were, from that time, convinced, and firmly believed, that our Lord could be no other than the great Messiah so long promised by the ancient prophets; but others, who still expected a temporal prince, and were therefore unwilling to acknowledge him for their Saviour, were filled with indignation, and, in a malicious manner, went and reported what had happened to the Pharisees at Jerusalem, particularly the chief priests and elders. In consequence of this a council was immediately summoned to deliberate what measures were most expedient to be taken on the occasion. The last miracle, as well as all the rest our Lord had wrought in confirmation of his mission, was too evident to be denied; and therefore, as they could not find any just accusation against him, they pretended that his whole intention was, to establish a new sect in religion, which would endanger both their church and nation. *Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. If we let him then alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.* John xi. 47. The common people, astonished at his miracles, will, if we do not take care to prevent it, certainly set him up for the Messiah; and the Romans,

under pretence of a rebellion, will deprive us both of our liberty and religion.

The greater part of the council now proposed that Jesus should be put to death; but some few, who were our Lord's disciples, strongly objected to it, urging the injustice of such an act, from the consideration of his miracles and the purity of his life. This, however, was over-ruled by Caiphas the high-priest, who, from a principle of human policy, told them, that the nature of government often required certain acts of injustice, in order to preserve the safety of the state. *Ye know nothing at all* (said he) *nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.* In consequence of this, the proposition made by the greater part of the council was agreed to; and, from that time, they entered into a combination to have him apprehended, and put to death.

It was not long before our Blessed Lord, (who was at this time at Bethany) received information of the transactions that had taken place in the council at Jerusalem; upon which (*as his hour was not yet come*) he avoided their malicious designs by retreating from Bethany, and retiring to a small place called Ephraim, belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, where he continued for a few days, with his apostles, till the time was near at hand for celebrating the Feast of the Passover at Jerusalem.

Six days before that solemn feast began, our Lord, in his way to the city, called at Bethany, where he was kindly entertained at supper by Martha and Mary, the two sisters of Lazarus. Martha (according to her custom) dressed the supper: Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead, was one of the company that sat at table with him, while Mary, to express her love and bounty, took a vial of the most valuable essence, made of spikenard, and, pouring it upon his feet, anointed them, and wiped them with her hair, so that the whole house was filled with the fragrancy of its perfume. This action Judas Iscariot (who afterwards betrayed his master, and had, at that time, the care of the bag wherein money for charitable, and other necessary uses, was kept) highly blamed, as a piece of prodigality, in throwing away

what might have been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor; not that he valued the poor, but because he was a covetous wretch, and was always purloining some part of the public money to himself. Our Lord, therefore, who knew the sincerity of Mary's, and the baseness of Judas's heart, in a very gentle reply, commended what Mary had done, as a seasonable ceremony to solemnize his approaching death; but blamed Judas's pretended concern for the poor, since objects of that kind they had always with them, but his continuance among them was not to be long. *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. 7, &c.

While our Lord continued at Lazarus's house, great numbers of Jews, out of curiosity, came to Bethany, not only to have a sight of Jesus, but also of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. But, when the Sanhedrim understood this, and that the resurrection of Lazarus had occasioned many people to believe on Jesus, they consulted how to destroy him likewise.

Our Blessed Lord, after tarrying all night at Bethany, set forward, the next morning, with his disciples and others who attended him, on his way to Jerusalem. When he came near to a place called Bethphage, on the side of the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples into the village, to bring from thence an ass, and her colt, which was not yet backed, that, to accomplish a remarkable prophecy,\* he might ride thereon to Jerusalem.†

\* See Zechariah ix. 9.

† It has been a matter of some argument among the learned, whether our Lord rode upon the *ass*, or the *colt*, or both *alternately*; but the latter appears evidently to have been the case, as will be seen by the following observations. In the words of the prophet Zechariah, mention is made of riding both *upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass*; and from St. Matthew (chap. xxi. 7.) it is farther observed, that the disciples, having brought the *ass and the colt*, which our Saviour had sent them for, *put on them their clothes, and set him thereon*. Since, therefore, the relation of St. Matthew thus literally agrees with the propheey of Zechariah, and both expressly assert, that our Saviour did ride upon the *ass*, as well as the *colt*, there cannot be any reason why these texts should not be taken in

The disciples did as they were ordered; and, having mounted their Master on the colt, he proceeded, as it were, in triumph towards the city, amidst the loud acclamations of an innumerable multitude, whilst crowds of people came forth to meet him, with branches of palm-trees in their hands, some spreading their garments in the way, others cutting down branches, and strewing them where he was to pass, and all, as it were with one voice, crying, *Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!*

On our Lord's arrival at the descent of the Mount of Olives, his disciples, being transported with the honors shewn to their Master, broke out into raptures of thanksgivings, and loud doxologies to God, for all the mighty works which they had seen, while the whole body of the people, as well those that went before, as those that followed after, joined with the disciples in their Hosannas and acclamations. In consequence of this some of the chief of the Pharisees, being envious of our Lord's glory, desired him to command their silence. To which he replied, *I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.* Luke xix. 40.

When our Lord had advanced so near to Jerusalem as to have a full view of the city and temple, he stopped, and looking stedfastly on the city, with tears in his eyes, made a lamentation over it to this effect: "Oh! that thou "hadst known, at least in this thy appointed day, the "things conducive to thy peace! But now, alas! they are "hidden from thine eyes. For the fatal time shall come, "when thy enemies shall throw up trenches about thee, "hem thee in on every side, destroy thy children, de- "molish thee, and not leave in thee one stone upon "another, because, thou wouldest not know the time of "thy visitation."

their most plain and obvious meaning; and that we should, from thence, conclude, that, for the more exact fulfilment of the prophecy, our Saviour did actually ride, part of the way on the one, and the remaining part upon the other.

## CHAP. XI.

*Our Blessed Lord drives the dealers of several kinds out of the temple, and at the same time cures many people of their respective infirmities. Acquaints his disciples with his approaching death, and testifies his resignation to it. Denounces a judgment upon a fig-tree. Argues with the chief Priests and Scribes in the temple, reprobates them for their conduct, and delivers several parables on the occasion. Answers a captious question put to him by the Sadducees and Pharisees. Settles the most important points of the law. Exposes the vices of the Scribes and Pharisees, and foretels the judgment that will fall upon them. Commends a widow woman for contributing her mite to the public treasury. Predicts the destruction of the temple, and informs his apostles of the signs which should precede that event. Exhorts his disciples to watchfulness and prayer, which he enforces by delivering two parables; one of the Wise and foolish Virgins; and the other, of the talents entrusted with diligent and slothful servants.*

THE entrance of our Blessed Lord into Jerusalem with such a prodigious retinue of people, greatly alarmed the citizens, and an universal enquiry was made amongst them who he was, and from whence he came; in answer to which they were told by the multitude, who proclaimed it aloud, and in a manner that expressed the great satisfaction they felt on the occasion, that it was *Jesus the prophet of Nazareth, of Galilee.*

The first thing our Lord did after his entrance into Jerusalem was, to go to the temple, accompanied by his disciples and a great multitude of people, where, looking about him, he found the Court of the Gentiles notoriously profaned and dishonored by trading and merchandize. That he might, therefore, end his ministry as he had begun it, with the reformation of his Father's house, he drove out all the buyers and sellers (who traded in various articles) from the sacred ground; he overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the stalls of those who sold doves, telling them that they had made the temple,

which was deservedly called an *House of Prayer*, a *Den of Thieves*.

After our Blessed Lord had drove this venal clan out of the temple, there were brought unto him many persons that were blind, lame, and otherwise afflicted; all of whom he instantly relieved of their respective complaints. The multitude were filled with admiration at the sight of these wonderful acts; but the chief priests and Scribes, when they saw the miracles which he wrought, and heard the acclamations of the people (more especially of the children, who cried out, *Hosanna to the Son of David!*) they were greatly enraged, and discovered their anger by asking our Lord, If he had heard what they said? But he silenced their question by shewing them, that, what was so displeasing to them, did really fulfil the scriptures, particularly that passage in the Psalmist, where it is said, *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength.* Psal. viii. 2. This answer, however, did but enrage them the more, and put them upon seeking all occasions to destroy him, though their dread of the people (who were exceeding numerous, and heard him with the greatest eagerness and attention) prevented them, for some time, from carrying their base designs into execution.

During the time our Blessed Lord continued in the temple, certain proselyted Greeks, who came up to worship at Jerusalem, being desirous to have a sight of Christ, addressed themselves to Philip, one of the apostles, who, by the assistance of Andrew, introduced them into the temple. At this time our Lord was discoursing to his disciples on many things relative to his Passion, and, particularly, of the efficacy of his death, and what a powerful means it would prove to convert the people of the world to his religion; more powerful, indeed, than his life could possibly be, even as corn, though it dies in the ground when sown, rises again with great abundance. *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.* John xii. 24. He farther told them, that since it was absolutely necessary for him to suffer the pains of death before he ascended the throne of his glory; so they, as his followers, must also

expect to be persecuted and spitefully used for his name sake; but if they persevered, and even resolved to lose their lives in his service, he would reward their constancy with a crown of glory. He likewise intimated to the strangers, that if their desire of conversing with him proceeded from any expectations of obtaining from him temporal preferments, they would find themselves greatly disappointed. *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.* John xii. 26.

While our Blessed Lord was thus discoursing on his death, he seemed, on a sudden, to be seized with a *natural* agitation on its approaching hour, and even went so far as to request of God a reprieve from it. *Now, (said he) is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour.* But, recollecting that it was for this purpose he came into the world, he changed his petition, and, with a resolved acquiescence in God's good pleasure, begged of him to demonstrate his own heavenly glory to the people: *Father, (said he) glorify thy name.* Scarce had he uttered these words, when he was answered, by an audible voice from heaven, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* The miracles thou hast already performed have glorified my name; and I will still farther glorify it by other miracles to be wrought before the sons of men.

This voice (which in loudness resembled thunder, and was sufficiently articulate to be understood by all present) our Lord told his hearers was not so much for his own information of the will of heaven, as it was, to convince them of his Divine mission. *This voice, (said he) came not because of me, but for your sakes.* It came to confirm what I have told you relating to my sufferings, death, resurrection, and the conversion of the whole Gentile world to the Christian religion.

Having said this, our Lord told his disciples that the time was at hand, when the kingdom of Satan should be destroyed, and that of the Messiah exalted. *Now (said he) 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.* The people, not under-

standing the force of this affirmation, replied, *We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?* But to this objection our Lord did not make them any absolute reply. He only told them, that they should soon be deprived of his presence and miracles, and that, therefore, they would do well to listen attentively to his precepts, firmly believe the doctrines he delivered, and wisely improve them to their eternal advantage; otherwise they would be rendered incapable of inheriting the promises of the Gospel. That while they had the opportunity of enjoying the benefit of his preaching and miracles, which sufficiently proved the truth of his mission from the Most High, they should make the best use of it by believing on him; as, by those means alone, they could become the children of God. *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 whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.* John xii. 35, &c.

After having said this, our Lord departed from the temple, in order to refresh himself from the fatigues he had undergone in so long preaching to the people. He clearly perceived that neither Divine discourses, nor miraculous cures, would gain the faith, or general approbation of any, except the populace; for, though some of their rulers might believe in him, yet such was their timidity that they durst not declare it openly, in the first place, for fear of being excommunicated, and, in the second place, because *they loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God.*

Towards the evening our Blessed Lord went again into the temple, and exhorted the people to believe in him, as a messenger sent from God to offer salvation to mankind. *He that believeth on me believeth on him that sent me.* He that acknowledges the divinity of my mission, acknowledges the power and grace of God, on whose special errand I am thus sent. He that sees the miracles I perform, seeth the operations of that Omnipotent power by which I act. I am the Sun of righteousness, whose beams dispel the darkness of ignorance in which the sons

of men are involved, and am come to deliver all who believe on me out of that gloomy darkness. You must not, however, expect, that I will at present execute my judgment upon those who refuse to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel; for I am not come to condemn and punish, but to save the world, and consequently to try every gentle and winning method to reclaim the wicked from the error of their ways, and turn their feet into the paths of life and salvation. They shall not, however, escape unpunished, who neglect the instructions and offers of salvation now made to them; for the doctrine I have preached shall bear witness against them at the awful tribunal of the last day; and as their negligence has aggravated their sin, so it shall then heighten their punishment.

Our Blessed Lord having discoursed to the people in words to this effect, left the temple, and taking his apostles with him, retired to Bethany, where his benevolent miracle, in raising Lazarus from the dead, had procured him many friends, among whom he was always in safety. Here he continued all night, and early the next morning returned to Jerusalem. As he pursued his journey, he saw, at a distance, a fig-tree, which, from its fulness of leaves, promised abundance of fruit. As he was in want of some refreshment, he approached the tree in expectation of finding some fruit on it; but, upon his coming up to it, he discovered it to be quite barren, upon which, looking at the tree, he said, in the hearing of all the apostles, *Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.* Matt. xxi. 19.

After being thus disappointed in finding fruit on the fig-tree, our Blessed Lord pursued his journey to Jerusalem, whither he had no sooner arrived than he proceeded to the temple, and there continued the whole day, teaching and instructing the people. While he was doing this, the chief priests, Scribes and rulers of the people, knowing that he had no commission from the Sanhedrim, went and demanded of him by what authority he proceeded in that manner? Whether he was a prophet, priest or king, as no other person had a right to make any alterations either in church or state? And, if he did lay claim to either of those characters, from whom he received it?

Instead of giving a direct answer to these impertinent questions of the chief priests and Pharisees, our Lord asked them another; promising, if they resolved his question, he would also answer theirs. *I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men.* Matthew xxi. 24, &c. This question greatly puzzled the priests. They considered, on the one hand, that if they acknowledged that it was from God, it would oblige them to admit the authority of Jesus, John having, more than once, publicly declared him to be the Messiah; and on the other, if they peremptorily denied the authority of John, they would be in danger of being stoned by the people, who, in general, considered him as a prophet. They, therefore, thought it the best way to answer, that they could not tell from whence John's baptism was. Well, therefore, might the Blessed Jesus say, *Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.* You have no right to ask, since you have confessed you are unable to judge; and, therefore, I shall not satisfy your impertinent enquiries.

As these haughty rulers had acknowledged that they knew not from whence the Baptism of John was, our Blessed Lord sharply rebuked them both for their ignorance and obstinacy. He conveyed his reproof in the parable of the two sons commanded to work in their father's vineyard, and asking their opinion of the two, obliged them, by their answer, to condemn themselves. *A certain man (said he) had two sons, and he came to the first and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. But this ungracious youth very roughly answered, I will not.* However, after reflecting on the impropriety and indecency of such behavior to his kind and indulgent father, he repented of what he had done, and went to work in the vineyard. The father, having met with so sharp a reply from the former son, had recourse to the other, and, in the same manner, ordered him to go and work that day in the vineyard. This son was very different from the former, and, in a very dutiful manner, said *I go, Sir.* But notwithstanding this seeming obedience, he delayed

to do as his father had desired; he did not go to work in the vineyard.

The temper and behavior of the second son were exactly conformable to those of the Pharisees. They gave God the most honorable titles, and professed the utmost zeal for his service, in their prayers and praises; but at the same time they refused to do any part of the work that he enjoined them. The character of the other son is very clearly described in the disposition of the publicans and harlots. They neither professed, nor promised to do the will of their Creator; but when they came to reflect seriously on their conduct, and the offers of mercy which were so kindly made them, they submitted to our Saviour, and, in consequence of their faith, amended their lives.

After our Lord had finished his parable, he asked the Pharisees, which of the two sons did the will of his father? To which, without the least hesitation, they replied, *the first*. They did not immediately perceive, that by this answer they condemned themselves, till our Lord made a just application of the parable in this sharp, but pertinent rebuke. *Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not, nor entered into your Father's vineyard, though, like the second son, ye promised so to do in the most fair and open manner; but the publicans and harlots believed him, repented of their former disobedience, and entered into the vineyard.*

Our Blessed Lord having thus rebuked the haughty Scribes and Pharisees for rejecting the preaching of John the Baptist, he next represented to them the great crime of the people in rejecting all the prophets which had been sent since they became a nation, and, among the rest, the only begotten Son of the Most High; warning them, at the same time, of their danger, and the punishment that would inevitably ensue, if they continued in their rebellion. He told them, the outward economy of religion in which they gloried would be taken from them, their relation to God, as his people, cancelled, and the national constitution destroyed; all which he pointed out by the similitude of the following parable.

There was (said he) a certain householder, 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. The comparison of the church to a vineyard is frequently used in the Sacred Scriptures, but this particular parable, for the fuller conviction of the Jews, is expressly taken from the fifth chapter of Isaiah, with which they could not fail of being well acquainted, nor ignorant of its meaning, as the prophet, at the end of it, adds, “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 righteousness, but behold a cry.” Our Saviour, therefore, continued the metaphor, telling them, “that when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants 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.” The Almighty sent the prophets to exhort the Jews to entertain just sentiments of religion, and tread in the paths of virtue; but the Jews, irritated at the prophets for the freedom they used in reproofing their sins, persecuted and slew them with unrelenting fury. But their wickedness in destroying these messengers did not provoke the Almighty instantly to pour down his vengeance upon them: he sent more prophets to exhort and reclaim them, but they met with no better fate than the former. His mercy, however, still continued, and that no means might be left untried, he sent to them his own Son, whose authority being clearly manifested by undeniable miracles, ought to have been acknowledged cheerfully by these wicked men: but, instead thereof, it had a quite contrary effect. This our Lord fully explained by the conclusive part of this parable, in which the householder, after the husbandmen had killed his servants, sent his son, whom he imagined they would have received. “When the husbandmen (said he) saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. 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 hus- "bandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably de- "stroy those wicked men, and let out his vineyard unto "other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in "their seasons." To confirm the truth of this, our Lord added a remarkable prophecy of himself, and his rejection, from the 118th Psalm. *Did you never (said he) read in the Scriptures, 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.* The rejection of the Messiah by the Jews, and his being received by the Gentiles, are wonderful events; and therefore, I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

The chief priests and Pharisees, finding these parables were manifestly directed to them, were greatly irritated, and would have apprehended the Divine Speaker, had they not been fearful that it would have been resented by the multitude. Being, therefore, quiet, our Lord delivered to them another parable, wherein he described, on the one hand, the bad success which the preaching of the Gospel was to meet with among the Jews; and, on the other, the cheerful reception given it among the Gentiles. This our Lord illustrated by the behavior of a certain king, who, in honor of his son, made a great feast, to which he invited many guests. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.* This marriage dinner, or great feast, signifies the joys of heaven, which are compared to an elegant entertainment, on account of their exquisiteness; and are here said to be prepared in honor of the Son of God, because they are bestowed on men in consequence of his suffering in their stead, and behalf.

Some time before the dinner was ready, the servants were sent forth to call the guests to the wedding, but *they could not come:* when the fulness of time approached, the Jews, as being the peculiar people of God, were first called by John the Baptist, and afterwards by Christ himself; but they refused all these benevolent calls of

mercy, and rejected the kind invitations of the gospel, though pressed by the preaching of the Messiah, and his forerunner. After our Saviour's resurrection and ascension, the apostles were sent forth to inform the Jews, that the gospel-covenant was established, mansions in heaven prepared, and nothing wanting, but the cheerful acceptance of the honor designed them. *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 these messengers were as unsuccessful as the former. The Jews undervaluing the favor, mocked at the message; and some of them, more rude than the rest, insulted, beat, and slew the servants that had been sent to call them to the marriage. *But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed the murderers, and burnt up their city.* This part of the parable plainly predicted the destruction of the Jews by the Roman armies, which afterwards took place, not only the greater part of them being put to death, but likewise their temple and city totally destroyed. *Then said the king unto his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden (that is, the Jews) were not worthy. Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as ye shall find (that is, of the Gentiles) bid to the marriage.* This was immediately done, and the wedding was furnished with guests; but when the king came into the apartment, *he saw there 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.* Matth. xxii. 11, &c.

We may learn, from the conclusion of this parable, that the profession of the Christian religion will not save a man, unless he acts from Christian principles. Let those, therefore, who have obeyed the call, and are by profession the people of God, think often on that awful day, when the king will come in to see his guests, when

every soul will be strictly examined that lays claim to the joys of heaven. Let us think of the speechless confusion that will seize such as have not on the wedding garment, and of the inexorable anxiety with which they will be consigned to weeping and gnashing of teeth. Let us remember that, to have seen, for a time, the light of the Gospel, and the fair beams of an eternal hope, without having paid a proper attention to the gracious offers made us thereby, will add deeper and more sensible horrors to our punishment: while, on the contrary, if we continue steadfast in the faith, and persevere in those Christian precepts which are laid before us, we may anticipate the joyful hour which will consign us to bliss immortal.

The last parable delivered by our Lord at this time being apparently levelled at the Pharisees, they were so irritated, that they immediately left the temple, and consulted with the Herodians, or Sadducees, on the most proper method of putting Jesus to death. It is sufficiently evident that their hatred was now carried to the highest pitch, because the most violent enmity, which had so long subsisted between the two sects, was, on this occasion, suspended, and they joined together to execute this cruel determination on the Son of God. They, however, thought it most eligible to act very cautiously, and endeavor, if possible, to catch some hasty expressions from him, that they might render him odious to the people, and procure something against him, that might serve as a basis for a prosecution. Accordingly they sent to him some of their own people, whom they thought best able to hold a controversy, with orders to feign themselves just men, who maintained the greatest veneration for the Divine law, and dreaded nothing more than the doing any thing inconsistent with its precepts; and, under this specious cloke of hypocrisy, to beg his determination of an affair that had long lain heavy on their consciences, namely, the paying tribute to Cæsar, which they thought inconsistent with the zeal of their religion.

The question was, it seems, furiously debated in our Saviour's time; one Judas, a native of Galilee, having inspired the people with a notion that taxes to a foreign

power were absolutely unlawful. A doctrine so pleasing to the worldly-minded Jews could not fail of friends, especially among the lower class, and therefore must have many partizans among the multitude that then surrounded the Son of God. The priests therefore imagined, that it was not in his power to decide the point, without rendering himself obnoxious to some of the parties: if he should say it was lawful to pay the taxes, they believed that the people, in whose hearing the question was proposed, would be incensed against him, not only as a base pretender, who, on being attacked, publicly renounced the character of the Messiah, which he had assumed among his friends, but also as a flatterer of princes, and a betrayer of the liberties of his country, one who taught a doctrine inconsistent with the known privileges of the people of God; but if he should affirm that it was unlawful to pay tribute, they determined to inform the governor, who, they hoped, would punish him as a fomenter of sedition.

Having laid this diabolical plan, the enemies of our Lord immediately repaired to the temple, where he was then preaching to the people, not doubting but the scheme they had formed would be amply carried into execution. Accordingly, after passing an encomium on the truth of his mission, his courage and impartiality, they asked him this question: *What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar?* But the Blessed Jesus saw through their secret intentions; and accordingly called them hypocrites, to signify, that though they made conscience, and a regard for the Divine will, their pretence for proposing this question, he saw through the thin veil that concealed their design from the eyes of mortals, and knew their intention was, to ensnare him. He, however, did not decline answering their question, but previously desired to see a piece of the tribute money. The piece was accordingly produced, and proved to be coined by the Romans; upon which our Lord gave them this answer: *Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God, the things that are God's.* As if he had said, "At the same time that you discharge your duty to the civil magistrate, you should never forget

the duty you owe to your God; but remember, that as you bear the image of the great, the Omnipotent King, you are his subjects, and ought to pay him the tribute of yourselves, serving him to the utmost of your power."

An answer so unexpected quite disconcerted and silenced these crafty enemies of Christ. They were astonished, both at his having discovered their design, and his wisdom in avoiding the snare they had so artfully laid for him. *When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.* Matthew xxii. 22.

After our Lord had thus defeated the two conjunctive parties, the Sadducees attacked him separately, by starting a question which they thought insurmountable. They denied the doctrine of a future state, together with the existence of angels and spirits; and therefore proposed to him their strongest argument against the resurrection, which they deduced from the law given by Moses, with regard to marriage. "Master, (said they) Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were, therefore, seven brethren; and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also. And they died and left no children. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife." Luke xx. 28, &c.

The Sadducees, who believed the soul to be nothing more than a refined matter, were persuaded, that, if there was any future state, it must resemble the present; and that being in that state material and mortal, the human race could not be continued, nor the individuals rendered happy, without the pleasures and conveniences of marriage. And hence they considered it as a necessary consequence of the doctrine of the resurrection, or a future state, that every man's wife should be restored to him.

But this argument our Blessed Lord soon confuted, by telling the Sadducees they were ignorant of the power of God, who had created spirit as well as matter, and who

could render man completely happy in the enjoyment of himself. He also observed, that the nature of the life obtained in a future state made marriage altogether superfluous, because in the world to come, men, being spiritual and immortal, like the angels, there was no need of natural means to propagate or continue the kind. *Ye do err (said the Blessed Jesus) not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage.* Matth. xxii. 29, 30. *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.* Luke xx. 36. Hence we may observe, that good men are called the children of the Most High, from their inheritance at the resurrection, and particularly on account of their being adorned with immortality.

After our Lord had thus pointed out to the Sadducees their great folly and unbelief, he proceeded to shew them that they were also ignorant of the scriptures, and particularly of the writings of Moses, from whence they had drawn their objection, by demonstrating, from the very law itself, the certainty of a resurrection, at least that of just men; and consequently quite demolished the opinion of the Sadducees, who, by believing the materiality of the soul, affirmed that men were annihilated at their deaths, and that their opinion was founded on the writings of Moses. *Now (said our Lord) 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. 37, 38. As if he had said, The Almighty cannot properly be called God, unless he has his people, and be Lord of the living. Since, therefore, Moses called him the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, long after those venerable patriarchs were dead, the relation denoted by the word God still subsisted between them; consequently they were not annihilated as you pretend, but are still in being, and continue to be the servants of the Most High.

This argument effectually silenced the Sadducees, and the multitude were agreeably surprized to see the objection, hitherto thought impregnable, totally abolished, and the sect they had long abominated fully confuted. *And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.* Matth. xxii. 33.

No sooner had our Blessed Lord confuted the absurd arguments of the Sadducees, than he was attacked by one of the Scribes, who desired him to give his opinion on a question which had been often debated among them, namely, which was the great commandment of the law? It is to be observed that some of the most learned among them had declared that the law of sacrifices was the great commandment; some that it was the law of circumcision; and others, that it was the law of meats and washings.

But our Blessed Lord, in the answer he gave to the question, clearly pointed out to them that they were all mistaken; for that the great commandment of the law was the duty of piety, as one proof of which he particularly mentioned that comprehensive summary of it given by Moses. *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. 29, 30.

The first and chief commandment is, to give God our hearts. The Divine Being is so transcendently amiable in himself, and hath, by the innumerable benefits conferred upon us, such a title to our utmost affection, that no obligation bears any proportion to that of loving him. The honor assigned to this precept proves, that piety is the noblest act of the human mind; and that the chief ingredient in piety is love, founded on a clear and extensive view of the Divine perfections, a permanent sense of his benefits, and a deep conviction of his being the sovereign good, our portion, and our happiness. But it is essential to love, that there be a delight in contemplating the beauty of the object beloved, whether that beauty be matter of sensation or reflection; that we frequently, and with pleasure, reflect on the benefits conferred on us by the object of our affections; that we have a strong desire

of pleasing him, great fear of doing any thing to offend him, and a sensible joy in thinking we are beloved in return. Hence the duties of devotion, prayer and praise, are the most natural and genuine exercises of the love of God. Nor is this virtue so much any single affection, as the continual bent of all the affections and powers of the soul: consequently to love God is, as much as possible, to direct the whole soul towards him, and to exercise all its faculties on him as its chief object. Accordingly, the love of God is described in scripture by the several operations of the mind, *a following hard after God*; that is, by intense contemplation, a sense of his perfections, gratitude for his benefits, trust in his goodness, attachment to his service, resignation to his Providence, the obeying his commandments, admiration, hope, fear, joy, &c. not because it consists in any of these singly, but in them altogether; for to content ourselves with partial regard to the Supreme Being, is not to be affected towards him in the manner we ought to be, and which his perfections claim. Hence the words of the precept: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.*

Our Blessed Lord having thus answered the question put to him by the Scribe, and clearly pointed out the first great commandment of the law, added, *And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* This, indeed, had no relation to the lawyer's question concerning the first commandment; but our Blessed Lord thought proper to shew him which was the second, probably because the men of his sect did not acknowledge the importance of love to their neighbors, or because they were remarkably deficient in the practice of it.

The love of our neighbor was very justly represented by our Lord as the second grand commandment of the law. It is one of the principles of our love to God, and must be productive of every good work. All the best things we can do, if destitute of this principle, will appear to be either the effect of hypocrisy, or done to procure the esteem of men. Without love, a narrowness of soul will shut us up within ourselves, and make all we

do to others only as a sort of merchandize, trading for our own advantage. Those who really love their neighbor, have a constant calm within, and are not disturbed with passion, jealousy, envy or ill-nature. They observe and rejoice in the happiness of others; they are glad to see them easy, and share with them in their joy and felicity; not fretting or complaining though they enjoy less than their neighbors. The good man, by the overflowings of his love, is sure that he is a favorite with his Maker, because he loves his neighbor. His soul dwells at ease, and there is sweetness in all his thoughts and wishes. This makes him clear and easy in his views of every kind, and renders him grateful to all around him.

When the Scribe heard the answer our Blessed Lord gave to the question put to him, he was astonished at the justness of his decision, and answered, That he had determined rightly, since there is but one supreme God, whom we must all adore; and if we love him above all temporal things, and our neighbor as ourselves, we worship him more acceptably than if we sacrifice to him *all the cattle upon a thousand hills*. Our Lord highly applauded the piety and wisdom of this reflection, by declaring that the person who made it was *not far from the kingdom of God*.

As the Scribes and Pharisees had, during the course of our Saviour's ministry, proposed to him many difficult questions, in order to prove his prophetical gifts, he now, in his turn, thought proper to make a trial of their knowledge in the sacred writings. For this purpose he asked their opinion of a difficulty concerning the Messiah's pedigree. *What think ye (said he) of Christ? Whose son is he?* *They say unto him, The son of David.* Our Lord then asked them in what sense the Messiah could be David's son, when David himself called him *Lord*. *If David, then, call him Lord, how is he his son?* The Jewish doctors did not imagine that their Messiah would be endued with any perfections greater than those that might be enjoyed by human nature: for though they called him the Son of God, they had no notion that he was divinity itself, and therefore really the Lord of David. In consequence of these their imperfect ideas,

they were not able to give an answer to the question propounded. *And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.*

After these disputes with the Scribes and Pharisees (which were the last he had with them) our Lord left the temple, and, in the evening, retired again with his apostles to Bethany.

As our Blessed Lord was returning the next morning to Jerusalem, his apostles, observing that the fig-tree, on which he had the day before denounced a judgment on account of its barrenness, was withered away, and dead to the very root, took notice of it to him as a thing very strange and surprizing. In consequence of this observation, our Lord exhorted them to have a steadfast faith in God, and to preserve a fervency and perseverance in their prayers, in doing of which they would not fail, in the course of their ministry, to perform as great, or greater miracles, than what he had done in causing the unfruitful fig-tree to wither and die away.

As soon as our Blessed Lord returned to Jerusalem, he immediately repaired to the temple, and began to teach the people as he had done the day before; and, to raise an aversion in his disciples, and in all that heard him, to the principles and practices of the Scribes and Pharisees, he took the freedom to expose their vices without reserve; their pride, their hypocrisy, their covetousness, their hard-heartedness to parents, their impiety to God, and their cruelty to his faithful servants. *The Scribes and the Pharisees (said he) sit in Moses's 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.* While they teach the doctrines before delivered by Moses, observe all they say; but by no means imitate their practices; for they impose many precepts on their disciples, which they never perform themselves. *For they bind heavy burdens, and 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. The difficult precepts they impose on others are never regarded by these hypocrites, and any good ac-

tion that they may happen to perform is vitiated by the principle from whence it proceeds. They do it only with a view to gain popular applause, and not from a regard to God, far less from a love of goodness. They are proud and arrogant to excess, as is plain from their affected gravity in their clothes; from the anxiety they discover lest they should not obtain the principal seats in the public assemblies, and from their affecting to be saluted in the streets with the sounding titles of *Rabbi*, and father. *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. 5, 6, 7.

The word *Rabbi* signifies, properly, *great*, and was given to those men who had rendered themselves remarkable for the extent of their learning; it is therefore no wonder that the proud and supercilious Pharisees were fond of a title, which so highly complimented their understandings, and gave them great authority with their disciples. But the followers of the Blessed Jesus were to decline this title, because the thing signified by it belonged wholly to their master, in whom are placed all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and because they did not owe any part of their knowledge to themselves, but derived it entirely from him. *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 the earth; for one is your father, which is in heaven.* Life, with all its blessings, come from God, and men wholly depend upon him; all praise and thankfulness, therefore, should ultimately be referred to him; so that if any one teacheth rightly, not the teacher, but the wisdom of God, is to be praised.

Nor were the disciples of our Blessed Saviour to accept of the title of *master*, or *leader*, which the Jewish doctors also courted, because, in point of commission and inspiration, they were all equal, neither had they any title to rule the consciences of men, except by virtue of the inspiration which they had received from their Master, to whom alone the prerogative of infallibility belonged.

*Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, even Christ.* The Divine teacher, however, did not intend by this to insinuate that it was sinful to call men by the stations they held in the world; he only meant to reprove the weakness of the common people, who loaded their teachers with praises, and forgot to ascribe any thing to God; and to root out of the minds of his apostles the Pharisaical vanity, which decked itself with honor belonging solely to the Creator of the universe. Accordingly, that he might instil into their hearts a proper principle to dispose them to do good offices one to another as occasion offered, he assured them that humility was the only road to true greatness; for by assuming what did not properly belong to them, they would be despised both by God and men; whereas, if they did not disdain to perform the meanest offices of love to their brethren, they would enjoy a very high degree of the Divine favor.

Among the great multitude that at this time heard our Lord's discourses, were many of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were greatly offended at his doctrine, and particularly as the subject matter was principally levelled at them. This, however, did not lay any restraint on the Divine teacher. He had hitherto used the most mild persuasions to bring them to a sense of their wickedness without effect; and as this was to be the last sermon he was ever to preach in public, he thought it necessary that he should now treat them with some severity. He therefore denounced, in the most solemn manner, dreadful woes against them, on account of their excessive wickedness. They were public teachers of religion, and therefore should have used every method in their power to recommend its precepts to the people, and to have been themselves shining examples of every duty it enjoined; but on the contrary, they abused every mark and character of goodness, and, under the cloke of a severe and sanctified aspect, were malicious, implacable, covetous and rapacious. In a word, instead of being reformers, they were the corrupters of mankind, and consequently their wickedness deserved that rebuke which was justly given them by the great Redeemer of mankind. “Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye shut

" up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go " in yourselves, neither suffer them that were entering to " go in. Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; " for ye devour widows' houses, and, for a pretence, " make long prayer; therefore ye shall receive the greater " damnation. Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypo- " crites; 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." The pun- ishment you shall suffer will be terribly severe, because you have given a wrong interpretation of the ancient prophe- cies concerning the Messiah, and done all that is in your power to hinder the people from repenting of their sins, and believing the Gospel; because you have com- mitted the grossest iniquities, and under the cloke of re- ligion, have devoured the substance of widows and orphans, hoping to hide your villainies by long prayers; because ye have expressed the greatest zeal imaginable in making proselytes, not with a view to render the Gentiles more wise and virtuous, but to acquire their riches, and a command over their consciences; and instead of teaching them the precepts of virtue and the moral duties of religion, you confine their duties to super- stitious and ceremonial institutions; and hence they often relapse into their old state of Heathenism, and become more wicked than before they were converted, and conse- quently liable to a more severe sentence.

Having said this, our Lord next proceeded to their doctrine concerning oaths. He declared, in opposition to their abominable tenets, that every oath, if the matter of it be lawful, is obligatory; because when men swear by any part of the creation, it is an appeal to the Creator himself; for in any other light an oath of this kind is abso- lutely ridiculous, the object having neither knowledge of the fact, nor power to punish the perjury. " Wo 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 sancti-  
“ fieth 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.”

After this, our Lord reprehended their superstitious practices, in observing the minutest parts of the ceremonial precepts of the law, and at the same time utterly neglecting the eternal and indispensable rules of righteousness. “ Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ; “ for ye pay tythe 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.” Our Lord then censured them for their hypocrisy. They spared no pains to appear virtuous in the eyes of the world, and maintain all external conduct that should acquire the praises of men, but at the same time neglected to adorn their souls with the robe of righteousness, which was the only ornament that could render them conspicuous in the sight of their Master. “ Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypo- “ crites ; for ye make clean 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 the platter, that the outside of them may be “ clean also.” Cleanse first the mind, thy inward man, from evil dispositions and affections, and the outward behavior will, of course, be virtuous and praise-worthy.

Having thus pointed out their hypocrisy, our Lord next animadverted on the success that had attended it. They deceived the simple and unthinking part of mankind with their pretended sanctity, appearing like whitened sepulchres, beautiful on the outside, while their internal parts were full of uncleanness. “ Wo unto you, Scribes and “ Pharisees, hypocrites ; for ye are like unto whitened sepul- “ chres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are “ within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. “ Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men,

“but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.” He also reproved the pains they had taken in adorning the sepulchres of the prophets; because they pretended a great veneration for their memory, and even condemned their fore-fathers, who killed them, saying, if they had lived in the days of their fathers, they would have opposed such monstrous wickedness, while, at the same time, all their actions abundantly proved that they still cherished the same spirit they condemned in their fathers, by themselves persecuting the messengers of the Most High, particularly his own begotten Son, whom they were determined to destroy. “Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because ye build the tombs of the prophets, 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.” He added, that for their great iniquities they must expect the Divine vengeance, and that it would be inflicted in so terrible a degree, as to be a standing monument of God’s displeasure against all the murders committed by the sons of men, from the death of Abel, to that of Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the high-priest.

After our Blessed Lord had thus laid before them their heinous guilt, and the dreadful punishment that would follow, he was, at the thoughts of the calamities which were soon to fall upon them, exceedingly moved, and his breast filled with sensations of pity to such a degree, that unable to contain himself he broke out into the same bewailing exclamation he had made use of before. “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.” By the word *house* our Blessed Lord meant the temple, which was from that time to be left unto them desolate; the glory of the Lord, which Haggai had prophesied should fill the second house, was now departing from it.

Our Lord, therefore, added, *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.* As if he had said, "As ye have killed the prophets, and will shortly put me, who am the Lord of the temple, to death, your holy house shall be left desolate, and your nation totally deserted by me; nor shall you see me any more till ye shall acknowledge the dignity of my character, and the importance of my mission, and say, with all the people of the earth, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

Our Blessed Lord, having thus exposed the secret practices of the Scribes and Pharisees, and denounced the judgment that would fall upon them for their iniquities, went into the court of the temple called the treasury, from several chests being fixed to the pillars of the portico that surrounded it, for receiving the offerings of those who went to worship in the temple. While he continued in this court, "he beheld how 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 made 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.

Notwithstanding the offering given by this poor widow was in itself very small, yet, in proportion to the goods of fortune she enjoyed, it was remarkably large; for it was all she had, even all her living. In order, therefore, to encourage charity, and shew that it is the disposition of the mind, not the magnificence of the offering, that attached the regard of the Almighty, the Son of God applauded this poor widow, as having given more in proportion, than any of the rich. Their offerings, though great in respect of hers, were but a small part of their estates, whereas her offering was her whole stock. And from this passage of the Gospel we should learn, that the poor, who in appearance are denied the means of doing charitable offices, are encouraged to do all they can. For

how small soever the gift may be, the Almighty, who beholds the heart, values it, not according to what it is in itself, but according to the disposition with which it is given. On the other hand, we should learn from hence, that it is not enough for the rich, that they exceed the poor in gifts of charity; they should bestow in proportion to their fortune; and they would do well to remember, that a little given, where a little only is left, appears a much nobler offering in the sight of God, and discovers a more benevolent and humane temper of mind, than sums much larger bestowed out of a plentiful abundance.

As our Lord was about leaving the temple, it came strongly into the minds of his apostles, what he had declared at the conclusion of his pathetic lamentation over Jerusalem, namely, that the temple should not any more be favored with his presence till they should say, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* This reflection gave them great uneasiness; and therefore, as he was departing from that sacred structure, they desired him to observe the beauty of the building, insinuating that they thought it strange he should intimate an intention of leaving it desolate. *Master* (said one of them) *see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here.* In answer to this our Lord told them, that however strong or costly it appeared, yet the whole should be totally destroyed. *Seest thou (said he) these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.* That noble edifice, raised with much labor, and at a very great expense, shall be levelled to the very surface of the earth.

When the disciples heard their Master affirm that not one of those enormous stones should be left upon another, they thought, indeed, that the temple was to be demolished, but did not suspect that the sacrifices were to be taken away, and a new religion introduced, which would render the temple unnecessary. They therefore flattered themselves that the fabric then standing was too small for the numerous worshippers who would frequent it when all the nations of the world were subject to the Messiah's kingdom, and that therefore it was to be pulled down, in order that another might be erected on a more

extensive and magnificent plan, suitable to the idea they had conceived of his future empire. Filled with these pleasing imaginations, they received the intelligence with pleasure, meditating, as they walked along, on the glorious things which (as they thought) were shortly to come to pass.

Our Blessed Lord directed his course to the Mount of Olives, whither he frequently retired to discourse in private with his apostles. When they arrived at the top of the mount, and their Master had taken his seat on an eminence, from whence there was a prospect of the temple, and part of the city, they drew near him with a resolution of satisfying themselves relative to the ideas they had formed concerning the temple; when the demolition of the old structure was to happen, and what were to be the signs of his coming, and of the end of the world. *And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto 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?* It appears, from this request, that they were desirous of knowing what signs should precede the creation of that extensive empire, over which they supposed the Messiah was to reign; for they still expected he would govern a secular kingdom. They, therefore, connected the demolition of the temple with their Master's coming, though they had not the least notion that he was to destroy the nation, and change the form of religious worship. What they meant, therefore, by the *end of the world* was nothing more than the period of the then political government; and they considered their Master's coming to destroy the constitution then subsisting as a very desirable event. They also thought the demolition of the temple proper, as they expected a larger and more superb building (proportionate to the number of the Messiah's subjects) would be erected in its stead. That this was the real sense of their question will sufficiently appear, if we consider that they were highly pleased with their imaginary and worldly prospect; whereas, if they had meant by the *end of the world*, the final period of all things, the destruction of the temple would have exhibited to them, in their then temper of mind, a melancholy

prospect, which they could not have beheld, without shewing a deep concern on the occasion.

But our Blessed Lord soon convinced them of their mistake, by telling them that he was not come to rule a secular empire, as they supposed, but to punish the Jews for their perfidy and rebellion; after which he proceeded to inform them of the signs that would precede the destruction both of their temple and nation, in doing of which he began with giving them the following caution relative to their future conduct. “Take heed (said he) “that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my “name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” This caution was, no doubt, exceeding necessary, because, though the apostles were to see their Master ascend into heaven, yet they might take occasion, from the prophecy, to think that he would appear again on earth; and therefore they might be in danger of seduction by the false prophets that should arise.

*And when 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. Before this nation and temple are destroyed, terrible wars will happen in the land: For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.* These are the preludes of the important event, forerunners of the evils which shall befall this people and nation. At the same time you shall meet with hot persecutions: walk, therefore, circumspectly, and arm yourselves both with patience and fortitude, that ye may be able to perform your duty through the whole course of these persecutions; for you shall be brought before the great men of the earth for my sake. “But when they shall lead you, and deliver you “up, take no thought before-hand what ye shall speak, “neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be “given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye “that speak, but the Holy Ghost.” Mark xiii. 11.

Our Blessed Lord then told them that, during this time of trouble and confusion, the perfidy of mankind should be so great towards one another, that, *brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and*

*children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.* The unbelieving Jews, and apostate Christians, shall commit the most enormous crimes. It is, therefore, no wonder that the perfidy and wickedness of such pretended Christians should discourage many disciples, and greatly hinder the propagation of the gospel. But he who supports his faith during these persecutions, and is not led away by the seduction of false Christians, shall escape that terrible judgment which will fall upon them for their baseness and perfidy.

And when Jerusalem shall be surrounded with armies, Pagan armies, bearing in their standards the images of their idols, the *abomination of desolation*, mentioned by the prophet Daniel; then let him who has read the predictions of that prophet understand, that the end of the city and sanctuary, together with the ceasing of the sacrifice and oblation there predicted, is near at hand, and consequently the final period of the Jewish nation. "Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out." Luke xxi. 21. "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, Matth. xxiv. 17, 18." Then shall be fulfilled the awful predictions of the prophet Daniel, and the dreadful judgments denounced against the impenitent and unbelieving. In those days of vengeance the women who are with child, and those who give suck, shall be particularly unhappy, because they cannot flee from the impending destruction. *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter*, when the badness of the roads, and the rigor of the season, will render speedy travelling troublesome, if not impossible; *neither on the sabbath-day*, when you shall think it unlawful. *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.\** He farther

\* That this part of the propheey was most amply fulfilled appears from the relation given us by Josephus, who says that when the Roman army invested Jerusalem, no less than 1,100,000 persons perished in the siege.

said, that except the days of tribulation should be shortened, none of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, of whom he was then speaking, should escape destruction.\* *But, added he, for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened those days.* By the elect are signified, such of the Jews as had embraced the doctrines of the Gospel, and particularly those who were brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles.

As it is natural, in times of trouble, to look with eager expectation for a deliverer, our Blessed Lord cautioned his disciples not to listen to any pretences of that kind, as many false prophets would arise, and deceive great numbers of the people.† “ If any man shall say to you, “ Lo, here is Christ; or lo, he is there; believe him not: “ For false christs and false prophets shall rise, and “ shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were “ possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I “ have foretold you all things. Mark xiii. 21, &c.

But as the partizans of the false prophets might pretend that the Messiah was, for a time, concealed for fear of the Romans, and the weaker sort of Christians might imagine that Christ was actually returned to deliver the nation in its extremity, and to punish their enemies who so cruelly oppressed them, our Lord thought proper to caution them against this particular. “ Wherefore (said “ he) if they shall say unto you Behold, he is in the desert, “ go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers, be- “ lieve it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the

\* We are told, by the same historian, that the quarrels which raged during the siege were so fierce and obstinate, that both within the walls of Jerusalem, and without in the neighboring country, the whole land was one continued scene of horror and desolation; and that had the siege continued much longer, the whole nation of the Jews must have been totally extirpated.

† This part of the prediction was likewise fully accomplished during the terrible siege of Jerusalem by the Romans. Josephus tells us, that many arose pretending to be the Messiah, boasting that they would deliver the nation from all its enemies; and the multitude, always too prone to listen to deceivers, who promise temporal advantages, giving credit to those deceivers, became more obstinate in their opposition to the Romans, and thereby rendered their destruction more severe and inevitable.

“east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Matth. xxiv. 26, &c. The coming of the Son of man shall be like lightning, swift and destructive. But he will not come personally; his servants only shall come, the Roman armies, who, by his command, shall destroy the Jewish nation.

Our Blessed Lord, having thus given them a particular account of the various circumstances which should precede the destruction of Jerusalem, next described that catastrophe itself, in all the beauties of language and imagery made use of by the ancient prophets, when they foretold the destruction of cities and kingdoms. “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light; and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.” Mark xiii. 24. And “upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring: men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” Luke xxi. 25. By these lofty and figurative expressions, the decaying of all the glory, excellency and prosperity of the nation, and the introduction of universal sadness, misery and confusion, are beautifully described. The roaring of the sea and the waves may justly be considered as metaphorical, as the signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars are plainly so; and by the powers are meant the whole Jewish policy, government, laws and religion, which were the works of heaven: these our Lord tells us should be shaken, or rather totally dissolved.

Having thus beautifully, but awfully described this important and striking event, the Blessed Jesus assured his disciples that it would be very unexpected, and thence urged the necessity of a watchful vigilance, lest they should be surprized, and have a share in these calamities. From hence he took occasion to put them in mind of the destruction of the world, and to exhort them to a faithful discharge of their duty, from the consideration of the suddenness of his coming, to call every individual to account after death. “Therefore (said he) 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 household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily, I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.” Matth. xxiv. 44, &c. As if he had said, “ You, who are ministers of religion, ought to be particularly attentive in discharging the important trust committed to your care; you are the stewards in whom are entrusted the whole household of the church; and you would do well to remember, that your example will have a great effect upon the minds of those employed under you. It is your duty to be well acquainted with the stores of the Divine truths, and to understand how they may be applied to the best advantage. You should also be careful to know the characters of the different persons under your directions, that you may be able to give each his portion of meat in due season; and if I find you thus employed, I will reward you with the joy of my kingdom, even as an earthly master bestows particular marks of respect on such servants as have been remarkably faithful in any important trust. But, on the other hand, if you are not true to the trust reposed in you; if you pervert your office, and watch not over the souls committed to your care, I will come unto you unexpectedly and make you dreadful examples of mine anger, by the severe punishments which I will inflict upon you. “ But 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 off; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion, with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matth. xxiv, 48, &c.

After our Blessed Lord had thus pointed out to his disciples the future state of retribution, he proceeded to the consideration of the general judgment, when those rewards and punishments should be distributed in their utmost extent. “ Then (said he) 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 " 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 bride- " groom came; and they that were ready went in with " him to the marriage; and the door was shut. Afterward " came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open " to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto " you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know " neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man " cometh."

To the ten virgins mentioned in this parable may be compared all those to whom the Gospel is preached. To these all Christian professors may be likened, who, taking the lamp of Christian faith, go forth to meet the bridegroom; that is, prepare themselves as candidates for the kingdom of heaven, and desire to be admitted with Christ, the celestial bridegroom, into the happy mansions of immortality. It must be remembered, that there always was, and always will be, a mixture of good and bad in the church, till the great day of separation arrives. The weakness of the foolish is represented by those virgins who took no oil in their vessels with their lamps; that is, the foolish Christians content themselves with the bare lamp of a profession, and never think of furnishing it with the oil of Divine grace, the fruit of which is a life of holiness. Whereas the wise, well knowing that a lamp, without the supply of oil, would be speedily extinguished; that faith, without love and holiness, will be of no consequence, take care to supply themselves with a sufficient quantity of the Divine grace, and to display in their lives the works of love and charity.

In order to shew us more clearly the nature and use of Christian watchfulness, to which our Lord exhorts us at the conclusion of the beforementioned parable, he delivered another, in which he represented the different characters of a faithful and slothful servant, and the difference of their future acceptation. This parable, like the former, is intended to stir us up to a zealous preparation for the coming of our Lord, by diligence in the discharge of our duty, and by carefully improving ourselves in holiness; and at the same time to expose the vain pretences of hypocrites, and to demonstrate that fair speeches and outward form, without the power of godliness, will be of no service in the last day of accounts.

In delivering this parable, our Blessed Lord told his disciples, that the Son of man, with respect to his final coming to judge the world, might be likened “unto 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 abilities; and straightway took his journey.” Matth. xxv. 14, 15. Immediately on their master’s departure he that had received the five talents lost no time, but went and traded with the same, and his increase was equal to his industry and application; he made them other five talents. He that had received the two talents did the same, and had equal success. But he that received one, very unlike the conduct of his fellow-servants, went his way, digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money, idle, useless, unemployed, and unimproved.

After some time, and at an hour when they did not expect it, the lord of those servants returned, called them before him, and ordered them to give an account of their several trusts. Upon this, he that had received five talents, as a proof of his fidelity, produced other five talents, saying, “Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents, behold I have gained besides them five talents more.” His lord, highly applauding his industry and fidelity, said to him, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into

“the joy of thy Lord.” Matth. xxv. 21. In like manner, he that had received two talents declared he had gained two other; upon which he was honored with the same applause, and admitted into the same joy with his fellow-servant. After this, he that had received the one talent came, and, with a shameful falsehood, to excuse his vile indolence, 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 the talent in the earth; lo, “there thou hast that is thine.” This perversion greatly excited the resentment of his Lord, who answered, “Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knowest 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 shall be weeping and gnashing “of teeth.” Matth. xxv. 26, &c.

Such is the parable of the talents, which contains the measures of our duty to God, and the motives that enforce it, all delivered in the plainest and most simple allusion. But its views are so extensive and affecting, that while it instructs the meanest capacity, it engages reverence and attention from the greatest, and strikes an impression on the most improved understanding. We are to consider God as our Lord and Master, the author and giver of every good gift, and ourselves as his servants or stewards, who, in various instances and measures, have received from his goodness such blessings and abilities as may fit us for the several stations and offices of life to which his Providence appoints us. But then we are to observe, that these are committed to us as a trust or loan, for the due management of which we are accountable to the donor. If, therefore, we faithfully acquit ourselves of this probationary charge, we shall receive far greater in-

stances of God's confidence and favor; but, if we are remiss and negligent, we must expect to feel his displeasure and resentment.

After delivering this parable, our Blessed Lord proceeded to describe the manner of his coming to the last and general judgment, when, surrounded with the resplendent rays of his glory, he should summon all the people that ever lived in the world to appear before him. "When the Son of man (said he) shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate 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." Matth. xxv. 31. Here our Blessed Lord compares good men to sheep, on account of their innocence; and wicked men to goats, for their exorbitant lusts. He does not, however, pursue the allegory farther, but describes the remaining, and, indeed, the greatest part of this awful scene in terms perfectly simple and intelligible. Here the judgment of all nations is exhibited; and the particulars on which these awful trials are to proceed, displayed by the great Judge himself. Here we learn that we shall be condemned or acquitted, according as we have neglected or performed works which flow from the great principles of faith and piety, and which the very heathens are, by the light of nature, invited to perform. Good men can at best but consider their present state as exceeding wretched: a state in which they are often exposed to innumerable temptations, to persecutions, to poverty, reproach and contempt. But the consideration that they are travelling towards the heavenly Jerusalem, a place prepared for them when the foundations of the world were laid, will be abundantly sufficient to support their spirits, and render them *more than conquerors*. The glory laid up for them in the mansions of eternity, and which the great Judge will, at the awful day of accounts, confer upon them, will animate them to bear the violences of their oppressors, and even defy the malice of men and devils. Nay, they will behold with contempt the flourishing pros-

perity of the wicked, and look forward to that glorious and immortal crown, which will be given them by their great Redeemer. " Then shall the King say unto them " on the right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, in- " herit 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 in prison, and ye came unto me." The righteous shall then ask, with great reverence and humility, when they performed these services, as they never saw him in want, and therefore could not assist him: " 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 in prison, and came " unto thee? And the King shall answer, and say unto " them, Verily, I say unto you, insomuch as ye have " done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye " have done it unto me." Matth. xxv. 37, &c. This is truly astonishing indeed! The united wisdom of men and angels could never have discovered a more proper method to convey an idea of the warmth and force of the Divine benevolence to the sons of men, or offer a more forcible motive to charity, than that the Son of God should, from his seat of judgment, in presence of the whole race of mankind, and all the hosts of blessed spirits from the courts of heaven, declare that all good offices done to the afflicted are done to himself. During the time of his dwelling with human nature in this vale of tears, he suffered the most unspeakable injuries; and therefore he considers all the distressed virtuous, as members of his body, loves them with the utmost tenderness, and is so greatly interested in their welfare, that he rejoices when they are happy.

The awful judge himself having told his disciples what would be the happy fate of the righteous, next proceeded to inform them what would befall the wicked, on whom he passed the following sentence of condemnation: " De- " part 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 thirsty, and ye gave me  
“ no drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me not in :  
“ Naked, and ye clothed me not : Sick, and in prison,  
“ and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer  
“ him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or a  
“ thirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison,  
“ and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer  
“ them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye  
“ did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to  
“ me.”

After having thus represented the sentences that were to be passed on the righteous and the wicked, our Lord closed his discourse with the following words: *And those (speaking of the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.* Happy decision to the followers of the Lamb! Awful sentence to the workers of iniquity! May it, therefore, excite us to pray for that grace, by which alone we shall obtain the former!

.....  
END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.  
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### BOOK IV.

#### CHAPTER XIII.—FROM PAGE 5, TO PAGE 26.

Demetrius, the nephew of the late Antiochus Epiphanes, claims the crown of Syria, which he obtains, and orders Antiochus Eupater and the regent Lysias, to be put to death. Aleimus, the high-priest, represents the Jews in a very unfavorable light to Demetrius, who thereupon sends Bacchides, the governor of Mesopotamia, with an army into Judea, in order to carry on the war against them. The perfidy and cruelty of Aleimus the high-priest to his brethren. Bacchides returns to Antioch, and leaves Aleimus commander of his forces against the Jews. Judas Maccabeus obliges Aleimus to leave Judea, and fly to Antioch, upon which Demetrius sends another army into Judea under the command of Nicanor, with strict orders to destroy Judas and his followers. Nicanor enters into a treaty of peace with the Jews, which is rendered ineffectual by the baseness of Aleimus. Nicanor marches against Jerusalem, but is attacked by Judas, his army defeated, and himself slain. Judas enters into a league of friendship with the Romans. He engages the army of the Syrians under the command of Bacchides and Aleimus, from the superiority of whose numbers he is defeated and slain. His brother Jonathan succeeds him in the command of the Jewish forces, makes a brave stand, and afterwards forms a treaty of peace with Bacchides. Alexander, the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, usurps the kingdom of Syria, in which he is joined by Jonathan, who, among other favors bestowed on him by Alexander, is appointed to the office of high-priest. Alexander engages the army of Demetrius, obtains a complete victory, and kills his antagonist. The son of Demetrius endeavors to revenge his father's death, and to divest Alexander of the Syrian throne. He gains over to his interest Apollonius, the governor of Cœlo-Syria, who, to oblige Jonathan to quit Alexander's party, marches against him with a considerable army. Jonathan engages him, and obtains a complete victory. Alexander, in conjunction with Ammonius his favorite, concerta a plot against the life of his father-in-law Ptolemy Philometer, which proves abortive. Ptolemy engages Alexander, defeats his army, and obliges him to fly into Arabia, where Zabdiel the king of that part of the country, cuts off his head and sends it to

Ptolemy. Ptolemy dies of the wounds he received in the battle with Alexander, and Demetrius obtains quiet possession of the Syrian empire.

**CHAPTER XIV.—FROM PAGE 26, TO PAGE 47.**

Jonathan, the high-priest, and governor of the Jews, lays siege to the fortress of Aera. He goes to Ptolemais, in obedience to the orders of Demetrius, to whom he makes many rich presents, and from whom he, in return, receives the promises of very distinguished favors. He sends an army to the assistance of Demetrius, who, after having his purposes answered, takes off those indulgencies he had before granted to Jonathan. Tryphon (the governor of Antioch during the reign of Alexander) overcomes Demetrius, murders Jonathan and his two sons, together with Antiochus (son of the late Alexander, whom he had placed on the throne of Syria) and afterwards usurps the government to himself. Simon succeeds his brother Jonathan in the command of the Jewish forces, and taking the fortress of Aera, levels it with the ground. Antiochus Sidetes, brother to Demetrius, lays claim to the crown of Syria, and marches with a body of forces against the usurper Tryphon, who is taken and put to death. Antiochus, having got full possession of the throne, sends an army against Simon, who engages them and obtains a complete victory. Ptolemy, the son-in-law of Simon, causes him and two of his sons to be assassinated, after which he sends the same assassins to murder Hyrcanus, the youngest son of Simon, but he being apprized of their intentions, renders them abortive. Hyrcanus is made high-priest and appointed commander of the Jews in the place of his father Simon. He assists Antiochus Sidetes in his war against the Parthians; at the close of which Antiochus and his army are cut to pieces by the inhabitants of the country. Demetrius, after enduring a long imprisonment, is set at liberty, and recovers the kingdom of Syria, but is deposed and put to death. Hyrcanus enlarges his territories, and makes himself master of Samaria. He is greatly incensed against the Pharisees. His death and character.

**CHAPTER XV.—FROM PAGE 47, TO PAGE 66.**

Aristobulus succeeds his father Hyrcanus in the government of Judea. He imprisons his mother and three of his brethren, the former of whom he causes to be starved to death. He makes war with the Ituraens, whom he subdues, and brings over to the Jewish religion. He causes his brother Antigonus to be put to death, the reflection of which, added

to the murder of his mother, so affects his mind and body that he dies miserably, after having reigned only one year. He is succeeded by his brother Alexander Jannæus, who releases his other two brothers from confinement, the elder of whom he causes to be put to death. He lays siege to Ptolemais, but abandons the enterprize. He enters into a treaty with Ptolemy Lathyrus, the expelled king of Egypt, but proving perfidious, Ptolemy engages his army, defeats him, and lays waste a great part of his territories. He forms an alliance with Cleopatra (the mother of Ptolemy) queen of Egypt. He marches into Cœlo-Syria, and takes Gadara, with the fortress of Amathus, but is afterwards defeated by Theodorus, the son of Zeno, prince of Philadelphia. He lays siege to Gaza, which, by the treachery of Lysamachus, he reduces, puts all the inhabitants to the sword, and totally destroys the place. He returns to Jerusalem, and is insulted by his subjects, who enter into an open rebellion against him. He marches against the Ammonites and Moabites, whom he subdues, and makes them become tributary. He is capitally defeated by one Thedas, an Arabian prince, and narrowly escapes with his life. A civil war takes place between him and his subjects, the latter of whom apply to Demetrius Euchærus, king of Damascus, for assistance. Demetrius accordingly enters Judea with a considerable army, and engaging Alexander obtains a complete victory. Alexander flies, with his scattered forces, to the mountains for safety, where, being joined by a great number of those Jews who were in arms against him under Demetrius, the latter, fearful that the rest may do the like, retires into Syria. Alexander, having taken eight hundred of his rebellious subjects, prisoners, carries them to Jerusalem, where he orders them all to be crucified, and their wives and children massacred before their faces. He dies at the siege of Ragaba, but, previous to his death, gives a political piece of advice to his queen, who, in consequence thereof, is afterwards settled in the supreme government of the nation.

#### CHAPTER XVI.—FROM PAGE 66, TO PAGE 82.

Alexandra, the Queen-Regent of Judea, appoints her eldest son Hyrcanus to the High-Priesthood. The Pharisees, having the ascendancy over the queen, direct the principal management of all public affairs. They abolish the decree of John Hyrcanus against their traditionalist constitutions, and persecute the friends and adherents of the late king. Aristobulus, the brother of Hyrcanus, goes, with some of the most eminent men, to remonstrate with the queen

against the conduct of the Pharisees, in consequence of which, at their request, she gives them possession of several strong places. The Jews are greatly alarmed on being invaded by Tigranes, king of Armenia, but their fears are soon removed, for, on their making him presents, he withdraws his forces. Aristobulus leads an army against his brother Hyrcanus, but on their meeting a treaty is formed between them, by which Hyrcanus resigns the office of high-priest, together with the sovereignty, to his brother Aristobulus. Hyrcanus, assisted by Aretas, king of Arabia, defeats Aristobulus, after which they both make their appeal to Pompey. Aristobulus takes up arms against Pompey, who reduces Jerusalem, restores Hyrcanus to the sovereignty, and carries Aristobulus, with his family, prisoners to Rome. Gabinius, the Roman governor in Syria, confirms Hyrcanus in the high-priesthood, and takes the civil administration out of the hands of the Sanhedrim. Aristobulus, having made his escape from Pompey, goes into Judea, and attempts to raise fresh disturbances, but is taken prisoner and again sent to Rome, where he dies by poison. Julius Cæsar confirms Hyrcanus in the government of Judea, and restores the civil administration into the hands of the Sanhedrim.

#### CHAPTER XVII.—FROM PAGE 8*½*, TO PAGE 11*½*.

Antipater the sub-governor of Judea, repairs the walls of Jerusalem, and exhorts the people to pay a proper submission to Hyrcanus. He promotes his two sons Phasael and Herod, the first to the government of the country round Jerusalem, and the latter to that of Galilee. Herod makes a prisoner of Hezekias, the ring-leader of an outrageous banditti, whom, with several of his associates, he puts to death. The enemies of Antipater envy the prosperity of his sons, and occasion Herod to be brought before the Sanhedrim to answer for his conduct. He accordingly appears, upon which Hyrcanus, fearful of the consequences, adjourns the court, and advises Herod, in the mean time, to make his escape from Jerusalem. Herod takes this advice, and retires into Syria, where he is countenanced by Sextus Cæsar, who appoints him to the government of Cælo-Syria. Herod resolves to march to Jerusalem, and depose Hyrcanus; but, by the expostulations of his father and brother, he is prevailed on to relinquish his design. A civil war takes place among the Romans, in which Sextus Cæsar is basely murdered by means of Cæcilius Bassus. Julius Cæsar is assassinated in the senate-house at Rome. Antipater is poisoned by Malicus, and his death revenged by his son

**Herod.** Felix declares war against Herod and his brother Phasael, the latter of whom proves victorious, and all the attempts of Felix are rendered abortive. A considerable body of the Jews apply to Mark Antony against Herod and his brother, but without success. Antigonus (the younger son of the late Aristobulus) by the assistance of the Parthians, gains the kingdom of Judea. Hyrcanus and Phasael are taken prisoners and sent to Antigonus, the former of whom has his ears cut off, and the latter puts an end to his own existence. Herod goes to Rome, and by means of Antony and Augustus, obtains from the Senate a grant of the kingdom of Judea. He is opposed by Antigonus, and indifferently assisted by the Romans. He lays siege to Jerusalem, takes Antigonus prisoner, and prevails with Antony to have him put to death.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.—FROM PAGE 114, TO PAGE 154.

Herod, after getting possession of Jerusalem, and the sovereignty of Judea, revenges himself on his enemies. He promotes a person of mean birth to the pontificate, but afterwards deposes him at the instigation of his relations, and places Aristobulus in his stead. Hyrcanus is treated with great respect by the king of Parthia, who gives him his liberty and he returns to Jerusalem. Herod confines Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus, causes Aristobulus, the high-priest, to be drowned, and puts to death his uncle Joseph. He marches with an army to assist Antony against Cæsar Octavianus, but, by Antony's orders, he makes war with the Arabians. A dreadful earthquake happens in Judea. The Arabians take advantage of this, and after murdering the Jewish ambassadors, march with great resolution against Herod. A battle ensues, in which Herod proves victorious, and the Arabians are totally reduced. Antony is defeated and killed at the battle of Actium. Herod, fearful that Hyrcanus should supplant him in the sovereignty, causes him to be put to death. He submissively applies to Cæsar, who now assumes the surname of Augustus. He meets with a favorable reception, and is confirmed in the government of Judea. He is greatly perplexed by domestic troubles on his return to Jerusalem. He goes a second time to Cæsar, and on his return puts to death his wife Mariamne. He repents of his conduct, and, from the horrors of his mind is seized with a dangerous disease. On his recovery he rebuilds the temple of Jerusalem, which is the last memorable occurrence previous to the incarnation of Our Blessed Saviour, the Prince of Peace, and Redeemer of Mankind.

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Our Blessed Lord goes to Jerusalem, and performs a miraculous cure at the pool of Bethesda. He reprobates the Jews for their superstition, in condemning the performance of necessary works on the Sabbath-day. Vindicates his disciples for eating ears of corn on the Sabbath, and himself for curing a man on the same day, of a withered hand. The Pharisees conspire against his life; upon which he retires with his disciples towards the sea-side, and, in his way, cures a great number of diseased people. He chuses his twelve apostles, and preaches to a numerous audience his excellent and well-known sermon on the Mount.

**CHAPTER VI.—FROM PAGE 375, TO PAGE 396.**

Our Blessed Lord goes to Capernaum, and heals the servant of a Roman Centurion. He raises to life a widow's son. Passes great encomiums on John the Baptist. Absolves a woman from her sins. Cures a demoniac at Capernaum, and reproves the Pharisees. Instructs the multitude in parables. Cures a woman of a bloody flux. Restores the daughter of Jairus to life, and performs other great miracles. Goes to Nazareth, and is ill-treated by the people. Sends out his Apostles, and gives them their commission. The death of John the Baptist.

**CHAPTER VII.—FROM PAGE 396, TO PAGE 411.**

Our Blessed Lord, after hearing of the death of John the Baptist, retires to the desert of Bethsaida, where he adds to the confirmation of his mission and doctrine by performing a most astonishing miracle. The people, struck with his distinguished power, propose raising him to the earthly dignity of king. Peter, by means of his Blessed Master, performs a miracle, by walking on the surface of the sea. Our Lord preaches to the people in the synagogue at Capernaum concerning spiritual food, in order to improve the miracle wrought in the desert of Bethsaida. He reprimands the Pharisees for their superstition. Continues to display his power and benevolence in relieving several distressed objects. Reasons with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and cautions his disciples to avoid their errors and fallacies. Cures a blind man at Bethsaida, and makes trial of his apostles' faith. Delegates a special power to Peter. He informs them of his future sufferings, and is afterwards transfigured on the Mount.

**CHAPTER VIII.—FROM PAGE 411, TO PAGE 434.**

Our Blessed Lord cures a youth who was dreadfully tormented with an evil spirit. He foretels his death to his disciples, to whom he recommends humility and forgiveness of injuries. Conforms to the custom of the country by paying the tribute, which he raises by a miracle. Refuses to destroy the city of Samaria, which would not receive him in his journey to Jerusalem. Harangues the multitude at the Feast of Tabernacles. Exempts the woman taken in adultery from the punishment annexed by the Jews to that crime. Preaches to the people the mysteries of Christianity, and promises eternal life to his disciples. Prefers Mary's choice, and both teaches and encourages his disciples to pray. Inveighs against the Scribes and Pharisees. Preaches against Covetousness, and exhorts the people to Watchfulness, a preparation for death and judgment, and for a timely repentance.

**CHAPTER IX.—FROM PAGE 434, TO PAGE 459.**

Our Lord removes the complaint of a woman who had been deformed eighteen years, and confutes the ruler of the synagogue. Goes to Jerusalem, and there gives sight to a man, who had been born blind. The Pharisees endeavor to destroy the force of this miracle, and for that purpose strictly examine the person relieved, who boldly asserting it was Christ that had performed it, they excommunicate him from the synagogue. Our Lord shews the Pharisees to be false guides, and himself the true one; and, upon asserting his divinity, is in danger of being stoned. He leaves Jerusalem, and retires to Bethabara. Explains to the people the great difficulty of attaining salvation. Is warned to depart the country, in order to escape the resentment of Herod. Predicts the fate of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Cures a man of the dropsy, recommends humility, and represents the different success of the Gospel. Informs the people what qualifications are necessary for them to become Christians, and vindicates his own conduct in conversing sometimes with sinners. Shews the manner in which we are to employ our riches, and the miserable consequence of uncharitableness. Reminds his disciples of several duties, especially of humility, and cautions them against being deluded by false prophets.

**CHAPTER X.—FROM PAGE 459, TO PAGE 478.**

Our Lord leaves Galilee, and, crossing the river Jordan, enters Perea, where he cures great numbers of people afflicted with various disorders. He kindly receives the little

children brought to him to partake of his Divine benediction. Shews to the people the great danger of riches, and the rewards of a faithful adherence to him and his religion ; which he displays under the parable of laborers in a vine-yard. Is applied to by Martha and Mary in behalf of their brother Lazarus, who is sick ; upon which our Lord goes to Bethany. In his way he cures Bartimeus, a blind man, and dines with Zacheus, a publican, at whose house he delivers the parable of the servants entrusted with their lord's money. He arrives at Bethany, and raises Lazarus from the dead, to the great astonishment of all the spectators. The news of this miracle reaching Jerusalem, the Sanhedrim form the resolution of having him put to death, upon which he retires, for a short time, to Ephraim, a small place belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. He leaves Ephraim, and proceeds towards Jerusalem, in his way to which he stops at Bethany, and sups with Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. During his stay, Mary testifies her obedience, humility and respect, by anointing his feet with odoriferous perfume, and afterwards wiping them with the hair of her head. Judas Iscariot repines at the loss of the valuable ointment, for which our Lord, after commanding Mary's conduct, rebukes him for his avarice. Our Lord makes his public entry into Jerusalem, amidst the universal acclamations of the people, and on his near approach to the city publicly laments its impending fate.

#### CHAPTER XI.—FROM PAGE 478, TO PAGE 514.

Our Blessed Lord drives the dealers of several kinds out of the temple, and at the same time cures many people of their respective infirmities. Acquaints his disciples with his approaching death, and testifies his resignation to it. Denounces a judgment upon a fig-tree. Argues with the chief Priests and Scribes in the temple, reproves them for their conduct, and delivers several parables on the occasion. Answers a captious question put to him by the Sadducees and Pharisees. Settles the most important points of the law. Exposes the vices of the Scribes and Pharisees, and foretels the judgment that will fall upon them. Commends a widow woman for contributing her mite to the public treasury. Predicts the destruction of the temple, and informs his apostles of the signs which should precede that event. Exhorts his disciples to watchfulness and prayer, which he enforces by delivering two parables ; one of the wise and foolish Virgins; and the other, of the talents entrusted with diligent and slothful servants.

