





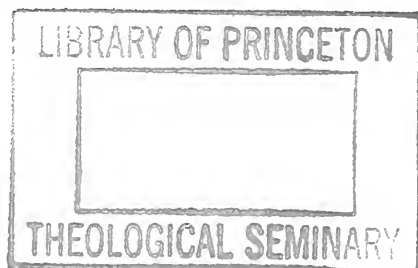
NOTES

ON

SCRIPTURE.

BY

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## A FEW PRELIMINARY WORDS.

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THAT the author of a work which, either as to its substance or its method, is seriously influenced by considerations which are not discussed in the work itself, should, by preliminary explanations, or even by a large introduction, set forth those controlling considerations, is extremely natural, may often be indispensable, and was formerly very general. But it is not possible for one human being so to possess himself of the whole thought of another, as to perform this service for him, even when it is needed, with complete success. Moreover, it is only in works of a peculiar kind—and this work of JUDGE JONES can hardly be said to be of that kind—that such attempts can be important, even when they are successful. It is because the duties of friendship are sacred—sacred towards the dead—sacred towards those who survive—far more than because there is any need of it, that any words of mine precede these NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

Many years ago, and for a number of successive years, it was my fortune to be immediately connected, as owner, publisher, and editor, with the periodical press. JUDGE JONES was one of the largest and most valued contributors to those pages for which I was, in so many ways, responsible. Expositions of Scripture, and expositions, critical and historical, of the Papacy, were his chief themes. This literary connection ripened into a warm and lasting friendship; and in this manner were those abounding opportunities afforded, to appreciate justly his gifts, his attainments, and his virtues, and to speak with the greatest confidence of his remarkable fitness as an expositor of the word of God.

Liberally educated, all that part of his culture was made both complete and permanent, by his pursuing the profession

of a teacher for some years during his early manhood: a profession which, as President of the great Institution founded by Mr. Girard, he resumed for a short period in maturer life. Trained to the profession of the Law, and for a number of years a Judge, the habits of deep research and patient thought, which made that noble calling familiar to him, and the rectitude of mind which made its administration honourable, all alike fitted him, at the same time, for some of the highest duties of an expositor of sacred Scripture. To a knowledge, at once accurate and broad, of those ancient languages in which God has revealed his will to man, he added a familiar acquaintance with the chief languages, both ancient and modern, in which mankind has most largely discussed divine things; and in them all, how wide and thorough his reading was, all his writings testify. Naturally endowed with high faculties, justly balanced and nobly directed; enriched with great experience of life, and adorned with much of its best success; he added as his highest fitness for his favourite studies, that reverence and love for the word of God, that conformity of heart and life unto it, and that spiritual insight of its mysteries, which they who have not, are but blind leaders of the blind. It is such a man, the last and, as he judged, the best labours of whose life, and that a life rather long than short, are contained in this volume—nearly, though not strictly, posthumous. His gentle and modest spirit, though it did not direct, desired this publication. The bereaved partner of his life lays it as a tribute of love upon the altar of the Lord. If the saints of the Most High fructify by its use, its whole end is gained.

It is striking and very affecting to observe, in all the scriptural expositions of JUDGE JONES, the direction which his thoughts took, and the tenacity with which his mind adhered to that which occupied it most. These *Notes on Scripture* are, in effect, an exposition of the Gospel doctrine concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, as this diligent student of the Scriptures understood it. They are Notes upon those portions of the Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, embracing, rather incidentally, parallel and illustrative passages from all the other inspired books, which appeared to him to contain and to



develop the Gospel doctrine concerning the Saviour of the world. In some respects they are critical—in some respects they are historical; but it is their expository character which chiefly distinguishes them—expository in the sense of being carefully and continually directed towards the precise understanding of the entire meaning of the particular inspired statements as contained in themselves, and as illustrated, enforced, or limited by other inspired statements, and by the great ideas, and aim, and end of all inspired Scripture. The aspect of the work is not devotional, nor is it controversial; nor is it, properly speaking, dogmatical; but it is of the nature of a judicial analysis, and determination of the true meaning of a record, the particular portions of which that bear specially upon certain vast topics, have been submitted to a most rigorous scrutiny. And the candid reader will observe, everywhere, the studious diligence with which every conclusion is made to rest on special Scriptures, which are constantly cited; the judicial fairness with which conclusions differing from his own are stated; the modesty with which new interpretations, and peculiar opinions are announced; and the blended calmness and directness with which his own interpretations and judgments are given.

The casual reader of this volume may receive the impression that it is fragmentary and incoherent. Whoever will carefully read over, in connection, the tables of contents prefixed to its fifteen chapters, will perceive how erroneous such an impression would be. Commencing with the genealogy of Jesus, the work terminates with the glorification of Christ. Between these two points lies the whole work of the Mediator between God and man, in his estate of humiliation, and also the beginning of his work in his estate of exaltation; and all is discussed from the particular point of view occupied by the author. Of the seven chapters at the close of the volume, three are devoted to the crucifixion of Christ; and the last four to his resurrection and all that followed, until, and including, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. From the beginning to the end, the chain of thought and the sequence of the facts is rigorously preserved; and the numerous and important questions of an incidental kind, which were obliged to be discussed,

are so skilfully disposed as to strengthen, instead of breaking the continuity of the development. In such a performance it would be impossible to evade the expression of the writer's opinions upon all those immense topics following after Pentecost, which arise out of the dispensation of the Lord Jesus, considered in his estates of humiliation and exaltation; and it is not improbable that the deep interest which JUDGE JONES is known to have felt for many years, in all questions connected with the second coming of the Son of Man, may have been a chief cause of the composition of this work. Undoubtedly, his views on those subjects could not fail to enter into his views of many preceding subjects, out of which they grew; and the spirit, and method, and rule of his interpretations upon strictly connected topics, could hardly fail, in such a mind as his, to be uniform and constant. As now used, the word Millenarian is one of the vaguest ever employed to designate an opinion, a theory, or a party. Nevertheless, in a sense somewhat peculiar to himself, but very clear and decided, JUDGE JONES was a Millenarian; and to omit stating the fact here, would have been deemed by himself, unworthy, if not sinful.

While it is true, as I have intimated, that the views entertained by JUDGE JONES concerning the second advent, and the numerous and sublime events dependent on it, necessarily suppose a certain sense to be the true sense of various passages of Scripture which do not treat immediately of that second advent; it by no means follows that all who accept this tone and particular sense of those passages last alluded to, must necessarily accept his views of the second advent. For example, it is impossible to see how he could embrace the views he held concerning the second advent, if he had not been a Calvinist; but it is very easy to see that one may be a Calvinist and not embrace them. Moreover, there are multitudes of topics in the Scriptures—and they amongst the most vital of all—which do not appear to have any assignable relation to any special class of opinions touching the Millennium; as, for example, our Effectual Calling, its nature, and the manner of its occurrence. The object of stating these distinctions, is to point out how naturally it may occur, and to assert my personal conviction that these *Notes on Scripture*, wholly irre-

spective of their character as touching any doctrine of the Millennium, are of extraordinary value. Many questions of great difficulty and deep interest to every student of the Scriptures, are treated with great clearness and force; and many more of high personal importance to every human being, are settled with singular distinctness; and all this is done with a simplicity of style and a fruitfulness of matter rarely combined.

I shall not attempt to estimate, or even to state in a connected and systematic manner, the opinions of JUDGE JONES dispersed through this work, on those vast topics which embrace the whole future of the human race, and of the kingdom of God, as connected with this earth. They are topics on which my own views have been laid before the public in a permanent form. It is proper to say, and it is sufficient, that I adhere to what I have published; in some things agreeing with the views presented in these *Notes*, in some things dissenting entirely from them, in some things standing in great uncertainty of mind where positive opinions are herein expressed. In these respects, I may probably consider myself not an unfit representative of the great mass of such serious Christians, now alive, as have anxiously pondered these things, and have found our attainments in Divine knowledge and the Divine life, not adequate, as yet, to the attainment of complete satisfaction regarding all their high mysteries. Very shallow views, which long prevailed amongst Protestant, and still longer amongst Papal expositors, no longer satisfy the minds of God's people; and my long and wide experience as an office-bearer in the Church of Christ, has made me fully aware, that the common people have as thoroughly passed from those interpretations, as our whole current religious literature shows that the minds of their teachers are widely unsettled concerning them. In this volume, we have an original, independent, temperate, and able contribution in aid of every one who is inquiring concerning the true sense of God's word, touching the great promise and the great threat of the New Testament Scriptures. They who the most readily receive, without careful examination, what is herein written, will depart the farthest from the spirit and the habit of him who wrote it.

There are two particulars concerning the authorship of this volume which, though subordinate in themselves, seem to me to demand special mention here. In the first place, it is the work of a private gentleman, much and long engaged in important affairs, apparently remote from such studies; thus recalling the times when the highest officers of state, the noblest gentlemen and scholars, nay the great publicists and even captains, took in hand to record the doings, and to expound the doctrine of the Lord; and thus laid at the feet of Jesus, tributes which still adorn and enrich his people. It is a precious token of a better day with us. In the second place, it comes out of the bosom of the Presbyterian Church—that great branch of that God-fearing Reformed Church—to whose highest turrets men look to see the light of God as it rises, break on them first of all; and to which they look to see it linger there last of all, when it departs. One more of her sons has lifted up his clear and loud call to dying men—and the voice is all concerning Jesus, and the glory that is to be revealed.

R. J. B.

DANVILLE, KENTUCKY,  
*December, 1860.*

## MEMOIR.

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CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHY is at once a just tribute to the dead, and an instructive monument to the living. When a useful life is closed in death, and a character moulded into completeness presents itself for a last survey, as we tenderly consign it among the treasures of memory, both philosophy and piety dictate that we should ponder its lesson, and heed its moral. And should we find, while pursuing the pensive task, that the world has been made richer by a new example of virtue, that we gain juster views of the dignity and value of human existence, and of the entire compatibility of deep religious sentiments with earthly toils, successes, and honours, it will then seem a duty as well as privilege, to extend and perpetuate the influence.

It is such a moral legacy that has been bequeathed by the learned author of this volume. With his departure has passed away a type of the Christian scholar, as singular in its excellence as it is difficult to delineate. It must remain a solitary model of blended learning and goodness that may be revered and cherished, but cannot be perfectly matched or imitated. Some may have approached him in mere erudition—some may have equalled him in mere piety—a few, under the impulse of an academic or clerical vocation, may have illustrated as signally the harmonious union of these two attainments; but it was his rare merit, and, it would seem, his peculiar mission, that while actively engaged in the legal profession, he should yet make himself a master in theology; and, though called to public positions and busied with secular interests, should so thoroughly fuse together the judicial virtues and religious graces, as to present the two-fold aspect of a Christian without a trace of cant or enthusiasm, and a jurist without a taint of duplicity or worldliness.

That such a life on review should seem comparatively uneventful, may remind us that it is not always the most stirring careers that are the most useful, or the most worthy of study and imitation.

Judge JOEL JONES was born in Coventry, Connecticut, on the 26th of October, 1795. Descended from Puritan ancestry, and carefully trained by a mother who was of the same religious race, he exemplified the inheritance of natural virtue, and the covenant mercy which is from generation to generation. His

father, Amasa Jones, was largely engaged in mercantile business as well as farming. His mother was the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Joseph Huntington, well known in the New England churches. He was the eldest of nine children. The first years of his life were principally spent upon the farm; but even at that early period, it is said that "the mature and elevated character which he ultimately developed was distinctly foreshadowed."

When he was about fifteen years of age, an uncle for whom he was named, desired to associate him with him in his business, and for this purpose he removed to Hebron. Here, though always diligent and courteous, he soon showed that such a calling was not consonant with his intellectual tastes and aspirations. Without the knowledge of any one, he purchased a Latin grammar, and devoted his leisure hours to self-preparation for his future course. When his studious habits and inclinations became known, both his uncle, who was strongly attached to him, and his father, united to throw obstacles in his way, and to make large and tempting inducements for him to remain in a life of business. But his determined purpose, seconded by the persuasive counsels of his mother, prevailed, and the village pastor was engaged to direct his preparations for college.

In the year 1813, he was admitted Freshman at Yale, taking rank from the first with the best scholars of his class. He had not, however, been enjoying these congenial pursuits longer than six months, when a reverse in the family fortunes threw a dark cloud upon his prospects. After a severe conflict between the claims of filial duty and that love of learning which became the master passion of his life, he at length resolved to reconcile both by devoting to them both the proceeds of his labour as a teacher of youth during the intervals of study. To the necessities and struggles of this period, as well as to original disposition, he no doubt owed the formation of those habits of untiring industry, perseverance, and system, which characterized his whole subsequent career, and were the foundation of his success and usefulness; and so proficient did he become in this school of blended trial and study, that he not only maintained his academic standing, but digressed into some medical studies outside of the course, and graduated with the Berkleian prize, and at but one remove from the highest honours of his class.

His first deep religious convictions seem to have been received during his college life; but, though observant of outward church duties, and for a period superintendent in a Sabbath-school, he did not until some years afterwards make a public profession of his faith.

Among the life-long friends he made while at New Haven was the late Judge Bristol, with whom he commenced the legal studies, afterwards finished at the Law School in Litchfield.

The family having removed to Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania, he joined them there, on the completion of his education; but, after meeting with new embarrassments, at length removed to Easton, and established himself in the practice of his profession. He is remembered in that town by families in which he was always a welcome visitor, and also for the influence he exerted through the community in promoting literary tastes, and sound morals. It was there, too, that he first publicly united with the church, and entered with new interest and success into religious labours.

In the year 1831, June 14th, at Philadelphia, he was married to Miss Eliza P. Sparhawk. Of their six children, two only are living. His home was always the central sphere of his life, to which he devoted his most assiduous cares, and which he adorned with the virtues of the primitive household of faith.

While at Easton he rose rapidly at the bar, acquiring a reputation for learning and ability. Having been appointed by the Governor of Pennsylvania one of three Commissioners to revise the laws of the State, he came frequently to Philadelphia to meet his colleagues; and at length, after having declined several other proffers of judicial position, he accepted that which brought him to Philadelphia, and ultimately established him as President Judge of one of its Courts. From this post he was called to the Presidency of Girard College, and during the brief term of his incumbency, impressed upon that Institution, then in its formation, a marked and salutary influence. On resigning this position he was elected Mayor of the city of Philadelphia, from which office he retired to active private life, and was pursuing with all his early zeal his professional labours, church duties, and favourite studies, when it became sadly evident that his physical system, so long overtaxed by incessant mental application, was beginning to yield to fatal disease. Having reluctantly abated his labours and submitted to the necessary retirement and quiet of an invalid, after a severe and painful illness, he at length passed away from the bosom of his family-circle and friends, while in the full possession of his faculties, and with an assured hope of glory. The event occurred in Philadelphia, February 3, 1860. It was noticed by the daily newspaper press with sketches of his public life and services, and the funeral solemnities, conducted in the Second Presbyterian Church, were attended by a concourse in which the learned professions were largely represented.

In attempting to estimate a character tested by such varied

positions and relations, we cannot but be struck with its steady truthfulness, unity, and harmony.

As a public man, Judge Jones has left a reputation of almost singular value. He was, doubtless, too much of a scholar, and too little inclined by his retiring habits, his religious tastes and principles, to adopt congenially much of the routine which has become essential to a successful politician. Yet, he never held an office or discharged a trust in which he was found wanting in any of the moral qualifications of probity, discretion, and true solicitude for the public welfare; and if his political friends and adversaries alike found it impossible to draw him into some of the current arts of partisanship, he certainly did not forfeit their respect by his strict adherence to duty, right, and principle.

As a jurist, his peculiar excellence is too much a matter of professional appreciation, to admit of extended notice in these reflections. His pupils and associates hastened to bear testimony to his uniform official courtesy and propriety, to his accurate habits of thought and expression, to his severe discrimination, to his sound practical judgment, to the value of his judicial decisions, his legal consultations and opinions, and to his thorough mastery of the whole philosophy, literature, and practice of jurisprudence.

As a church officer he left vacancies lamented alike for the personal intercourse and judicious counsel which they terminated. In the various ecclesiastical Boards, of which he was an active and punctual member, his literary and legal opinions, always freely bestowed, were invaluable. In the church, of which for several years he was a ruling elder, his characteristics were fidelity, humility, conscientiousness, an edifying fervour and unction, and a blameless and holy life. The prayer-circle found him always at his post; and while leading its devotions, with his rich scriptural phraseology drawn from a heart imbued with the mind of the Spirit, and alike removed from the language of literature or of conversation, the scholar and the lawyer for the time so wholly disappeared in the humble Christian, that the lowliest listener found himself in sympathy. His familiar presence will long be missed from the scene of worship, whither he came with such regularity, and at each returning communion so devoutly ministered at the table of his Master.

But it was as a trained and ripe scholar that he impressed himself most obviously and characteristically upon the casual observer. Though no trace of pedantry tinged his ordinary intercourse, yet it was impossible not to see that his stores of learning were indeed vast—that his erudition was accurate, profound, and extensive; involving solid acquirements rather



than the more graceful accomplishments. Both fitted and inclined by nature for severe studies, he had furnished himself with the aids of two libraries—the one enriched with treasures of divinity, and the other not less remarkable in the department of his profession; and joining to these appliances a thorough mastery of ancient and modern languages, he entered and traversed the whole field of human learning, until there was scarcely a recess left unvisited.

In jurisprudence, his acquirements have been described as exhaustive. He was “conversant not only with the English common law, but with the civil law of Rome and the modern European systems. The compilations of Justinian were no less familiar to him as objects of study than the Commentaries of Coke. Indeed, from his taste for antiquities and for comparative jurisprudence, he was not only peculiarly qualified but intellectually inclined to explore the doctrines of the law to their historical sources, and gather around them, in tracing their development, all the accessories which history and learning could supply. This was to him a loving labour—for he regarded the law as a lofty science, and its practice as the application of ethical principles by a trained logic.” And he has adorned the literature of his profession with productions that will remain as monuments of his learning and industry.

In theology, his attainments were, perhaps, even more varied and remarkable. He was closely familiar with the versions of the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, with the early Christian fathers, with the writings of the scholastic theologians and of the English divines, particularly those of the Westminster Assembly; and if he neglected the modern German theology, it was more from a spiritual distaste for some of its remote tendencies than from any want of preparation for its acquisition. Into the rarely explored fields of Rabbinical literature, both ancient and modern, he had so extensively penetrated as to have acquired a European reputation; while in the literature and history of the Millennialian controversy, which he made a speciality, he was without a superior in this or any country. His collection of books upon the subject, it is believed, is unequalled. He brought to the prophetic Scriptures his legal habits of interpretation, and, by an original exegesis, had constructed upon the basis of the orthodox theology a doctrine of the futurities of Christianity, which was not a mere theory, but inwrought with his whole personal experience. The second coming of Christ, as ever imminent, was with him a belief that imparted a glow to his whole piety, swayed his daily conduct, and invested his life with an habitual, though cheerful, solemnity.

In philology, he had made himself master of the Oriental,

classical, and modern languages. He had a linguistic taste and tact, which made such acquisitions a pastime rather than a drudgery.

As a well-read lawyer, a writer and a thinker, a linguist, a theologian, a biblical critic, he could have taken rank with the most eminent. His attainments in divinity were so peculiar in one not trained for the pulpit as to have occasioned the remark at his funeral: "But yesterday the scholars of the Church were gathered at the grave of its most learned clergyman\*—there are those present who will deem it no exaggeration to say, that to-day we are burying its most learned layman."

The only regret that can be felt in view of such immense knowledge is, that it must perish from among us without adequate memorial; and that, with the exception of a few anonymous contributions to periodical literature, and an occasional volume for the instruction of youth, he has so wronged by his modesty his reputation and usefulness.†

It was this ardent love of learning for its own sake, and almost without conscious regard to its uses and advantages, which, fed by long indulgence, had become an absorbing passion, and even threatened to verge into a besetting infirmity. It showed itself in a desire for the accumulation of curious volumes and ancient editions, and for the acquisition of extinct languages. A rare old book, if it could be procured at any sacrifice short of a principle, was a temptation it was simply impossible for him to resist. He expended large sums upon his theological library.

His heart warmed, as with instinctive sympathy, toward needy scholars and struggling students, who, on applying to him, were always sure of a welcome and a helping hand. He lived the life of a student, amid the bustle of a great city and under the rigorous claims of a laborious profession, and was never happier than when secluded from the world among his treasured books, or discoursing to a congenial friend on his favourite views in theology.

\* Rev. J. Addison Alexander, D. D.

† Of his theological publications, the following may now be mentioned as the most prominent:

Articles in the *Princeton Review* on Protestantism; in the *Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine*, and the *Spirit of the Nineteenth Century*; and in the *Jewish Chronicle*, over the signature of "Azor;" "Review of the Discussion between Bishop Hughes and Dr. John Breckinridge;" "Notes on Scripture," over the signature of "PHILO," in the *Theological and Literary Journal*, embracing a continuous commentary upon the Gospel history.

"*The Story of Joseph, or the Patriarchal Age.*"

He also translated from the French, with original notes, "*Outlines of a History of the Court of Rome, and of the Temporal Power of the Popes,*" and edited and caused to be published "*The Literalist,*" in 5 vols. 8vo, adding a treatise of his own, entitled "*Essays on the Kingdom of God,*" by "PHILO-BASILICUS."

And yet, with all his learning, he was still content to be a pupil in the school of godliness, and a scholar at the feet of Jesus. Without pedantry, without intellectual pride, without sophistry, or scepticism, or vain philosophy, he preserved the humility and simplicity of a lowly disciple through all the temptations of learned investigation, and would have esteemed it the most precious of privileges to have been permitted to devote himself exclusively to sacred and scriptural studies. A new view of a familiar text, or solution of a difficult passage, delighted him more than any other intellectual acquisition; and though he brought to such researches all the irksome appliances of grammar, lexicon, and concordance, comparison of versions and citation of authorities, yet his reverence for the original as an actual Divine utterance, made the exercise devotional as well as critical, and had become so much the habit of his mind when quoting scriptural phrases, that even his dying protestations were interspersed with exegetical allusions. He regarded his commentaries as the most valuable labour of his life. Will they not also remain as his most fitting monument?

If we turn away from these more public actions and visible traits which make up his ordinary reputation, and penetrate into his private life and experience, we find ourselves in presence of a character which cannot be appreciated from any mere description—it was so simple, equable, and pure. It was the true gentle heart of a child masked under the gravity of a sage, and expressing itself in a blended kindness and decorum which had the grace of truth itself, and was utterly lost upon all who could not come within the circle of his spiritual sympathies. Though unassuming, he was still content with himself in any human presence. He was incapable of pretence or guile, and shunned display.

But it was his deep and fervent piety which formed his crowning characteristic. This was of a type growing rare in these days of busy philanthropy and religious dissipation. It partook of his quiet, undemonstrative nature—was an intensely individual sentiment engrafted upon a deeply reverential and trustful disposition—had been chastened by severe bereavements, of which he could never speak without emotion, and rigorously trained in daily duty, until it became the ever ascendant power of the soul. Religion in him had acquired the permanence of a habit and the force of a regulating principle. It pervaded his whole character and life, and was carried by him into every position and all occasions—not as a profession, but because he could not do otherwise; and even in the most worldly associations, though never obtruded, still made itself felt with his very presence as an atmosphere of holiness and a rebuke to sin. All knew that he was a godly

man, though no expression of mere personal experience was ever allowed to escape his lips.

It was only when disease and the prospect of death invaded his characteristic reserve and equanimity, that his secret walk with God began to reveal itself with a richness, a tenderness and beauty, that surprised even his most familiar friends. His spirit seemed lingering as upon the very borders of heaven. His heart was full of Christian love toward all who approached him. To his relatives, his friends, his pastor, his fellow-members of the session, he sent messages of kindly counsel and affection.

His only expressed anxiety to live was, that he might complete some Scripture studies in which he hoped to embody the matured results of his investigation of Divine truth. Between this holy solicitude and the commencing appreciation of the glory shortly to be revealed, he wavered, like the Apostle, in a strait between two—willing to remain, yet having the desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Once, while weighing this latter event as probable, he suddenly exclaimed, with an eye scanning unblenched the whole dread futurity, "Blessed Saviour! do I not love thee? Show me thy glory."

But it would be trespassing upon the privacies of a home so lately bereft of his presence, to enlarge upon those sacred moments. It was a death-bed around which was shadowed no terror. Such unclouded tranquillity, such perfect assurance, such strong intelligent faith, such humility, trustfulness, and tender affection, such glimpses of the heavenly glory, made it like the exit of a saint of the olden times of our faith; and when at length the bodily pulse began to wane, the beatific vision so grew upon his spirit as to swallow up all earthly interests and affections, and even illumine the clouds of physical anguish with the prophetic light of that broken utterance—the last ever breathed from his lips on earth—"A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." An hour of placid breathing succeeded, during which he sank to rest so peacefully, that the practised eye of his physician alone detected the moment of departure.

How the light of heaven falls in holy tranquillity upon the couch of the dying believer! What a deep, rich calm there ensues upon the turmoil of life and the pains of parting and dissolution! We would not disturb it with one murmur of repining; and though life for a while must seem impoverished, and the earth vacant and lonely, yet we soon learn to thank God for the grace illustrated in the life and death of his servants, and for one more proof that, even in this sinful world, true virtue shall not lose its reward.

C. W. S.

# NOTES ON SCRIPTURE.

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## CHAPTER I.

Genealogy of Jesus.—Form of Government appointed for the tribes of Israel and for the land God gave them.—Connection between the representation of Jeremiah xxxi. 15, and the massacre of the children of Bethlehem by Herod.

**MATTHEW I. 1.** “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham,” which may be paraphrased thus: The table of the genealogy of Jesus, who is the Christ, that great King in whom the covenants God made with Abraham and David met and were fulfilled. This title is not confined to the first seventeen verses. It extends to the whole chapter.

The design of the Evangelists in composing the Gospels was to prove that Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jews had just before rejected and put to death, Acts ii. 36, is the Christ, the Son of God, Luke i. 4. The Evangelist John expressly declares this as his motive, xx. 31; and Matthew virtually does so in this verse. Had it been his object merely to deduce the pedigree of the Lord Jesus, he would not have connected his name immediately with the names of David and Abraham, nor would he have given him, in this place, the title of Christ, or king. It would have been sufficient to say: The book of the generation of Jesus—Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, &c.

To prove that Jesus is the Christ, it was necessary to show his descent from David, Matt. xxii. 42. Had he descended from Levi, he might have been a priest, but not the Christ, Heb. vii. 14. Hence the words, “son of David,” denote the first proof, or order of proof, of the Messiahship of Jesus, and were added for that reason. But why add also, “the son of Abraham?” This was implied in his being the son of David,

for David descended from Abraham. And why did the Evangelist not add, "the son of Shem," or some other earlier ancestor of David? see Luke iii. 34—38. The answer to both these questions is: the former were necessary to state fully the Evangelist's design in composing the gospel, the latter would have been superfluous.

This will appear, if we reflect that the Christ was the seed especially promised to Abraham, Rom. ix. 7; Gal. iii. 16, 19, although afterwards promised to David under new relations. In other words, the two great covenants, viz. the Abrahamic and Davidic or royal covenant, both met and were fulfilled in the person of Jesus. Hence, we infer that the Evangelist's design in the first verse of the gospel was to propound, for the consideration of his readers, Jesus as the seed of these two great national covenants. The effect of these additions to the proper personal name of our Lord, then, is to circumscribe and define the subject he proposed to treat, as if the Evangelist had said, "I propose to write the history of Jesus of Nazareth, who is the seed first covenanted to Abraham, and afterwards to David, and therefore, the Messiah or Christ."

The table of pedigree is then immediately added as the first proof of this proposition. This was a necessary, but not of itself a complete proof. Joseph, the husband of Mary, was a descendant of both David and Abraham, Matt. i. 20, yet not the Christ. To complete the proof, therefore, the Evangelist, as he proceeds, introduces, in logical order, other facts, which serve not only to discriminate Jesus from every other descendant of David, but to evince the truth of his proposition beyond a reasonable doubt. In general terms they may be stated thus: 1. The human genealogy of the Lord Jesus. 2. His divine generation, i. 19. 3. Extraordinary public events which occurred about the time of his birth, and the effect they had upon the mind of the king of Judea, chap. ii. 1, 2, 3—9, 16. 4. The ministry and testimony of John the Baptist, chap. iii. 5. The miracles of the Lord Jesus, many of which are recorded to show that they were just such works as the prophets foretold Messiah should perform, iv. 23, 25. 6. The divine elevation and purity of his doctrine, chap. v.—vii. 7. The manner of his death, xxvii. 50, 54. 8. His resurrection, chap. xxviii.

Some authors, as Whiston, suppose that the first portion of this gospel, as far as chap. xiv. 12, has been greatly disarranged. Others even call in question the authenticity of the first two chapters. See Bowyer's Conjectures on Matt. iii.

The foregoing observations furnish sufficient grounds of dissent from all such surmises. The matters contained in the gospel are logically arranged with a view to prove the proposi-

tion contained in the first verse, which, as before explained, was not only the most important, but, in view of the sin and folly of rejecting him, appalling to the nation. Had Pilate written over the cross, "This is Jesus, the son of David, the son of Abraham, the king of the Jews," it would have been much more offensive to the priests than the one he actually wrote; for it would have charged them with rejecting and putting to death that great deliverer and king, sent to them in fulfilment of those Divine promises, which were the most precious inheritance of the nation.

We regard this gospel as intended specially for Jews. It begins abruptly. It takes for granted that the readers are well acquainted with Jewish history. It was probably written in Hebrew and Greek by the Evangelist himself. See a Tract by Dr. Tregelles on this question. It is not improbable that many authentic gospels were composed for the use of that people by inspired men, which may have been, and probably were, written in the Hebrew, or the vernacular dialect of the country; and that to such the Evangelist Luke refers in the first verse of his gospel, Luke i. 1. If so, it was a gracious provision for that people, suited to the exigency of their times and condition as a nation, and quite in accordance with the reason of the injunction our Lord gave to his apostles, Luke xxiv. 47, "beginning at Jerusalem." See notes on Acts iii. 19—21. Their time was short. The gospel must be made known to them by writings and by preaching soon, or it would be too late. Other nations could wait, as their times were to be prolonged. If, then, we suppose the gospels referred to by Luke were like this gospel of Matthew, written in Greek or Hebrew, or both, we can account for their loss by supposing they had served their special purpose when the nation was destroyed, and the people dispersed. This gospel of Matthew, however, was preserved for the instruction of the Gentile church. See Whitby and Doddridge on Luke i. 1. Also Clark and Townsend, at the same place.

MATT. I. 2. "Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Judas, and his brethren."

We observe that neither Ishmael nor Esau is included in the enumeration. It is true they were not ancestors of Jesus, nor were the brethren of Judas. This is a sufficient reason why their names should not be included in a table of pedigree, as such. Yet, as the Evangelist has respect to the Abrahamic covenant, it was important to refer generally to all the sons of Jacob, because they were embraced by it, and he does so. For the same reason Zara is mentioned, verse 3. But no allusion is made to the other sons of Abraham or Isaac, because they

were to be numbered among the Gentiles, Rom. ix. 7; Gal. iv. 22.

MATT. I. 6. "And Jesse begat David *the king*, and David *the king* begat Solomon"—not Solomon *the king*.

Both the addition and the omission are significant. It was not to give greater honour to David than to Solomon that this distinction was made: Solomon was as truly a king as David, and his reign was even more glorious. See Matt. vi. 29. There is an allusion here to the royal covenant or the covenant of the kingdom, which God made with David, of which we have an account in 2 Sam. vii. 12, 18—29; 1 Chron. xvii. 17. To the same covenant, the angel Gabriel refers in his address to Mary. Luke i. 32, 33.

There is, perhaps, also an allusion to the typical relation of David to the Messiah. The mercies of David were made sure by covenant, Isaiah iv. 3; Acts viii. 34. They were not like Adam's, Gen. ii. 17, and Saul's, liable to forfeiture by disobedience, 1 Sam. xiii. 13, 14; xvi. 1; 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15. No other king of Israel was ever the object of so great condescension and grace as David. He was not only king by divine right—a type of the second Adam, but an everlasting kingdom is made sure to him and his seed, that is Christ, Dan. vii. 13, 14, who is the second Adam. See notes on Matt. ix. 6.

The meaning of the Evangelist, then, may be thus paraphrased: "And Jesse begat David, that king to whom and to whose seed the kingdom was made sure and perpetual by the covenant of God with him."

MATT. I. 12. "And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias," &c., and verse 17, last clause.

The Evangelist mentions the carrying away of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to Babylon, but says nothing of their return from this captivity. The reason is, neither these nor the ten tribes which had previously been carried into captivity, had been restored in the sense of the covenant. God had promised Abraham to make him the father of an innumerable posterity, the father of nations, the father of kings. He had promised to give him a country for his posterity to dwell in, even the land of Canaan. He had also promised him his blessing and protection against enemies, and great renown; also to make him the means of blessing the whole world. And all these promises God had made sure to him and his seed for ever by an oath. See Gen. xii. 1, 3; xiii. 14—17; xv. 5; xvii. 3—8; xviii. 18; xxii. 17, 18; Rom. iv. 13. These promises were afterwards renewed and confirmed to Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 1—5; xxviii. 4, 29, and to Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 13, 15; xxxv. 11, 12; xli. 3.



The Jews, for whom this Evangelist especially wrote, were sensible that these great and glorious promises had never been fulfilled. The ten tribes were carried into captivity, B. C. 721, and had never returned. The two other tribes were carried into captivity B. C. 606, and very few of them comparatively afterwards returned. The Samaritans, a mongrel race, possessed the central parts of the land of Canaan, and the descendants of the returned Jews were subject to the Romans, and obliged to submit to the arbitrary decrees of that heathen power. They had not in fact been an independent people at any time, after their captivity B. C. 606, except about forty years, and during that time they were under princes not of the tribe of Judah, but of Levi.

The nation's hope even at that time was centred in the expected Messiah or Christ. None expected deliverance till he should come; but with his coming, the nation expected the realization of God's covenants with Abraham and David, Luke i. 71; ii. 26, 30, 33; Acts i. 6.

What particulars were included in the nation's hope, may be learned from 2 Sam. vii. and 1 Chron. xvii. The whole of these chapters should be carefully considered. We select only a few verses: "Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will *plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more, neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more* as beforetime; also the Lord telleth thee, that he will make thee a house, and when thy days be fulfilled, &c. I will set up thy seed after thee, &c., and I will establish his kingdom, &c. . . . I will establish the throne of his kingdom *for ever*, and thine house and thy kingdom shall be established *for ever* before thee." 2 Sam. vii. 10, 11, 16; 1 Chron. xvii. 9, 11, 12, 14. How then could the Evangelist speak of a return from Babylon? To have done so, would have done violence to the nation's hopes as well as to the terms of these covenants.

Some authors, however, maintain that portions of all the tribes did return from their captivity, and that therefore the prophecies relating to the restoration of Israel, may be considered as fulfilled. It is not the purpose at this time to consider these prophecies. The subject comes up in connection with God's covenants, with which no doubt the *prophecies* correspond. It is undeniable, however, that the Evangelist makes no mention of any restoration, although he might easily have done so if such were the fact, in the 12th verse—"And (after the return from Babylon,) Zorobabel begat," &c., or "Abiud begat," &c., as the fact might be. Josephus the his-

torian (Antiq. book ii. chap. 5, § 2) evidently supposed that the ten tribes remained in captivity when he wrote; and the same appears to have been the belief of his countrymen, John vii. 35; James i. 1; Acts xxvi. 7. Had there been a restoration in the sense of the covenants, and consequently of the prophecies also, it is probable the Evangelist would have noted it as he did the captivity, or he would have omitted both, especially as the fact of a captivity had no necessary connection with the pedigree of our Lord, but only with the covenants which were to be fulfilled by him. If we had no means of information but this chapter, we might infer that not only Salathiel, but all those whose names follow his, were begotten in captivity at Babylon.

MATT. I. 16. . . . "of whom was born Jesus"—ἐξ ἧς ἦν ἐγγεννηθῆναι Ἰησοῦς.

The marginal translation of γεννηθῆναι in v. 20, is *begotten*, which is preferable to *born*. In the same sense should the word γεννωμενον in Luke i. 35, and the word ἐγγεννηθῆναι, in this place be rendered. In the previous parts of this chapter the word ἐγεννησας is used in the causative or Hiphil sense (גִּבְרִיתִּי.) Here the word, without change of tense, is converted into the passive form, without any intimation in the context of any other change of the sense. It is simply a change of construction made necessary by the divine generation of Jesus, which the Evangelist proceeds immediately to explain.

Had not our Lord been divine as well as human, no change of phraseology would have been necessary. The evangelist would have continued ἰωσήφ ὁ ἐγεννησας τον Ἰησοῦν τον λεγομενον Χριστον, and this would have been in accordance with the Jewish notion of the promised Messiah, and with the heresy of Cerinthus. The nation believed that the promised Christ would be a *mere* man, who, by God's favour and blessing, would accomplish their deliverance. The Evangelist here corrects that mistake. Yet it was necessary that Jesus should be the son of Joseph as well as the son of God, Mark i. 1, in the proper and strict sense of the word. If not, the table of pedigree was superfluous—in fact, would prove nothing, by reason of its failure to connect Jesus with the ancestry of Joseph. He was, therefore, not merely born of Mary, but begotten of her by the Holy Ghost, yet made really and truly the son of Joseph by *divine covenant*, for the transaction recorded in verses 20 and 21 amounts to a covenant between God and Joseph. As the creator of Joseph and Mary, of David and Abraham, it was not possible that he should filiate himself to either in any other way. He took to himself the body

which was born of Mary,\* that is, his Divine power was active in the generation or formation of that body, which, in the execution of the covenant, he committed for a time to their joint care and custody; each performing in the order of nature their appropriate offices. Said the angel to Mary, Luke i. 35, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, and therefore shall that Holy (being) which shall be (*γεννωμενον*) *begotten* of thee† be called the Son of God—that is, he shall be called the Son of God, not because he was *born* of Mary, but because he was *begotten* by God the Holy Ghost. See Mark i. 1.

According to this view, the word *γεννησις* in verse 18, or rather *γενεσις*, which is the true reading, should be rendered *generation*. This sense accords with the following verses, 20—23. The Evangelist is not speaking in this place of the birth of Jesus. Indeed, he nowhere records the time and circumstances of his birth, as Luke does, but merely adverts to the fact and place of his birth, in the first verse of the second chapter, which (as we may infer from chapter i. 25) did not occur till some time after the events recorded in verses 18—21.

It may be added, that Beza translates this word in Matt. i. 16, 20, and in John iii. 3, 6, 7, by *gigno*, not *nascor*. See also Sebast. Schmidt's translation.

MATT. I. 23. "And they shall call his name Emmanuel," &c.

The framework of this chapter rests, so to speak, upon the names JESUS (Saviour, verse 22,) IMMANUEL (God with us,) and the appellative descriptions, *the son of David* (the heir or seed of the covenant of the kingdom, Luke i. 31—32,) *the son of Abraham* (the heir of the world, Romans iv. 13, or the seed in whom all nations should be blessed, Galatians iii. 8.) The chief object of the Evangelist was, at the beginning of the gospel, to propound or set forth Jesus, the great subject of the gospel, in these four relations. The whole Bible is little,

\* "Queritur num massa, ex qua Christus progenitus est, in utero Mariæ a peccato fuerit præservata an purificata, aut noviter creata," &c. (Walchii Mis. Sac.) We regard all such inquiries as irreverent. We can know nothing more about God's mysterious ways and workings than the Scriptures teach us. The incarnation was an act of creative power; above the order of nature, and out of the sphere of natural causes. Who can explain to us how the human soul and the divine nature of our Lord became incarnate a second time in the dead body of Jesus in the tomb of Joseph! Such acts of divine power are too wonderful for us to explain. We should receive them as facts, as we do the fact of creation, Hebrews xi. 3.

† These words, "of thee," are supplied by the translators, though they do not appear to be an addition to the text, even in the earliest edition. (1611.)

if anything, more than an expansion of the things involved in these relations.

The word Immanuel occurs in the New Testament only in this place. We infer, from the manner in which the Evangelist employs the word, and the event with which he connects it, that it is a name assumed to denote the *incarnate* relation of Jehovah to his people. Before the incarnation, Jehovah was Eloah, or Elohim, to the seed of Israel, see 1 Kings xviii. 21, 39, (Hebrew text,) a distinction, however, which Elias Hutter, in his Hebrew version of the New Testament, and his revisers, have not observed, as perhaps they ought to have done in rendering Hebrews xi. 16. By incarnation, Jehovah assumed a new relation to the fallen race of man, viz. that contemplated in the covenant of redemption. In this new relation he became the seed of David, the heir of the throne of David, Acts ii. 31; the heir of the world, Dan. vii. 14. As Jehovah and Creator, he is the Lord of the universe, as Son of man, (Ben Adam Ps. viii.) he is the Lord of the world, Deut. x. 14; Psalm xxiv. 1; 1 Cor. x. 26, 28. As Immanuel, he has a land\* especially his own, Ezek. xxxviii. 16—21; having a defined length and breadth. It is the land which Isaiah prophesied would be overrun by the king of Assyria, Isa. viii. 8. He has a people also as well as a kingdom of defined limits, John i. 11. *Εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἦλθε καὶ οἱ ἔθνη αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον.* This land is the land given to Abraham and his seed by covenant, Genesis xiii. 14, 15; xii. 7. Of this covenant the Evangelist had already reminded his readers, in the first verse of the gospel, in a manner well calculated to suggest to an intelligent Jew of his own day, how great were the sin and folly of their rulers in rejecting Jesus, in whom alone, any of the blessings of this covenant could be fulfilled.

We sometimes hear devout persons invoke God's blessing on their country, in terms expressive of the relation which the Lord (Jehovah) assumed by his incarnation to the elect Israel and the land especially included in the Abrahamic covenant—"Make this land" (meaning their own country,) "Immanuel's land," or similar expressions. We doubt not that such petitions, devoutly uttered, may be answered, but not according to the letter, Isaiah viii. 8.

The Evangelist quotes in this place, Isaiah vii. 14, where the name first occurs in the Old Testament. It occurs also in

\* It is to be observed that the property in the soil of Canaan, God expressly reserved to himself. "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine: Ye are strangers and sojourners with me." Leviticus xxv. 23. That is, the Israelites were to be mere occupants, not the proprietors of the land. Comp. John i. 11. Original Greek.

Isaiah viii. 8, 10. The LXX. translate it in both these places  $\mu\epsilon\theta' \eta\mu\omega\nu \acute{o} \theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ . So does John David Michaelis. The Vulgate, Sebast. Schmidt, Castalio, Diodati, and the authorized English Version, transfer the word in viii. 8, as a proper name, and translate it in the tenth verse. Luther, Stier, and Theile translate the tenth verse, denn hier ist Immanuel, because Immanuel is here. Regarded as a proper name, and we may so regard it in all these places, the last clause of the tenth verse may be shortly expressed, "because of Immanuel," and the meaning of the whole verse would be, The counsel of the confederated enemies of Immanuel's land, the land of the covenant, should come to naught, and their word should not stand because of Immanuel. It is his land. See Glassius Phil. Sac. p. 1066, 7, and David Martin's (French version) Comm. on Isaiah viii. 8. But the full explanation of this name is given by the Evangelist, John i. 1—14.

MATT. I. 24. "Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him," &c.

If we were to inquire, "How *could* Christ, being the Son of God, become man?" it *might* be answered: By his creating for himself a true body and a reasonable soul, as he did for Adam, our first parent, and by then uniting to it his divine nature, so as to form one person. But had he adopted this method, he would not have been of our race, nor could he have been the promised seed of the woman, whose office it would be to crush the serpent's head. If we inquire again, "How *did* Christ, being the Son of God, become man?" it might be answered, by his taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, in the race of man, and entering into the family of man, according to the order of nature which he himself had established. In this way, he did become a member of the human family, and the promised seed of the woman. But if we inquire again, "How *could* Christ, being the Son of God, become the son of Joseph?" it may be answered:—in the same way that he could become the son of David, or the son of Abraham, Matt. i. 1. The difficulty in either case is precisely that with which our Lord pressed the Pharisees, Matt. xxii. 42, 45, when he inquired of them, "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" In Rev. xxii. 16, he says of himself, "I am the root of David," that is, David as truly sprung from me as the tree grows up from its root. He adds, "I am the offspring of David," that is, I sprung from David as truly as the branch shoots off from the trunk of a tree. But how can this be? He was David's Lord, because he created him. He was David's son, because he graciously covenanted with David that he would take to himself the human nature in his race. He was Joseph's son,

because he selected the family of Joseph as that in which he would fulfil his covenant with David and Abraham. He was as truly, and in the same sense, the son of Joseph, as he was of David or Abraham. The cause or reason of his being the son of either was his sovereign purpose and promise to put himself in that relation. It may be objected that by *son*, Matt. i. 1, we must understand *descendant*, and thus understood, we may with strict accuracy say, he descended from Abraham and David through Mary, not through Joseph. But the word *descendant* creates the same difficulties as the word *son*, understood in the sense of an immediate descendant. For, how, we may inquire as before, could Christ, being the Son of God, become a *descendant* of David, or of Abraham, or of Adam, or of Eve, or of Mary? The answer must be the same as that already given. It may be objected again, that we find *express* covenants with Abraham and David to this intent, but none of like nature or import with Joseph. To this objection we reply, the transaction with Joseph recorded in verses 20, 21, and 24, amounts to a covenant. "Joseph did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him." See chap. ii. 13, 14, 19, 20—23.

MATT. I. 18—25. From what has been said it sufficiently appears that these verses really form a part of the table of pedigree. The Evangelist had shown the descent from Abraham to Joseph, the husband of Mary; naming the father who begat and the son begotten. In the 16th verse, he changes the phraseology. He says not that Joseph begat Jesus, but simply that Joseph was the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was begotten. Here, then, is an omission which must be supplied. Had the table stopped here, the reader might have inquired who begat Jesus? Anticipating this inquiry, the Evangelist answers, "the Holy Ghost." Again it might be inquired, how could that be known? This question, also, is anticipated, and the answer given, "by divine revelation." The Evangelist then proceeds to show that such a revelation was made to Joseph; the manner in which it was made; and the occasion which led to it. He states the facts circumstantially as they occurred, doubtless by inspiration, and not upon information received either directly or at second hand from Joseph. By this method, we are taught incidentally several particulars of great interest and importance, which would have been excluded by a concise statement of the simple fact of the generation of the human person of the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit—*πνευμα δε αγιον εγεννησε τον Ιησου.*

Thus we learn, for example, that his personal name (Jesus) was divinely appointed, and that Joseph was commanded to call him by that name, Matt. i. 21, as Mary previously had

been, Luke i. 31. The obedience of Joseph to this, as to other commands, gave to the proceeding, as has been suggested, the form of a synallagmatic transaction, and the effect of a covenant. In this way, too, the Evangelist shows how Isa. vii. 14, which predicts the incarnation, was fulfilled—a prophecy quite indefinite in its terms, but made precise by the revelation of the angel to Joseph. The prophet says, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive,” &c.; but by what power, he does not say; and his words might naturally suggest the inquiry of Mary, Luke i. 34, 35.

The Vulgate translates verse 18, *Christi autem generatio sic erat*. Erasmus preferred this reading, and Mill inclined to it; but Whitby contended for the *textus receptus*. As the object of the Evangelist was to trace the descent of the royal office to Jesus, and show his right to it *as the Christ* or Messiah, we see a reason why he should use that designation. But as that was his *title*, not his personal name, it was proper, in this verse, to designate him by his personal name rather than by his title; yet not improper to add the title, especially as he had already done so in the 16th verse after a *ὁ λεγομενος*. The last word in the 25th verse may be regarded as a resuming of the narrative at verse 16.

MATT. II. The first chapter of this gospel—it has been suggested—begins with the proposition of the entire book. The first proof of it is the genealogy of the Lord Jesus. This proof involved the mystery of the incarnation, which, though taught in the Old Testament, Ps. cx., was not understood by the Pharisees, Matt. xxii. 41, 46, and excluded from the popular theology. The Evangelist, therefore, shows how he was the Son of God, and also the son of Joseph, and through him the heir of David’s throne by descent. The Evangelist also connects with the table of genealogy, as we have seen, the two great national covenants, the Abrahamic and Davidic, in which all the blessings the nation hoped for or could expect were included.

To the Jewish mind no subject more interesting or important could be presented, and to those Jews who still believed that Jesus was a deceiver, Matt. xxvii. 63, the addition of the title Christ to his name, thereby affirming that he was in truth the promised Messiah, and the further additions, “son of David,” “son of Abraham,” thereby affirming that he was that son, or descendant of those patriarchs, in whom the great and glorious covenants God made with them were to be fulfilled, must have been extremely offensive.

In the second chapter the Evangelist proceeds to the second proof of his proposition, which may be called the testimony of

Herod. The logical connection would be more obvious if the Evangelist had marked the transition from his first to the second proof somewhat after this method:

“But ye Jews, who still reject Jesus of Nazareth, and still persist in saying that the Messiah has not yet appeared, listen to the testimony of Herod the Great, one of your own kings, the close of whose reign some of you are old enough to remember. Herod, indeed, never saw this Jesus, whose history I am writing, and knew not his person, yet he firmly believed that the promised Messiah was born during his reign, as is proved by the well-remembered visit of the wise men from the East, and the proceedings of Herod thereupon.”

Such, it is suggested, is the connection or undercurrent of thought; and thus regarded, the facts recorded in this chapter strongly support the leading proposition of the book. As an argument, it was peculiarly suited to impress the Jews of that day. The atrocities of Herod were well remembered, and some who suffered by them were, no doubt, alive when this gospel was written, which was probably about eight years after the resurrection of Christ. Herod was an unscrupulous and cruel prince, as his conduct proved; but did he act upon insufficient grounds, or was he moved by a vain fear? The grounds upon which he acted were public facts—the public appearance of the Magi—their public inquiry after the new-born king, &c. The force of the argument depends on the weight due to the acts of such a government as Herod’s. The argument is not in itself absolutely conclusive, because Herod, with all the means of information his power could command, might have been mistaken; yet, taken in connection with the other proofs, it deserved the serious consideration of the Jews of that day.\*

MATT. II. 2. “Where is he that is born king of the Jews,” or rather where is *the* (ὁ τευχθεις βασιλευς) *born king* of the Jews, q. d. legitimus et naturalis? Herodes enim factitius tantum erat et à Romanis datus, &c. Hardy’s N. T.

This question of the wise men taxed Herod’s dynasty with usurpation, and rightly. The legitimate kings of that country were of David’s race. They were kings *jure divino*, because kings by force of God’s covenant with that patriarch, Ps. cxxxii. 11; Acts ii. 30; 2 Sam. vii. 12—16; 1 Chron. xvii. The last

\* We may quote in this connection a passage from Macrobius touching the acts of Herod. Writing of Augustus, lib. 2, cap. 4, he says: “Cum audisset inter pueros, quos in Syria Herodes rex Judæorum infra bimatum jussit interfici, filium quoque ejus occisum; ait, Melius est Herodis porcum esse quam filium.” If Augustus said this in Greek—and some have conjectured he did—the wit consisted probably in a play upon the words, ὕς, (swine) and υἱός or υἱός, (son.) The passage is important chiefly as a confirmation of the fact related by the evangelist.



of these was Jeconias, Matt. i. 11, 12. In his days the tabernacle of David fell, Acts. xv. 16. For God had then executed the threatening made by the mouth of the prophet Amos, ix. 9, 11, by sifting the house of Israel among all nations, as corn is sifted in a sieve. Let us open this matter a little.

The form of government appointed for the tribes of Israel, and for the land God gave them, was, from the time of their *exodus* from Egypt, purely theocratical; God claimed for himself the prerogatives of an absolute king over them, and this appears even by the names the people themselves gave him. They called him their king, 1 Sam. xii. 12; Jer. li. 57; Ps. cxlix. 2, xlvi. 2; Hos. xiii. 10; Matt. v. 35; their Elohim, Deut. xxvi. 17, a name applied to princes, judges, and kings, to denote their peculiar relations and powers, and to God also, not only on account of the worship due him, but as their king and protector. See Deut. v. 32; Judges viii. 22, 23; Exod. xix. 4, 5, 6. As an earthly king resides in his palace among his people, gives his commands, punishes the transgressors of his laws, administers justice, and provides in various ways for the well-being of his empire; so God dwelt in the tabernacle by the symbol of his glorious presence above the ark, where the cherubim, with their outstretched wings, exhibited, as it were, the royal throne on which the Shekinah, or cloud glittering with fire, rested. As a king has his ministers of government, so Moses, before the institution of the ceremonial law, was God's minister, and the mediator between him and the people, Exod. xx. 19; Deut. v. 27; Gal. iii. 19. After the institution of the law, it was the office of Aaron, the chief-priest, as God's minister, to approach his throne, though but once only in a year, while the people were excluded even from the sight of it, Heb. ix. 7; Exod. xxx. 10; Lev. xvi. 2. No treaties could be formed with the nations, nor wars waged, without the command of God.

When the people desired Gideon to be their king, and offered to make the royal office hereditary in his family, he promptly and resolutely refused the offer, saying, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you. The Lord shall rule over you." Judges viii. 22, 23.

While the theocracy remained unchanged from its original institution, the commonwealth of Israel prospered. Their demand of a king in the days of Samuel was virtually a rejection of Jehovah as their king, and the commencement of their downfall, 1 Sam. viii. 5, 7. For although in the times of David and Solomon the nation seemed more prosperous than ever before, yet the people were really in revolt. It was then that idolatry was introduced from the surrounding nations. At the close of Solomon's reign, about one hundred and twenty years

after the change, the ten tribes revolted from the throne of David. This was a great calamity, especially to the revolting tribes. Very few of Solomon's successors walked in the ways of the Lord, and scarcely any one of the kings of Israel. So that what Moses had intimated, if not clearly foretold, was abundantly fulfilled in their subsequent history, Deut. xvii. 14, 20; 1 Sam. viii. 11—22. The Jews themselves, or at least some of the most devout among them, ascribe the evils which befell their nation to their kings. Saul having forfeited the divine favour, fell on Mount Gilboa; David, by his sin, caused a plague; Ahab's sins provoked Divine judgment; Zedekiah caused the desolation of the sanctuary, &c.

Yet God did not then absolutely withdraw the theocracy from all Israel for their sin in demanding a king. Nor did he when he rejected Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 28, restore the former *regime* under judges, but, (יִצְחָק, 1 Sam. xvi. 1, xiii. 14,) of *his own accord*, that is, without a fresh demand from the people, he chose David, and made him his minister, as Moses and the judges were, though for different ends, and not only, but graciously condescended to make with him a covenant, in the execution of which he would not only restore the theocracy, but establish it in a higher and much more glorious form, Acts ii. 30; Ps. cxxxii. 11. This was the covenant of the kingdom under which the Lord himself became incarnate as king of Israel in the family of Joseph, to whom the right of the earthly kingdom had been transmitted by descent from David.

We conclude, then, that the theocracy continued from its establishment, at the exodus from Egypt, until the birth of the Lord Jesus, even during the captivity, although in a modified form. The ten tribes, by their revolt from the house of David, renounced the blessings of the covenant with that patriarch, 1 Kings xii. 16, and the special guardianship of Jehovah as their king, as did the two tribes also when they denied the Holy One and the Just, Acts. iii. 14, and before Pilate acknowledged Cæsar as their only king, John xix. 15. Then indeed the theocracy was entirely withdrawn from all the tribes of Israel, nor will it be restored until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, Luke xxi. 24, and Israel shall be restored to the land of the covenant, and ungodliness be turned from them, Ps. cx. 3; Matt. xxiii. 39; Rom. xi. 25, 26. With this great event God has inseparably connected the restoration of the world itself to its lost place in the holy creation. The kingdom of the heavens, which, as we have reason to believe, embraces innumerable worlds into which God has not permitted sin to enter, will then come nigh again to this world, and be out-

wardly established over a people prepared perfectly to obey its laws and enjoy its blessings.

We may note in conclusion, that the Evangelist recognizes Herod as king of the Jews *de facto*. Yet he was not such *de jure*, being an Ascalonite by birth, and disqualified for the office he exercised even by the law of Moses, Deut. xvii. 15, not to mention the covenant with David, by which only the right to the kingdom could be conferred, Luke i. 32, 33. Our publicists may find here an example of, if not an authority for, the distinction they make between governments *de jure* and *de facto*. The mutations of earthly sovereignties show that there are none *de jure divino*, and will not be till the vision of the Psalmist shall be fulfilled, Ps. xlvii. 6, 7, and the Lord himself shall be king of Israel and king of the whole earth, and the theocracy be restored to the world, redeemed and purified from sin and every pollution.

MATT. II. 12, 13. We observe here that two extraordinary Divine interpositions occurred in order to save the infant Jesus from the cruelty of Herod, viz. the warning to the wise men not to return to Herod, and the warning to Joseph to flee to Egypt by night. They were special providences, not to say miracles, designed to avoid the necessity, if we may so say, of miracles or other extraordinary means, which would be more open to public observation. Human or natural means of protection or escape were preferred to extraordinary or miraculous, in order that the passing of the Lord Jesus from infancy to manhood, and even through his public ministry, might be, in all respects, like that of other men, *in more humano*, as nearly as possible.

It is observable that our Lord, after he entered publicly on his ministry, almost always withdrew from approaching danger, John vii. 1, x. 40; Matt. xii. 15; John xi. 54; yet on some occasions he escaped danger by extraordinary means, Luke iv. 29, 30, and on other occasions he gave his word a miraculous power over the minds of his enemies, John vii. 32, 44, 45, 46. At last, however, he surrendered himself voluntarily, John xviii. 8, yet not without showing that he had power by his mere word to protect himself, John xviii. 6. The Evangelist ascribes the protection of his disciples, during the hour and power of darkness, Luke xxii. 53, simply to the power of his word, John xviii. 8, 9. But it is unnecessary to labour this point. It was impossible that he should die except in the appointed way, Luke xiii. 31, 33, and thus Satan reasoned in the temptation, Matt. iv. 6. He represents himself as laying down his life that he might take it again, John x. 17, 18, xix. 11; Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.

Why, then, did he not always give his words the power to deter and awe his enemies? Or, why did he not always give them the power to persuade? Why not the power to prostrate? Or if not, why did he not always protect himself by some miraculous means, as he did on some occasions, but rather resort to just such as a mere man would use to avoid dangers too great to be overcome.

The answer is plain. The Messiah of prophecy was not to resort to miracles for self-preservation. His miracles were to be wrought in relief of the lame, the deaf, the blind, the infirm, the sick—not for himself, Matt. xi. 5. As the Son of man he multiplied bread to feed the people, not to feed himself, Matt. iv. 3, 4. It is remarkable that the Evangelists never represent him as partaking with the people of the products of his miraculous power. He was not to provide for himself by miraculous means a house or shelter, or the ordinary comforts of life. Matt. viii. 20; see Matt. xii. 14—20; Isa. xlii. 1.

This characteristic of the Saviour's life is prominent from the beginning to the end of it. As an infant he has the feebleness of infancy. During this period he provides for himself human parental care. The parents flee with him to avoid approaching dangers. The only or chief difference between this and other incidents is, that Joseph did not discover the danger by his own sagacity. He was divinely warned. Yet this warning was a secret intimation of which others had no knowledge. The wise men were diverted from their purpose to return to Jerusalem in the same way. The command of God absolved them from their promise to Herod, if they made one, and they were soon beyond the bounds of Judea. Nor do we know that they ever returned. Yet divine power truly resided in the person of the Saviour, continually, from his birth, until he yielded up his human spirit on the cross. At twelve years of age, he manifested extraordinary, but not the superhuman wisdom he really possessed, Luke ii. 42, 43. His physical and mental powers he developed gradually from childhood to manhood. Luke ii. 52. And after he entered on his ministry he put forth his divine power, and manifested the divine nature which was in him, according to divinely appointed measures, without ostentation or display, Matt. xii. 19; not for the purpose of showing, that as a man he was unlike others (except in this, that he bore all the predicted marks and characteristics of Messiah,) John xv. 24—not to show that his manhood already partook of the divine nature, but that the divine nature was truly incarnate in his humanity.

MATT. II. 18, and Jer. xxxi. 15. "A voice was heard in Rama," &c.

The subject of this chapter of Jeremiah, from which the Evangelist quotes, is the captivity of the ten tribes, and their restoration. Rachel, the wife of Jacob, is exhibited as lamenting the loss of her children. She was buried in the way to Ephrata, which is Bethlehem, Gen. xxxv. 19; xlviii. 7. Rama was several miles distant from Bethlehem, but both within the tribe of Benjamin. Rachel was the mother of Joseph and Benjamin; and Ephraim, who is specially mentioned in the 6th, 9th, 18th, and 20th verses, was the younger son of Joseph, Gen. xlviii. 18, but is here named as the head of the ten tribes, which had been carried into captivity (circ. 721 B. C.; 2 Kings xvii. 6; xviii. 10) a century or more before this prophecy was uttered. These are the children for whom Rachel is represented as weeping. The prophet, in the name of the Lord, bids her to refrain her voice from weeping, and her eyes from tears, "for thy work shall have a reward, saith Jehovah, and they shall return out of the land of the enemy. There is hope in thy latter end, saith Jehovah, and thy children shall return unto their own border."

Thus explained, the prophecy respects the restoration of the ten tribes. Hulsius (*Nucleus Prophetie*) and others contend that the prophecy relates to the captivity of Judah and Benjamin, notwithstanding Ephraim, or the ten tribes, is expressly named, because, as Hulsius says, there is no mention made in Scriptures of the restoration of the ten tribes, but on the contrary, it is denied that they ever will return. For this assertion he cites Hosea i., but see Hosea iii. 4, 5; Ezek. xxxvii. 20, 22; and Jer. xxxi., throughout. Professor Lee and other writers entertain the same view, on substantially the same grounds. This whole subject has been ably discussed by the Rev. Walter Chamberlain, in a work entitled the "National Restoration and Conversion of the Twelve Tribes of Israel," to which the reader is referred.

The object of this note is not to enter into this inquiry, but to consider what connection there is between this interpretation or view of the prophet's words, and the massacre of the children of Bethlehem by Herod. On either hypothesis the difficulty is the same. That there is such a connection, however, as fully warrants the quotation, may be assumed; but what is it?

It is to be observed, that the Evangelist quotes only the 15th verse, which is *not prophetic but retrospective*. Rachel is represented as lamenting a calamity already suffered. In point of fact, the ten tribes had been in captivity more than a

century when Jeremiah wrote. The prophecy respecting their restoration is contained in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses, which are not quoted.

The cause of the lamentation of Rachel was the ruthless violence of the Assyrian in carrying away the ten tribes, after myriads of them had been slaughtered. The conduct of Herod, we may admit, was not less cruel, but this cannot be the reason for the quotation; for, besides that the number of Herod's victims was comparatively small, it does not appear that they were descendants of Rachel, or of the number of those for whom she is represented as lamenting. Yet says the Evangelist, "then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah, &c., Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."

To satisfy the words of the Evangelist, we must find in the conduct of Herod a renewed cause for the lamentation of the mother of the ten tribes, and this will appear if we consider the general design of the Evangelist. This design was, as we have seen, to represent the Lord Jesus as the seed in whom the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants met, and were to be fulfilled. These covenants required the restoration and conversion of the ten tribes of Israel, and, of course, the fulfilment of the promises contained in the 16th and 17th verses, Jer. xxxi.—"they shall come again from the land of the enemy," "there is hope in thine end," thy children shall come again to the land of their own border." The rejection of the Lord Jesus by the nation, and his crucifixion by the command of Pilate, postponed, so to speak, the realization of these promises, and, in the figurative language of the prophet, were renewed causes for the weeping of their mother. In the same way the act of Herod was a blow aimed at the Deliverer, which led to his temporary exile, verse 14, and afterwards to his residence in a despised place, Matt. ii. 23, John i. 46, and the reproachful epithet of Nazarene. All these acts of Herod, of the Jews, of Pilate, tended directly to prolong the calamity, at first inflicted by the Assyrian. In this point of view the Evangelist appears to have regarded it. If the original captivity was a cause of weeping, now, when the appointed time for their restoration from captivity had come, any act that would frustrate their restoration, and thereby prolong, if not perpetuate, their captivity, was a fresh cause for weeping; not, however, for the children slain by Herod, who were not of the tribe of Ephraim, but for her own children, or the ten tribes represented by Ephraim, because, after so long a time, and even after their Redeemer had come to deliver and restore them, they still are not. Before the advent of their Redeemer, she

sorrowed for their loss by the hand of the Assyrian. But after their Redeemer came, and upon the first public announcement of his birth, Herod sought his life, and drove him into exile, her sorrow for the same cause is renewed and increased by disappointed hope. It is true, Herod did not accomplish what he attempted, though it is probable he thought he had. But the Evangelist, writing after our Lord's ascension, probably grouped in his own mind this act of Herod with the act of the Jews and of Pilate, who actually executed what Herod in vain attempted. Or, as an old commentator expresses it, Christ being yet scarce born, beginneth to be crucified for us, &c.

The representation of the prophet is dramatical. By a bold figure, he represents "Rachel as come forth from her grave, lamenting bitterly the loss of her children; none of whom presented themselves to her view, being all slain or gone into exile." *Blaney*. The Evangelist adopts the imagery of the prophet, and applies it to the first of that series of persecutions, which resulted in the rejection and death of the Redeemer of her lost ones, because by means of those acts, the cause of this mother's sorrow was prolonged; and, but for the mercy of God, through the blood of this rejected Redeemer, would have been perpetual.

This view of the passage yields a sense in harmony with the scope of the Evangelist, and with the words, verse 17, by which he introduces the quotation. See Spanheim, *Dub. Evang.* 553—575, for an elaborate discussion of this passage.

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## CHAPTER II.

John's Character and Ministry.—John's Baptism emblematical.—Baptism of the Holy Spirit.—Baptism by Fire.—Baptism of Christ.—Commencement of Christ's Ministry.—Christ's Sermon on the Mount.—The Office of Faith in Miracles.—Diversities of the Operations of Faith.—Christ's title, "Son of Man."—Mysteries of Christ's Nature.—Christ's power over the Physical World.—Christ's power over Evil Spirits.

**MATTHEW III. 1.** "In those days came John the Baptist in the wilderness of Judea."

The Evangelist refers to John as a well-known character; and such he was among the Jews. Josephus, the historian, forty years afterwards speaks of him much in the same way. *Antiq.* xviii. c. 5, § 2.

He was also a very extraordinary character, in whatever view we consider him. His conception was announced by the angel Gabriel, Luke i. 13—19. It was miraculous, or out of the ordinary course of nature, Luke i. 7—18, as truly so as was

Isaac's, Rom. iv. 19. His name (John) which signifies *grace*, *favour*, was divinely appointed, Luke i. 13, though not prophesied of. His manner of life was peculiar; he dwelt in the deserts, until the day of his showing unto Israel at Bethabara, near the banks of Jordan, Luke i. 80; Matt. xi. 18; John i. 28; iii. 23. His ministry was closed by his imprisonment—his imprisonment by his death. He was filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth, Luke i. 15, and performed his office with the spirit and power of Elias, Luke i. 17, although he was not Elias in person, John i. 21, as the name given him was designed to indicate. His mission and ministry were foretold, Isaiah xl. 3; Matt. iii. 1; Mark i. 2; Matt. xi. 10, but not under any name; as was that of Cyrus, Isaiah xlv. 1, and that of Elijah, Mal. iv. 5. His mission was divine, John i. 6, 33; Matt. xxi. 25, yet did he not use the style of the prophets, "Thus saith the Lord." The authentication of his mission and office was so complete, that the common people would not permit even their rulers to call it in question, Matt. xxi. 26. The masses of the people thronged his ministry, and submitted to his baptism, and mused in their hearts whether he were not the Christ, Matt. iii. 5; Luke iii. 15, 21. Yet he performed no miracle, John x. 41. It is remarkable, too, that the common people received him as a prophet, but not as Elias, while the learned rejected him as one possessed by the devil, Matt. xi. 18. His ministry was limited to the circumcision, as was the personal ministry of our Lord, Rom. xv. 8; Matt. xv. 24. Very little has been recorded of it, and nothing separately, but only in connection with the personal ministry of the Lord.

But whence did he derive his cognomination, Baptist? It was not said to Zacharias that he should be so called, or that he should baptize the nation, Luke i. 13. It was not given him at his circumcision, Luke i. 60—63, Luke describes him as John the son of Zacharias, iii. 2; yet the addition was commonly and properly made. Herod so called him, Matt. xiv. 2, John's disciples also, Luke vii. 20, and our Lord himself, Luke vii. 33; See also xiv. 8; xvii. 13; Mark viii. 28; Luke vii. 28; ix. 19. John says of himself that he was sent to baptize, John i. 33, though we know he preached also, and with great power, Luke i. 17; iii. 15. These were, however, distinct functions, 1 Cor. i. 17, and with John preaching was the subordinate; baptizing the chief function. This is, perhaps, one reason why our Lord said he was more than a prophet.

The explanation probably is this: John was the forerunner of the new dispensation, the near approach of which he



announced; and his ministry was appointed to introduce it. Now baptism, or its equivalent, has hitherto introduced every economy of the divine government since the fall of man. Thus, Noah was introduced through water by means of an ark into a new economy; in fact, into a new world; and in this event the apostle Peter finds the equivalent for baptism, 1 Peter iii. 20, 21. Moses brought Israel into new covenant relations with God, by what Paul calls a baptism in the sea, and in the cloud, 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. The economy established by the hand of Moses, was now about expiring. A new economy—the dispensation of the kingdom of the heavens—had come nigh. John was appointed to announce the event, and baptize the people as a preparation for it. This being the chief object of his mission, he was therefore called the Baptist.

MATT. III. 3. “For this person,” says the Evangelist, “is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, chap. xl. 3, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”

John the Baptist applied the same prophecy to himself in answer to the questions of the priests and Levites sent from Jerusalem to him at Jordan, “Who art thou?” “What sayest thou of thyself?” John i. 22, 23. Our Lord also applied to him the prophecy in Mal. iii. 1, Matt. xi. 10, and the Evangelist Mark applies to him both, Isa. xl. 3, and Mal. iii. 1, Mark i. 2, 3. It is remarkable that neither of the Evangelists, nor the Baptist, nor our Lord, ever quotes or cites the very notable prophecy in Mal. iv. 5, concerning the mission of Elijah, as having reference to the person of John. But the common opinion of Protestant commentators of the last two centuries is, that all these prophecies were fulfilled by the mission of John the Baptist. Augustine, Chrysostom, Jerome, and the early Christian writers, on the contrary, generally held that the last of these prophecies, Mal. iv. 5, is yet unfulfilled. As the point is of considerable importance in its bearings on the interpretation of other Scriptures, it deserves a careful investigation. With a view to this question, several distinctions, besides that above suggested, should be carefully considered. We notice them in this place very briefly, because they will occur in connection with other texts.

(1.) John was not Elias *in person*, John i. 21. He came during the continuance of the legal economy. His mission was unsuccessful. He did not restore all things, Matt. xvii. 11, Acts iii. 21. The Jews nationally rejected the Lord Jesus, and for that sin were destroyed as a nation, and scattered among the Gentiles. The restitution of all things is still future, Acts iii. 21. But the prophecy (Mal. iv. 5) foretells that the

mission of Elijah will be successful. "He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," &c., otherwise the Lord will smite the earth with a second curse, Mal. iv. 6, Matt. xvii. 11. While the legal economy lasted, and before the influence of the Holy Spirit had been purchased by the death of Christ, the mission of Elijah would have been premature, because, owing to the depravity of human nature, it would infallibly have been unsuccessful, as John's ministry proved; and so this prophecy would have failed. But when Elijah comes, it will not be in his *own spirit and power*, but in the spirit and power of God the Lord, as his name imports, whose influences have been secured by the work of Christ.

(2.) Although John the Baptist was not Elijah in person, yet he was equal to Elijah, Matt. xi. 11. He went forth to the people in all the energy and power of Elijah, Luke i. 17. He was therefore, in his office and functions, the Elijah of the legal economy, and was raised up especially to fulfil the office of Elijah at that time—that is, to do all that Elijah himself could have done towards preparing the way of the Lord, had he been sent to Israel at that time *in person*. John would have been the Elijah foretold, if the people had received him, Matt. xi. 14. But it was not more impossible for John to be Elijah *in person*, than it was for the Jews to receive him with the obedience of faith, Jer. xiii. 23; Isa. liv. 13; John vi. 44, 45.

(3.) John was the subject of prophecy as well as Elijah, but not of the same prophecies. John was not prophesied of by name, but only by description; as a *voice* crying in the wilderness, Isa. xl. 3, or as a *messenger* sent before the face of the Lord, to prepare his way, Mal. iii. 1. Elijah was prophesied of by name, and his mission and the successful result of it expressly foretold.

(4.) Both, however, were prophesied of, as ministers of the circumcision. Both were to be sent to a people dwelling together in the land of Israel, and not to that people, as they now are, scattered abroad among the nations. It is implied therefore in the prophecy of the future coming of Elijah, that Israel shall yet be restored to their land and be dwelling therein, after which this prophecy shall be fulfilled.

MATT. III. 6. "And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."

Paul represents the miraculous passage of Israel through the Red Sea as a baptism into Moses, 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, but not their miraculous passage through the river Jordan, Josh. iii. 14, 16, as a baptism into Joshua. Why was not the latter a baptism in the same sense as the former? The reason for the distinction is not to be found in the nature or the relative magnitude

of the miracles, but in the character and official relations of the persons who performed them. Moses introduced, officially or instrumentally, a new economy which was appointed to subsist until the Messiah should come, John i. 17; Joshua fulfilled no such office, Heb. iv. 8. The functions he performed were subsidiary to the work of Moses, and were not undertaken until near forty years after the giving of the law. His taking the people through Jordan was not, in any sense, a baptism introductory to a new economy, though it was a miraculous manifestation of the divine power, and a wonderful proof of the theocracy which had been established over Israel at Mount Sinai. As such, it was proper to be commemorated by especial means, Josh. iv. 4, 7, 20, 23. But Joshua, as well as John the Baptist, was, in a certain sense, a forerunner of the Lord Jesus. He was also a type of him. By taking the people through Jordan, Joshua did not introduce them into the promised rest of the kingdom of God, Heb. iv. 8, but he pre-figured by this act that which Jesus—the Prince who appeared to Joshua, v. 13, 14, 15—now at the close of that economy had come to perform, Luke i. 68—75, by actually bestowing upon Israel the blessings of the kingdom of which the promised land was a type.

There may also be something significant in the place where John baptized. If it be inquired why John baptized in Jordan rather than in any other stream, may we not answer that both Jordan and Canaan were types of heavenly things, and that John, as the baptizer of Israel in Jordan, performed an office which Joshua could not, because the time appointed for it had not come? This answer, if well founded, suggests the further observation that John's ministry of baptism *in* Jordan, was, so to speak, supplementary to Joshua's in conducting the people *through* Jordan, and that the functions of both Joshua and John must be combined, in order to make up what was included in the corresponding part of the ministry of Moses.\* John the Baptist performed no miracle, but Joshua and Jesus did. Neither Joshua nor Jesus baptized the people, though they were themselves baptized. We do not read that John the Baptist was baptized by Jesus or by any other, although he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth, Luke i. 15.

MATT. III. 11. "I indeed baptize you with water unto"—in order to—"repentance; but he that cometh after me . . .

\* Quod Moses nequivit, Joshua fecit; quod Joshua non facere potuit (introducere in celestem requiem) Jesus efficit solus. Joshua fluentum dirimit, aquas dissecat sed Dei manu:—Jesus . . . propria potentiâ, mari, vento, fluctibus imperat. Arca fœleris in aquis stans omnibus Israelitarum securum transitum præbuit: Jesus in Jordane stans, cœlum aperuit, etc.—*J. H. Maius.*

he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and [with] fire," Luke iii. 16.

John was a minister of the circumcision. His mission, like that of Isaiah, Elijah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the other prophets, was to the "house of Israel," or rather to the "house of Judah." His baptism was appointed for the whole people, and his preaching was addressed to all, Acts xiii. 24; Luke iii. 18, 21. We are to understand "you," therefore, in this enlarged or national sense. "I baptize you" Israel, or house of Israel, "with water," &c. In the same enlarged sense we are to understand the word "you" in the last clause, "He shall baptize you" O house of Israel "with the Holy Ghost and fire"—not you pharisees and sadducees, *γεννηματα ἐχιδῶν*.

One object of John was, to state a contrast between the baptism which he administered and that which should afterwards be administered by him whom he preceded. It is implied also, that his baptism would be ineffectual to secure their national repentance. They—that is the nation—needed, and at some time afterwards should receive, a baptism of divine power, which should be effectual, Acts v. 31. The last clause is therefore prophetic and as yet unfulfilled. The nation has never yet been baptized with the Holy Ghost. A long interval had been laid in the divine plan between John's day and the fulfilment of this prophecy or promise, during which many momentous events were to occur;—The appearance and public ministry of the Lord Jesus—his rejection and death—the opening of a new dispensation for the gathering and upbuilding of the Church—the destruction of the temple—the dispersion of the people among all nations during the times of the Church militant—the final restoration of Israel to their own land—the mission of Elijah to them in their restored condition at the time of the proximate approach of the restitution of all things. Acts iii. 21, and see note on that verse. Not until all these things shall have come to pass will this prediction of John the Baptist be fulfilled. But then it will be; for observe the prediction is absolute. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." The prediction is concurrent or parallel with Mal. iv. 5, 6. See Ezek. xxxix. 28, 29.

John's baptism of *the nation* with water, was simply emblematical of this future baptism of *the nation* with the Holy Ghost. Neither has respect to the Church. John's baptism preceded the times of the Church—the baptism of which he prophesied will follow those times. The baptism which our Lord appointed after his resurrection, Matt. xxviii. 19, on the other hand, had respect to *the Church* which is to be taken out of all nations, Acts xv. 14. It looks forward to the end of the

dispensation of the gospel among all nations, and the completion of the elect body of Christ. There it terminates. In this respect it is like the Lord's supper, which was appointed to show forth the Lord's death *till he come*, 1 Cor. xi. 26. The second coming of Christ and the gathering of the Church unto him, will supersede both, as his first coming superseded the institution of the passover. So the baptism with the Holy Ghost, which our Lord promised to the apostles on the day of his final ascension, Acts i. 4, had the Church in view. See notes on Acts i. 5, and Mark xvi. 15, 16, Acts. ii. 2—4. The baptism which John promised to the whole nation, the Lord actually bestowed on a few who received him, John i. 12, but withheld it at that time from the masses, who rejected him, though he will yet fulfil the promise on all Israel in its amplest sense, Rom. xi. 29, when the times appointed to the Gentiles shall have been fulfilled, Rom. xi. 25, 27.

The fall of Israel gave occasion to the dispensation of the gospel to the Gentiles, Rom. xi. 11, to the dispersion of the Jews among the Gentiles, and the consequent postponement of the restitution of all things, and the baptism of Israel as a nation by the Holy Ghost: so that the present dispensation for the building of the Church is intercalated, if we may so express it, between the baptism *of the nation* by John with water, and the promised baptism *of the nation* by Christ with the Holy Ghost.

Besides this difference in the times and persons to which the baptism of John and that appointed by our Lord relate, there is another, too important to be passed without notice. The baptism of John was ineffectual, because it was not attended by the Holy Spirit's influence. Indeed, the promise of a *future* baptism with the Holy Ghost implied a negative of his present influence. But the baptism with water appointed by Christ after his resurrection will be made effectual upon the elect by the accompanying energies of the Holy Spirit. So that although the baptism of John was ineffectual to prepare Israel for the *first* coming of Christ, the latter will be effectual to prepare the elect church for his *second* coming. This great object, the completion of the church, having been accomplished through the Lord's death, resurrection, and ascension, he will, at his second coming, baptize *the bodies* of his elect, both the living and the dead, with the Holy Ghost, thereby transforming them into bodies of glory like his own, Philip. iii. 20, 21—their souls having already been baptized with the renewing influences of the Spirit. He will, at the same time, also baptize the *souls* of his restored people Israel with the Holy Ghost, as he did the twelve apostles on the Pentecost after his

ascension, thereby converting them universally into an eminently holy people. And the Spirit will also, at the same epoch, to complete the restitution of all things, move, as he did at the beginning, over the face of physical nature, Gen. i. 2, delivering (τὸν κόσμον) the earth itself and its furniture of creatures from the bondage to which the Creator subjected them by reason of sin, Rom. viii. 20, 21. Vast, and very various then, will be the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing about this mighty change of the Divine administration, dependent upon the second coming of the Lord to fulfil this prediction of John the Baptist.

It is worthy of observation, that our Lord promised the apostles at his last interview, Acts i. 5, "that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost *not many days hence.*" By these words he alluded by way of contrast, as we suppose, to the more distant fulfilment of the prediction made by John. As if he had said, "God's promise by the mouth of John the Baptist to *all* Israel shall be fulfilled to *you* who have received me, not many days hence, however long it may be deferred to those who rejected me." John i. 12. If this suggestion is well founded, all the apostles might have applied to themselves the expression of Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 8, regarding himself as having been born of God *before* the due time;—i. e. the time appointed for all Israel. See *Joseph Mede's* note on this text.

We observe again: Our Lord did not promise the apostles baptism "with fire," although the fact of such a promise as he made has inclined many to suppose the whole of the prediction of John was actually fulfilled at that time. It is by no means necessary, however, to suppose that the cloven tongues "*like* as of fire," resting upon the twelve apostles, were the baptism with *fire* which John the Baptist predicted. They may be regarded as emblems or visible signs of the Holy Spirit's presence, designed to convince the apostles, and those who saw them, of the fulfilment of the Saviour's promise to send the Comforter to them, John xvi. 7. In the case of Cornelius and his kinsmen, Acts x. 24, the Holy Spirit also descended *visibly*: the object of the visible demonstration being to teach the apostles God's purpose to admit Gentiles into the church, and so Peter considered it, Acts x. 47. In the case of the apostles, they were tokens or badges of authority which none could dispute, and as such were important means in laying the foundation of the church. We do not read that the apostles, except Paul, Acts ix. 18, were baptized with water (unless with the baptism of John,) either before or after the day of Pentecost—the symbol of water in baptism having been design-

edly supplied, it may be, by more impressive emblems of the Spirit's presence on the day of Pentecost.

MATT. III. 12: "Whose fan (is) in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor and gather the wheat into his garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Luke iii. 17.

This verse, if not exegetical of the preceding, should be interpreted in connection with its last clause. It is predictive of God's dealings with Israel after their restoration, preparatory to their baptism with the Holy Ghost, or, it may be, in connection with it. Ezekiel, chap. xx. 38, foretells that God will purge out from among the house of Israel rebels and transgressors, see vs. 33—40, and there are other similar prophecies. See Deut. xviii. 15—19, Acts iii. 23, and note on that verse. The language is figurative, taken from husbandry. The same figure is made the groundwork of the parable of the tares, Matt. xiii. 30, 40, 41, although the parable has a wider scope than this verse. It is implied in the language of John, that the acts of purging of the floor and the separating of the wheat from the chaff, are to be performed at the *time of the harvest*, which, in the parable of the tares, is declared to be the end of the world, Matt. xiii. 39, that is (*του αιωνος*) of this dispensation of the gospel among the Gentiles, and no reason is perceived why the same symbol, "harvest," should be used to denote different, even remote epochs. Some of the arguments under the last verse might here be repeated, but we add under this head only that both Mark and John omit this verse, and the last two words, "with fire," of the preceding verse. The reason may be that the matter exclusively concerned Israel, and was not of so much importance to Gentile Christians, for whom chiefly they wrote. These observations suggest our next remark: The words "with fire," or baptism with fire, denote *punishment*. The meaning may be thus expressed: "He," the Messiah, at his second appearing to you, O house of Israel, after your final restoration, Ezek. xx. 33 et seq., shall baptize (consume) and utterly destroy\* those of you who still continue to be rebels and transgressors against him with fire, see note on Acts iii. 22, 23; while those who repent and are inclined to obey his voice he will baptize with the Holy Ghost. This interpretation is borne out by the last clause of the twelfth verse. The *chaff* denotes those whom the Lord will reject and cut off from the people, and the burning of the chaff with

\* The expression is elliptical; we supply the word "baptize" from the preceding phrase. If the expression, "baptize with fire," in the sense of consume, seems unusual, the reader may adopt the word "consume" or destroy, which is the sense as it appears to the writer.

*unquenchable fire* denotes their sudden and utter destruction. To this extent, at least, the twelfth appears to be exegetical of the eleventh verse.

Upon the whole, then, it is submitted that these two verses relate exclusively to *Israel as a nation*—that they are predictive of events, not only still future, but events which cannot occur, until the winding up of the present dispensation; nor until the eve of, or after, the restoration of that people to their land—that then God will try that people, and separate those who remain obdurate and rebellious from the rest, and destroy them utterly; while he will baptize the saved ones with the Holy Ghost as he did the twelve apostles on the day of Pentecost, only *in a larger measure*, in order to fit them for the higher and holier dispensation of the kingdom of God to come, Matt. vi. 10. See note on Acts iii. 22, 23, in which even the least of them shall be greater than the apostles were during their earthly ministry. The common interpretation of these verses is liable to several objections beside those implied in the foregoing remarks.

The apostles were not baptized with fire on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 3. The parted tongues which sat upon them were not fire, though they had the appearance of fire. Nor was any considerable part of the nation baptized with the Holy Ghost. The great body not only remained obdurate and rebellious, but became worse and worse, till they were destroyed as a nation. Yet dreadful as were the divine judgments, there was mercy mingled with them. The people were scattered, yet preserved as a race. They are probably now, and for ages past have been, as numerous as they were then. These events do not come up to, or correspond with the language of the 12th verse. The thorough purging of the floor, the gathering of the wheat into the store-house, and the burning of the chaff (the wicked) with unquenchable fire, denote decisive and final action, not corrective punishments (to be followed by another trial) such as the prophets predict. Ezek. xx. 35—38, xxxviii., Mal. iv., Zech. xiii. 8, 9, xiv., iii. 9, Jerem. xxxiii. 8, Isa. iv. 3, 4, Joel ii. iii.

The interpolation of the word *is*, by the translators, has probably given occasion to the common interpretation. Retaining this word, however, the language is parabolical; and in parables, the time of the action represented, does not depend upon the grammatical tenses employed in their construction.\*

\* The phrase (ὡς τὸ πτῦον ἐν τῇ χερὶ αὐτοῦ) is an example of the nominative absolute. The noun has no finite verb in the original, and should have none in the translation. The writer or speaker appears to have cut short the construction first intended, and adopted another. Many examples of this sort occur in



MATT. III. 14. "But John forbade him saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" or, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and thou comest to me!"

When we consider that John was filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth, Luke i. 15, that his mind and affections were renewed, and his whole spiritual nature fitted for the eminent services for which he had been raised up, we naturally inquire in what sense he needed baptism. A holier man than he had never lived, for holiness in the divine regard, is an indispensable element of greatness. Matt. xi. 11. Even the apostles after the day of Pentecost, it is probable, were not so fully nor so constantly possessed by the Holy Ghost as was John. What further need then had John to be baptized of any? Are these words anything more than an expression of the humble sense this eminently holy man entertained of himself in comparison with the august Being who stood before him? We apprehend they are. The words ( $\epsilon\gamma\omega$   $\chi\rho\epsilon\iota\alpha\nu$   $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ ) "I have need," denote a real necessity; and if they were uttered by the promptings of the Holy Spirit within him, we must interpret them in a sense commensurate with the Spirit's work. Accordingly, we understand them not only of something which John then had not, but of something which he could only receive through the baptism of Jesus. Now it may safely be affirmed, that John had all which the Holy Ghost has ever done or ever will do for any man in this life in the way of sanctification, except for those of the Lord's elect, who shall be alive at his second coming. Philip. iii. 21; 1 Thess. iv. 17. All that remained for John to desire, or for the Spirit to do, was the regeneration or glorification of his body; the Spirit's crowning work in man's redemption, which could not precede, but must follow the sacrificial work of Christ, and his ascension to glory.

The reply of the Lord Jesus tacitly concedes what John had said of himself, and by joining John as, in some sense, a co-worker with him, he virtually promised John the baptism he desired. As if he had said, "True, thou hast need to be baptized by me; and hereafter—not now—I will baptize thee with my baptism." What he added, revealed to John, it is probable, a purpose which he did not understand before. We paraphrase it thus, "Yet baptize thou me with water now, for the appointed way to my baptism is through thine. I must

the New Testament. They are characteristic of impassioned discourse. The connection and the sense may be expressed thus: "I indeed baptize you with water, but the days are coming when Messiah shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire. At that time going forth, with his fan in hand, as the husbandman does, in the time of harvest, he will thoroughly purge his floor," etc.

first be baptized with water to prefigure my death and burial, and then again be baptized with the Spirit for my glorification. Luke xii. 50, and see the introductory note on Acts, chap. ii. Afterwards I will baptize thee. In this manner it is appointed unto *us* to fulfil all righteousness."

MATT. III. 15. "Suffer it to be so now"—rather (*ἀφες ἀρτε*) "Suffer it at this time;" the word *ἀρτε* being used in the sense of the Hebrew *hap-pa-am* חַפּ־פּא־אִם (Gen. ii. 23, xxix. 35; Exod. ix. 27.) There is a tacit allusion in this expression to another time or coming, as if the Lord had said, "I have now come to offer this human body which I have assumed, as a sacrifice for sin; and the baptism of it, which I seek at your hands, is a typical showing forth of the sacrifice I am to make. But I shall come (*ἐκ δευτερου*, Heb. ix. 28, *ἀπ' ἀρτε*, Matt. xxvi. 64,) at another time, and at that, my second coming—that time, this rite, as you suppose, will not be proper; for then shall I come, without a sin-offering, not in a body to be sacrificed for sin, but in glory for the salvation of those who shall then look for me, and love my appearing. Heb. ix. 28; 2 Tim. iv. 8.

May we not suppose that our Lord then first made known to John the mystery of his sufferings and death; for John at first recoiled from the service required of him, as though it were no part of his office to perform it. It was after this, too, that John called the Lord Jesus the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, John i. 29. It was then also John discovered the Messiah, whose coming he had announced, in the person of Jesus, John i. 31, 33; first by the special revelation of Jesus, and immediately afterwards by the descent of the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove. John must have discerned also, in this typical action, the unsuccessful issue of his own ministry; for it was impossible that he should be received by the nation in the spirit of his mission, and Jesus be rejected.

This interpretation of the passage suggests a reason for the (*χοινωνησας*) peculiar phraseology of our Lord's address to John—"For so," that is, in this typical way, "it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." The actual fulfilling of all righteousness was certainly our Lord's sole work. "He trod the wine-press alone." But John could take part with him in this typical action, which significantly set it forth.

If we reflect that the Lord was speaking to one filled with the Holy Ghost (and therefore able to comprehend his meaning,) about a mystery of redemption, not understood by this eminently gifted man before, we shall be convinced that the

sense in which these verses are commonly interpreted, falls far short of their true intent and meaning.

MATT. III. 17. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." These words attested to John the Baptist the divine Sonship of the Lord Jesus, and the Father's approbation. If we now turn to Matt. xvii. 5; Mark ix. 7; Luke ix. 35, we find that the same words were uttered in the hearing of Peter, James, and John, with the addition of a command—"Hear ye him." Why this difference? May we not find it in the different offices to be performed by these persons? John the Baptist was the forerunner of the Lord. His ministry must *end* before that of the Lord Jesus could *begin*, Matt. iv. 12, 17. The disciples, on the other hand, were to be *ambassadors* (ministers, servants,) to publish the messages the Lord gave them. Hence the (*αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε*) command was added—"Hear, obey him," thus making their mission, if we may so say, twice divine, from the Father as well as from the Son. This explanation, if correct, discloses one of those nice congruities or fitnesses which tend strongly to establish the genuineness of the Gospels. No fabricator of fictitious writings would have thought of such a distinction. This is proved by the fact that so few readers of the Gospels observe it, until pointed out, or if they do, do not discover the reason of it.

LUKE I. 17. "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

These words are a part of the message sent by the angel Gabriel to Zacharias. They are not a quotation from any of the prophets, but something new, which the angel was sent especially to make known to the devout priest, ver. 19. That the promised son was not to be Elijah is apparent, not only from the name by which he was to be called, but from the very nature of the promise itself, ver. 13; and so Zacharias understood it, ver. 18. To denote the energy of his character and ministry, the angel was bid to say, "he shall go before the Lord *in the spirit and power of Elias*," which necessarily implies that he should have power to do all that Elias himself could do, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. The angel did not declare the result of his ministry, but only the *purpose* of it. We know that it failed. The nation rejected the Lord, and for that reason were rejected by him for a season. Hence, we may safely infer, that the words of Malachi (iv. 5, 6) remain to be fulfilled:—"He," viz. Elijah, "shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a

curse." The consequence of Elijah's failure is expressed in terms\* which indicate God's purpose to prevent it.

Although the prophet does not intimate what those preventive means would be, we know that they were to be the new creating energies of the Holy Spirit, purchased by the sacrifice of Christ, which was accomplished through the sin of the people, to whom John was sent in the spirit and power of Elias. Indeed, the purpose of redemption is so connected with the national salvation of Israel, by God's covenant with Abraham and David, that we are authorized by his own word, to say that the one can fail as soon as the other, Deut. xxxii. 8; Jer. xxxi. 35—37; xxxiii. 20—26. It is impossible to find a stronger assurance that God will not annihilate the earth by a second curse, than he has given in regard to the perpetuity and stability of his covenant with David. The ministry of Elijah therefore cannot fail; although John's ministry could be allowed to fail of its designed end, because God had ulterior purposes to accomplish, which, until after the death of Christ, were obscurely revealed.

But whether we are to understand the prophet to signify that Elias will be sent *in person* before the second coming of the Lord, is, perhaps, not clear. The Jews of John's day evidently believed that Elias *might* appear under another name, or that another prophet might be sent in his place, John i. 21, but this is a question upon which we need not dwell; because the prophecy respects not the Church, but restored Israel, and the restitution of the Theocracy at the close of the present dispensation of the gospel among the Gentiles. It belongs to a future order of things.

MATT. III. 1, 2. "In those days came John the Baptist preaching, &c., and saying, *Repent.*"

Like the ancient prophets of Israel, John was a preacher of repentance. His inspiration was not occasional, but constant from his birth, he being at all times under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. He was qualified, therefore, without any human instruction, see John vii. 15, to teach the people in the knowledge of God, and of their duties to him and to each other, Luke iii. 10—14, as well as to show them their sins, and exhort them to amendment of life. From the time the Lord Jesus came to him for baptism, he appears to have been

\* Jahn says on this verse "פָּקַד (ne) non tantum est negativum, prohibitivum, dissuasorium et dubitativum, sed notat etiam consilium præcavendi, etsi dein, conditione non posita, reapse consequitur, quod præcavere debebat, ut locus noster prorsus parallelus Hos. ii. 5 docet: Confer et Gen. iii. 3; xi. 4; Jerem. xxxviii. 19; Prov. ix. 8; xxvi. 4."

aware of the issue of his own ministry, and consequently of the sacrifice of Christ, John i. 29—36; iii. 30. In knowledge as well as in holiness then, he was greatly in advance of the apostles, when they were first commissioned to preach the kingdom, Matt. x. 1—7. It was not a part of their commission to preach *repentance* but only *the kingdom*, Matt. x. 7, and although power was given them to work miracles, they were not qualified as teachers to instruct the people. One of them was a wicked man, and yet he received the same power to work miracles as the others, John vi. 70; Matt. xviii. 3. They were commanded to observe those who sat in Moses' seat, Matt. xxiii. 1—3. Not so John the Baptist. He asserted his prerogative to command and teach all, rulers and people alike, Matt. iii. 7—12; Luke iii. 7—18. He was God's messenger to the nation; a preacher of repentance, a preacher of the kingdom, having divine authority to command all to come to his baptism, from the Chief Priest to the lowest of the people, Matt. xxi. 31, 32. A greater than he of the sons of men had never appeared, and none greater than he will ever appear till all things shall be restored, and the kingdom of God shall come. See note on Acts iii. 22, 23. Then the least of God's restored people Israel—for such we suppose to be the Saviour's meaning in Matt. xi. 11—being made perfectly holy, and dwelling in a new world, will be greater in knowledge and power, and all the other attributes of manhood than John; and, consequently, greater than any other mere man since the fall; while the least of the glorified saints will be exalted to a far more exceeding glory than Israel in the flesh.

We should greatly underrate the dignity of John were we to suppose he was inferior in grace or divine knowledge to the chiefest of the apostles, even after they received the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Saviour joins John with himself as in some sense a co-worker with him in fulfilling all righteousness, Matt. iii. 15, which shows the great excellence of John's character and office. The apostles indeed were endowed with different powers, suited to the different offices they were appointed to fill. They were inspired to foretell things concerning the Church, which did not belong to John's office of forerunner. They could also perform miracles, although it was not in this that their greatness consisted, Luke x. 20; but that John understood the mystery of redemption through the sacrifice of Christ, and foresaw the unsuccessful issue of his own ministry, is plain from his own words, John i. 29, 36; iii. 30.

These passages touching the character and office of John are important, although he was exclusively a minister of the circumcision, and his ministry fell within the old economy,

because erroneous opinions on these points have occasioned the misinterpretation of other Scriptures.\*

JOHN I. 22, 23. "Then they said unto him, who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias."

It is said that the Sadducees rejected the Scriptures, except the Pentateuch; and if this opinion be correct, persons of that sect would have attached no importance to this quotation from Isaiah. Hence, perhaps, the Evangelist adds, vs. 24, that the embassy was composed of Pharisees, who admitted the inspiration of the prophet quoted. But it is more important to observe that this question was not put until John had positively affirmed that he was neither the Christ nor Elias, nor that prophet who was to fulfil the office of the one or the other. The avowed motive of the question was to be able to give to those who sent them a full answer upon the questions they had proposed, touching his person and character. He had told them thus far, only who he was not. They wished him to answer in his own words, affirmatively, who he was; and now, as before, he answers according to the intent of his questioners. Had he said "I am John, the son of Zacharias," Luke iii. 2, he would have told them only what they already knew. They wished to know what religious or prophetic office or function

\* One popular commentator, after saying that John was greater than other prophets, remarks that "he that is of inferior standing to him in the Christian Church is greater than he. The Christian economy is so much in advance of that under which John lived and acted that he who is comparatively of low rank among the teachers here is greater than John, etc., etc. Behold the dignity and excellency of a Sabbath-school teacher." Another popular commentator remarks that "it could hardly be affirmed of the *obscurest* and *most ignorant* Christian, that he had clearer views than Isaiah or John. But of the apostles of the Saviour, of the first preachers who were with him, who heard his instructions, it might be said that they had more correct apprehensions than any of the ancient prophets or John." Scott also confines the comparison to the apostles and the New Testament prophets, saying, at the same time, that many extend it to all faithful ministers of the gospel and all true believers. Adam Clarke says: "Now the least in this kingdom—the meanest preacher of a crucified, risen, and glorified Saviour, was greater than John, who was not permitted to live to see the plenitude of the gospel grace in the pouring out of the Holy Spirit." Such remarks can only arise from a great misconception of John's character, inspiration, and office. The observation of the Saviour we doubt not may be repeated at this moment with exact truth—that a greater than John the Baptist (Jesus only excepted) hath not yet arisen; nor will a greater than he arise till the Lord shall come the second time, and baptize all Israel with the Holy Ghost, and establish his kingdom in manifested glory over the renewed earth. Then, indeed, he that is least in that earthly kingdom will be greater than John then was, while John, being exalted to a far exceeding glory, will be far greater than the greatest in that earthly kingdom will then be.

he claimed, and the scriptural warrant for his claim or pretension. His reply sets up a claim at least to a divine mission, and shows his warrant for it; and though it was very humble, when compared with the dignity of Messiah and his office, he was distinguished above all the prophets who had previously appeared, in this respect, viz. that his mission and ministry had been expressly foretold, Isa. xl. 3.

The Jews referred this passage and the chapter from which it is quoted to the times of Messiah, and rightly: for so John applied it. To the same epoch they also referred the prophecy of Malachi, iv. 5, 6, concerning Elijah. This answer of John, therefore, created a difficulty which could not be resolved consistently with the tenets of the learned. This will appear, if we consider that the Jews of that day had no belief, or even an idea, of two advents of Messiah, John xii. 34. Indeed, they could not believe in a second advent or mission of Messiah, without some foreknowledge of his rejection by the nation, at his first appearing. See Acts iii. 17, 21, and note on Acts ii. 14—36. Proceeding upon the assumption that Messiah would certainly be received by the nation, at his first coming, and thereupon immediately establish his kingdom, they referred this prophecy of Isaiah, as well as that in Malachi iii. 1, to Elijah, and the times of his mission, Mal. iv. 5, 6. It was an error of interpretation, yet too deeply rooted in their minds to be eradicated by those irrefragable proofs of John's divine mission, which fully convinced the masses of the people, Matt. xxi. 26. When, therefore, John denied that he was Elias, yet claimed to be the "voice" prophesied of by Isaiah, he divided two prophecies which, according to their interpretation, inspiration had joined. His pretensions, therefore, were contradictory, and, by his own showing, without warrant. "Upon theological grounds, then, which appeared to them unquestionable, they not only rejected his baptism, Luke vii. 30; Matt. xxi. 32, but altogether denied his divine mission." Mark xi. 30; Matt. xxi. 25.

It is worthy of remark, that this theological difficulty had no effect upon the popular mind; for although the people did not receive him as Elias, yet all of them believed he was a prophet, John x. 41, and had authority to baptize, Luke iii. 21. Many Christian commentators believe, with the learned Jews of that day, that these three prophecies, Isa. xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1; iv. 5, 6, refer to one and the same person, yet differ, not only from them, but from the mass of the people, in holding that the last of them, Mal. iv. 5, 6, was fulfilled in John the Baptist.

JOHN I. 25. "And they asked him and said unto him: Why

baptizest thou, then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?"

This question furnishes a clue to some of the opinions of the learned Jews of that day concerning the subjects grouped in it. The persons sent were, we may presume, men of prudence and zeal for religion, conversant with the Scriptures and the interpretation put upon them by the learned. Without doubt they were selected from those most competent to investigate properly, what seemed to the Sanhedrim, the extraordinary pretensions of John. It was highly important to have John's pretensions thoroughly sifted, and if groundless, exposed, owing to the deep impression he had made on the popular mind, Luke iii. 15. The chief point of inquiry was his authority *to baptize*, not his assumption of the office of a religious teacher. He was of the sacerdotal race, and by birth entitled to a priestly education at Jerusalem. His father had been an officiating priest, and if deceased, as it is probable he was, Luke i. 18, yet was still remembered. Had John assumed merely the functions of an *ordinary prophet or teacher*, there would have been nothing in his ministry at variance with their national history or experience. But *to baptize* the nation implied the near approach of a great if not a radical change in the existing institutions, and the establishment of Messiah's kingdom, which the Scriptures taught them was the next in order. Had he been the Christ, or Elias, or that prophet foretold by Moses, Deut. xviii. 15—19, or, perhaps the meaning is, that prophet whose mission was foretold by Malachi, iv. 5, 6, under the name of Elijah, his authority to baptize the nation in preparation for the impending change was conceded, as we infer from the question; but he had before denied that he was either. Hence the question itself imputed to John a usurpation of the sacred functions of another. That John so understood the question may be inferred from his answer to it: "I baptize *with water*;" and in so doing, I do not usurp the functions of Messiah. As if he had said—"Ye err greatly in supposing that when Messiah, or Elias, or that prophet comes, either will perform the humble office which I perform in baptizing you *with water*, John iv. 2. So far from it, the only baptism appropriate to the office of Messiah is of resistless energy—the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, Matt. iii. 11; Luke iii. 16, with which Elias, or that prophet you speak of, if he baptize at all, will in some way be connected. See Luke ix. 54; 2 Kings i. 10, 12. What John adds, in vs. 27, was adapted, if not designed, to repel the implied charge of imposture. It amounts to this: I seek nothing for myself. On the contrary, I tell you that *even now* there is one among you so far exalted



above me that I am not worthy to do the humblest service for him. He will appear when my ministry shall be ended, but as yet you know not who he is."

We may also infer from this question that the learned among the Jews believed Elias might appear under some other name, and such appears to have been the belief of the common people, Matt. xvi. 14. They knew that the Baptist's proper personal name was John, and there was no propriety in asking him if he were Elias, unless they supposed that Elias *might* appear under another name. The question then, had respect to the *reality* of his person, not to his personal designation; and as it was put to him with reference to the public office he was performing, it had respect to the functions as well as the person of Elias, and in this sense John answered it. Thus considered, his reply amounts to this: "I am not Elias, in name nor in person nor in office, nor am I the prophet appointed to fulfil the office of Messiah or Elias. I am sent to baptize this people *with water*, which neither Messiah nor Elias nor that prophet will do."

If John were Elias in the sense of the questioners, or in the sense of the Scriptures, he could not have answered "I am not Elias," for that means I am not Elias in the sense of the Scriptures, nor in the sense of your question, nor in any other sense whatever.

JOHN x. 41. "John did no miracle, but all things that John spake of this man were true."

The public ministry of John the Baptist was inseparably connected with that of our Lord. Both had respect to the same kingdom, the near approach of which was announced by both in the same terms, or nearly. Yet they were not concurrent, Matt. iv. 12, 17; Mark i. 14, and they were in other respects distinctly marked—the one by the baptism of the nation, the other by miracles. If we reflect a moment upon what Paul said to the disciples at Ephesus, Acts xix. 4, we shall perceive that John's baptism had respect to the Lord Jesus as his *successor, in respect of time*. Hence, John the Evangelist is careful to say that Jesus did not baptize, even during the time of John's ministry, and in the verse under consideration, he discloses, by way of contrast, the fact that John did no miracles. To an observer of that day, the contrast of their times must have been very striking. It was designed to mark the difference between the *proximate approach* of the kingdom which John proclaimed, and the *actual* (παρουσία) *presence* of the kingdom which the miracles of the Lord Jesus proved. There was an obvious reason for this arrangement which is not sufficiently considered. The miracles performed

by our Lord, attested, in the strongest manner possible, the Divine appointment of John's baptism. For suppose our Lord had simply preached the kingdom as only near, or even as actually come in point of time, Mark i. 15, yet, without exhibiting the evidence of its presence by his miraculous works, it would have been adding only the verbal testimony of one appearing to be merely a man, to the truth of John's proclamation. Or suppose that he had followed John simply as a baptizer and preacher of the coming kingdom, it would have tended rather to *weaken* than to confirm the belief of the nation in the authority of John to baptize. For why, it might be inquired, should the nation be baptized again, if the baptism of John was heaven-derived? But the miracles the Lord performed were visible, palpable evidence of such a change of times as John proclaimed; in other words, they proved the actual presence of the kingdom which John had announced as near. Hence we infer that the primary use and intent of our Lord's public miracles was *retrospective*, namely, to confirm John's proclamation, and evince, by miraculous evidence, his authority to baptize. The miracles which our Lord wrought, and those which his disciples wrought during their first mission, Matt. x. 5—8, were primarily designed to *convince that generation of Jews*, whom John was sent to baptize, by evidence addressed to their senses, of the actual presence of the kingdom which John proclaimed as near, and for which he had baptized them with water.

Our Lord's miracles, therefore, fulfilled their chief design, whether the Jews of later generations believed them or not. Yet the destruction of their temple and commonwealth, and the dispersion of their people, considered in the light of the prophecies which they do acknowledge, ought to convince the Jews of later times that the Evangelists, who have recorded them and also the sin of their forefathers in rejecting them, are worthy of their belief. But considered as evidence of the Divine institution of the present dispensation of the gospel to the Gentiles, they have no persuasive effect or force upon the mind of the unbelieving Jew. He considers the whole of the gospels as belonging to the Christian Church, although in truth those parts of them which relate to the public ministry of John, and the public ministry of our Lord Jesus, fall within the Levitical economy, and would have been received by their forefathers as a part of their oracles, had they not rejected the kingdom which John and the Lord Jesus preached.

LUKE III. 20, 21. "But Herod the Tetrarch being reproved, &c., added this above all, that he shut up John in prison." See Matt. iii. 13; Mark i. 14.

If we duly reflect upon the history of John the Baptist, it will seem not a little remarkable that his public career was closed by his imprisonment—not by his death. The whole purpose of John's life—existence we may say, Luke i. 17,—was to fulfil the office of forerunner of the Lord. We are not informed that any part of it was spent in the ordinary pursuits of life. From the cradle he passed to the solitude of the desert, Luke i. 80, and his sustenance was the spontaneous productions of the place, Matt. iii. 4; Mark i. 6. Even his clothing was not the product of art and human industry, Matt. iii. 4. Emerging at length from his solitude, without any other preparation for his office than the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he entered into his public ministry and fully accomplished it, before Herod was allowed to molest him. See Acts xiii. 25. The remainder of his life—about eighteen months according to Lightfoot—he spent in prison. But for what end? Was no divine purpose concerned in this event? Can we believe that all the other particulars of his life were included in the divine arrangement, and made to serve some purpose in the great scheme, while this important event—his life in prison—was left out? Was it for John's sake that his life was thus prolonged after his work was done, or was it for the sake of his nation? Or was it a necessary part of the divine plan, that his life should be prolonged during a part of the public ministry of the Lord Jesus? The following suggestions may throw some light upon these questions, which may seem to the reader to be curious rather than useful, yet are not without their use.

The ministry of John the Baptist and the public personal ministry of our Lord among the Jews, both tended to one and the same end. The nation was to be tried by the joint effect of both. The ministry and testimony of John were designed to prepare the way for the reception of the Lord, John i. 31; v. 33—36; Luke i. 17, and on the other hand, the testimony of John was to be enhanced and enforced by the testimony and miracles of the Lord Jesus. With the design, therefore, of bringing to bear upon the nation, as a means of trial, the concurrent and accumulated testimony of both, at a time when both were among them and might be received, John was preserved in prison awhile, to await, as it were, the influence on the public mind, of the miracles and testimony of the Lord Jesus in his favour. As if the Lord had said, "Peradventure this people will receive John when they shall see the wonderful works of that Mighty One, whose presence he proclaimed."

Accordingly, after John had been several months in prison—seven or eight according to Lightfoot, *Harm.* § 31—John being moved by the Holy Spirit, sent two of his disciples to Jesus

with the question, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" Matt. xi. 3; Luke vii. 19. He answered the question by appealing to his works, Matt. xi. 4—8; Luke vii. 22, and then, upon the departure of the disciples, bore a most remarkable testimony to the character and office of John, Matt. xi. 7—13; Luke vii. 24—31, concluding it with this offer or appeal to the people: "And if ye will receive, he is Elias who was for to come."\* That is, if ye will receive *him*, he shall be to you the same as the Elias foretold by the prophet Malachi iv. 5, 6, and all the blessings of Messiah's kingdom shall be immediately conferred upon you as a people. For if ye receive him, ye will receive me, and I will gather you and protect you with the most affectionate care. See Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 34; xix. 41—44; Ps. lxxxi. 13—16; Acts i. 6.

It was with a view to this transaction, we suggest, that John's life was prolonged in prison about eighteen months, during all which time this offer of John by the Lord to the people for their acceptance continued, as it were, to speak to them. If the reader should reject this explanation, we ask him what purpose the life of John in prison was designed to answer?

MATT. IV. 12—17. "Now when Jesus heard that John was cast into prison," &c., "From that time Jesus began to preach," &c.

The ministry of John was appointed to precede the ministry of the Lord Jesus. John's description of himself as *one going before*, implies as much. Matt. iii. 11; xi. 10; John i. 27; Acts xiii. 25; Mal. iii. 1. Hence the fact, that Jesus appeared publicly, as a preacher of the kingdom, as soon as John was cast into prison, implies that John's ministry was by that event fully ended. Had John been set at liberty, we have no reason to believe that he would have resumed his ministry, for the reasons already suggested. His life was spared for a different purpose. See note on Luke iii. 20, 21. We infer that his principal work of baptizing had been fully performed. Luke iv. 21. All the people had received his baptism, except those who had voluntarily and wickedly rejected it. Luke vi. 29, 30. The words ἀπο τότε † "from that time," in the 17th verse, there-

\* The whole sense of this verse is changed by supplying the word *it*. Neither the Syriac nor the Vulgate version supplies the omission at all. By this interpolation the word *receive* (δεχθησι) is made to signify *believe*, or give credit to the declaration, which to say the least is an unusual sense. See Matt. x. 14, 40, 41; xviii. 5, and Schmidt's Greek Concordance, δεχομαι.

† These words are employed several times where the exact time of an event is meant to be denoted, Matt. xvi. 21; xxvi. 16; Luke xvi. 16, and it is important to notice the particularity, in order to apprehend clearly and fully the sense of the writer. Thus, from Matt. xvi. 21, we learn that the Lord did not speak to his disciples of his approaching sufferings and death until the mystery

fore denote with precision, the commencement of the Lord's ministry and the termination of John's.

The Lord did not begin to preach *before*, because the times appointed for the baptism of the people had not elapsed. He did not delay *after*, because John's imprisonment marked the completion of the times appointed for the national baptism. Hence, according to Mark i. 15, the Lord commenced his public preaching by saying: *The time is fulfilled* for the coming of the kingdom, and the evidence of the fact he proceeds immediately to exhibit to the people by his miraculous works. See John ii. 3, 4; x. 41.

MATT. IV. 17. From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven"—the heavens—"is at hand"—hath come nigh.

Our Lord's personal ministry among the Jews may be considered under three heads or functions. We may regard him (1) either as a preacher of the kingdom, or (2) as a preacher of the law, or (3) in the domestic or private relation of a teacher of his disciples. The first two of these functions were public, and he exercised them in harmony with the economy of law, which still continued in force. Matt. v. 17; and see note on Matt. xxvii. 51—53; Luke xxiii. 45. His instructions to his disciples, apart from the multitudes, were frequently prophetic, and suited to the dispensation of grace which was to follow. To these he alluded, especially in his last discourse with them. John xiv. 26. This distinction is marked and very important, Matt. xiii. 11; xvi. 20; Luke x. 23, if not indispensable to the clear comprehension of the gospels.\*

The text under consideration, it is unnecessary to say, belongs to our Lord's function or office of preaching the kingdom. The import of the proclamation is explained in the note on Matt. iii. 2; xix. 28; and see note on Acts iii. 21. To the same function we refer (1) the act of calling and commissioning the apostles to preach the kingdom, and conferring upon them the power to perform miracles, in proof of the proclamation.

of the incarnation was revealed to Peter. But (*ἀπο τότε*) from that time forth he began to show unto his disciples the mystery of his death and resurrection, which were next in order. Matt. xvii. 22, 23; xx. 17—19. From Matt. xxvi. 16, we learn, that from the time Judas covenanted secretly with the priests to betray his Master, he was continually watching for an opportunity to fulfil his part of the agreement, and earn the promised bribe. Luke xvi. 16 proves, that the commencement of John's ministry, in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, was an epoch in the history of the nation. A new order of things then commenced, and new responsibilities attached. Matt. iii. 10.

\* The reader will find great advantage in assorting and arranging the matter of the four Gospels according to this plan of distribution. It may be done in parallel columns, in the order of time, blending, however, the four Evangelists.

Matt. iv. 18—22; x. 1—8; Luke ix. 1, 2; x. 1—17. (2) The public miracles of our Lord, Matt. iv. 23—25, and the miracles performed by the apostles under their first commission. (3) The parables or similitudes of the kingdom which were publicly delivered. Matt. xiii. 24—34; xxi. 33—44; xxii. 1—14; Luke xix. 11—27. These the reader will regard as examples. He will find other passages which belong to the same category.

MATT. IV. 23, 24. "And Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people; and his fame went throughout all Syria, and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those that were possessed with devils, and those that were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and he healed them."

The miracles of our Lord which have been circumstantially recorded, are about forty in number, but he performed many more which are referred to, as in these verses, only in general terms. John xx. 30; xxi. 25; xii. 37. They may be distributed into several kinds or classes, according to their nature; such as (1) miracles of healing, (2) of raising the dead, (3) of casting out devils, (4) of multiplying food, (5) miracles of power in suspending or controlling the laws and powers of nature, (6) miracles of power over the fish of the sea, (7) the transfiguration of his person, (8) the miracle of conferring upon his apostles the power to work miracles, (9) the miraculous exertion of power over the officers, soldiers, priests, and others who apprehended him, (10) to these may be added the miracles which attended his death and resurrection.

Those of the Lord's miracles which were publicly wrought in proof of the proclamation of the kingdom, John v. 36, for the most part belonged to the first, second, third, and fourth classes before mentioned. They are alluded to, except the fourth, in general terms, in the answer which he sent to John the Baptist. Matt. xi. 4, 5. These were part of his public instruction to the people. They were such works as the prophets foretold the Messiah should perform, Isa. xxix. 18, 19; xxxv. 5, 6, and consequently notes or marks by which the people might learn his claim to that character. John x. 25; xv. 24. The miracles of the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth classes were performed in the presence of the disciples, or some of them only. These, therefore, may be considered as a part of the private discipline of the apostles, and designed to qualify them for the offices they were to fulfil in the approaching dispensation. See 2 Peter i. 17, 18; John i. 14. The others were performed with some special design.

A few of the miracles mentioned by John, (ii. iii. 2; iv. 50,) were performed before the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and of course before the Lord entered publicly upon his ministry. These, therefore, belong to the category of private instruction, rather than his public functions.

Many of our Lord's miracles appear to have been wrought spontaneously on his part, that is, without the prayer or request of those who received the benefit of them, or the exercise of faith on their part; see Luke vii. 11—15, John v. 1—9; while others were wrought in answer to the request or entreaties of those who sought the benefit. In these instances faith was the indispensable prerequisite or condition of the gift; see note on Acts iii. 16. The miracles which the Lord wrought through the apostles under their first commission, Matt. x. 8, prove this distinction. They were not commissioned to teach the people, Matt. x. 7, nor were they capable of doing so; nor were they required to make any distinction between those upon whom they were to exert their miraculous powers, but to give to all as freely as they had received, Matt. x. 8.

The miracles mentioned in the verses under consideration, appear to have been performed without solicitation. In the eighth and subsequent chapters of this Gospel the Evangelist gives instances of miracles wrought through the faith of those who were healed or of others. These distinctions are important, and they are stated in this place with a view to particular remarks hereafter.

MATT. V. VI. VII. These chapters are to be referred to our Lord's functions as a preacher of the law. Taken in connection with the preceding chapters, they form a complete proof of his Messiahship, and for that purpose they are introduced in this place, according to the method of the Evangelist, explained in the note on Matt. i. 1. It is purely a legal discourse, adapted to the economy of law then in force, without a single allusion to the way of salvation by grace, through faith in Christ, but characterized by a Divine elevation and purity, which has commanded the admiration even of Deistical writers. It is in fact the perfect law of the kingdom he preached, verse 48, applied to men in the state of apostasy, as most of the particular precepts prove. Verses 11, 12, 21, 22, 23, 31, 32, 39, 40, &c.

It is remarkable too, that although the Lord did not assume the title or character of Christ, he represented himself as having come to fulfil the law, verse 17, and as one who would be addressed, Lord, Lord, in the day of judgment, having power to receive into, and exclude from, the kingdom of heaven, vii. 21, 23. The miracles he had performed proved his right to the

character he claimed, which was confirmed by the sublimity and excellence of his doctrine. The people were astonished at the majesty of his demeanor and the authority with which he delivered his precepts. The particulars of this discourse we do not propose to comment upon, except a few which cast light upon some topics which will be brought to the notice of the reader hereafter.

MATT. v. 17. "Think not that I am come to destroy" (dissolve the obligations of) "the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil" the law and the prophets.

The burden of the prophets, we are taught by St. Peter, is the restitution of all things, Acts iii. 21, 24; see note. Their predictions extend to the whole futurity of the earth, and of man as the inhabitant thereof, Ps. cxv. 16; xxxvii. 11; Matt. v. 5. The law was ordained as a means to that end, Heb. x. 1; Col. ii. 17; Gal. iii. 19; and for that reason, the whole of it, not excepting its minutest requirements, must be fulfilled. Hence our Lord added with a solemn asseveration—

Verse 18. "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled."

These verses, therefore are very comprehensive, and to understand their meaning fully, we must be able to comprehend not only all that the prophets have foretold, but all that the law, in all its parts, moral, ceremonial, and typical, foreshadows or requires. For the law is not only preceptive but predictive; and its preceptive parts, as before observed, are subordinate to the predictive, that is, in the sense of a means to an end. Hence they are often spoken of conjunctively, as in this place. See Matt. xi. 13; Luke xvi. 16. Hence, too, the sufferings of Christ, which were typically shown by the sacrifices appointed by the law, were joined with the universal glory that should follow, which the prophets so much delight to dwell upon, 1 Pet. i. 11. The institution of the Sabbath and of the sabbatical year, Lev. xxv., Deut. xv., and the duties connected therewith, is another example. The separation of the seventh year as a rest, and the blessing of God on the sixth year, typically set forth good things to come, which were more explicitly announced by the prophets, Heb. iv. 4, 9.

For these reasons, we do not regard these words of the Saviour as intended to intimate merely a change of the Jewish ritual, or the abolition of ordinances and the institution of a more spiritual worship, John iv. 23, although these were included, but as having respect to his perfected work, when he shall have fulfilled all things written in the law and in the prophets and the Psalms concerning himself, Luke xxiv. 44; see 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. Yet as the fulfilling of the law and the



prophets was to be accomplished through the sufferings and death of Christ, these words concealed a mystery, which could be understood only by subsequent events and the teachings of the Holy Spirit, through the apostles, after the ascension and glorification of the Lord Jesus.

According to the foregoing interpretation of these verses, the prophecies concerning the restoration and conversion of Israel, and the establishment of Messiah's kingdom in outward and visible glory over the whole earth, were within the Saviour's meaning. See notes on Matt. ii. 18, citing Jer. xxxi. 15; Luke xxiv. 25, 26; Acts iii. 19, 21—23. For these were among the great things which the prophets had foretold. We add, that even now, he is as really and truly fulfilling, from his mediatorial throne, the prophecies concerning himself as when he was a man of sorrows on the earth.

In explaining the words of the Saviour, especially those which respect his office and work, the largest sense we can conceive of falls immeasurably below the fulness of his own conception. By not attending to this consideration, (which may be safely assumed as a rule of interpretation,) we fail of much of the instruction we might otherwise receive. Against error arising from defective views of Divine truth, we should ever be upon our guard; because from such often spring errors of perversion, and the denial of other important if not essential truths which are plainly revealed.

MATT. v. 34. "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King." Ps. xlviii. 2.

The institution of the oath is a proof and a consequence of man's apostasy from God. If all men were perfectly holy, and the will of God done universally by all on earth, as it is in heaven, no purpose or occasion to be served by an oath could arise. A man's word would be as sure a warrant for belief as his oath. Can we suppose that the holy beings who surround the throne of God confirm their communications to each other by an oath, or need to do so?

The necessity of an oath *for confirmation*, Heb. vi. 16, cometh from the evil, or deceitfulness, of men's natures, and this appears to be the meaning of the Saviour in the thirty-seventh verse. But the law of the kingdom, of which this precept is a part, requires of men that they should be perfect in their natures and conduct, even as God himself is perfect, Matt. v. 48. If they were such, we repeat, they could have no occasion to swear at all. But because men do not and cannot fulfil the law of God's kingdom, by reason of their sinful natures,

the solemn oath, as well as other departures from the strict requirements of this law, Matt. xix. 8, see Acts xvii. 30, were permitted to them in their fallen condition, until the time of the reformation or restitution of all things in the kingdom come. Even God himself, in condescension to the weakness of men and the habitual mistrust of their natures, which springs from their fallen condition, has confirmed his own word with an oath, though it is impossible for him to deceive, Heb. vii. 20—28; Luke i. 73; Acts ii. 30.

We shall not apprehend the force or application of this precept and of some others contained in this sublime discourse, unless we regard our Lord as preaching or declaring the law of the holy, heavenly kingdom, which he taught his disciples to pray for, as yet to come. As a rule of duty it is now and ever will be binding, because men are even now and ever will be bound to be perfect. But as a rule of practice it was not enforced during the Levitical economy, nor was it designed to be under the present Christian dispensation, as some have supposed. According to this distinction we explain James v. 12. Judicial oaths are necessary to the well-being and orderly government of mankind in their present fallen and imperfect state. But even these, not less than all profane oaths, will not be allowed when the kingdom of God shall be established on earth. The judicial affirmation appears to be as much within the spirit of this precept as the oath.

MATT. VI. 9. "Our Father which art in heaven," (*πατερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*). In the original Greek, as well as in the Latin Vulgate, we find the plural *heavens*, which our critics, with general, if not one consent, consider a Hebraism. It is suggested, however, that the plural is here used with the design to convey an allusion to the omnipresence of the Father. By heavens we are to understand the whole creation, Gen. i. 1, the universal system of suns and planets established in their orders, in illimitable space; and we address the Father as filling them all by his presence, and, of course, as present with us. These form the Father's (*οἶκια* John xiv. 2,) house or dwelling place. See *Camerarius* and *Theophylact* on John xiv. 2. The same allusion is conveyed in Heb. iii. 4, "Every house is builded by some one, but he that built all things"—all worlds, as a house or dwelling place for himself—"is God." The same designation or description of the Father, occurs frequently in the Gospel of Matthew, see v. 16, 45, 48; vi. 1, 9; vii. 11, 21; x. 32, 33; xii. 50; xviii. 10, and always with evident allusion to the same Divine attribute. The word is also used by him in the singular, see vi. 10, 20, when no such reference is intended, or where the limited nature of the subject forbids the plural

sense. To call such expressions *Hebraisms* does not signify much. The Jew might with equal propriety call our form (in the singular) a *Gentilism*. The question is, which form of expression is best adapted to the nature of the subject, and most accurately sets forth the idea intended to be signified? If it should be said that the ancient Hebrews had no adequate or correct idea of astronomy, it may be conceded. But the words of Scripture were all dictated by the Holy Spirit, and the words under consideration were uttered by him who made all things, and certainly had no need of the teachings of human wisdom or science.

MATT. VI. 10. "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

These petitions are very comprehensive. They imply much more than most who repeat them suppose. At the time they were dictated they implied the sufferings and death of Christ, his resurrection and ascension to glory: for these were the divinely appointed means for restoring the kingdom of God to this earth. They still imply the filling up and completion of his elect church and the second coming of the Lord to destroy the man of sin and purge the earth of its abominations. But, what we wish especially to remark, they are conclusive evidence of God's determinate purpose and counsel. The Saviour certainly would not have dictated petitions for things which the Father had not designed to accomplish, or rather had designed never to accomplish. See Acts xv. 18. We conclude then, from this prayer, that the curse of God shall be removed from the earth. The creature—physical nature, all the irrational tribes, as well as man—shall be delivered from the bondage of the curse, the kingdom of Satan be destroyed, and mankind, as inhabitants of this earth, will be restored to perfect holiness and communion with God. Less than these cannot give reality to these petitions. We learn from them also the largeness, the perfection, and the glory of the Saviour's work. What orb in the universe will be more glorious than this, when these petitions shall be fully granted? Will He then, afterwards, annihilate or utterly destroy it with another curse? Mal. iv. 6. Why this, rather than any other, in which his will is done as perfectly as in heaven, where his throne is? This petition, then, proves also the perpetuity of the earth as a dwelling-place for man. Matt. v. 5, Ps. cxv. 16.

MATT. VIII. 2, 3. "And behold a leper came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will: Be thou clean."

The miracles mentioned in chap. iv. 23, appear to have been wrought by the Saviour of his own accord, without having been asked to perform them. See John v. 7, 13, 14. The immediate and necessary effect of them was, to spread his fame, and induce others from far and near to bring their sick to him for cure, iv. 24. No mention, however, is made of the faith of those whom he healed, nor do we suppose it was demanded in all cases as a prerequisite. They were the appointed proofs of the presence (*παρουσία*) of the kingdom which the Lord preached, see Matt. xi. 4, 5, John xv. 24, and they are mentioned in almost immediate connection with his proclamation. It was necessary that the proofs should be exhibited, irrespectively of the faith or worthiness of those who received the benefit of them, John ii. 3; v. 4—8, Luke vii. 11—15, and in many instances, no doubt, were so. It was with this view, as we suppose, the Evangelist mentioned, in general terms, the miracles of the Lord, in the place just referred to. In this chapter he resumes the subject of miracles, not merely as a proof of the presence of the kingdom, but for the further purpose of proving the power of faith in the scheme of redemption. The observation is also important, as showing the method or plan of the Evangelist. See note on Matt. i. 1.

The miracle recorded in these verses was not publicly performed, nor was it intended as a *public* proof to the people; for the leper was commanded not to tell it to any man. The motive of it was mercy to the leper, and the means or medium of it was the leper's faith. See ix. 23—29. This is a new topic, and it is proper in this place to suggest some considerations, which are applicable to all such cases.

The effects of faith, in the theological sense, are wholly of a spiritual nature. They are to be sought for in the *soul* of him who exercises it. This limitation of the power of faith is a natural consequence of the cessation of miracles; for the outward visible, or rather physical effects of faith, are no longer, or at most very seldom, seen. Yet this is a very imperfect representation of the power of faith, and of the ends which it is designed to serve in the world of redemption. The miracles of healing wrought through faith, are so many examples of its *physical* or outward effects upon *the bodies of men*, and the Lord repeatedly ascribes to faith a power over material nature, Matt. xvii. 20; xxi. 21; Mark xi. 22, 23; Luke xvii. 6; see 1 Cor. xiii. 2; Heb. xi. 29, 30. It is in fact the power, or, what amounts to the same thing, the established medium for the transmission of Divine power, in the renovation of the whole nature of man, of his body, as well as of his soul. By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death, Heb. xi. 5,

and by their faith the bodies of those of the Lord's people who shall be alive at his coming, will be changed into conformity with his glorious body, and be caught up to meet him. 1 Cor. xv. 51; Philip. iii. 21; 1 Thess. iv. 17. By faith (we mean by the term, an abiding and implicit confidence in, and reliance upon the Saviour) will the souls of departed saints be invested with bodies of glory and power by the Holy Spirit in their completed regeneration at the day of the Lord's coming; (see foot-note on Acts ii. 47;) and by the same means will their union to him, as their Head, be for ever maintained. Thus considered, faith, or that principle (*affectio animæ*) which has been described, (call it confidence, reliance upon, or trust in Christ, for all the soul hopes for or desires, as the reader pleases,) is a principle or law, or an established medium for the transmission or action of Divine power in the work and world of redemption, as really so as what we call gravitation is an established law, or rule of action in the universe of material nature; and one lesson these miracles of healing were designed to inculcate is, that as the bodily infirmities and sicknesses of men were cured through their faith in Jesus, so by the same means their bodies of sin and death will be transformed into bodies of life and immortal glory at the Lord's coming.

It is not an objection to this view of the uses and effects of faith that its first operation is *upon the soul*, in which the work of regeneration begins. In its source, faith is a grace, or a gift of God—a medium of connection between the soul and God, through Christ, and a means of spiritual benefit in this life, even although no other should be received. These, however, are its elementary uses or benefits. Its full power, as a law, will be developed only in the world of redemption, when the glorified saint, having been made one with Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit working through this medium or means, will find that not one jot or tittle shall fail, of all the Lord has said concerning the power of faith. Matt. xvii. 20; xxi. 21; Mark xi. 22, 23.

Erasmus regarded this miracle as teaching, *by a figure*, from whence, and by what faith, those diseased with the leprosy of soul should seek a remedy.\* But the *typical* import, as we conceive, respects the body, and that perfect cure or relief from mortality and sin which it shall receive from the Lord, through faith at his coming. It yields the lesson Erasmus derived from it, but its typical import is prophetic of other and greater things.

\* Typo quodam docturus eos, qui leprâ laborarent animorum, unde et qua fide deberent remedium petere." Paraphrasis in loco.

MATT. VIII. 5—13. “And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus said unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and 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 into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.” See Luke vii. 1—10.

The miracle we have just considered was performed on a Jewish leper, in answer to his own prayer of faith. That which the Evangelist has recorded in these verses, was wrought through the faith of a Gentile, not upon himself but upon another person. The reason for introducing the account of it in this place, probably was to show a diversity of the operation of faith, and to furnish another illustration of its power. It was a favour shown to the centurion, though a stranger to Israel, in answer to his faith. This is expressly taught. “As thou hast believed, so be it done *unto thee*,” verse 13. We are not told that the servant exercised faith, or was even conscious of what his Master was doing in his behalf. In this particular, it is like that wrought upon the daughter of the Syrophenician woman. Matt. xv. 22—28; Mark vii. 24—30. These examples teach, that in the economy of the kingdom, the faith of one person may be made the means of conveying blessings to another, who may not be capable of exercising the faith necessary to receive them. The raising of Jairus’s daughter, Matt. ix. 18; Mark v. 35, 36; Luke viii. 41, 50, is an eminent example of this power or operation of faith, and of the diffusiveness of its benefits. James v. 15. This principle is fully understood and recognized by the Church, in respect to *spiritual* blessings. But the typical import of these bodily cures, as intimated at the end of the last note, suggests another lesson. In the day of the Lord’s coming to receive his living elect, 1 Thess. iv. 17, who can say what numbers will not receive

eternal blessings through the faith of others? Pious parents, surrounded by groups of children, see Mark v. 42, whom they have dedicated to God by baptism, and for whom they daily and hourly offer the prayer of faith—will these be separated? the parents taken and their little ones left? Rather will not the prayer of faith, like that of the centurion, the Syrophenician woman, and Jairus, be heard and answered? Heb. xi. 7.

The faith of the centurion gave our Lord occasion to refer in general terms to coming events. His public allusions to the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, were comparatively few and indistinct, especially towards the beginning of his ministry. As he was about to close it, some of his parables very significantly set them forth. See Matt. xxii. 1—10; xxi. 33—44.

MATT. VIII. 17. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

This is a quotation from Isa. liii. 4. The word translated *infirmities* is rendered (*ἀμαρτίας*) *sins* by the LXX. and it appears to have been taken in that sense in 1 Pet. ii. 24. In the authorized English version of the Old Testament it is rendered *griefs*. Grotius was of the opinion that the word admits both senses. The Evangelist quotes the prophecy in connection with the miracles of healing which the Saviour performed upon the sick, and persons possessed with devils, which he says fulfilled it. If we regard these miracles as typical of the completed regeneration of man in his body as well as spiritual nature (see note on verses 2, 3,) we shall have no difficulty in reconciling either the Septuagint with the Gospel, or the Evangelist with the apostle. The cause or the origin of the infirmities, griefs, and sicknesses, of which the prophet speaks, is sin. Without bearing the latter, the Saviour could not, consistently with the Divine plan, bear the former. Hence he bore both. In the full and *perfect* sense he bore them on the cross, as the apostle Peter expressly alleges, and by bearing them, he wrought out the work of redemption of man from sin and all its consequences, moral and physical. But these miracles of healing were not that perfect work. They were examples, in a comparatively small way, of that perfect, thorough work which the Lord will perform upon all his redeemed ones when he will come to receive them to himself, and inaugurate his kingdom on earth.\*

\* The remark of Grotius, though not quite correct, is worthy of being quoted: Sicut veterum res gestæ rerum, Christi figuram habuerunt, ita et ipsius Christi actiones aliæ aliis deuotandis inservierunt. Nam beneficium

It is worthy of observation that St. Matthew makes more quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures than either of the other Evangelists—a proof, as it is supposed, that he wrote his Gospel especially for the Jews. The number of quotations which he makes is thirty-five.

MATT. VIII. 20. “And Jesus saith to him, the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, [rather shelters, *Trench*, 148.] but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.”

The denomination, or title, “Son of Man,” which our Lord here assumes and applies to himself, is taken from Psalm viii. 4. That this Psalm has respect to the Lord Jesus Christ is proved by Heb. ii. 8, 9, where it is quoted, and so applied. The expression occurs very frequently in the Gospels, and frequently in connection with words which denote also his Divine nature. See Matt. xxvi. 45 and chap. xxiv. In that divine sense he was understood by the high priest when questioned as to his Messiahship. Matt. xxvi. 64, 65. In his answer he had allusion, it is probable, to Dan. vii. 13, which may be regarded as a visionary representation of the future fulfilment of the eighth Psalm. The frequent use of this description or designation of our blessed Lord, is designed to inculcate, among other things, the truth that he was really and truly a man. This was essential to his priestly, as well as kingly office. Heb. iv. 14, 15. He says of himself, that the Father hath given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man, John v. 27; as if his manhood were an indispensable qualification for the office of a judge over men; and Paul, in his address to the Athenians, Acts xvii. 31, refers pointedly to the manhood of Christ when he says, “God will judge, or rule, the world in righteousness by *that man*, (that is, by the Adam, ben Adam,) whom he hath ordained.” See 1 Cor. xv. 45—47.

What our Lord here says of himself, shows the extreme poverty of his condition as a man; being less provided for than the irrational animals. The declaration was well calculated to discourage the Scribe, if he cherished hopes, as perhaps he

corporibus redditæ sanitatis quin figuram remissionis peccatorum et sanatarum mentium tulerit, dubitari non potest. Bis ergo impletum est vaticinium, &c. We do not adopt the notion, that this prophecy was twice fulfilled, as Grotius here supposes, nor that the cures performed on the diseased bodies of the sick, were figurative of a work wrought, or to be wrought on the souls of men merely, as both Erasmus and Grotius appear to have regarded them. The figure or the type has respect to the completed work of man's redemption, viz. to what St. Paul calls the *adoption, to wit*, the redemption of the body. Rom. viii. 23; Luke xxi. 28. Compare Luke xxi. 28 with Rom. viii. 19 and 23 in the original: ἐπαράτε τὰς κειράς=απικερδία;—απλυτρωσίς ἡμῶν=τὴν ἀπλυτρωσίν τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν.



did, of wealth or worldly greatness, from becoming a follower of the Lord. It does not appear from the narrative that he actually joined the company of the disciples.

MATT. VIII. 23—27. See Mark iv. 39; Luke viii. 22—25.

The miracle recorded in these verses belongs to the fifth class mentioned in the note to Matt. iv. 23, 24. It was not performed in the presence of the multitudes, but only before the disciples who were then with him. It was not therefore intended as a public proof of his Messiahship, or of the presence of the kingdom which he preached, but for some end or purpose, in which at that time his disciples only were concerned. The same observations may be applied to the miracles recorded in Luke v. 4—9; Matt. xiv. 25—33; xvii. 27; Mark vi. 47—51; John vi. 17—21; xxi. 6. This distinction is important. Indeed, all the miracles of this class belong to our Lord's Adamic, rather than to his Messianic character and relations. Notice the connection. In the 20th verse the Evangelist records for the first time our Lord's assumption of the title or character, "Son of Man." He then proceeds almost immediately to the relation of this miracle, leaving us to infer that it was performed by him in that character. The title is taken from Psalm viii., and was assumed, no doubt, with reference to the exalted condition and attributes there ascribed to him. This conclusion is justified by the application which Paul makes of this Psalm in Heb. ii. 5—7. If we would get a proper apprehension of the majesty of the character thus denoted, we must ponder such passages as Dan. vii. 18; Rev. i. 13; xiv. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 45; Matt. xxvi. 64; xii. 8; ix. 6; John iii. 13. Yet in assuming the title, the Lord declared his extreme destitution at that time of worldly possessions. 2 Cor. viii. 9. The miracle removes the apparent discrepancy between what he said of himself and the universal absolute dominion over creatures and the works of God, which the Psalmist ascribes to him in that character. It was a partial unfolding of the profound mystery of his person; and the recording of the miracle in this place, is a sort of commentary upon his words, and we may add (digressively) upon what he afterwards said to Pilate, John xviii. 36, "My kingdom is not of this world." See notes on John xviii. 36.

The connection thus developed, is logical, although the connecting thought is latent, and must be supplied from the Psalm from which the title itself is taken. But why, it may be inquired, were only the disciples permitted to witness miracles of this kind, while the nation at large had no knowledge of them, or at least had no *ocular* evidence of their performance?

The reader will be instructed by pursuing this inquiry for himself.

The following suggestions may aid him in the investigation, if they do not resolve the inquiry. "Son of Man," (Ben Adam) as a title of the Lord Jesus, denotes his Headship over the world of redemption, and his federal relations to the innumerable hosts of his redeemed people. As Son of Man, he has a kingdom in which he will hereafter come, of which his transfiguration was a type or figure, Matt. xvi. 28 to xvii. 9; Mark ix. 1—10; Luke ix. 26—36; Matt. xxvi. 64. It is more comprehensive than his title of Messiah, which has respect especially to the throne of David, and his reign over the house of Jacob, Luke i. 32, 33. Both titles, indeed, concurred in his person, and the glory of both will be simultaneously manifested in the same great consummation; yet this specific appellation, if we may say so, is different, and the evidence of his claim to each was not only distinct and different, but exhibited to different witnesses. The nation was concerned to receive him *as the Messiah*—the promised son of David; and to the *nation* he exhibited such notes or marks of his Messiahship, as the prophets foretold of him in that character. See Matt. xi. 4—6. His disciples, *i. e.* his apostles, were to be his heralds in a new dispensation, the consummation of which was to be the restitution of all things at his coming, as the second Adam, in his kingdom. It was to qualify them for this service, which was their real vocation, that they were taught by miracles, by parables, and in plain language, many things which the multitudes were not permitted to know, see Matt. xiii. 11; the meaning of which was mysterious at the time, but afterwards unfolded to them by the Holy Spirit.

Such instruction as he thus privately gave them was eminently adapted to qualify them for their office, and inspire them with resolution to endure the sufferings to which it would subject them. Matt. xvi. 24—28; see Heb. xii. 2.

In our Lord's last discourse with his apostles before he suffered, he assured them, with manifest allusion to these miracles of his (Adamic) power over physical nature, as well as to those he publicly performed, that all who believed in him should do greater works than any he had done before them, John xiv. 12. And why should he give them such a promise, except for their conviction and encouragement? To be gifted with such powers to be employed in his service, is in itself an inconceivably great and glorious reward. See Luke xix. 17, 19. For wonderful as these miracles may seem to us, they were but faint and transient exercises of the power which, as Son of Man, he really possessed; and although quite sufficient

as proofs of the character he claimed, they were far below the works which his redeemed people will be enabled to perform in his service, through faith in him, in the world of redemption. In the plainest language he declared that nothing should be impossible unto them, Matt. xvii. 20; xxi. 20, 21; Luke xvii. 6. All such promises, however, had respect to the futurity of their being—to their glorified, and not to their fallen and imperfect state; for they enjoyed none of them during their earthly career. 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

These considerations may suffice to show, in general, the use and intent of this miracle, and the character or relation in which our Lord performed it. We add a few observations on some of the particulars.

MATT. VIII. 23. "And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him." Who these disciples were we are not informed. Probably they were few in number, and those, or among those, who were afterwards commissioned as apostles.

MATT. VIII. 24. "And behold there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves."

The word (*σεισμος*) translated *tempest*, is frequently, if not usually employed to signify an earthquake. Matt. xxiv. 7, xxvii. 54, xxviii. 2; Mark xiii. 8; Luke xxi. 11; Acts xvi. 26; Rev. vi. 12, viii. 5, xi. 13, 19, xvi. 18. The word was chosen, perhaps, to indicate the suddenness of the peril. The sea is about eighteen miles in length and five or six in breadth. It is subject to whirlwinds and sudden gusts from the hollows of the mountains, of short duration but great violence. On this occasion, the gust was so violent that the vessel or boat (*καλύπτειθαι*) was hidden under the waves, and, as we may infer, would have been submerged, had not Jesus been on board. See John ix. 3.

"But he was asleep," (sleeping.)

We take these words in their literal import, as we would if they had been said of one of his disciples, xxvi. 43. In his fleshly nature, therefore, he was unconscious of the tempest. How could this be, seeing his human nature was united to the Divine? We cannot tell. There was, however, an impenetrable mystery about his human person, distinct from the union of it with the Divine nature. This appears by what he said of himself to Nicodemus, John iii. 13, "No one hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven;" by which we are to understand (1) that he had ascended to heaven, and (2) that afterwards he had locally descended, and was at that time come down from heaven, and yet (3) that he was at that moment also in heaven, and all as the Son of Man. The distinction of natures does not

help us here. As man, he ate and drank, Matt. xi. 19, and slept, as truly as the first man did. Gen. ii. 16, 21. He was at the same time on earth and in heaven, into which he had ascended, see Prov. xxx. 4; John vi. 62, and from which he had come down, and yet he was still there. He was the man of whom Adam in his unfallen state was only a type. Rom. v. 14.

MATT. VIII. 25. "And his disciples came to him and awoke him, saying, Lord save us: we perish," (we are lost.)

They aroused him (*ἤγειραν*) out of sleep to consciousness, hoping that his extraordinary powers might, in some way, avail to *their* deliverance, though their ship or boat should be lost.

MATT. VIII. 26. "And he saith to them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith!"

The narrative allows us to suppose that the Saviour uttered these words while yet in his recumbent posture, and while the danger appeared as imminent as ever. "Why fear ye these winds and these waves? know ye not, have I not told you, that I am the Son of Man, to whom the Father hath given absolute dominion over all the works of his hands, O ye of little faith?"

Our Lord in his human nature was susceptible of sorrow, trouble, weariness, and other sinless human infirmities, Matt. xxvi. 37, 38, John iv. 6, xi. 33, 35, xiii. 21, but not of fear. Even before Pilate, when accused by infuriated priests, and when bearing his cross to Calvary, he felt no fear. As the Son of Man, all creatures and all the powers of nature were subject to him as his servants, while he was subject only to God the Father, 1 Cor. xv. 24—27, with whom, in his divine nature by sonship, he was one. John x. 30. Sorrow, suffering, pain, death, he assumed as inseparably incident to his redemptive work, but not fear. His confidence or faith, *as man*, in God was perfect. He was always heard, John xi. 42; and his hold (if we may so express it) upon Omnipotence, placed him, *as a man*, above all created natures and powers. See Matt. xxvi. 53. If the disciples had exercised the same confidence or faith in him, they would have shared in his exemption from fear, as well as all causes of fear. John xiv. 1. But they did not, and hence the rebuke. We infer that the redeemed, being made perfect by faith, will, like their adorable Head, know no fear, Ps. xlvi. 2, 3; Rom. viii. 38, 39; and the only reason why such an exemption is not attainable in this life, is the imperfection of faith. See 1 John iv. 17, 18; Heb. ii. 15.

"Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm."

The power he put forth resided, as we suppose, in his *human* will, though it was derived from his Divine nature, to which it was mysteriously united. For there is no power or authority

but of God. Rom. xiii. 1. So will it be with the elect people of Christ in their glorified state. The wonderful powers with which they will be invested, will truly reside in their wills, so far as powers can be supposed to belong to creatures; yet they will be derived through their union to Christ from the infiniteness of God in Christ. John xvi. 23; xiv. 12; Matt. xvii. 20; xxi. 21.

The words of rebuke the Saviour addressed to the winds and the sea were interpretative of the act he performed, or intended merely as external evidence to the disciples of the power he exerted. In this light we are to regard his words to the leper, Matt. viii. 3, and whatever other external acts accompanied any of his miracles. See Matt. ix. 6.

MATT. VIII. 27. "But the men marvelled, saying, what manner of man is this, that even the winds and the seas obey him!"

This exclamation may remind the reader of the words of David in 1 Chron. xvii. 17; 2 Sam. vii. 19. See Dr. Kennicott's and Bishop Horsley's remarks on these verses. The Lord Jesus, in his human nature, was a style of manhood of which they had no conception, although the Psalmist had in general terms described it. Ps. viii. Adam was invested with much larger powers than any of his descendants ever possessed, but the world was not then what it became afterwards, when by transgression he lost those powers. It would be mere speculation to inquire whether Adam could, in his state of innocency, control at his will the physical energies of material nature; but from the dominion given him it is reasonable to infer that he had all the powers necessary to his condition as Lord of the world. Gen. i. 26. However this may be, such powers as the disciples had just witnessed, exerted by a man at his will, were essentially a new thing, at which they might well marvel, even if they had fully understood the import of the title "Son of Man."

The word (*ὑπακούουσιν*) *obey*, we need not say, is properly predicable only of intelligent beings, but in the sense intended by the disciples it was neither poetical nor figurative. For the Lord had addressed the winds and the waves as conscious of his presence and will. The conception was new to them, and this word was suited (if not the only one they could employ) to express it.

MATT. VIII. 28—32. We regard the miracle related in these verses as belonging to the same class as the last. It was performed in the absence of the multitudes. The keepers of the swine, the Evangelist is careful to say, were (*μαζορων*) a good way off, verse 30, and the demoniacs were so fierce that no man could pass that way, verse 26. Jesus and his disciples, who just

before had witnessed the stilling of the tempest, only were present. Yet miracles of this kind were often publicly performed by our Lord, and he imparted to his disciples afterwards the power publicly to perform them. Matt. x. 8; Mark vi. 7; Luke ix. 1. Still it was an exercise of the Lord's power as Son of Man. The miracles, which appropriately belonged to his office as Messiah, are those enumerated in his answer to the inquiry of John: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Matt. xi. 3. This form of inquiry plainly referred to the expected Messiah. The answer virtually referred John to what Moses and the prophets had written concerning the Messiah. As if he had said: Go tell John those things which ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. By these things he may know whether I am he that should come (*ὁ ἐρχομενος*) or whether this people should look for another. If such be the import of the answer we may infer that the miracles enumerated were those which properly belonged to the office of Messiah, as foretold and described by the prophets.

It may seem to the reader remarkable, that our Lord should answer John in this indirect way, and not by a simple affirmative. But a careful perusal of the Gospels will show that he did not publicly assume the title of Christ during his public ministry, Matt. xvi. 20; John x. 24, although he did very frequently the title "Son of Man."\* The reason will be explained hereafter. But there is another argument or reason for assigning miracles of this kind to our Lord's Adamic office or character, which may be thus stated:

As Son of Man, he was the Man of whom the first Adam was but a type, Rom. v. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 45—47, and in this character or relation he was the Lord of this world. The conditional dominion given to the typical Adam was made sure and perpetual to him, and in this sense we are to understand the Psalm (viii.) already so often referred to. The power of Satan, who is often called the god or the prince of this world, John xii. 31, xiv. 30; Luke xxii. 53; Eph. ii. 2, vi. 12; see Matt. xii. 29, Luke x. 18, is therefore a usurpation of his rights AS SON OF MAN; and though as ancient as the first Adam, it exists only by his sufferance as the rightful Lord and Ruler. Bearing this in mind, we perceive that our Lord's incarnation,

\* This title occurs 32 times in Matthew, 14 times in Mark, 26 times in Luke, 11 times in John, and only 4 times in the other parts of the New Testament, viz. Acts vii. 56, Heb. ii. 6, and Rev. i. 13, xiv. 14. See Schmidt's Gr. Concordance.

and assumption of this title, was the assumption of his rightful power as the Adam of promise or covenant, over all the power of the usurping enemy, Luke x. 19, to be exercised to a greater or less extent at that time, according to the Divine purposes. John xii. 31—33. Upon this fundamental idea the Lord answered the calumny of the Pharisees, when they ascribed his power over devils to the prince of the devils. Matt. xii. 24—29; Luke xi. 15—22. By the strong man *armed*, he denoted the usurping power of Satan over this world, permitted in consequence of the fall of Adam. By the stronger man, whose energies needed not to be enforced by arms, he denoted himself as the rightful Lord and Proprietor of the world, by Divine right in his character of Son of Man. Luke xi. 21, 22.

This miracle, then, taken in connection with the one last mentioned, exemplifies the Saviour's power and authority, as Son of Man, in two distinct yet equally vast departments of his government, viz. the physical or material world, and the world of spirits. The next miracle will furnish an example of his governmental power as Son of Man over the human race, Matt. ix. 2—6, thus making up the complement of evidence of his universal and absolute government over the world itself. The grouping or combining these miracles in such order\* is an admirable illustration of the method of the Evangelist, and confutes the notion of some, that the parts of this Gospel have been disarranged.

We add an observation on Matt. viii. 29: "And behold they cried out, saying; what have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come to torment us before the time?" (*καιρος*, the appointed time.)

Mark and Luke add "Most High," and they represent the demons as adjuring Jesus not to torment them. It is evident they knew his person and his name, and their absolute subjection to his power. Yet it cannot be inferred from their words, if interpreted according to the idiom of the language, that they understood his personality in the Godhead. Adam was a son of God, and Luke so calls him, Luke iii. 38, comp. with verse 23. Dominion, glory, and bliss had been given him. In the possession of these he resembled God, and in this sense, as well as that of creation, he might be called a son of God. From the expression, "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" we infer that they took him to be that mysterious man, or seed promised at the fall, by whose power they had understood from

\* It is important to notice that the Evangelist introduces this miracle in this place by anticipation—departing from the order of time; and for no other reason that we can perceive, than argumentative effect, as above suggested. But this was a sufficient motive. See Mark v. 1—13; Luke viii. 26—34.

the beginning, the dominion of Satan, their leader and prince, was at some time to be crushed. It was before the time appointed for this purpose, as the event has shown: for the world is still subject, in some measure at least, to Satan's power. Rom. xvi. 20; 1 Pet. v. 8. But how they knew, or whether they knew the precise time or season of the event they so earnestly deprecated, is a question about which we need not inquire. See Mark xiii. 32. They can no more penetrate the secrets of the Divine mind, than the most ignorant of God's creatures. Yet they may be permitted to know what men may not, and cannot know in this life; and God may withhold from Satan and his hosts the knowledge of things which he makes known to holy angels, or even to men. The word "deep" (*ἀβυσσος*), employed by Luke, shows what their fear was. It is the same word which is translated "*bottomless pit*" in Rev. xx. 1, 3; ix. 1, 2, 11; xi. 7; xvii. 8.

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### CHAPTER III.

The power of faith.—The call of Matthew.—The harvest field.—Powers conferred on the Apostles.—Sending forth the Twelve.—Necessity of distinguishing between the person, offices, or authority of Jesus.—First conspiracy against the life of Jesus.—Chief intent of John's inquiry of Jesus by his disciples, "Art thou he that should come?" &c.—Contrast between sins against the Holy Spirit and sins against the Son of Man.—A prophetic allegory especially applicable to the Jews, shadowing forth their future character and moral condition.—Division of parables into public and private instruction.—Importance of the distinction between our Lord's public functions as a minister of the circumcision, and his private functions as a teacher of disciples.—Christ's private instructions to his disciples contain the germ of all the great doctrines of the Epistles.—An allegorical representation of the state of the world between the first and second advent of the Son of Man.—A similitude of the teachers the Lord designed to raise up and instruct in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

MATTHEW IX. 2. "And behold they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus, seeing their faith, saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

We have here another example of the power of faith. The sins of the sick man were forgiven on account of the faith of the sympathizing friends who brought him. It was not *his* faith, but *theirs*, which is alleged as the ground of the miracle. The forgiveness of his sins involved, as we may infer, the cure of his infirmity. Whether the cure was effected simultaneously with the uttering of these words, is not expressly affirmed. We suppose so: yet the evidence of it was not immediately apparent, and this gave occasion, verse 3, "to certain of the



Scribes" who were present to say "within themselves, This man blasphemeth." "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Mark ii. 7; Luke v. 21; vii. 49.

Heinous as the offence of blasphemy was, by the Jewish law, and in their own apprehension, the sublimity of our Lord's character and deportment repressed the audible utterance of the accusation; and this gave occasion for the exhibition of another superhuman attribute, which our Lord always exercised and often manifested to others. John ii. 24, 25; vi. 64; xvi. 30; Mark ii. 8; Acts i. 24; Rev. ii. 23; see 1 Sam. xvi. 7; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

MATT. IX. 4. "And Jesus knowing their thoughts said: Wherefore think ye evil (of me) in your hearts? For is it easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk?"

By this question, the Saviour assumed, that to him it was indifferent what words he used, or whether he used any. They were not the means by which he accomplished his purposes, but only the external evidence of them. Hence, he added, verse 6: "But, that ye may know that the Son of man hath power (*ἐφείναται ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἁμαρτίας*, Mark ii. 10) to forgive sins on earth," I said these words—that is, he used them for their sakes merely; that they might know what he intended to prove by the miracle, *namely*, his power and authority as Son of Man to forgive the sins of men.

The prerogative, which the Saviour here claims as the Son of Man, rightly considered, involves the absolute government of men in all their relations. Sins are offences against the law of God, which is paramount to all other laws, and the remission of sins includes the remission of all the penalties due to them. See Gen. ii. 17; John xi. 26; Matt. xi. 28. On another occasion, Matt. xii. 8, he claimed authority over the Sabbath day, the earliest and most sacred of the divine ordinances. But what is particularly to be noticed, he annexes these prerogatives to his human, not to his Divine nature; a distinction which, if observed, is not sufficiently considered. In his Divine nature as the Eternal Word he is the Creator and Governor of all worlds, but as Son of Man he is the absolute Lord and proprietor of this world; and in this character, he claims the allegiance of the human race, of angels good and bad. Heb. i. 6. The world to come, or the earth in all its futurity, physical nature, irrational creatures, in short, the world and all its apparatus of powers, of rational and irrational, animate and inanimate, corporeal and incorporeal, material and spiritual natures, and whatever else there may be of things

terrestrial—all are made subject to him *as the Son of Man*\* by the Father, with whom, in his Divine nature, he is one. Matt. xi. 27; Ps. viii. 6.

In perfect harmony with (or rather, perhaps, we should say, as a future demonstration of) these attributes, he declared, that as Son of Man he would come in his kingdom, in the glory of the Father with his angels, and sit upon the throne of his glory, and gather all nations before him, and reward every man according to his works. Matt. xiii. 41; xvi. 27; xix. 28. See also Matt. xxiv. 27; Mark xiii. 26; Luke xxi. 27; John i. 51; Matt. xvi. 27. And, as if to remove the possibility of mistake, or misapprehension, he declared that these majestic powers of judgment and government were committed to him by the Father because he is the Son of Man, John v. 27—that is, the Adam of the Covenant, by force whereof these powers were vested in him, Ps. viii. 6—9; Gen. i. 26, from the beginning.

It is commonly supposed that this title or designation of our blessed Lord, was assumed chiefly, if not merely, to set forth the reality of his human nature and its identity with the nature of other men, Heb. ii. 14; iv. 15, and there can be no doubt it does unequivocally teach us that truth. Indeed, he identifies himself with our manhood in his reply to the first temptation of the tempter, Matt. iv. 4: “It is written, *man* shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” There would be no appositeness in this reply, had he not been truly a man made under the law, Gal. iv. 4. and bound by its requirements. But in assuming it, our Lord had especial reference (as has been suggested, see note on Matt. viii. 23, 27,) to the eighth Psalm, where “the manner of the man,” especially the exalted and holy nature of his humanity, and the Divine attributes of power and government with which it is invested, are briefly portrayed. What David’s conceptions were of the man he had there described by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, may be con-

\* But we must distinguish between the power possessed (*κτῆσθαι*) and the full exercise of it (*χρησθῆναι*.) The power our Lord possessed as Son of Man he did not exercise, except occasionally and in small measures, in proof or demonstration of his attributes, while in his state of humiliation; although he frequently asserted his possession of it. In pursuance of the Divine plan, he had so far divested himself of it, in respect to the enjoyment of worldly possessions, that he had not where to lay his head. Matt. viii. 20. See John xix. 36. After his ascension and glorification, he began to put forth his power, and he will continue to exercise it, until all things shall be restored and brought into subjection to him, while he himself is subject only to God. Heb. ii. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 24—27. The purchase of the Holy Spirit by whose energies he will subdue all things to himself was made by the offering of his body, as Son of Man. Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45. See 1 Tim. ii. 6.

jectured from his address to God, after he had heard the message delivered to him by Nathan, see 2 Sam. vii. 18—29; 1 Chron. xvii. 16—27, and it is apposite in this place briefly to consider them.

Dr. Kennicott remarks of this address, that it is “just such as one might naturally expect from a person, overwhelmed with the greatness of the promised blessing; it is abrupt, full of wonder, and fraught with repetitions.” The words in 2 Sam. vii. 19, rendered, “And is this the manner of the Man, O Lord God,” are not, according to the same learned author, sufficiently, or even accurately translated. Their meaning, as he expresses it, is: “And this is (or must be) the law of the man or of the Adam;”—that is, this promise must relate to the law or the ordinance made by God to Adam concerning the seed of the woman—the Man or the Second Adam, as the Messiah is expressly called by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 45—47. See Rom. v. 14.

Bishop Horsley adopts the leading idea of Dr. Kennicott, but departs a little from his translation. He renders the passage thus: “And this is the arrangement about the MAN, O Lord Jehovah!” The words, he says, are exactly parallel with 1 Chron. xvii. 17, which he translates thus: “And thou hast regarded me in the arrangement about the MAN that is to be from above, O Lord Jehovah.”\*—that is, in forming the

\* Sebastian Schmidt translates the words, 1 Chronicles xvii. 17, *הָרָאִיתָנִי הַמַּעֲלָה בְּתוֹרַת הָאָדָם הַמַּעֲלָה* “et respexisti me juxta rationem hominis illius celsissimi,” which is defective in this, that it does not give the full sense of *הַמַּעֲלָה* which, according to Dr. Kennicott, very remarkably signifies *hereafter* as to time, and *from above* as to place; both of which senses are combined by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 47.

Ernst Bertheau, Professor at Gottingen, not perceiving the allusion to the Second Adam, and finding a difficulty in extracting any intelligible meaning from the Hebrew text as it stands, proposes to change *הָרָאִיתָנִי Kal* into *הָרָאִיתָנִי Hiphil*, and render the words thus: “And thou hast caused me, as it were, to see the succession of men from this time upwards”—in other words: “The line of men which stretched onward from David in an unbroken series into the remote future, appears as an ascending line rising upward to an immeasurable distance.” This author admits, that if the present reading is retained, *תָּרָר* (*tor*) must be understood in the sense of *תּוֹרָה*, (*torat*) which, according to Bishop Horsley, may well be without rejecting the word *הַמַּעֲלָה* as superfluous, although Professor Bertheau thinks it must be, as a necessary consequence of such an interpretation. As to the expedient of changing *Kal* into *Hiphil*, without the authority of a MS. (see Dr. Kennicott’s Ed. of the Hebrew Bible) it is, to say the least, a very bold one and entirely unnecessary; as the notes of Dr. Kennicott and Bishop Horsley above quoted, abundantly prove. S. Cahen admits that the passage is difficult. He renders it, following De Wette, “Tu m’as regardé d’une manière humaine, toi qui es élevé, Jehova Dieu.” He cites Kimchi, who finds in the words this meaning: “Thou hast regarded me, as if I were a man of elevated rank, whereas I am a pitiful

scheme of incarnation, regard was had to the honour of David and his family as a secondary object, by making it a part of the plan that the Messiah should be born in his family." See Barrett's *Synopsis of Criticisms*. Vol. ii. Part ii. pp. 545, 546.

If we carefully consider and compare this address of David, with the Psalm, which it is probable he had previously composed, we shall perceive that the purpose of redeeming the world and such a race as mankind are, by such an expedient as the incarnation, was a matter of inexpressible wonder to him;\* but his wonder passes into amazement when he is informed that this Son of Man, the Second Adam, the heir and the Lord of the world, should condescend to become the heir of his throne.

If John the Baptist had equally just conceptions of the Lord Jesus, as the Son of Man, (and who can doubt it? John i. 15,) no wonder that he recoiled from the service of baptizing him with water, Matt. iii. 14; but the tempter surely had not, or he could not have thought of alluring him by the gift of what was

being." The Septuagint and the Syriac translators followed, as this author supposes, a different reading.

The truth is, the difficulty lies less in the language than in conceiving the Divine purpose which it expresses. It belongs to the mysteries of the kingdom, which mere learning and sagacity, however acute, can never discover. Matt. xiii. 11. As to the signification of רָרַר, see Venema Hist. Eccl. vol. i. p. 488. Calasio's Concord, ad voc. רָרַר. It is an argument in favour of the received text, that it is the more difficult, inasmuch as the difficulty lies chiefly in our inability to grasp the sublime idea the words are intended to convey.

\* Anticipating the restitution of all things under the Son of Man, and in prophetic vision seeing it accomplished, the Psalmist exclaims with holy admiration and awe, "O Jehovah (Adonenu) our Lord, O how excellent (great, illustrious,) is thy name in all the earth!" Reverting then to its fallen and disordered condition, he summarily sets forth the redemptive work of Christ by which this great change was wrought: and Satan and his hosts, the mighty enemies, which had so long held it in subjection, overcome and expelled (stilled). This wonderful work was accomplished by strength constructed and raised up out of the weakness of babes and sucklings. The next thought that strikes him, is the wonderful condescension of God, whose power is so mighty, whose wisdom so incomprehensible, whose works are so vast:—that HE should be mindful and care for, poor, miserable, mortal man, and especially that HE should visit such creatures in the way of an alliance with them in their nature, and for ever so little a time submit to be lower (in that nature) than his angels, and not only to suffer want, but to have his wants supplied by his own creatures. Matt. iv. 11; Luke xxii. 43.—The condescension is so great that he has no words to express his conception of it. He therefore passes immediately to the exaltation of the (ben Adam) Son of Man, thus taken into union with the Divine nature, and exultingly adds: "Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour (the honour of the Father;) Thou hast invested him with (absolute) dominion over these (terrestrial) works of thy hands; Thou hast put all things (pertaining to the earth; all its natures, powers, and creatures in absolute subjection to him) under his feet," &c. The Psalmist can say no more; and for want of other words, ends this inspired effusion as he began it: "O Jehovah, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"

already his own. Matt. iv. 8, 9; Luke iv. 5—7, and Bengel on Matt. xvi. 13.

MATT. IX. 9. "And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom, and he saith unto him: Follow me. And he arose and followed him."

It is worthy of being remarked, that the call of the Saviour was always effective. We have no instance in which the least delay or hesitation was manifested. Like the winds and the waves, diseases and unclean spirits, they yielded instantly to the power of his word, thus recognizing in the most impressive manner his authority to command them. Matthew, otherwise called Levi the son of Alphaeus, Mark ii. 14; Luke v. 27, was, at the moment of his call, actually engaged in the performance of his public duties. Luke adds, "he left all." Simon and Andrew, James and John, were called under similar circumstances, Matt. iv. 18, 22; see John i. 35—51. We have no particular account of the calling of Thomas, of James the son of Alphaeus, of Lebbeus, surnamed Thaddeus, of Simon the Canaanite, [ζηλωτης, Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13, the zealous or the zealot], nor of Judas Iscariot; yet as they were the appointed instruments of the Saviour's work, we have no reason to suppose that they did not yield instantly and implicitly to the power of his word. See Matt. xix. 27.

Matthew, it is probable, was the only one of the twelve apostles who was called from a thriving worldly condition. His employment was lucrative, and honourable among the Romans, but highly disreputable among the Jews. Luke v. 29, 30. The account which he gives of himself is characterized by great modesty and even humility; an evidence that neither his employment nor worldly wealth had corrupted his heart. See Luke xix. 1—10; iii. 12, 13.

MATT. IX. 18—31. The miracles recorded in these verses, are further examples of the power of faith; see note on Matt. viii. 2, 3, and with that view of them, it is suggested, they were introduced by the Evangelist in this place. The Saviour had before this time restored to life the widow's son at Nain, Luke vii. 11—13; but that miracle, though a wonderful proof of the Saviour's power and compassion, was not an illustration of the power of faith. The Evangelists, in composing their Gospels, selected from the abundant materials they had at hand, such as were best suited to some particular point or purpose they had in view. Thus John records the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead for the purpose of showing, among other things, the reason why the rulers of the nation precipitated their measures for the destruction of the Lord Jesus. John xi. 46—51.

Luke's object in recording the raising of the widow's son at Nain, was to illustrate the great compassion of our Lord as well as his power; while Matthew, in the passage under consideration, further illustrates and enforces, by various instances, the power of faith. See Luke viii. 50; Mark v. 36.

The miracles mentioned in these verses suggest many instructive thoughts, and we may return to them hereafter. They have been thus briefly alluded to in this place for the purpose of pointing out to the reader, the plan, in one particular, upon which this Gospel was composed, and vindicating it from the suspicion that its contents have been disarranged.

MATT. IX. 35. "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."

This tour, which must have occupied a considerable time, in which many discourses must have been delivered, and a great many miracles performed, is described in the most general terms. A particular narrative of it, we may easily believe, would have filled more pages than the whole Gospel as we have it. The brevity is characteristic, and proves that this Gospel was not intended as a biography of our Lord, or as a journal or connected record of his public ministry, but rather as *excerpts* or selections from large materials. See note on John xx. 19. The Evangelist's motive for alluding to this tour is suggested by the next verse.

MATT. IX. 36. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd."

The Lord was attended on this tour by his disciples. It disclosed to them the condition of the people, although they were not sensible of their extreme destitution. He called their attention to it, as a subject in which they ought to feel a deep concern, and employ the means best suited to remove it.

MATT. IX. 37, 38. "Then saith he unto his disciples, the harvest," as you see, "truly is plenteous, but the labourers few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will (would) send labourers into his harvest."

A congeries of sublime ideas, if interpreted, as the verse should be, according to the parable of the tares of the field, Matt. xiii. 24, 38, 39, 41. The harvest-field is the world; the harvest the countless myriads of the human race; the time of the harvest is the end of the world, and the Lord of the harvest is the Son of Man. The idea contained in the word (*θερισμος*) *harvest*, includes the whole work of preparation for it—all the means which enter into the Divine plan for producing the grand

result—the sowing of the seed, the culture of the plants, and finally the gathering of the products. The Saviour, on a later occasion, John xii. 24, represented even his own body under the emblem of a corn of wheat, which must fall into the ground and die, in order that it might be quickened into fructifying life.

Portions of this vast field were to be occupied in succession by successive labourers. The first portion in order, was that upon which the Saviour himself had entered. It was a little angle in the vast demesnes of the Lord of the harvest. The multitudes, among whom he moved, which excited his compassion, were comparatively but a handful. On an earlier occasion, he applied a similar remark to the Samaritans, John iv. 35, showing, that his views embraced other interests than those of Israel. See John x. 16.

We understand these words, then, in the large sense in which the Saviour interpreted the parable of the tares of the field. Matt. xiii. 37—43. They embrace all nations, and all times, till the Son of Man, the Lord of the harvest, shall come. But what we desire particularly to notice, is the majesty of the character of the Lord of the harvest. He is the Lord of the field, and the field is the world. He is the absolute proprietor of whatever may be gathered from it. He calls it HIS harvest. He superintends the whole work, and sends forth whom he will to perform it.

The word (ἐκβαλεῖ) translated *send forth*, implies a compelling force. The same word is translated, in Mark i. 12, *driveth*. The connection shows that force from the hand of the Lord of the harvest is intended. This interpretation suggests that the Saviour had respect especially to the day of Pentecost, when the apostles entered upon their labours under the inspiration and impulse of the Holy Spirit, and preached the word as they were moved by him. It may be added, that the word (ἐργατης) *labourer*, is used by the apostle Paul to denote a prophetic or inspired minister. This interpretation agrees with the fact: For the Lord Jesus, as Lord of the harvest, sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and thus qualified them as labourers for him, John xvi. 7; Acts ii. 33, and constrained them to enter zealously on their work, 1 Cor. ix. 16.

In a subordinate sense, however, the mission of the Twelve apostles to the cities of Israel, recorded in the tenth chapter, and the mission of the Seventy disciples soon after, Luke x., may be regarded as the sending forth of labourers into the harvest. It was a field of labour, though not of success.

MATT. X. 1. "And when he had called unto him his twelve

disciples he gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.”

MARK III. 13, 14, and LUKE VI. 12, 13, relate the call and ordination of the twelve apostles, which Matthew omits. These acts belonged to the Lord's function or office of preacher of the kingdom; the design of them being to spread more widely the proclamation of the kingdom, which John the Baptist first began to preach. The conferring of such powers upon the apostles, preparatory to their mission, for the confirmation of it, was itself a miracle of the highest order, which for reasons already suggested, see notes on Matt. viii. 28—32; ix. 2, we assign to his Adamic character or relations. The power conferred was limited to two kinds of miracles, see note Matt. iv. 23, 24, healing diseases and casting out unclean spirits or devils;\* and even in respect to these, it is not necessary to suppose he gave them power equal to his own. See Matt. viii. 29, note, and xvii. 16.

The gift appears to have been annexed to *their office as preachers of the kingdom*, and in the case of Judas, if not of the others, to have been bestowed irrespectively of personal holiness. They were not required to impose the condition of faith upon those who sought relief at their hands, nor are we told that they did so. Mark vi. 13; Luke ix. 6. How they exercised their power we are not particularly informed. Mark, vi. 13, says they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. Luke says, ix. 6, they went through the towns preaching the gospel and healing everywhere. It is probable they cast out devils in the name of Jesus. Luke x. 17; see Mark ix. 39; Matt. vii. 22. This was necessary in order to connect him with the kingdom which they preached; and it is probable our Lord refers in his question to the Pharisees, to the invocation of his name by his disciples over the demoniacs they relieved. Matt. xii. 27; see Acts xix. 13—15. The power of his name produced these wonderful effects, while they were unconscious of any power transmitted to, or proceeding from them.

It is worthy of observation that not a miracle they performed during our Lord's personal ministry is circumstantially recorded,

\* By the 8th verse it would seem, power was also given them to raise the dead. But these words (*νεκρους ἐγερτε*) *raise the dead* are not contained in some ancient MSS., and are thought by some commentators to be an addition to the genuine text (see Mill and Beza.) Only three miracles of restoring the dead to life were wrought by the Saviour himself, viz. the raising of the widow's son, Luke vii. 11—16, of Jairus' daughter, Matt. ix.; Mark v.; Luke viii., and of Lazarus, John xi.; at least, none others are recorded.



nor a sermon or an address which they made to the people. We are not told that they were followed by multitudes, nor that they were sought for by individuals for healing, except in one case in which they were unable to effect a cure, Matt. xvii. 16, and this was after their return from their mission—an important fact, which will hereafter be particularly noticed. It may be added, the discourse contained in this chapter, x., belongs to the category of private instruction, see note on Matt. iv. 17.

MATT. x. 5—7. “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into a city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and as ye go preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Such was their commission. It was restricted to the proclamation of the kingdom (come nigh) to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The restriction was removed after our Lord's resurrection, Matt. xxviii. 19. Thenceforward they were to teach *all* nations. The difference is so remarkable that some have regarded the last as a new and distinct commission, but it seems proper to regard it rather as the same commission, with enlarged powers, and a wider scope.

We observe, they were not commissioned to preach *repentance*, as John the Baptist did, Matt. iii. 2. They were sent out to proclaim a single fact, and prove the proclamation by miracles. We have no reason to suppose that even Judas, the traitor, did not share equally with the others in the commission, the due execution of which did not require the gift of inspiration. Yet, according to Mark, vi. 12, they did preach that men should repent, which they would naturally and might properly do, in imitation of John the Baptist and the Saviour. The point of the observation is, that they were not *authorized expounders of the law*, nor were they at that time capable of exercising that function, which proves their inferiority to John the Baptist, in spiritual gifts. See Matt. xxiii. 2, 3, and note on iii. 1, 2.

MATT. x. 9, 10. “Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey; neither two coats, neither shoes nor yet staves.”

The Saviour, during his personal ministry, exercised a special care over the apostles. It was not until his public ministry was ended, and he was about to surrender himself to his enemies, that he revoked the order contained in these verses. Luke xxii. 35, 36. In this sense, as well as in that of spiritual guardianship, we understand John xvii. 12, “While I was with them in the world, *I kept them* in thy name.” Even at the moment of their greatest peril, he exercised his power signally for their protection. “If ye seek me, let these go their way.” These were words of power, spoken “that the saying might be

fulfilled; of them thou gavest me have I lost none." John xviii. 8, 9. We observe, again, that the Saviour's providence extended to the smallest and most necessary things. This appears, by the particulars, enumerated in these verses, and yet more clearly by his assurance, verse 30, "that the very hairs of their heads were all numbered."

Accordingly, the Gospels contain no account of any injuries done to them. Their lives, their health were spared. We read of no sickness, or hurtful accident, or persecution happening to any of them. Peter was safe, notwithstanding his fears and want of faith, when sinking in the midst of the sea. Matt. xiv. 24, 30. The power, if not the hand of Jesus, the King of the kingdom the apostles were sent forth to preach, was ever present, to ward off the most threatening dangers. The shepherd must be smitten before the sheep could be harmed or scattered. Matt. xxvi. 31; Mark xiv. 27; Zech. xiii. 7.

MATT. X. 12, 13. "And when ye come into an house, salute it, and if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it."

Some ancient MSS. add to the 12th verse a form of salutation, (*λεγοντες, ειρηνη εν τω οικω τουτω*), "Saying: Peace be in this house." *Beza*. This formula accords well with the Jewish custom; but the emphasis of the precept lies on the word *your*—Let *your* peace come upon it. The *peace* of the apostles, as we have just seen, verses 9 and 10, consisted in the covenanted care and providence of the Saviour. It was an assured and special protection against all enemies, and all harm. No Jew or Jewish household besides had any share in it. Hence, the Saviour added, "If it be not worthy, let *your* peace return to you," that is, let that house be like others which have no part in the protection I have especially promised to you, and to those who shall receive you.

MATT. X. 14. "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet."

In order to understand some of the directions contained in this chapter, we must bear in mind that our Lord's ministry to the Jews was a *national* visitation under the legal economy, and that his sending of the twelve apostles to the cities of Israel, or to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, verses 6, 23, accorded in its purposes with his own. Hence cities were held responsible as *communities*. The preaching of John the Baptist was addressed not simply to individuals, but to the nation as such. The baptism he administered was appointed *for the nation*, as the elect people, see note on Matt. iii. 11, as well as for the individuals composing it. So our Lord preached the kingdom to the nation; and John the Evangelist, xii. 37—41,

recording the rejection of him, quoted the prophecy of Isaiah, liii. 1; vi. 1, 9, 10, as fulfilled by the national unbelief. There were some who believed, yet for the national sin of rejecting the kingdom, a national judgment was inflicted, in which all were involved, while those who did not consent to the nation's sin, received power to become the sons of God, John i. 12, and be manifested as such, when the kingdom shall be brought nigh again, and the Son of Man shall appear the second time.

MATT. x. 15. "Verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city."

This verse confirms the view taken of the last. The Lord pronounces this doom against the cities who would not receive his messengers, nor hear their words as *communities*; and he likens it to the judgments which were so inflicted upon those cities of the plain of Jordan. They suffered as social and political organizations, and so did the Jewish nation, in consequence of their rejection of Christ and the kingdom he preached. Under the present dispensation the gospel is preached to men as individuals. It was appointed to *take out* of all nations, and the cities and smaller communities composing them, an elect people, Acts xv. 14; Matt. xxviii. 19; and the apostles, after the ascension of Christ, were not authorized to enforce their preaching, in any of the places to which they were sent, by the denunciation of national judgments. The distinction is important, as it results from the essential difference between the economy of law established over Israel *as a nation*, and the economy of grace which is extended to all nations—between the gospel as preached to the Jews under the economy of law, and the gospel of grace preached to all nations.

MATT. x. 18. "And ye shall be brought before governors and kings, for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles."

The apostles received only one commission from the Saviour, but under it they received two missions. See note on verses 5—7. The first was restricted to the cities of Israel, and it fell within the period of our Lord's personal ministry, verse 6. The second was to all nations, Matt. xxviii. 19; to the uttermost part of the earth, Acts i. 8; to every creature, Mark xvi. 15. At the time of their *first* mission, they had no idea of a *second*, so different in point of extent from the first. They had no conception of the new dispensation about to be established, nor of the events which were to precede and introduce it. Nor was it our Lord's purpose to instruct them at that time, on these subjects. Previously to this time, he had not

even spoken of his rejection by the nation, nor of his death and resurrection. Had any of these particulars been mentioned, or plainly alluded to, they would not have understood what he intended, Luke xix. 31—34; Matt. xvi. 21, 23; xvii. 9. But as the whole of the approaching dispensation was vividly present to his mind, as well as the events which were to introduce it, our Lord expressed himself in general terms, some of which were exclusively applicable to their *first*, others to their second mission, and some to both, which they would afterwards be taught to apply, according to his meaning, by the Holy Spirit. The passage under consideration seems to have respect primarily, if not exclusively, to their second mission. The Gentiles and their governors and kings are expressly mentioned, among whom the apostles at first were forbidden to go. In the preceding verse, 17th, councils and synagogues are mentioned, and that verse forewarns them of the treatment they should receive from the Jewish people. Yet it does not appear that even that prediction was fulfilled during our Lord's personal ministry, although it was, in the case of some of them, soon after his resurrection. Acts iv. 3—7. And when he commands them not to meditate how or what they shall speak, verses 19, 20, assuring them, at the same time, that it shall be given them what they shall speak; so that it shall not be they who speak, but the Spirit of the Father, he plainly refers to the inspiration they should receive on the day of Pentecost, and consequently to the time of their second mission. The apostles, however, would very naturally apply all that he then said, to the service upon which they were about to enter, as they were ignorant of the extent to which their service would ultimately be required. But the instruction was sufficient for both, and the events which the Saviour foresaw would attend their service, would, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, show them its application.

It is worthy of being noticed that our Lord, on this occasion, first promised the apostles the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to guide and instruct them, though it was only by implication. verse 20. Afterwards, when about to leave them, he repeated the promise in the most explicit terms. John xvi. 7, 13, 14; xv. 26; xiv. 16, 26; Luke xxiv. 49.

MATT. x. 23: "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye to another; for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come."

This precept is very plain, but the reason by which it is enforced, has been the subject of much discussion. We may paraphrase the verse thus: "When you are persecuted, (as you will be) in one city, (stay not to endure it, but) flee from it to another; and if persecuted there also, flee to a third, and so on;

for proceeding thus from city to city, you will not have gone over all the cities of Israel until the Son of Man ( $\xi\lambda\theta\eta$ ) may come and supersede your service." The difficulty is to determine what we are to understand by the coming of the Son of Man, ( $\xi\omega\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\ \xi\lambda\theta\eta\ \acute{\omicron}\ \nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\upsilon$ .) If we understand these words of his coming to put an end to the dispensation for which he had commissioned them, and to establish his kingdom in outward glory over the whole earth; the meaning is that the apostles might *never* fully accomplish the service for which he had commissioned them, even if they should live to the end of time. Lightfoot understands the expression to mean "till the Son of Man rise from the dead." To this interpretation Whitby objects, for several reasons, but chiefly because in their first mission (from which they presently returned,) they met with no persecution, and because the phrase "the coming of the Son of Man," never signifies our Lord's coming at his resurrection, but only his coming to destroy the Jewish nation, or to the final judgment. Hence he adds that "seeing the apostles were none of them to live till the day of judgment, it seems necessary to understand this of his coming to avenge his quarrel on the Jewish nation." Dr. Whitby's objections to Lightfoot's interpretation seem to be unanswerable. The objections to Dr. Whitby's interpretation are, that the sense he puts upon these words is not supported by the texts which he cites, viz. Matt. xxiv. 27, 30, 37, 44; xxv. 13; Mark xiii. 26; Luke xviii. 8; xxi. 27; all of which refer to our Lord's coming to the final judgment. His interpretation is equivalent to the sense just before expressed, that the apostles might never be able to accomplish fully, even in the method which he prescribed, the service on which he sent them, because the cities of Israel would be destroyed and their population be dispersed by the Romans, before they could go over them. Our Lord appears to have referred in this expression, "till the Son of Man be come," to the time of the death of John the Baptist, when his mission to that people as the Messiah was ended, and he was about to go forth to them in the character of Son of Man and Saviour of all who would come to him, whether the nation and the communities composing it would receive him as the Christ or not. According to the distinction stated by John i. 11, 12, He came to his own as the Christ and his own people received him not, but as many as afterwards received him as the Son of Man and Saviour of the world, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, &c. See the original Greek. This will be more fully explained hereafter.

MATT. XI. 1. "And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, (and had sent

them forth by two and two, Mark vi. 7,) he (also) departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities."

Until this time, the apostles had followed the Lord Jesus as learners, witnessing the miracles he performed, but without possessing any miraculous powers themselves. Now they were to be more or less separated from him, at least for a time.\* They were to preach or proclaim the presence of the kingdom. This was the great fact—the great event of the times—the greatest event which has occurred in this world since the fall of man. Their mission, then, was of the most important nature, even with the restriction before mentioned, that they were not commissioned to expound the law or call the nation to repentance, as John the Baptist did. Luke iii. 7—14. The powers they were invested with, and which they exercised in the name of Jesus, sufficiently authenticated their proclamation.

MATT. XI. 2—15. "But John (the Baptist) having heard in prison of the (miraculous) works of Christ, sending two of his disciples, said to him, Art thou he that should come (*ὁ ἐρχομενος*) or should we look for another," &c.†

John had been in prison, according to Dr. Lightfoot, about seven or eight months, see note on Luke iii. 20, 21, when he sent this question to Jesus, and various are the motives which commentators have ascribed to him in sending it. See Whitby's note, for some of them; also Scott and Henry on this verse. With Dr. Whitby, we cannot believe that the Baptist could make this inquiry on his own behalf, or doubt whether Jesus were the Messiah or not; for he was sent to bear witness of him, and received from heaven a sign by which he should certainly know him. John i. 6—8, 33; iii. 28—30. Nor can we believe that John sent his disciples for their own satisfaction in the matter, but as suggested in the note just referred to, was moved to do so by the Holy Spirit, for a most important end. If we consider what transpired at our Lord's baptism, Matt. iii. 14; John i. 33, 34, the question seems a very remarkable one for John to put. It was sent publicly, and put to Jesus when he was surrounded by multitudes. The people knew by this act that Jesus was that mighty One of whom John had previously testified in general terms.

\* There are reasons for supposing that after the death of John the Baptist, they did not separate from him for the purpose of preaching the kingdom, as will appear hereafter.

† The first verse of this chapter should have been included in the last chapter. It is probable the true reading is "when John heard of the works of Jesus," &c. See Mill. Naebe, Harwood. But as the word is used historically, the question is not important to our purpose.

It was an official and public act, the last and most explicit testimony of John to the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus. The chief intention of the transaction was, however, as we apprehend, that the Lord might publicly testify in the most unqualified and strongest terms to the character and office of John, and formally tender him to the people for their acceptance, as the divinely appointed Elias of the economy of law under which they were placed. See note on Luke iii. 20, 21. His testimony was not only of the strongest kind, but most explicit. He declared that John was a prophet and more than a prophet—a prophet whose mission had been foretold; having authority to preach a new dispensation. Virtually he declared that neither Enoch, nor Noah, nor Abraham, nor Moses, nor David, nor Elijah, was greater than John the Baptist. See notes on Matthew iii. 1, 2; and John x. 41. Having thus attested the character of John, he added, what we paraphrase thus: “If ye will receive” not *it* but *him*, “he shall be to you,” now under this economy of law, the same as Elias; that is, the same that Elias shall hereafter be to you under the economy of grace.

This offer was made as a test or trial, in a way suited to the popular apprehension, in order to show by their neglect or rejection of it, the insufficiency of the highest motives, backed by all the evidence the nation had of John's authority, enhanced by the express testimony of the Lord Jesus, and the evidence of his miracles, to prevail with them to accept John in the spirit of his mission; for it should be remembered that the coming of Elias was universally and justly regarded by the nation as the sure harbinger of Israel's greatest national glory and happiness.

The Lord knew full well what the result would be, yet it seemed to the Divine wisdom not the less proper that the test should be applied; for the Jews were then the subjects of law, and the law assumed that they were capable of performing its requirements. Exodus xix. 5, 6. Yet, had they been really holy, and, therefore, really capable of fulfilling the law, Elijah would have been sent to them at that time, as we may believe, and not John. But because salvation by law was not possible, and because a dispensation of grace could not be introduced except through the failure of the law, and the rejection and death of Christ, and consequently of his forerunner, Rom. viii. 3; Acts xiii. 39; Rom. iii. 20; Heb. vii. 18, 19, John was raised up and sent to them in the place of Elias, with the spirit and power of Elias, to perform the office of Elias under the law, in order that it might be possible for God, consistently with his own holiness, through the rejection and sufferings of Christ, to give them the grace to receive the true Elias when

he should be sent to them; and so become prepared to receive their Messiah at his second coming. In dealing with Israel, God regarded them as the subjects of law, and accountable for every breach of it. At the same time he regarded them, as they truly were, the subjects of a hopeless depravity, and as utterly helpless in themselves. According to this double aspect he formed the scheme of redemption, involving, as necessary expedients, two advents of Messiah, and two fore-runners; yet so, that the purposes and requirements of his law should not be annulled or interfered with by his purposes of grace. Wonderful scheme! Wonderful in the developments of the past! and in the yet greater wonders of the future!

From these considerations we may get some proper apprehension of John's character. He was no mediocral person, liable to be swayed, or swerved from the purpose for which he was raised up, by the disturbing influences of fleshly or human appetites and passions, as a reed is shaken by the wind, verses 7 and 8. He was great before the Lord. Luke i. 15. Everything touching him took hold of the deep mysteries of the kingdom, and for that reason imparted a mystery to his person and office, which none of his contemporaries could comprehend. See notes on Matt. iii. 1, 3, 6, 11, 12, 14, 17; Luke i. 17; John i. 22, 23, 25; x. 41; Luke iii. 20, 21; Matt. iv. 12. We add a few observations upon some of the clauses of this passage.

MATT. XI. 3. "Art thou he that should come?" ( $\Sigma\upsilon \epsilon\acute{\iota} \acute{\omicron} \acute{\epsilon}\rho\chi\omicron\mu\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\omicron\varsigma$ .) Dr. Whitby remarks, that these words were in those days the common style for the Messiah. He refers to Matt. iii. 11; John i. 15, 27; Matt. xxi. 9; xxiii. 39; Luke xix. 38; Hab. ii. 3, cited Heb. x. 37; Dan. vii. 13; Matt. xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64. Yet our Lord came also as the Son of Man, Matt. xviii. 19; Luke xix. 10; Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45; Luke ix. 56, and that character he openly and publicly assumed. In that character he repeatedly declared that he would yet come again. Matt. xvi. 27; xxiv. 27, 30; Mark xiii. 26; Luke xxi. 27; Matt. xxiv. 37, 39, 44; xxv. 13, 31. The words under consideration in themselves are applicable to a coming in either character. Yet the characters are not identical, though united in his person. We have seen how they came to be united, and how David was affected by the revelation of God's purpose to blend them in the heir of his throne. See note on Matt. ix. 2—6. This twofold character or relation in which he was to come, may be one reason for the form of the question, which pointed, nevertheless, to his Messiahship, *i. e.* the character which he did not *publicly* assume or claim. Matt. xvi. 20; xxvi. 63; Luke xxii. 67;



John x. 24. In this character only, was there any occasion for the inquiry. Why, then, it may be inquired, did not John put the question to him, plainly as the people did, John x. 24, Art thou the Christ? The reason is suggested by the form of the answer our Lord returned to John, which consisted in an appeal to his works, "Go show John the things that ye do hear and see," &c.; that is to say, let John collect from this evidence, whether I am he who Moses and the prophets did say should come. See John i. 45. And in the same way he answered the people, John x. 24, 25; v. 36, after the death of John.

And if we reflect upon the exalted nature of the office of Messiah, we shall perceive a reason for the form of both the question and the answer. The attributes and the office of Messiah are of so high a nature, that the right to it could not be established or proved to human or finite judgment, by the *mere claim* or *assertion* of man; nor indeed by any merely human or natural testimony or proof. So far from it, the assertion of a claim to it upon such grounds confutes itself, and so in effect our Lord declared. John v. 43; Matt. xxiv. 5. Hence the Divine wisdom appointed as the necessary proof of our Lord's Messiahship a *dispensation of miraculous evidence*, from which the people were to determine whether he were the Christ or not. This explains our Lord's saying to his disciples after the close of his public ministry—"If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin," John xv. 24, and also his saying to the people: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not, but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works," John x. 37, 38, thus appealing, if we may so say, from his own word to his works. These considerations explain also the form of John's question. He did not fall into the error of the Jews, John x. 24, nor of the High Priest, Luke xxii. 67, who had no adequate or proper conception of the mystery of the throne of David, or of the Messiah, but being filled with the Holy Ghost, and moved by him to send the question, he put it in the only form consistent with the Divine plan.

MATT. XI. 10. "For this is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face which shall prepare the way before thee."

This quotation was made from Mal. iii. 1. If the prophecy of the same prophet, Mal. iv. 5, 6, concerning Elijah, was applicable to John the Baptist, and was fulfilled by his mission, we cannot account for our Lord's omission to quote it. His object was to set forth in the most impressive manner, the dignity and excellence of John's character and ministry, as

is evident by the next (the 11th) verse. Elijah was the prophet whom the nation expected, as the forerunner of Messiah. Matt. xvii. 10; Mark ix. 11. It was the common doctrine of the Scribes. Our Lord, however, did not say, "For this is he of whom it is written, Behold I will send Elijah the prophet," &c., although the quotation of this prophecy, falling in with the preconceived opinion and expectation of the nation, and by its explicitness, would have been more impressive, and for that reason would have been quoted, if it were applicable to John. To make up, however, for any difference there may be in the two prophecies in this respect, our Lord adds (verse 11) in effect, that John the Baptist was equal to Elijah, and if any had been born of woman who were greater than Elijah, then John was also greater than Elijah; thus in the most expressive and unqualified manner, by a sweeping comparison, declaring that John was at least the equal if not the superior of Elijah the prophet, whom the nation expected. The design of the Saviour appears to have been, on the one hand, to avoid affirming that John was Elijah, or that the prophecy concerning Elijah was fulfilled in him; and on the other hand, to affirm that John was at least equal to Elijah, and that his ministry among them should have the effect of Elijah's, if they would receive him with their hearts, in the spirit of his mission, verse 14. How this could be, was a mystery to the nation, which our Lord intimated by the words, verse 15, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

MATT. XI. 12, 13. "And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven (*βασίλεια*) *suffereth violence*, and the violent take it by force: For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John."

This passage is regarded by commentators as difficult, and if we may judge by the variety of the interpretations put upon it, few are more so. We take it in connection with Luke xvi. 16, where the same general sentiment is expressed somewhat differently. "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God (*εὐαγγελιζέται*) *is preached*, and every man (*βασίλεια*) *presseth into it.*"

We observe that instead of the words (*βασίλεια*) *suffereth violence*, Luke uses the words (*εὐαγγελιζέται*) *is preached*, and instead of the words (*βιασταὶ ὀρπαζουσιν αὐτήν*) *the violent take it by force*, Luke uses the words (*πας εἰς αὐτήν βασίλεια*) *every man presseth into it*. Is it allowable to interpret the earlier by the later text—Matthew by Luke? We do not know a safer rule. If the Gospel of Matthew was first written, and Luke was acquainted with it, he would, in composing a Gospel for Gentile churches, interpret into plain language such

idiomatic or figurative expressions and allusions as would not be easily understood except by Jews. Comp. Luke xxiii. 47 with Matt. xxvii. 54, and see notes on these verses.

But this rule requires a modification of the translation. The word (*βιάζεται*) which occurs in both places, is translated in Matthew, *suffereth violence*, but in Luke, *presseth*, i. e. in the former it is taken in reality in the *passive* sense, but in the latter as in the active or middle voice. But this is not necessary. On the contrary, if we interpret the word in the middle voice in both places, a clear and consistent sense is elicited. In this voice, the word signifies, in this connection, "to press, to urge itself upon or against."\* Substituting this sense for "suffereth violence," the verse will read, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven urgeth (presseth) itself upon" i. e. upon this generation, for their acceptance, which in plain language signifies, *is earnestly preached* to them, (*εὐαγγελίζεται*) and this is the expression of Luke, which we may regard as an interpretation of the figure.

The remaining clause or phrase should be interpreted in a sense consistent with the historical facts; for we do not regard it as a precept or evangelical maxim, as most commentators do, but as a declaration of the manner in which the preaching of the kingdom was received by the Jews during the ministries of John the Baptist and our Lord. They did not press into the kingdom with a holy urgency. On the contrary, as Luke says, (*πας εις αυτην βιαζεται*) every man, meaning the generality of the people, (presseth) pressed himself *against* it †—resisted it, (for so we interpret the preposition *εις*) see Luke xii. 10; Matthew xviii. 21; Rom. iv. 20; or, in the more figurative language of Matthew, (*αρπαζουσιν*) treated it with ruthless violence. This interpretation agrees with the fact. John i. 11; xii. 37; Rom. xi. 8, 11, 12; Matt. xxiii. 13. Adopting this view, we interpret the word (*βιασται*) translated *violent*, by Luke's expression, (*πας βιαζεται*) ‡ *every one presseth*. It is

\* The word is used in this sense in Exod. xix. 24, Septuagint, though it is rendered *break through*. "Let them not *press* (or break through) to ascend," &c. See also Gen. xxxiii. 11, where it is used (*ιβιασται*) to signify the *urgency* which Jacob used with Esau to accept his gifts. Gen xix. 3, where it is said Lot (*κατιβιασται*) *pressed* the angels greatly. Judges xix. 7, And when the man rose up his father-in-law (*ιβιασται*) *urged* him. 2 Kings v. 16, Naaman (*παριβιασται*) *urged* Elisha to take a gift. Exod. xii. 33, The Egyptians *were urgent* (*κατιβιασανται*) upon the people to send them away in haste.

† See translations of Montanus and Erasmus; also the Vulgate *Et omnis illud vim facit*.

‡ The verbal adjective (*βιασται*) employed by Matthew as a *descriptio personarum*, is resolved back by Luke into the verb from which it is derived, and Luke's motive for employing a more simple form of expression, it is probable, was, as before suggested, that he might be more easily understood by Gentile Christians, for whom chiefly he wrote.

descriptive or denominative of those to whom the kingdom had been preached, or upon whom the kingdom pressed itself; and if taken in the active sense, it may be regarded perhaps as an example of antiphrasis. See Exod. xix. 24. "Pressers into the kingdom," they thought themselves to be, and such they ought to have been. In truth, however, they were rejecters of the kingdom, and violent opposers of those who preached it.

The sense of the passage, then, according to the foregoing exposition, may be thus expressed: "The law and the prophets extended downwards from Moses to the time of John the Baptist. They announced the coming of the kingdom of heaven as a future event. But from the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist until the present moment, a new order of things has supervened. The kingdom of heaven has come nigh and presseth (urgeth) itself upon this people for their acceptance. But this people, who regard themselves and profess to be (pressers into) eager expectants of the kingdom, (snatch it away, Matt. xiii. 19—lock it up, as it were, with a key, Matt. xxiii. 13) not only resist and reject it, but treat it with contumely and ruthless violence."\*

MATT. XI. 25—27. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto (νηπιους) babes<sup>†</sup>: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me by the Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

In this ejaculation our Saviour tacitly alluded to the Divine constitution of which David speaks in the 8th Psalm, a part of which he formally quoted on another occasion. Matt. xxi. 16. See note on Matt. ix. 2, 6. The power, by which the enemy was to be stilled, the Father saw fit to raise and construct out of the mouths of babes (ἐκ στοματος νηπιων) and the Saviour rejoiced to see the beginning of the glorious work in the

† Jerome's comment on this verse is, "Grandis enim est violentia in terra nos esse generatos, et coelorum sedem quaerere, possidere per virtutem quod non tennimus per naturam." Bede copies Jerome almost verbatim. For another specimen of Patristic commentary, see Clemens Alexandrinus τις ὁ σαζόμενος. He says, "Nor does the kingdom of God belong to those who indulge in sleep and sloth, but the violent take it; for this is the only good violence, (βία κατὰ Θεὸν βίαισασθαι Deo vim ferre) to do violence to God, and to snatch life from God." See Whitby, Scott, and Clark. Generally the commentators regard this declaration of the Saviour as an evangelical maxim or a rule of Christian life, and not as the declaration of a matter of fact merely, touching the reception of him and his ministry by the nation; whereas it seems as truly a mere record or declaration of a fact, as the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th verses are.

Father's revelation of the mysteries of the kingdom to the little circle of humble followers around him. They were (*νεπαισμένοι*) babes in knowledge then, and simple-minded, yet made ready by Divine influence to receive, upon his assurance, what the wise and prudent of the nation contumeliously rejected as unworthy of their regard. See note on Matt. xi. 12, 13. But what we desire particularly to notice is the first clause of the 27th verse. "All things are (*have been*) delivered unto me of my Father"—John xvii. 2; xiii. 3; 1 Cor. xv. 25—27; that is, all things and all men had been delivered unto him *as the Son of Man*, and with them the sole power and authority to reveal the Father and his purposes and to execute his judgments. John v. 27. This is what the Psalmist teaches. Ps. viii. 7. As Son of Man he was constituted the absolute Lord of this lower world, including all its natures, creatures, powers, energies, and things. Everything pertaining to it, as before observed, was put under his feet, *i. e.* made subject absolutely to his will and control. And more than this, not a ray of knowledge of the Father, or of his purposes, could beam upon the world, except through him, as Son of Man.

We may regard this passage as exegetical of the Psalm, or as a development of what is implied in the dominion there ascribed to him as Son of Man. Paul excepts from the "all things delivered to him"—nothing whatever—nor *any being* but God. 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28. We find it difficult to conceive that such dominion can be vested in, or be possessed by him *as Man*, but this is what Paul expressly teaches. For only as man is he subject to God, and as the man Christ Jesus he is the Mediator between God and man. 1 Tim. ii. 5. In his Divine nature he is one with the Father. Consider then how great this man is! How rich he was and how poor he became, Matt. viii. 20, that we through his poverty might become rich, 2 Cor. viii. 9, his brethren, Rom. viii. 29, and sharers in his dominion and his throne. Rev. iii. 21; 2 Tim. ii. 12.

MATT. XII. 8. "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath-day.

Our Lord exculpated his disciples from the charge of Sabbath-breaking on four distinct grounds. (1.) The example of David, which their accusers would have been inclined in any other case to respect. (2.) By the law of Moses, relating to the temple service, which imposed bodily labour on the priests on the Sabbath-day. This was a higher authority than the example of David. (3.) By the word of God himself, when he declared by the prophet Hosea, vi. 6; see Micah vi. 6—8, that he preferred mercy to sacrifice, even to his own appointed sacrifices of the temple. This argument enhanced upon the

last. Finally, (4.) by his own authority as the Son of Man. The disciples were his servants, and he was the Lord of the Sabbath-day. Upon this last ground, we add a few observations. As Son of Man, he was the Lord of the world and of all earthly institutions, and the direct object of all earthly allegiance; and being constituted Mediator by the union of the Divine nature in the person of the Son of God to his manhood as Son of Man, allegiance could go no higher; for terminating on him it terminated on God, as the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in his manhood. Col. ii. 9; i. 19. See John i. 16. As MAN, too, he was and is the Mediator between God and man, 1 Tim. ii. 5, and the Sabbath and the temple and its sacrifices were mediatorial appointments, emanating from him, and subject to his will; to establish, suspend, alter, or abolish, according to his pleasure. Nevertheless, in the administration of his government he acts in all things according to the will of the Father, with whom in his Divine nature he is one. John viii. 29—38; v. 17, 19, 22, 27; x. 30; xii. 26. Accordingly, in the passage under consideration, our Lord\* claims absolute authority over the Sabbath as the Son of Man—that is, as THE ADAM of whom the Adam of the garden of Eden was but a figure, a shadow or type. Rom. v. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 47. It is probable that some readers of the New Testament do not consider the distinction between the different relations our Lord sustained as very important to be observed, inasmuch as they were all mysteriously blended in his person; and some perhaps habitually regard them as synonymous designations of his person, rather than as the appropriate designations of his different offices or relations. None of the distinctions, however, which the Saviour made in respect to his person, offices, or authority, can be considered unimportant; and it is conceived that the due observance and consideration of them will shed great light upon some parts of his discourses which are confessedly difficult to explain. Illustrations of this remark will occur as we proceed.

MATT. XII. 9—13. “And having departed thence”—from the temple—“he went into their synagogue. And behold a man having a withered hand was there. And they asked him, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man 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

\* The word “Lord” in this place includes the sense of the Heb. בעל, (*ownership*,) *proprietas*, (*property*) *dominion*.

is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other."

Luke assigns this miracle to another Sabbath, vi. 6, and he adds, that the Saviour also taught. Matthew omits both these circumstances; his chief object being to establish, by the miracle, the claim of Jesus to be the Lord of the Sabbath, verse 8 and note. Observe: the question was addressed to him as a religious teacher. He resolved it in the affirmative, and to prove his authority, in the character in which he claimed it, to expound the law of the Sabbath, he healed the man by simply bidding him to use his hand; for that in effect was the meaning of his command. The circumstances show that the cure was to be ascribed exclusively to the power of his will as Son of Man and Lord of the Sabbath-day, verse 8.

The argument derived from the allowed course of their own conduct, verses 11 and 12, in showing mercy to beasts, serves to connect these verses with the quotation in the 7th verse from Hosea, which shows the logical connection of the passage and the Evangelist's reason for disregarding the minor circumstances mentioned by Luke.

MATT. XII. 14. "Then the Pharisees went out" [of the synagogue] "and held a council against him, how they might destroy him."

The question was insidiously put, though with outward respect. The argument derived from their own conduct was unanswerable, and the proof he had given of his authority of the most convincing kind, yet neither the argument nor the proof averted or softened the malice of the Pharisees. On the contrary, they then for the first time formally conspired against his life. See John xi. 47, 48.

MATT. XII. 15. "But Jesus, knowing it, departed thence, and great multitudes followed him and he healed them all."

It may be inferred from this verse, that there were other diseased persons in the synagogue at that time, who had come on the Sabbath-day to be healed. This may have given occasion to the question, verse 10. See Luke xiii. 14. If such were the fact, the Saviour did not stay for the purpose of healing them, owing to the impending danger. According to Mark, iii. 7, he went to the sea-side beyond the confines of Judea. It is pertinent to remark in this place as before, see Matt. ii. 12, 13, that the Saviour seldom employed miraculous power for his personal protection, but in his ordinary intercourse with the people, always observed the rules of human prudence to avoid impending dangers. See Matt. iv. 7.

Again, we observe a characteristic difference between the

Evangelists Mark and Matthew. Mark enters into particulars. He mentions the place to which the Saviour retired—that his disciples went with him, and that the multitudes which followed in his train were partly Galileans and partly from Judea, where he then was. Matthew, on the other hand, discerns in this conduct of the Saviour the fulfilment of an important prophecy, and a prophetic note or sign of his character. For he not only retired from the threatening danger to a great distance, but he charged the multitudes who followed him that they should not make him known, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying:

MATT. XII. 18. "Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased, I will put my Spirit upon him and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles."

This passage is cited by the Evangelist from Isaiah xlii. 1—4, and it has respect to our Saviour as the Son of Man. Only in that character could he be called a servant or receive the Divine Spirit. In his Divine nature he was equal to and one with the Father. But as man, though the divinely constituted absolute Lord of the world, he could be subject, as a servant, to God the Father. John xiv. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 28. But this prophecy had respect to him also as the Messiah of Israel. This is evident from the reference to the Gentiles in contradistinction to Israel. We have seen (note on Matt. ix. 2—6) that God's covenant with David contemplated the incarnation of the second Adam (or as an old writer describes him, the Glory-man,) in his family, so that the heir, that is Lord, of the world should be the heir of his throne; and we have also seen how this purpose affected him. In the passage under consideration one object of the inspired prophet was to describe the public demeanour of this great being, in his subject condition and servant-form, as a note or mark by which he might be known.

MATT. XII. 19. "He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any in the streets hear his voice"—as a voice of terror, Heb. xii. 19; Exod. xx. 19; Deut. v. 5—25, during his merciful visitation. And then again the gentleness with which he will carry on his work.

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and the dimly burning flax shall he not extinguish," till the time for the consummation of his work in the restitution of all things shall come. See Isa. xlii. 13—15.\* The same contrast between meekness and

\* The first eight verses of the 42d chapter of Isaiah relate to the first advent of Christ, and the dispensation of grace which he then introduced. At the 9th



majesty, power and weakness, is stated by the Saviour in the context of a passage already remarked upon. Matt. xi. 27—30. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no one knoweth the Son but the Father." . . . . "Come unto me all ye that labour, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest."

MATT. XII. 20. "Till he send forth judgment unto victory." See "Critical Conjectures," *Lord's Theological and Literary Journal*, vol. vii. 563—569.

MATT. XII. 22—24. "Then they brought to him (a demoniac) one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb (man) both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed (*ἐξέστησαν*) and said, Is not this the Son (rather, is this the Son) of David (Messiah)? But when the Pharisees saw *it*—(this surmise of the people)—they said: This *fellow* (say *man*) doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils."

The preceding verses from the 14th are digressive. At these verses the Evangelist resumes the subject of our Lord's miracles. He had already mentioned several, which were performed, as we have seen, for particular purposes. His object now is, to show the effect of our Lord's miracles upon those who witnessed them. Already, chap. ix. 32, 34, he had alluded to this point, but now he returns to it to make a more full explanation, and it is probable, especially with a view to record our Lord's reply to the injurious thoughts of the Pharisees. On the former occasion, just referred to, he says the multitudes (*ἐθαύμασαν*) marvelled, and confessed that the like had never been seen in Israel; while the Pharisees affected to believe that the Lord Jesus was an underling of the prince of devils, and that he derived his wonderful powers from him.

verse the inspired prophet pauses. He announces that the predictions relative to the gospel to the Gentiles and the dispensation of grace are fulfilled. He imagines himself as standing on the dividing line of a dispensation past, and a dispensation to come, and looking forward into the new economy, he proceeds to describe the manner in which it will be introduced. "The former predictions; lo! they are come to pass"—that is, the predictions relative to the present dispensation of the gospel. "New events I now declare unto you—before they spring forth, I make them known unto you"—that is, the events relating to the economy of the restitution of all things. Then the prophet by a bold figure calls on all mariners and things in the sea—the distant sea-coasts, the deserts, the cities and the villages, &c.,—in one word, upon the world as it now is, to sing a new song to Jehovah and utter his praise in prospect of the events he is about to declare. The prophet then announces the second advent of the Lord; and the description of it in all its parts is a sort of antithesis to his description in the previous verses of the first advent. "Jehovah shall go forth as a mighty man, (verse 13th) like a mighty warrior shall he rouse his vengeance. He shall cry aloud, he shall shout again, he shall exert his strength against his enemies," &c.

But on seeing the miracle we are now considering, the conclusions of the common people assume a more definite form; they seemed to regard it as a legitimate proof of his Messiahship. The Pharisees, provoked by this turn of the popular mind, and apprehensive of the final result, contemptuously ascribed the miracle to the power of Beelzebub.

It is important to observe, that none doubted the *fact* of the miracle. So manifestly clear was it, beyond the possibility of any deception or delusion, that the most virulent and determined opposers of the Saviour were obliged to admit it *as a fact*, and avoid its effect by accounting for it in a manner most injurious to him. The miracle, therefore, fulfilled its chief design. See note on John x. 41. Those who saw it were the proper judges of the fact. They had direct and the highest evidence possible of the reality and truth of the miracle, and the Jews of succeeding generations are in reason bound by their judgment. See note on John xx. 29. The only argument, therefore, which is fairly open to the Jews and infidels of the present day is, whether the gospel is fabricated and false, or a true record or history. This is a question to be resolved by historical evidence, like all others of the same nature. Admit the record to be true, and the whole question is decided; for those who were eye-witnesses were more competent judges of the reality of the miracle than any others can be.

MATT. XII. 25. "But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand."

It is evident from this verse, that the Pharisees did not give audible utterance to their calumny, in the hearing of Jesus. As before remarked, his demeanour imposed upon them, on most occasions, a powerful restraint. See note on Matt. ix. 2—6. It is not improbable, however, that they uttered this calumny among the people, when they supposed they would not be heard by him.

The Saviour's answer was founded upon earthly analogies, the justness and force of which were obvious. Assuming that Satan, the prince of devils, whom they called Beelzebub, had a kingdom in this world—(a truth which on other occasions he expressly affirmed, John xiv. 30; xii. 31; see Matt. xxv. 41; Coloss. ii. 15; Eph. ii. 2)—which he desired to preserve and maintain, it was absurd to suppose he would make war upon himself, or permit malignant spirits, subject to him, to make war on each other; for this would weaken or destroy the dominion he had acquired in this world, by the fall of man. This was

his first answer, and it was a complete answer to the whole accusation. For,

MATT. XII. 26. "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then shall his kingdom stand?"

Bengel's remark is, "Satan or the devil is one. I, says our Lord, cast out Satan. In the kingdom of darkness there is none greater than Satan. If therefore your words are true, it must be Satan who casts out Satan. But this is clearly absurd. One kingdom, one city, one house is not divided against itself, neither is one spirit divided against himself."

Our Lord's second answer was in effect, that the calumny though malignant, was not broad enough to meet the whole case. There were others of their own people besides himself, who cast out devils. They did not do this with their own power. Mark ix. 38; Luke ix. 49; x. 17. These were public, notorious facts. How did they explain them? Whence did they derive such extraordinary power? Ask them; let them be judges for you in this matter. Such appears to be the import of the following verse.

MATT. XII. 27. "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges."

These persons were either the disciples of the Lord Jesus, or others who acted in his name, and therefore were not in league with Satan, nor consciously acting by his power.\* If these persons should confess that they acted by Satan's power, the confession would be false, or it would prove that Satan himself was demented, and was no longer acting as a reasonable being. If they confessed they acted in the name and by the power of Jesus, they would be witnesses for him. Having shown to the Pharisees in the presence of the people the absurdity of ascribing to the power of Satan his miracles of power *over* Satan, he gives the true explanation, and draws the only conclusion which this miracle warranted.

MATT. XII. 28. "But if I, by the Spirit (by the finger, Luke

\* Some have supposed that the Saviour alluded to exorcists, but it is not easy to discover the reason of this opinion, or the applicability of the passage thus interpreted, to the matter in hand, if such were the allusion. We have no reason to believe that any person during the personal ministry of our Lord cast out devils in any other name, or by any other power than his. Indeed his power over evil spirits and the unvarying rigor with which he exercised it, compelling them to flee from his presence, was one of the decisive marks of his Messiahship. Note on Matthew viii. 28—32. From the time the devil departed from the Saviour (*ἀχρει καίρου*) until the evening of the last supper and the giving of the sop to Judas, we suppose that neither Satan, nor any unclean spirit subject to him, voluntarily sought the presence of Jesus.

xi. 20) of God cast out devils, then the kingdom of God has come upon\* you."

This conclusion is in support of his authority as a preacher of the kingdom, Matt. iv. 17; ix. 35, and maintains that his miracles of power over Satan were of themselves sufficient evidence of the truth of his proclamation of it, without taking into account his other miraculous works. This could not be, if Satan were an imaginary being, and his kingdom in this world consequently unreal. Both the accusation of the Pharisees and the response of the Saviour assumed that there is such a being as Satan,—that he has a kingdom in this world which he desires and endeavours to maintain with all his intelligence and power; that he has evil spirits under him, to execute his purposes, who act in harmony with his policy and purposes, and that he conducts his government as an intelligent ruler of a kingdom or city or household would, so as to produce harmony of action, and avoid a division of his forces and strength, to the destruction or detriment of his grand design.

MATT. XII. 29. "How can one enter into the house of a strong man and spoil (despoil him of) his goods, unless he first bind the strong man? Then, indeed, he will (may) spoil (make spoil of) his house."

This verse contains another distinct answer to the Pharisees, founded upon the effect produced by the miraculous powers of the Saviour. The world is the house of Satan. It is the seat of his dominion. *Bengel in loco*. He is never called, however, the *king* of the world, says Bengel, because he is a *usurper*. But he is called the prince of this world, from the greatness of the control he has in it, restrained though it be, by the power and the providence of God. Yet by reason of the power permitted to him, Satan is called by the Saviour a strong man, or, as Luke xi. 21 has it, a strong man *armed*. Into this house of Satan he, as the Son of Man and rightful Lord of it, had entered. Satan and his hosts cower before him, for they know him. His very word proves his lordship over the world, for it binds Satan, the usurping prince of it, and all his hosts of unclean and malignant spirits, and delivers their captives. Luke xiii. 16. The strength of the allegory we cannot realize, owing to our inadequate conceptions of the world of evil spirits, and of the greatness of the power they exercise. Eph. vi. 12; ii. 2; 1 Peter v. 8; Rev. xii. 12; Col. ii. 15; Matt. xiii. 39.

MATT. XII. 31, 32: "Wherefore I say unto you all manner

\* Ἐθθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς not merely ἤγγικε *has drawn nigh*, but is actually come to you, and (ἐντος ὑμῶν ἐστι, Luke xvii. 21) is actually in the midst of you as a nation. The words are expressive of the actual (παρουσία) presence of the kingdom, which the Lord's presence proved.

of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit; that shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him. But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him; neither in this world nor in the world to come."

These verses have been the subject of much discussion, and of anxious inquiry into their meaning. Perhaps we do not commonly consider them from the proper point of view. The following suggestions are submitted for consideration. A contrast is stated between sins against the Holy Spirit, and sins against himself as Son of Man. As Son of Man he came into the world to lay down his life as a ransom for many. Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45; Luke ix. 56. Hence, although he was and is the Lord of the world, and of all men as Son of Man, and entitled to their allegiance and love, the sins of men against him in that character, *i. e.* as Son of Man, might be forgiven, because they were within the scope and purposes of his advent at that time. He knew from the beginning that he would be contumeliously rejected, and the sacrifice he was about to make of his body was ample to atone for all the sins they could possibly commit against him in that character. Hence he prayed to the Father from his cross that he would forgive the last and most atrocious of their sins against him as the Son of Man. But the Holy Spirit who dwelt in him, and acted through him and by him, came not for such a purpose. The demonstrations of his presence and power, through the Lord Jesus, were designed to authenticate and prove beyond all reasonable doubt, his divine mission as Son of Man. They challenged obedience and submission to him as God's messenger, and the hearty reception and belief of all that he taught. To ascribe these demonstrations of the Holy Spirit's presence and power, therefore, to the power and presence of Satan, was to do what they could to frustrate the Divine purposes, and prevent for ever the world's redemption. It was in effect calling the Holy Spirit, who dwelt in Jesus, an unclean spirit, Mark iii. 30, and therefore a blasphemy against God. It was taking part with Satan in God's controversy with him; it was complicity in Satan's sin, which, in its very nature, is unpardonable.

In this consideration lies the force of the verse preceding these: "He that is not with me"—on my side in this controversy, "is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad" with Satan, and shall have part in his irreversible doom.

MATT. XII. 33. "Either make the tree good, and his (its)

fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his (its) fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by *its* fruit."

A proverbial expression. By the tree he means himself, and by the fruits of the tree, his miraculous works; which were undeniably good and beneficent in their nature and effects. The sense, as we conceive, is expressed in the following paraphrase:

Instead of calumniating me inconsistently as you do, either confess that I am a good man, and that I perform these miracles of mercy by the power and according to the will of God, or if you persist in saying that I am a wicked man, and do these miracles by the power and according to the will of Satan, deny that the works I do are beneficent and good, and such as become the power and the goodness of God to perform. Nay, more: to be consistent, you should affirm that my works are evil, and such as it becomes Satan, the father of lies and the author of misery, to accomplish: for in God's kingdom of nature, the tree is known, and infallibly judged of, by the fruit it produces.

MATT. XII. 38. "Then certain of the Scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying: Master, we would see a sign from thee."

A similar passage occurs in Matt. xvi. 1—4. We may take them together, as the proper exposition of both is the same. This question was put after our Lord had publicly performed many miracles, the reality of which could not be denied. But they were such miracles as he enumerated in his answer to John the Baptist. Matt. xi. 5. He had restored to life the son of the widow at Nain, healed many persons of their diseases and infirmities, and cast out many devils. These miracles did not satisfy the Scribes and Pharisees. They demanded a miracle of another nature—a sign from heaven. Luke xi. 16. Erasmus supposed that there was an allusion in this demand to our Lord's claim to a Divine nature, and the aid of the Holy Spirit. We know not how this may be, and it is not important to inquire. Our Lord's answer to the demand contains the instruction which deserves chiefly to be noticed. It may be paraphrased thus: "In the common affairs of this life you are contented with probable grounds of judgment. You judge of the approaching weather by the appearance of the sky, and regulate your conduct in your most important worldly concerns accordingly. In so doing you act wisely; for this is the kind of evidence God in his providence gives in such matters. Just so in respect to the times of the kingdom, which I preach unto you. God has given you in the Scriptures the signs, by which you may judge of its near approach, and that, too, with much

greater certainty than you can of the events of his common providence. In my life, my doctrine, and my daily works, performed in the presence of you all, you have the divinely appointed signs of the coming kingdom. Yet not content with these, you demand signs of another nature, and such signs as the Scriptures do not authorize you to expect; which, if given, would not be so sure grounds of belief as these signs which you already have.\* Therefore God will not give you the signs you demand, nor other than such as you now have, except one, which will come too late to prevent your guilty rejection of me and the kingdom I preach, *namely*, the sign of Jonas the prophet, whose history typically sets forth my burial and my resurrection."

This answer proceeds upon the assumption, that the Jewish people were the subjects of law, and bound by its requirements—that in dealing with them, God had given them sufficient evidence of his will, and the very evidence which he had told them beforehand, he would give them, and that he would hold them responsible and guilty if they rejected it. The Saviour exhibited to his disciples in private, it is true, evidence of his Divine character which he withheld from the nation at large. See note on Matt. viii. 23—27. But this evidence, so to speak, was outside of the Messianic prophecies, and therefore not the kind of evidence upon which the nation at large was to be tried. Had he been transfigured in the temple before the multitudes, or cast himself unharmed from its pinnacle; or had he walked upon the waters in a tempest, or hushed the whirlwinds by his word in the presence of the Pharisees the rulers and the people, no doubt the minds of his fiercest enemies and revilers would have been overpowered and awed into submission; but their hearts would have remained selfish and corrupt, and themselves as unfit subjects of the kingdom

\* A popular commentator remarks, on Matt. viii. 33: "That the purpose of the Saviour's miracles was to confirm his Divine mission." Upon this we have nothing to say; but he goes on to remark, "that it might as well have been done by splitting rocks or removing mountains, or causing water to run up steep hills, as by any other display of Divine power." Upon this remark, we observe, that if the Scriptures had predicted that Messiah should perform such works as these, then they would have been the appropriate marks or signs of his character. But such manifestations of power would not have been in accordance with the Scriptures as we have them, and therefore if the Saviour had made them, they would not have proven that he was the Messiah whom Moses and the prophets did say should come. See note on Matt. xi. 3—4. The force of the evidence which our Lord's miracles furnished consisted in this, that while it fully and accurately corresponded with the prophecies of the Messiah, his works were such as no other man ever did, and therefore left no room for a reasonable doubt, that he was the Messiah whose mission was foretold. John v. 39; xv. 24.

as before. See notes on Luke xxiii. 35; Matt. xxvii. 39—43; Mark xv. 29—32.

MATT. XII. 43—45. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places seeking rest and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return to my house, whence I came out. And when he is come he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first. *Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.*"

A prophetic allegory, especially applicable to the Jews, which shadows forth their future character and moral condition, as the last clause shows. During our Lord's personal ministry among that people a new order of things existed. The kingdom of heaven had come nigh. The Son of Man, the rightful Lord of the world, had come to take possession of his own, and expel the enemy and usurper, or, in the words of the Psalmist, to still the enemy and the avenger. Ps. viii. 2. During that period Satan was disarmed. He had fallen from the heaven of his power. Luke x. 18. His kingdom was disturbed by adverse influences. He was liable to be banished, with his hosts, by the word of Jesus, the true Melchisedec, to the abyss of darkness, and would have been at that time, had the Jews, as a nation, received him with the obedience of faith: but they received him not. John i. 11. Even the whole world felt the presence of its rightful king, through the restraint which his presence had put upon the powers of darkness. Wars in a great measure had ceased throughout the earth; and according to some histories of those times, the oracles of heathenism were silent. We see nothing incredible in these accounts given us by early Christian writers, because Satan, the author of them, was, as it were, cast out of his house and respited from the abyss, only until the Lord should be received by his people, if they would receive him. This was the period represented in the allegory, of his walking through dry places in search of rest, but not finding it.

At the close of our Lord's ministry this condition was changed. The kingdom was withdrawn, and the Son of Man ascended up where he was before. The hour (or season) of the power of darkness returned. Satan, the prince of darkness, resumed his possessions, and reinstated himself in his former sway, with intenser energies than ever before. He found his house prepared to receive him. The fulfilment of this allegorical prophecy may be read, in its beginning, in the history of the crucifixion, and, in its sequel, in the history of the Jewish war by Josephus. According to his description of the enormi-



ties of sin and cruelty practised by the leaders of the factions and their adherents, the nation, during the remaining short period of its existence, may be regarded as the impersonation of Satan—a demoniac of gigantic proportions and energies, saved from self-destruction only by the destroying sword of Rome.\*

The allegory thus interpreted, is in part parallel with the Saviour's explicit prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, as recorded in Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., and Luke xxi., but with this difference that the prophecy foretells the outward facts which were to be developed in providence and recorded in history, whereas the stress of the allegory lies upon the Satanic influence working underneath the surface of things—in fact, in the very heart of the nation, which resulted in its destruction. It should be observed, however, that the mercy of God restrained their madness, and postponed their calamity until the Gospel had been universally preached to the nation, under the administration of the Holy Spirit. See note on Acts iii. 19—21.

MATT. XII. 46—50. "While he yet talked to the people, behold his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold 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."

The force of this remark of the Saviour lies in the contrast tacitly drawn by him, between mankind as fallen and man as redeemed; between the Adam of Eden and himself as the second Adam, and their respective races. Augustine strikingly represents the whole human race as, in a certain sense, only two men—the first and the second Adam, the race of each being sum-

\* Josephus, Pref. 4, says, "It appears to me that the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to those of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were; while the authors of them *were not foreigners neither*," (καὶ τούτων αἰτίαι οὐδαμῶς ἀλλοφύλοι.) This agrees with the Saviour's prediction, Matt. xxiv. 31; Mark xiii. 19; Luke xxi. 23, 24. In Book V., chap. xiii. § 6, he says: "And here I cannot but speak my mind, and what the concern I am under dictates to me, and it is this: I suppose that had the Romans made any longer delay in coming against these villains (ἀλασθηριούς) that the city would either have been swallowed up by the ground opening upon them, or been overflowed by water, or else been destroyed by such thunder as the country of Sodom perished by; for it had brought forth a generation of men much more atheistical than were those that suffered such punishments; for by their madness it was, that all the people came to be destroyed." See Matt. xi. 20—24.

med up and represented in their respective Head.\* In the passage under consideration, our Lord spoke as the Adam or Head of his redeemed race, which he was to gather out of the race of the fallen Adam, and transfer to, and as it were, to ingraft into himself as a new stock, so that they should become a new and distinct family or kindred of human nature—a new world of mankind. In that new world, the distinctions of mother, sister, and brother, the Saviour taught, would all be absorbed in a higher, holier, closer, more endearing, and more enduring relation—that of perfect union between all his redeemed to each other and to him, and through him to the Father, by one and the same tie—the Holy Spirit.

Anticipating the consummation of the glorious work, upon which he had entered, he points to his disciples, as the representatives of the whole family of his redeemed, and says: “Behold my true and lasting kindred. These and such as these, who do the will of my Father, are in the Divine scheme and purpose more closely allied to me than any can possibly be by ties of blood and earthly kindred, which are frail and soon broken, and when once broken, can never be renewed in their blessed influences, except through the covenant of redemption.” We should mistake the meaning greatly were we to suppose the Saviour intended to speak lightly of his kinsfolk, or disparagingly of them, except as being, like all others, even his disciples, to whom he pointed, of the race of the fallen Adam, and needing alike to be redeemed by his death and glorified by his Spirit, by being created anew in his image as the second Adam. Then all will stand in equal nearness to him, whether mother, brother, sister, or unallied by kindred or any earthly affinity, otherwise than through the common Father of the race, whose nature he took.

MATT. XIII. The parables or similitudes of the kingdom contained in this chapter, belong in part to the category of public and in part to the category of private instruction. See note on Matt. iv. 17. To the former we assign the parables of the sower, of the tares, of the mustard seed, of the leaven, verse 34. To the latter category we assign the parables of the hid treasure, of the merchant seeking goodly pearls, and of the net cast into the sea. The *explanation* of the parables of the sower, verses 18—23, and of the tares of the field,

\* “Primus homo, Adam sic olim defunctus est, ut tamen post illum secundus homo sit Christus; cum tot hominum millia inter illum et hunc orta sint. Et ideo manifestum est, pertinere ad illum, omnem qui ex illâ successione propagatus nascitur; sicut ad istum pertinet omnis qui gratiæ largitate in illo nascitur. Unde fit ut totum genus humanum quodam modo sint homines duo; primus et secundus.”

verses 37—43, we also assign to the category of private instruction.

Our Lord's *public* similitudes of the kingdom are expository of his proclamation of the kingdom, iv. 17; ix. 35; x. 7, and therefore belong to his functions, as preacher of the kingdom. Most of them very clearly intimate, that there would be some delay in its outward manifestation and establishment. Thus, by the parable of the tares of the field, the people were taught that the kingdom would not appear until the time represented by the harvest should come, which implies that the time required for the culture and growth of the seed sown must precede it. In the parable of the nobleman, Luke xix. 15, the interval between his first and second advent, and the establishment of his kingdom, was shadowed forth by the nobleman's departure, absence, and return. In the parable of the mustard seed, it is the tree which represented the kingdom, but the tree was the slow product of the seed, then about to be planted. The hidden leaven which required time to produce its effect, was another allegory of the same import. Thus, by these parables the people were taught, that although the kingdom was then nigh—at hand, indeed, in the very midst of them, Luke xvii. 21, as a nation, yet for some cause, which he did not publicly explain, it would not immediately appear. It was this seeming incongruity, probably, that gave occasion to the inquiry of the Pharisees, Luke xvii. 20, “*When* the kingdom of God should come.” The Lord, as well as John the Baptist, had preached to them that the kingdom of heaven was at hand; but it did not outwardly appear. His parables significantly intimated that it would not immediately *appear*. How, then, could it be at hand? When will it appear? This was their question. But the question touched upon a mystery, about which they had no right to inquire. The kingdom had come to the nation, and was, so to speak, in the midst of them, if the nation would accept it, with the obedience of faith. They were concerned to know simply the fact, and the duty which the fact imposed on them was to accept it. They had no right to know what God had resolved to do upon their disobedience and sinful rejection of the kingdom. This was a part and parcel of the mysteries of the kingdom which it was not given to them to know, verse 11. Indeed they could not fully be made known to them without a full disclosure of the consequences of their rejection of the Lord Jesus, of his death, resurrection, and ascension, of the new dispensation of grace, and of his second coming at the close of it.

These considerations show the importance of the distinction before taken, Matt. iv. 17, between our Lord's public functions as a minister of the circumcision, and his private functions as

a teacher of disciples. His public functions were discharged in strict accordance with the legal economy to which the nation was then subject. The duty of the nation was, to have faith in him, as their Messiah *come*, and to become willing subjects of the kingdom he preached, and that too as subjects of the law. *Exod. xix. 5.* That was the sum of it. His public instructions, therefore, were founded on the then *present* truth and the obligations which the law under which they lived imposed on the nation in consequence thereof. His private instructions to his disciples, on the other hand, were chiefly bottomed on foreseen events, and consequently looked forward to the dispensation of grace, about to be established, through their instrumentality, at least in part. This was a mystery of the kingdom, which it was given to them to know, *verse 11*, and which he explained to them from time to time as far as they were able to bear (comprehend) it. See *Matt. xvi. 21—23*; *John xvi. 12.*

It is very observable, however, that the disciples, with the knowledge they then had, were incapable of fully understanding the mysteries involved or shadowed forth in these parables. They did not at that time know, that their Master would be rejected and put to death, nor the purpose of God to cast off their nation for a time, and establish an economy of grace, for all nations. Hence these events are not so much as alluded to in the explanation of the parables of the sower and of the tares, although these parables are applicable to all time, until the Lord's second coming, at the end of this world. Yet the explanations given were sufficient, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for their future instruction, *John xvi. 13*, and form an important part of those evangelical truths out of which the sublime doctrines of the Epistles of the apostles are derived.

A question has been made by some theologians, whether the Epistles contain *any* doctrines not taught in the Gospels. If the foregoing observations are well founded, we may answer, that undoubtedly they do contain doctrines which are not to be found in our Lord's *public* instruction of the people.\* But if his *private* instructions to his disciples and others, who sought him with a teachable spirit, be carefully considered, they will be found to contain the germ of all the great doctrines of the Epistles. Yet in the germ only; for our Lord in his very last

\* Perhaps we should distinguish also between the *public* instructions of our Lord *before* and *after* the death of John the Baptist. John's death was an epoch in the nation's trial, as we shall have occasion to show hereafter, and we may observe a marked difference in our Lord's public discourses after that event. See the sixth and subsequent chapters of John's Gospel.

discourse with them, before he suffered, designedly forbore to enlarge upon and develop the doctrines he touched upon, alleging expressly as the reason, their inability to bear them. John xv. 26; xvi. 12, 13; Acts i. 8; Luke xxiv. 49. Many things which he thus intimated during his intercourse with them could not be understood, except in the light of coming events, and for that reason, we suppose, he left their development to the Holy Spirit.

We add a few observations upon particular portions of this chapter. Verses 3—8 and 19—23. The great instrumentality by which the kingdom is to be introduced, is preaching “the word of the kingdom,” verse 19, and the design of the parable of the sower is to set forth the effect of preaching, during all time, until the kingdom shall come with power. Observation and experience show, that the parable is not to be limited to our Lord’s personal ministry. It has, therefore, an evangelical sense and application, and for that reason chiefly it was privately explained to the disciples as one of the mysteries of the kingdom. It sets forth the chief impediments in the way of this instrumentality, and accounts for its limited success: They are, the ever-vigilant and active opposition of Satan, tribulations, and persecutions, worldly cares, and the delusive love of riches. Verses 19—22. The parable gives no intimation that the institution of preaching will ultimately overcome and survive them, or have unobstructed progress and success. But elsewhere we are taught, that preaching itself shall cease, when the knowledge of the Lord shall everywhere prevail. Jer. xxxi. 34; Heb. viii. 11. See Mal. i. 11, and contrast Matt. xiii. 19 with Rev. xx. 1—3.

MATT. XIII. 24—30. *The parable of the tares of the field.*

This parable is an allegorical representation of the state of the world during the interval between the first and second advent of the Son of Man. It is closely connected with the parable just noticed. The principal character in both is the same—a sower of seed;—but the lessons inculcated are different in several respects. The parable of the sower sets forth the scantiness of the crop, judged of by the seed sown, and accounts for it by various causes. This parable shows, that the crop actually produced is encumbered by the admixture of a worthless growth, and explains how it happened. It is a material circumstance in this parable, that the mischief is of such a nature, and done in such a way, that it must be endured, until its power to harm is spent—that is, during the whole period of the growth, and ripening until the harvest. The circumstances, it is obvious, are all taken from common life, and the whole action represented is such as may have frequently occurred in

human affairs, which if we suppose, we have the case of a malevolent wrong clandestinely done, for which the injured party might justly demand exemplary redress.

MATT. XIII. 37—43. It is only in the Saviour's *explanation of the parable* we perceive the sublime conception it envelopes.

The field is the world; the owner of it is the Son of Man. His title to it is by Divine constitution and covenant; and coeval with its creation. This august Being is the sower. He plants in it the family of man—the future subjects of his kingdom. Just then, Satan is permitted to enter and usurp his rights. The usurpation is not immediately avenged. At the time represented in the parable as the seed-time, he sends forth his servants, and at the same time Satan, with emulous and persevering, but malicious industry, plants and nurtures his own seed. But at length the season of harvest arrives. It is the end of the (*αιων*) world. The Son of Man appears, assumes his right, expels the adversary, destroys his works, and, contrary to expectation, exhibits the products of his own care, in beauty and glory, enhanced by the adverse circumstances of their culture and growth. Verse 43.

Will the Lord of the field, when this is done, destroy it, or abandon it to eternal waste? Will he be content with a single harvest, the product of one short summer? The parable does not so teach. Rather, may we not infer, having thrust out his adversary, he will thenceforth put it to the uses for which it was originally designed—so that seed time and harvest, understood in the sense of the parable, shall never fail. Gen. viii. 22. Certainly the parable does not compel us to believe that the Lord will annihilate the earth at his second coming. As little does it encourage the expectation of a millennium of universal holiness and purity on earth, before that time.

The contrast between the humble imagery of the parable, and the magnificent ideas and events it represents, may be designed to suggest the idea of changes, not less magnificent, in the earth itself. Dr. Goodwin, a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, on Eph. i. 21, says, "As Adam had a world made for him, so shall Jesus Christ, the second Adam, have a world made for him. This world was not good enough for him. He hath a better appointed than that which the first Adam had—a new heaven and a new earth, according to Isaiah lxxv. 17—25, and lxxvi. 22.

The central idea of the parable is the rightful dominion of the Son of Man over the earth, according to the eighth Psalm, and his right to use it as he pleases, and to have all it yields. Even the works of Satan are his, to do with them and to

destroy them when and in whatever manner it may please him. Verse 29, 30, 40, 41, 42.

MATT. XIII. 44, 45. The parables of *the hid treasure and merchant seeking goodly pearls* belong to the category of private instruction. See notes on Matt. iv. 17. They were privately delivered to the disciples, and are so plain that they required no explanation, verse 51. They are called similitudes of the kingdom, not because they set forth any quality of the kingdom itself, or the manner of its coming, but rather because they portray the qualities and spirit of those who shall be found worthy to enter it. They belong to the same class with that of the king taking an account with his servants, Matt. xviii. 23—35, although the particular lesson they inculcate is different. How strong the contrast between the true and sincere seekers of the kingdom and the Jews to whom our Lord preached, who thought themselves to be such! See notes on Matt. xi. 12.

MATT. XIII. 47—51. The parable of *the net cast into the sea* also belongs to the category of private instruction, and appears to have been especially intended for the apostles. It taught them what the result of their labours would be, and coincides in this particular with the public parable of the tares of the field. The fruits of their labours, however zealous and unremitting or carefully performed, would not be pure and unmixed with evil. The churches they would be sent forth to gather and establish, would inevitably contain false as well as faithful disciples. No efforts of theirs would or could avail to prevent, what the Divine wisdom had seen fit to permit, until the end of the dispensation (*αιων*) in which they were to be the first labourers. Satan, the adversary in the parable of the tares, was too vigilant, too subtle, and too strong for them. He would mingle his seed with the good, and in process of time, if not immediately, make even consecrated hands unconsciously scatter it: or, adopting the imagery of the parable we are considering, bring vile and worthless fishes within the sweep of their nets, and burden their arms with that which must be cast away when they reach the shore and their labour is done. The separation will then be made by a power and a wisdom far greater than their own. See notes on Acts ii. 47.

MATT. XIII. 52. "Therefore every Scribe instructed unto the kingdom is like a householder who bringeth out of his treasury things new and old."

This is a corollary, not from the instruction of any of the preceding parables, but from what he had said, verses 11—17, relative to their privileges, as his disciples, and the benefits they should receive therefrom. The verse itself is another

similitude, not of the kingdom of heaven, but of the teachers the Lord designed to raise up and instruct in its mysteries. Such were not the Scribes, who taught the people the law. They shut up the kingdom. Matt. xxiii. 13. They were blind guides, hypocritical and corrupt. Matt. xxiii. 13—33. Nor were the disciples such at that time. They had scarcely received the first lesson in the mysteries of the kingdom. See Matt. xvi. 22; Luke xviii. 34; Mark ix. 10; John xx. 9. They understood these parables only in their most superficial sense. Hence the form of this instruction was by way of parable. It was not applicable to them as they *then* were: but as they should *thereafter* be, when the Holy Spirit should unfold to them the deep and far-reaching mysteries of the kingdom, which had been kept secret from the beginning of the world. Rom. xvi. 25. Then indeed would they be like a householder, having laid up in his treasury the acquisitions of many years, sufficient to meet the constantly occurring and recurring and ever-varying wants of his numerous household:—then would they have a treasury of Divine knowledge of the works and ways of God from the beginning, from which they could bring forth whatever might be needful or useful for the instruction, comfort, and edification of those they should be sent forth to govern and teach. It is not improbable, the Saviour intended to represent himself by the householder, Col. ii. 3, as in him were laid up at that time all the treasures of Divine wisdom and knowledge out of which they, who were of his household, were to be supplied. John xvi. 14. If so, there was a mystery, even in this allusion, to the office of the Holy Spirit, whom he afterwards promised, in plain language, to send upon them, inasmuch as his bringing forth of things new and old from his treasure of Divine wisdom and knowledge for their use, was to be done through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

MATT. XIII. 58. "And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief." Mark, vi. 5, adds, "save that he laid his hands on a few sick folk and healed them."

The miracles which he performed, according to Mark, were performed, as we suppose, without solicitation, in proof of his proclamation of the kingdom. They were, if we may so express it, *official* acts attesting his authority as preacher of the kingdom. The miracles which he did not, or, as Mark expresses it, could not, perform, were miracles of faith or miracles to be wrought through faith as a medium for the transmission of his Divine energies and powers; according to the distinction before taken. See notes on Matt. viii. 2, 3. In no other way can we explain the language of Mark consistently with the infinite plenitude of the Saviour's power. The defect was not in him, but in the people of his own country. Verse 54.



## CHAPTER IV.

Herod's Imprisonment of John.—John's Death.—Christ's Preaching after John's Death.—Christ's Miracle of multiplying bread.—Christ Walks on the Sea.—Christ's power over Nature.—Peter's attempt to walk on the Sea.—The Apostles acknowledge Christ as the Son of God.—Christ's Journey towards Tyre.—He again multiplies bread.—The False Doctrine of the Pharisees.—Christ as the Son of Man.—Peter's Confession of Christ.—The Keys given to Peter.—Our Lord's names, Jesus and Christ.—Christ's rebuke of Peter.—The value of the Soul.—Christ's title, the Son of Man.—The Transfiguration.

MATTHEW XIV. 1, 2. "At that time Herod the Tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus. And he said to his servants: This is John the Baptist. He has risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him." Mark vi. 14—16; Luke ix. 7—9.

Although our Lord's country was Galilee, which was within Herod's jurisdiction, it is evident from Luke xxiii. 8, that Herod never saw him until the day of his crucifixion. Yet as he went about all Galilee, preaching in the synagogues, and performing miracles, Matt. iv. 23—25, during John's imprisonment, we naturally inquire how it happened that Herod had not heard of him before. The Evangelists, though they all concur in the fact, do not explain it. Some learned men suppose that Herod had been absent from his tetrarchy, Luke iii. 1, during this part of our Lord's public ministry, and did not return until about that time. If this be the true explanation, it accounts sufficiently for John's being allowed by Herod to remain in prison during so long a time, without any further proceeding against him. But however this may be, the united testimony of the three Evangelists leaves no room to doubt the fact. Herod was well acquainted with Jewish opinions, and no doubt had the same idea of the resurrection of the body which the people had. He appears to have attached the idea of personal identity to the body, as well as the soul of the Baptist, and must have supposed, therefore, that the severed head which had been delivered to Herodias, perhaps in his presence, had been brought back to the rest of the body, and united to it in some miraculous way.

It is more important to observe, that this extraordinary way of accounting for our Lord's miracles shows conclusively that Herod did not doubt in the least the accounts he had received. The evidence must have been incontestable, or he would not have imagined a greater miracle, as the most reasonable way of accounting for them. We may regard, then, these verses, as Herod the Tetrarch's *testimony* to the truth and reality of the

miraculous works of Jesus; and in that view the Evangelist appears to have introduced his saying in this place. Perhaps he also meant to set in contrast the reasonings and belief of this wicked man (whose chief distinctions were those of infamy and sin, see notes on Luke xxiii. 8,) with the blasphemous insinuations of the self-righteous Pharisees. Matt. ix. 34; xii. 24. Regarded, however, as the testimony of the Tetrarch, who had the means of investigation at his command, to the truth of our Lord's miracles, the argument deducible from it, is analogous to that derived from the conduct of Herod the king. See notes on Matt. ii.

It may be remarked, also, that these verses conclude the first, or what we have called the argumentative, part of this Gospel. The Harmonists have shown, that from the fourth to the fourteenth chapter, the narrative does not follow the order of time, see *Whiston's Short View of the Harmony of the Four Evangelists*, pp. 100—103, and *Le Clerc's Harmony Dissert.*, 2 can. i., while the remainder of it does so, very nearly. Whiston maintains that the matters contained in these chapters have been misplaced—that originally they stood in much the same order as they do in Mark; whose Gospel he regards, erroneously, we think, as an epitome of this. The view which we have taken is, that an orderly plan is pursued in the first fourteen chapters of this Gospel as they now stand; but it is the plan of an argument. See notes on Matt. i. 1. If such a plan is discernible, it is a moral demonstration that we have this Gospel in the order in which it was written. How far this hypothesis is supported by the preceding notes is left to the judgment of the reader. Whatever precedes the death of John the Baptist, relates to our Lord's mission to that people as the Messiah or Christ. All that follows the death of John the Baptist, relates to his mission to the people as individuals, as Saviour and Son of Man. In respect to his mission as Christ, the appeal was national. Judgments were pronounced against cities and communities as such; whereas, when he entered upon his further mission as Son of Man, and Saviour, his appeal was made to individuals, as many as would come to him—according to John i. 11, 12.

MATT. XIV. 3. "For Herod had laid hold on John and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife."

The Evangelist had before alluded to the imprisonment of John the Baptist, but without mentioning the cause or any of the circumstances of it, iv. 12. This was necessary, to mark *precisely* the commencement of our Lord's public ministry. See notes on Matt. iv. 12—17. Now he relates the cause of the

imprisonment and the termination of it by way of introduction to the narrative which is to follow; for having mentioned the death and burial of John, he takes up the history from that time onward, very nearly in the order of time.

MATT. XIV. 4, 5. "For John said unto him it is not lawful for thee to have her, and when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet."

John the Baptist was an authorized and an authoritative teacher of the law, to which Herod and Herodias were subject. In this he was superior to the apostles at that time. Matt. xxiii. 3; and see notes on Matt. iii. 1, 2. His influence with the people may be judged of by the fears of Herod. Impelled by passion and the instigation of Herodias, his intention was to put him to death, but his fears restrained him at the moment. This was a providential expedient for the preservation of John. And if we may suppose, that soon after imprisoning John, he went to Rome, and was detained there by public affairs, we should regard his absence as another providential expedient for the same purpose. If to this we may add, that he put John to death soon after his return, we reasonably account for his not having heard of the miracles of the Lord Jesus until after that event, and for his extraordinary conjecture that he was John the Baptist risen from the dead.

MATT. XIV. 6—9. "But when Herod's birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod; whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she being before instructed of her mother, said: Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her."

These verses give us a glimpse of the festivities of the great men of that day, and may remind the reader of a similar cruelty of one of the kings of Egypt. Gen xl. 19, 20. As the influence of Herodias secured the imprisonment of John—which we have seen was the event upon which the commencement of our Lord's public ministry was suspended, see notes on Matt. iv. 12—17—so it was her influence which occasioned his death; which, as we shall see, was another epoch in the trial of the nation. Strange that such great things should depend upon the malice and cunning of such a woman. That her influence over Herod, her uncle, see notes on Luke xxiii. 8, was very great, is proved by a passage in Josephus, (*Antiq.* book xviii. chap. vii.) where he records an instance of her pertinacity and of Herod's yielding to her, against his will and better judgment, as it proved to

be, in a measure which resulted in the loss of his tetrarchy, and banishment to Lyons. That her influence was not sufficient to procure the death instead of the imprisonment of John upon his first arrest, is to be ascribed to the special providence of God, whose designs of mercy to the nation, and of judgment, required the preservation of his life for a time. See notes on Luke iii. 20, 21. But when those designs were accomplished, providential restraints were withdrawn; Herod was given up to the evil influences by which he was surrounded, and the carousals of his birth-day, his rash and wicked oath, by which he put himself in the power of a giddy girl, became the occasion of John's death. This was the first seal put upon the nation's doom.

MATT. XIV. 10. "And he sent and beheaded John in the prison."

According to Lightfoot, *Harm.* § 46, John was beheaded a little before the time of the passover, A. D. 32. He founds this opinion, in part, upon John vi. 6. John began his ministry about three years before—that is, about the time of the feast of the passover, A. D. 29, and he was imprisoned about the month of October in the year following, *i. e.* A. D. 30, so that "his story is of three years' space, the better half of which he preached at liberty, and the other half he lay in prison."

Consequently our Lord had been preaching about a year and a half when John was beheaded. During this time he commissioned the twelve apostles, and sent them forth to preach the kingdom, from which mission they returned at or about the time of the death of John. Mark vi. 30. See Lightfoot, *Harm.* § 47. It does not appear that he sent the twelve forth again upon a similar mission during his public ministry. Their second mission followed his resurrection and ascension.

However this may be, the death of John the Baptist was the crisis of the nation's trial. While John lived, it was, in one sense, in the power of the nation to receive him; at least, he was in the midst of them to be received. Now it was too late, unless God would raise him from the dead, as Herod imagined he had, and send him to them again. See Acts iii. 20. Having rejected John, they could not *nationally* receive Jesus; for, according to the Divine plan, both must be nationally received, or both nationally rejected. The personal ministry of each was inseparably connected with the personal ministry of the other, so far as the nation, as such, was concerned, so as to constitute one great moral trial, and to issue in the same result. Hence our Lord not only joined his ministry with John's, (Matt. iii. 15, and see notes,) but applied the predictions of the prophets concerning his sufferings and death to John. Mark ix. 12, 13.

Each bore the strongest testimony to the other, to prevent, if possible, the rejection of either by the nation. See notes on Luke iii. 20, 21. But the time allowed for their change of mind, in respect to John, expired at his death; and from that time onward we observe an important change in our Lord's public and private discourses and miracles,\* which we account

\* The correctness of this remark, which is very important, will appear as we proceed. At present it may be sufficient to say, that the *public* miracles of our Lord, before the death of John, were miracles of healing, of raising the dead, and casting out devils. The miracle of multiplying food was not performed till after that event, and, as we shall see, for a particular end. As to his instructions to his disciples, it was not till after the death of John he spoke *plainly* of his sufferings, death, and resurrection. Matt. xvi. 21. As examples of his public instruction of the people before the death of John, the reader may be referred to the sermon on the mount, Matt. v. vi. vii. chaps., and his public parables in Matt. xiii., the great themes of which are the law of the kingdom he preached and the manner of its coming. To these we may add his public discourse at Jerusalem, in John chap. v., the leading design of which was to vindicate his authority as Son of Man and Lord of the Sabbath-day. See notes on Matt. xii. 8. As an example of his public teaching after the death of John the Baptist, we may refer to the discourse in John vi. 26—52, delivered at Capernaum shortly after his first miracle of multiplying bread, while the impression it made was fresh upon the minds of the people. John vi. 26. In this discourse he does not appear as a *preacher of the kingdom*, urging it upon them in their *national* capacity, but as the Son of Man, having power to save and give eternal life to as many as would individually receive him. John i. 12. Taking the miracle he had just performed as his theme or text, he discourses about himself as the *true bread*. He told them the bread with which he had just before miraculously fed them to satiety, was not the bread of heaven, though it was the product of his heavenly powers. It was perishable food, verse 27. Nor was the bread that Moses gave their fathers the bread of heaven, verse 32. That also was perishable food. Exod. xvi. 19, 20. The bread of God is the SON OF MAN, who came down from heaven to *give his life* for the world, verses 27, 33, 48—51, of which the bread of the miracle and the bread Moses had given their fathers, were mere symbols. Here we observe a plain allusion to his death, which presupposed his rejection as Messiah by the nation, now made sure to enlightened human judgment by the rejection of John. We observe also an obscure allusion to his elect people of grace, verses 39, 44, which presupposed the rejection of Israel, according to the flesh, *as the elect* people or nation. We notice also, that the appeal to his hearers is *personal* throughout, as individuals, not collectively, as a part of the nation and representing it. This change of address was a consequence of the new posture which the nation took at the death of John. Though the kingdom was not actually withdrawn or taken away from them until the close of his ministry, (or after it, as has been suggested in the notes on Acts iii. 19, 21; see Matt. xxi. 43; Luke xvii. 21; x. 9,) yet it was no longer preached, as at the beginning of the Lord's public ministry, and urged upon the people for national acceptance, according to the view taken in the notes on Matthew xi. 12; but instead, the Saviour's public discourses and miracles were designed, as before remarked, to prove that he was the Son of Man, sent into the world by the Father, and that he had power to save all, whether few or many, who would receive him with the obedience of faith. This discourse, and those in the vii. viii. and x. chapters, do not therefore properly belong to his office as a preacher of the kingdom or preacher of the law, but to his office or relation to the world as Son of Man and Saviour. But what we wish the reader especially to consider is, that this change in our Lord's public instruction of the people took place at the death of John the Baptist,

for by the new posture of the nation in the sense just explained. The Evangelist appears to have regarded the death of John in this light, for he makes it the beginning of a new series of narrations, in which he pursues, as Mark and Luke do throughout their Gospels, very nearly the order of time.

MATT. XIV. 13. "When Jesus heard of it [viz. the death of John,] he departed thence by ship to a desert place; and when the people heard [thereof] they followed him on foot out of the cities."

The Saviour no doubt knew of the death of John before he was informed of it by John's disciples. He was at that time at Nazareth, xiii. 54, whence he departed to preach the gospel of the kingdom, upon the imprisonment of John, iv. 17. The news in both instances, it is probable, was carried to him from the prison or fortress of Machaerus,\* situated at the east of Jericho and the river Jordan, upon a small stream which enters into the Dead Sea from the north-east, which was at a considerable distance from Nazareth. The point to be especially noticed is that dividing our Lord's public ministry into two portions, as before suggested, the beginning of each is from Nazareth.

Perhaps it was in order to gain occasion for a new and very different display of his miraculous powers, John vi. 6, our Lord retired by ship to a desert place, whither he knew he would be followed by multitudes from the cities, without making adequate provision for their wants, attracted by his healing power, as we may infer from the 14th verse. The disciples perceiving their destitute condition, proposed, after their sick had been healed, to send them away in order that they might buy food for themselves.

MATT. XIV. 16. "But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart, give ye them to eat."

This command of the Saviour must have struck the disciples with great surprise. They knew how scanty their own supply

which shows the significancy and the importance of that event. It proves, we submit, that at John's death the trial of the nation, *as such*, was virtually ended, and that the *drift*, if we may so express it, of the Saviour's public instructions from that time onward, was to make or increase the number of his disciples, not to preach the kingdom in order to its acceptance by the nation in its collective capacity. Hence, at his final entry into Jerusalem, Luke xix. 41, 44, and at his final departure from the temple, Matt xxiii. 37—39, he spoke of the nation's visitation and trial as already past, although he was yet in their midst, and the formal act of rejecting him before Pilate was yet to be performed. See notes on John xix. 15. For the nation's trial was in effect, though not formally, closed when Herod beheaded John.

\* It is supposed by some that it was at this place Herod celebrated his birthday, where he had collected an army against Aretas, whose daughter he had married, and had repudiated for Herodias' sake. See Grotius *in loco*. Josephus, *Antiq.*, lib. xviii. chap. 5. Cradock, *Harm.*, § xxvii.

was, and the impossibility of buying sufficient food in such a place for so large a company. How then could they obey this extraordinary command? John vi. 5—9. The display of power which the Saviour intended to make, was one of which they had no conception; it was a new revelation of his character to them, as well as to the multitudes, who had fewer and less favourable opportunities of observing it.

MATT. XIV. 17. "And they say unto him, We have but five loaves and two fishes."

John, who is a little more particular, informs us, that the loaves and fishes were not of their own supplies, but belonged to a lad (*παιδαριον*, a boy) in the company; and he adds an expression of Andrew's, which shows that he thought them of no account for such a purpose: "But what are they among so many?" John vi. 7, 9.

MATT. XIV. 18—21. "He said, Bring them hither to me. . . . And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to [towards] heaven, he blessed and brake and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude, and they did all eat and were filled; and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children."

This first miracle of the kind, is recorded by the four Evangelists: Mark vi. 37—44; Luke ix. 13—17; John vi. 5—13. It gave occasion to a public discourse, soon after, at Capernaum, which none of the Evangelists, except John, has recorded. John vi. 26—52; see foot note on p. 137. One other miracle of the same kind was performed soon after, near the Sea of Galilee, Matt. xv. 32—39; Mark viii. 1—9; but of this neither Luke nor John take notice. The first of these miracles, we may presume, was performed for the purpose of public instruction, as we find our Lord made it the foundation, or as we may say, the text of an earnest, searching public discourse, in the synagogue at Capernaum, John vi. 59, and 22—24, the effect of which was to diminish very much the number of his professed disciples. John vi. 66. The particular use our Lord made of the second of these miracles and of the difference between them, we shall have occasion to notice hereafter. See Matt. xvi. 8—12; Mark viii. 16—21.

In this place, it is pertinent to remark, that this kind of miracle is not mentioned in the answer our Lord sent to John the Baptist. Matt. xi. 6. Nor is there any express prophecy in the Hebrew Scriptures, that Messiah should perform such miracles. It is also important to be borne in mind, that no such miracle was performed before the death of John the Baptist, by which event the posture of the nation *as such*, it has been

remarked, was materially changed. See the note on verse 10. Hence we infer, that this kind of miracle does not so properly belong to the Messianic office of our Lord, as to his Adamic character or relations, and thus he applied it to himself in the discourse at Capernaum, before referred to. John vi. 27, 48, 53.

This miracle appears to have impressed the popular mind more strongly than any which he had previously performed. This is proved from the resolution of the people, on that occasion, to make him a king *by force*, John vi. 15, which he frustrated by retirement. The reasons why such an act could not be permitted are obvious. The nation had rejected John the Baptist and the appointed evidence of our Lord's Messiahship, John xi. 8, upon which they were bound to receive him, with the obedience of the heart, and they could not afterwards be allowed to recognize his regal rights, upon other evidence, especially under the promptings of unholy and selfish motives. John vi. 26.

But it is more important to our present purpose to observe, that this miracle was an exercise of our Lord's Adamic power, or of his power *as SON OF MAN*, with which he was invested from the beginning, according to the declaration of David. Ps. viii. 6. In this character, we have seen, he was the Lord of the world. All the powers of nature were obedient to his will. At his bidding, the earth produced all he required, and as he required, without stint or limit. Water became wine by his will. John ii. 1—10. A single loaf, a single grain, became a full supply for myriads of men. Philosophically considered, the miracle authorizes the conclusion that the Saviour's power over nature was absolutely without bounds: for he that could make five small loaves suffice for five thousand men, and leave a surplus greater than the original quantity, could with equal ease make one loaf suffice for a thousand times that number, because nothing short of unlimited power over physical nature could do either, and such power can produce whatever may be required, from little or much, at will.\*

On this principle our Lord reasoned with his disciples on a

\* It is instructive to consider the argument our Lord deduced from this miracle. John vi. 26—58. It proved his power to produce, at will, suitable aliment for their bodies. Hence he argued, that *he himself, who had that power*, was the *true bread*, that word being understood in its literal and proper sense: and as he had shown them his power to provide food for their fainting bodies, they ought to believe he was able to supply, with equal ease, their spiritual natures, with *the bread* or sustenance they needed. As he called himself *bread*, because the miracle proved his power to produce it; he also called himself the *bread of life*, because the miracle was a sufficient warrant for them to believe that he could produce the (bread) aliment their souls required to sustain in them (undying) immortal life. It is on the ground of this figurative, or emblematical representation of himself *as bread*, that he spoke of the hearty



later occasion, Matt. xvi. 8—11, as we shall notice particularly hereafter.

MATT. XIV. 22—33. *Jesus walks on the sea.*

The miracle recorded in these verses was another exercise of our Lord's Adamic power. It differs, in its order or class, in one respect, from that last mentioned, inasmuch as it was exhibited only to his disciples, and of course belongs to the category of private instruction. See notes on Matt. iv. 17; viii. 23—27. That there was a design in concealing it from the public may be inferred from John vi. 25, where we find that the people, not being able to account for his being so soon on the other side of the sea, desired him to tell them how he came there, which he tacitly declined. John vi. 25, 26. Luke omits this miracle entirely, but Mark, vi. 46—52, and John, vi. 16—21, record it, with some variation of circumstances and language, which it is proper to notice.

According to Matthew and Mark, the boat was in *the midst* of the sea, but according to John it was *twenty-five or thirty furlongs*, or between three and four miles *from the land*, when Jesus overtook them. Neither of the Evangelists, however, expressly affirms that he passed over all that distance by walking on the surface of the water. Nor do we suppose it necessary to assume that he did so. His power as Son of Man, which he more strikingly exhibited after his resurrection, enabled him to approach them in whatever way, and with whatever rapidity he chose; but *when the disciples first saw him approaching* their boat, he was walking on the sea. Both Mark and John omit to mention Peter's adventurous request and his rescue, Matt. xiv. 28—31; and Matthew and Mark take no notice of another miracle, which John records in a single line, viz. the rapid, if not instantaneous, transit of the boat to the land whither they

reception of him by faith, as *an eating of his flesh and drinking his blood*. Verses 53—56. In these expressions he maintains the figure in part, and drops it in part. Bread *is eaten*, that it may give nourishment. Accordingly, he maintains this part of the figure, that of eating, but drops the other, when he speaks of eating *his flesh*. The sense is the same as if he had said, "He that eateth this bread of life," meaning himself, "hath eternal life." This partial retaining and change of the figure offended his hearers, verse 52, and it was no doubt designedly made, to test the character of some of his professed followers, verses 60—65, though he told them, very distinctly, that his language was to be understood in a figurative or emblematical sense, verse 63, as indeed the whole structure of it, and the miracle which gave occasion to it, showed. If we invert the proposition in the 56th verse, we get the best commentary that can be made upon it. "He that dwelleth in me," that is, heartily receives me, "and I in him," by being so received, "he" it is, that "eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood."

The Romish doctrine of transubstantiation rests mainly upon a misinterpretation of this discourse, founded upon this first miracle of our Lord after the death of John.

went, upon their receiving Jesus into it. John vi. 21. This miracle, if we duly consider it, is strikingly illustrative of the Saviour's power over nature. Mark adds a reflection, vi. 52, upon the whole matter, which enables us to assign these miracles to the same and their proper category: "They (the disciples) considered not the miracle *of the loaves*," which they had just before witnessed.

This miracle of the loaves is referred to, as we conceive, because it was of the same order or class. They had witnessed many, if not all, our Lord's public miracles—the healing of the sick, the cleansing of lepers, the raising of the dead, the restoration of sight to the blind, of hearing to the deaf, of strength and soundness to the lame and palsied—his power over demons, which they themselves also had exercised in his name; yet these the Évangelist does not refer to, but only to the miracle of the loaves. It was easy, and would have been natural for him, to say they considered not his many miracles, John xii. 37, had there not been a *peculiar propriety* in referring especially to the miracle of the loaves. The miracles of healing belonged to the Messianic office of our Lord; but the miracle of the loaves, like his other miracles of power over physical nature, was an exercise of his powers and prerogatives as Son of Man, and not included in his Messianic office.

Upon this miracle, then, we may reason as we did upon that last noticed. The inherent power of his nature as Son of Man, by which he performed it, would have enabled him to walk upon the winds, or the clouds, with equal ease, had he chosen to do so, Ps. civ. 3; Prov. xxx. 4; viii. 28, 30; for nothing less than an absolute control over physical nature is sufficient for either. This power, as before suggested, he frequently and most wonderfully manifested to his disciples after his resurrection, but only in stinted measures before. As this view of the matter may strike the reader as uncommon, if not quite new and questionable, we desire to add a few considerations in support of it.

Our Lord's intercourse with his disciples after his resurrection is justly regarded as profoundly mysterious; and yet his approach to them on this occasion was not less so. We perceive this the moment we attempt to explain it. His apparently casual approach to the disciples going to Emmaus, his sudden disappearance from them, and his reappearance to them and their companions the same evening at Jerusalem, Luke xxiv. 13—36, were not the exercise of *newly acquired* powers, but a different or larger exercise of the powers *which he possessed from the beginning as Son of man*. See notes on Matt. viii. 24. The difference in the manner of his intercourse with them before

and after his resurrection is to be accounted for by the liberation or enlargement of the powers he always inherently possessed, from the confinement or restraint put upon them by the Divine plan which he came into the world to execute. See notes on Acts ii. That plan required him in his intercourse with the people, and for the most part with his disciples also, to conform himself to the ways of our frail and feeble humanity; and very seldom did he depart from it in public; see Luke iv. 30, John viii. 59, and notes on Matt. ii. 12, 13, or even privately in his intercourse with his disciples; and then only for their special instruction, Matt. viii. 23, 27; xiv. 25, 32; Mark vi. 48; John vi. 19; or for the instruction of a part of them. Matt. xvii. 1, 2; Mark ix. 2; Luke ix. 29. During the whole of his public ministry he restrained the mighty powers within him; contracting them, so to speak, to the puny measures of our fallen humanity; because, as Son of Man, he could do nothing of himself (that is, he could not give scope and action to his powers) beyond the works the Father had given him to do (or exhibit). John v. 19, 30, 36. The class of miracles we are considering were permitted, as transient or momentary exhibitions of his majestic nature, see 2 Pet. i. 16, 17, in the manner, and to the extent, in which they were performed, for special purposes; and are to be reckoned as exceptions to the habitual restraint or constraint to which he had voluntarily submitted. At his resurrection he cast off this restraint in a great measure, as the manner of his appearing to his disciples and departing from them proves, and at his glorification he was wholly and completely enlarged from it. See notes on Luke xxiv. 38, 39, and Acts ii.

According to this view, what we commonly consider the natural side of our Lord's character, was really the miraculous side; and what we consider the miraculous side, was but the natural outward actings of his glorious humanity, as Son of Man, and Lord of the world. Nor must we forget that his Divine nature as Son of God was in hypostatic union with his Adamic and fleshly nature, and this consideration enforces the view we have taken, because in his Divine nature the *restraint* of his powers only, and not the *exertion* of them in mighty works, can be accounted miraculous.

MATT. XIV. 28. "And Peter answered him and said, If it be thou, bid me come to thee upon the waters."

If Peter had any doubt whether it was Jesus whom he then saw, and thus addressed, he proposed a most extraordinary expedient to remove it. But the conduct of Peter shows that he had no doubt whatever on that matter. He knew it was Jesus, and this new exhibition of his Lord's miraculous powers prompted his request. The words of the original admit, per-

haps, of a different turn from that given them in our translation: "Is it thou?—bid me come to thee upon the waters." We may regard the words *εἰ σὺ εἶ*, "is it thou," as words of recognition and surprise, not as implying doubt. He was confident it was Jesus, and that he could enable him to do what he was doing, and in this confidence he made the request.\*

MATT. XIV. 29. "And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

So far as we know, this is the only instance in which any of the disciples attempted a miracle of this nature; and this we suppose was the Evangelist's reason for recording it. Peter was naturally courageous and impulsive, and consequently sometimes inconsiderate, and this passage among others, is cited to show that such was his character. But that, we suppose, is not the instruction the record was intended to convey. The chief lesson is the power of perfect faith—that is, faith without fear or doubt—to perform acts or works like these, as the following verses prove:

MATT. XIV. 30, 31. "But when he saw the wind was boisterous, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, Lord, save me! And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Peter failed in his attempt, not because he was impulsive, or inconsiderate, but for want of faith; he was afraid. He doubted or wavered in his mind, whether he could do what he was attempting, by the command and approbation of Jesus; and *that* marred his faith. What the Saviour said to Peter after his rescue, was an assurance to him that perfect faith or trust, without fear of consequences or doubt of success, would have enabled him to do what he had attempted, which amounts to this, that *perfect* faith in Jesus is a power superior by Divine constitution to physical laws: and this agrees with what the Lord taught his disciples most explicitly on other occasions. He told them that if they had such faith, even in its seed (that is undeveloped) form (as it must necessarily be in this life), †

\* The use of the imperative, *κράνου με*, shows, according to the laws of language, as well as the instincts of human nature, that Peter viewed the condition (*εἰ σὺ εἶ*) as *actual*; that is, as expressing the real fact—not merely as probable. If he had supposed it as only probable, that the person he addressed was Jesus, or if he had had no definite notion about it, the use of the imperative would have shown greater inconsiderateness than we can impute even to Peter, *namely*, his readiness to hazard his life upon a doubt: nor could he have made the request in any form, or under any condition, without risking life on the truthfulness and power of an unknown or doubtful person or spirit.

† Or, perhaps the allusion may be to purity or homogeneity, freedom from mixture or alloy with anything of another nature, as a mustard seed is.

nothing would be impossible to them, Matt. xvii. 20; Luke xvii. 6, and the examples he gave them of the power of faith, prove its superiority to physical laws. The Lord's remark on this occasion shows us, that we are to understand such promises or assurances *literally*; not in a figurative or hyperbolic sense, or as intended merely to represent strongly and impressively the moral power of faith. Matt. xvii. 20; xxi. 21; Mark xi. 23; Luke xvii. 6; notes on Matt. viii. 2, 3. The verse under consideration, then, is important as furnishing a rule of interpretation; and for that purpose chiefly, we suppose, it was recorded. It teaches us in what sense we are to understand the Saviour's language in like cases.

The power conferred upon the apostles when they were sent forth to preach the kingdom, Matt. x. 1—8, did not extend to miracles of this nature. Nor do we know that they performed miracles of any kind after the death of John the Baptist, until they were endowed with fresh powers by the descent of the Holy Spirit after our Lord's ascension. For reasons already suggested, (Matt. xiv. 3—12, note,) we presume they did not, at least in virtue of their commission to preach the kingdom. If this be so, it was only by the power of faith they were able, after the death of John and their return from their first mission, to perform a miracle, Matt. xvii. 16—20, even of the kinds which their commission embraced. These were miracles of the first and third classes before mentioned. Notes, Matt. iv. 23, 24; x. 1. Peter's attempt to walk upon the water, and *his partial success*, were the nearest approximation to a miracle of a different order or nature, made by any of the apostles. But the faith requisite for such miracles is not designed for the holiest and best of men in this life. Fear and doubt are instinctively and inseparably incident to our fallen or mortal condition. They constitute, in part, the bondage, Heb. ii. 14, 15, from which we are to be delivered, when the body shall be redeemed, Rom. viii. 23; Luke xxi. 28, exalted and glorified. 1 Cor. ix. 27; xiii. 2. Then perfect faith (or call it assurance or confidence) will take the place of doubt and fear. The believer will no longer know in part, but perfection having come, all the frailties of his fallen nature will be done away. 1 Cor. xiii. 9—12. For it is one of the inconceivably great and glorious purposes of redemption to raise up and construct out of the fallen race of Adam, a new order of manhood by a genealogy derived from the Second Adam—the Adam of glory, the Man of God's right hand, Ps. lxxx. 17, in whom the attributes of dominion and power described by David, Ps. viii. 6, and the large promises of the Saviour shall be fully and literally realized. Rev. iii. 21; John xvii. 23, 24.

MATT. XIV. 32. "And when they were come into the ship the wind ceased." John adds, vi. 21, "and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went."

Two other miracles of power over nature, and, as it seems, silently wrought. It is not said that he rebuked the winds audibly, as on a former occasion, Matt. viii. 26, notes, and the rapid, noiseless transit of the vessel from the middle of the sea to the place of their destination, after the wind had ceased, without their toiling and rowing, was itself a most amazing effect of his power as Son of Man.

MATT. XIV. 33. "Then they which were in the ship came and worshipped him; saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

Some commentators suppose that these words (*οἱ δὲ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ*) "they which were in the ship" include mariners besides the disciples; because the word "disciples" is commonly used, when none else are meant. And to account for these mariners joining in an ascription of a Divine nature to the Lord Jesus, Dr. Bloomfield supposes that the disciples would be likely to impart to the mariners the information that they had heard him claim to be the Son of God. It is much more probable, however, that none but the chosen disciples were in the vessel, because none but the disciples are spoken of in verse 22, where it is said that Jesus constrained *his disciples* to get into the ship and go before him, and that they were *gone away alone*. By occupation four of the apostles, at least, were fishermen, and competent as mariners to navigate the lake. John, vi. 19, represents the disciples as rowing; and Mark, vi. 48, as toiling in rowing. Besides the article (*το*) *the*, verse 22, indicates that it was the ship or boat which was commonly used by the disciples, and perhaps kept especially for their use. But the chief reason is derived from the nature of the miracle itself. It was one of those extraordinary acts of power, which none but the disciples were permitted to witness. See notes on Matt. viii. 23—27. The miracle was a part of the private instruction or discipline of the apostles, designed to qualify them for the offices to which they had been chosen. As to the reason first above suggested, that the word "disciples" is commonly used, when none other are meant, it is sufficient to say, that the word "disciples" would have *included* Peter, whereas the intention of the Evangelist was to *exclude* Peter from the observation he made. Consider the circumstances: the Saviour had caught Peter when beginning to sink, and had brought him to the vessel. They entered it together, (*καὶ ἐμβαντῶν αὐτῶν*), verse 32. The other disciples, who remained in the ship, (*οἱ δὲ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ*) coming forward to meet the Saviour by whose side Peter

was standing, (*προσεκυνήσαν αὐτῷ*.) worshipped him and said: "Truly thou art the Son of God." His saving Peter from sinking, and bringing him into the vessel again, in the manner they had witnessed, walking by his side as on solid ground, was in itself another miracle, which served to increase their amazement.

As to their expression, "Of a truth thou art *the* Son of God"—*Ἀληθῶς Θεοῦ υἱὸς εἶ*—the article, though it appears in our translation, is not in the original. The expression is different in this respect from Peter's in Matt. xvi. 16, (*ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος*) "the Son of the living God." On the occasion of Peter's confession, the Saviour blessed him, adding that he had declared a truth which flesh and blood had not revealed to him, but the Father. Matt. xvi. 17. He pronounced no such blessing on this occasion, nor did he intimate that they had confessed him to be the Son of God by inspiration. There must, therefore, be a difference in the two expressions, or in the sense in which they were uttered: for if the expressions are equivalent, and if they were uttered in the same sense, we cannot account for the different manner in which they were received by the Saviour. Notwithstanding, therefore, all that Bishop Middleton or any one else has proved concerning the use or omission of the Greek article in the New Testament, we cannot understand the expression of the disciples on this occasion as a confession of the Deity of the Lord Jesus, which Peter's confession certainly was. It appears to be much of the same nature as the centurion's, who watched the crucifixion. Matt. xxvii. 54. See notes. They regarded him as a man highly favoured of God, endowed with most extraordinary powers, as Satan surmised he was, Matt. iv. 3, 6, but without any conception of his Divine nature and attributes as the Son of God and the Creator of all things. This view of the passage detracts nothing from the proofs of the doctrine of our Lord's Divine nature, and his equality in that nature with God the Father. For this great truth is to be proved rather by his own words and works, than by the confessions of his disciples, especially those made before they were inspired, and when they were imperfectly instructed in the mysteries of redemption. See Matt. xvi. 21—23.

MATT. xv. 12, 13. "Then came his disciples and said to him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up."

It is interesting and instructive to observe, how constantly the disciples approached the Saviour *to give him information of*

what they observed, as if his knowledge and means of knowledge were limited like their own. This fell in with his own habit of inquiring of them concerning many things, as if he needed information. John vi. 5, 6; Matt. xvi. 13; John ii. 24, 25. Hence we learn how completely his superior nature was concealed under his humanity. None of the apostles appear to have realized his glory as Son of Man, or his omniscience as divine, until after his resurrection. Then Peter, in answer to his thrice repeated inquiry, declared the great truth: "Lord, thou knowest all things." John xxi. 17. It was a part of the Divine plan that it should be so. Perhaps we may say it was one of the constraints to which the Saviour had submitted, that he should not always act upon what he knew, but upon what had been communicated to him in the way of ordinary intercourse between men. But what we wish particularly to note is, the Divine purpose as to the ultimate condition of this world. The remark, it is true, has a special application to the Pharisees, who were offended at his doctrine. Yet it is a great truth of universal application. The figure the Saviour employs, may remind the reader of the parable of the tares. The enemy is planting his seed and nurturing his plants; but they shall, when the time of the harvest comes, all be rooted up, and nothing which is not of heavenly origin shall be suffered to remain. This instruction, which was privately given to the disciples, coincides with the Lord's prayer—"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

MATT. XV. 21. "Then Jesus went thence and departed into [say *towards*] the coasts [borders] of Tyre and Sidon."

John the Baptist and our Lord were both ministers of the circumcision. See verse 24, and Rom. xv. 8. It does not appear that either ever crossed the borders of the land of Israel. And when our Lord passed through Samaria in going from Jerusalem to Galilee, John iv. 3, 4, there was a necessity for it, as the Evangelist is careful to inform us; because the Samaritans were not among those to whom he was sent. Matt. x. 5; xv. 24. For these reasons the word (*εἰς*) translated *into*, in this verse, should be rendered *towards*, or into the neighbourhood of the territories of Tyre and Sidon, for he did not actually go out of the land of Israel. This was another constraint which he put upon himself as a man, to confine himself strictly to the objects of his mission. John the Baptist's mission was so closely bound up with his, that we do not suppose the Holy Spirit with which he was filled would have allowed him to lead any other manner of life than he did.

MATT. XV. 22—28. The miracle recorded in these verses, was performed after the death of John the Baptist, and of



course after the trial of Israel as a nation virtually was ended. See notes on Matt. xiv. 3—12. Yet it is plain the objects of our Lord's mission to Israel were not fully accomplished. They were still the sheep of which he was the shepherd, yet lost sheep; because they had rejected the Lord's forerunner, and were soon to reject and crucify him. Yet they were still the children of the kingdom, and the blessings the Saviour had to dispense were *their bread*. Rom. xv. 27. The time had not come when Gentiles were to be admitted as sharers therein; but this obstacle was overcome by the faith and importunity of this Gentile mother. To illustrate the power of faith by this further example, the Evangelist records this miracle. In the case of the centurion, Matt. viii. 5—10, it does not appear to what nation the servant belonged. In this case the subject of the miracle was a Gentile. According to Mark, vii. 24—39, the interview took place in a house into which the Saviour had entered with a desire to be concealed, yet with some of his disciples, as it appears by Matthew. It may be regarded, therefore, as a private instruction to them, and disconnected with the *public* purposes of his ministry.

MATT. xv. 30. "And great multitudes came to him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them."

These miracles were performed near the sea of Galilee, verse 29. We infer that the number and variety of them were unusually great. The impression they made on the minds of the people was deep, verse 31, and to make it still deeper, the Saviour, before he dismissed them, again miraculously fed them. According to the views suggested in the note on Matt. xiv. 10, we do not suppose these miracles were performed to prove the actual presence of the kingdom of heaven, or with a view to his being received *by the nation* in their *collective* capacity; but rather to commend himself to the people individually as the Son of Man, and Saviour of all who would receive him. The Evangelist John, i. 11, 12, refers to this two-fold aspect, or direction of our Lord's public ministry—the one ending, and the other beginning at the death of John. We have seen how deeply the popular mind was impressed by the first miracle of the loaves. The Saviour now performed another of the same kind, after healing all the sick brought to him in order to prepare their minds fully for the course of instruction\* upon

\* Our Lord's discourse in John vi. 26—58, has already been referred to. See foot note to Matt. xiv. 10. We now add, for the purpose of pointing out more fully the change in our Lord's public instruction after the death of John the Baptist, a few references to his discourses in the seventh, eighth, tenth,

which he had just entered, with a view to the gathering out of the nation, the beginnings or groundwork of an elect people, who would receive him notwithstanding the nation, as such, had virtually rejected him, by rejecting his forerunner. From the death of John, therefore, the public ministry of our Lord in this respect, was like that which he afterwards appointed for his apostles. See Rom. ix. 5, 14; 1 Cor. ix. 22.

MATT. XVI. 4. "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall be no sign given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas: and he left them and departed."

This verse was remarked upon in connection with Matt. xii. 38. But that declaration was made *before* the death of John the Baptist, and contains one of the few allusions which the Saviour publicly made to his death, during John's lifetime. See John ii. 19. This declaration was made *after* the death of John, and this was a further reason for refusing the sign the Pharisees and Sadducees demanded. Our Lord's ministry, from being national in its appeal or object, had now become *personal* among the people; and if they desired, or pretended to desire, the sign, with a view to his reception by *the nation as Messiah*, the import of the answer was, it was too late for that purpose. Their trial as a nation was virtually over. All the appointed signs had been given but one, and that one was

and twelfth chapters of John. In the seventh chapter we find an obscure allusion to his ascension, verses 33, 34, and to the gift of the Holy Spirit, verse 39, as well as individual appeals to his hearers, verses 37, 38. In the eighth chapter we find an allusion to his crucifixion, verse 28—a warning of the consequences of their unbelief, verses 21—24—invitations to follow him as the light of the world, verse 12—promises to those who believed, verses 31, 32, 51—a strong denunciation of their sinful character, verses 41—44—an assertion of his pre-existence and oneness with the Father, verses 56, 58. In the ninth chapter we have an account of one convert, verses 35—38, and his own declaration as to the effect of his mission, verse 39, founded upon the foreseen rejection of himself by the nation. The appeal of his discourse in the tenth chapter is *personal* and individual. He portrays his character and office under the emblem of the good shepherd, and assuming his rejection as actual, plainly declares his purpose *to lay down his life* for his sheep, verses 11, 15, 17, 18. He alludes also to the calling of the Gentiles, verse 16, to the purpose of forming an elect people out of both Jews and Gentiles, verses 27, 28, 29, and plainly declares his Divine nature, verse 30. We observe the same individual appeal in the twelfth chapter, verses 25, 26, 35, 36, and a plain allusion to his death, verses 32, 33. These discourses were all delivered after the death of John. How different they are from those pronounced before, may be seen by comparison of them with the sermon on the mount, Matt. v., vi., vii., and his public parables. Matt. xiii. 1—9, 24—33; and see also John v. 17—47. The Gospel of John, we suppose, was designed in part, to exhibit more fully than the other Evangelists had done, the public discourses of our Lord *after the death of John the Baptist*, and his private instruction of his disciples. In these two particulars, it is very rich and full. The miracles which he wrought during this period were proof of his Divine authority to command the belief of the people, and their hearty reception of him as the only and all-sufficient Saviour of men. See the note on Matt. xiii.

typically set forth by the prophet Jonas. We observe too, that on the first occasion, our Lord's answer was little more than a denial of their request. Now, however, he explains the ground of his refusal by referring to their own principles of action. This was in effect converting the question into one of *personal* and *individual* concern, and accords well with the altered purposes of his ministry. It was a kind of *argumentum ad hominem*.

His miracles, which they had seen from the beginning of John's imprisonment, were unequivocal signs of the times, and conclusive evidence of his character. John's death was to the nation another sign of the most momentous import. These signs, he told them, they ought to consider with as much candour and care, as they employed in the ordinary concerns of life, as the stake they individually had in them was of infinite moment. As if he had said, "I go my way," and if you consider not these signs, and decide and act upon them with the candour and earnestness you observe in your temporal affairs, "and believe not that I am he" that should come, "ye shall die in your sins." John viii. 21, 24.

MATT. XVI. 6, 7. "Then said Jesus to them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread."

This is one of several passages which exhibit, in a striking manner, the dulness of the apostles, or their want of sagacity to apprehend the Saviour's meaning, even when his allusions were very plain. See chap. xv. 16; John xiii. 29, 36; xiv. 5. They seem to have been quite as dull of apprehension as the common people, who did not enjoy his private instruction. John vii. 35; xiii. 36. We are sometimes ready to inquire, why the Saviour, who had such control over their minds, did not infuse into them greater powers of comprehension; but the answer is, this belonged to the office of the Holy Spirit. John xvi. 13.

The allusion in these verses to the corrupt doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees, seems to us plain enough, yet they thought he referred to their having forgotten to take bread with them, and they understood his words as a caution against buying of those who had no good will to them, and were wicked enough to poison their food. A moment's reflection upon what they had just before seen, should have convinced them that the matter of a few loaves of bread was not of the slightest consequence to him, and that the conjecture they made was of all imaginable the most improbable; but it gave the Saviour the occasion to show them the import of his miracles of the

loaves, and what the difference between them was designed to prove.

Their strange conceit is recorded for the sake of the reasoning by which the Lord removed it. His questions show wherein the force of these miracles lay. In the first of them, he fed *five* thousand men with *five* loaves, and the fragments remaining filled *twelve* (*χοφινους*) baskets. In the second, he fed *four* thousand with *seven* loaves, and the fragments remaining filled only *seven* (*σπυριδας*) *smaller* baskets; that is, the *smaller* number of loaves was sufficient to satisfy the *larger* number of persons, and leave a greater surplus remaining—thus proving that his power was not graduated, or limited by, or in any way dependent on the supply. This, however, would not appear from the miracles, if the (*σπυριδας*) baskets left of the seven loaves were larger (proportionally) than the (*χοφινους*) baskets of fragments left of the five loaves; for then the surplus left of the seven loaves would be greater in proportion as the number of the loaves and the number fed was less. The readers of the English translation naturally understand that the baskets, in both cases, were of the same description. The original shows they were different. What the exact difference is between the original words may be hard to determine, but the point of our Lord's question requires us to assume that the (*σπυριδας*)\* baskets remaining of the seven loaves were of less size than the (*χοφινους*) others. Thus understood, by the first miracle, the smaller number of loaves supplied the larger number of persons, leaving of the fragments a larger number of larger baskets; and by the second miracle, the larger number of loaves supplied a smaller number of persons (sufficiently indeed,) but left only a smaller number of smaller baskets full of fragments. The difference, he would have his disciples understand, depended solely upon his will—in other words, that the *abundance*, if we may so express it, in the latter miracle, did not increase his power nor the deficiency in the

\* In Acts ix. 25, we read that Paul was let down through the wall of Damascus (*ἐν σπυριδι*) in a basket. The object of the writer is to show the imminence of the danger to which the apostle was exposed, and one of the circumstances laid hold of to show it was, the insecure means to which his friends, in their haste or extremity, were obliged to resort. If we suppose the basket comparatively so small and frail that it could not receive and securely sustain the apostle's person (which according to tradition was not large,) we perceive the force of this circumstance. Had it been a (*χοφινος*) basket large enough and strong enough to contain a man of ordinary size and weight, the danger of his descent to the ground would have been much less, perhaps it would not have been mentioned at all. The apostle, referring to this danger, 2 Cor. xi. 32, and the means of his escape, uses the word *σπυριδι*, which probably signifies in this place a small basket made of twigs. Vaup's *Steph. Thes.* cccci. vol. i.

former instance diminish it; but the effect in both cases depended simply on his will, and not upon the means he employed.

We add only that both these miracles are to be ascribed to his power as Son of Man, and they prove his absolute dominion over nature. See Ps. lxxvii. 1, 6.

With these verses the Evangelist commences a series of most important instructions privately given to the disciples, extending, with the exception of five verses, (xvii. 14—18,) to the end of the eighteenth chapter. It is a rich vein of Divine mysteries, which will amply reward the profoundest study.

MATT. XVI. 13, 14. "When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying: Whom [who] do men say that I the Son of Man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets."

There was an immeasurably deeper mystery in the person of our Lord than any connected with the person of John the Baptist. The mystery of John's character and relations arose chiefly from the obscurely revealed purpose of two advents of the Messiah—the first to suffer, the second to reign; and the consequent appointment of two forerunners—the first under the covenant of law; the second under the covenant of grace. The mystery of our Lord's person consisted, if we may so express it, in the trinity of relations or characters which he sustained, each of which involved mysteries too deep for creatures to comprehend. 1 Pet. i. 12. He was the Word, John i. 14, and as such the Creator and Governor of all things. John i. 3. He was the Son of Man, and as such, the absolute Lord of the world. He was the seed of the Davidic covenant, and as such, the Messiah of Israel. The mystery of John's character was involved in the last of these relations, that, namely, of our Lord's Messiahship; whereas the chief mystery of our Lord's person lay in the union of his Divine and human nature, and of his human nature to the seed of Abraham.

The question our Lord proposed to his disciples respected his humanity, or his nature, as Son of Man. Notice the particularity of the question: It is not "whom [who] do men say that I am?" In that form the question would have involved the whole complexity of his being, which is incomprehensible by creatures. The question turned upon his manhood or humanity. "Whom [who] do men say that I, *the Son of Man*, am?" This was his intermediary character, connecting, as it were, his Godhead with his Messiahship, as God-Man-Messiah.

David, we have shown, had some glimpses of his majesty and

glory as Son of Man; see notes on Matt. ix. 4; and was overwhelmed by the greatness of the promise, that so great and glorious a Being should become incarnate in his race. Whether he had any conception of the mystery which lay aback of this—the union, namely, of the Divine to his nature as Son of Man, cannot be inferred either from the Psalm he had composed, or from his address to God, which we have considered; notes on Matt. ix. 4. However this may be, it is plain from the answer of the disciples, that the people had no proper conception of his character or person in any of these relations. They mistook the order of his manhood. John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremias, and all the prophets were of the fallen race of the first Adam. They were mortal men, and heirs of the fortunes of their fallen progenitor. He was the Second Adam, and by Divine covenant the head of a holy, undying race, and Lord of the world. He could not die except by his own voluntary submission to powers which were under his control. John x. 17, 18.

We cannot have any adequate conception of an essentially immortal man, and much less of our Lord's manhood in union (as it was from the beginning designed to be) with the Divine Nature. That it is fraught with the deepest mysteries, is proved by John iii. 13, vi. 62; xvii. 5. That the mysteries of the nature of angels are not to be compared with the mystery of our Lord's manhood, may be inferred from his exaltation in that nature immeasurably above them. Heb. i. 4, 6. See notes on Matt. xxviii. 9, 10. That he existed in his human (though not fleshly) nature before the world was, or the angels were created, has been maintained by many learned and pious divines. But without entering into this question, we add in the note below a few passages, which will sufficiently open it for the consideration of the reader.\*

\* The truth of the matter as it lies in Jesus, is thus: This mediatory person, being made the Glory-Man of God's fellowship, Zech. xiii. 7, in his counsels from everlasting, is that image and likeness subsisting in covenant-union at that time, in the Second person of God; though not then subsisting by incarnate union, and actual birth-union of the flesh of Christ in the Son of God. He becomes absolutely, *as the man*, the first-pattern of God's workmanship in the creation; and so the first likeness or creature of God. Col. i. 15. . . . . Now according to this likeness, subsisting in and abiding with God in the Son, and with the Father, John i. 1, 2, God the Spirit comes down with a creating power, and by the pattern of the covenant-man, forms that noble creature, *Man*, or Adam, whom he raised into being in the Garden of Eden, and out of whose loins he had ordered that the natural [or fleshly] substance of that other man [the Second Adam] the Lord from heaven, and of his bride too, the Elect, should be taken in the work of creation—the creation and marriage of Adam and Eve being intended *as a shadow* of the mystery; as is clear by the apostle Paul's arguing in Eph. v. 23—32.—*The Glory of Christ Unveiled*, by Joseph Hussey, p. 175.

“Christ is Nature's fulness, as well as the Gospel's. He lighteneth every

MATT. XVI. 15. "He saith unto them, But whom [who] say ye that I am?" Without making any observation on these opinions of the people, our Lord immediately propounds the same question to the disciples, somewhat abbreviated, yet

man, *with natural understanding*, that cometh into the world, John i. 9, and that, as he is God's image." Col. i. 15. It was in this image Adam was created; and it has pleased the Father, that all fulness should dwell in Christ. Col. i. 19. . . . . There is nothing of God communicable to us, or to any creature in heaven or earth [except by derivation from, or] out of Christ's fulness, either of Nature, or Grace, or Glory."—*Glory of Christ*, by Joseph Hussey, p. 103, 104.

[The] image then spoken of in Genesis, i. 26, is the *substantial* image of God, Heb. i. 3, or the Glory Man. . . . subsisting in the second person of God: so standing in him before Adam, as *to* and *with* God, who is incapable of changeable sight, he was considered and reputed the same. He was to stand for ever. *Ib.* p. 102.

What can we make of these texts [of the Old Testament] which call him THE MAN [THE ADAM] (Ezek. ix. 3, 11; x. 2, 6, 7; Dan. xii. 6, 7; Zech. vi. 11, 12; xiii. 7) if we shut out his *secret* being with God before the *open* ways and means, of his *open* being with men? Was he a man at all in their sense, who deny that he was a man otherwise than *intentionally to be* a man, till he existed by *incarnation* in the Virgin's womb? They think it enough, because 'tis orthodox to own he was God, *without* beginning, and Man in and from the Virgin's womb. But though this is truth and orthodox, it is *not* all the truth. . . . . It is sound to hold the person of the Mediator, God-Man, to be one person and two distinct natures, but it is not sufficient, if we do not begin the human nature as the secret glory-man with the Father in the Son from everlasting. Prov. viii. 22—31; John xvii. 5.

He was actually man to God *before* his incarnation in the womb, of the substance of the Virgin. He was a man *with* God by a beginning from everlasting, as well as he was actually God before without beginning from everlasting. He was a man secretly in the *covenant* before he was incarnate secretly in his mother's womb. This was the condition of the Mediator to and with God in the everlasting covenant. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5; vii. 18, 19; 1 Chron. xvii. 17. The intermediate *successions* of things, and all the *changes* in the ways and means, were future or *to be*, in respect of the Man and in respect of the church; not in respect of God: For it was done *in* God and *to* God and *with* God, before; and yet the *Divine Settlements* and laws of Heaven made it as necessary, that it should be done *in* the man and *to* the man *successively* through time, as it was certainly done *in* God, *to* God, and *with* God, upon the man, by infallible settlements, constitution, and make, in his secret covenant among the persons of the Godhead, before all time."—Hussey, *Glory of Christ Unveiled*, p. 185.

Calvin says in his readings upon Daniel: "In eo nihil est absurdū quōd Christus aliquam speciem humanæ naturæ exhiberet antequam manifestatus in carne." Calvin, however, does not maintain this view.

Dr. Henry More (*Oper.* fol. 66) says: "Quodque Angelus qui ducebat Israelitas in terram Canaan, Christus erat, videtur planè asserti 1 Cor. x. 5. Nequē tentemus Christum sicut quidam eorum tentarunt, etc. Christus vero non nudus Deus est, sed complexum quid ex humanā naturā et Divinā. Perpende Heb. xi. 26. . . . . Atque profectō animam Messię in rerum naturā fuisse antequam nostram carnem sumperat, sensus maxime facilis ac naturalis illius loci 1 John iv. 2, videtur etiam inferre. Παν πνευμα ὁ ὁμοιωσι Ἰησοῦν Χριστον ἐν σαρκὶ ἐκλυθησθα ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἔστιν. . . . . Sensus enim genuinus est, Quicumque spiritus profitetur Jesum esse Messiam profectum in carnem sive in corpus terrestre, ex Deo est; quod supponit eum fuisse, antequam in illud venerat, vel huc ἐ cœlo profectus erat.

"Rursus; cum optimè fieri possit, ut ille, etiam ante generationem hominum et terrarum orbis inhabitationem Messias electus esset (ut ita loquar) et unitus

importing the same; as if he had said, "But whom [who] say ye that I, the Son of Man, am?"

MATT. XVI. 16. "And Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

It has already been remarked, that there is much more in this answer than in the exclamation of the disciples, when the Lord entered their boat from walking on the sea. Matt. xiv. 33. See notes. The answer is to be interpreted by the terms of the question, and may be thus expressed: "Thou the Son of Man art the Christ, the Son of the living God." In his Adamic nature (or as the Second Adam, that is, Second in the order of

insuper cum Divino *κτρω* cœlestique gloriâ ac pulchritudine resplendens inter angelos in cœlo; hæc hypothesis rationem reddet admodum facilem et geniuam multorum locorum Novi Testamenti quæ aliter valde obscura videntur: Quemadmodum illud Philip. ii. 6, 7, 8. Multorum enim mentes exercuavit, qui fieri possit, ut ex eo quod homo fiat, sui ipsius exinanitio in æternum et *immutabilem* Deum cadat. Ad quod tamen textus digitum videtur intendere. Potest autem admodum propriè competere animæ Messiæ, qui etiam verè Deus erat per unionem physicam cum Deitate. Similiter Joh. xvii. 4, 5. *Glorificavi te in terrâ, etc. Nunc igitur glorifica me tu Pater, etc.*, hoc est, Reduc me, Pater, rursus ad teipsum ut eâ gloriâ iterum fruam, quam apud te habui in cœlis autequam homines nati essent, atque hic terrarum orbis formatus.

. . . . . Postremo Joh. vi. 38. *Quia descendi è cœlo ut faciam, etc.* Et Joh. iii. 31. *Qui è cœlo venit supra omnes est.* Et adhuc explicatius, Joh. xvi. 28. *Exivi ex Patre et veni in mundum, et iterum relinquo mundum et proficiscor ad Patrem.* Sed omnium explicatissimè, Joh. iii. 13. *Nullus enim ascendit in cœlum nisi qui descendit è cœlo nempe filius hominis qui est in cœlo. . . . .* Quibus omnibus addere poteris. Joh. vi. 62. *Quod si igitur spectaveritis filium hominis ascendentem co ubi erat prius.* Vide Prov. xxx. 4.

Dr. Watts held to the belief that the human soul of Christ existed with the Father from before the foundation of the world, on which ground he maintained the real descent of Christ from heaven to earth. He says "the generality of our Christian writers believe that it was only the Divine nature or Godhead of Christ which had an existence before he was conceived of the Virgin Mary and became incarnate." . . . . But "if we suppose the human soul of Christ to have a pre-existent state of joy and glory with the Father before the world was created, these expressions" (which speak of the abasement of Christ and the humiliating change he passed through) "are great and noble . . . . and have a happy propriety in them to set forth the transcendent love of the Father in sending his Son; and of the Son of God in coming from heaven. . . . . And this love is exceedingly enhanced while we consider that this human soul of Christ was personally united to the Divine Nature, so that hereby, God himself becomes manifested in the flesh."

There is much more in Dr. Watts's writings in support of this belief. Other modern authors who have professed and defended it, are Dr. H. More, (before quoted,) Dr. Edward Fowler, Bishop of Gloucester, Robert Fleming, Joseph Hussey, (also before quoted,) Bishop Gastrell, Dr. Thomas Bennet, Dr. Thomas Burnet, Dr. Knight, Dr. Thomas Godwin, and see Dr. Watts's discourses, entitled "*The Glory of Christ as GOD-MAN*, displayed in three Discourses."

These quotations and references are not made with a view to any particular mode of explaining the doctrine of the Trinity, but only as they bear upon the question of the pre-existence of the Son of Man, as the Man of the Covenant, the Glory-Man, the Second Adam, whose image the apostle Paul teaches, 1 Cor. xv. 45, his elect people will bear.

It is proper to add, that Dr. Owen on Heb. ii. takes a different view.



manifestation, though First in the order of being) he was the Son of God. Prov. viii. 22—31; Luke iii. 38; comp. verse 23. In his fleshly nature, which he took from the seed of Abraham, he was called Son of God by the angel Gabriel, Luke i. 35, because begotten in that nature by the overshadowing power of the Most High. In his Divine nature also, he was the Son of God, and one in essence with the Father, as is proved by many passages. John i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Matt. i. 23. The emphasis of Peter's answer lies, as we conceive, in the words (*του ζωντος*) *the living*. Under one view, these words seem superfluous; for God in his nature is ever-living, eternally the same and unchangeable in his being. But as indicating precisely the meaning which the apostle intended to express, they are by no means superfluous. They signify that as the SON of God he partook of the life and being of God—of his nature and attributes, John v. 26, just as the son of a mortal man partakes of the nature of the father who begat him. Thus interpreted, these words declare the profoundest mystery of redemption, *to wit*, the incarnation of God the Son, in Christ, which, as we learn by the next verse, could never be known except by the revelation of the Father.

Whether David perceived this mystery, when Nathan conveyed to him God's promise concerning the Messiah, cannot be determined, as has been observed, by his address on that occasion. 1 Chron. xvii.; 2 Sam. vii. See notes on Matt. ix. 4. What struck his mind with overwhelming force, was the exalted nature and attributes of our Lord's *manhood*. Nor can we determine from the words of Peter on this occasion, whether he apprehended as David did, our Lord's greatness and glory as the Second Adam. We infer that he did not, as that was not the truth especially revealed to him at that time. Hence the importance, if not the necessity of considering together these different revelations, as it is only by combining them we can form any proper apprehension of the greatness and glory of Christ, as God-Man-Messiah.

MATT. XVI. 17. "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed [it] unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven."

There is an emphasis or animation in these words, which seems to indicate that our Lord rejoiced that the Father had now at length been pleased to discover this great mystery of his person to one of his disciples. Luke x. 21; Matt. xi. 25. It was a great event, and was soon followed, as we shall see, by the disclosure of other mysteries by himself, of which the disciples had not the remotest conception before; we mean the

mysteries of his death, resurrection, and glorification, verse 21; and xvii. 1, 2. This apostle was blessed in being chosen first to receive and declare this great mystery of the incarnation. He was told that the discovery he had made, was not due to his own sagacity, or any human teaching, or even to his own Divine teaching, but solely to the revelation of the Father.

It is worthy of observation also, that our Lord addresses this apostle by his original name, Simon Bar-jona, as he did after his resurrection, at the Sea of Tiberias, John xxi. 15, 16, 17, and not by that he had given him at their first interview before his call. John i. 42. That there is something significant in this manner of address we cannot doubt. At least it renders probable the suggestion, that the name PETER was then first given him to denote the fact that he first declared the Divine Sonship of the Lord Jesus.

MATT. XVI. 18. "And I say unto thee that thou art Peter" [that is, that thou art he who has rightly declared the mystery of my person as Son of Man] "and upon this rock" [this foundation, meaning God's work of revealing to his elect people the mystery of the incarnation] "I will build my church, and the gates of hell" [that is death] "shall not prevail against it."

MATT. XVI. 19. "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, [literally, of the heavens,] and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, [literally, in the heavens,] and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," [literally, in the heavens.]

Great use is made of these words by Romanists to establish the supremacy of Peter over the other apostles, and of those who claim to be his successors, over the Church of Christ, but without good reason. One argument against this use of the passage is derived by Protestant commentators from Matt. xviii. 18, where the power claimed for Peter, it is supposed, is expressly given to all the apostles, or rather to the Church. The verse reads thus: "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven,"—not *in the heavens*, as in Matt. xvi. 19—"and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"—not in the heavens, as before.

In the context of this passage, xviii. 15—18, our Lord had prescribed a course of proceeding to be observed towards an offending brother, the last step of which was, to make a complaint against him to the Church. . This plainly is a measure of church discipline. He then added, addressing all the disciples, "Whatsoever ye shall bind," &c. We observe here a change from the *plural* of the word heaven, which the Lord used when

addressing Peter, to the *singular*, and the first question is, whether the change is unimportant? Are the singular and plural form of this word (heaven) indiscriminately used? See notes on Matt. vi. 9. Or is the change of phraseology significant and designed? In the next verse, Matt. xviii. 19, the Church is not spoken of in a collective capacity, but as if to show the efficacy of union in prayer, our Lord adds a similar promise: "Again I say unto you, that if any two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that ye shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven," literally, in the heavens, reverting to the plural form again.

A careful perusal of this Gospel in the original Greek, will show very clearly that the Evangelist does not use these two forms of the word indiscriminately, and we assume that the sense is not the same in the two passages under consideration. The difference appears to be this: In Matt. xviii. 18, our Lord is speaking of his future Church, and he gives them a law or rule, by which they should regulate their conduct in the case of an offending brother who will not listen to the admonitions of the Church. Upon this precept, the discipline of excommunication is in a great measure founded. To this rule the apostle Paul plainly refers in 2 Thess. iii. 6. Our Lord's meaning appears to be, that such an act, so done, during the Church state, and until the end of the dispensation of the Church militant, shall receive the Divine sanction. The promise to Peter, on the other hand, is personal to him, and has respect to the times of the kingdom, which are yet future, and are to follow the times appointed for the gathering of the elect Church, and therefore gave him no such supremacy in the Church as has been claimed for him.

What, precisely, is the import of this promise to Peter, we know not, nor can we imagine what privileges and powers are implied in the promise of thrones and dominion over the twelve tribes of Israel, which our Lord afterwards made to all the apostles. Matt. xix. 28; and see Luke xxii. 29, 30. If it were allowable to conjecture upon so obscure a matter, we should suggest, that the promise to Peter of the gift of the keys is, in some way, connected with the second advent of our Lord, and may in some respects be analogous to the office of John the Baptist or of Elijah.

This dogma of the Romanists rests upon the assumption that the Church is the kingdom of heaven, which John the Baptist and our Lord preached, whereas the times of the kingdom are the times of the restitution of all things, to be introduced at the second coming of the Lord.

MATT. XVI. 20. "Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus,\* the Christ."

This injunction, it will be borne in mind, was given after the death of John the Baptist. As we have already suggested (see notes on Matt. xiv. 10,) the trial of the nation was then virtually over, and our Lord's ministry among the people was directed to the reception of himself by *individuals* as the Son of Man, rather than to the reception of himself *by the nation* as their Messiah, and this may have been one of the motives of this command. But it should be observed also, that our Lord did not at any time during his ministry, publicly assume the title of Christ until after his betrayal, Mark xiv. 62, and then his public ministry was ended. Then, indeed, such an avowal was necessary, in order to show more explicitly the public and formal rejection of him by the nation in that character, notwithstanding his many miracles, and his sufferings as their king.

The reasons why our Lord did not publicly assume the character and title of Christ, have already been sufficiently stated in the notes on Matt. xi. 3, to which the reader is referred. †

\* Eminent critics agree, that the word *Ἰησους* should be omitted from the text. There are fifty-four MSS., it is said, that do not contain this word. Besides, it is omitted in several versions, and by most of the early Christian writers who quote this verse. We should therefore, read, "that they should tell no man that he was the Christ."

† Every reader of the New Testament, must have observed that Jesus (not Christ) is the name usually employed by the Evangelists to designate our Lord's person. It occurs about six hundred times in the four Gospels. The name or title Christ, on the other hand, occurs but seldom; and the name Jesus Christ still more unfrequently in the Gospels. In Matthew's Gospel, the name Christ occurs eleven times; in Mark's, six; in Luke's, twelve; and in John's, eighteen times. The name Jesus Christ, occurs in Matt. i. 1, 18; Jesus the Christ, in Matt. xvi. 20; Jesus called Christ, in Matt. i. 16. In Luke's Gospel he is nowhere designated by both these names. If we turn to the Epistles, we find the reverse to be the fact. The apostles in their Epistles, and Luke in the Acts, commonly apply to him both names. Jesus Christ, or the Lord Jesus Christ, or our Lord Jesus Christ, or our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but seldom Jesus without addition, although sometimes they do. See Philip. ii. 10; 1 Thess. i. 10; Heb. ii. 9. In Paul's Epistles, there are nearly two hundred examples of one or the other of these designations.

This change is too remarkable to be accounted for on the ground of popular usage, which Dr. Campbell suggests; for, as Calvin observes, *Inst.* book ii. chap. xvi. § 1, "as the name Jesus was not given him rashly, or by fortuitous accident, or by the will of man," so we suggest, the change from the name Jesus, to Christ or Jesus Christ after his ascension was not unadvisedly or accidentally made, nor did it come through mere usage or the pleasure of man. He was not called Christ during his public ministry, because he did not publicly assume that character, for the reasons above suggested. He was called Christ after his ascension, because he really was the Christ, and was rejected by the nation in that character. See notes on Matt. xvii. 22.

MATT. XVI. 21. "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

It is very interesting to notice the method our Lord observed in the instruction of his disciples, apart from the multitudes, after the death of John the Baptist. See John xvi. 4, and notes on Matt. xiv. 10. The words (*ἀπο τούτε*) *from that time*, see notes on Matt. iv. 12—17, refer to the time of the revelation to Peter of the mystery of the incarnation, verse 16. This mystery once apprehended, the Lord proceeds *immediately* to declare the *next* in order, namely, the mystery of his death and resurrection. But these mysteries they were slow to apprehend, Matt. xvi. 22; xvii. 23; Mark viii. 32; Luke xviii. 34, and really did not, until after the events foretold had occurred. Luke xxiv. 20, 21; John xx. 9; Mark ix. 10. Not understanding these mysteries, they were of course incapable of comprehending the allusions he made to his ascension, John vi. 62, and his future advent in glory, John xvi. 12. Yet he taught this in the plainest terms, verse 27; and to enable some of them better to apprehend his meaning, was transfigured before them, within eight days after the first of these mysteries was revealed to Peter. It was a memorable week of their discipleship; for in this brief space of time the five great mysteries of redemption were made known to them, namely, the incarnation, the death, the resurrection, the glorification, and future advent of the Lord.

MATT. XVI. 22. "Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee."

Peter had just been taught by inspiration one great mystery, but nothing more. Of the rest he was quite as ignorant as his fellow-apostles, and remained so until he was taught by the fulfilment of the predicted events. "Men frequently teach," or attempt to teach, "all things at once; Divine wisdom acts far otherwise." *Bengel*. In the same manner the whole of Divine revelation has been given to the world. Heb. i. 1.

Peter's observation, however affectionately intended, was not only rash and contradictory to the Saviour and the Scriptures, but prompted by a carnal mind. It was wholly at variance with the hidden wisdom of God, in regard to the world's redemption, as appears by our Lord's reply.

MATT. XVI. 23. "But he turned and said to Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me:" [*σκανδαλον*, or an impediment in the path of my duty and office,] "for thou

savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

Peter was looking to a kingdom in the unredeemed world, groaning as it was, and still is, under the curse of God. He had no conception of the expedient Divine Wisdom had devised to repair the ruin brought upon the world and upon men at the fall by the curse. As however he confidently believed that Jesus was the Christ, verse 16, he confidently expected his kingdom would *then* be established, and with this thought in his mind and these words on his lips, it is plain he was looking for a much more inglorious dominion for his Master, than was worthy of him to establish or accept. It was a kingdom of the same kind as that which Satan proffered, and which the Lord rejected with the same words of rebuke he employed on this occasion. Luke iv. 8. Unwittingly, therefore, Peter, though an attached friend and follower, touched upon the same point as Satan did, and so far as his words can be supposed to have had any persuasive effect, they were a temptation to him to give up the work of suffering and death, through which alone, his kingdom could be established consistently with his own glory and the Divine plan. In this way we account for the sharpness and severity of the Saviour's rebuke, and for the same form of words he had employed in his answer to the tempter.

MATT. XVI. 21—27.

A close and natural connection of thought runs through these verses. Peter in his ignorance would have his Master exempted from the sufferings and death he had now for the first time plainly predicted. In this he savoured of the things of men. As Peter's remark showed this, the Lord took occasion to declare with equal plainness what his followers must expect, as if he had said, “I must suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and Scribes, and be put to death. And you, my followers, must be prepared for the same usage. Covet not the kingdoms or the glory of this world, but take up the cross of crucifixion as the slave does, and suffer death upon it, if fidelity to me requires it. Thinking and feeling thus, you will savour of the things of God, for it has been appointed that only through my sufferings and death my kingdom can be established.”

This thought brings out the meaning of what follows. “The loss of life in this way is no loss of life at all. On the contrary, it is the divinely appointed way to gain eternal life. The world, and all the kingdoms of this world, are really of no moment. The honour and the eminence they can confer, will profit you nothing.” The Saviour put a case of extreme suffering—that of a torturing, lingering death, with ignominy. He means to require the entire and supreme devotion of his

followers under all, even the most trying circumstances. He intimates too, that occasions will occur, in which they will be put to this severest of tests. To counterpoise this, he adds, that the Son of Man, though he must thus suffer, shall nevertheless afterwards come in the glory of his Father, with retributions and rewards for every man according to his works.

Our Lord here teaches, by implication, if not explicitly, his second advent in glory, although it is not probable that the apostles at that time, comprehended his meaning. Luke xviii. 34.

MATT. XVI. 26. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Man has been called a *microcosm*, and such indeed he is even in this life. He is a little world of capabilities, faculties, and endowments, each of which is susceptible of ever-increasing enlargement during unending ages. Especially is this true of man as redeemed and renewed by the Holy Spirit. Everything else, earth-born or earthly, is stinted to certain measures. This boon of renewed human nature comes from the union of the believer to Christ through the perpetual indwelling of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is, not only to sustain and sanctify him, but to impart to each and every power and faculty of his nature continual and ever-increasing vigour and growth. See John i. 4. We know not that such is the condition of any other order of God's creatures. Even the holy angels, although they may, and no doubt do, advance from age to age in knowledge and happiness in the service of their Maker—as man now does in the progress of his earthly career—yet do not sustain that relation to the Redeemer which his elect people do, Heb. ii. 16; nor have we reason to suppose that they are the subjects of that peculiar creative work which the Holy Spirit will ever be performing upon the redeemed of mankind. Much less have we reason to suppose, that those of mankind in whom the Holy Spirit does not dwell, will share in this privilege or prerogative of the members of the body of Christ. John xv. 1—6. Their powers and faculties may remain what they may be or will be when their day of grace is over; for they are the subjects of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to them individually according to their deeds. Rom. ii. 5, 6. Yet if we lay out of view the retributions of the day of judgment, who can estimate the extent of their loss? To fail of that union to the Redeemer, which brings them under the tuition of the Holy Spirit, and insures to them his eternal indwelling, is to fail of the great end of their being, and in itself is a loss which cannot be measured. Even if the Divine goodness, as some vainly imagine, were still to mete out to

them that measure of happiness which they enjoy in this life, their station would be fixed among the lowest ranks of creation, while those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells will be advanced by him from one degree of beauty, and glory, and happiness, and power to another, and their capacities for the service and the enjoyment of God will be for ever expanding through the cycles of eternity. What mind can follow the career of the least of God's elect people?

The apostle Paul calls believers "the temple of the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16. There is much more in this expression than we are apt to consider. We are not to restrict it to the present life. The apostle took an enlarged view of the destination of the Church. The accomplished aggregate of God's elect, raised to glory by the power of the Holy Spirit, constitute the temple of which he spoke. This temple is wholly the Spirit's workmanship, Eph. ii. 10, 21, and he will for ever dwell in it, and adorn it with new glories, and enlarge and strengthen it by his almighty energies. 1 Cor. iii. 9; Eph. iii. 10. With such views we should ponder the Saviour's question, What advantage would a man gain, though the profits of his worldliness were the world itself, if thereby he suffers even the smallest damage in his soul, or fail of attaining these high privileges of the saints?

The expression (*την δε ψυχην αυτου ζημιωθη*) *lose his own soul*, may perhaps be understood in the sense of suffering damage, injury, or loss in the soul, or in respect (*κατα την ψυχην*) to the soul. The expression seems to have been transferred from the business of a merchant whose aims are to make profit or gain by traffic. The other expression, "What shall a man gain *in exchange*," &c. (*ανταλλαγμα*), may be applied to the case of the entire loss of it. Thus understood, these two questions have respect to different classes of persons—the first, to those saved ones who nevertheless fail, through their worldliness, of the exceeding blessedness and glory proffered to them, and the last to those who shall be finally and for ever lost.

MATT. XVI. 27. "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works." See John v. 28, 29.

Every person familiar with the Gospels must have observed that our Lord frequently spoke of himself, as of a third person; but it was only when he applied to himself the designation in this text—SON OF MAN. Yet often, when speaking of himself, he used the pronominal and customary forms of personal reference, as in his sermon on the mount, Matt. v.—vii., and in the discourses recorded by John, v.—x.

Various reasons have been given for this peculiarity, but the



true reason appears to be, that our Lord used this form of designation as a titular distinction, to denote his relation to this world as its Sovereign or Lord. As an earthly king may speak of himself as *the king*, to denote his relation to his people, so the Lord Jesus spoke of himself as THE SON OF MAN, to denote his relation to the world as its Lord. The context confirms this view. Royalty, and absolute, universal government over the world and the whole race of mankind, belong to him as the Son of Man, which is as much as to say, that, as Son of Man, he is the King of the kings, and the Lord of the lords, of the whole earth. It is in no respect synonymous, as some have supposed, with his title MESSIAH. The title Messiah has especial reference to Israel and the throne of David, Luke i. 32, 33, and to his elect Church, the Israel of God, (see notes on Matt. ix. 4, vii. 8.) as we shall have occasion to show hereafter. See notes on Matt. xvii. 22.

MATT. XVI. 28. "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."

With this promise the conversation near Cæsarea Philippi was concluded. Our Lord commenced it, we have seen, by the inquiry, "What men said of him as Son of Man." Having received their answer, he repeated the question to the apostles. Peter answered it correctly, and received his Master's blessing. He then spoke to them for the first time plainly, of his rejection by the nation, his sufferings and death. This drew from Peter an expression extremely offensive to the Saviour, for which he was severely rebuked. This done, the Saviour returns to the subject of suffering, and adds that they also, if they would follow him, must be willing to suffer, as he was about to suffer, and even give up their lives in his service. This was very discouraging to them. It was so opposite to their expectations and hopes, that it might naturally be expected to shake their purposes, unless counteracted by some strong assurance of the ultimate attainment of their hopes, and some demonstration of the nature and glory of the things he promised. A fit occasion, therefore, had occurred for the Saviour to make an extraordinary manifestation of his glory, as a counterpoise, so to speak, to the mournful and discouraging disclosures he had just made. For these reasons, among others, we suppose that our Lord, in this promise, tacitly referred to his intended transfiguration, which occurred on the same day of the week following; thus bringing within the compass of eight days, to the knowledge of at least three of the apostles, the great mysteries of the kingdom, of which before they had no conception. Such appears to

be the connection of the transfiguration with this conversation of our Lord with his disciples.

In confirmation of this view, it may be remarked, that Mark and Luke, as well as Matthew, narrate the transfiguration in immediate connection with this promise. Luke varies a little in his expressions from the other Evangelists. He says it was about an eight days after *these words*, (*μετα τους λογους τουτου*, ix. 28,) by which he may refer to this promise in particular, or to the whole conversation the Saviour had with the disciples on that occasion.

But understood either way, the transfiguration having occurred so soon afterwards, and neither of the Evangelists having recorded anything the Saviour said or did during the interval, are very probable grounds for believing that they regarded the transfiguration the fulfilment of that promise.

Dr. Whitby, however, thought it "wonderful that some commentators, both ancient and modern, should refer this passage to our Lord's transfiguration on the mount, mentioned in the following chapter." But his interpretation, which refers it to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, (A. D. 70,) destroys the connection of thought between this verse and the context. If it be correct, all the apostles, except John, died without seeing what the Lord had promised. His chief arguments are these: "*Seeing* the transfiguration, could not be seeing the Son of Man coming in his kingdom; because his kingdom was not begun till after the resurrection, when all power in heaven and earth was given to him." Matt. xxviii. 18. But see Matt. xi. 27. His next argument is, that "it was as true of all the disciples as it was of Peter, James, and John, that they should not taste of death until after that vision."

Our Lord said nothing to the contrary of this. He said that some of them should *not* taste of death *till* they saw the Son of Man coming in his kingdom; not that some of them *should* taste of death *before*. None of them did taste of death until long after that vision, but nine of them did taste of death without seeing it, and this is perfectly consistent with the promise. To the first of these arguments it may be replied, that the transfiguration was a real though transient manifestation of the glory of the Son of Man. Moses and Elias *really* appeared. It was a *real* appearing of a bright cloud—the Shekinah or symbol of the Divine presence, as we suppose. There was a real voice issuing out of the cloud. In one word, the transaction, in all its parts and concomitants, was a reality, not a mere scenic representation, or a mere impression produced upon the minds of the apostles without a corresponding outward reality. It was, however, an uncarthy reality, and consequently could

be nothing else than an *actual* appearing of the Son of Man in his form of glory, just as he will appear at his second coming in his kingdom. These three apostles, therefore, did see the Son of Man coming, i. e. as he will come, in his kingdom, although they did not see the *kingdom* come.

Thus we are to understand John i. 14: "And we beheld his glory—the glory as of the only begotten of the Father;" and 2 Pet. i. 16, 17: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you *the power and coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were *eye-witnesses* of his majesty." This apostle evidently refers to some account he had previously given to the persons he was writing to, of the transfiguration, after our Lord's resurrection, and he proceeds: "For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Peter felt no difficulty in calling the transfiguration "the power and coming," or, "the coming in power" of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor in saying that he was an eye-witness of his majesty, when he beheld him transfigured, attended by Moses and Elijah, and overshadowed by the cloud, or symbol of the Divine presence. And to remove all ambiguity as to what he referred to, he adds: "And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him *in the holy mount.*"

If the connection of thought be that before suggested, and if the object of the Saviour was to teach these favoured disciples, by an ocular demonstration, the mystery of his glorification, in connection with the mystery of his death and resurrection, there was no other event to which this promise of the Saviour could refer; for none of them, it is unnecessary to observe, lived to see the actual coming and establishment of his kingdom over the earth. And if this was not the Saviour's purpose, what could it be? Upon Dr. Whitby's hypothesis, what object could the Saviour have in telling the disciples in so obscure a manner, that one of their number should survive the destruction of Jerusalem? Would that strengthen or encourage them to take up the cross and follow him; to deny themselves; to renounce all the hopes they had cherished of a kingdom to be possessed without shame or suffering? That the motive we have suggested is worthy of the Saviour to hold out, is proved by Heb. xii. 2. Any other interpretation, especially Dr. Whitby's, dislocates the verse from its natural connections, and deprives the promise of any perceptible motive or meaning.

But, it will be inquired, Why did the Saviour express himself so vaguely, if he secretly intended to fulfil the promise, within the compass of a week? "There be some standing here that

shall not *taste of death*, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." These expressions would be natural, if applied to an event known or believed to be *remote*, but would they be so, if applied to an event known to be so near?

This form of expression no doubt influenced Dr. Whitby. It has served, with many commentators, to divert the mind from the event the Saviour intended, and this so far from being an objection, is a further reason for applying the promise to the transfiguration. For consider, the transfiguration was the most private of all our Lord's miracles. Three only, of the twelve apostles, were permitted to witness it. It was designed to be kept a secret until after the Lord's resurrection. Matthew and Mark say that he expressly charged them not to speak of it, till that event. Luke does not mention this charge, but merely says, that "they kept it silent and did not speak of it to any man in those days." Now, such being the purpose of the Saviour, we may suppose that if he spoke of it at all, he would do so only in a very indistinct, indefinite way. He would not say particularly that some of them should see him assume his form of glory, and call to his presence two of the departed saints. Nor would he definitely announce the time when he purposed to fulfil the promise. He would not say, within a week or within a year some of you shall see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. For, when the time had elapsed, there would be an inquiry among them, who had seen the fulfilment of the Lord's promise. The apostles, it need not be said, were inquisitive. They had much conversation together, and sometimes disputes. James and John excited the displeasure of their companions, by an ambitious request. It is unnecessary to add, the Saviour understood their characters perfectly. He knew their weaknesses and faults, and shaped his conduct with consummate skill and prudence. Had it been known which were the favoured disciples, might not the others have felt grieved? See Matt. xx. 20—28. Perhaps the favour shown to James and John, in admitting them to see the transfiguration, emboldened them to ask for pre-eminence in the kingdom. However this may be, our Lord, by so indefinite a promise, gave no occasion to those whom he did not intend thus to favour, to make any inquiry about its fulfilment, and thus Peter, James, and John, were not known to be the favoured ones, until after our Lord had risen from the dead. Then an entirely new order of things commenced. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they were all taught very different views of the kingdom from those they had previously entertained. Their envy and ambition were extinguished, and the eight not favoured, rejoiced heartily in the favour shown to the three.

Now a promise made with such objects in view, as it would necessarily be indefinite in its terms, would naturally produce the same effect upon the minds of commentators as it did upon the minds of the apostles at that time. None of the apostles then knew what the Lord intended. Afterwards they did, and the method which the Evangelists took to remove the obscurity, was to narrate, in immediate connection, the promise and fulfilment. The connection comments on the words.

MATT. XVII. 1. "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves." Mark ix. 2; Luke ix. 28.

Luke says it was "about an eight days after these words"—meaning perhaps not only the promise but the whole discourse, of which the promise was the conclusion—in which computation he includes the day on which the promise was made, and also the day of the transfiguration, whereas Matthew and Mark exclude both these days; so that there is no discrepaney between the Evangelists. It is more important, however, to notice the particularity with which all of them denote the interval of time. According to Dr. Whitby's interpretation, and, indeed, any other than that before stated, this *precise* notation of the time can serve no other purpose than that of denoting the order of its occurrence. The Evangelists might as well have said (*μετα ταυτα*) *after these things*, or (*και εγενετο*) *it came to pass* (*μετα ταυτα*) *after these things*, which are the phrases they generally use. The design of this particularity we suggest, as before, is to connect the promise, in Matt. xvi. 28, with the transfiguration *as its fulfilment*. Thus understood, it shows how the Lord hastened to allay the severity of his rebuke to Peter by this extraordinary privilege, and how soon he practically taught these favoured disciples to look through and beyond the sufferings and ignominy he must endure, to the glory which would follow. 1 Pet. i. 11.

And here, it is proper to observe, that our Lord exhibited different degrees of evidenee of his Divine nature and glory to different persons. To his disciples generally, he exhibited more than to the multitudes—to the twelve apostles more than to his other disciples—to Peter, James, and John, more than to the rest of the twelve, and perhaps to Peter more than to James or John. Certain it is, that Peter was distinguished by the Father above his fellow apostles, in being first taught the mystery of the incarnation, as has been remarked upon Matt. xvi. 17; and the reader need not be reminded, that there were especial reasons why one of the twelve should not be a sharer in the extraordinary favours of his Master. See John vi. 70.

It is noticecable, also, that while the Evangelists are precise

in denoting *the time*, they are very indefinite in respect to *the place* of the transfiguration. Matthew and Mark describe it as a high mountain, Luke calls it "the mountain," as though he had reference to some particular mountain, but does not intimate what mountain. Jerome who died A.D. 420, at the age of 80, that is nearly 400 years after this event (*Ad Eustochiam Epitaph. Paulæ*,) has preserved the traditionary opinion or belief that Mount Tabor was the mountain referred to by the Evangelists. Josephus says that Tabor was in Galilee, twenty leagues and more from Cæsarea Philippi; and from Mark, ix. 30, we may infer that our Lord was not in Galilee when he rejoined his other disciples the next day. Luke ix. 37.

Others suppose our Lord was transfigured upon Mount Panium, situated at the fountains of Jordan, near the foot of which Cæsarea Philippi was built. See Lamy's *Harmony*. This opinion also rests upon conjecture. None of the apostles, except Peter, James, and John, knew the mountain until after the resurrection of our Lord. Whether they spoke of it afterwards definitely to others, we do not know, but the apostle Peter when writing of it, 2 Pet. i. 18, is not more definite than the Evangelists, and John, i. 14, when referring to the transfiguration, makes no allusion whatever to the place where it occurred. This obscurity was designed in order, perhaps, that no occasion should be given to the superstitious practices which it was foreseen would have followed, if the Evangelists had definitely marked the spot of this most wonderful transaction.

MATT. XVII. 2. "And was transfigured before them."

It will be useful before proceeding further, to collect from the three Evangelists, and arrange in their order, all the circumstances attending the transfiguration. This we have attempted to do as follows. But the reader should attempt it for himself. (1) Our Lord ascends the mountain to pray, as Luke informs us, ix. 28, attended by Peter, James, and John; (2) while in the act of prayer, his person is transfigured, or, as Luke expresses it, the appearance of his face was altered or became (*ἕτερον*, another) changed. His face shone as the sun. His garments became white as light (Matt.)—[white exceedingly as snow, shining, such as no fuller could make them (Mark)—white and glistening (Luke)]. In the meantime, Peter, James, and John, had become heavy with sleep, and probably did not witness the change at its commencement. (3) Moses and Elias then appear in glory. (4) The disciples awaking, Luke ix. 32, perceive the change in the Lord's person;—they perceive, also, the presence of Moses and Elias in glorified forms. (5) The disciples hear the conversation of the Lord with Moses and Elias about his approaching (*ἐξόδου*, Luke

ix. 31) exodus from his state of humiliation at Jerusalem. (6) The conversation ceases, and Moses and Elias are in the act of departing. (7) Peter perceiving it, as we may suppose, makes the most extraordinary display of his character on record. He ventures to speak, as if unawed by the presence of such glorious and majestic forms. (8) Before Peter had done speaking, a cloud (probably the Shekinah) suddenly overshadowed them. Matthew calls it a light or bright cloud. According to some readings, it was a cloud of light. (9) Meantime (that is, while Peter was speaking) Moses and Elias disappear, so that the presence of the cloud succeeded the presence of Moses and Elias. (10) As the cloud enveloped the disciples, they were filled with fear. Luke ix. 34. (11) Instantly the voice of the Father issues from the cloud, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." See notes on Matt. iii. 17. As Moses and Elias had previously departed, the disciples could not doubt that the meaning of the voice was to be applied to Jesus. (12) Hearing the voice, the disciples fell on their faces. Matt. xvii. 6. (13) While they thus lay prostrate, the cloud also disappears; (14) and with the departure of the cloud, Jesus, by an act of his own power, as we suppose, resumed his former appearance. (15) Going then to his disciples, he touched them, bid them rise and not fear. (16) Then they arose, and looking round (perhaps to see again those glorious forms, Mark ix. 8) they perceived that Moses and Elias had departed, that the cloud had disappeared, that Jesus was no longer transfigured, but the same as when he ascended the mountain with them and began to pray.

Thus, a succession of testimonies to the mystery of our Lord's person was furnished by this most wonderful transaction. The transfiguration of his person into the appearance of such majesty, was of itself an overpowering testimony to his glory as the Son of Man. Then the appearing of Moses and Elias, and their conversing with him about his decease or transition from humiliation to his former glory, was another amazing testimony to the glory of his nature, as the Son of Man. Having accomplished the object of their mission, nothing remained to detain them longer, and they departed. The crowning testimony of all followed:—it was the testimony of the Father himself. In order to this, the mysterious cloud appears, as soon as Moses and Elias disappear, and while Jesus with the three disciples only, were within it, the voice is uttered, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him." No greater testimony than this could be given. Then the cloud also disappears, and the transfiguration is passed.

Many questions are suggested by this wonderful transaction, but we must not too curiously inquire into a matter so profoundly mysterious. There can be no doubt that there were reasons for ordering the whole scene exactly in the way it occurred, although we should not be able to discover them. We may safely believe, however, that none are so probable as those which tend most to exalt the majesty and glory of the manhood of our blessed Lord. As to the transfiguration itself, we are inclined to regard it as a temporary display or revealing of the concealed glory of his person; or, as an outward manifestation or uncovering, for a little space, of the inherent glory of his manhood. John xvii. 5. See notes on Matt. xiv. 22—33.

We call the transfiguration a miracle, and such it was. But his return from his transfigured, or glorified, to his inglorious form, is not commonly regarded in the same light. Yet, if we consider the essentially inherent glory of our Lord's person, it was, perhaps, a greater miracle to conceal it under the humble veil of his flesh, and keep it concealed, except so far as his miracles occasionally displayed it, from his incarnation to his resurrection, than to uncover or reveal it, as he did on the occasion which we are considering. We add a few observations upon some parts of this narrative.

LUKE IX. 29. "And as he prayed," &c.

The Evangelist does not mention the subject of his prayer, but as he ascended the mountain to make this display of his glory, we may reasonably conclude that his prayer had respect to it. If this supposition be admitted, it would follow that his prayer was the appointed means for that end, and as faith or implicit trust in God is the life and energy of prayer, we may conclude that the transfiguration of the human person of the Lord Jesus was wrought through that means. See John xvii. 5. Our Lord's faith, *as a man*, was perfect. It took hold of God, and drew from God whatsoever he asked, John xi. 41, 42, being always agreeable to the Divine will. Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.

LUKE IX. 30. "And behold there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who, appearing in glory, spake of his decease [*ἐξόδου,*] which he should accomplish [*πληροῦν*] at Jerusalem."

The Evangelist is very explicit. Two men, not angels, appeared, and these men were Moses and Elias. It was not, then, a scenic representation merely, but the real appearing of two departed saints, in forms of glory, sent to earth from the heavenly world expressly to hold this interview with the Saviour. They *talked* with him in audible, intelligible words, which the three apostles heard and understood. The subject of their discourse was the same our Lord had, for the first time,



broached to his disciples a week before, *namely*, his sufferings and death at Jerusalem. Moses and Elias knew the purpose of the Lord's humiliation, and the place of its termination or accomplishment. They spoke of his decease (decession, *decessus*, ἐξόδου,) or departure, at Jerusalem. The identity of the subject confirms the interpretation of the promise before suggested. Matt. xvi. 28. It is as though our Lord had assumed temporarily his glory, to repeat, in Peter's hearing, the very things at which that apostle had revolted, in order to show him how differently these saints regarded them.

However this may be, we may regard our Lord's brief intercourse with these departed saints, as a type, or exhibition on a small scale, of the society and intercourse between him and his redeemed in his kingdom. In this sense, it was a fulfilment of his promise; for it was an open manifestation of himself, as Son of Man, in the glory with which he will appear in his kingdom.

MATT. XVII. 4. "Then answered Peter and said, Lord, it is good for us to be here. If thou wilt, let us make three tabernacles: one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."

Peter evidently regarded his Master as the greater of the three glorious persons before him. Whether his glory surpassed that of the others, or whether the manner of their address and demeanour convinced him of it, we are not informed. Nor are we told how he could know one departed saint from another. The fact only is recorded, and it seems to argue either that the apostles were, for the occasion, gifted with new powers of discernment, or that these saints made themselves known to the apostles by some extraordinary power which they possessed. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. But the transaction is too mysterious to be reasoned about. It belongs to the invisible world, or rather to the times of the kingdom yet to be revealed.

We cannot leave this passage without calling the reader's attention again, for a moment to the character of the apostle. He was in a scene of unearthly glory. Before him stood the Son of Man, attended by the greatest of the prophets, and all three attired with the splendour of the heavenly world. Who but Peter would dare to utter a voice or mingle his words with theirs in such a scene! It is obvious to remark that he neither appreciated the nature nor the object of the transaction, nor the character nor condition of the persons before him. Evidently he was awe-struck and bewildered. Luke ix. 33; Mark ix. 6. In that there is no marvel. The marvel is that he should speak at all. The character of Peter, in this respect, is unique. No such record as this is made of any other man.

One observation more upon the whole of this passage, Matt. xvii. 1—8, and the instruction it was intended to convey. We have eye-witnesses of the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus; eye-witnesses of his person after his resurrection; eye-witnesses of his ascension; and eye-witnesses of his glorified person, and of the manner of his intercourse with the saints in glory; but not in this order: for the Divine purpose did not permit of the Lord's return to the earth after his final ascension, until he should come in his kingdom. Acts iii. 21. Hence he appeared in his glory for a little space, during the period of his humiliation, and two of the most eminent saints of the former dispensation were sent to hold converse with him, in the presence of three of his disciples, in order that the Church might have, through their testimony, out of order and before the appointed time, an example or outward manifestation of the kingdom, and of the hope to which his elect people are called. In this view of the transfiguration, it was a most gracious provision for the comfort and encouragement of the Church in her pilgrimage through this world. See Heb. xii. 2, 22, 23; xiii. 13, 14; 1 Pet. i. 10—18. For by thus teaching the mystery of our Lord's glorification in connection with the mystery of his death, it marvellously joined the sufferings of the cross with the kingdom and the crown.

MATT. XVII. 9. "And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision [what things they had seen, Mark ix. 9] to no man, until the Son of Man be risen [again] from the dead."

From this verse we infer that the instruction to be derived from the transfiguration was designed for the Church. No purpose connected with our Lord's personal ministry among the Jews was to be served by it. We may observe also that the Lord's resurrection from the dead was *the epoch*, very nearly, of his entering permanently into his glory, Luke xxiv. 26, so that the injunction in effect was, not to speak of this temporary glorification of the Lord's person so long as he continued in his state of humiliation, nor until he was ready to pour out the spirit of glory upon his followers.\* We have no

\* The author of an interesting little treatise, lately published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, entitled, "The Last Days of Jesus," supposes the mountain in Galilee, mentioned in Matt. xxviii. 16, was the mountain on which the Lord was transfigured, and that the appearance in Galilee "was a substantial reproduction of the transfiguration scene." In this way he accounts for the two opposite effects produced: "some worshipped and some doubted." In this conjecture, we think, the author mistakes the object of the Saviour's appearance after his resurrection, which was to establish the *reality* of the fact of the resurrection of the *very* body of flesh which was crucified,

evidence that the disciples revealed the secret until after the day of Pentecost, but one use they then made of it may be learned from the second epistle of Peter, the leading doctrine of which is the second coming of the Lord.

Both the vision, or what they had just seen, and the rising from the dead, are here predicated of the Son of Man. It was the glory of his manhood which they had seen in the transfiguration, and it was as Son of Man that he was to rise from the dead and ascend into heaven, John vi. 62, and thereupon to enter permanently into the glory in which they had just seen him. The prohibition amounts to this: that the disciples were not to speak of this temporary glorification of the Son of Man, so long as he should continue in his state of humiliation. Why this injunction was made, we can only conjecture. But the injunction itself proves that no use could be made of the vision, consistently with the Divine plan, during our Lord's personal ministry among the Jews; and the implied permission to speak of it after his resurrection, shows that the instruction it conveyed was intended for the Church. It is not probable that the three disciples at that time understood either the motives for secrecy, or when, or by what means, they would be absolved from it. For Mark, ix. 10, observes that, though they kept it faithfully among themselves, they did not so much as understand what the rising of the Son of Man from the dead could mean. See John xx. 9.

and for that purpose alone St. Paul uses it, 1 Cor. xv. 5, 6, the evidence of which would be impaired by transfiguration. Besides it seems impossible that St. Peter would refer to the transfiguration in the special manner he does, 2 Pet. i. 16—18, if the same transaction had been repeated afterwards in the presence of the whole body of (or more than five hundred of) the disciples. If the Lord had been twice transfigured, there would be the same reason for recording both, and we cannot give any reason why the last should be mysteriously concealed, and the first be circumstantially recorded. It may be sufficient to say, however, that this opinion or conjecture is without evidence, and the estimable author referred to, it may be presumed, regarded it in that light.

## CHAPTER V.

The coming of Elias.—Casting out Demons.—The Apostles' want of Faith for Miracles.—The Faith for working Miracles.—Jesus as Son of Man and as Christ.—Jesus as Son of Man and as Messiah.—Christ's Kingdom as Messiah.—Christ's paying Tribute.—The Apostles ask, Who shall be greatest?—Those like little Children to be greatest.—Little Children saved.—The Son of Man came to save the Lost.—Contending Brethren to be Reconciled.—Sense of the word Church.—Binding and Loosing.—The Discipline of the Church.—The Regeneration.—The New Heavens and the New Earth.—The Apostles to sit on Thrones.—All Believers to receive Rewards.—Christ foretells his Crucifixion.

**MATTHEW XVII. 10.** "And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the Scribes, that Elias must first come?"

This verse should be read, or at least be interpreted, with the 8th verse. Thus: "And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the Scribes that Elias must *first* come?" This question was suggested by the disappearance of Elias, and it implies a doubt whether the doctrine of the Scribes was true. The disciples knew that Jesus was the Messiah. The transfiguration proved it beyond the possibility of a doubt. Elias had just appeared to Jesus, but he had departed, and Jesus was now returning to his ministry among the people. Besides, if this brief appearance of Elias could be considered the "coming" taught by the Scribes, still Elias did not come *first*. How then could the doctrine of the Scribes be true? Such was the reasoning, as we suppose, suggested by the vision.

The reply of our Lord to the question, confirmed this doctrine of the Scribes, and at the same time vindicated his title to the Messiahship.

**MATT. XVII. 11.** "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly cometh first, [as the Scribes say,] and [when he shall come] he will restore all things."

As if he had said: "Nothing that you have seen or heard contradicts, or conflicts with this doctrine of the Scribes. For, at the coming of which they speak, Elias will really appear to this people, and restore all things to their former state; and this is a note or mark by which the coming of Elias, foretold by the prophets, may be certainly known. The coming of Elias at my transfiguration was designed for an altogether different purpose. It was not foretold by any prophet, nor have the Scribes any idea of the coming of Elias, which you have seen. Nor must you even speak of it to them, or to any other person, until after my ministry to this people shall be ended."

This part of our Lord's answer, then, had respect to the futurity of the nation, and by it he taught the disciples that the doctrine of the Scribes, so considered, was true. They had visible evidence that all things had not been restored, and, consequently, that the appearing and departing of Elias, which they had witnessed, without so much as showing himself to the people, nor to them except for a few moments, could not be the coming of Elias taught by the Scribes. But, if our Lord had concluded his answer with these words, the perplexity of the disciples would have been increased; for, how then could he be the Messiah, if the doctrine of the Scribes were true, seeing that Elias had not yet appeared and restored all things? Would not the Lord's answer have been equivalent to a confession that he was not the Messiah, although the vision proved that he was, and the voice of the Father commanded them to obey him as such?

To anticipate any doubt which might arise from a simple confirmation of the doctrine of the Scribes, he added:

MATT. XVII. 12. "But I say unto you, that Elias is come already and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed."

By these words our Lord vindicates his Messiahship, and reconciles the teachings of the vision with the doctrine of the Scribes. Elias had come in person, but not to restore all things. Yet why should he come for any purpose, if Jesus were not the Messiah? Of this coming of Elias, the Scribes neither knew nor taught anything. Further: John the Baptist had so far fulfilled the office of Elias as to vindicate his title to the Messiahship, and that, too, consistently with the sense of these Scriptures from which the Scribes derived their doctrine. Isaiah xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1.

Yet John did not restore all things. His ministry was not only unsuccessful, but he suffered at their hands. How then could John be the Elias who shall restore all things at his coming? The disciples must have felt that something was wanting to make the explanation complete; but they acquiesced in it as satisfactory upon the ground of the vision and the authority of their Master; for he did not enter into any elucidation of his meaning, much less explain how it could be that Elias was yet to come and restore all things, and yet had already come and been rejected and put to death by the nation.

The truth is, the disciples were unable, at that time, to comprehend the explanation of the matter. They could not believe, or even conceive, that the Messiah would be rejected and put to death. Matt. xvi. 22; Mark ix. 32; Luke ix. 45; xviii. 34. They knew not what he meant by the saying, "till the Son of

Man be risen from the dead." Mark ix. 10; John xx. 9. Consequently they thought of the Lord's advent at that time as his successful and only advent. Could they have conceived of two advents of the Messiah—the first to suffer, and the second to reign—the solution of any doubt arising from the Lord's answer, would have been easy. It would have been obvious to conclude that each advent might, in the Divine purpose, require a harbinger; and thus the doctrine of the Scribes concerning the future coming and successful ministry of Elias, would be consistent with the divine mission of John and the Messiahship of our Lord. It is proper to add, that the prophecies concerning John the Baptist and Elias, Isa. xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1; iv. 5, 6, are couched in such terms that they may be applied to one or two forerunners; or, in other words, so that John might be concealed, if we may so express it, under the drapery of Elias. Certain it is, our Lord did not say John was really Elias, (*juxta fidem corporis*, to use Jerome's words;) but, that he fulfilled the office of Elias at that time, and in that sense might be called Elias, as has already been shown in the preceding notes. See notes on John i. 22, 23; Matt. iii. 1, 3; xi. 2—15.

MATT. XVII. 12. "Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them."

By these words our Lord again foretells his rejection by the nation, linking the issue of his own ministry with that of John's. Mark, ix. 13, represents him as saying that John's sufferings were predicted by the prophets. But by which of them, and where? This is considered by some commentators a point of difficulty. Some have resorted to the expedient of transposing the words "as it is written of him," in the end of the 13th verse, so as to make them the third clause. "But I say unto you, that Elias is indeed come, *as it is written of him*, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed." See *Whitby* and *Scott*. But there is no ancient version or MS. which justifies the transposition. Euthymius says that Isaiah predicted the sufferings of John, but he does not cite the place. In the margin, the 49th chapter of Isaiah is referred to, but Jansenius (*Harmony*, 502, Col. 2) found nothing in that chapter which he could so interpret.\*

\* According to some MSS., and the Vulgate and Syriac versions, the 12th verse of Mark ix. should be read thus: "Elias verily cometh first and restoreth all things, and (*as it has been written*, *καθως γεγραπται*, of the Son of Man) that he may suffer many things and be set at nought;" that is, *καθως* is read instead of *πας*, and the whole phrase may then be read parenthetically. See Griesbach, Knappius, Mill, Beausobre and L'Enfant's version. Adopting this reading, the verse may be paraphrased thus: "And he answered and told them, Elias indeed cometh before the Christ, as the Scribes teach; and at his coming he will restore all things. But Elias cometh *also* that he may suffer, and be set at nought, as it has been written (*καθως γεγραπται*) of the Son of Man. This

The true explanation appears to be, that the person and ministry of our blessed Lord were so bound together in the Divine purpose, with the person and ministry of John, so far as they respected that people at that time, in their national capacity, that whatsoever was written expressly of the rejection of the Lord Jesus, as the Messiah, was virtually written of John as his herald; and hence it is that our Lord, in this passage, Mark ix. 13, combined and compared, in the same breath, John's rejection and suffering with his own; alleging, as he did, that such was the sense of the prophecies. See the notes on Matt. xi. 2—15; iii. 3; Luke iii. 20, 21.

MATT. XVII. 11. "And restore all things."

At the time our Lord addressed these words to the three apostles, the things to be restored or the desolations to be repaired did not appear. The Jewish Commonwealth was still in existence; the country and cities, though subject to the Roman power, were flourishing. The Levitical worship was observed; they had their gorgeous temple, their synagogues, their teachers, and rulers. Their State was yet to become one vast ruin. The people were yet to be scattered among all nations, as the necessary consequence in the Divine plan of the smiting of their true Shepherd, Matt. xxvi. 31, and be subjected to a long and galling captivity, during which great diversities would be wrought in their character.\* From this dispersion they were to be restored and reconstituted into a Commonwealth again, before the work of Elias could begin. Both Peter (Acts iii. 21) and James (Acts xv. 16,) after they received

the Scribes do not teach, for they do not understand the prophecies they undertake to explain. Moreover I say unto you that Elias has indeed already come, and they knew him not, and what they listed, that they did to him; as it is virtually written of him in the prophecies concerning the Messiah. In like manner, the Son of Man is about to suffer by their hands."

These last words pointed so plainly to John the Baptist, that our Lord's allusion could not be mistaken. Matt. xvii. 13. Still, the mystery was not cleared up to the apprehension of the apostles, for the reasons suggested above; for they were not at that time capable of understanding how much was involved in "the restitution of all things," nor the means through which so great an event was to be accomplished.

\* It is plain from the question the disciples put to the Lord at his last interview with them, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Acts i. 6, they had no idea that the Roman power was yet to be exerted to the utter ruin of their Commonwealth, and bring them into a captivity, which was to endure more than twenty-five times longer than their captivity under the kings of the ancient Babylon; and it may be observed that the Jews in general so construed their Scriptures that they saw predicted in them but one captivity under one Babylon—but one return from Babylon—one advent of Elias—one advent of Messiah, and *that* his advent of glory and power in his kingdom. Whereas, in fact, two oppressing Babylons were foretold, and two returns from captivity, two advents of Elias, and two advents of Messiah; yet but one kingdom.

the gift of inspiration, refer to this restitution in which Elias is to perform a part, as future. The apostle James represents it, on the authority of the prophecy of Amos, ix. 11, 12, as following the work of taking out of the Gentiles an elect people for Christ, Acts xv. 16; that is, the present dispensation of the Gospel among the Gentiles for the gathering and completion of the Church.

But we suppose, and so understand the apostle, that the prophecy of Amos has respect rather to the spiritual upbuilding of Israel, than to the rebuilding of their wasted cities and the reconstruction of their political or national State. The restoration of Israel to their land, according to the Scriptures, is to be brought about by other means than the ministry of Elias. Isa. lxi. 4; Deut. xxviii. 49—66; xxx. 1—6; Isa. xi.; xlix. 22, 23; lx.; lxi. 4—7; Jer. xxxiii. 5—8; xxxi.; Ezek. xxxiv., xxxvi., xxxvii., xxxviii., xxxix.; Hos. iii. 4, 5; and many other places. Elias will not, as we conceive, have anything to do in the preparatory work of their political restoration. At his coming, he will find Israel, to a considerable extent, though perhaps not wholly, restored to their land, their cities rebuilt, and their State reconstructed, and the people endeavouring, perhaps, to worship God according to the law of Moses. In these circumstances we can conceive there will be occasion for the ministry of some great prophet, to be attended with greater power than John's was. Mal. iv. 5, 6.

The question concerning the future mission of Elias seems, therefore, to be intimately, if not inseparably, connected with the restoration of Israel to the land God gave to Abraham. If the Scriptures teach that Israel will be thus restored, we can perceive no reason why God should not send them a prophet after their restoration, endued with powers which shall insure, Mal. iv. 5, 6, the success of his ministry. And if he sent Elias *in any sense* before our Lord entered on his ministry of humiliation, why should he not send Elias (or an Elias) to them after their restoration? There appears to be no more reason for understanding the Scriptures relating to the future coming of Elias *figuratively*, than there is of understanding the prophecies relating to the restoration of Israel figuratively. Yet many persons are ready to admit the latter who deny the former. But if the prophecies concerning their restoration signify nothing more than their conversion to the Gospel, and their being gathered into Christian Churches in the lands where they now dwell, the principles of interpretation by which we reach such a conclusion, would justify us in understanding the prophecy concerning the sending of Elijah, Mal. iv. 5, 6, as meaning nothing more or different from the outpouring of the



Holy Spirit upon that people in their dispersed and dissociate condition. What need would there then be of the coming of Elias in person? What would be the use of his ministry? What would he have to restore? Where would he appear? Where would he find all Israel? The field of his mission would be the world. Again: Would he find the people converted? If so, why need Elias be sent to them in person? Would he find them unconverted? It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convert men during this dispensation by means of the gospel ministry. Why then should Elias be sent with the power of the same Spirit to supersede the ordinary ministry of preaching and the appointed means of grace? Such are the speculative questions suggested by the spiritualizing scheme of interpretation.

On the other hand, if we adopt the conclusion that Israel will be restored to their land, at the termination of this dispensation of the Gospel and the proximate coming of the Son of Man, none of these questions can arise. For, entertaining this view, we should expect to see the wasted cities of Israel literally rebuilt—their now empty land actually filled with people—its vales, and hills, and mountains cultivated again, and places for the worship of God erected. In one word, we can admit, without hesitation, that all the prophecies relating to what that people will be and do, or to what God will do for them (including even this prophecy of sending Elijah to them,) will be literally and punctually fulfilled. And as they have respect to a future dispensation of God's government over the world, it does not concern us of the Gentiles now to contend for a spiritual interpretation of them, as though they concerned the Christian Church, any more than it concerned the Jews of our Lord's day to know what God would do for or with the Gentiles after the Levitical dispensation expired. The fact that many Christian writers have done so, has been the occasion of throwing obscurity on other points of practical concern and even of serious error. Indeed, it is not possible, as we conceive, to reach such a result except by principles and modes of reasoning which leave no fact secure from cavil, no doctrine from perversion, no part of the Bible safe from the attacks of neologians and infidels.

MATT. XVII. 14—21. (Mark ix. 14—27; Luke ix. 37—42.)

Verse 16. "And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him."

Yet the Lord had given these disciples power over unclean spirits without exception, to cast them out; and power to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Matt. x. 1, 8. Why, then, could they not cast out the unclean spirit on this

occasion; they had exerted the power successfully before. Mark vi. 13. Why could they not do so now? This was the question the disciples themselves put to their Master, after they had retired with him from the crowds, verse 19. He ascribed their failure to their unbelief, verse 20. Yet when he sent them forth to preach the kingdom, their faith was not made a condition for the successful exercise of the powers conferred. Even Judas is not excepted from this grant of miraculous power, yet no one can suppose he had any real faith or holiness. John vi. 71; xii. 6. Why, then, was faith necessary on this occasion? We suggest the following answer to these inquiries:

The miraculous powers with which the twelve apostles had before been invested, were conferred with an especial view to the mission on which they were then sent, and were confined to that mission. The special design of this gift of powers was to authenticate the proclamation they were commanded to make. Matt. x. 7. So long as they were engaged in that mission, we do not suppose they failed, or even could fail, in any attempt to cure a disease, or cast out a demon of any kind; because a failure would have impaired the evidence of their proclamation. The Divine honour and power were chiefly concerned in this measure. It was God's testimony to the nation of the near approach of his kingdom, and his own exhibition of the pre-appointed evidence of the fact. Steadily, and with unerring effect therefore, the power of the name of Jesus, when invoked in execution of his command, see Matt. xii. 27, overcame all the power of the enemy, without prayer or fasting, and even irrespectively of faith, either in those who received the benefit of the miracles or in the apostles who performed them. But the apostles, as we learn from Mark vi. 30, returned from that mission at the death of John the Baptist, and it does not appear that they were afterwards sent forth to preach the kingdom during our Lord's personal ministry. The special object of this extraordinary gift of power having been accomplished, the gift itself was withdrawn; that is to say, they were put back into the condition they were in, before they were sent forth to proclaim the kingdom.

It is true that after the death of John the Baptist, seventy *other* disciples were invested with similar powers, Luke x. 1—9, in order to qualify them for another special mission. Here it should be observed, the twelve apostles were sent to all the cities of Israel without exception. Matt. x. 6, 23. The seventy disciples, on the other hand, were sent only to those cities and places *whither the Lord himself would come*. Luke x. 1. This is a difference important to be noticed. The apostles were sent

to proclaim the kingdom to the whole *nation*. Every city and place of Israel was within the scope of their mission. The seventy disciples were sent before the Lord to prepare his way, and by their preaching and miracles to incline the minds of the people to receive him. It was a gracious means designed to prevent, if possible, the rejection of himself as the Son of Man and the Saviour of the world, by any to whom he should afterwards personally come. The seventy were commanded to repeat and confirm the proclamation the twelve apostles had made, Luke x. 9, 11, for the kingdom was still nigh to them as individuals composing the nation, although it had been virtually rejected by the nation itself, by the rejection of John the Baptist. The power conferred on the seventy disciples, like that conferred on the twelve apostles, appears to have been unqualified, and in no respects dependent on their faith. Luke x. 17.

Apart, then, from a special design or purpose connected with our Lord's official relations or functions, either as Messiah or Son of Man, we do not suppose that any of the apostles or disciples had power to work miracles, except through faith in him; but with faith, some who did not join themselves to the company of the disciples, could cast out devils in his name. Luke x. 49; Mark ix. 39. And herein lies the force of our Lord's remark, when that fact was mentioned to him by John: "There is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can (*δυνήσεται*, shall be able to) lightly speak evil of me,—because his faith, through which he alone can receive such power, is a proof that he is one of mine." Mark ix. 39; Luke ix. 50.

These considerations open to us the actual condition of the apostles, in respect to miraculous powers, during our Lord's personal ministry. From the time of their call until the time they were commissioned and sent forth to preach the kingdom, they had not power to perform miracles, except through faith; and it does not appear that they attempted, during this period of their discipleship, to perform a miracle on any occasion. From the time they were sent forth to preach the kingdom, until their return from that mission at the death of John the Baptist, they had the power to perform, in execution of their mission, miracles of healing and miracles of power over demons; but this power, so to speak, was appended or made appurtenant to the commission given them, and ceased when that commission was fully executed. From that time onward to the close of our Lord's personal ministry, they had not the power to perform a miracle, except through faith in him; and the power was not conferred on them again until after our Lord's final ascension,

when they received the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and among others, the gift of the faith, which at this time they had not.

Bearing these considerations in mind, we return to the text before quoted. The nine disciples whom the Lord left behind, when he ascended the mountain, failed through their want of faith in Jesus, notwithstanding the many proofs he had given them of his Divine nature and power. The wonderful works they had themselves done by his command, to say nothing of the other proofs he had given them of his nature and attributes, should have wrought faith in them, if indeed faith could be produced by evidence of the most powerful and convincing kind. Hence the severity of our Lord's reproof: "O faithless and perverse generation, (addressing his disciples,) how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you?" They attempted the miracle, relying, it is probable, on the success they had while executing the commission they had lately fulfilled. Evidently they were surprised by their failure. The tone of their question indicates it. No doubt, at the commencement of their mission, they were surprised at their success, Luke x. 17, and the Lord, without explaining to them *why* the powers formerly conferred upon them had ceased, adapts his answer to the condition in which they actually were at that time, in which also they were to continue, until they should be sent forth again upon a wider mission after his ascension, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the gift of true faith.

MATT. XVII. 19, 20. "Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could we not cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: For verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, [meaning, perhaps, the mountain from which he had just descended,] Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

This is a difficult passage to explain. The difficulty is to determine what our Lord meant by "faith as a grain of mustard-seed." We have many examples of persons who sought the Lord for healing, with faith sufficient to receive the benefit they sought; yet we have no reason to suppose they had the faith requisite to perform a miracle in his name. The father who besought him on this occasion is an example. Mark ix. 23, 24. Had he the faith which our Lord described, and could he have ejected the foul spirit from his child? Had the apostles less faith than this father? That the father had *some* faith is evident. Mark ix. 23, 24. Is all faith of the same kind? Or is there one kind of faith sufficient to *receive* a blessing from the Saviour, but not sufficient to impart or convey a blessing

from the Saviour to another person, while there is another kind of faith sufficient for both these purposes? 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

That there is some ground for such distinctions may be inferred from the fact before stated, and also from the cessation of miracles in the Church; for otherwise the cessation of miracles would prove the utter extinction of faith, and consequently, of the Church itself. Let us adopt the distinction for a moment, and proceed to consider how far it will serve to explain this passage. The apostles were applied to on this occasion as the *known disciples* and *ministers* of the Lord Jesus. It is not improbable that the father who brought his child to them, had seen or heard of the miracles they had performed, verse 16, and they essayed to act, as they acted before, in that character. They failed in this attempt, because they had not the faith, as his ministers, (*actively*) to fulfil the functions of their office. If we consider our Lord's answer, in verse 17, as addressed to the apostles in their ministerial character, and intended as a reproof to them, we may find an intimation in it of the deficiency with which they were especially chargeable. "How long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you?" As if he had said, "Must I for ever remain with you performing such signs and wonders as you have seen, which demonstrate the glory of my person and the greatness of my power? Will ye never learn to know who I am, and to believe in me as I am? What other signs and wonders must I show you, if those which you have seen do not convince you?" It is evident they did not properly appreciate the evidence they had of his glory and majesty, and consequently their conceptions of his nature and offices were low and grovelling. They had no clear apprehension of his Deity, or of his power and glory as Son of Man and Lord of the world. This deficiency unfitted them for his active service as stewards and dispensers of his Divine powers. To serve in this capacity they must needs have a faith founded upon a clear apprehension of the nature, attributes, and glorious majesty of their Master, as God-Man-Messiah. But his incarnate and outwardly humble condition, or the veil of his flesh, as the apostle expresses it, Heb. x. 20, concealed the inherent and essential glory of his person almost as effectually from them as it did from the masses of the people, and the veil continued until the cloud at last concealed his body from their sight, on the day of his final ascension. Even Peter, James, and John, who were witnesses of the transfiguration, are not to be excepted from this remark. John xiii. 36, 38; Mark x. 35; xiv. 50, 71; Luke xxii. 32; Matt. xviii. 3.

If we may adopt this view of the passage, the faith which our Lord spoke of, had respect to the powers of his kingdom,

and to the apostles as his ministers in his kingdom, and dispensers or channels for the dispensation of those powers. Such faith is of too high a nature to be produced or wrought in man, as he now is, by mere evidence. It is the product of the Holy Spirit's power alone. Accordingly on the day of Pentecost the apostles received it, Acts iii. 16, in such measure as the Divine purposes at that time required. But the full exhibition of the power of faith, as we may infer from the example our Lord gives in this passage, (comp. 1 Cor. xiii. 2,) is not to be expected during this order of things. The faith which feeds and sustains the Church now, is more like the faith of the father who besought the Saviour to heal his child, Mark ix. 22, 24, than the active energizing principle which the Saviour describes and will give to those whom he will make partners in his throne. Rev. iii. 21. More adequate and realizing views of the majesty and glory of the Lord, would, no doubt, impart unwonted energy to the faith of the Church even in this dispensation; but whether such views will be attained before the coming of the Lord, depends wholly upon the operations of the Holy Spirit, for which we can only pray, with such faith as we now have.

MATT. XVII. 21. "Howbeit this kind" [of demons, or this kind or order of beings called demons] "goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

It seems extraordinary that our Lord, after ascribing such power to faith, should seem to admit that any kind of foul spirits could not be overcome by it. It seems extraordinary also, that he should ascribe to prayer and fasting greater powers than those he had ascribed to faith. Yet these are deductions which some make from the text. In order to interpret this passage we must rightly appreciate our Lord's position as a teacher of such men as the apostles were at that time. Their mistaken views on some points, and their utter ignorance of coming and even impending events, have already been frequently alluded to. In conveying instruction to them he took them as they were, and expressed himself in such terms as were best suited to their extremely limited powers of apprehension. Had he said to them, in plain language, that they were about to pass into a new dispensation, entirely different from that then existing, in which they would be subjected to a new discipline, and receive new influences; and that this dispensation was to be introduced by his crucifixion, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, which would be followed by the mission of the Holy Spirit, they would not have understood him; for they could not so much as conceive of his rejection and death. Such sayings "would have been hid from them,

neither would they have known the things which were spoken." Luke xviii. 34.

Our Lord, therefore, did not take this method, although his allusion, in the words under consideration was, as we conceive, to the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, which he denotes by one of its adjuncts, or ordinances. Fasting was not a part of the discipline which our Lord appointed to his disciples. Indeed it was his will and appointment that they *should not fast* while he remained with them. Matt. ix. 14, 15; Mark ii. 19, 20. But when he should be taken away from them, that is after his ascension, then it was his will that they should fast as well as pray. The allusion, though it may seem to us obscure, is to post-ascension times, and the new order of things and discipline which would then be established; then, through prayer and fasting, they would receive from the Holy Spirit the faith by which they would be able to cast out this kind of demons. The words of the Saviour are limited to the occasion and the question he was answering; or the case in hand. He declared the cause of their failure in that particular instance; leaving it to them to infer that in all cases requiring the exercise of miraculous power, the want of faith would be followed by the same result.

In confirmation of this interpretation it may be added, that it does not appear that any of the apostles did perform any miracles after the death of John the Baptist, until they received the gifts of the Spirit after our Lord's ascension; and if we consider the new posture of the nation in consequence of that event, and the change in our Lord's ministry consequent upon it, see notes on Matt. xiv. 10, we cannot perceive any reason, arising from their official relations to the Lord Jesus, why they should. It is probable they were his constant attendants on his journeyings from place to place; and when persons brought their sick to be healed, the Lord himself was present to heal them. The Evangelists uniformly represent him, and not his disciples, as performing the cures. On the occasion in question, nine of the apostles were for a short time separated from their Master. It was an extraordinary occurrence, brought about by an extraordinary design or occasion. We do not know that they were separated as long, at any time afterwards, until they fled from him in the garden of Gethsemane. Matt. xxvi. 56; Mark xiv. 50.

The passage is regarded by all interpreters as very obscure, and the foregoing interpretation, if not satisfactory, may suggest one which is so. At least it seems preferable to that which ascribes the failure of the apostles to the neglect of a practice which they were not required at that time to observe—a prac-

tice which, for some reason, it was not proper or possible for them to observe. Mark ii. 19. Indeed, if the reader will duly consider what has been said in the note on verse 16, and the other notes therein referred to, he will not hastily reject this interpretation.

MATT. XVII. 22, 23. "And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, the Son of Man [בֶּן אָדָם *Ben Adam*, Ps. viii. 6] shall be betrayed into the hands of men, [בְּיַד אַנְשִׁים *bidi anashim*] and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again." Mark ix. 31.

It has been already remarked, that our Lord is to be considered under three distinct relations, which met and were blended in his person. He was the Divine Word, the second person of the Trinity, and as such the Maker and Governor of the universe. Col. i. 16. He was the Son of Man—the Adam of the Covenant, or as St. Paul calls him, the second man—the last Adam. 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47. In this character he was and is, under God, 1 Cor. xv. 28, the absolute Sovereign and universal Lord and Governor of the world. As such he is also the High-priest of the world, and the only Mediator between it and all its concerns and God. His sovereignty and priesthood go together, and because he sustains the one, no other being in the universe is capable of sustaining or performing, officially or acceptably, the functions of the other. He was also the Messiah of Israel, and as such, the Christ. But his priestly office, though commensurate with his kingly office as Son of Man, was by God's covenant with David united to or connected with his Messianic office. Hence it was, that although the purpose of his first advent was to atone for the sin of the world, 1 John ii. 2; John i. 29, and redeem the world as his inheritance; his mission at that time was nevertheless confined to Israel. Matt. xv. 24; x. 5, 6. At his second advent he will come to take possession of the world as his kingdom, and to rule over it as the Son of Man. Matt. xvi. 27; xxv. 31, 32; John v. 27; Heb. ix. 28. See also the notes on Matt. viii. 20, 23—27; ix. 4; xiii. 37—43.

Bearing these distinctions in mind, we observe that our blessed Lord, whenever he spoke of his approaching sufferings, always designated himself as the Son of Man; as if the body he bore as Son of Man was the sacrifice appointed for him to make. Matt. xx. 18, 28; xxvi. 2, 24, 45; xvii. 12; Mark viii. 31; ix. 31; x. 33, 45; xiv. 21, 41; Luke ix. 22, 44; xxii. 22. But his priestly office, to which the act of making sacrifice belonged, could not, in the nature of things, as we have shown, be inferior to the order of his manhood, see notes on Matt. xvi. 13, 15; xxi. 28; and the apostle Paul, in Heb. v. 6, 10; vi. 20;



vii. 16, 21, expressly teaches us that his priesthood was according to the order of Melchizedec, the nature of which he briefly describes. It was higher than the order of Aaron, and distinguished from it in many important respects. Heb. vi., vii., viii. It was perpetual in his hands, verse 24—it was according to the power of an endless life, verse 16—it was universal in its scope and effect, verse 25. In all these respects it agrees with the nature, attributes, and office of Jesus as the Son of Man.

The apostles, on the other hand, in their epistles, never spoke of his sufferings as those of the Son of Man, but as the sufferings of Christ. Rom. v. 6, 8; viii. 34; 1 Pet. i. 11; v. 1, *et passim*. This difference is remarkable, and cannot be accounted for satisfactorily, except by the distinctions before taken between the Saviour's relations or offices as Son of Man and Messiah, and the nature and objects of the present dispensation of the Gospel, of which the apostles were the first ministers, and the final dispensation of the restitution of all things. This will appear by the following considerations.

Israel, according to the flesh, were the chosen or elect people of God. To them peculiar and very glorious promises were made, upon the condition of their obedience. Had they fulfilled this condition, or had that generation of Israel to whom the Saviour went, received him with true faith, and with the obedience of the heart, John i. 11; Matt. xxiii. 37; Ps. lxxxi. 13—16, then, indeed, they would have been a peculiar treasure unto God above all people—a kingdom of priests, and eminently holy above all other nations. Exod. xix. 5, 6. In order to the fulfilment of these promises, God graciously covenanted with David that the Son of Man—the Adam of the everlasting covenant, should become incarnate in his race, and the heir of his throne, by means of which covenant his universal priesthood was knitted or annexed to his office as Messiah. Such was the Divine plan; and although Israel fell, and thereby lost these privileges, that plan was not thereby frustrated. Rom. xi. 11; Matt. xxi. 43. A new dispensation was opened upon the fall of Israel, in order to gather out of all nations another elect people, who should take the place of Israel according to the flesh; and by becoming the peculiar people of Messiah, become also a peculiar treasure unto God and a kingdom of priests. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Now, the ministry committed to the apostles was appointed to gather this elect people for the Lord Jesus, not as the Son of Man, (for as such all the nations of the earth are his) but as the Messiah of Israel or the Church. Hence they preached him as the Christ, and spoke and wrote only of his sufferings *as Christ*, and not as the Son of Man.

Yet the gathering of this elect people is not the whole of our Lord's redemptive work. As the Son of Man and the patriarchal king and priest of the whole world—the true Melchizedec and king of peace,\* he redeemed, by the offering of his

\* Very various opinions have been entertained concerning the person of Melchizedec. Some have supposed he was Shem—others that he was a grandson of Shem; others that he was a great-grandson, or other descendant, of Japhet; others suppose he was Ham; others, still, that he was a righteous and peaceful Canaanitish king, cotemporary with Abraham, without pretending to determine anything more about him. See Stuart on Heb. vii. 3; Excursus xiii., and Brown's Dictionary. Other writers have maintained that he was the Holy Ghost. Yet others, that he was the Son of God in his Divine nature; and still others, that he was Christ himself: which last opinion was rejected by Professor Stuart, for the reason that it would force us to adopt the interpretation that "Christ is like unto himself," or that a comparison was formally instituted by the apostle between *Christ and himself*—"Cujus mentio est refutatio." Upon this question it may be remarked,

(1.) That he was *a man*, and not God or a divine person of the Trinity, follows from the nature of the office of a priest or mediator for man with God. Heb. v. 1, 4, 5; Gal. iii. 20; 1 Tim. ii. 5. See Matt. xx. 28; note, Mark x. 45.

(2.) That he was a greater man than Abraham is expressly asserted by the apostle. Heb. vii. 7, also 4. He was greater also than the whole Levitical priesthood put together, for virtually they all paid him tithes in Abraham, according to the reasoning of the apostle. What Canaanitish king could answer this description? Abraham had the promises, and was thereby distinguished above all his cotemporaries. He was called the friend of God. 2 Chron. xx. 7; Isa. xli. 1, 8; James ii. 23. He was the greatest mortal man of his day.

(3.) That Melchizedec was not a sinful mortal man, who needed to be redeemed himself by a priest of his own order, is proved by the dignity, excellency, and enduring nature of his priesthood: for if he were such, it would follow, that had he been on earth at the time our Lord offered his body as a sacrifice, though a mortal man, of our fallen race, he would have been the officiating priest, and performed the act of making the sacrifice, as Abraham essayed to do when he laid Isaac on the altar. But the whole course of the reasoning of the apostle, Heb. v., vi., vii., as well as our Lord's own declaration, John x. 17, 18, renders the things supposed impossible.

(4.) The description which the apostle gives us of Melchizedec, if we may understand him to mean what he says, proves that he was not a man of Adam's race. He was without father, without mother, without any (human) genealogy. He had neither beginning of days nor end of life, but was made like unto (or conformed unto) the Son of God, by reason, or means, as we suppose, of his union with the second person of the Trinity, and consequently, eternally a priest without a successor in his office.

(5.) Again, his name, which must be understood in its full and proper import, is descriptive of his person and office. Thus understood, it can belong to no being in the universe but the Son of Man—the Ben Adam of the everlasting covenant. For he only can truly be called the King of righteousness and peace, having universal and everlasting dominion over this world. Isa. ix. 6; Ps. ii. 6, 12; Dan. vii. 14; comp. also John viii. 58, with Heb. vii. 4. As the absolute Lord of the world, the Son of Man is the only being capable of the functions of High Priest of the world, and of Mediator between it and all its concerns and God. As the world, which was his inheritance, had fallen under the curse of God, he only could redeem it from apostasy and sin, and restore it to allegiance and the Divine favour.

(6.) David refers to Melchizedec in a prophecy concerning the exaltation of Christ as an extraordinary person. Ps. cx. 4: "Jehovah hath sworn, and it

body, the world itself, which was from the beginning his rightful possession as the Son of Man. Hence the apostle John, 1 John ii. 2, speaking in the name of the whole body of the elect, or of the universal Church, says, "Who is the propitiation for *our* (that is, his elect people's) sins, and not for *ours* only, but also *for the whole world.*"\* According to the same distinction, we understand an expression of the apostle Paul, in 1 Tim. iv. 10, "Who is the Saviour of all men, *especially* of those that believe."

The only salvation offered to men during this dispensation is this great or especial salvation of the elect people, given to Christ as his peculiar people, Tit. ii. 14, who are to inherit the privileges first conditionally promised to Israel according to the flesh, Exod. xix. 5, 6—called, on account of their subrogation, "the Israel of God," Gal. vi. 16. Hence the apostles preached Jesus as the Christ, not as the Son of Man. Their commissions and all their labours fell within the Messianic office of our Lord. His kingdom, as Messiah or the Christ, is, during the whole of this dispensation or order of things, the great and the only concern. All, to whom the Gospel is preached, are invited to embrace this great salvation and enter this kingdom. But when this kingdom shall be consummated by the gathering to himself of the accomplished aggregate of his elect—that is, of all who have been given to him in that relation or character, then will he come in his kingdom as the Son of Man, and

repenteth him not. Thou art a priest for ever, after [according to] the order [manner] of Melchizedec." It is true he gives no explanation of his person or character. Yet from the manner in which his name is introduced, he was of a rank worthy of the Divine persons engaged in the transaction. The oath of Jehovah cannot be interpreted of an inconsiderable person or thing. Nor can the Messiah in his exaltation be in any of his relations or offices, of the rank or order of a mortal man. As observed above, the order of our Lord's priesthood could not be inferior to the order of his manhood, and he is the one and only map of his own order. He is the head of the new creation—the second Adam, and cannot take rank in his person or any of his offices from any of our mortal race.

These considerations might be enforced by an examination of Heb. v., vi., vii., but without more, they justify the conclusion (we submit) that the Melchizedec who met Abraham and blessed him, Gen. xiv. 18, and brought forth bread and wine, the elements employed by the Saviour, at the institution of the Supper, was the Son of Man—the Adam to whom the psalmist, Ps. viii., ascribes universal dominion. With this view of the question, let the reader ponder John viii. 56—58: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw and was glad." . . . "Before Abraham was, I am." We add only, that this interpretation is not open to the objection of Professor Stuart, before mentioned; for it amounts to this, that the order of our Lord's priesthood, *as the Christ or Messiah of Israel*, is according to the order of his nature, offices, and attributes *as the Son of Man*. See the notes on Matt. xx. 28.

\* The words, *the sins of*, are a gloss of the translators, and should be omitted. They tend to mislead from the true sense.

extend his benignant rule over all the nations of the earth, Matt. xxv. 31, and the blessed effect of his redemptive work be seen and felt in the restitution of all things.

The sum of what has been advanced on this topic may be thus stated: Our Lord, in speaking of his sufferings as the Son of Man, had in view the whole of his redemptive work, not only as it respected his elect people belonging to him as Messiah, but the world itself and the nations who are to dwell upon it during all futurity, which belongs to him as the Son of Man. Matt. xiii. 41; xxv. 31—34, 40.

The apostles, on the other hand, speak only of his sufferings as Christ, because the ministry which had been committed to them had respect only to the kingdom which had been given to our Lord, as the seed of David and the Messiah of Israel, which must be consummated before his coming into his kingdom as the Son of Man.

This interpretation suggests that our Lord's kingdom as the Christ is a kingdom of kings and priests exalted to thrones of glory in the world of redemption, Rev. iii. 21; i. 6; v. 10; Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 29; Rom. viii. 28—30; Phil. iii. 21; 1 Thess. iv. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rom. viii. 17; 1 Pet. iv. 13; Eph. i. 20, 23; 1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19; John xvii. 9, 20, 24, constituting, as it were, a vast temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This kingdom is distinct from his kingdom as the Son of Man, which is a kingdom over this world and the nations and people that shall dwell upon it. Dan. vii. 14; Rev. xxi. 24; Matt. xxv. 31—46. But this also is a glorious and an everlasting kingdom, which shall not pass away or be destroyed, Dan. vii. 14; ii. 44, out of which he will cast and destroy all things that offend, and them that do iniquity. Matt. xiii. 41.

One observation more: The union of the Divine to the human nature of Jesus as the Son of Man, and the incarnation of both under the Abrahamic and Davidic covenant, have exalted his human nature to the throne of the universe, Rev. iii. 21, and his elect people to his own throne as Son of Man, Rev. i. 13, comp. with Rev. ii. 26, 27, iii. 21, and so made them also kings and priests unto God. Rev. xx. 6; v. 10; i. 6. Whether, therefore, the apostles speak of our blessed Lord as the Son of God, or as the Son of Man, or as the Christ, or simply as Jesus, they refer to the complexity of his person as God-Man-Messiah, the Maker and Redeemer of the world—and the Redeemer of Israel; and they seldom have occasion, as Paul had when reasoning about the priesthood of Jesus, to ascribe the particular parts of his work discriminately to the particular character, relation or office in which he performed them,

because their mission and office fell within and were circumscribed by his mission and offices as the Christ, and the designed end and especial purposes of these will be fully attained when the elect *Church*, or the Israel of God, shall be completed, and the Lord shall come to receive it to himself. Matt. xiii. 43, and see notes on Matt. xii. 8.

MATT. XVII. 24. "And when they were come to Capernaun, they that received tribute *money* came to Peter and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute?"

The fact that such a question should be addressed to a follower of the Lord, shows how completely his Divine nature was concealed under his humanity. The question assumes that he was a mere man, and a subject of earthly government. It affords a proof of the meekness and quietness of our Lord's demeanour, Matt. xii. 19, and of the groundlessness of the charge made against him before Pilate by the chief priests and rulers of the Jews. Luke xxiii. 2.

MATT. XVII. 25. "He saith, Yes."

If we reflect what opportunities this apostle had had of knowing his Master's true nature and character, his answer will appear more extraordinary than the question. He had witnessed the power of his will over the winds and the waves. He had seen him raise the dead by his voice, feed thousands with a few loaves, walk on the sea, and but just before, beheld the transfiguration of his person. He had heard the voice of the Father acknowledging him as his Son. What impressions were these things adapted to make on the mind of this apostle? Yet upon being asked, "Doth not your Master pay tribute?" "he saith, "Yes." The answer was inconsiderate unless it be understood as meaning nothing more, than that it was his Master's *habit* or *practice* to pay tribute. But in whatever sense we are to understand it, our Lord's questioning of him was designed to awaken reflection and explain the motive of his own conduct if such had been his custom or practice.

MATT. XVII. 25, 26. "And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented [anticipated] him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own sons or from other persons? Peter saith to him, Of other persons. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the sons free."

It is probable that Peter entered the house to inform the Saviour of the presence of the tax collectors, and of their demand. But in this he was anticipated. The case put was closely analogical. Custom or tribute is both an exaction and a duty, from which the sons of earthly kings were exempt. The analogy was too obvious to Peter to require an express

application. He could not have forgotten the voice from the cloud, "This is my beloved Son." Who could exact tribute from him or impose on him the duty to pay it? Has the God of the whole earth less power than earthly kings? The miracle recorded in the next verse, in fact proved his exemption; for he that could make the fish of the sea his servants, could have made all the kings of the earth and their subjects, even the earth itself, open and proffer to him their treasures at his will.

MATT. XVII. 27. But that we may not "offend them, go thou to the sea and cast a 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 Evangelist does not say that Peter did as he was bid, or that he actually found the piece of money required. He is contented with reciting merely the circumstances which led to this direction, leaving it to the reader to supply the rest. We have no doubt that the apostle executed his Master's command, with the success foretold. This miracle had even fewer witnesses than the transfiguration. We are not informed that any other of the disciples heard the direction, or went with Peter to the sea, and saw him cast a hook or take a fish with the money in his mouth. Peter, so far as we know, was the only witness of the miracle; but he no doubt spoke of it to his fellow disciples. It taught them, or should have taught them, that they could need no other riches than the love and favour of their Divine Master.

The miracle was an example of our Lord's power, as the Son of Man, over the fish of the sea, according to Psalm viii. 8, and this we suppose is the chief point of instruction. Of all the miracles our Lord performed, this is the most difficult for false religionists to explain away. "Peter is sent to the sea, not with a net, but with a hook . . . A net might enclose many fishes, a hook could take but one . . . A fish shall bring him a stater in her mouth; and that the fish that bites first. What an unusual bearer is here! what an unlikely element to yield a piece of ready coin!" *Bishop Hall*. Nothing short of absolute power over the fish of the sea and knowledge of them, could have enabled the Saviour to perform this miracle.

This is the only miracle of the kind mentioned by Matthew, and he selected it, as we suppose, because it was the most striking illustration of the power of Jesus as Son of Man. At the calling of Peter, according to Luke, v. 4—10, our Lord displayed his power over the fish of the sea, and again, according to John, after his resurrection. John xxi. 6—11. These last were witnessed only by those who were, or were to

be, apostles, and consequently were a part of their private instruction; and although both of them were perfectly convincing to those who saw them, yet are they more easily evaded or explained away by rationalistic interpreters, than the one we are considering. For either the fact itself here recorded must be denied, or, as Bengel observes, a manifold miracle of omniscience and omnipotence must be admitted, (1) That something should be caught—*capi aliquid*; (2) and that quickly—*et cito*; (3) that there should be money in a fish—*in pisce fore pecuniam*; (4) and that in the first fish—*eamque in pisce primo*; (5) that the sum should be just what was needed—*nummum fore tanti quantum opus esset*; (6) that it should be in the fish's mouth—*fore in piscis ore*. Therefore the fish was commanded (or constrained) to bring a stater or four-drachm coin, that very moment, from the bottom of the sea.

The miracle illustrates very impressively Psalm viii. 8, before referred to, and taken in connection with others before remarked upon, shows that we are to understand the words of David literally, and in their fullest sense. "Thou madest him to have dominion (absolute) over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet—all sheep and oxen; yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea; and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea."

MATT. XVIII. 1. "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" [of the heavens.]

Mark informs us, ix. 33, of a dispute which had arisen among them, when they were apart from the Lord; about which he questioned them, but they were unwilling, for some cause, to mention the subject of it. Luke, although less particular in some respects, represents the Saviour as having come to the knowledge of it through his knowledge of their hearts. Luke ix. 47. The disciples, it is evident, were confidently expecting the coming of their Lord's kingdom at that time; and, as they had been especially chosen to follow him, they took it for granted that they all would have distinguished places in it. They expected, also, that there would be distinctions made between themselves, and the question was, who of them should be the greatest. Evidently they supposed, that by privately discussing the matter among themselves, when Jesus was not immediately present, they could prevent his knowing anything about their ambitious aspirations, which shows how imperfectly they understood the character of their Master. It is important that we should properly appreciate the character of the disciples, so as not to overestimate either their piety or knowledge, in order that we may properly under-

stand our Lord's instructions to them and his method of dealing with them. No fact is clearer than that the apostles, during our Lord's personal ministry, and until they were inspired by the Holy Spirit, entertained very limited and very erroneous views upon many subjects which, to us, appear too plain to be misunderstood.

MATT. XVIII. 2, 3. "And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them" [and having taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Mark ix. 36,] "Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

It is manifest from this verse that the apostles, at that time, were very far from being fit for the kingdom of heaven, yet they were, excepting Judas, all elected and chosen of God to eternal life. Luke x. 20; John vi. 70. The mere choice of them by the Saviour to be his apostles, and the future stewards of the mysteries of the kingdom, included, we may believe, their election to eternal life. Yet to Peter, to whom the Father had revealed the mystery of the incarnation, the Saviour addressed similar words, after foretelling his apostacy: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke xxii. 32. On this occasion our Lord impressively taught them, that the road to greatness lay in the direction opposite to that their eyes were turned to. Their views must undergo a change equal to that of transforming a worldly, ambitious man, doting on worldly distinctions and glory, into a little child, who cannot even understand what such glory and distinctions are, and has no thought or desire to possess them.

What a picture of the kingdom of heaven is here given! Nothing indeed is said directly of the kingdom itself, but only of the spirit of its inhabitants. Men must unlearn, as it were, their whole education, and be brought back to the simplicity of childhood, to have the first qualification for the kingdom of God, in which *Love* is the centralizing or cementing power, Col. iii. 14, and *Rule* is service; and the highest rule the humblest service. John xiii. 14—16; Mark ix. 35; Matt. xx. 26—28.

The word ( $\sigma\tau\rho\alpha\zeta\eta\tau\epsilon$ ) translated in this place, and also in Luke xxii. 32, *converted*, is not that which is commonly used in the New Testament to denote a change of heart, Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17; xi. 20, 21; xii. 41, or of the mind, see Matt. v. 39; vii. 6; xvi. 23; xviii. 3, yet the circumstances of the occasion, and what our Lord did say to them, imply that they needed it. And it magnifies the power and goodness of the Saviour that he not only bore with his disciples, but kept them from falling away from him, notwithstanding their carnal views and unsanc-



tified affections. He had taken them from the humble walks of life, and although unlearned, they had derived their notions of things from the more elevated classes of their countrymen, and no doubt esteemed those things great and desirable, which the great men of the nation so esteemed. He taught them many things concerning himself which were utterly at variance with their expectations, and without the illuminating, converting, and strengthening power of the Holy Spirit, he attached them to his person—preserved them (the son of perdition only excepted) amidst all the scandals and temptations to which they were exposed, to the end of his ministry; and then, as it were, handed them over to the Holy Spirit to convert, enlighten, sanctify, and preserve, till they should seal their testimony with their blood. See notes on Acts ii. 1.

MATT. XVIII. 4, 5. “Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child” [meaning the child he then held in his arms, Mark ix. 36, 37,] “the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven; and whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me.” Mark adds: “And whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me” [only] “but him” [also] “that sent me.” Mark ix. 37.

The primary object of our Lord, on this occasion, was to correct the ambitious views of the apostles. He taught them they must lay them aside, and become like that little child, in order to obtain even an entrance into the kingdom, the chief places of which they coveted. But incidentally he taught them also, that little children were peculiarly dear to him, and not only that, but that little children, like the one he held in his arms before them, were, and would be received into the kingdom of heaven. This is more plainly declared in Matt. xix. 14; Mark x. 14; Luke xviii. 16. It would be incongruous to say to the apostles, that unless they became like little children they should not enter into the kingdom, unless little children do enter into that kingdom; for that would imply that they might enter into the kingdom by becoming like those who do not enter into it. How can it be that the receiving of a little child in Jesus’ name is receiving of him unless the child is his? Can we have a stronger assurance that all children removed by death, before the commission of actual sin, are saved? By nature, indeed, they are lost; otherwise they would not need a Saviour. But because they are the Saviour’s, the effect of his work is to transfer them, at the very beginning almost of their being, from the stock or parentage of the fallen Adam to his own stock or parentage as the second Adam; so that their genealogy from the first shall be reckoned from him. This was a great object of his incarnation—so great that it seems to be

represented in the 11th verse as the prominent object of his coming, which the apostles did not seem to have any conception of, Matt. xix. 13; Mark x. 13; Luke xviii. 15, even after he had so explicitly declared it, although they might at least have conjectured it from their own Scriptures. See Jer. xix. 3, 5; Joel ii. 16—18; 2 Chron. xx. 13; Jonah iv. 9, 11; and Numb. xiv. 23, in the Septuagint, a passage which is not found in the Hebrew text. According to the Divine plan, this world or this life, so far as the infant race is concerned, may be compared to a nursery ground of the kingdom of heaven; or rather, taking our similitude from the parable in the 12th, 13th, and 14th verses—the Father of myriads of worlds is not willing that the least and most inglorious of them should perish. On the contrary, he takes infinite pains to recover it; and not only that, but also to recover every individual of the race he planted upon it. Such was the scope of the mission of the Son of Man, verses 11—14. He came to repair the ruin of the fall—to restore the human family to his kingdom, except so far as personal, actual sin, persisted in, without repentance and faith, should prevent. But this exception does not embrace infants removed by death before actual sin. How extensive, then, and how minute, is the plan of redemption! Who can count the number of the infant dead from the beginning? Yet not one of them is overlooked by our Father in heaven. He will gather them all into his kingdom; but in what orders or ranks, or with what distinctions, depends wholly on his sovereign pleasure. 1 Cor. xv. 40, 42.\*

What our Lord said on this topic amounts to this: None of the human race, except little children, can enter into the king-

\* A strong, if not conclusive argument, in support of this exposition, may be derived from 1 Cor. xv. 22, compared with Rom. v. 12, 14: "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."—"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Death was the penalty of the sin of Adam, and to die *once* is the *whole* of that penalty; so that when death hath passed once upon an infant, who has committed no actual sin, it has suffered the whole of that penalty. In other words, the penalty was not to die and then to be raised from the dead through the work of Christ the Second Adam, and then to die a second death; but simply to die once, Heb. ix. 27, on account of the sin of the first Adam. But the Son of Man came to reverse that penalty, or rather to bear it for men, and bring them to life again by raising them from the dead. In this resurrection children, dying in infancy, will have part. Will their resurrection be a blessing or a benefit to them? Most certainly. But how will it be a blessing or a benefit, if they are raised from the dead only to die the second death? It follows, therefore, from the doctrine of the resurrection of the infant portion of our race, through the work of Christ, that their condition in the future state cannot be otherwise than happy, because if it were not so, the work of Christ would be the means of increasing the original penalty to those who die before they are capable of repentance and faith, and even of committing actual sin. This argument is developed and enforced in Russel's *Treatise on Infant Salvation*.

dom of heaven; that is, none but children, literally such, and those who become so like them, that they may be called little children. All the saved, therefore, are little children, either literally such or made such by Divine grace. It is an inversion of the Saviour's meaning, to suppose that he *primarily* intended humble-minded, child-like disciples or followers. Primarily he meant babes, little children; and secondarily, his humble-minded followers, so like them in disposition that they might be regarded as though they were literally such. This interpretation shows the force of the designation "little children," frequent in John's Epistles, and once used by Paul, and once also by our Lord. John xiii. 33; Gal. iv. 19; 1 John ii. 1, 18, 28; iii. 7; iv. 4; v. 21.

MATT. XVIII. 6. "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

From his care and love for children, and the Divine purposes in regard to them, the Saviour passes to offences or occasions of sin given to them by others. As the receiving of them in his name is receiving him, so offences against them are offences against him, deserving the severest punishment. A large proportion of our race, some say three-fifths, are removed by death before they are capable of committing actual sin, and of course before they are capable of being offended in the sense of the text. Hence our Lord confines his denunciation to offences against those little ones *who believe* in him. For he makes no distinction between those young persons who have become accountable for their conduct and others, except that founded on belief and unbelief—that is, between his Church and the world. Still, in the case of children who are spared to grow up to maturity, there is a moment at which each first becomes capable of committing sin. Until that time, they are the Lord's in the sense explained. In regard to every one of them there must be a first sin, and a first occasion of sin, and he who gives it, falls within this denunciation of the Saviour. The sin of misleading and corrupting children, or becoming the occasion of their straying into the way of transgression, we are warranted by this passage in saying, is peculiarly offensive to the Saviour. How few think that it would be better for them to die a violent death than to become the occasion of sin to a little child, or to an humble child-like follower of the Saviour! How few consider the fearful responsibilities of their conduct towards those whom the Saviour claims especially as his own.

Yet such is the condition of the world, and the influences to which it is subject, that "it must needs be that offences come,"

verse 7, and such is human nature that offences, or occasions of sin, come even from within ourselves, as well as from the world without, verses 8, 9. The apostles, and consequently all others, might become their own tempters, but in such cases the Saviour required them to proceed to extremities, if necessary. "But if thy hand or foot offend thee, cut it off," . . . "and if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out," if there be no other means of resisting the occasion of offence. Recurring, then, to the subject of children, he repeats, with particular application to the apostles, a caution already impliedly given: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones," enforcing it by the dignity and excellency which the Divine regard and care for them gives them.

MATT. XVIII. 10. "For I say unto you, That their angels in heaven" [literally, in the heavens] "do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

This expression is to some extent metaphorical; for God is a Spirit. See John xiv. 9; i. 18; Heb. i. 3. "No one hath seen God at any time." Yet we cannot suppose our Lord would have spoken in this way, if these little ones had no guardian angels. Paul speaks of angels as ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Heb. i. 14. What reasonable objection, then, can there be to this belief? There are angels enough for the service. Paul speaks of them as myriads. Heb. xii. 22. Even nations have their angels. If not, how can we explain Dan. x. 20, 21; and xii. 1? The fact that God uses the ministry of angels in this world, cannot be denied consistently with the Scriptures. Luke i. 11, 19, 26; ii. 9, 12; Matt. xxvi. 53; Acts i. 10; xii. 7, 8; xxvii. 23; and see Deut. xxxii. 8, in the LXX. version; also notes on John xx. 10, 12; and Jacob Ode's *Commentarius de Angelis*.

MATT. XVIII. 11. "For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost," [literally the lost *το ἀπολωλος*.]

Besides his mission as Messiah to Israel, our Lord had a mission as Son of Man. At the imprisonment of John the Baptist, he entered publicly on his mission to the nation of Israel as *Messiah*, John i. 11; at the death of John the Baptist, he entered on his mission to the *people* of Israel as *the Son of Man*,\* and he was now engaged in the execution of that mis-

\* This distinction may explain Matt. x. 23, a very difficult passage. At the death of John the Baptist, we have seen that our Lord changed his public course. Until that event, the nation was on their trial in their public, political, or associate capacity. The question for them to decide was, whether they would *nationally* receive Jesus as their Messiah. By rejecting John and allowing him to be put to death, they virtually rejected the Messiah also, whom he foreran. John i. 11. After the death of John, the Lord entered on his mission to the people as *Son of Man*; and the question then was, who among

sion. Hence he said, The Son of Man is come—is already entered upon his work of saving (*το ἀπολωλός*) *the lost*—an expression comprehensive of all the effects of the apostasy, both in general and in all, even the minutest particulars. This is apparent from the illustration the Saviour makes of his meaning in the next three verses.

MATT. XVIII. 12, 13, 14. “How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine and goeth [go] into the mountains [or leave the ninety and nine upon the mountains and go] and seeketh [seek] that which is gone astray, [the strayed one] and if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that [sheep] than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.”

The grace and goodness of God, as well as the minuteness of his care and concern for his creatures, is beautifully illustrated by this comparison. It extends even to one little child; and would, even although only one were lost. But there is a magnificent idea in these verses which we shall fail of, if we do not consider the extent and diversity of its application. When we consider the vastness of the creation, and reflect that this world and all its creatures and concerns, compared with the rest, are but as a microscopic speck in the ocean; and that the Divine providence and care are extended as constantly and minutely to the whole of his creation as to this part of it, we are lost in the unsearchable reach of the Divine attributes and the infinite riches of our Father's goodness. Some men, of great worldly reputation, find it impossible to believe that God should care for so inconsiderable a thing as this world, and especially that he should make such provision, as the Scriptures teach us he has made, for its recovery, even if they could regard it as lost. But they err through their ignorance of the Divine nature and attributes; nor do they consider that the goodness of God is concerned to confine rebellion and sin, if they are to be permitted at all, within the narrowest limits possible, consistent with his infinitely wise and glorious purposes. The earth, diminutive as it

the people, each for himself, would receive him as *the Son of Man and the Saviour*. It was to this change in his relations and ministry, perhaps, our Lord alluded, when he said to his apostles, “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come”—as if he had said—“Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, before my mission to *this nation as their Messiah*, shall be accomplished, and I be ready to enter on my mission as Son of Man to the people in their individual and personal relations. John i. 12. This explanation did not occur to the writer until after the note on Matt. x. 23, was printed. It appears to be more satisfactory than any suggested in that note.

may be, is a part of the vast fabric of creation; and man, humble as he now is when compared with angels, is one of God's subjects; and the honour of the Divine government is, for aught we know, as much concerned in his revolt and the curse it brought on this little world, as it could be in the case of some greater and more excellent orb, or of some more exalted creature than man. Add to this, God's attributes of justice and mercy may be as gloriously displayed in the redemption and restoration of this little world, as they could have been, had it been the largest and most glorious of all the worlds he has made, and for aught we know, even more so. The comparison in these verses, and the application our Lord makes of it to the case of one little child, justifies the view we have taken of this subject; for, as in the case of a little child, the grace and goodness of God are not less conspicuously shown, because the earth is but a little planet and only one out of an infinite number; nor because the object of so expensive provision as the incarnation of the Son of God, is a comparatively little race of creatures, whose absence would scarcely be missed if blotted out of existence. Rather let us say, both are magnified and exhibited more gloriously to all creatures in all worlds.

MATT. XVIII. 15. "Moreover if [but should] thy brother trespass or sin against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; and if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."

Our Lord had just spoken of offences coming from the world, and pronounced a woe upon the world on account of them. With these he connects another class of offences, namely, those which should or might arise among his followers who were brethren. The world could not be dealt with in the way which was proper to be observed among brethren; he therefore gives no directions how to proceed when the offence comes from ungodly or heathen men. They are to be left to the just judgment of God. But if the offence comes from a brother, a particular proceeding is prescribed, which it was the duty of his followers to observe. So the apostle Paul appears to have interpreted these directions of the Saviour. 1 Cor. v. 12, 13.\*

\* The connecting thought appears to be that above suggested, although the word (*ἀνατιθέμενος*) translated *offend* is not synonymous with the word (*ἁμαρτανω*) translated *trespass*. Some critics suppose the expression, "if thy brother trespass against thee," should be rendered "sin before thee," or "in thy presence." However this may be, the chief difference between this and the preceding verses (7th and 8th), appears to be that, in the former, the Saviour speaks in general of scandals, offences, or causes or occasions of sin to others, without discriminating whether in or out of the church; whereas, in this verse (15th) he speaks exclusively of sins or trespasses by one brother or member of his church against another.

The direction in this and the next two verses, implies that differences must not be permitted to continue among brethren. The sin, or the offence, must be removed, or the relationship itself must cease. The overture, or initiatory step, must be taken by the offended party, and if it is successful, the offended party is to esteem himself a gainer, by the restoration of fraternal intercourse and relations. We observe, in this direction, a delicate regard to the infirmities of our nature. Our offences against our brethren are not to be made public without necessity. A private interview also may be attended with success, when one not strictly such might fail. It is, therefore, more hopeful, as well as more brotherly. Hence we might infer that the next step is directed, in part, at least, with a view to evidence, although not without some hope of reconciliation.

MATT. XVIII. 16, 17. "But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word [the whole thing] may be established." [Deut. xix. 15, in LXX.] "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* [*i. e.*, *πρωτονημια*, *negotium de quo agitur*, *Beza*] to the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" [as the ethnic or the publican is—*ὁ ἔθνηκος καὶ ὁ τελωνης*.]

The interveners, who are to serve as witnesses, it is to be presumed, are also to be brethren, although this is not expressly directed, because they are first to use persuasion, and not until that fails, are they to appear as witnesses against the offender, before the whole body of brethren, which our Lord here calls *the Church*. He had before spoken once of *his Church*, but without any allusion to its condition, either as visible or invisible, or any description of its exterior form or of its attributes. Matt. xvi. 18. Here he alludes to the Church as a visible body of brethren—yet imperfect, inasmuch as the precept itself supposes sins or offences committed by one member against another.

The learned John Selden supposed the (*ecclesia*) Church our Lord meant was the courts of law which then sat in Jerusalem; but he mistook the scope of the passage and of its context.

The word occurs in the course of a most important private instruction, designed for the direction of the apostles in the new dispensation, upon which they were soon to enter. The idea, our Lord does not develope. It could not be outwardly realized, or exhibited to the world, until after his rejection, death, resurrection, and ascension, and the sending of the Holy Spirit—events, as we have frequently remarked, of which the apostles had no conception. Hence our Lord borrows a word from the existing institutions, in order to denote a *new thing* in the

earth.\* Heathenism had no institution analogous to the *Church*, which implies an association for religious purposes in contradistinction to secular objects and interests. At Rome the Emperor was both the religious and political head of the empire. Cicero regarded the augurship the highest dignity in the State. The Flamens had the honours of royalty—a seat and a vote in the Senate by virtue of their office, the curule chair, and a palace to reside in. The Emperor through his subordinates took it upon himself to appoint the high-priest of the Jews. Religion in the Roman world was wholly a State affair. Nor had Judaism a *Church* in the evangelical sense of the word; and we may add, it was never meant to have. The religious and political commonwealth, by Divine constitution, were identical. That the subjects of either should form a society in an exclusively religious interest, independent of, or distinct from, their political relations or duties, was incompatible with the fundamental idea of theocracy, and would not have been tolerated in the days of David or Solomon. Judaism recognized no distinction between the citizen and the worshipper. Every ungodly Israelite was a traitor to his Divine King; and every rebel against the State was an apostate from his religion. See notes on Luke xxiii. 30; John xix. 13. Its express aim was to organize the nation, as such, into a kingdom of heaven, under the Messiah, and it was the failure of this aim, through the depravity of nature, so far as that people were concerned, which gave occasion for the formation of the Church, out of which, or by means of which, the purposed kingdom of heaven should ultimately be organized.

The Church of which our Lord spoke then, was to be a new thing in the earth. Its foundations were to be laid by the Holy Spirit, and the superstructure to be wholly the product of Divine power. As in its origin, in the land of Judea, it was independent of the Jewish State, and, in fact, designed upon its completion to take its place, and inherit the promises made

\* The word ἐκκλησια occurs frequently in the LXX., although the word church does not occur in our version of the Old Testament. The Hebrew word most frequently rendered by it is קְהִלָּה (See *Trommius, Conc.*) rendered *Assembly*, Deut. xviii. 16, or, *congregation*, Deut. xxiii. 1, 2, 3, 8; xxxi. 30; Josh. viii. 35, and many other places. The word קְהִלָּה is commonly translated in the LXX.

συναγωγη (synagogue) and in the English Version *congregation*. Exod. xii. 3, 6, 19, 47; xvi. 1, 2, 9, 10, 22; xvii. 1; xxxiv. 31; xxxv. 1, 4, 20; xxxviii. 25, and many other places. It is probable our Lord gave this precept in the vernacular dialect of the apostles, but whether or not, the Evangelist writing by inspiration, wrote ἐκκλησια and not συναγωγη, as most approximative to the idea of the Saviour, and in this he is followed by Luke in the Acts, and by the apostles in their Epistles. It occurs one hundred and fourteen times in the New Testament. In Acts xix. 39, 41, it occurs in the secular sense of assembly.



to it as the theocratic nation or people, 1 Pet. ii. 9; Exod. xix. 5, 6; so, during its increase and progress to its final consummation at the second coming of the Lord, it was to be independent of, and wholly disconnected with, the secular powers of the world, because such alliances could not accelerate or aid its real progress, although, as experience has abundantly shown, they could greatly adulterate its purity, and, indeed, convert it into a secular thing, in many respects not unlike the state religions which existed at its origin. Such, then, being the origin, nature, and relations of the Church, we add: A grosser perversion of the spirit and simplicity of this precept of the Saviour can hardly be imagined than the law of excommunication as it was practised for ages in the whole Church, and is now practised in some portions of it. When this institution of the Saviour began to be perverted, it would be difficult precisely to determine. Selden affirmed that no man can show any excommunication before the Popes Victor and Zephyrinus first began to use it, upon private quarrels, at the beginning of the third century. Hence he inferred it was but a human invention, which he said was borrowed from the heathen. In this remark, Selden, no doubt, referred to the practice of excommunication, as it existed in the Roman Church; for, undoubtedly, the sort of excommunication which consisted in the withdrawal of fraternal communication, was practised in the days of the apostles. 1 Cor. v. 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12; 1 Tim. i. 20; Rom. xvi. 17; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14; 2 John, verse 10.

The cause of this perversion, whenever it may have first occurred, was the influx of false professors, and their predominant influence; and this again led to the alliance of the Church to the secular powers, and finally the subjection of the secular powers to the visible Church during a period of several centuries. Virtually this was the restoration of a state of things similar to that which existed at the origin of the Church, while the Jewish Commonwealth existed. The true Church was then hidden again within the ecclesiastical Commonwealth, which had become secularized, and, like the Jewish and Roman States, persecuting.

At the Reformation, a large proportion of the true Church was excommunicated from the visible Church, including many pious ministers. Yet they lost neither their standing nor their authority as ministers of Christ: for he is the great Architect of the Church. Matt. xvi. 18. From him they derived their authority, and by his blessing he manifested his approval of their work. The *true* Church, by which we mean the body of the elect which the Lord will receive to himself, was no less one after the Reformation than it was before: for the true Church

is not and never has been identical with the visible Church, even in its purest form, as is proved by the character of the visible Church, even in the days of the apostles. See notes on Acts ii. 47.

MATT. XVIII. 18. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

This verse has already been, to some extent, remarked upon. See notes on Matt. xvi. 19. It is to be read in connection with the preceding verse, which, although of general application, is in its form addressed to the apostles, as if personal to them. Our Lord did not give it a wider application at that time, for the reason already repeatedly mentioned, viz., the inability of the apostles to conceive of coming events. To have given them an adequate conception of the multiplication of Churches throughout the world, even during their lifetime, it would have been necessary to disclose many things which his Divine wisdom left to his Providence, and the teachings of the Holy Spirit. He therefore spoke of the (*ἐκκλησία*) Church, as though it were a single visible association of his disciples; and for a period of several years there was, in fact, but one such body. But to guard against the interpretation that the promise contained in this verse, was to be limited to that one body or Church, he added, verses 19, 20: "Again I say unto you, That if *two of you* shall agree on earth as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven: for where [any] two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

This is the power of binding and loosing spoken of in the preceding verse, and the addition of these words proves that the power promised was not designed to be the exclusive possession of any one visible body of believers. It follows, therefore, that each successive Church, or association of believers to the end of the dispensation, comes within this promise as fully as the first Church that was formed at Jerusalem; and not only Churches, but individual believers, in small numbers, meeting together without any permanent organization, are also included in the promise; for the presence of Christ in the midst of them implies a promise to hear their requests, and the promise of his grace and power to fulfil them, which moreover is expressly made by the words, "it shall be done for them." This agrees with the nature of the Church as before described. It is a heavenly, not an earthly institution. All its real and authorized powers are Divine, and of course vested not in any visible body *as such*, but in those members of any visible body or Church in whom the Holy Spirit dwells; for these only are

really included in the promise. The being "gathered together in the name of Christ" implies much more than the congregation or association of those who have made an *outward* profession of faith in his name. An association composed wholly of unconverted persons is not a Church. To call such an association a Church is a solecism.

MATT. XVIII. 21, 22. "Then came Peter to him and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him: I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven." See Luke xvii. 3, 4.

This question was suggested by the direction our Lord had just given in respect to an offending brother, verse 15. The case put by the Saviour was that of a single offence. The apostle desired to know how often the course of proceeding he had prescribed should be pursued. Our Lord's reply in effect is, that the duty of forgiveness, between brethren, is of permanent obligation, and he enforced it by the consideration, in the 35th verse, that unless heartily performed by the injured brother, he could not look for the Divine forgiveness. But we notice this passage chiefly for the light it casts upon the *nature* of the discipline our Lord intended to authorize.

In reviewing this passage, verses 15—21, one thing strikes us as very significant: it is this, that our Lord should comprise the whole of the discipline he appointed for his Church in this single direction. As a rule prescribed for those who truly have the spirit of Christ, it is all-sufficient and perfect. As applied to visible bodies of professing Christians, it fails only because many who profess the name of Christ do not possess his Spirit. In such cases, the rule serves as a test or means of discrimination between true and false professors. It was natural that the apostles should afterwards prescribe for the churches they established, more in detail, an orderly mode of proceeding for those cases which should come before them, and indicate the manner in which their action should be authenticated and be made known. Beyond this we conceive the apostles did not go. The voluminous codes of ecclesiastical or canon law which have been formed since their days, have nothing to rest upon but human authority. They are, for the most part, the work of worldly men in the Church. They never could have come into existence if the visible Church had remained pure, and had not forgotten the teachings of the Lord and his apostles concerning his always-to-be-expected return. In framing these codes of permanent laws, which it requires the labour of a long life to comprehend, the Church, or rather the hierarchy, proceeded upon the assumption that the day of the Lord's coming was

certainly afar off, see Matt. xxiv. 48, 49; whereas the apostles, by not giving many or minute instructions, proceeded upon the idea that they were bound at all times to look for it, because they knew not at what hour their Lord would come and take the whole body of his elect people to himself. To the apostasy of the Church, 2 Thess. ii. 3, must be ascribed, also, instrumentally, the delay of the Lord's coming, which has given occasion to the perversion of church discipline before mentioned. The Church has not preached the Gospel to all nations, and the elect body is not yet completed. This is one of the mysteries of the kingdom which our Lord allegorically foretold in the parable of the tares of the field.\* Matt. xiii. 30, 40.

MATT. XIX. 24—26. "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them and said to them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

This conversation occurred privately between the Lord Jesus and the disciples, upon the choice of the young man who inquired what good thing he must do to have eternal life, verses 16—21. The amazement of the disciples arose from their ignorance, at that time, of the plan of salvation, and the means by which it was to be accomplished. They had no idea of salvation through a crucified Messiah, which our Lord here intimates would be the means of working greater wonders than the passing of a camel through the eye of a needle. The work of

\* There is a chasm in the narrative of this Evangelist, between the 18th and 19th chapters, which the harmonists fill with several chapters of Luke and John. Griesbach introduces at this place the entire passage from Luke ix. 51 to xviii. 14. Newcome begins with Luke x. and ends with Luke xviii. 14; but he transposes Luke x. 38, 42, so as to make it follow Luke xviii. 14. From John's Gospel also, he introduces from the beginning of the 7th chapter to the 54th verse of the 11th chapter. By a reference to these chapters, it will be perceived that the break in the narrative of Matthew is considerable. Some of the omitted topics have already been incidentally remarked upon—such as the mission of the seventy disciples, the discourses of our Lord recorded by John in the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 10th chapters, and others may be adverted to in the same way hereafter. The place last mentioned by this Evangelist is Capernaum, xvii. 24. The 1st verse of the 19th chapter informs us of the Lord's (final) departure from Galilee towards the confines of Judea beyond Jordan; and in chap xx. 17, that he proceeded thence towards Jerusalem. See Luke ix. 51. What follows, therefore, relates to what our Lord said and did in his last journey to and at Jerusalem, upon which Luke principally dwells. See foot-note to John xx. 19. This omission of many of the incidents of that journey by Matthew, is accounted for by some critics on the supposition that it was Matthew's intention to confine his narrative chiefly to our Lord's ministry in Galilee. It is impossible, we think, to make a perfect chronological harmony of the four Evangelists, and if we could, it would be best to explain each separately; for in this way only can we attend closely to the drift of each.

redemption, in all its parts, is a new creation. It is carried on by powers contrary to nature and above nature. The end of it is to change nature and restore it from its fallen condition by powers of a higher order. Rightly considered, there is no hyperbole in our Lord's comparison; for it amounts simply to this: "Fallen nature has no self-restoring power. It cannot bring itself back to the state it was in before the fall. No proposition, involving a mere physical impossibility, is comparable, in respect of difficulty, to the impossibility of nature (either physical or moral) changing itself back into the state of incorruption. But the power that created all things at first can create all things anew; and there is nothing that creative power cannot accomplish." The disciples were unable, at that time, to enter into this large conception of the nature, extent, difficulty, and glory of the work on which the Saviour had entered, or of the powers by which it was to be accomplished; but, with this idea in the Saviour's mind, we can easily trace the connection between the observation which so amazed his disciples, and what he said concerning the regeneration (or *palingenesis*) immediately afterwards, in his reply to the question of Peter. What more natural than to connect the wonderful work of fitting a fallen, sinful man for the kingdom of God, and the wonderful work of creating all things new! The former is but a part of the latter, and is included in it.

MATT. XIX. 27. "Then answered Peter, &c., Behold we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?"

Peter's question, and the remark on which it was founded, were obviously suggested by the conduct of the young man. He would not give up, as they had done, his earthly possessions at the bidding of the Saviour, and could not, therefore, enter into the kingdom of God. Would this be the case with them, whose conduct was the opposite? Our Lord's reply, as often happened, was exuberant. He did not simply say, Ye shall enter into the kingdom of God, but ye shall have dominion in that kingdom.

MATT. XIX. 28. "Verily I say unto you, *ye* who *have* followed me," [tacitly alluding, by way of contrast, to the conduct of the young man,] "in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The meaning of the word *regeneration* (*παλιγγενεσια*,) indeed of this whole passage, has been greatly controverted, and some critics, in the main judicious, have sought to avoid the difficulty they find in explaining it, by the bold expedient of expunging the whole verse. Of the genuineness of this verse, however, there can be no reasonable doubt.

MATT. III. 2. "Kingdom of heaven" [*βασιλεια των ουρανων*) kingdom of the heavens.]

If we adopt the hypothesis, that the stupendous globes which garnish the heavens, surpassing in number our arithmetic, many of which greatly exceed the earth in magnitude, are the dwelling places (*μοναι*, John xiv. 2) of an intelligent moral creation, capable of beholding the glory of God, and of adoring him for his goodness, it will not be difficult for us to admit, also, that the government of this immeasurable fabric of worlds is directly administered by God himself—in other words that the government of the universe, as one vast dominion, is, and necessarily must be, theocratical. Before Adam fell, God's government of him and of the world itself was immediate. Had Adam continued upright, we have no reason to suppose God would have withdrawn from him, or left his offspring to grope in darkness after his will. Acts xvii. 27—30.

Let us suppose, further, that each of these unnumbered worlds is the dwelling-place of a race or order of beings proceeding from, or some way connected with, one common stock, Eph. iii. 15, and all sinless, the loving, willing subjects of their Creator; his laws, however communicated, would rule their being; his will would be done in each perfectly, as we are taught to pray that it may yet be done on earth. However diversified in their form, structure, or condition, these worlds and their inhabitants may be, and however various may be the manifestations of the Divine will, and although separated by spaces vast beyond all finite conception, yet relatively to the Creator they constitute but one kingdom, called in the Scriptures the kingdom of the heavens, or the kingdom of God, because none but God could govern a realm so constituted or so vast. Considered as one kingdom, the government of it, therefore, can only be theocratical.\*

But this world has dropped from the sphere it was designed to occupy. The curse of God has come over it, through sin. Rom. viii. 20, 22. As a necessary consequence, the kingdom of the heavens was withdrawn at the coming in of the curse.

\* Camerarius on John xiv. 2, says: "*οικιαν* autem non accipiemus nunc dici locum aliquem certe habitationis sed omnipotentiam et imperii Dei infinitatem: Sic enim Theophylactus: *οικιαν την εξουσιαν και την αρχην νομι-μοναι* autem sunt habitationes *απο του μνημι*, id est a manendo." The Father's (*οικια*) dwelling-place is the universe of worlds which he has made. Every house, (*οικος*) says Paul, is built by some one, but he that built all things—as a house or dwelling-place (*οικια*) for himself—is God. Heb. iii. 4. The late Dr. Dwight remarks (Serm. xvii:.) "Thus the universe is the immense and glorious empire of Jehovah; an empire formed of suns and systems, the families, cities, and provinces of the vast kingdom ruled by him, who telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names."

Yet not for ever; for it was God's purpose even from the beginning, to restore the world to its lost place in creation, by ways which, from time to time, he gradually revealed. The time for its restoration, though fixed in the Divine mind, has ever been a secret; yet, because it is fixed, it has continually been drawing nearer. When John the Baptist appeared, this kingdom was formally announced by him as come nigh; but the Jews, having rejected and crucified the incarnated King of this vast kingdom, it was taken away from them, Matt. xxi. 43, and for a time withdrawn again from the world.

The Jews, from the giving of the law, had been subject to the special government of God. They received their laws directly from him; we, therefore, call the government established over them theocratical. See notes on Matt. ii. 2. Yet it was not the kingdom of the heavens which they enjoyed, Deut. xi. 21; that was a much higher form of theocracy, and such as perfectly holy beings only can enjoy. The race of Israel, notwithstanding the restraints and proffered blessings of the Divine government, Exod. xix. 5, 6; Deut. xi. 26—28, were a stiff-necked and rebellious people from the beginning, always resisting the Divine will, Acts vii. 51; Ezek. xx., and continually suffered, on that account, chastisements such as no other nation has experienced. But the kingdom of the heavens imports the absence of all sin, Matt. v. 48, and all moral and physical evil, Gen. i. 31; Rev. xxi. 4, and consequently embraces within its Divine influences only unfallen worlds, or those into which sin has not entered. "That there are such—the residence of intelligent beings of incalculable numbers, and endless diversities of character, all supported, governed, and blessed, as the worlds they inhabit are sustained, regulated, and moved, by the hand of that Almighty Being who created them, and whose kingdom ruleth over all—there is the highest reason to suppose." *Dwight's Serm.* xvii.

This was the kingdom John preached, which was withdrawn from the world when man fell and sin entered. That it was not the theocracy of the Levitical economy, is proved by the fact that the law and the prophets, during all the times of the Jewish theocracy, announced the kingdom of the heavens *as future*. John the Baptist, first after the fall, proclaimed it as come nigh again. Luke xvi. 16; Matt. xi. 11, 13.

Nor was the kingdom John preached, as many suppose, the dispensation of the Gospel to the Gentiles; for John's baptism and whole ministry was limited to Israel, and when Israel fell, his baptism was superseded by a wider baptism. Matt. xxvii. 19; iii. 5, 6; Luke iii. 21. See notes on Matt. iii. 11, 12. The dispensation of grace to the Gentiles was appointed because of

the failure of the dispensation of the law to the Jews. Rom. viii. 3; Gal. ii. 21. As in the parable of the marriage, Matt. xxii. 1—7, had (Israel) the first invited guests accepted the king's most gracious offer, another company, elected and taken out of the Gentiles, would not have been called. Luke xiv. 15, 24; Rom. xi. 11. This last company, subrogated to, or substituted in, the place of those first called, will attain, by God's grace, when their body, the elect Church, shall be completed, that pre-eminence in the kingdom of God, which was first promised to Israel, 1 Pet. ii. 9; Exod. xix. 5, 6, conditionally on their obedience. It results, therefore, that both the economy of law and the economy of grace were designed to be introductory to the kingdom of the heavens. John preached a kingdom which is yet future, but would have come in his day, had Israel accepted it with the obedience of the heart to its appointed king. We preach the same kingdom as still future, to Jew and Gentile alike, while the Spirit seals those who believe, and will continue to do so till the aggregate of the elect of God shall be accomplished, and another chosen generation and truly royal priesthood, 1 Pet. ii. 9, shall be made ready to show forth the praises of Jehovah Jesus, the second Adam—the Restorer of the kingdom, and its anointed King.

It can be shown, that along with the setting up of the kingdom of Messiah, the Jews expected the end of the whole present condition of human things, and also the resurrection of the pious dead. See *Koppe's Excursus* I. to 2 Epist. Thess., for valuable thoughts on this formula, though he falls short of the conception this note is designed to set forth. Also, *Lightfoot* on Matt. xxiv. 3.

Bloomfield (*Crit. Dig.*) on Matt. xix. 28, remarks, "There is scarcely any passage, the meaning of which has been more controverted." This seems strange; for the idea expressed by the Saviour must have been familiar to the disciples, and of course to the Jewish mind. Why cannot we also apprehend it? It has been remarked, notes on Matt. iii. 2, that along with the setting up of the kingdom of Messiah, the Jews expected the end of the whole present condition of human things. This would necessarily result from the nature and glory of Messiah's kingdom, or the kingdom of the heavens, which is the same thing. Dan. ii. 44; vii. 22, 27. They expected in fact a renovation, or what our Lord here expresses by the word (*παλιγγενεσία*) palingenesia, a second generation or creation (*παλιγγενεσις*) much more glorious than the present—a new world, in fact, in which all the glorious predictions of their prophets should be fully realized, Isa. lxxv. 17, 25; 2 Pet. iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 5, over which Messiah their Prince would reign. Ps. ii. 6, 12. With this conception



our Lord's language in the verse we are considering agrees. To Pilate he said: "My kingdom is not from hence; it is not of this world—it cannot consist together with this condition of things; my servants do not strive for place or power in it." To his disciples he said: "In the regeneration, (*παλιγγενεσία*) when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon thrones," &c.

The regeneration (or palingenesia), and the kingdom of the heavens, then, are related ideas, Luke xxii. 28, 30; the former denoting the order or condition of things over which the latter is to be established. They are not strictly synonymous terms, but as they signify synchronous or co-existing things and events, they may be interchangeably used. The *palingenesia* is another name for the new heavens and new earth, Isa. lxxv. 17; 2 Pet. iii. 13, or for the world to come (*οἰκουμένην τὴν μελλούσαν*, Heb. ii. 5,) in which all things shall be created anew. Rev. xxi. 5. When this expectation shall be realized, then the kingdom of the heavens will embrace and bless the earth again as it did before sin entered it, and as it now does, and ever has, myriads of unfallen spheres. See Rom. viii. 21.

Bengel's remarks on this verse are to the point, and striking: "Nova erit genesis, cui præerit Adamus secundus, 1 Cor. xv. 44, 47, ubi et microcosmus totus, [meaning man,] per resurrectionem et macrocosmus [by which he means the earth and the heavens connected therewith, and all creatures contained in them,] genesin iteratam habebit." He cites Acts iii. 21; Rev. xxi. 5; Matt. xxvi. 29; Tit. iii. 5; Luke xx. 36; Rom. viii. 23; and 1 John iii. 2.

Olshausen expressly refers to the connection between the "Regeneration" and the kingdom of the Heavens. "The *παλιγγενεσία*," he says, "denotes merely the coming forth of the *βασιλεία*, from its concealment in the inner world of the Spirit, into the outer world; or the spiritualizing of the outer world from within. The selection of the expression *παλιγγενεσία* to denote this, arises from the magnificent idea of drawing a parallel between the whole and the individual," or, as Bengel expressed it, between the macrocosmus and the microcosmus. "In Titus iii. 5, baptism (*λουτρον παλιγγενεσιᾶς*) appears as the means which bring about the new birth of the individual. . . . It goes forward from the *πνευμα* to the final glorifying of the *σωμα*. Rom. viii. . . . Without distinguishing the separate steps, the term (*παλιγγενεσία*) comprehends the whole in one general expression. . . . Man, therefore, as a *microcosm*, appears as an emblem, prefiguring every stage of development in the *macrocosm*, and just as it is only in the glorifying of the

body, that the development of an individual's whole life" [that is, his *παλιγγενεσία*, or regeneration] "has its consummation, even so the glorifying agency of the Spirit reaches its climax only in the pervading of the material." See an *Essay on Regeneration by Maitland*, in Eruvin.

We may conceive of this great change with equal propriety, as the bringing in of new influences, *ab externo*—as the restoration of powers and principles originally operative, but long since withdrawn—in one word, as the *βασίλεια των ούρανων*, or paradise, restored, or brought back again.

Such a conception would be as natural as the outward development of inward power, and more agreeable to the form in which John the Baptist and our Lord first announced this great change, to which the baptism of John had respect. The baptism afterwards appointed by our Lord, though different from John's, has respect to the actual coming of the same kingdom, as well as the resurrection and glorification of the elect when their number shall be completed. But as this matter will be more conveniently discussed in connection with another passage, we pass it for the present without further remark.

We add, in the note below, some extracts from the commentators to show the opinions of the learned on this passage; premising, that Dr. Owen and some others, see *Bowyer's Conjectures*, and *Bloomfield's Critical Digest*, would expunge the words (*ἐν τη παλιγγενεσία*) as an interpolation.\*

\* In the regeneration—*ἐν τη παλιγγενεσία*—*ἐν τῷ αἰὶνι ἑπερχομένῳ*, Mark x. 30; *ἐν τῷ αἰὶνι ἑρχομένῳ*, Luke xviii. 30, which are parallel expressions: "in the second generation, or creation," *Triglot*, New Test.; "in the renovation," *Dr. Campbell*; "in the new order of things at the end of time," *Kenrick*, New Test.; "in the new world," *Murdoch*; "in sæculo novo," *Fabricius*, Latin New Test from the Syriac; "iterata generatio," *Kuinoel*; "in renovatâ vitâ," *Castalio*; "in illa restauratione (resurrectione) quando Messias splendidum suum tribunal occupaverit," *Næbe*; "in regeneratione (*plenâ*)," *Sebast. Schmidt*; "bey der Wiederherstellung der Dinge," *De Wette*; "in jener neuem Verfassung," *Stoltz*, *Van Ess*; "Wiedererzeugung, Wiedergeburt, Wiederaufleben, Erneuerung," *J. G. Schneider's Lex.* Cicero uses the word, *Ad Attic.* vi. 6, to signify the recovery of his rank and fortune. Josephus, *Antiq.* xi. 3, 9, uses it to denote the recovery of country, after exile. Philo, in *Vita Mosis*, uses it to signify the renewal of the earth, after the Deluge. See *Rose's Parkhurst Lex.*, *Robinson's Lex.*, *Griffiths*, New Test., *editio Hellenistica*. The Pythagoreans used it to signify reditum mentis *eis γένεσιν*, cum mens prius defuncti ad vitam in corpus alterius redibat. *Hammond* and *Le Clerc*. See also *Adam Clarke*.

"Hæc vox propriè novum seu secundum statum significat το ἐκ δευτέρου γενέσθαι καὶ ἀναπλασθῆναι, denuo generari et formari ut aiunt Grammatici." *Hammond* and *Clericus*. *Hesychius*.

MATH. FLACIUS ILLYRICUS notes: "Regeneratio significat illam gloriosam vitam ubi erit plena hominis et regni Dei instauratio."

SIMON, the Romanist, translated by Webster, says: "By the regeneration, most of the ancient commentators understood the resurrection, believing the last judgment to be here spoken of. It may be said, likewise, that Christ speaks of his own reign. The Jews agree that, at Messiah's coming, all

Our own conception of the (*παλιγγενεσία*) regeneration, and of the (*βασιλεία των ούρανων*) Kingdom of the Heavens, is expressed in general terms near the beginning of this note. More particularly it includes:

(1.) The resurrection, exaltation, and glorification of the Church of the first born or the elect; their installation as kings

things shall be renewed, and the law shall receive a new perfection." See also *Lightfoot* on Matt. xxiv. 3.

BEZA says: "Regeneratio sumitur pro illa die, quæ electi incipient novam vitam vivere, id est, quum animo et corpore fruuntur illâ hæreditate cœlesti." This note is translated in the margin of the Old English Bible, Edit. 1598.

PFÄFFIUS says: "Ad renovationem sæculi, mundumque futurum hic spectari tam clarum est, quam quod clarissimum: ita ut miremur esse viros qui existiment de regeneratione spirituali, vel priore Christi adventu hæc explicanda, quem errorem hic et *Lightfoot* erravit."

OLEARIUS (*Obs. Sac.* ad Evang. Matt.) says: "Omnino itaque verissimam existimem eorum sententiam, qui *παλιγγενεσίαν* Christo hic idem, quod Petro ἡ τῶν πάντων ἀποκατάστασις est, esse existimant; h. e., novam faciem rerum omnium in mundi consummatione, quam delineans *Joannes ούρανὸν καινὸν, γῆν καινὴν, πάντα κἀνα* esse dicit, et cujus regenerationis pars est restitutio mortuorum, per resurrectionem; quæ inde ut supra ostendimus, et ipsa *παλιγγενεσία* dicitur. Quam subordinationem eleganter illustrat locus *Epiphani*:—*ἰνα μὲν αὖτις ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ ἀσκακῶσθαι τὸ ἄγγος ἐν τῇ ἀποστάσει εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν φαιδριότητα: ἢ ἐν παλιγγενεσίᾳ ἄνω πάλιν ἔσται, per resurrectionem ad pristinam pulchritudinem restituat.*" *Epiph. Ad Hæres.* xxxvii. i. And see *Thomas Gataker* in *Notes to Marcus Antoninus*, xi. 1, and *Burnet's Theory of the Earth*, L. iv. c. 5, for copious citations from the Stoic and Platonic philosophers. The word also occurs in *Clement's* first Epistle to the Corinthians, v. 3, or § ix. of *Hefele's* edit. *Ναὶ πιστὸς εἰρήθεὺς διὰ τῆς λειτουργίας αὐτοῦ παλιγγενεσίαν κόσμου ἐκηρύξεν . . . κ. τ. λ.* Noah being found faithful, did, by his ministry, preach regeneration to the world, &c.

DEYLINGIUS (*Obs. Sac.*) says: "Nobis magis probatur sententia eorum qui *παλιγγενεσίαν* hanc sensu ampliori exponunt de totius universi in die novissimo renovatione quando cælum novum, nova terra, ac omnia, erunt nova, secundum delineationem *Joannis Apocal.* xxi. Hæc *παλιγγενεσία* Christo hic nil aliud est, quam ἡ τῶν πάντων ἀποκατάστασις Petro commemorata, Act. iii. 21, cujus innovationis pars est restitutio mortuorum per resurrectionem. Hæc enim initium erit, et magna pars hujus *παλιγγενεσίας* et *ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων*, qua facta, Apostoli in judicio extremo erunt *συνόρονται*, testes et assessores Christi, universum terrarum orbem, singulatim duodecim tribus Israel judicaturi," &c.

MUNSTER (*Crit. Sacri*) says: "Hæc secunda generatio est resurrectio mortuorum, quando Christus gloriosus redibit judicaturus orbem et electi et regenerati ad gloriam simul cum Christo, capite suo, regnabunt," &c.

LE CLERC and HAMMOND say: "Apud Scriptores sacros, pariter usurpatur pro resurrectione, seu quæ fit ultimo die, cum corpus restitutum denuo cum mente conjungetur."

COCCEIUS more briefly thus: "*παλιγγενεσία* . . . hoc est quando fiet cælum novum et terra nova in quibus justitia habitat." He cites 2 Pet. iii. 13.

JANSENIUS says: "Per regenerationem intelligenda est resurrectio ex mortuis, quæ velut secunda generatio hominis erit secundum corpus, quemadmodum in baptismo est secunda hominis secundum animam generatio." *Hærm. Ch.* c. p. 717.

DIODATI: "In the regeneration, that is to say, in the life to come, when there shall be a new heavens and a new earth." *Annotations.*

LAMY'S gloss is: "In renovatâ vitâ, in futuro sæculo."

PISCATOR says: "Id est in renovatione mundi vel potius, post renovationem

and priests of the Messiah, into the places of honour prepared for them by the Father in the wide domains of his universal kingdom. Rev. ii. 26; v. 10; xx. 6; Luke xix. 17, 19; Matt. xx. 23; xix. 28; John xvii. 20, 21, 22—26; Phil. iii. 21; John v. 2. Some of the authors before quoted seem to consider the resurrection and glorification of the elect as all that is intended by this term; others seem to include also, as we do,

(2.) The renovation of the world, and its restoration to the perfection and glory of Paradise, which, of course, implies the expulsion of Satan, of sin, and of all physical and moral evil—in one word, of the curse, and the full realization of the many prophecies predictive of every conceivable good, both negative and positive, of a terrestrial kind. See *Greswell on the Parables*, vol. i., Introd. part i., chap. xii. pp. 234—252, for a summary of these prophecies.

(3.) It includes also, as we conceive, the restoration of the twelve tribes of Israel to the land of the covenant; their conversion and complete sanctification; the re-establishment of the Theocracy over them, and consequently their pre-eminence among the nations of the earth; for, from Jerusalem shall then go forth the law and the word of the Lord to all the earth, with

mundi, in altero sæculo quanquam nomen *παλιγγεσσια* videtur potissimum intelligendum de restitutione corporum et resurrectione."

CORNELIUS A LAPIDE comments thus: "Verum omnes alii" (S. Hilario excepto) "passim per regenerationem, accipiunt resurrectionem communem, futuram in die judicii: hæc enim, quia corporis totiusque hominis, æque ac mundi renovatio, et quasi secunda ad gloriam generatio, hinc recte hic et alibi regeneratio vocatur. Unde Syrus vertit in *sæculo novo*; Arabicus in *generatione ventura*: tunc enim erit novum cælum et nova terra." Isa. lxxv. 17; Apoc. xxi. 1; 2 Pet. iii. 13.

CHEMNITZ (*Harm.* chap. 132, vol. 1, p. 1372) says: "Alii vero referunt" (vocem regenerationis) "ad sequens verbum *sedebitis*, ut loquatur de secundo suo adventu, ubi in novissimo die, qui à Petro dicitur dies restitutionis omnium, et mortui resurgent omnes, et superstites in momento immutabuntur. Is dies hic vocatur à Christo regeneratio, eo quod in resurrectione, regeneratio nostra, quæ in baptismo inchoata, et ubi anima ab omnibus sordibus peccatorum, abluta est, plene ita ut, etiam corpora nostra, incorruptibilitatem et immortalitatem induant atque conformia fiant glorioso corpori Christi." Philip. iii. 21.

But GROTIUS, HARDOIN, WHITBY, LIGHTFOOT, TOWNSEND, Bishop BLOOMFIELD, GOADBY'S *Illustrations, New Testament*, and some others, refer the phrase to the present condition of things. GROTIUS, for example, says that the word denotes the kingdom of Messiah, which, as he teaches, commenced with the resurrection of Christ—in other words, he applies it to the present dispensation of the Gospel among the Gentiles, which in his view is the *παλιγγεσσια*. CALOVIUS says this is against the common consent of almost all interpreters. He adds that even the Syrian translator whom GROTIUS quotes, renders the word *seculum novum*, and the Arabic, *generationem venturam*. See *Calovius in loco*.

SCOTT, HENRY, BARNES, JACOBUS, and many others among modern commentators, on the other hand, with better reason, agree with the ancient, in referring it to a future condition of the world and of mankind, though they do not express any distinct idea as to what that condition will be.

irresistible energy and power. Isa. ii. lx. The theocracy from that time forward will not be limited to a single nation, and that a sinful and rebellious one, as the Hebrews were during the Levitical economy; but it will embrace and sanctify all the nations of the earth, subordinating them to Israel, Isa. lx. 11; Mal. i. 11, now made perfectly holy, Isa. lx. 20; lxi. 3; Acts iii. 23, while Israel in the flesh in turn, as well as (*τα ἔθνη των σωζομενων*) the nations who shall survive the judgment of that day, Rev. xxi. 24, will be subordinate to the Israel of God, or the Church of the first-born, the glorified elect, among whom the apostles will have a peculiar office, Matt. xix. 28, gathered by Christ their head (*ἐν τοις ἐπουρανιοις*, John iii. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 40, 48, 49; Eph. i. 3, 20; ii. 6; iii. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 18) to dwell with him for ever in heavenly places, exalted far above all angelic natures, and clothed with spiritual, immortal bodies, like the Saviour's, of surpassing beauty and strength. John xiv. 2, 3; 1 Thess. iv. 17.

Thus the *palingenesia*, a word expressive of the great purpose of redemption, embraces the complete reparation of the evil done by the prevarication and fall of Adam; the restoration of man, *as the inhabitant of the earth*, to the dignity and excellence in which he was created, thereby making him a fit subject of the kingdom of God, as it was originally established over Adam, and as it now prevails in all worlds into which sin has not entered; and besides all this, an accession of accumulated glory in compensation, so to speak, for the immense cost of the Divine achievement, in the elevation of myriads of our race immeasurably above the rank originally assigned to man in the hierarchy of created natures.

4. It is implied also, as we conceive, that this new creation, being a fruit of the redemptive work of Christ, 1 John ii. 2, will for ever remain before the Lord, perfect and glorious, and continue to be for ever the dwelling-place of holy, happy beings, through an unending series of generations, under the headship of the Second Adam. But, as remarked by Olshausen, the word (*palingenesia*) does not distinguish the steps of the process through which the final result will be reached. The great Sabbath of the world, or the millennium, is blended in this expression, with the glory which (*ἐν τοις αἰωσι τοις ἐπερχομενοις*, Eph. ii. 7) shall follow it. See notes on Acts iii. 21.

5. Again: as the first creation was wholly God's work, Gen. i. 1; Job xxxviii. 4; Prov. xxx. 4, so will the new creation be. This is implied in the term (*γενεσις*) *palingenesia*. Whether we regard it as the second generation of Man (the microcosm,) or of the earth and the heavens connected therewith (the

macrocosm,) nothing but the creative power of God can accomplish it. Man cannot even commence the work on his own soul, any more than he can consummate it in the resurrection and glorification of his body. Both the beginning and the end of the work are of God. Yet the divine plan required that the offer of the kingdom and its blessings should ever be made under specific conditions, the rejection or violation of which only would or could prevent its immediate outward manifestation and realization. In this manner the kingdom was promised to Israel at the foot of Sinai, *Exod. xix. 5, 6*, offered to them when they were introduced into Canaan, and again in the fullness of time by John the Baptist and our Lord, but in every instance with the same result. In this way God has shown to the universe the impotency of corrupted nature to recover itself; the utter insufficiency of a dispensation of law to save man, and restore the world he made for him, *Ps. cxv. 16*, to its lost place in his kingdom. This view of the subject shows the ground and the reasonableness of such passages as *Rom. ix. 20, 21*; *Eph. ii. 8, 10*; *Isa. xlv. 9*; *lxiv. 8*; *xxix. 16*; *Jer. xviii. 6*; *Prov. xvi. 4*; *Job xxxviii. 5*; (*Wisd. xv. 7*; *Sir. xxxiii. 13*;) *Prov. xvi. 4*; *Job xxxiii. 13*.

6. Finally, many persons stumble at the idea of the personal reign of Christ, as the Son of Man or Second Adam, simply because they conceive of it erroneously. The proper idea of it may be gathered from the preceding observations. No believer doubts that our blessed Lord, in his Divine nature, now exercises personal and direct dominion over all unfallen creatures in all worlds. That he does so, is most clearly and unequivocally taught in the Scriptures. *Col. i. 15—19*; *Phil. ii. 9—11*; *1 Cor. viii. 6*; *John i. 3*; *Rom. xi. 36*; *Rev. i. 5, 6*. But when all things on earth shall be restored, *Acts iii. 21*, and this world shall resume its original place in the kingdom of the heavens, why should not our Lord, as God-Man, also exercise personal and direct dominion in this? The personal reign of an earthly monarch does not imply his constant, visible, personal presence, at all times, in every part of his dominions. No more does the personal coming and appearance of Christ involve his personal continuance on earth in his human nature, at all times, and his personal absence from all other parts of creation. Nor does the proper idea of his personal reign exclude the ministry of creatures, whether angels or glorified men. But it does imply the acknowledged supremacy of Christ as king by all, *Eph. i. 10*; *Dan. vii. 27*; *John xviii. 36, 37*; *1 Cor. xv. 23—25*; *Col. ii. 10*; *Phil. ii. 10*, the administration of his laws as the only authoritative rule of con-

duct, and such abiding tokens of his presence as will render his power manifest and his government exceedingly glorious. See Isa. iv. 5; *Deschamp's* translation; *Mede's Works*, folio, 603, 4; *Jerusalem's Glory*, by Jeremiah Burroughs, p. 65.

The word (*παλιγγενεσία*) *regeneration* does not occur in the LXX. version,\* and only in one other place in the New Testament. Yet, the meaning of it is plain. It signifies the new creation. The verse we regard as parallel in doctrine to Acts iii. 21; 2 Peter iii. 13; Heb. ii. 5; Rev. xxi. 5; Isa. lxv. 17; lxvi. 22; xliii. 19; Rom. viii. 18—23, with this difference, that the Saviour here assumes what in most of these passages is directly taught. If the doctrine of the physical new creation or regeneration of the earth were not elsewhere taught; on the contrary, if it were clear, by the Scriptures, that it is the purpose of God to let the earth droop and wither under the blighting influence of the curse, until he shall have completed the number of his elect, and thereupon to annihilate it; then, indeed, we could not ascribe to this word any such meaning. On the other hand, if the Scriptures assure us that it is the Divine purpose to remove the curse and restore the earth to its original beauty and glory, it is much worse than useless to pare down the natural and proper meaning of the word, or wrest it from its proper meaning, in order to show that the Saviour did not employ it in its full and proper sense in the promise we are considering. Let us pause, then, to consider briefly some of the passages in which the physical regeneration of the earth is taught.

In Acts iii. 21, the apostle Peter speaks of the restitution of all things implicitly as the effect or result of the (*παλιγγενεσία*) regeneration or second creation of all things, because such a work includes, as a necessary effect, the removal of the curse and the rectification of all physical and moral natures. The fundamental idea the apostle expresses in his second epistle. 2 Peter iii. 13. In both these passages he had a reference, no doubt, to Isa. lxv. 17, and lxvi. 22, to which we will now turn. In these prophecies we find that the prophet plainly describes

\* In the Septuagint version we find the words *עַד בּוֹא הַלְרִפְתִּי* Job xiv. 14, translated *ἕως ἂν πάλιν γθωμαι* (donec veniat immutatio mea, Lat. Vulg.) Elias Hutter, in translating this 27th verse of Matt. xix. into Hebrew, adopts the word *חֲלִיפָה* from Job. In Bagster's edition of the Hebrew New Testament the word is changed to *בְּבִרְיָאָה הַחֲדָשָׁה* which conforms more closely to the Greek.

Job referred, undoubtedly, to the resurrection of his body; and those who understand this word as signifying merely the resurrection of the body, would probably prefer Hutter's version. Understood of man, Hutter sufficiently expresses the sense; but, as applied to world, the version published by Bagster is to be preferred.

a state of things on the earth; for he refers to a city on earth, to people on earth, to employments on earth. He speaks of the building of houses, the planting of vineyards, the propagation of inhabitants, different stages of human life, infancy and old age. He speaks of a change of condition in words which imply identity of place. "The voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her," implies that, in former times, the voice of weeping had been heard in her. He speaks, also, under the same conditions, of the perpetuity of the people. The seed and the name of Israel, he assures us, shall for ever afterwards endure, and be as permanent as the new heavens and the new earth. See Jer. xxxi. 35, 37; xxxiii. 25, 26. These new heavens and new earth are, we doubt not, the regeneration to which our Lord refers; and the thrones of judgment he promised his apostles over the twelve tribes of Israel are to be enjoyed in this new and blessed condition of all things.\*

The apostle Paul, Rom. viii. 18—23, evidently refers to the same era. He describes the earth as travailing and groaning now; but waiting, nevertheless, with intense expectation for a glorious change. For the creature, that is, the physical creation itself, he says, shall be delivered from its present bondage of corruption, and made to share in the glorious liberty of the children of God. This deliverance, we conceive, will be accomplished by the regeneration of which our Lord spoke.

We understand Isaiah vi. 3; xi. 9; xl. 5, as referring to the same era and condition of the earth. Rev. xxi. 5, seems to be a repetition of the prophecy of Isaiah; at least the language is so similar, that the writer must have had the words of the prophet in his mind.

Those who restrict the word to the resurrection of the bodies of the saints, curtail its meaning. It includes physical nature, as the passages cited prove; to which we may add, Isaiah xxxii. 14, 15; xli. 18, 19; xliii. 19, 20; li. 3; lv. 13; xi. 6, 8; xxxv. 9; lxv. 25; Hosea ii. 18. Even the lower orders of animal nature will share in it (Isa. xi.; lxv. 25; Ezek. xxxiv. 25; Rom viii. 19—22) as well as man, and the whole body of the elect church. Matt. xxv. 31—40; 1 Cor. xv. 43—52; Philip. iii. 20, 21.†

\* Many learned men, however, take very different views of Isa. lxv. 17, and its context. They all depart very widely from the literal sense, but in different directions. We must reject all of them, or regard this prophecy as one which Elias only can rightly interpret. The real difficulty of these learned writers is to understand the words of the prophet *otherwise* than literally as their discordance proves.

† The word in Titus iii. 5, if rightly interpreted, has the same enlarged sense. The apostle does not certainly mean that regeneration, or *the* regeneration, is, or consists in a washing or baptism, although he alludes, no doubt, *especially*



“When the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory.”

In this expression we have a note of the time appointed for the fulfilment of the promise. The Saviour promised his apostles that they should sit upon thrones in the regeneration, at the time when he should sit upon the throne which belongs to him as the Son of Man. The *regeneration* or *palingenesia* he spoke of, is therefore still future. The precise epoch of its commencement, as we learn from Matt. xxv. 31, will be reached “When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him;” for then will he sit upon the throne of his glory. This is a promise, therefore, for which the apostles still wait, depending on the faithfulness and the power of their Lord and Master. Nor are the twelve tribes of Israel yet gathered. This is another note of time, which serves to establish the futurity of the regeneration. But many interpreters deny that the twelve tribes of Israel ever will be restored, see notes on Matt. ii. 18; and although the Saviour does not here expressly declare that they shall be, yet he assumes it as a purposed event. His words are:

“Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

All the terms in which this promise is expressed are very striking and significant; thrones—sitting on thrones—judging, or ruling over, the twelve tribes of Israel—in the *palingenesia*, (the regeneration) when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory. The promise hinges on greater events than the

to the renewed state of man, while the Saviour had respect *generally* to the renewed *state of all things*. The washing of which the apostle speaks is emblematical of the renewed state of man *in body*, soul, and spirit, the consummation of which will be brought about by his resurrection; or the reproduction of his body in a new and glorified form at the coming of Christ, which will mark also the epoch of the restitution of all things. Acts iii. 21. Hence the connection between the word as Paul uses it, and the full and proper sense of it, as our Lord uses it. Paul's subject led him to speak of the *palingenesia* only as it respects *man*; but the nature or matter of the promise our Lord made to the apostles, involved the full sense of the term: for the promise respected the universal state of things which *shall be*, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory; when, and not before, the apostles shall be rewarded with thrones and dominion. To the same period the Lord referred in Luke xxii. 28, 30, and Paul also in 1 Cor. vi. 2;—for in that place the scope of his subject required it, though he did not there use the word *παλιγγενεσία* as he did in Titus iii. 5; but his meaning is the same as if he had said (Οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι [ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ] οἱ ἄγγελοι τῶν κίσμων κρινουσι): “Know ye not that [in the regeneration] the saints shall judge the world?” The use which Paul makes of the word *παλιγγενεσία* in Titus iii. 5, is an example of *synecdoche*. He curtails the sense, by applying to *man* (the microcosm) what properly belongs to the world (the macrocosm,) with which man is connected; the renovation of both being synchronous in the Divine purpose, and the result of one and the same grand scheme of the Divine operations.

world has ever yet witnessed. The Saviour assumes that they are all unalterably fixed in the Divine purpose, and the very fact that he assumes them as certainties, shows his interpretation of the Scriptures which predict them. He observes the same method in the promise he gave them at the institution of the Supper. Luke xxii. 28—30.

Those who refuse to receive these promises in their full and literal sense, commit themselves to the work of explaining the most important prophecies relating to the destiny of Israel, in opposition to the plain and obvious meaning of the language in which they are expressed. But all difficulties of interpretation disappear, if we but admit, what the Scriptures plainly teach, that the present is not the final dispensation of God's government over men on earth, see note on Acts iii. 21; but designed chiefly for the preparatory work of the gathering of the Church. This done, the dispensation will be closed, and the close of it will be signaled by the restoration of Israel to the land God covenanted to give Abraham for an *everlasting* possession—the coming of the Son of Man for the judgment of all nations, Matt. xxv. 31—the resurrection and glorification of the elect Church, and the inauguration of a new dispensation variously called, the restitution of all things, Acts iii. 21, the new heavens and the new earth, Isa. lxxv. 17; 2 Pet. iii. 13, the world to come, (τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν, Heb. ii. 5) and in this place, *the regeneration*, during which the apostles, in fulfilment of this promise of the Saviour, will be entrusted with the government of the twelve tribes of Israel, but in what manner it is impossible for us to conjecture. See notes on Acts iii. 22, 23.

There is nothing preposterous or degrading in the idea of the apostles reigning over Israel in the new earth. The reign of Jehovah over Israel during the theocracy was personal. 1 Sam. viii. 7. He appeared at times in human form, and he gave them symbols of his presence in his temple. But the earth was not then what it will be in the regeneration of it. How can it be degrading to the apostles, or detract from their happiness, to serve God as kings in the way of his appointment? To depreciate the rewards which the Saviour promises, or to argue that they are less glorious or desirable than those which he might bestow under some different arrangement or ordering of things, betrays not only great presumption, but a spirit not unlike that which the Lord often rebuked. Mark ix. 33; Matt. xx. 21, 26, 27.

MATT. XIX. 29, 30. "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 hun-

dred-fold, and shall inherit life everlasting. But many that are first shall be last, and the last first."

The promise contained in this verse is distinct from that made to the apostles. Among them there was to be an equality. Each was promised a throne and dominion, and perhaps a separate dominion over a particular tribe. But among those who come within the terms of this verse, distinctions of some sort would be made. Many first would be last. Many last first. The ground of all such distinctions, the parable in the next chapter, verses 1—16, teaches, is the Divine sovereignty.

MATT. XX. 1—16. The parable recorded in these verses, belongs to the category of private instruction, and in this respect, is like that in chap. xviii. 21—35. It was designed to illustrate the principle of the Divine government announced in the last verse of the 19th chapter, which is repeated at the conclusion of the parable, verse 16, with the additional observation "that many are called, but few chosen." This is another principle here declared for the first time, and repeated at the conclusion of the parable of the marriage. Matt. xxii. 14. The expression occurs in no other place. The scope and material circumstances of the two parables are different, but they illustrate the same principle. Confining our attention at present to the parable of the householder, we observe that only one class of the labourers entered the vineyard for a *stipulated* reward. Those who entered the vineyard at the third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hours, engaged in labour without any special agreement *as to the sum* they were to receive. They were content to leave their reward to the householder's discretion and sense of justice, and for aught that appears, the householder would not have employed them on other terms. The first class only, therefore, could claim the promised reward *as a debt*. Rom. xi. 6. Another material circumstance is the proportion between the time of labour and the reward bestowed. Had the reward been proportionate only to the time, those who entered the vineyard at the third hour would have received three-fourths of a penny; those who entered at the sixth, ninth, and eleventh hours, would have received respectively a halfpenny, a farthing, and the third of a farthing. All they received above their just reward was mere favour or benevolence shown to them, and the greater in proportion as their service was less. Indeed, the reward bestowed upon those who wrought only one hour was almost wholly a gratuity which they owed to the benevolence of the householder. We regard it as another material circumstance, that those who entered the vineyard *last* were rewarded *first*, and those who entered it *first* were rewarded *last*, (although as soon as they had the right to demand the sum

they had earned) so that the benevolence of the householder to those who entered the vineyard at the eleventh hour, was marked not only by what he gave them, but by the time and manner of giving it.

We should notice, also, that the whole-day labourers are represented as murmurers, having an evil eye. They were not good men, therefore, and it was necessary to state this circumstance, in order to show the reason as well as the occasion of the householder's remark. Nothing is said to show the character of the other labourers—whether they were grateful, or whether they would not have murmured also, if they had not been paid as much or more in proportion to the time of their labour than full day-labourers were paid. Hence we infer that the *character of the labourers* is not a circumstance upon which the instruction of the parable depends. Nor do we suppose the *penny* is designed to represent the reward of eternal life. It is material only so far as it serves to show the justice of the householder to the murmurers, and his benevolence to those who could claim little or nothing as of debt. The parable, as we conceive, turns wholly upon the character of the householder, and the design of it is to illustrate the Divine sovereignty in the bestowment of favours. God is just to all, and “gracious to whom he will be gracious.” Rom. ix. 15, 17; Exod. xxxiii. 19.

It is to be observed, that both Mark and Luke omit this parable. Luke stops with the promise of eternal life, xviii. 30. Mark adds to the promise that distinctions of reward will be made. “Many first shall be last.” Mark x. 31. The reason why Matthew adds the parable is to be found, it is probable, in the 27th and 28th verses of the preceding chapter. Peter had inquired what *their* reward should be, who had forsaken all and followed him. In reply, the Saviour promised him and his fellow-apostles peculiar exaltation. They should sit upon thrones, and exercise rule over the tribes of Israel. The reward of each should not only be great and glorious, but, as we may presume, equal. Having made this special promise to the twelve, the Saviour added this parable in order to exclude the conclusion, which other disciples might derive from it, that equal and equally great rewards should be bestowed upon all his followers. Had the other Evangelists recorded the question of Peter and our Lord's answer, they would, as we conceive, also have recorded this parable as a *caveat* or caution against a false conclusion; but having omitted the question and the answer, the parable was not necessary.

If such be the especial use of this parable, it furnishes strong internal evidence of the genuineness of Matt. xix. 28, and those who would reject that verse as an interpolation, should reject

with it this parable also, which no critic hitherto has been bold enough to propose.

MATT. XX. 17, 19. "And Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said to them: Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify, and the third day he shall rise again." Mark x. 32—34; Luke xviii. 31—34.

Our Lord having finally left Galilee, was now on his last journey to Jerusalem, and probably had come near to Jericho, and with a view to prepare their minds for the severe trials they were soon to undergo, he took them aside and repeated to them the prediction he had twice already made to them while he abode in Galilee, Matt. xvii. 22; xvi. 21, but with some additional particulars. We have observed that the first time our Lord forewarned them of his sufferings, was immediately after Peter had declared the mystery of his person. Matt. xvi. 21. It was also after the death of John the Baptist. The next time was soon after his transfiguration; and now as the events drew near, he recurs with solemn emphasis to the same distressing subject. On the second occasion, Matthew says they were exceeding sorry. Mark says, ix. 32, they understood not his saying, and were afraid to ask him. Luke adds, ix. 45, to what Mark says, that his saying was hid from them, and they understood it not. On the present occasion, Luke notices only the effect the communication made upon their minds. He says, xviii. 34: "They understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

This blindness of the apostles can only be accounted for by their *full* and firm belief of our Lord's Messiahship, and equally full persuasion, that none of those things *could happen* to the true Messiah. Their blindness was the joint effect of truth and error, which seem to have taken equally fast hold of their minds. Publicly, the Saviour, several times afterwards, alluded to the same events in a more general way, Matt. xxi. 39; John xii. 24, 32; Matt. xxvi. 2, 12; Mark xiv. 8; John xii. 7, and privately again at the last supper with his disciples, Matt. xxvi. 24; Mark xiv. 21; Luke xxii. 22, and in the long discourse which followed, related only by John, xiii. 21, 33; xiv. 30, 31; xvi. 5, 28, &c.

The subject he knew was harrowing to their feelings. He disclosed the particulars of his sufferings by degrees, and never in direct terms, except on the three occasions before mentioned,

and then in a way to give them no unnecessary pain. Having thus formally thrice predicted in direct terms his sufferings and death, that when they came to pass, the apostles might remember his prediction, and believe, we observe that in his last interview he alluded to them only in general terms, showing the most delicate regard to their love of him. But let us notice the particulars.

On the first occasion he designated the place of his sufferings—*Jerusalem*: He described his sufferings only in general terms—*shall suffer many things*: His rejection—*by the elders, chief priests, and scribes*: His death—*be killed*. Matt. xvi. 12; Mark viii. 31; Luke ix. 22.

On the second occasion he spoke of his betrayal or delivery *into the hands of men*: His death—*they shall kill him*: but Luke mentions only his betrayal. Matt. xvii. 22, 23; Mark ix. 31; Luke ix. 44.

On the last occasion, he names *Jerusalem* as the place of his sufferings—*his betrayal*, which is to the chief priests and elders: His *condemnation*—they shall condemn him to death: *His delivery to the Gentiles*—they shall deliver him to the Gentiles. *Their cruel treatment of him*—they shall mock and scourge and spit upon him, and *crucify* and kill him. Matt. xx. 18, 19; Mark x. 33, 34; Luke xviii. 31, 33. On each occasion he adds that he shall rise again from the dead on the third day.

We observe this last prediction was the most circumstantial of all. But there was one particular which he still withheld—who it was that should betray him. John xiii. 21; Luke xxii. 21; Mark xiv. 18; Matt. xxvi. 21. This circumstance most nearly concerned their own body; and had it been disclosed without the name of the traitor, would have caused anguish to those whom the Saviour designed to spare. Matt. xxvi. 22; Mark xiv. 19.

Of all the events foretold, none, it is probable, was more repugnant to the preconceived opinions of the apostles, than *his delivery to the Gentiles* and his death by *crucifixion*; and for this reason, it is probable, the Saviour withheld them until the last. How could they conceive that the Messiah, as they believed him to be, who was to deliver them and their nation from the power of the Gentiles, should be delivered into their hands and ignominiously put to death by them? Perhaps it was to this part of the last prediction that Luke especially refers when he says, "And this saying was hid from them." Luke xviii. 34.

But however we may explain it, no fact is more clear than that the apostles at this time were profoundly ignorant of the

future. They had no conception of a suffering Messiah any more than the rest of their countrymen; nor more than the unbelieving Jews of the present day have. The work of redemption in all its parts was an impenetrable mystery to them, until they were taught it by the Holy Spirit.

We add, in conclusion, that our Lord's demeanour on his last journey to Jerusalem, especially as he drew near to the city, was peculiarly impressive. He led the way with a steadfast purpose, Luke ix. 51, and the apostles followed with amazement and fear. Mark x. 32.

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## CHAPTER VI.

Drinking of Christ's Cup.—The Apostles not to be ambitious.—Christ came to serve.—Melchizedec the "Son of Man."—Christ's entry into Jerusalem.—His lamentation over Jerusalem.—His expulsion of the Money Changers.—The Homage of the Children.—The withering of the Fig-tree.—Christ is questioned by the Priests.—Christ's response.—Christ's further response.—The Nation reject Him.—The Parable of the Vineyard.—The Parable of the Marriage.

MATTHEW XX. 20, 21. "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said to her, What wilt thou? She said unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom."

According to Mark x. 35, it was James and John who made this request, and it is evident, from Matthew's account, that they at least joined in it, verse 22. But we may well marvel that these brethren should even allow such a request to be made, after the promise the Lord had given them, as well as to the other apostles, in reply to the question of Peter. Matt. xix. 27, 28. He had promised each a throne and dominion over a tribe of Israel in the world to come (palingenesia.) Yet not content, they would occupy the thrones nearest to the King, their Master. We must remember, too, that James and John had witnessed the transfiguration, and must have had higher conceptions of the glory to which they aspired than any other of the apostles excepting Peter. The request, and the indignation it excited, reveal the imperfection of their knowledge and character at that time, and with this view especially we notice the passage. One would think that the lowest place in such a kingdom would be glorious enough to satisfy their loftiest wish. But the request displayed their ignorance, and so the Lord told them. It was made no doubt with the full belief that the

expected kingdom was soon to be established in outward glory at Jerusalem, and of course before their death. The other apostles, though with less knowledge of the glory of the kingdom, displayed the same ambitious spirit. They were incensed at what they regarded an unjustifiable attempt to forestall the most eminent places, verse 24; and to this, the manner in which the request was made perhaps contributed. The mother leads the way, as if to prevent the failure of her sons, by her influence. She does not at first specify her wish, but desires the Saviour to commit himself by a promise to grant whatever she should ask, as if her thoughts and wishes were unknown to him. While the narrative is true to nature, it shows how little our Lord's character was understood by his most favoured disciples, notwithstanding the wonderful displays of it which he had made.

MATT. XX. 22. "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able."

The question thus interposed by the Saviour, before he answered the mother's request, was designed to call the attention of the mother and her sons to its import. There was a cup to be drunk of, and a baptism to be experienced, before they could reach the thrones they coveted. Such was the plan the Father had ordained. In answering the question affirmatively, they answered ignorantly. Of themselves they could do neither. Hence the Saviour confirmed their answer with a promise of Divine power, as if he had said: Ye know neither what ye ask, nor what ye say; but I grant you this.

MATT. XX. 23. "Ye shall" [be enabled by the Divine power and grace to] "drink indeed of my cup, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with."

These words we regard as a promise in answer to the mother's request. It was not the thing she asked, but what the Saviour saw proper to grant. It was an assurance to these brethren, that they should be sharers with him in sufferings and glory, see Rev. i. 9, and an assurance also of his Divine aid to endure the one and attain the other.

MATT. XX. 23. "But to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but [or except to those] for whom it is prepared of my Father."

By these words the Saviour denies, or rather refuses to promise beforehand, the distinctions especially requested; leaving them to the disposal of the Divine decree, in conformity with which he would, in all things, regulate and administer his king-



dom.\* This (23d) verse then contains a promise made and a promise withheld.

But according to the common interpretation it contains no promise whatever—only a prediction of sufferings, expressed under the two forms of “drinking of a cup,” and “being baptized.” The sense, however, appears to be: “Ye shall indeed drink of my cup of sorrows, see Matt. xxvi. 39, and be baptized with my baptism, by which your souls shall first be renewed and sanctified, and your bodies at last be glorified and made like unto my own body of glory, see Philip. iii. 21; 1 John iii. 2; Rom. viii. 29; but to sit on my right hand and on my left, enjoying the first places in my kingdom, is not mine to give, except to those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.” See the notes on Acts ii. The prediction of sufferings is emblematically represented by the words “drink of my cup.” The promise of glorification is involved in the word “baptism.” Thus understood, the words beautifully illustrate the gracious character of the Saviour. The mother asked for glory and distinction in glory, for her two sons. The Saviour promised them glory, great glory, not the reverse of what they desired. See Luke xi. 11, 12. But it was a glory to be attained only through sufferings (drinking of his cup,) which his grace should strengthen them to endure.

It is a further objection to the common interpretation that neither James nor John suffered death by crucifixion. James was put to death by the sword. Acts xii. 2. John died, it is supposed, a natural death, at an advanced age, after having suffered severe persecutions. These we may regard as fulfilling the prediction, “Ye shall indeed drink of my cup.”

MATT. XX. 24. “And when the ten heard *it* they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.”

Matthew, the writer of this Gospel, was one of the ten here spoken of, and he records this fact as an evidence of the imperfection of his own and their character. They did not even understand the import of the Lord's reply to the mother's request. Peter, who was with James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, and who shared in the common indignation,

\* The interpolated words in the English version, “*it shall be given*” to them, &c., should be stricken out. Our Lord elsewhere represents himself as the sovereign arbiter of the rewards of his kingdom, Luke xix. 11—27; John v. 22, 27; Matt. xxviii. 18; John xvii. 2; xiii. 3. The rendering of the Syriac version is in conformity with that above given. See Fabricius' Lat. version, and Murdock's Eng. version of the Syriac New Test., also Tremellius. Diodati interpolates the words *sarà dato*; Erasmus, *continget*; the Vulgate, *vobis*; Montanus renders verbatim, without interpolation. The particle *ἄλλα* is sometimes used in the sense of *except*. See LXX. in Numb. xxxv. 33; Dan. ii. 11; Mark iv. 22; 2 Cor. v. 4.

could more justly appreciate their ambitious desires than the others. Perhaps he, of all, felt it the most keenly. All seemed to ascribe the request to *the sons* and not to the mother, whom they seem to have regarded as the instrument of their ambition. The effect it produced on the minds of all, shows one motive of our Lord, for enjoining secrecy upon the three, whom he permitted to witness his Transfiguration and glory. It was the favour shown to James and John, perhaps, which influenced them to make this request. But we add, how different must the views and the feelings of this Evangelist have been when he composed his Gospel. The Holy Spirit had taught him the meaning of the Saviour's words, and shown him something of the nature and glory of the kingdom which they all then ignorantly judged of by the kingdoms of this world. The day of Pentecost produced a wonderful transformation of the character of the apostles intellectually and morally.

MATT. XX. 25—27. "But Jesus called them and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them," [the nations, their subjects] "and they that are great, exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant." Mark x. 45.

All the apostles had taken it for granted that the same system and arrangement of things which they observed in the world would continue to subsist in the kingdom they expected. This misconception is apparent from the passage just considered, and our Lord, in these verses, takes occasion to correct it. He told them that although they should be princes in his kingdom, they would be most unlike the princes of this world, for they lord it over their subjects; but in his kingdom, places of eminence and power would be places of service, and the greatest eminence would be inseparably joined with the humblest service. As if he had said: "I have promised you thrones and dominion over the tribes of Israel, but do not think that you will exercise it after the manner of the princes of this world."

"The great law of my kingdom, is the law of love. Your office will be to impart good to those whom you will rule over, and serve them, not to be served by them. In so doing, you will most resemble God, whose nature it is to impart blessings to the humblest as well as the most exalted of his creatures, without recompense, which the infinite fulness of his nature renders him incapable of receiving." Ps. l. 7—14.

It cannot be denied, however, that this preconceived opinion of the apostles, while they were yet unsanctified, has greatly prevailed in the visible Church, almost from its origin, notwith-

standing these words of the Saviour. The hierarchy of Rome—while assuming for its sovereign pontiff the title, *Servus Servorum Dei*—has exercised lordship over the Church and the world, after the manner of Gentile princes; and other branches of the Church, since the Reformation, have frequently lost sight of, perhaps quite forgotten, the kind of dominion the Saviour promised—even while professing to follow this fundamental law.

What our Lord said on this occasion to the twelve apostles, he said to all his elect people. See Rev. i. 6; iii. 21. And if it be inquired, what occasions there can be for such rule or service, and what field vast enough for the unceasing employment of their whole body, we can only answer, we know not. Our conceptions on these questions may, in other respects, be as far from the reality as were the conceptions of the apostles upon the nature of the pre-eminence they coveted. But as we are taught expressly that the happiness of the elect will consist essentially in service, we confidently infer that a service ample enough to engage all their energies will be assigned to them. Luke xix. 17—19. Something of this kind seems to be intimated in Luke xvi. 9—an obscure passage—the precise meaning of which it is impossible for us to apprehend, without more knowledge of the economy of the world of Redemption. See Heb. i. 14; ii. 5. Besides, we know that in the “Father’s house are many mansions,” John xiv. 2; and to all these the dominion of our Lord extends. The creation is vast already, infinitely beyond our highest conceptions; and for aught we know—rather as we have reason to believe, John v. 17—the creative energies of the Divine nature will be for ever employed in enlarging it on every border. But however we may speculate, thus much we know, that the Lord will provide the means of fulfilling everything he has promised or purposed.

MATT. XX. 28. “Even as the SON OF MAN came not to be ministered unto [served] but to minister, [serve others] and [rather say, even] to give his life a ransom of many.”

Our Lord enforces his doctrine by his example. As Son of Man, he was and is the Lord of the world. See notes on Matt. xvi. 27. As if he had said, “If I, the King of the kings and Lord of the lords of the whole earth have come to do service to the humblest of men—my creatures, my subjects; not to be served by them; you ought to dismiss these low and grovelling views of greatness. My example, not the example of the princes of the Gentiles, is worthy of your imitation and love.” John xiii. 15. His works of beneficence they had witnessed in many forms, which they would have been well prepared to appreciate, could they have conceived adequately of

the majesty and glory of his nature. One service, however, greater than all, and inconceivable to them, yet remained; it was his sacrificial work, to which he referred by the last words of this verse—"even to give his life a ransom for many." See Rom. v. 7, 8; John x. 11. Upon this clause we add a few observations.

The act of giving or offering his life as a ransom, our Lord predicates of himself as Son of Man. It was an act appropriate in its nature only to the priestly office. It follows, therefore, that as Son of Man he ever has been a priest as well as a king. It was shown in a former note, Matt. xvii. 22, 23, that as the King and Lord of Nature he was its Pontiff—his sovereignty and priesthood being commensurate and inseparable. His relation, as the Son of Man, to this world, as its King and universal Lord, is most explicitly taught in various forms. Ps. viii. 6, 7, 8; Matt. xiii. 41; xvi. 27, 28; xix. 28; xxv. 31—46; John v. 27; Acts xvii. 31; Rev. i. 13; Dan. vii. 13, 14. His dominion is, in the fullest sense, "an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." When he shall enter upon it in outward glory, see 1 Tim. vi. 15, according to this prediction of Daniel, Satan shall have no power again to mar it—all that is offensive to Divine purity in the whole earth shall be expelled from it. Matt. xiii. 41. All his enemies, including the powers of darkness as well as rebellious men, will have been subjected to him, Matt. xxii. 44; Ps. cx.—the curse, and all the evils it has entailed, cast out, Rev. xxi. 3—5, and all things restored to a beauty and glory transcending that in which they were at first created. Over the new world, the Son of Man, as the Second Adam, will exercise eternal dominion. The means by which this ineffably glorious result is now being wrought out, are his sacrificial work as the Son of Man, the universal Pontiff, and Lord of Nature.

If we consider, in connection with these two functions, his attributes of wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, we shall best approximate a proper conception of the KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS and KING OF PEACE, Isa. ix. 6, 7, whom Paul describes in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of his Epistle to the Hebrews. By interpreting the names MELCHIZEDEC, MELECHSALEM, Gen. xiv. 18, the apostle intimated that the principal thing to be regarded was, their signification; and of whom, we may now inquire, can the description he gives us of that great personage who met Abraham be predicated but the Son of Man? See the notes on Matt. ix. 4, 25—27; xii. 2, 43—45, 46—50; xiii. 37—43; xiv. 18—21, 22, 23, 32; xvi.

6, 7, 13, 14, 15, 16, 27, 28; xvii. 2, 9, 22, 23, 27; xviii. 11. Consider:

(1.) He was without father, without mother, without descent, or any earthly genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God. This is said of him, as we conceive, not as the seed of the woman nor as the seed of Abraham, nor as the seed of David, Gen. iii. 15; Matt. i. 1, but as the Son of Man, the second Man, the last Adam, the Lord from heaven. 1 Cor. xv. 45—49. As the seed of the woman, the son of David, the son of Abraham, his genealogy is given, Luke iii. 23—38; Matt. i. 1—16; but as the Second Adam, the Man of the everlasting covenant, he was with the Father before the world was. John xvii. 5; vi. 62; iii. 13; Isa. liii. 8; Prov. viii. 23—31; xxx. 4. Of the Son of Man, therefore, this description is literally and fully true.

Some commentators endeavour to evade the plain meaning of these words of the apostle by supposing they intend no more than that no genealogy of Melchizedec is given in the Scriptures; or that his father and mother were not of royal rank, see *Stuart on Hebrews*; but this mode of interpretation would make strange work of the Scriptures, if applied to every person whose genealogy is not given in the Scriptures, or to any other person except the Son of Man. Concerning him, indeed, the inspired prophet inquires, "Who shall declare his generation?" Isa. liii. 8.

(2.) Consider, again, what the apostle says of the priesthood of Melchizedec. To be made a priest after or according to this order, is to be made a priest, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. Heb. vii. 16. He alleges the one hundred and tenth Psalm as a proof that Melchizedec still liveth. Heb. vii. 8. His great argument against the perpetuity and sufficiency of the Aaronic priesthood is, that men who are made priests according to that order die; which could not be affirmed of Melchizedec and his order, for he continueth for ever, and his priesthood is unchangeable, that is, does not pass from one person to another. Heb. vii. 23, 24.

What man, having an earthly, or human genealogy, could be a priest of this order but the promised seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, of Judah, of David, Jesus the son of Joseph? Now the apostle is careful to remark, Heb. vii. 14, that of the tribe of Judah, Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood, and consequently no man of that tribe could be a priest according to the order of Aaron. See Heb. viii. 4. But the Son of Man—the Heir, the Lord, the Pontiff of the world—having become incarnate in the tribe of Judah, in fulfilment of God's

covenant with David, see notes on Matt. ix. 4, in order that he might have somewhat (viz. the body of flesh which he took) to offer, Heb. viii. 3; x. 5, fulfilled his own proper office of priest according to the order of his higher relations as Son of Man; that is to say, as the Christ, the covenanted seed of David, he exercised a priesthood above the order of his incarnate relations to the race, and according to his relations to the world from its creation, as Son of Man. It was this which constituted him a priest according to the order of Melchizedec. This could not be, if Melchizedec had been any other than the Son of Man. For if Melchizedec were a mortal man, then he could not have had that which is essential to his own order, for which our Lord was denominated a priest after his order; but if an immortal man, then he could be no other than the Son of Man.

(3.) Again; if the priesthood of Melchizedec be perpetual, and Melchizedec himself a priest (*εις το αιγιμενος*, Heb. vii. 3) for ever, then our Lord as Son of Man was Melchizedec; otherwise it would follow that there are two perpetual priesthoods, or a succession of one priest to another in that priesthood, or two priests at the same time in the same office, either of which is impossible. And if it be essential to the order of Melchizedec that the priest should intercede within the veil, then the Son of Man, in the person of Jesus, must be the Melchizedec of whom Moses, and David, and Paul wrote; or there would be two intercessors within the veil, which is contrary to the Scriptures; for none but Jesus ever did or ever will intercede within the veil. It may be added that the similitude between the priesthood of Christ and that of Melchizedec, pointed out by David in the 110th Psalm, has respect to the perpetuity and eternity of the latter. Hence, again, we infer that Melchizedec and the Son of Man were one and the same person, only under different manifestations and dispensations.

(4.) If we may translate Heb. vii. 1 (*οδτος γαρ ο Μελχισεδεκ*) by the same rule the translators of our version observed in rendering Heb. viii. 10 (*οτι αυτη η διαθηκη*) "for this *is* the covenant," etc., we get a direct solution of the apostle's meaning; for the verse would then be read thus: "For this"—referring to Jesus, the forerunner, in the preceding verse—"is the Melchizedec (king of righteousness,) king of Salem (king of peace,) priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him."\*

\* These kings, as all the kings of the earth ever have been, were subordinate to the Son of Man as the rightful Lord and King of the whole earth, and they were in rebellion against him. The appearance of Melchizedec, therefore, to meet the returning victor, and what he said to him, is not to be regarded as a courtesy of friendly congratulations, such as one earthly king might show or

In this manner Erasmus, no mean authority, interpreted the verse. "Nam hic erat Melchizedec, rex Salem Pontifex Dei Altissimi," etc. The meaning of the apostle is, that Jesus, whom he urged upon them to acknowledge and receive as the promised Messiah, is a priest superior to their own priests of the order of Aaron, being a priest according to the order of Melchizedec, because as the Son of Man he is the Melchizedec who met Abraham, and blessed him, and received tithes of him, as being by far his inferior. See notes on Matt. xvii. 22, 23.\*

The clause of the verse (28th) upon which these observations are founded, may then be paraphrased thus: "Even as the Son of Man, the true Melchizedec, came forth from the Father and came into the world (John xvi. 28) and took unto himself a body in the seed of Abraham (Heb. ii. 16,) in order that he might, as a priest of his own order, offer it up on the cross as a sacrifice, a ransom for many."

This was the end for which he came; for although at first he came to the nation of Israel as Messiah, and preached the kingdom to them that they might receive him in that character as their king; yet it was foreseen that the nation would reject him, as they virtually did when they rejected John the Baptist, and from that time forth he ministered to those who would receive him as the Son of Man and Saviour, and at the appointed time laid down his life a ransom for many of that people and for the redemption of the world, which was by inheritance his own.†

MATT. XXI. 1—11. The triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem was a remarkable event. Nothing like it had occurred before. It was at variance with his previous life, see Matt. xii. 19, and it must have greatly perplexed the priests

send to another, but as an interference of a superior of both the victor, who acted in this affair as his minister, and the vanquished; having the right to rule over and command or dispose of both, and award between them at his pleasure.

\* J. H. Kurtz, in his treatise on the *Old Covenant*, vol. i. p. 220—223, § 55, published in *Clark's Foreign Theological Library*, vol. xxi., New Series, regards Melchizedec as the highest and last representative of the Noachic covenant, and as the last independent representative of the Shemitic population, which had been vanquished by the Canaanites. In some respects this author thinks he was superior to Abraham, but in other respects inferior. The discussion is elaborate, but does not remove the difficulties that attend every hypothesis, which assumes an earthly although unknown genealogy of Melchizedec.

† In Rev. v. 10, the redeemed are represented as praising the Lamb because he had made them kings and *priests* unto God; and in Rev. xx. 6, it is declared, that those who have part in the *first* resurrection shall be *priests* of God and of Christ. See 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. Did it ever occur to the reader to inquire of what order their priesthood will be? See John xvii. 22; Phillip. iv. 21; 1 John iii. 2; Heb. ii. 11.

and Pharisees who had already resolved to put him to death. John xi. 53. John gives us precisely the date of it in reference to the approaching passover. By comparing John xii. 1 and 12, it appears to have taken place on the fifth day before that festival, and according to our reckoning on Sunday, the Sunday following being the day of his resurrection. The interval was thickly crowded with the most wonderful events the world has ever witnessed. The history of these events, and the public and private discourses our Lord delivered during that short space of time, occupy the last eight chapters of this Gospel. The space allotted by each of the Evangelists\* to the closing week of our Lord's ministry, compared with that allotted to the preceding part of it, shows not only the transcendent importance of its events, but the deep interest which they felt in them.

But there is another view in which we should consider this occurrence. In the preceding notes the reader's attention has been called to the majesty and glory of our Lord's nature as a man, his wonderful attributes of wisdom and power, and his dominion over all physical and spiritual natures. That such a being should accept a triumph whose crowning glory was the hosannas of children, shows his great condescension, and justifies the conclusion that there was a much deeper meaning in the transaction than those who witnessed it discerned. Matthew alleges expressly, that this entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, and the manner of it, were a fulfilment of prophecy, Zech. ix. 9, and so does John, xii. 15. It was a sign by which Jerusalem might know her king; and however minute or trivial it might appear to the careless and worldly Jews, it must be fulfilled. John xix. 28; x. 35. He was the king—God's king over the whole earth—of whom it had been declared, Psalm ii. 6, 7: "Yet have I set MY KING upon my holy hill of Zion;" and this was the sign by which his approach might be known: "Behold thy king cometh unto thee, meek and sitting upon an ass, the foal of an ass." But let us attend to the circumstances of the narrative.

MATT. XXI. 1, 2. "And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two of his disciples, saying, Go into the village over against you."

Our Lord had advanced from Bethany, which was fifteen furlongs, or nearly two miles distant from Jerusalem, to Beth-

\* The last six chapters of Mark's Gospel—from the 28th verse of the nineteenth chapter of Luke to the end—from the 12th verse of the twelfth chapter of John to the 23d verse of the twentieth chapter.



phage, a village supposed to have been somewhat, though not much, nearer the city. See Luke xix. 29. There he stopped for a few moments, it may be presumed, to make the necessary preparation for his entry in the manner predicted by the prophet. He was surrounded by a vast multitude, Matt. xxi. 8, greater, perhaps, than ever before, who were going up to the approaching festival. From Bethphage he sent two of his disciples to a village not named by either Evangelist, but quite near, and, perhaps, in sight, giving them a direction which evinced both his knowledge and his power.

MATT. XXI. 2. "And straightway (*εὐθὺς* readily, without seeking) ye shall find an ass *tied*, and a colt with her," "whereon never man sat." Mark xi. 2, Luke xix. 30.

This direction may remind the reader of that he gave to Peter respecting the tribute money, Matt. xvii. 27, and of another he soon afterwards gave to the two disciples he sent to prepare the passover. Mark xiv. 12—16; Luke xxii. 8—10. Nor can we regard the words "whereon never man sat," as unimportant. They are the words of the Saviour, and two of the Evangelists carefully note them. Their design, perhaps, was to show the submissiveness of the untrained animal to the Saviour's will, and, in this view, it may be classed with the miracle wrought for the payment of the tribute money, Matt. xvii. 27, and thus be intended as a further exemplification of the dominion ascribed to him in the eighth Psalm.

MATT. XXI. 3. "And if any one say aught to you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them, and straightway he will send them."

What the Saviour anticipated, we learn from Mark xi. 5, and Luke xix. 33, occurred. The owners, Luke xix. 33, observing the unceremonious manner in which their property was about to be taken, interposed: "Why loose ye the colt?" The motive for this question is not explained. Whether they apprehended trouble or danger from untying the colt, or merely regarded the act as an improper interference with their rights, we can only conjecture. Bengel supposes that the owners were devoted friends of the Lord Jesus. But of this there is no evidence. We suppose that they would as readily have consented if they had been strangers, or even enemies to him. It seems much more probable that the recording of this circumstance was designed to show the power of the Saviour's will; and thus considered, it may remind the reader again of Mark xiv. 14, 15; and Luke xxii. 8—10. Besides, the title which he assumed, and bade his messengers declare—THE LORD—יהוה seems to have respect to his universal headship over the

earth, as Son of Man, rather than to the special relation he bore to his disciples and familiar friends. See John xiii. 13. We may add, that the fulfilment of prophecy finds neither impediments in the opposition of enemies, nor assistance from the favour of friends. If we may adopt this view as the true one, we have in this chapter three notable examples of the power of the Saviour's will, see verses 2, 3, 19, as well as a direct reference, verse 16, to the eighth Psalm, in which his dominion, also as Son of Man, over created natures, is described. See notes on Matt. viii. 28—32.

But we must not leave this passage without noticing the majesty of the expression, "The Lord hath need of them." As if he had said: The Son of Man—the Lord of the world, requires their services, not for his own ease or convenience, for we do not read that he rode at any other time during his public ministry, but for the fulfilment of prophecy, as we are informed in the next verses.

MATT. XXI. 4, 5. "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, [Zech. ix. 9] saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, [Jerusalem] Behold thy king cometh unto thee, meek and sitting upon an ass, and [rather say *even*] the foal of an ass," [used to a yoke] or, as John quotes, "Fear not, daughter of Zion, behold, thy king cometh, sitting on an ass's colt."\*

Neither Mark nor Luke quotes this or any other prophecy as having been fulfilled on this occasion; and John omits the

\* This verse differs in some respects from the corresponding verses of the other Evangelists. Some critics regard the words (*ἐπι ὄνον καὶ παῖλον*) "upon an ass and a colt," as an example of hendiadys, and consequently suppose that only the colt was brought by the disciples, according to the representation of the other Evangelists. They rectify the other variations according to this idea. Thus in verse 7, for *ἔπαυον αὐτῶν* they read *ἔπαυον αὐτῶν* or *ἔπαυον ἑνὸς ἐξ αὐτῶν*. See Dr. Owen *Bowyer's Crit. Conj.* This explanation does not fully meet the difficulty. It is plain from Matthew, that two animals, the ass and her colt, were brought by the disciples, and it is plain from the other Evangelists, that the Lord entered the city riding on the colt. Bengel says, "our Lord rode on the foal, but *employed also the mother as a companion to the foal*," but why, he does not explain. We suggest that it was for the more punctual fulfilment of the prophecy. The word *אֲתוֹנִים* (athnoth) is rendered in the LXX. by the word *ὑπεζυγιον*, which word Matthew adopts. It signifies a *draught animal*, a *beast of burden*. Accordingly, it is rendered in the Geneva, Cranmer's, Wickliffe's, and the Bishops' translations of the Bible, the foal of an ass *used to the yoke*. Assuming the sense of the Septuagint, as conveying the proper meaning of the prophet, the Evangelist Matthew differs from the others, chiefly in being more particular; for the purpose, it may be presumed, of showing how minutely our Lord's conduct, on this occasion, corresponded with the words of the prophecy. He took care that nothing should be wanting to the sign or proof which he was now about to exhibit to the nation, that he was the king in whom the prophet bade them to rejoice greatly. Zech. ix. 9.

circumstance of the Saviour sending two disciples to the village, and the directions he gave them. He says, however, that none of them understood at that time the meaning of the transaction; but after "Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him." Yet the prophecy is unambiguous, and by thus fulfilling it the Lord virtually assumed the character of Zion's King. It was an overt act or claim of sovereignty much more significant than any which the chief priests alleged against him before Pilate. Luke xxiii. 2. It was an answer also to the demand of his authority which the priests and elders made on the day following in the temple, verse 23, which they might have perceived, had they remembered the prophecy and understood it.

MATT. XXI. 8. "And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut down branches from the trees and strewed them in the way."

It appears by John xii. 12, 13, that the multitudes which attended him on this occasion, in part at least, came out from Jerusalem to meet him, for the news of his coming had reached the city. These joined the multitudes which had followed from Jericho. Matt. xx. 31. It was a vast concourse, which agitated (*ἔσεισθη*, verse 10) and aroused the whole city. The universal inquiry was, Who is this?

The spreading of their garments and the strewing of branches in the way, were tokens of submission to him, as their lawful King. 2 Kings ix. 13. It was done (*κατ' οἰκονομίαν*) as a part of the customary ceremonial of a new accession to the throne.

MATT. XXI. 9. "And the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."

By this acclamation they indicated that a king of David's race had commenced his reign; an event which was looked for by all, and was most grateful to their desires. The word hosanna was an invocation of his royal aid and clemency, 2 Sam. xiv. 4; *Σωσον, ὁ βασιλευς, σωσον*, LXX; *Serva me, Rex*, Vulg.; *הוֹשַׁנָּה*, Heb.; see also Ps. cxviii. 25, from which this acclamation appears to have been adopted, as if they had said: "Hosanna to thee, O Son of David; Hosanna to Him who is in the highest heavens, (*Ῥωσωννα, δοξα τω ἐν ὑψιστοις Θεω.*)"

We learn from Luke xix. 37, that the acclamation commenced at the descent of the Mount of Olives, and from Matthew xxi. 15, that it was continued until after he had entered the temple. The Pharisees, who were displeased, Luke xix. 39, regarded this demonstration of the popular favour as a

sure indication of his success, John xii. 19; from which we may infer the impressiveness of the scene. Matt. xxi. 10. But to us it suggests other reflections.

The time had now come when our Lord, in fulfilment of the prophecy, must enter his own city as her king. Matt. v. 35; Ps. xlviii. 2; lxxxvii. 3. His entrance, and the manner of it, was his own voluntary act; and to give it the force of a true sign and proof of his character, it must be attended with circumstances which demonstrated the presence of Divine power, and with tokens which no deceiver could fabricate. Some of these have already been alluded to. See notes on verse 3. The same power which he exerted over the untrained animal, and over the will of its owners, he exerted over the minds of the multitude. Their hosannas, though voluntary, could not have been withheld, or had that been possible, even inanimate nature would have been subservient to his will. Luke xix. 40.\* The whole transaction, not excepting its minutest circumstances, was arranged and carried on by the power of his will; as the homage due to the royal office he had temporarily assumed, in order to fulfil the Scriptures. Had their hosannas been universal and sincere, the overflowings of holy hearts, he would at that time have established his kingdom over them. Luke xix. 41—44; Matt. xxiii. 37. But they were not such; rather were they the homage of depraved natures—a homage, nevertheless, which must needs be rendered, that the prediction of the prophet might be fulfilled, verse 4.

To this occasion, and the events which soon followed, the second Psalm undoubtedly refers. Acts iv. 24—28; xiii. 33. The 6th verse refers especially to this occasion, yet only provisionally or conditionally: “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion,” [or more literally, “And I have anointed my King over Zion, the mountain of my holiness.”]

Jesus, the Son of Man, Jehovah’s King over the whole earth, was advancing to Mount Zion to take possession of the throne of David, and to confirm, at that time, the promises unto the fathers, Rom. xv. 8, if their children would receive him with a loving and obedient spirit.

LUKE XIX. 41—44. “And when he was come near, he looked on the city and wept over it.”

The word (*ἐκλαυσε*) translated *wept*, implies, says Dr. Robinson, “not only the shedding of tears, but every external expression of grief.” It is a more intensive word than (*ἐδάκρυσε*) that translated *wept*, in John xi. 35. The passage proves, that as

\* Luke’s word *καρραζοῦται* is very expressive. It is the only example of the paulo-post-future tense in the New Testament.

a man, our Lord felt more deeply for the doomed city and its inhabitants than any other man could feel; for no other man could have so vivid an apprehension of the awful judgments which their foreseen and guilty rejection of him would bring upon them. See Luke xxiii. 27—31, and notes on those verses. But notice also the contrasts: He was entering the city with triumphal displays, amidst the shoutings and rejoicings of myriads, in the manner foretold by the prophet, yet lamenting aloud—a circumstance not plainly expressed by the prophet, yet implied perhaps in the word *ani*. See Deut. xvi. 3; Prov. xxxi. 5; Gen. xvi. 11; xli. 52, which the LXX. in this place render *παῦς*—a rendering which the Evangelist adopts. We do not suppose the word *necessarily* implies the shedding of tears, because the Evangelist adds, by way of explanation:

LUKE XIX. 42. "Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! But now they are hidden from thine eyes."

This verse may be rendered: "Oh! that thou hadst known, even thou also"—alluding, perhaps, to his disciples, who acknowledged him with hearty good will—"the things that make for thy peace, in this thy day!"—meaning, perhaps, that very day of his entry into Jerusalem, as her rightful King, which was a day altogether extraordinary. Ps. cxviii. 24. But now they are hidden from thine eyes." See *Bengel's Gnomon*.

By the rejection of John the Baptist, the nation virtually rejected the Lord Jesus, and the kingdom he offered them. See notes on Matt. xiv. 10. By the just judgment of God, therefore, the condition of the nation, *as such*, was changed. Judicial blindness had come over the people nationally. The ministry of the Lord, as has been remarked, had also been from that time changed, and his labours directed to other ends, viz. to the saving of those who would receive him with the obedience of faith. John i. 11, 12. Yet no one who considers this verse with intelligence and candour, can doubt the willingness (rather say the earnest desire) of the Lord Jesus to save the whole nation, and to establish his kingdom in outward glory over it, even at that time. That he did not do so, was owing wholly to their voluntary rejection of him as their King. Matt. xxi. 42; Ps. cxviii. 22. Had the nation received him, there would have been no occasion for a dispensation like the present, the object of which is to gather another elect people to take the place of Israel, according to the flesh. Matt. xxi. 42. Yet, had Israel nationally received him, a new dispensation, or order of things, would, no doubt, have been established, in the blessings of which all the nations of the earth would have shared. But by what means, or in what manner, the Divine wisdom would have intro-

duced it, we presume not to speculate or inquire. The Scriptures are silent upon the question, as they have been given to us, according to the foreknown issues of the Levitical economy. Acts. xv. 13—18. Yet we have no reason to believe, that the recovery of the world from the fall, and the removal of the curse, could have been wrought by any other means than the death of the Son of Man, its King and Lord. But who would have put him to death, if his people had received him? In the providence of God, the chosen people had become subject to Gentile power; and Ps. ii. 1, 2; Acts iv. 25—27, may cast some light upon this subject. Still the question is speculative, and ought not to be pressed. Of one thing, however, we are sure, that the Divine power and wisdom can never want expedients to accomplish all the Divine purposes, under all supposable or possible contingencies and emergencies.

We are justified, therefore, in considering the scheme of the Divine procedure towards Israel, the elect nation, and the world at large, as framed with a double aspect; that is, as having respect to what God would do, whether Israel would keep or break the terms of the covenant. If Israel would obey and keep the covenant, then they should be a peculiar people, a kingdom of priests. This is expressly declared, Exod. xix. 5, 6. They should be exalted to thrones of celestial glory, and be for ever with the Lord, and not only behold the glory of their King, but be sharers in it and his throne. The nations of the earth, from that time forth, would have been subject to their rule. But if, on the other hand, they should disobey and break the covenant, as it was foreseen they would, then the promised kingdom should be taken from them, and given to another people, to be chosen of God, and called and collected in such manner and at such times as he should see fit. Matt. xxi. 43; xxii. 8, 9, 11—13; Luke xiv. 24; 1 Pet. ii. 9; and see notes on Matt. xvii. 22, 23.

LUKE XIX. 43, 44. "For the days will come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

This prophecy was pronounced as the Lord Jesus was about to enter the city as its King. It was repeated more in detail to four of the disciples upon the mount, from which he was then descending, two days afterwards, Luke xxi.; Matt. xxiv.; Mark xiii.; and the same calamities he alluded to again, when bearing his cross to Calvary. Luke xxiii. 29. The true cause of them is assigned in the last clause of these verses. The

nation "knew not the time of its visitation," words which correspond to the 42d verse. The time had come when the peace of the nation must be established under his rule, or the nation itself must be given over to the power of its enemies. He would have gathered and protected them with the most affectionate care, Matt. xxiii. 37; Ps. lxxxii. 13—16, but they would not be gathered. The fault was theirs. The Saviour had exhibited to them all the appointed proofs of his Messiahship. The manner of his entry into the city at that time was a prophetic sign of his royal character, and claim to their allegiance. Had it been possible for them to receive him with the obedience of faith, and had they done so, "he would have soon subdued their enemies, and turned his hand against their adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves to him, but their time should have endured for ever." Ps. lxxxii. 14, 15.

MATT. XXI. 10, 11. "And when he was come into Jerusalem all the city [the whole city] was moved [agitated, put in commotion,] saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

Matthew alone notices the impressiveness of the popular demonstration and display upon the masses of the city, thronged as it was at that time. Probably this minuteness was suggested by the fact that it was the fulfilment of the important prophecy he had quoted. Never before had our Lord entered the city in that manner, and never did he so enter it again. Yet it is noticeable, that the multitudes who thus honoured him, ascribed to him no higher character than that of a prophet from a despised city. Unwittingly, therefore, they fulfilled the prophecy, John xii. 16, not even understanding the hosannas they offered to him as the Son of David; thus ignorantly acknowledging him as their King, whom their rulers, five days afterwards, ignorantly but wickedly rejected and slew. Acts ii. 23; iii. 17.

MATT. XXI. 12, 13. "And Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; and he said to them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Some harmonists refer this transaction to the next day, (Monday, according to our reckoning,) in order to reconcile Matthew with Mark. Others suppose, that it was repeated on the next day, as Mark relates, with this additional restraint, that he would not suffer any one to carry a vessel through the temple. Mark xi. 16. According to this hypothesis, the Lord

drove out of the temple the money-changers thrice, viz. once before he entered upon his public ministry, while John was still baptizing, John ii. 13—17, and twice just before the close of it.

Without entering into a formal discussion of the question, the writer adopts this view of the matter, as it appears to be both reasonable and natural. Another question has been made, whether the action was miraculous or simply natural. Upon this, we remark, that the transaction was in harmony with the other acts of our Lord on that occasion. He had, in the fulfilment of prophecy, Zech. ix. 9, temporarily assumed his character of King of Zion. Entering the city as her King, in the manner foretold, he proceeded to the temple and entered it also in that character. This is evident from the hosannas which he there received in despite of the remonstrances of the priests and scribes, verse 15. All felt his presence and the mysterious power of his will. His works in the temple on that occasion, were (*θαυμάσια*) wonderful—wonderful, as we suppose, in comparison with any he had exhibited on other occasions, verse 15. For a little space, he acted as King, though (*πραῦς*) meekly or mildly, in comparison with the powers he will exert when he shall sit on the throne of his glory. Matt. xxv. 31, 32. It was in keeping with the occasion, and indeed it was required by the prophecy he was fulfilling, that he should do so. This view is confirmed by the next verse.

MATT. XXI. 13. "And he said to them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." Mark xi. 17; Luke xix. 46.

He claims the temple as his own—his house: his, by Divine right, as King of Zion. See Matt. xii. 6. In that character and by that right, he expelled, not by a scourge of cords, John ii. 15, but by force of his will, those who polluted it. These words must have been understood by those who heard them as an assumption of personal authority over the temple, and of the right to overrule the authority of the priests. Therefore it was, that on the next day the priests and the elders made a formal demand of his authority, and whence he derived it, verse 23, seeing the guardianship and the use of the temple was by the law and the constitution of their commonwealth especially committed to them. It is natural to suppose that this demand was made officially, and after a formal consultation; which the exciting events of the preceding day did not allow them to hold. The reader will observe also, that their demand did not turn upon his miracles of healing, verse 14, or upon his teaching, see Matt. xxii. 16, for these they did not



regard as an invasion of their authority, but upon his other acts on that occasion.

MATT. XXI. 15, 16. "And when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things [*θαυματα*, the wonders] he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were sore displeased [indignant,] and said to him, Hearest thou what these say?"

This question of the priests and scribes shows the chief cause of their indignation. They understood the import of the acclamation, see notes on verse 9, and regarded his acquiescence, as an assumption of the character the children ascribed to him. They were justified in doing so, by the acts of authority he had previously performed. We have no reason to suppose that the healing of the lame and the blind especially moved them, as the day was not the Sabbath. Luke xiii. 14.

MATT. XXI. 16. "And Jesus said to them, Yea," [I hear them; and] "have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise?"

By this quotation, Ps. viii. 2, our Lord tacitly alludes to his own majesty as Son of Man: for the words of David were addressed to himself as Jehovah Lord. "O Jehovah, our (Adon) Lord, out of [or from] the mouth of babes *thou* hast perfected praise." Well, therefore, might he approve and appropriate to himself as Son of David the hosannas so offensive to the priests and Scribes; for to him alone were they due. See notes on Matt. ix. 4. It is plain, however, that the Jews had no conception of the mysterious union of the Divine and human natures in the person of Messiah, or the Son of Man in the Son of David; for on the same day, and perhaps in the temple on the same occasion, his discourse concerning himself as the Son of Man, John xii. 23—34, prompted the people to inquire, "Who is this Son of Man?" verse 34. "The Christ," said they, "abideth for ever." This we have heard out of the law: but thou sayest, "The Son of Man must be lifted up." The seemingly opposite destinies of these two persons, as declared by the law and by himself, proved to the apprehension of the people that they could not be the same person. This inquiry of the people was not made in a sceptical spirit, for they regarded him as a prophet, and were very attentive to hear him. Luke xix. 48; Mark xi. 18; Matt. xxi. 46. That the Son of Man was not an ordinary man was apparent from the whole tenor of our Lord's discourse; especially from John xii. 23, the glory claimed for him, attested as the claim was, by a miraculous voice, verses 28, 29. This they must have understood: but who could he be? They had not heard of him as they had of the Christ, out of the law. It is significant

that our Lord did not answer the inquiry. It proves that there was a mystery in the matter, which it did not belong to his mission to explain. Comp. verses 34 and 35 of John xii.

The view the writer takes of the question will be apparent to those who have considered the preceding notes. As the Adon or Lord of the world, he became incarnate in the line of David. It was this purpose which excited the amazement of David. See notes on Matt. ix. 4; Matt. xvi. 13, 14, 16. As the seed of David, he was also King of Zion. On the ground of this distinction, we account for the discriminative words of Ps. ii. 6: "Yet have I set my King," that is, my King of the whole earth, "upon Zion, the mountain of my holiness." He had now come in fulfilment of prophecy, Zech. ix. 9, meekly, yet authoritatively, to take possession of his kingdom and of his temple for a brief space, and then voluntarily to offer up his body as a ransom for the world, of which, as the Son of Man, he was the Lord. Considering his foreseen rejection as Messiah, this was the great end of his incarnation and mission; and that was the mystery which the question of the people touched upon. Our Lord's answer was in effect: "Use well the light you have, while you have it, without inquiring into matters which do not especially concern you at this time." John xii. 35, 36.

MATT. XXI. 17. "And he left them, and went out of the city into [to] Bethany, and lodged there."

According to the harmonists, our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and the transactions in the temple which we have considered, occurred on Sunday, or five days before the passover. It does not appear that he lodged in the city any night afterwards. He went either to Bethany, Mark xi. 12, or to the Mount of Olives, Luke xxi. 37, 38; Matt. xxvi. 30; Mark xiv. 26; Luke xxii. 39, or to the garden of Gethsemane, Matt. xxvi. 36, or to some other place out of the city, Mark xi. 19. Are we to regard this conduct as a precaution, designed to guard by natural means against his apprehension before the appointed time, see John x. 39, and notes on Matt. ii. 12, 13, or a part of the arrangement by which the punctual fulfilment of the prophecies was to be accomplished, see John xviii. 2; Acts i. 16, or both? However we may resolve these questions, it is evident, the rulers thought it a matter of much difficulty to apprehend him, requiring even subtilty on their part, Matt. xxvi. 4; Mark xiv. 1; John xi. 57, and so did Judas, Luke xxii. 6; Matt. xxvi. 15. Hence they eagerly embraced the offer of the traitor, Luke xxii. 5. It is probable, too, they thought night the only time when the apprehension of him could be made without danger of a rescue by the people. See

Matt. xxi 46; Luke xix. 48. But they knew neither the mystery of Providence, nor the mystery of his person. No hand could apprehend him before the appointed hour had come. John vii. 30; viii. 20; xiii. 1; Luke xxii. 53. Then he voluntarily surrendered himself. John xviii. 4—8. The manner of his apprehension, therefore, was an unnecessary indignity, and so the Saviour himself spoke of it, as the Evangelists are careful to notice. Matt. xxvi. 55; Mark xiv. 49; Luke xxii. 53. It is sufficient to add, that our Lord's daily departure at evening from the city, gave occasion to the priests and rulers to display their character; and especially to Judas, who entered into a formal compact with them on the Wednesday following, to perform his part in the final scene.

MATT. XXI. 18—20; Mark xi. 12—14, 20, 21. *The withering of the barren fig-tree.*

The miracle recorded in these verses was witnessed only by our Lord's disciples. Mark xi. 14. It was wrought apparently for the purpose of conveying to them the instruction contained in the next two verses, verses 21, 22. If we regard the tree as a symbol of the nation, and the malediction as indicative of the nation's doom, until the end of this dispensation, the *time* of the act may be significant. Our Lord had entered Jerusalem, the day before, as her King, but he was not received in that character, except by the children. The multitudes hailed him only as the prophet of Nazareth, while the rulers plotted against his life. John xii. 36. With that day, therefore, the day of their national visitation ended, and before he entered the city again, he portrayed in the fig-tree the nation's doom. The parable of the fig-tree, in Luke xiii. 6—10, at least favours the symbolical interpretation of this miracle, although we cannot, as before intimated, find ground for such an interpretation in the context. See Matt. xxi. 42, 43. Nor is it probable the disciples, at that time, saw more in the miracle than an exhibition of power which the Saviour taught them they would be able to exercise through faith in him; and thus considered, we understand in the literal sense the following verse:

MATT. XXI. 21. "Verily, I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this, which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done." See Mark xi. 22, 23.

This is teaching by example; a method which excludes hyperbole. Yet, as before intimated, the promise has respect to the glorified elect in the world to come. See notes on Matt. xiv. 30, 31; John xiv. 12. If, indeed, we assume that our Lord, in this promise, had respect to his believing people in

this world, then it must be confessed it has never been realized, even in the holiest of men, 1 Cor. xiii. 2, and we feel constrained by the fact, to divest it of its proper literal meaning. What our Lord *added* to these words, however, may be intended to describe the power of faith in this life.

MATT. XXI. 28. "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask *in prayer*, believing, ye shall receive."

Here prayer is added to faith, as a means to the end. On a former occasion, Matt. xvii. 21, see notes, he prescribed *fasting* as well as prayer, but in that case, with reference to their exercise of *miraculous* powers in this life. But in this verse, the Saviour seems to speak only of believing prayer; and thus understood, there is no reason why we should confine the promise to the apostles, any more than we should the injunction to forgive, which Mark adds, xi. 25. The promise of our Lord, thus interpreted, extends to the whole futurity of the believer's being—to his state of humility and suffering in this life, and to his state of glory in the ages to come. We may add, the largeness of our Lord's conceptions, including, as they ever did, his whole work, favours this interpretation. All his promises to his elect took hold of unfathomable mysteries.

MATT. XXI. 23—XXV. 46.

The matters recorded by this Evangelist, beginning at this place, and ending with chapter xxiii., are commonly supposed to have occurred on (Tuesday) the third day before the pass-over. Our Lord's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, delivered privately to four of his disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, Mark xiii. 3, and the parables he subjoined to it, Matt. xxiv. and xxv., are assigned to the same day. On this day, (according to some Harmonists, but according to others on the day following—Wednesday) the priests, Scribes, and elders of the people were formally convened at the palace of the chief-priest, Matt. xxvi. 3, to devise means for the apprehension of the Lord Jesus, when Judas sought admission to the assembly, and entered into a formal compact with them. Matt. xxvi. 14—16. On the day preceding, (Monday) the Lord had expelled the traders and money-changers from the temple, and, as we may infer, from Mark xi. 18, taught the people, but what he taught them, does not appear. Mark xi. 15—19. The day before, (Sunday) he had entered the temple amid the shoutings of the people, and having taken a survey of it, without teaching, or, according to Mark, performing any other act, he retired to Bethany with the twelve. John, xii. 20—36, however, records an impassioned discourse to the people on that day, which, if we may consider it in connection with his triumphal entry, shows how he was affected by the hosannas which had

been offered him. But not to dwell on these circumstantial notices, we remark that the reader will not appreciate the sublimity of this portion of the Gospel, without a profound sense of the majesty of our Lord's person, and the solemnity of the crisis the nation had reached. It was the last day of our Lord's public ministry. Several hours before the close of it, and we doubt not, before the hour of evening prayer, he took his final leave of the temple, declaring it left desolate. The death of John the Baptist, we have seen, was an epoch in the nation's history. It marked their near approximation to the verge of destruction, and their certain downfall. See notes on Matt. xiv. 6—9. Now the crisis had come. In an important sense, it was the nation's day of judgment. For although the Lord did not enter the temple on that day officially to judge the nation, yet he entered it to pronounce words of reprobation and punishment, by commandment of the Father, which, in the course of Divine Providence, were soon to be put in execution, with fearful and prolonged effect. Luke xxi. 22. Accordingly, the language he employed was positive, direct, and judicially denunciatory.

We must not regard the words he uttered as the language of strife or invective, nor his responses to his assailants as an exhibition of dialectic skill. This would be a low view, infinitely beneath the dignity and majesty of his character, and quite at variance with the solemn function he was performing. He was the Son of Man, and the rightful Lord of the world. He was the Christ, and in that relation the king of Israel. He was the Minister of God the Father, performing, by Divine command, the last public, official act of his ministry. John xii. 49, 50. A tone of authority, power, and majesty, pervades all his sayings on that day, and his words did but convey to them God's reasons for the fearful calamities he was about to send upon the nation. We return now to the text.

MATT. XXI. 23. "And when he was come into the temple, the chief priest and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?"

Our Lord left Bethany (*πρωας*) early in the morning, verse 18. The impression his preaching had made on the people was very deep. Luke xix. 48. In the expressive language of Luke (*ἐξέζηρομεν αὐτόν*) they hung upon him, and assembled very early (*ἠρόθηρον*, Luke xxi. 38,) to hear him. We may reasonably suppose he had been engaged a considerable time in teaching, before the dignitaries of the nation appeared at the temple, with their demand, which seems to have been officially made. The motive for making it may have been, in part, at least, to

counteract his influence with the people, which they greatly feared, xxvi. 5; John xii. 19—and if so, they would be likely to make it with a stately show of their own authority, to impress the people, and perhaps also with the vain conceit of producing awe in the mind of Jesus. However this may be, the demand interrupted his discourse to the people, and drew their attention to his discourse with the priests and elders which followed. It was a new step upon the part of the rulers, and calculated to create the apprehension that it would be followed by violence. According to Mark's account, which doubtless is accurate, on this occasion also our Lord drove out of the temple the traders and money-changers. There is nothing incredible in the supposition that the mercenary people he had cast out the day before, according to Matthew's account, had returned, or that others had taken their place; and this is the view we take of the matter. See notes on verse 12. This demand of the priests, therefore, referred rather to this act of authority, than to his assumption of the office of a teacher, and thus understood, it may be paraphrased thus:—"By what authority dost thou forbid and prevent that which we, the lawful guardians of this holy place, have seen proper to permit; and who gave thee authority to interfere with, and overrule our regulations?"

The demand for his authority was a demand for *evidence* of his authority. It implied, that the miraculous works which he had performed before them in the temple, verse 14, and during the whole of his public ministry, of which it must be supposed they had personal knowledge, were not sufficient evidence to satisfy their minds. Therefore, had the Saviour replied to the demand—"My works show my authority. They testify of me; who I am, and whence I came. They are such as no man ever did,"—this would have been but repeating what he had often told them before, and what they had rejected as sufficient proof of his Divine mission. They regarded them, or affected to regard them, in another light. Hence, our Lord replied by asking them another question.

MATT. XXI. 24. "And Jesus answered and said unto them: I also will ask you one thing, which if ye will tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things."

As if he had said: Seeing you judge, that my works, performed in your presence, do not prove my authority to do these things, nor show whence I derive it, I also will ask you one thing, your answer to which will prove, whether you can be convinced of my authority, by any evidence which God has seen proper to give you upon that question: for other or greater evidence you cannot have.

MATT. XXI. 25. "The baptism of John: whence was it? From heaven or from men?"

The reader must remember that the whole evidence which God saw proper to give the Jews of the Divine mission of the Lord Jesus, was comprised in the ministry or baptism of John, and his own ministry, especially his miraculous works. This has been sufficiently shown in the foregoing notes. Especially did our Lord rely upon his works, placing them not only above the testimony of John, but his own words. John v. 30—37; xv. 24. No other signs from heaven of his authority were consistent with the Divine plan. Matt. xvi. 1—4, and see notes on Matt. xii. 48. It is obvious, therefore, that if the questioners were not convinced by the miracles of the Lord, and their question, as we have said, assumes that they were not, the only remaining source of proof was the ministry or baptism of John. This, though inferior evidence to miracles, was in its nature and power a sufficient attestation of the Divine mission of Jesus. See notes on Matt. iii. 1, 2; xi. 3.

Some commentators suppose that the turn which our Lord gave to the question of the priests and elders was designed to put them in a strait between their malice and their fears—an effect which it had. But the motive of the Saviour, as we conceive, lay deeper. *His* question was pertinent to *their* question—their question being considered with reference to the only evidence upon which it could possibly be resolved. It was designed to prove out of their own mouth that neither the testimony of John, nor his own wonderful works could convince them; and without these, his own verbal declaration of his authority would be, even in his own view, of no avail. John v. 31; xiv. 11; xv. 24.

MATT. XXI. 25, 26. "And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, From men, we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet."

Some, perhaps most, readers take it for granted, the Saviour would have replied as the priests and elders surmised he would, if they had answered his question truly. By such a reply they would no doubt have publicly convicted themselves of enormous guilt, but it is by no means certain that his answer to them would have been such as they imagined. Certainly he would have fulfilled his promise, and shown them his authority, and perhaps have made it convincing to them by his power over their hearts. Had they overcome their fears, and answered his question, as they desired to do, *falsely*, though they would not have fulfilled the condition upon which his promise depended, yet he might have told them, in reply, that no further evidence

could be given them of his authority, but that which was furnished by the baptism and ministry of John and his own works, both of which they had rejected. See Matt. xvi. 1—4, and notes. That they would have answered the question falsely, had they not been restrained by their fears, is evident, not only from their treatment of John, but from the form of our Lord's reply.

MATT. XXI. 27. "And they answered Jesus and said [ὄχι οἶδαμεν,] We cannot tell," [rather, "We do not know."]

According to this answer, the baptism of John might have been of Divine origin, *for aught they knew to the contrary*. Their rejection of him, therefore, was not only extremely rash, considering the effect of his ministry upon the minds of the people, but guilty, in not giving due heed to the evidence they had upon a matter of so great moment. If we assume, however, that their answer was insincere—that they really did believe that John's baptism was without a heavenly warrant, it would prove that the evidence of John's authority was ineffectual to produce conviction in their minds, as the miracles of the Lord Jesus were; and also, that their unbelief and obduracy were insurmountable by the combined force of all the evidence God had seen proper to give them.

MATT. XXI. 27. "And he said unto them, Neither tell\* I you by what authority I do these things."

Our Lord knew their thoughts and answered them according to their intent, and not according to their words. He assumed, however, the Divine authority of John's mission, as well as his own; which in effect he connected together as one in purpose and intent, so far as they respected the nation, by his question. The admission or denial of John's authority was in effect the admission or denial of his own, John v. 33, 36, and a doubt concerning either, was a doubt which could not be removed by additional evidence: Hence the appositeness of the reply.

MATT. XXI. 28—31. Having thus disposed of the question proposed to him by the chief-priests and elders, our Lord put to them an hypothetical case taken from common life, upon which he framed another question in such terms, that it could receive only one answer. "But what think ye?" What would be your opinion in this case? "A man had two sons, and going to the first, he said, Son, go to work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterwards he repented, and went. Then going to the second, he said [likewise] the same. And he answered and said, I go, sir, but went not. Which of the two *did* the will of the father?"

\* An old commentator notes on this verse: οὐκ εἶπεν, οὐκ οἶδα, ἄλλ', οὐ λέγει—ἀντί του οὐκ ἠβουλήθητι τοῦ ἀληθῆς εἶπεν.



This case was put with tacit reference to the Jewish people, considered under two divisions—the rulers and the ruled—the priests, Pharisees, lawyers, Luke vii. 29, 30, and the learned on the one hand, and the common people, including the lowest and most despised classes of them, on the other. John vii. 45—49. The former were, by outward profession, the servants of God, and the acknowledged ministers of his religion—the teachers and guides of all classes of the common people. Matt. xxiii. 2, 3. Upon all questions of religious worship and duty, their decisions were authoritative and decisive. The appearance and public ministry of John the Baptist, were extraordinary and startling events. They were so regarded by all. He summoned the nation to a new baptism, which was a religious rite, well known to them. But by what authority? That was the great question. The priests, rulers, and teachers of the people claimed the right to decide it as they did other questions connected with religion; and the masses of the people, it is probable, would have easily acquiesced in their decision, had not John's authority been authenticated by the most ample and convincing proofs. See notes on Matt. iii. 1. The rulers did decide the question, but the people almost universally, Luke iii. 21; Matt. iii. 5, 6, rejected unhesitatingly and strongly their decision, and as a proof of their sincerity, sought him and submitted to his baptism.

But the contrast which our Lord intended to make was not between the rulers and the masses of the people generally, but between the rulers and those whom they regarded as the lowest and vilest of the common people, who led openly irreligious and immoral lives; thereby showing not only no profession of service, but that they had no sense of religious obligation. Accordingly, upon receiving the answer of priests and elders, he said, verse 31, "I say unto you, the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

As if he had said, "You priests and elders who profess to be the servants of God, and the guardians of the temple of God, promise well indeed, but you perform not, and however highly you think of yourselves, are farther from the kingdom of God than the publicans and harlots whom you despise."

MATT. XXI. 32. "For" when "John came unto you in the way of righteousness," [that is, in the divinely-appointed way of bringing in everlasting righteousness] "ye believed him not," [on the contrary, ye rejected all the proofs which God gave you of his Divine mission, although they convinced every one but you, for] "even the publicans and harlots believed him; but ye, when ye had seen," [and had had ample opportunity to consider those proofs, notwithstanding your large

professions of obedience,] “repented not, that ye might believe in him.” Therefore, “publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.”

On this occasion, our Lord referred for the last time, so far as we know, to the ministry of John the Baptist; and the reader will observe he does so in connection with his own. As on a former occasion, see Matt. xi. 10—14 and notes, so now, he bears the strongest testimony to John’s authority. Then, indeed, John, though imprisoned, was in the midst of them. It was not too late *then* for the nation to receive him. But now he speaks of John’s ministry as a bygone matter, as an opportunity neglected and gone beyond recall. The rejection of John, we have seen, was in effect the rejection of the Lord himself, see notes on Matt. xiv. 10, and so he treated it, as appears by the next parable, verses 33—39. All questions, therefore, touching his authority or the authority of John came too late. No answer could have served any interest which they had at stake. By employing the words we are considering, our Lord assumed that the day of national visitation was over, and the hope of Israel, *as a nation*, gone for that time. The only hope of salvation that remained was individual and personal, which might be entertained by some on better grounds than by others. But of all classes, the priests and the rulers had the least reason to expect the Divine favour, less even than publicans and harlots. In this truth, thus plainly declared, not in anger or invective, but as the Divine estimation, John xii. 48, 49, of their character and condition, the severity of the comparison consisted.

Having told the dignitaries of the nation, in the plainest language, their true character and condition in the sight of God, our Lord passes immediately to the nation itself. The transition was easy and natural. In all their generations, from the commencement of their covenant-relations as the elect people of God, the governing powers of the nation had been corrupt and rebellious. It was only through the mercy and forbearance of God that it had been reserved to that generation to fill up the measure of their national sins. See Matt. xxiii. 30—32. With equal plainness, therefore, our Lord proceeds to pronounce the nation’s punishment, which, so far as declared on this occasion, consisted chiefly in the deprivation of the privileges contained in the covenant of the kingdom, verse 43. This is the drift or general import of the parable of the vineyard, verses 33—41. The loss, of necessity, fell upon the people composing the nation, and it came upon them mediately, or instrumentally, through their rulers, yet not without individual participation in the national sins. The people, in all their generations, had concurred in, or assented to, the sins of their

rulers, and oftentimes instigated them; although, in the matter of John the Baptist's ministry, their guilt did not consist in concurring with their rulers, but in their not receiving him with the obedience of faith. See notes on Matt. xi. 14. This lack of faith was a sinful defect, and the cause of their similar treatment of the Lord himself. We have seen that, from the death of John the Baptist, our Lord changed his public ministry from the nation, in its public capacity, to the people, in their individual and personal relations. He offered himself, thenceforth, as Son of Man and Saviour to all who would receive him; and to enforce his appeals, he wrought new miracles more impressive upon the popular mind than any he had previously wrought. They were even persuaded that he was "that prophet that should come into the world." John vi. 14; see the notes on Matt. xiv. 10, 14; xv. 30; xvi. 4. From that time especially, if not exclusively, they were put upon their individual personal responsibilities. Every one who did not receive him with the obedience of the heart, was guilty of rejecting him, and justly incurred the penalty of the sin. To this latter portion of our Lord's ministry, commencing at the death of John, we suppose the parable of the marriage, in the next chapter, especially applies, although not without some allusion to the previous portion of it. That parable represents the people, one and all, as making light of it, preferring their ordinary occupations and the ephemeral concerns of this life to the glory of the kingdom he offered them. Matt. xxiii. 5. The three parables are necessary to complete the subject of our Lord's discourse. Taken together, they cover the whole ground of condemnation, whether we consider the people in their national capacity, and as the children of the covenant—as rulers or subjects, or as individuals responsible for their personal sins. They are the last our Lord publicly delivered, and explain the reasons of the dreadful judgments which were soon to be sent upon them. These observations premised, we proceed with the exposition.

MATT. XXI. 33—41. *The parable of the vineyard.*

This parable may remind the reader of Isaiah v. 1—8, from which the imagery of it was, perhaps, designedly borrowed. It is an allegory of God's dealings with Israel, from the time he entered into covenant with them, at Horeb, Exod. xix. 1—5, and of their conduct, as the people of the covenant, to the close of our Lord's ministry. But the chief or finishing stroke of the representation is designed to set forth the end of his own mission and the most atrocious and heaven-daring of the nation's sins. It does not come within the purpose of these notes to explain minutely the material circumstances of the parable, or

to trace throughout the resemblance between the allegory and the historical events it compendiously represents. The moral or application of the parable is too obvious to be mistaken. The chief priests and Pharisees plainly perceived it. They could not fail to do so after our Lord had declared its import.

In general, it may be remarked that, by the mission of servants, verse 34, we are to understand the raising up and sending of prophets to the people, which may be supposed to commence with Samuel, see Acts iii. 24, in the days of Eli, about 1130 B. C., from whose days, till the return from the Captivity at Babylon, about 536 B. C., the succession of prophets was almost, if not quite, uninterrupted.\*

The book of Esther closes the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures. By whom it was written we do not know; but undoubtedly by an inspired person. After the close of the canon we have not so sure means of tracing the succession of heaven-sent messengers, but we have no reason to suppose that God, at any time, left the people without prophets, or wise men, or scribes, who were faithful witnesses of his truth, see Matt. xxiii. 34, during the succeeding interval which was terminated by the appearance of John. Such witnesses, whatever their office or character, would be aptly represented by the servants of the parable.

MATT. XXI. 37. "But last of all he sent his son, saying [certainly] They will reverence my son."

It cannot be necessary to remark that the son represents our blessed Lord himself. And when we consider the majesty of

\* The reader may satisfy himself of the correctness of this remark by referring to the following passages, according to Townsend's chronological arrangement of the Old Testament: 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, 15; xxii. 5; 1 Chron. xxix. 29; 2 Chron. xxix. 25; 2 Sam. xxiv. 11—14; 1 Chron. xxi. 9—13; 2 Sam. vii. 2; 1 Kings i.; 1 Chron. ix. 29; xvii. 1; 2 Chron. xxix. 25, 29; 1 Kings iv. 5; xi. 29; 1 Chron. ix. 29; 2 Kings xiv. 2—4; 1 Kings xiii. 1, 11—18, 10—22, 26—32; 2 Chron. ix. 29; xii. 15; xiii. 22; 2 Kings xli. 22; 2 Chron. xi. 2; xii. 5, 7, 15; xv. 1—8; xvi. 7; 1 Kings xvi. 1, 7—12; 2 Chron. xix. 2; xx. 34; 1 Kings xvii. 1; 2 Kings i. 3; 2 Chron. xxi. 12—15; 1 Kings xiv. 25; xviii. 4, 13, 19—40; xix. 16, 19—22; xvi. 33; xx. 13—22, 28, 35, 41; xxii. 8; 2 Chron. xviii. 7; 2 Kings ii. 3, 5, 7, 9—15, 16; xiii. 14—25; iv. 1, 38; ix. 1—4; 2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22; xxv. 7, 15; Amos i. 1; vii. 9—11; Hos. i. 1; 2 Kings xviii. 10; Isa. i. 1; vi. 1; vii. 1; xiv. 28; xx. 1; xxxv. 1; 2 Kings xix. 2; 2 Chron. xxvi. 22, 5; xxviii. 9; Mic. i. 1; Jer. xxvi. 18; 2 Kings xxi. 10; Jer. i. 2, 3; iii. 6; xxi. 1; xxii. 11, 24, 28; xxv. 1, 3; xxvi. 1; xxvii. 20; xliii.; 2 Chron. xxxv. 25; xxxvi. 21; Zeph. i. 1; 2 Kings xxii. 3, 14; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 22; Jer. xxvi. 20—33; Ezek. i. 1, 2; xl. 1; Dan. i. 1—21; vi. 28; ix. 1; x. 1; Hagg. i. 1, 15; ii. 1, 10, 19, 20; Zech. i. 1, 7; vii. 1; Ezra v. 1; vi. 14; Neh. viii. 2, 9; xii. 26, 36; Ezra vii. 1, 7, 8; Neh. i. 1; ii. 1; v. 14, xiii. 6; viii. 2—9; vi. 7, 14. Several of the foregoing references have been repeated on account of the connection they have with others. These references are sufficient to put the reader on the track of inquiry; and they will throw light upon Matt. xxiii. 34, 35.

his person as the Son of Man, the Adam of the everlasting covenant—his Divine wisdom and his wonderful works—his infinite superiority to the greatest of the prophets, Matt. iii. 11; xi. 11, there would be great reason to anticipate his favourable reception. The result of our Lord's ministry among the Jews proves beyond all doubt the incurable depravity of the human heart, except by the creative energies of the Holy Spirit, and this is vividly represented by the reasoning ascribed to the husbandmen in the parable. Reverence they had none, and the householder erred in calculating upon it. In this point the analogy of the parable fails. The issue of our Lord's mission was not only certainly foreknown, but predetermined in the Divine counsels. Acts ii. 23; xv. 18. Our Lord, therefore, designed merely to intimate the reasonableness of such expectations according to man's judgment—the guilt of the husbandmen in disappointing them—and the equity of the Divine procedure even when considered according to the low standard of earthly analogies. It was with this view of the circumstance, as we conceive, the Evangelist records the response of the people, verse 41.\*

MATT. XXI. 39. "And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." See Luke xx. 15; Mark xii. 8.

We incline to believe our Lord, in these words, had especial allusion to his approaching sufferings *without the city*. Heb. xiii. 12. There was a typical exigency for his suffering without the gate, which he might well represent in this circumstance of the parable. Mark, it is true, differs from the other Evangelists in representing the husbandmen as first killing the son, and then casting him out of the vineyard: and perhaps we should

\* There appears to be a discrepancy between the Evangelists in this particular. Matthew ascribes the answer in verse 41 to the people; Mark and Luke ascribe it to our Lord himself. We suppose both records are correct. Both answers may have been given—one by some of the bystanders, as Matthew relates, and the other by our Lord, as Mark and Luke relate, or our Lord may have adopted the answer of the bystanders, incorporating it, as he proceeded, into his own discourse. However this may be, the discrepancy proves that the stress of the passage does not lie on this circumstance. As uttered by our Lord, the words are prophetic. As used by the people, they express merely the reasonableness of such punishment. It was more important to Matthew's purpose to record the *popular* judgment upon the case represented, than the prophecy, because the prophecy involved in the words, as used by our Lord, is supplied by another declaration in the 43d and 44th verses, and also by the parable of the marriage, which he proceeds immediately to record. Matt. xxii. 7. Whereas the other Evangelists omit the parable of the marriage, as well as the response of the bystanders, and our Lord's other declaration, recorded by Matthew in the 43d verse, substituting for all these the Saviour's declaration of the punishment the Lord of the vineyard would inflict upon the husbandmen.

account for this discrepancy, as we did for that just noticed, by supposing that the stress of the parable does not, in any degree, lie upon this circumstance. We prefer, however, another explanation. Mark wrote his Gospel for the use of Gentile churches. It was not important to his purpose, nor was it his intention, as we suppose, to affirm the *order* of the events, or do more than specify the fact itself, which he does in substantial consistency with the record of Matthew. Either statement shows a contempt of the rights of the son, and equal indignity to his person, which was all that Mark intended to show. But Matthew wrote his Gospel especially for the Hebrew Christians, who were more or less familiar with the typical signification of their ritual. On this assumption Paul reasons, in the passage just before cited from Heb. xiii. 11, 12. It was more important, therefore, for such readers to record with orderly exactness this part of the parable, knowing the use that would be made of it as an argument with that people. Hence we conclude that, while neither Evangelist contradicts the other, the especial views with which they wrote, satisfactorily account for the difference between them in this as well as many other particulars.

The reader will observe, that the crime of ejecting and killing the Son, is ascribed wholly to (the Jews) the husbandmen. In the Divine regard, they were the authors of it, though the Romans acted concurrently with the Jewish rulers, and so the apostle Peter charged it upon them. Acts ii. 23; iii. 17, 18; v. 30. There was a needs-be, that the nation should disown his rights and their obligations before the Roman governor *could have* any power over him. John xix. 11, and see notes on that verse. We observe also, the tranquillity with which our Lord vividly depicts his impending sufferings. He was speaking the words of the Father as his minister, not his own words. John xii. 49, 50; xiii. 21. On another occasion, during the same day, he spake of them as a man having the susceptibilities of our nature with the deepest emotions. See John xii. 27.

MATT. XXI. 42. "Jesus saith unto them: Did ye never 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?"

Luke's narrative is more graphic. After relating the parable, and the question the Lord put upon it, he represents him as answering his own question, which drew from some of the bystanders a deprecatory response which gave occasion for this quotation from Psalm cxviii. 22, 23. We may paraphrase the passage thus: "What then shall the Lord of the vineyard do to these husbandmen? I will tell you what he will do to them:

He will come and destroy them and give the vineyard to others." Hearing this, some of them exclaimed, God forbid it. But He, looking intently (*ἐμβλεψας*) at them, said, Does the punishment seem to you severe? What then is the meaning of this that is written in the Psalms: the stone that the builders rejected as unworthy a place in God's building, the same has become, in spite of them, the very head-stone of the corner.

Substantially, the three Evangelists agree; all of them narrate the quotation in connection with the parable, and as expository of its meaning. Luke shows its particular connection with what was said before. The seeming discrepancy arises from the different degrees of particularity observed by the Evangelists, in narrating the same matter. It has already been sufficiently explained. See last note.

The quotation is from one of the Messianic Psalms; it is an allegory taken from architecture, as the parable is from the business of agriculture carried on by tenants. Both figures are combined by Paul in 1 Cor. iii. 9. "For we are co-laborers with God" in cultivating his vineyard—in erecting his building, the Church. See Matt. xvi. 18. "Ye are God's husbandry," or tillage, "Ye are God's building." A building is, perhaps, the most common figure of the true Church, 1 Pet. ii. 5; Eph. ii. 20—22; iv. 16; 1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19, taken, as we suppose, from our Lord's declaration, Matt. xvi. 18: "On this foundation (*οἰκοδομησω*) I will build my Church," &c. The quotation we are considering implies, that Israel, as a nation, were first chosen as the builders. Their election to this service was connected with exceeding great and glorious promises, but proving unfaithful to their trust in all their generations, they forfeited their privileges, and God was about not only to take them away, but inflict condign punishment, as the Lord had solemnly declared at the conclusion of the parable. Luke xx. 16; Mark xii. 9.

MATT. XXI. 43. "Therefore [*Δια τουτο*, for this reason] I say unto you, The kingdom of God, which was first promised to you as a nation, shall be taken from you," [as a nation, and] "shall be given [*ἐθνη*] to a nation bringing forth [*ποιουντι*, making or producing] the fruits thereof."

This declaration of the Saviour is recorded only by Matthew. It stands in immediate connection with the quotation from the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm, and sets forth in the plainest language, the import and bearing of the parable. The last clause of the verse, "bringing forth the fruits thereof," shows the connection. The chief priests and the pharisees, if they doubted about the meaning before, could doubt no longer,

verse 45. We might, perhaps, without marring the sense, transpose this verse, so as to read it in connection with the 41st and the 44th verses, in connection with the 42d—although we conceive the actual arrangement was designed to interlock the quotation from the Psalm with the parable, and then to declare the moral or import of both in their order.

However this may be, the verse, taken in connection with the preceding context, declares the result of the legal dispensation, which is the great lesson of the parable. That dispensation commenced at Horeb, the place which Israel reached on the forty-seventh day after their exodus from Egypt, amidst the most wonderful displays of the Divine presence, favour, and power. While encamped at that place, the law was delivered to them, and they were brought into new covenant relations with God, Moses being the mediator. Gal. iii. 19. It will be instructive to dwell a little on this subject.

The blessings which God covenanted to bestow on Israel, upon the condition of their obedience, are here summed by the Saviour in the words "The kingdom of God"—for it was *the kingdom of God* he declared should be taken from them in consequence of their unfaithfulness, according to the representation of the parable. The substance of the covenant is contained in Exod. vi. 7, 8, and more fully in Exod. xix. 5, 6, 8. "I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God." "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me *a kingdom of priests* and an holy nation." And all the people answered together, and said, "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do. See Exod. xxiv. 3—8. The covenant thus concluded was a continuing covenant. It embraced not only that generation, but their posterity to the remotest period. This is virtually asserted in Deut. v. 2, 3, "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord hath made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even* us who are all of us alive this day." See Exod. xxiii. 20, 25; xxix. 45, 46; xxxiii. 16; Deut. iv. 7, 20, 23, 31, 34; vii. 6—9; x. 15; xiv. 2; xxvii. 9, 10; xxix. 9—13; xxvi. 17, 18. This covenant was renewed at Shechem in the time of Joshua, Josh. xxiv. 22—25, and many years afterwards in the reign of Joash, 2 Kings xi. 17; 2 Chron. xxiii. 16; and again in the reign of Josiah. 2 Kings xxiii. 2, 3; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30, 31; Jer. xi. 1—10. It was renewed in the days of Asa, 2 Chron. xv. 12, and again in the days of Nehemiah, Neh. xi. and x., and this renewal is one of the last events recorded by inspiration in the public history of that people. Strictly, therefore, it was not only a



national, but a *continuing* covenant—running with the race of Israel and embracing that people in all their generations. The mission of John the Baptist presupposed that the covenant with the nation still subsisted, and his baptism and preaching repentance assumed that the national repentance and faith and hearty compliance with the covenant on the part of the whole people, should secure to that generation the covenanted blessings, notwithstanding the sins of their forefathers. Nay more, the Lord assured them, that it was because they not only yielded no fruits, but, in the words of the parable, were about to kill the son and heir, that the kingdom would be taken from them.

The covenant then was a *subsisting* one, and the parable teaches us, on the one hand, that the nation had continually broken it in all their generations, and on the other, that God had forborne with them, and as it were held himself bound by his promises until that time, though he might justly have cast the whole nation off, generations before, as he did ten of their tribes, and would have done so with the rest had it not been for his covenant with David. Jer. xxxiii. 17; 1 Kings viii. 25; 2 Chron. vi. 16. But now the time had come when he would forbear no longer. The covenant with David he had fulfilled so far as to raise up the Messiah from his seed, and send him to the nation. He was the Son mentioned in the parable. By rejecting him and putting him to death, that generation filled up the measure of Divine forbearance to their nation, Matt. xxiii. 32, and the covenanted kingdom was declared to be forfeited.

By the kingdom of God, our Lord alludes especially, as we suppose, to the words in Exod. xix. 6. "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests." However this may be, we cannot be mistaken in supposing that the kingdom of God had been committed to that people in some *especial* sense, Rom. ix. 4, 5, or at least that the nation stood in some peculiar relation to it; as the husbandmen did to the vineyard. If it were not so, we see not how the kingdom of God could have been taken from them, and given to another nation. That the kingdom of God was not theirs by right of ownership, is too plain to be argued. The nature of the promise forbids us to suppose any other privilege than that of eminent service, and the exalted glory and happiness connected with such service. We infer this from the words last quoted from Exod. xix. 6. "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests,"—a promise which reminds us of Rev. i. 6; v. 10; xx. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 9; passages which we may regard as expository of the words of this covenant. Adopting this as the meaning, God's covenant with the people was, that he would make it the honoured instrument

in his hand of bringing back to the world his kingdom, which it should be their privilege first to enter, and then, under the Messiah, to administer. See Dan. vii. 27. Hence the kingdom was first preached to them, Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17, and not until it was rejected, could it be taken from them and given to others, Matt. x. 6; xv. 24; Rom. xv. 8, 27.

But observe, the Lord does not say the kingdom shall be taken from them and given (*ἐδνεσαι*) to the *Gentiles* or to *all nations*, but (*ἐθνει*) to a *nation*—another nation, not named on this occasion, or in any way designated. The minds of the bystanders would naturally be directed by this language to some other contemporary nation, to be elected or chosen as Israel had been. Or some of them, remembering what God had said to Moses, Numb. xiv. 12; Deut. ix. 14, might have supposed him to mean, that God would choose some individual, as he chose Abraham and Jacob, and raise up from him a nation to whom he would transfer the kingdom. Either supposition would not be an unnatural inference from this expression; and a nation so chosen, or raised up, would be an elect people, in the same sense that Israel was. Our Lord, however, tacitly alluded to a nation, to be elected and gathered out of all nations, during a long succession of generations, according to the foreknowledge of God, and prepared for it through sanctification of the Spirit, 1 Pet. i. 2, into which all those who had been given to him by the Father in the covenant of redemption should enter, and no others—in one word, his Church. The idea he does not develope. It was the fact only of the substitution of another nation in the place of Israel, which he now declares. In his intercessory prayer, the elect people, intended in this place under the idea or description of a nation, are much more distinctly referred to.

But what we desire the reader particularly to notice is, that the original plan of committing the kingdom, in the sense explained, to *one* nation, chosen out of *all* the nations, is not abandoned in consequence of the unfaithfulness of the nation first chosen. That is not the method of the Divine administration. Of the march of Divine Providence it may truly be said, *Nulla vestigia retrorsum*. The owner of the vineyard did not resolve to destroy it or abandon it, or throw it open to the first occupant in consequence of the bad faith and wickedness of the first tenants. His plan he persists in. The only change he makes is in the *persons* he employs to execute his original design. So in the interpretation of the parable. The only change to be made, is the substitution of one nation, represented by a company of tenants, for another, though raised up and constituted by a different method. The first was elected

as a race according to the flesh—the second are begotten of God, by the Spirit. John i. 13; James i. 18. The first appeared visibly on earth from the time they were first chosen as an organized people, and continued visible through many generations. The second has ever been, and still is, without a local habitation or a name among the nations. The greater portion of it has passed the gates of death. Some are passing now, and some, perhaps many, are yet to come into being. Those composing the fragment of it now on earth, comparatively but a small number, are scattered as wheat growing among tares, with no marks of distinction but the fruits of the kingdom they bear. Nor are they to be gathered during the present order of things, and visibly appear as one body. The gates of Hades which conceal them must first be unbarred, Matt. xvi. 18, and the Lord himself appear in his glory to establish his kingdom, and judge the nations,\* before their number can be consummated, and they can appear. Matt. xvi. 18.

Those who understand by the kingdom of God, the present dispensation of the Gospel among all nations, conclude, consistently enough with their theory, that the promises first made *exclusively* to Israel, are to be bestowed upon all nations, without discrimination, but in doing so they disregard the obvious import of the words of the Saviour; for admitting that in consequence of the fall of Israel, the kingdom of God is to be preached to all nations and to every creature, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15, yet it follows not that all will receive it; on the contrary, our Lord teaches with express reference to this dispensation, that although the many are called, few only are chosen, Matt. xvii. 14, and the chosen ones only enter into that elect nation, upon which the kingdom promised to Israel will be conferred.

It is plain, also, that if those specific blessings, which were conditionally promised to Israel at Horeb—the same that the Saviour solemnly declared should be taken from them, and given to another nation—are to be conferred on all nations *indiscriminately*, or upon all nations *considered as one nation*, at any time during the progress of the present dispensation, then the Divine purpose is, to make *all nations a peculiar people unto him, above all people*, and a kingdom of priests; a supposition which is repugnant to the words of the promise, as well as the words of the Saviour. But this argument we shall more fully consider hereafter.

\* That this elect people, though now invisible, and even without a local habitation or a name on earth, may yet be called a nation, (*ἔθνος*) is proved by 1 Pet. ii. 9. See notes on Acts ii. 47.

MATT. XXI. 44. "And whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken, [*συνθλασθησεται*, dashed into pieces] but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder," [*λιμνισει*, make chaff of him, and scatter him to the winds. See *Robinson's Lex.* New Test. Comp. Dan. ii. 44 in LXX.] Luke xx. 18.

The stone is frequently employed as an emblem of Christ. It is so employed in this verse, and in Ps. cxviii. 22, 23, quoted in the 42d verse. In Gen. xlix. 24, Christ is called "The Shepherd, the Stone of Israel." In Zech. iv. 7, he is called the Head Stone. Isaiah, viii. 13, 14, 15, foreseeing his rejection by Israel, calls him a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, (see 1 Pet. ii. 6—8; Rom. ix. 33; Acts iv. 11; Eph. ii. 20; and Daniel, ii. 34, 45,) evidently refers to the Messiah under the emblem of a stone cut out of the mountain without hands. The verse we are considering comprises the totality of the present dispensation of the Gospel. In the first clause of it, our Lord refers, as we doubt not, to Isaiah viii. 14, 15, which was eminently fulfilled in the fall of Israel, and the breaking up and continued dispersion of the nation by the Romans. Regarded as a prophecy, it denotes the events more plainly described in the next parable, under the imagery of a captured and burned city. Matt. xxii. 7. The prediction has also been fulfilled in the uninterrupted calamities the Jews have suffered in all their generations since that event, in consequence of their hitherto abiding blindness and unbelief. Luke xxi. 22—24. Thus understood, how fearfully significant is this prediction!

In the last clause of this verse, our Lord refers, as we suppose, to the prophecy of Daniel, ii. 31—45, and especially to verses 34 and 45. He points us to the end of the times of the Gentiles, Luke xxi. 24, and those terrible judgments which are to precede the restoration of Israel, and the dispensation of the restitution of all things.\*

These judgments, we are taught, will fall in their intensity upon the nations symbolized by the image, Dan. ii. 31—38, or, as Paul teaches, 2 Thess. i. 8, 9, upon those in Christian lands, who are living in heathen ignorance of God, notwithstanding the Gospel has been fully preached among them.

The fourth kingdom represented in the image, Dan. ii. 40, is, by the almost universal consent of interpreters, understood to be the Roman Empire, as it existed at the commencement of our era. Its bounds, as then established, comprise Christendom

\* Compare this clause with Dan. ii. 45, in the Greek: *Και ἡ βασιλευς αὐτοῦ . . . . . λεπτυνῆ και λιμνησῆι πᾶσας τὰς βασιλῆας, κ. τ. λ.*

in its largest extent in any age. Hence, we understand the apostle and the prophet as referring to the same judgments. But what we would especially remark is, the discriminative justice of the Divine administration, and the difference which these words of the Saviour put between the breakers of the law, and those who abuse the grace of the Gospel. Severe as were the judgments which came upon Israel, they were not *utterly* destructive. Though the nation, by falling on this stone, was broken, and scattered to the four winds of heaven; and although the days of vengeance have come upon that people, in which all things written by Moses, Deut. xxviii. 15—68, and the prophets, shall be fulfilled, Luke xxi. 22, yet they have been, and are still preserved, as a race of men; and when these days shall be ended, they shall be restored, Deut. xxx. 1—6, to their land and the Divine favour, and a new covenant shall be made with them, different from the covenant made with their fathers, Heb. viii. 8—13; Jer. xxxi. 31—34, while a full end shall be made of all the nations upon which the stone shall fall. Jer. xlvi. 27, 28; Dan. ii. 35, 45. See vii. 11; see Heb. x. 28, 29.

MATT. XXI. 45. "And the chief-priests and Pharisees hearing his parables, knew that he spake of them."

With design the Evangelist throws in this observation at this place, and not at the conclusion of the parable of the marriage, which he proceeds immediately to record. The parable of the two sons, our Lord pointedly applied to the chief-priests and elders of the people; including, no doubt, all who concurred with them in their principles and conduct. The parable of the householder, and the vineyard, also, had an especial reference to the ruling classes, including those who exercised offices of instruction; although the people, generally, partook deeply of the national sins. The whole nation were, in the general sense of the parable, "husbandmen and builders," for it was *with the people* as well as the rulers, the covenant, Exod. xix. 5, 6, 8, was made. Yet, the priests, teachers, and rulers, to whom the power of government and instruction had been committed, were, in a special sense, the husbandmen and builders; and by reason of their authority and controlling influence, chiefly responsible for the sin and unbelief of the nation. Matt. xxiii. 13. In this sense, the chief-priests and Pharisees understood the Saviour, and rightly, as we infer from this passage. The parable of the marriage, in the next chapter, on the other hand, as has been already said, was designed to apply to all classes, without distinction; not to the influential or governing classes in particular, and this remark

of the Evangelist discriminates between them in their application.

MATT. XXII. *The parable of the marriage.*

This is the last of our Lord's public parables. It was pronounced, as the last two mentioned were, in the temple at Jerusalem, just before his final departure from it. It is an allegory consisting of two parts; the first part ending at (verse 7) the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, A. D. 70, and the second, stretching forward through the whole of the present dispensation of the gospel among the Gentiles, down to the second coming of the Lord, and the gathering of his elect people to himself. It is a similitude of the kingdom of heaven, but altogether different in its design from those recorded in the thirteenth chapter of this Gospel. The action of the parable commences at the earliest with the preaching of John the Baptist. By the marriage festival we understand the peculiar blessings included in the covenant Jehovah made with Israel at Horeb. See notes on the last parable.

By the invitation to the marriage, we understand the call made by John, and our Lord and his apostles, upon the nation to perform the conditions of that covenant by receiving the kingdom and its King with the obedience of faith. The first invited guests were all those whom John was sent to baptize—the whole nation, without distinction or exception. The servants first sent forth (verse 3) had executed their commission, when John was put to death. Matt. xiv. 1—13. See notes on that passage. The other servants (verse 4) had executed their commission when Jerusalem, on the eve of its overthrow, was encompassed by the Roman armies, A. D. 70. The 8th verse is a formal repudiation of Israel, as the elect people under the covenant of law, Hos. i. 9, which became irrevocable and complete when the temple was destroyed, and the people dispersed among all nations by the sword of the Romans. Luke xxi. 24. The theocracy was then entirely withdrawn, and Jew and Gentile were placed absolutely on the same level, in respect to the Divine proceedings shadowed forth in the 9th and 10th verses of the parable. See the notes on Acts iii. 19—21. For after those events, that people could be found only on "the highways and hedges," Luke xiv. 23, and if brought to the marriage at all, must be brought from thence, with such others as were found willing to obey the command of the King's servants.

Consider again the brevity with which the greatest events the world has witnessed are represented. The whole history of the preaching of the gospel, from the fall of Jerusalem, hangs on these two verses, 9th and 10th. To mention only a few of

them:—(1) The persecutions under Domitian, A. D. 94;\* under Trajan, A. D. 155; Antonine, A. D. 164; Septimius Severus, A. D. 205; Maximin, A. D. 235; Decius, A. D. 251; Valerian, A. D. 255; Aurelian, A. D. 270; and Diocletian, A. D. 303. Next, (2) the establishment of Christianity by Constantine, A. D. 323, as the religion of the Roman Empire. (3) The rise of the Papacy, and its progress to unbounded power. (4) The corruption of Christian doctrine by Arians and other heretics; by Popes and councils. (5) The Reformation from Popery; the rise and progress of the Protestant churches; and (6) the more recent Christian missions to Pagan countries; and the translating, printing, and distributing of the Bible among all nations. All these, and many more particulars, are not brought into view by the parable. Nor does it notice, in any form, the actings of those who have gone forth as servants of the king, without being sent by him. For these we must turn to another parable. Matt. xiii. 25. This parable has respect only to the *true* servants of the king, and their accomplished work, without any allusion to the impediments they were to meet with, or the persecutions they were to suffer in performing it

In harmony with this characteristic of the parable, is the time of its action. It is brief, yet *undefined*, in respect of its duration. The imagery is taken from the economy of human life, and considered as an actual occurrence, the whole representation would be reasonably circumscribed within a single day, or even an hour, according to the diligence and success of the king's servants. During a brief interval only, the entertainment already prepared and ready to be served up, can be supposed to wait. As soon as the servants have executed the king's command, he appears. The representation of the parable, in this respect, is in harmony with the doctrine of the uncertainty of the time of our Lord's coming. Mark. xiii. 32; Matt. xxiv. 36. It depends, if we may so say, upon the full execution of the commission which the Lord gave the apostles, and through them to all his servants and followers. Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15; Matt. xxiv. 14. When that elect people who, in the Divine purpose, have been substituted in the place of Israel, shall be fully gathered, then the Lord will appear in the midst of them and celebrate that marriage festival which this parable represents. See Rev. xix. 9.

Commentators have noticed the likeness between this parable

\* That under Nero, A. D. 66, occurred while Jerusalem was standing, and during the period which we have allotted to the second mission of the servants, verse 4.

and that of the Great Supper. Luke xiv. 15—24. That parable is, in truth, a similitude of the kingdom of heaven, although it was not put forth as such. It shows the manner in which the Jewish nation, and the Jews individually, refused the kingdom when it was preached to them by John and our Lord, verses 16—20. It shadows forth, also, the present dispensation of the Gospel among the Gentiles, verses 21—24. But the parable under consideration, so far as it respects the Jews as the elect people, is more specific. It was pronounced *as a similitude of the kingdom* which had been preached to *them* exclusively; and, consequently, they only were represented by the first invited guests. And when our Lord comes to speak of the judgments which their national and individual sins were about to bring upon them, he almost drops the drapery of the parable, that he might show them not only the nature of these judgments, but the form in which they would come, verse 7. Their city should be burned, and they themselves should be destroyed by the armies which their King, whom they had dishonoured and contemned, would send upon them. It is to be noticed, also, that in the parable of the Great Supper, our Lord does not represent the occasion upon which it was made, nor does he denote the character or rank of the person who made it; nor does it appear that any particular relation subsisted between him and the guests he invited. It was addressed to an individual, at a private entertainment, in reply to an observation which implied a too confident expectation of enjoying the blessings of the kingdom. This parable, on the other hand, is founded upon the relation between a king and his subjects. The occasion was an extraordinary one, intimately connected with the honour of the king, and of the heir of his throne. The dishonour done him by his subjects was a breach of their allegiance for which they deserved, and received, severe punishment. As before suggested, it is the complement of the two preceding parables, and was added to show the grounds of the Divine judgments as they affected *all* classes of the people, without discrimination between the rulers and the ruled. Thus much upon the scope and general import of this parable. We now proceed to submit a few observations on some of the particulars.

MATT. XXII. 2. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son."

As the marriage was not celebrated at the time first appointed, on account of the unworthy behaviour of the invited guests, but deferred for a little space, until other guests could be invited and assembled: so the kingdom of heaven would not be established at its first announcement, on account of the unworthiness



of the Jews, to whom it was promised and preached, but would be deferred until another people could be called and substituted in their place.

MATT. XXII. 3. "And sent forth his servants to call them that were [had been] bidden to the wedding, and they would not come."

The action of the parable commences, as before suggested, with the mission and ministry of John the Baptist. Previously to John, the prophets had preached the kingdom of God as *future*. Matt. xi. 13; Luke xvi. 16. John first announced it as *nigh*, and ready to be established. Matt. iii. 2; Mark i. 15. This act of the parable, the first mission of the king's servants, extends, as has been said, to the death of John. Matt. xiv. 10. It includes the first mission of the twelve apostles, Matt. x., who, as we have seen, returned from it at the death of John. Mark vi. 30; see notes on Matt. xiv. 10. During this period the call was made upon the nation as such; but this included an individual or personal call on every Jew to whom the kingdom was preached, just as the baptism of John, which was appointed for *the nation*, see notes on Matt. iii. 6; and 1 Cor. x. 2, was individual or personal in its administration. In this latter sense chiefly we understand the call intended in the parable. See John i. 11, 12. But "they [the people] would not come."

During this period none of the preachers of the kingdom suffered death at the hands of the people. John was put to death by Herod at the instigation of Herodias, through motives of private revenge, several months after his public ministry was ended. See notes on Luke iii. 20, 21. The sin of the people in respect to John's ministry consisted chiefly in their not receiving him with the obedience of faith.

MATT. XXII. 4. "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 to the marriage."

Interpreting this parable in accordance with the distinctions taken in preceding notes, (see notes on Matt. xiv. 10; xv. 30; xviii. 11, foot-note,) the second mission of the servants, which may be called the second act of the parable, commenced at the death of John and ended at the destruction of Jerusalem; consequently it includes the latter portion of our Lord's public ministry, the mission of the seventy disciples, Luke x., and the whole ministry of all the apostles, except the apostle John, under their second commission. While our Lord remained with them, none of them suffered death or violence. John xvii. 12; xviii. 8, 9. After his death persecutions arose. Stephen was

stoned, Acts vii. 59; viii. 1; Herod vexed some of the Church and killed James. Acts xii. 1, 2. The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Paul contain abundant evidence that persecutions of the apostles and their disciples, by the Jews, were rife and unrelenting, which Paul alleges as a reason why the wrath of God was about to break forth against that people, and abide upon them (εἰς τέλος) until the end, *i. e.* αἰῶνος. 1 Thess. ii. 14—16. Their cruel treatment of the servants of “the king” was the filling up of their sins, and provoked him to destroy them and their city.

MATT. XXII. 5. “But [ἀμελησαντες, neglecting or paying no attention to the call] they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise.”

Of those called or invited, there were two classes. The one merely made light of, or neglected the invitation, preferring their ordinary avocations to the honour their king proffered them. This was probably a numerous and perhaps much the largest class. To such the apostle seems to allude in Heb. ii. 3.\*

MATT. XXII. 6. “And the remnant” [οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ, but the rest, namely those who did not merely neglect the call] “took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.”

The representation in this verse compels us to extend this second mission of the servants to the destruction of Jerusalem. Historical facts would not justify the representation if this second mission terminated before our Lord’s ascension; for none of the king’s servants were slain until *after* that event. Besides it has been shown, see notes on Acts iii. 19—21, that while the temple stood, and the worship of it was permitted, and the rites of their law allowed to Jewish converts by the apostles, the Jews had not entirely lost their prerogative. See Acts xiii. 46. Peter addressed them as still “the children of the prophets and of the covenant God made with their fathers,” Acts iii. 25, and see Rom. ix. 1—5, and promised them, even then, the second mission of Jesus Christ upon the condition of their *national* repentance and faith. This interpretation is

\* Πῶς ἡμῖς ἐκφυζομεθα τῆλικαυτῆς ἀμειλισάντι σωτηρίας. How shall we escape if we neglect a salvation *so great*? The word (σωτηρία) *salvation* is employed in Scripture to convey many different degrees of meaning. See the use of the word in Acts xxvii. 20, 34; Heb. xi. 7; Matt. ix. 21, 22; Mark v. 23, 28, 34; vi. 56; x. 52; Luke viii. 36, 48, 50; xvii. 19; John xi. 12; Acts iv. 9; xiv. 9; Romans xi. 26; Rev. xxi. 24. Hence Paul adds to it the qualifying word (τῆλικαυτῆς) *so great*. He means by salvation not merely release from condemnation, but salvation *with glorification and exaltation* to the rank and condition of kings and priests in the kingdom of God, which was at first offered to the Israelites exclusively, but being rejected by them, will be conferred upon that elect people which this dispensation was appointed to substitute in their place.

enforced by the fact already mentioned, that the parable seems to extend this mission of the servants to that event, verses 6 and 7.

MATT. XXII. 8. "Then said he to his servants: The wedding indeed is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy."

This is a sentence of repudiation, or the formal exclusion of Israel as the elect nation from the high glories of the covenanted kingdom. Trial had been made of them under the covenant of law, *before* the Holy Spirit was given. Trial had been made of them again under the covenant of grace, *after* the Spirit was given. For a time the Gospel was preached to them exclusively. Acts xi. 19; see Gal. ii. 7. The epistles of Paul, and Peter, and James, falling as they do within this period, show how abundantly the apostles laboured in their behalf. They were tried nearly forty years—a whole generation—as faithfully as the Gentiles were, but with less effect, though they had the advantage of greater light and knowledge. But all in vain. By their neglect and contempt of the Gospel, and their persecutions of the "servants of the king," they proved themselves unworthy, and they were cast off.

MATT. XXII. 9. "Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage."

This may be called the third great action of the parable. It commenced at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews among all nations. The end of it we see not yet. All the apostles, except John, were then dead. The servants intended, therefore, must be those composing the churches which had been organized and established by the apostles in various parts of Asia, Europe, and Africa, or their leaders or rulers. Thus interpreted, the parable regards them as missionaries, or missionary bodies, whose chief duty it was to execute the command of the king. It is noticeable, also, that the command could not be applicable personally to Peter or Paul. They had fulfilled their course. Nor even to John, nor to any one servant. It was addressed to many; to all the king's servants. The parable contemplates, therefore, no hierarchy organized under one supreme head, but individual servants, each having the same mission and charged with the same duties, and accountable only to the King, their Master.

If we interpret this verse by Matt. xxviii. 19; xxiv. 14; Mark xvi. 15, the mission of the servants was and is world-wide, and its duration, though not defined, till the second coming of the Lord, represented in the parable by the king's coming in to see the guests. Indeed that great event seems to be dependent upon the full execution of this service, and con-

sequently, according to the representation of the parable, will occur sooner or later according to the zeal, activity, and success of the servants in performing it. Thus interpreted, the motive which the parable furnishes for missions with those who love the Lord's appearing, see 2 Tim. iv. 8, is stronger than any other that can be imagined.

Again, we observe that the servants were commanded to bid all, as many as, and whoever, they should find, to the marriage; that is, to the marriage festival which had been prepared, and from which the first invited guests, the Jews, had been rejected. No change in the blessings proffered is intimated, but only in the persons who were to enjoy them.

MATT. XXII. 10. "So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests."

This is an allegorical representation of the preaching of the Gospel, and of its results. The servants gathered together all, as many as they found, both *bad* and *good*. The representation is, of a mixed company; and in this respect it agrees with the parables of the tares of the field and of the net cast into the sea. Matt. xiii. 30, 40, 48. In thus proceeding the servants obeyed strictly the command of the king. The result was just such as the king might have expected from the faithful execution of his orders. Yet he acted advisedly in giving them, relying on himself to preserve the occasion from dishonour, by excluding from the festival those whom he found unworthy.

For observe: he gave his servants no authority to admit any to the marriage. This prerogative he reserved to himself, which he is represented as exercising personally, and not by a delegate or vicar.

MATT. XXII. 11—13. "And when the king came in to see the guests, 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."

This portion of the parable refers to the scene of the advent, into which it would be presumptuous curiously to inquire. We do not regard it, however, as identical with that represented in Matt. xxv. 31—46. The design of these verses is to exemplify, in a general way, the Lord's dealing with unworthy professors. The fault ascribed to the excluded guest, was a defect which must have been common to all the unworthy, however diversified their character in other respects. Hence one example is sufficient to impart the instruction the parable was designed to

convey. But that more than one person would be thus excluded seems inferrible from verse 10 and verse 14, which we now proceed to consider.

MATT. XXII. 14. "For many are called, but few are chosen."

These words occur at the conclusion of the parable of the householder and hired labourers, Matt. xx. 1—16, but the application of them is to different subjects. If we may regard the labourers in that parable under the same category as the servants in this, the rule of the Divine procedure declared in this verse, will be applied to the servants of the king, as well as to those whom they were sent forth to call. That some preached the Gospel from unworthy motives, even in Paul's day, is evident from Philip. i. 15—18; and that such preachers have been found in all ages since, the history of the Church abundantly proves. But confining our observations to this parable, the principle is applied to the gathered results of the labours of the true and loyal servants of the king. They *called many*; and the call may be considered as made wherever, and by whatever means, the light of the Gospel is spread. It is the Divine purpose, as we learn from other passages, that the world shall be fully evangelized. Matt. xxiv. 14. The mere light of the Gospel is a grace and a power, irrespectively of any special and saving effect given to it upon the hearts of men, by the Holy Spirit. It dissipates the darkness of paganism. It destroys heathen idolatry and its abominations. It greatly elevates man as a rational creature. Evangelization is a Gospel term for civilization. Civilization advances or retrogrades just in proportion as the light of the Gospel shines brightly or is obscured. This worldly men perceive and acknowledge.

But it is not in the power or nature of light, or the mere knowledge of Divine truth, to change the moral nature of man. This is the office of the Holy Spirit. It is his especial work; and, in performing it, he acts in accordance with the sovereign purpose of election declared in this verse. Out of the many called, he chooses whom he pleases, and by his almighty power creates them anew, in order that he may form them into a kingdom of kings and priests, and exalt them, as new creatures, to thrones of glory.

The principle thus explicitly declared at the conclusion of this parable, is identical with that which the Saviour assumed at the conclusion of the parable of the vineyard. Matt. xxi. 43. The election of Israel to be a kingdom of kings and priests unto God, was an act of Divine sovereignty. No wrong was done to the nations which were then passed by. And when Israel forfeited the condition upon which the blessings of the kingdom were promised, no wrong would have been done had God chosen

to substitute some contemporaneous people in their place, and confer upon them the privileges Israel had forfeited. Yet he chose rather to open a dispensation for all nations, to be continued until all of them should be called, in order "that he might take out of them a people for his name." When that purpose shall have been accomplished, he will return and build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and will build again the ruins thereof, and set it up, that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the nations upon whom his name is called. Acts xv. 14—17; see Rev. xxi. 24. All Israel will then be saved, and enjoy pre-eminence among the nations of the earth. But they will not be exalted to the glories of the kingdom promised them at Horeb.

The doctrine of election, then, as it lies imbedded in the New Testament, is but the development of the covenant God made with Israel at Horeb. The end or purpose to be accomplished in the administration of the Divine government by the elect Church, is that for which the race of Israel was originally chosen. 1 Pet. ii. 9, comp. with Exod. xix. 5, 6; also Rev. i. 6; v. 10; Philip. iii. 21; Rom. viii. 29. That purpose, we have seen, was to create a kingdom of priests, who should sustain the most intimate relations to the Messiah, John xvii. 23, and have part with him in his glory and his throne. John xvii. 22; Rev. iii. 21. When, therefore, the Church shall be completely formed, the kingdom which was taken from Israel as a nation, will be given to the elect Church—the body of Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 27—and they will exercise that rule over the nations of the earth, and in the kingdom of God, which was promised to Israel at Horeb, and would have been conferred upon them by the Lord Jesus, Matt. xxiii. 37, "had they indeed obeyed the voice of Jehovah, and kept his covenant." Exod. xix. 5; Matt. xxi. 43; 1 Peter ii. 9.

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## CHAPTER VII.

The plot against Christ in regard to tribute.—Christ's reply in respect to tribute.—The Sadducees deny the Resurrection.—Christ's answer respecting the Resurrection.—Resurrection promised in the ancient covenants.—The Resurrection promised to the Patriarchs.—Christ's answer respecting the Commandments.—Christ's question respecting his title as Lord.—He silences those who questioned him.—Intimate connection of the several parts of the Evangelical record.—The Jews were to hear the teachers of the Law.—Why the teachers of the Law were to be heard.—Character of the Scribes and Pharisees.—The ambitious to be humbled, the lowly exalted.

MATTHEW XXII. 15—46; see also Mark xii. 13—37; Luke xx. 20—44. The parables of the vineyard and of the marriage of the King's son, form a fitting conclusion of our Lord's

public instructions as a teacher, whether we regard him as the Messiah or Son of Man. The people had rejected him in both characters, and nothing belonging to his public functions remained but his sacrificial work. Why, then, it may be inquired, was the rest of this chapter added? Are we to regard it as miscellaneous matter, without coherence between its parts or with the preceding context, and as having been recorded only on account of its intrinsic importance; or is there a logical connection between its different parts and the instruction of the parables?

It would be impossible to over-estimate the importance of this portion of the chapter; and this consideration alone, if there were no others, would be a sufficient reason for recording it; yet, if we consider it, especially those parts which contain the words of the Saviour, in connection with the preceding parables, we shall perceive a continuity of thought which reveals a special design, and may guide us in the interpretation of the entire passage. This will appear if we bear in mind the following particulars:

(1.) In these parables Jesus had announced to the people the momentous truth that God would take away from them as a nation, the high privileges of the kingdom, which he had conditionally promised them at Horeb. In this purpose, it was implied that the Theocracy established over them, even in the lower form in which they had enjoyed it, would be withdrawn, and their national state be destroyed.

(2.) That another nation would be called and substituted under the covenant in their place, upon which the blessings of it would be conferred. Upon this part of the Divine procedure, the Saviour, as we have remarked already, was not explicit. Yet tacitly, he referred to a people to be gathered out of all nations by the preaching of the gospel, during a series of ages or generations. Involved in this idea is the death and resurrection of the vast majority of this substituted people, *namely*, the elect church—the very thought implied in Matt. xvi. 18—and his future coming as Son of Man, when all his enemies should be subdued.

These particulars, to mention no others, certainly enter into the Divine purpose and plan, as shadowed forth in these parables. They were, if we may so express it, the ruling thoughts in the mind of the Saviour, and influenced and even gave shape to his replies to the Herodians and the Sadducees. In the question which he proposed to the Pharisees, touching the Sonship and Lordship of Christ, we shall discover an allusion to the denial of his divine rights and his rejection by the nation at that time. Bearing these considerations in mind, we proceed with the exposition.

MATT. XXII. 15. "Then went the Pharisees and took counsel together, how they might entangle him in his talk," [ensnare him in discourse.]

The scene is still in the temple, and the time, the last day of our Lord's public ministry. The parable of the two sons, xxi. 28—32, and of the vineyard, 33—44, greatly provoked the priests and Pharisees; so much so, that they would have laid hands on him immediately, had they not been restrained by their fears of the people, verse 46. At the conclusion of the parable of the vineyard, it is probable, see Mark xii. 12, they retired to some part of the temple, to consult and concert a plan, by which they might destroy him, without personal danger; leaving him alone with the people, while he delivered to them the parable of the marriage. This connection of the verse with the last verse of the preceding chapter, is made obvious by Luke xx. 18, 19, 20. The plan they agreed upon was to substitute fraud or craft for violence, disguising their design by flattery.

Of course it was indispensable to success that they should not personally appear in the matter; for after the severe denunciation they had received, and perhaps the displeasure they had shown, it was not to be supposed they could address him so soon, with words of commendation and praise, without being suspected of insincerity. So they would naturally reason. They selected, therefore, persons, probably of less note than themselves; perhaps not of their own body, but such as favoured their principles and shared in their malice—disciples, (*μαθητας*) as Matthew calls them; trained insidious men, (*ἐγκλιθετους*) as Luke calls them, xx. 12, to whom they joined some Herodians; so called, because they were the domestics, or courtiers, or soldiers of Herod. See the Syriac version. Having concerted their plan, they watched (*παρατηρησαντες*, Luke xx. 20,) for an opportunity to carry it into effect. It occurred when the Lord had finished his last parable, Matt. xxii. 1—14, and, as we may suppose, as he was upon the point of departing finally from the temple. If this be a correct view of the circumstances, a good deal that follows in this and the next chapter, occurred apparently in consequence of the detention, after the close of his public formal address, with which his ministry was concluded; although we might properly add to the parables the last three verses of chapter xxiii., in which he apostrophizes, with inimitable pathos, the doomed city and her children. But these are conjectures on which we will not dwell.

MATT. XXII. 16. "And they sent out" [from their conclave or place of consultation] "unto him their disciples," [disciples of theirs] "with the Herodians, saying: Master, we know that



thou art true," [a true, sincere, candid man] "and teachest the way of God in truth," [we know also that thou art a fearless man] "neither carest thou for any, for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us, therefore, What thinkest thou?" [what is your judgment or opinion upon this question?] "Is it lawful" [for us Jews, who are God's chosen people, owing allegiance only to him] "to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?"

If the Herodians were a political party who maintained the affirmative of this question, as some conjecture, they were added to this committee of spies, it is probable, in order to give the transaction the appearance of a *real* dispute, which they wished to have settled by the superior wisdom of Jesus: for the Pharisees maintained the negative of the question. However this may be, the character they ascribed to the Lord was strictly just, whether they believed it or not, and in this respect, their words, though prompted by deceit, were not flattery.

The question also was artfully conceived: For if our Lord had answered it, *Yes*, the answer would have tended to impair his popularity with the people; and this it was which maddened the Pharisees so much against him. Had he answered *No*, they would have accused him to the governor of sedition. It is probable they expected the negative answer, supposing, perhaps, that he would not willingly impair his influence with the people; and the negative answer, no doubt, they desired, as it would have opened what appeared to them, an easy way to destroy him, by a prosecution before Pilate for a political offence against the supremacy of Cæsar.

We must not leave this passage without remarking, how completely our Lord's Divine nature was concealed under the veil of his flesh. Had the Pharisees and Herodians known who he was, it would not have been possible for them to approach him with flattery or to entertain the vain conceit of "entangling him in his talk." They thought of him as merely a man in his nature, like themselves, though endowed, as they could not avoid seeing, with extraordinary gifts of wisdom and power; yet not so transcendently wise, that he might not be overreached and ensnared; nor so powerful that he might not be overcome. See 1 Cor. ii. 8.

MATT. XXII. 18, 19. "But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, [rather, But Jesus, well knowing their wickedness, said, John ii. 24, 25,] Why tempt ye me, hypocrites? [Why do ye try me, to ensnare me, ye dissemblers?] Show me (το νομισμα του κηρσου) the tribute money: [the coinage in which tribute is demanded by Cæsar] and they brought him a [denarius] penny."

The stress of our Lord's demand was laid on the *coinage* (το νομισμα,) as is evident from his next question.

MATT. XXII. 20, 21. "Whose is this image [*εἰκων, effigies*] and superscription [*ἐπιγραφή, inscriptio*]? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he to them, [this, then, is Cæsar's money, and Cæsar demands tribute in his own money,] Render then unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's."

It was the coinage that gave the money currency. It was that which gave it an arbitrary or nominal value, according to the will of Cæsar, independently of its intrinsic or real value, which would depend on its weight. Gen. xxiii. 16; xliii. 21; Ezra viii. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30; Job xxviii. 15; Jer. xxxii. 9; Zech. xi. 12. Consequently, the currency of money (by tale, without regard to weight) of the kind and coinage produced, was a confession of the subjection of their civil or political state to Cæsar. This answer, therefore, established, at least indirectly, the lawfulness of the tribute, and virtually affirmed that the payment of it was not inconsistent, in their present and prospective condition, with their duties to God. But because he did not see proper to return a direct affirmative to the question, the priests, to whom his answer was reported, perverted it into a negative, as we learn from Luke xxiii. 2.

Some have supposed that our Lord adopted this form of answer to mitigate the odium of a direct admission of the rights of Cæsar, but the supposition cannot be admitted as even a possible one. Consider the time of the transaction. Our Lord's public ministry was ended. The doom of the nation he had just before portrayed in his matchless parables; his own sufferings on the cross on the third day thereafter, were fully in his view. Why should he, had he been merely a man, desire to mitigate or soften the odium, which he foresaw was so soon to burst upon him without restraint? His motive in thus answering the question had respect, we cannot doubt, to the condition of the nation, not only at that time, but during all the ages of the present dispensation, even down to the time of his second coming. It was a solemn precept given to them at his final departure from them, Matt. xxiii. 39, for their guidance in their subject condition, as long as it should continue, which we know will be until the final restitution of the nation to the land of the covenant, and their conversion. Thus we see how this answer connects itself with the parables in which he had portrayed their future history. It speaks to that people to-day, what it spoke to those whom the Lord personally addressed: "Render to Cæsar"—the powers to which, by the just judgment

of God you are subject, 1 Tim. ii. 2; Rom. xiii. 1—4, “the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

We should degrade the subject and derogate from the majesty of our Lord, if we were to regard this answer as evasive, or as an adroit escape from a snare, although the bystanders may have so regarded it at that time. To ensnare him was not possible. See Isa. xlv. 9. There was no equality nor approximation to equality between him and his questioners in any respect. Rather should we regard his answer as the dictate of the Divine will respecting their future conduct, not only during the short space their national state would be permitted to continue, but during their approaching dispersion among the nations. See Jer. xxix. 4, 7. It is not probable that the answer was received or understood in that intent. Certainly it was not obeyed, in the sense in which it was given, as the history of the nation until its utter overthrow under Adrian, A. D. 137, proves.

MATT. XXII. 23. “The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection” [nor angel nor spirit.] Acts xxiii. 8.

The Sadducees were materialists. They held that the souls of men were mortal, and perished with their bodies. *Josephus’ Jewish War*, book 2. chap. 12. They denied the existence of demons, which they included under the name of angels. Their question, however, had respect only to the resurrection, and this part only of their tenets, which were thoroughly infidel, therefore is mentioned by the Evangelists, or is directly noticed by the Saviour. The question they proposed was founded upon a case which, whether real or imaginary, was a possible one, and was supposed by them to involve a difficulty which would go far to prove the doctrine of the resurrection of the body an absurdity. The case put is familiar to the reader, and we need not transcribe it.

MATT. XXII. 29. “Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.”

Ignorance is a fruitful source of error. Yet of many things men are necessarily ignorant. Of the attributes, the works, and the ways of God, it is but a little they can know. Job xxvi. 14; Ps. cxxxix. 6; cxlv. 3. Hence the reasonableness and even necessity of faith in things relating to God. Yet often, and without being sensible of it, men measure the meaning of God’s words by their conceptions of his power. Things marvellous in their eyes, they suppose must be marvellous also in the eyes of God. Zech. xiii. 6; Gen. xviii. 14; 2 Kings vii. 2; Luke i. 20, 37; xviii. 27. They are often bold enough to adjust the scheme of his revealed purposes by their views of

the fitness of things. This is a plausible, because it is a disguised, form of infidelity. In the text the Saviour ascribed this error of the Sadducees to their ignorance of God's power. It was an error of *interpretation* arising from that source; for they did not deny the authority of the Scriptures, at least of the writings of Moses; but their low views of the power of God were the cause of their misinterpretation of the Scriptures in this and probably many other particulars. If this be the correct estimate of this text, there are even now many Sadducean errors which do not pass under that name.

MATT. XXII. 30. "For in the resurrection they [men] neither marry nor are [wives] given in marriage, but [both] are (ὡς ἄγγελοι) as [the] angels of God (ἐν οὐρανῶ) in heaven."

MARK XII. 25. "For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are (ὡς ἄγγελοι) as [the] angels in heaven" [ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, in the heavens.]

LUKE is yet more explicit, xx. 34—36. "The children of this world (του αἰῶνος τουτου) marry and are given in marriage, but they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world (του αἰῶνος ἐκεῖνου τυχεῖν) and the resurrection from the dead (καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τῆς ἐκ νεκρῶν, and that resurrection which is *from among* the dead, viz. the first resurrection,) neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are (ἰσαγγελοι) equal to [the] angels, and are children (υἱοι, sons) of God, being children (υἱοι, sons) of the resurrection."

The Saviour having told the Sadducees that they were in error, and the source of their error, proceeds to inform them that their question was not well conceived or put, being founded upon a total misconception of the condition of those who shall be raised from the dead. They assumed, as the basis of their question, an analogy which does not exist. As if he had said, "Because men marry and women are given in marriage in this world, you ignorantly assume it as certain that the marriage relation will continue in their resurrection state. In this you err: for those who shall be deemed worthy of being raised from among the dead and entering into that glorious kingdom of priests which God promised to Israel at Horeb, will be gifted with immortal bodies. They will be made angelic in their natures. They will be sons of God, inasmuch as God, by his almighty power, will raise them-up from the dead, and create them anew for himself. A condition so enduring, so exalted, so glorious, is absolutely inconsistent with the fleeting earthly relation of marriage. The doctrine of the resurrection, therefore, involves no such difficulty as you imagine."

In thus showing the Sadducees the triviality of their question, our Lord assumed, without pausing to prove, the existence of angels, which also they denied. Whether he intended by this allusion to angels to teach the immortality of the raised dead, or the incongruity of their condition with the marriage relation, may be uncertain. Perhaps he intended both. It is plain, however, from the context and other parts of Scripture, that he did not intend a comparison in all respects. The subject did not call for it. Besides, men and angels are, and for ever will be, different orders of creatures, and while men dwelling on this earth and invested with bodies of flesh and blood, will for ever be inferior to the angels, yet those of the race who shall be counted worthy of the resurrection of which our Lord spoke, will, by virtue of their union to him, as we have reason to believe, be exalted to a greater glory and a more glorious inheritance than are attainable by the angels. See 1 Cor. vi. 3: Heb. ii. 5, 7; John xvii. 22—24.

Having thus disposed of the case, the Saviour might have dropped the subject; but the erroneous doctrine which suggested it, struck at the very existence of the Elect Church, the members of which, we have seen, are to constitute that nation to whom he had just before declared the kingdom of God shall be given. He therefore took up the main question, and went on to say:

MATT. XXII. 31, 32. "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not [the] God of [the] dead, [men] but of [the] living."

MARK XII. 26, 27. "And as touching the dead, that they rise, have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush, God spake unto him, saying: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is not the God of [the] dead, [men] but [the] God of [the] living; ye therefore do greatly err."

LUKE XX. 37, 38. "Now that the dead are raised, [do rise] even Moses showed at the bush, when he called 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 [men] but of [the] living: for all live unto Him."

This answer silenced the Sadducees, as we learn from verse 34. The multitude, who heard it, perceived its conclusiveness. Yet, strange to say, learned men are not agreed wherein its force or appositiveness consists. A recent commentator, after stating some of the doubts which have been raised upon the question, resolves them by supposing that the answer was not

intended as an argument, but as an authoritative declaration of the truth. We regard it as both. But we are chiefly concerned with it at present as an argument, and in that light, the bystanders and Sadducees regarded it.

It is usual with commentators to isolate the whole of this passage from the preceding context, and interpret it as they would in any other connection. The case which the Sadducees stated, and the question which they put upon it, are totally unlike the question of the Herodians, and both equally disparate from the parables previously recorded. This is conceded. Yet if we carefully consider our Saviour's replies to these questions, in connection with the parables, we shall perceive the same vein of thought lying underneath both, only with different modifications, arising from the diversity of the subjects to which it is applied. This we have endeavoured to show in respect to our Lord's answer to the Herodians, and intimated in respect to the answer under consideration.

Before proceeding further, it is important to premise, that our Lord does not speak in this passage of the general resurrection of *all* the dead, but only of the resurrection of those (*καταζωοθευντες του αιωνος εκεινου τυχειν*) who shall be accounted worthy of that world, [ævum, age or dispensation] and of that resurrection, (*της εκ νεκρων*, which is) from among the dead. This is evident from the phraseology of Luke, and especially from the description he gives of their condition and their character. They will be constituted by the very act of their resurrection, "sons of God;" made equal to angels, and incapable of dying any more. See 1 John iii. 2; Rev. xx. 6. To such, the description which Paul gives, in 1 Cor. xv. 42—49, is designed to apply. This body, or portion of the raised dead, as before explained in our paraphrase, will constitute that nation to whom God will give the kingdom, which he conditionally promised to Israel at Horeb. See Matt. xxi. 43, and the notes on that verse.

Now this covenant being made, as we have seen, with Israel, *in all their generations*, involved the resurrection of all those of them who had died in faith, as the necessary or appointed means of conferring on them the covenanted blessings; consequently, if we suppose that the nation had received Jesus with the obedience of the heart, instead of rejecting him, God would have not only conferred the promised kingdom upon them, but upon all those (their ancestors) who had lived and died in the exercise of the like faith. We see not how otherwise, though we do not allege our ignorance as an argument, God could have fulfilled his covenant with them, and we are justified in assuming that he would have fulfilled it in this way, by the

reasoning of the Saviour in the passage under consideration, and of the apostle in Heb. ix. 17—19. Yet such an argument, framed upon the covenant at Horeb, would have been hypothetical, inasmuch as the nation had forfeited the condition upon which the kingdom was promised. Hence our Lord fell back, if the expression may be allowed, upon the earlier covenant which God made with Abraham, and confirmed unto Isaac and Jacob, which, being absolute and unconditional in its terms, the apostle informs us, Gal. iii. 17, remained firm, notwithstanding the forfeiture of the covenant made at Horeb. See Rom. xi. 30.

It is under this earlier covenant, which, as we have just said, is *absolute and unconditional* in its terms, that the elect nation or substituted people of which our Lord spoke, Matt. xxi. 43, are to be raised up and formed. Gal. iii. 17. This earlier covenant comprises also within its scope the covenant with David, Gal. iii. 16, which, unlike that which was made with the nation at Horeb, is also absolute and unconditional in its terms. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5; Isa. lv. 3; Acts xiii. 34.

The blessings promised in all these covenants are of the most exalted nature—the gift of immortality, and, as we have seen, exaltation to thrones of glory in the times of the restitution of all things. This elect people are designated under various relations, all of which are unspeakably glorious. They are called the redeemed of Christ, his friends, his brethren, his children, his witnesses, his bride, his members, members of his body, of his flesh, of his bones; his fellow-sufferers, fellow-kings, fellow-priests, the sons of God, sons of the resurrection, the temples of the Holy Spirit. They are said to be one with Christ, and he their first-born brother.

These intimate relations to the Messiah, and the exalted service, under him, which such designations or descriptions imply, in the administration of the kingdom of God, are all involved in the covenants which God made with Abraham and David, as well as in the covenant which he made with the nation of Israel at Horeb, the principal difference being that in the former the promises were absolute, in the latter they were conditioned upon the obedience of the people. But if there be no resurrection of the dead, none of these privileges can be enjoyed, neither Christ nor his chosen people could be raised, and consequently the blessings forfeited by the nation were, at the best, but ephemeral in their nature, and their loss not greatly to be deplored. See 1 Cor. xv. 32.

The doctrine of the Sadducees, therefore, made all these covenants empty and vain things, see 1 Cor. xv. 12—18, especially in respect to those who had died in the faith, with the

seal of God's covenant upon them; nor did it hold out any better hope for the living, upon whom the penalty of the original transgression still abode. There could be no restitution of all things—no kingdom of God in which there should be no sin nor any curse. According to their tenets, the purpose of God to take the kingdom from them, Matt. xxi. 43, which the Saviour had just declared, was an idle threatening, which could not much harm them if it were executed.

This part of our Lord's answer, then, is to be considered with respect to its bearing upon these covenants, which, we need not say, are far-reaching. They extend to the whole futurity of the earth, and all that God has purposed to accomplish upon it. They include all the means and agencies he has appointed for the ends he has in view—especially that elect people whom he has chosen to serve him as kings and priests in the accomplishment of those ends. The simple fact that God has formed such purposes ensures their accomplishment. His power is adequate to his will. Death cannot prevent it; for life itself is but the effect of his will, *παντες γαρ αβτω ζωσιν*, Luke xx. 38; Gen. i.

It is not probable that even the most learned, orthodox, and devout of the nation at that time had any proper conception of the richness and glory of these covenants, or of the particular intent with which the Saviour alleged them. They contain unfathomable mysteries. 1 Cor. ii. 7—9. But they understood that the promises which God made to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob were absolute, and they believed that he would surely perform them, even to those of former generations, who had part in them; and on this ground, mainly, they taught the resurrection of the dead, see Acts xxiv. 15,\* and to this extent our Lord's reply to the Sadducees confirmed it.

\* Three opinions touching the resurrection prevailed to a greater or less extent among the Jews. (1) Some maintained that only the just or righteous of their nation would be raised; (2) others maintained that the whole of their race (all Israelites) would be raised; and (3) some maintained that all Israelites and *some* Gentiles would be raised. It is evident from Acts xxiv. 14, 15, that the Jews of St. Paul's day did not adopt the first of these opinions, but they appear to have limited the resurrection to their nation. In Romans ix. 2—5, Paul teaches that the adoption, by which he meant the resurrection, Rom. viii. 23, pertained to Israelites; and hence it would seem that the resurrection, as a term of the original covenant, was limited to Israel. Rabbi Bechai says, God granted four special honours to Israel, viz. (1) the land of Canaan, (2) the law, (3) prophecy, and (4) the resurrection of the dead. Josephus, though obscure, evidently did not believe the resurrection would be universal. Yet the Pharisees held that *all souls* were immortal, and that the souls of pious Gentiles would be happy, though in a disembodied state, see *Lardner Credib.*, book i. chap. 4, § i., and that the souls of wicked Gentiles would suffer punishment in their disembodied state, see Acts xix. 15, where a *spirit* is represented as *speaking*. The philosophical Greeks, on the other



The words he quoted, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," conveyed a distinct allusion to the covenant God made with those fathers,\* and the avowal that he was their God, implied that he would punctually fulfil to them all he had promised. Had he promised them nothing more than the immortality of their souls, then nothing more could be inferred from this relation. But his covenant included their posterity, the Gentiles, even the world itself, Rom. iv. 13; Gal. iii. 8, and many specific blessings, which, in a dispensation during which death has reigned and hitherto has passed upon all, Rom. v. 14, could not be fulfilled without raising them from the dead, in order that they may be the recipients of the covenanted blessings. To be their God, then, in the sense of the covenant, is to be their God as *living men*, not as disembodied spirits. The force of the last clause, Luke xx. 38, "for all live unto him," will be perceived from the following paraphrase: "He who created all things at first out of nothing, and by whom all creatures live, wills to be a God to them, as living, not as dead men. For so he interprets his own covenant with them, and nothing, not death itself, can prevent his will: for life and even being, originated in his will, and continually depend upon it." Acts xvii. 28; 1 Cor. i. 28.

MATT. XXII. 35—40. "Then one of them [the Pharisees,] a lawyer [*νομικός*,] asked him tempting him [making trial of his skill,] and saying: Master, which is the great commandment of the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. [Deut. vi. 5.] This is the first and the great commandment."

This is a full answer to the lawyer's question. What our Lord added was not called for by the question, but was necessary, as we shall see to the design he had in answering it.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neigh-

hand, treated the doctrine with ridicule. Acts xvii. 32. In Romans ii. 1—15, Paul addresses unbelieving Jews mainly upon principles admitted by them. In the 16th verse he advances a doctrine which they denied. In verses 7th and 10th, he speaks of the rewards of well-doing, and in verses 8th and 9th of the punishment of those who do evil. It is probable the idea of the resurrection of the body is included in the (*ζωὴν αἰώνιον*) eternal life spoken of in the 7th verse. However this may be, the New Testament teaches the absolute universality of the resurrection of all men, whether Jews or Gentiles. But it does not teach that all men, universally, will be raised from the dead *at one and the same time*. There is a *first* and a *second* resurrection. Rev. xx. 5, 12; Luke xiv. 14. The children of the covenant only, or that elect nation of which our Lord spoke, Matt. xxi. 43, shall have part in the first resurrection. See *Harmer's Miscellaneous Works*, pp. 221—264, for a more full account of the Jewish doctrine of the resurrection.

\* Their relation to each other as co-covenantees in the same covenant, is the reason why the Saviour names them *all*, and not one of them only.

bour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

The question was a very important one, and from the fact that it was put by a person whose special employment it was to interpret the law, it may be inferred it was considered a debatable one. It was a practical question, and the lawyer, no doubt, proposed it under the impression of its importance in that respect to the nation, which he took it for granted would continue still to exist, with undiminished prosperity, till Messiah should come and crown it with unwonted glory and power. Our Lord's reply, on the other hand, was framed upon a vivid and perfect apprehension of the Divine purposes. The whole scheme of Providence, stretching forward to the consummation of all things, was present to his mind, and his answer, while it was perfectly apposite to the question, had a designed though unexplained reference to impending and remote events, of which the lawyer had no conception.

We interpret this answer, then, as we did that to the question of the Herodians, with reference not merely to the actual posture of the nation at that time, but its future fortunes in all time to come. The people, it need not be repeated, were on the eve of their national overthrow and dispersion. Jerusalem, then standing in beauty and strength, was soon to be destroyed. The temple in which they then stood was to be utterly demolished. All their political, social, domestic, and religious ties were to be disrupted by their dispersion among the nations. A new dispensation was about to be opened, in which the ceremonial worship of the temple would, in a few years, become impracticable. To this condition our Lord alluded at the beginning of his ministry, in his conversation with the woman of Samaria, John iv. 23; and now again, though less explicitly, at the close of it, in the words we are considering. What part of the law of Moses—let the reader consider the question—could this people observe and practice, during those days of vengeance, which were approaching, when their city should be subject to Gentile power, and themselves scattered by the sword?

The Saviour, in view of these events, took occasion to embody in these two precepts all of the law, which, from that time onward, would be useful to them. The typical parts of it he was himself about to fulfil. The spiritual parts of it only could they carry with them, and observe and transmit to their children. These could be retained by them, and ought to be, under the most adverse and distressing circumstances. The Gospel would indeed be preached to them, enjoining repentance towards God, and faith in their rejected Messiah, without which

they neither would nor could obey these precepts—the first of which was the measure of the allegiance they owe to God, and the second the measure of the duty he required of them towards their fellow-creatures. Taken in connection with his answer to the Herodians, see verse 21 and notes, they form a compendious code of their civil or political, social and religious duties. Indeed the *first* precept in *this* answer is expository of the *second* precept in the answer to the Herodians. For when he said to them, Render to God the things that are God's, he imposed no other duty than that of fulfilling this first and great command. See Mark xii. 32, 33, 34.

Considered in this view, there is great beauty in these answers of our blessed Lord to the ensnaring questions proposed to him as he was about to leave the temple. How suitable to the loftiness of his character! He speaks as a lawgiver, abrogating, in some sense, the former code, which was soon to become impracticable in many of its precepts, in order that he might adjust it to their altered condition, yet preserving its spirit and sense under new forms.

How suitable, also, to the benevolence of his character! He had come to save them. He wept over their blindness and unbelief, and their consequent rejection of God. In these precepts he gives them his parting injunctions, which it would have been well for them in all their generations to observe. That admiration which discovers nothing in these passages beyond a strife of intellects, or an exhibition of superior dialectic skill, would degrade the Lord of glory to the puny measure of the potsherds of the earth.

MATT. XXII. 41—45. "While the Pharisees were gathered together," [that is, while they remained together, before they had dispersed from the place where they had assembled, see verse 34,] "Jesus asked them, saying: What think ye of [the] Christ?" [whom ye are expecting.] "Whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit" [moved by inspiration of the Holy Spirit] "call him" [that is, the Christ, his Adon,] "Lord: saying, The Lord" [Jehovah] "said unto" [Adoni] "my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool." Psalm cx. 1. "If David then call him" [Adoni, my] "Lord," [not my son] "how then is he" [the Christ] "his Son?"

These questions, we conceive, were suggested by the question of the lawyer which has just been considered, or rather by the answer which our Lord had given to it. He had just declared the duty they owed to God. The same duty, however, they owed to him as God's vicegerent on earth. John v. 21—23.

Yet they had virtually rejected him, under a misapprehension of his nature and office. The second of these questions, founded upon the quotation from Ps. cx. 1, pointed them directly to the source of their error. As if he had said, "The Christ promised to you is a much more exalted being than you conceive him to be. Even David, in whom you glory, as the greatest of your kings, moved by inspiration, called him his (Adon) Lord. It is, then, only in some mysterious sense that David calls him his Son."

That the person whom David calls his (Adon) Lord is the Christ, is evident from the question. In fact the Saviour assumes it as unquestionable, and the Pharisees did not deny the assumption, and this proves that such was the commonly received interpretation. That the same person—this Lord (Adon) of David—is a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchizedec, is proved by the 4th verse of Psalm cx., from which this quotation is made. Now the office of priest belongs to the *human* nature. A priest must be a man, not an angel, not the Holy Spirit, nor the Son of God in his Divine nature; for every high priest, saith the apostle, *is taken from among men*, &c. Heb. v. 1—6. See *Whitby's Com. on Heb.* vii. 1; also 1 Tim. ii. 5; Heb. xii. 24. Of course, David had respect to the *human* nature of Christ, when he called him his (Adon) Lord. We may add that, in his human nature only, was the Messiah capable of exaltation. In his Divine nature, he was God. John i. 1. The whole of this Psalm, in fact, is prophetic of the exaltation of Christ *as the Son of Man*, after his resurrection from the dead, and is so treated by the inspired apostles. Mark xvi. 19; Acts ii. 34—36; Eph. i. 20—22; Heb. ii. 7, 8; x. 12, 13; vi. 20; 1 Pet. iii. 22; 1 Cor. xv. 25; and see Matt. xxvi. 64; Mark xiv. 62; Luke xxii. 69. Finally, the person represented as speaking throughout this Psalm is Jehovah, see Heb. text—the person represented as being spoken to, David calls his (Adon) Lord. They cannot, therefore, be one and the same person.

The Saviour's question then presents this difficulty: how the Messiah in his *human* nature can be the Lord of David, from whom, according to the flesh, he was to descend. It is to be observed here, that the question is framed according to the conception which the Pharisees themselves entertained of the Christ. They regarded him merely as a man, like David, although a greater man, and a more successful and glorious king. Had they believed that the Son of God in his Divine nature would become incarnate in the person of the Messiah, the question would have presented no difficulty except that which arises from the proper interpretation of the Psalm. They might have said,

The Messiah will unite in his person the Divine and the human natures, and David recognized him as his superior in his Divine nature, and in his human nature only in consequence of the honour conferred upon it by its union with the Divine nature. This is the solution of the difficulty which may strike the reader as the true one, being founded upon what we know to be the fact. It is important, however, to consider whether it was proposed in this view by the Saviour. As the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, the Christ was undoubtedly not only the (Adon) Lord of David, but his Creator. But was he not also, in another relation, the (Adon) Lord of David? As the Son of Man, we have seen he was the King of the kings and the Lord of the lords of the world. All the powers of nature—all material and spiritual beings are absolutely subject to his will. In this relation he became incarnate in the line of David, the purpose of which, when first disclosed by Nathan to that pious king, filled him with amazement. As Son of Man he will hereafter visibly appear to judge all nations, Matt. xxv. 31—46; xvi. 27; Acts xvii. 31; John v. 27, and preside over the world as the second Adam, (הָאָדָם הַשֵּׁנִי)\* the Lord from heaven. 1 Cor. xv. 47.

In reference to this relation, we conceive, the Lord Jesus proposed this question to the Pharisees, and Psalm cx. justifies this interpretation: For the same exalted being whom David calls his Lord (Adoni), Jehovah constitutes a priest for ever (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, LXX.; Heb. v. 6,) and exalts to his right hand. In this sublime relation, David in the Spirit beheld him, when he called him "Lord."

The reader is referred for a more full explanation of the grounds of this interpretation, to the notes on Matt. viii. 23—

\* The word (אָדוֹן) ADON signifies, ordinarily, (sustentator, columen familiæ seu reipublicæ,) the sustainer or supporter of a family or state, and is so called from (אָדָם) EDEN, *basis*; because, as the basis or foundation supports the edifice or structure erected upon it, so a family or state is supported by its ruler (Adon) or Lord. In this sense we apply the word to the Son of Man, as the (Adon) Lord and Judge and Ruler of the world. Such powers and prerogatives belong, by Divine constitution, to his Adamic character. Ps. viii. 6; Heb. ii. 7, 8; The word is an appellative, and is used in Scripture as well with reference to God as to men. Thus, in Ps. viii. 1, Jehovah is addressed as (Adonenu) our Lord—our supporter. And such he is, in the highest possible sense. In one of our hymns we say: "God my supporter (Adoni, my Adon,) and my hope, my Help for ever nigh." Sarah called Abraham (Adoni) my Lord, Gen. xviii. 12; 1 Pet. iii. 6, in the sense of her inferiority to and dependence on him. See various examples of the use of this word in Ps. xii. 4; Gen. xlv. 8; Exod. xxiii. 17; Ps. cxiv. 7; Isa. i. 24; Mal. iii. 1; Josh. iii. 11; Ps. xcvii. 5; Gen. xxiii. 6, &c. Some find the same figurative idea in the word βασιλεύς (king,) because a king is *quasi* βασις τῷ λαῷ. See Gusselius *Comm. Heb. Ling.* and Forster's *Heb. Lex.*; also Taylor's *Heb. Concord.*

27, 24, 26, 27, 28, 32; ix. 4; xi. 25—27; xii. 8, 18; xiii. 37—43; xvi. 13, 14, 28; xvii. 22, 23; xx. 28, which it is hoped he will carefully consider before he rejects it.

MATT. XXII. 46. "And no man [no one of them] was able to answer him a word." No one of them could give the reason or explain why or in what sense David called the Christ his Lord.

They did not understand the mystery of the Messiah's nature either as the Son of Man or Son of God. It was as much hidden from the learned of the nation as it was from the common people. John xii. 34; see Rev. xxii. 16. His priesthood too, or the nature and grounds of it, and the sacrifice which it was appointed to him to make, were equally hidden from them. This is evident from the laboured argument of the apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews, chaps. v. vi. vii. viii. This priesthood we have endeavoured to show was connected with his Adamic office as the Son of Man. The Saviour gave them no other clue to the question than that furnished by the Psalm from which he made the quotation. It was not one of the things which it belonged to him, at that time, to explain: for the Psalm presupposed his rejection by them, as his enemies, and his exaltation, after his sacrificial work was performed, to the throne of Jehovah. It also presupposed his right, as their Lord, to the supreme homage of their natures—the same homage which he had just declared was due to God the Father, verse 37. Herein lies the connection between this question of the Saviour and the question of the lawyer. The lawyer had asked him, what is the chief duty of man—the great commandment of the law. The Saviour answered, "Supreme love to God, and the offering up to him and his service of all the energies of your natures." He then inquires, "But what think ye of the homage due to Christ?" David, the greatest of your kings, and honoured above them all by the covenant God made with him, Ps. lxxxix. 35—37, called him his Lord, thus acknowledging his subjection to him, although he was not to be raised up from his seed till long after his death. Acts ii. 29—31. How then could David owe him homage, or render it to him? This was the first difficulty to be resolved, and in order to point them to the means of resolving it, he inquires further, "How, or in what sense, and by what means the Christ is, or is to be David's son? The proper answer to this question would have shown that the same honour and service which are due to God, as he had just declared, were due also to Christ, as the Son of Man—the Adam of the everlasting covenant, and the Lord of the world. For such was the Divine will. John v. 23—27.

But there is another connection to be noticed, which will cast additional light upon the whole passage. In the parable of the vineyard, the householder is represented as saying to himself, "they will reverence my son." As if he had said, "My *servants* the husbandmen have rejected and maltreated, *because they were servants*, although they knew they were sent by me. But my son is my heir, and knowing, as they do, that he will inherit my possessions and my honours, they will reverence him as they would reverence me." It is evident from the parable, that the householder counted upon the honour due to *the relation*, rather than upon the consideration due to the *commission* which he himself had given, because that had been disregarded in the case of his servants. The event, it need not be added, falsified this expectation. The son found himself, at the very moment of his arrival, in the midst of enemies. To this circumstance of the parable, the Saviour, as we conceive, tacitly alludes in his quotation from Psalm ex. 1. For observe, the question he proposed to the Pharisees turned exclusively upon the *first* clause of the verse, "The Lord said unto my Lord." There was no occasion then to quote the clause which relates to the subjugation of Messiah's enemies, unless he intended a latent or indirect allusion to his actual posture at that time. Thus considered, this part of the quotation is full of meaning. Jerusalem, at that very time, was crowded with myriads of enemies who, on the third day thereafter, were to demand his crucifixion. Pilate and Herod and Roman soldiers were there. See Acts iv. 27. That very hour he had been insidiously attacked by the chief priests and elders, Herodians and Pharisees, with the design to ensnare him, and compass his death. We may add, the quotation was also a prediction of the result of the conflict, and, in this particular, it goes beyond the parable. It foretells his exaltation to Jehovah's throne, and the utter subjugation of all his enemies by Divine power, and the exaction of the homage due to him as the Lord of David and the Lord of the world.

Thus we perceive that these questions of our Lord spring from the same great vein of thought which pervades all his instructions in the temple upon that memorable day. Although drawn forth by disconnected and apparently unrelated questions, there is a logical connection between his questions and his answers to *their* questions, eminently suited to the solemn occasion, and the Divine Majesty of the Saviour.

MATT. XXIII. A leading object of these notes is to trace the connection of the several parts of the evangelical record, and thus to illustrate obscure yet confessedly important passages, and also furnish distinct internal evidence of its truth.

Of critical commentaries we have an abundance, but none written with a sole view to this object. The writer has not been able to accomplish much in this way, but what he has done may serve, to some extent, as hints to others more competent to the undertaking, and more at leisure to accomplish it. In the notes on Matt. i. 1, it was suggested, that this Gospel was composed according to a preconceived plan, which the author kept steadily in view, both in the selection and in the arrangement of the materials composing it. In the notes on Matt. xiv. 1, 2, this matter was adverted to again, and the reader was invited to review the proofs which had been given in support of the hypothesis. We now remark that whatever judgment different readers may form of the method of the Evangelist, none, it is probable, will be disposed to deny that our Lord, in his discourses and conversations, pursued a chain of thought, which, if the links of connection could be discovered, would satisfactorily explain many expressions and transitions otherwise obscure, if not quite unaccountable. What the writer means by this remark will be understood by those readers who have carefully considered the notes on the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters. We have now come to one of the most obscure transitions in any of our Lord's discourses. He was still in the temple surrounded by crowds of the people, among whom were dispersed Scribes and Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians, priests, elders, and rulers. Many of his disciples, besides the twelve apostles, we infer, were also present. The time was the third day before the Passover, at which he suffered and fulfilled the typical parts of the Levitical ritual, and as a sign of it the veil of the temple was to be miraculously rent through the midst from the top to the bottom. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 51—53; Luke xxiii. 45. On the fifth day after this his last public discourse, he was to rise from the dead, ascend to the Father, and on the approaching Pentecost to send the Holy Spirit upon his apostles, endow them with miraculous powers, and send them forth to inaugurate, under his Headship, a new dispensation. Yet with the most profound and lively consciousness of these events and purposes, he turns from his questioners, whom he had silenced, to the multitude and his disciples, and thus continued his discourse:

MATT. XXIII. 2, 3. "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do."

At first view it strikes us as an inconsistency that our Lord should at such a time, and under the circumstances mentioned, either admit the authority of the Scribes and Pharisees to occupy the seat of Moses, or enjoin it on the people or his



disciples to obey their injunctions. What further need could there be for their instructions, seeing he was so soon to prepare and send to them other and inspired teachers, who would authoritatively and infallibly declare to them the Divine will? Our perplexity is increased when we consider the character which he proceeds almost immediately to draw of these teachers. See verses 13—36.

To relieve the subject of this difficulty we must consider that our Lord had in view the course of Divine Providence and the respite of judgment God would give the nation during, what we may consider, the lifetime of that generation. In the remarks on Matt. xxii. 6, 8, and Acts iii. 19, 21, it was intimated that a further trial was to be made of the nation, under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, for the space of nearly forty years, during which they should have an order of proofs which it was not consistent with the Divine plan to give them during our Lord's personal ministry. The first and greatest of these proofs was the Lord's resurrection, and to this he alluded under the sign of Jonas the prophet, in his answer to the demand the Pharisees and the Sadducees made upon him for further evidence. See Matt. xvi. 4, and xii. 38—40, and notes on these verses; Luke xi. 30 is very explicit. Of the fact of his resurrection they had the most convincing evidence. See notes on Matt. xxviii. 11—15. This evidence was to be enhanced by the testimony and enforced by the miraculous powers and other extraordinary gifts conferred upon the apostles, who for a time confined their ministry to the nation. See Acts x. xi. 19; xiii. 46; see also Rom. ix. 4. It is worthy of remark that the duration of this respite of judgment, upon the peradventure the nation might still believe and obey, was not chronologically defined.\* God reserved it in his own power to put an end to it by his providence, as he has the times and the seasons appointed to precede the restitution of the kingdom to Israel. Acts i. 6, 7. The end of the respite, we know, came when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, and the nation was broken up and dispersed among the Gentiles. See notes on the parable of the marriage, Matt. xxii. 6, 8. The sense of the verses under consideration, therefore, as we conceive of it, is expressed in the following paraphrase:

“The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, and, by Divine permission, they will continue to occupy it during the lifetime of the greater part of this generation. For it is the

\* Perhaps there is a mystical allusion to it in the forty days appointed for the repentance of Nineveh, as we shall have occasion to notice hereafter.

Divine purpose, notwithstanding the enormous wickedness of this people, to put them upon a further trial, under the economy of the Holy Spirit, in order to prove whether by any means they can be saved from the dreadful judgments which have been threatened against them. As long, therefore, as God in his providence shall permit them to exercise the functions of their office, observe and do whatsoever they shall command you to do, in accordance with [or out of] the law."

This paraphrase connects what we suppose to be the latent thoughts of the Saviour with the words he uttered. He had before predicted the destruction of the Jewish state, Matt. xxii. 7, and the taking away of the covenanted kingdom, Matt. xxi. 43, but it did not seem proper to him on this occasion publicly to enter into further particulars, by which light would be cast upon the times of these events. It may be proper to add in this place, that this provision of the Divine mercy, by which the times of the nation were prolonged, during the lifetime, it is probable, of all those who were personally guilty of rejecting the Saviour, may account for the continuance of Levitical rites and practices by Jewish Christians in the apostolic churches, and the allowance and even practice of them, to a certain extent, by the apostles themselves. Acts xvi. 1; xxi. 20—24, 26, 27; xx. 16. The Saviour's words not only allow, but seemingly command, an observance of them by Jews, during the period of which he spoke. In respect to Gentile Christians, however, no such obligation was intimated, and no such practice was permitted by the apostles. As inspired teachers and ministers of Christ, the apostles were qualified and authorized to carry out the Divine plan in this particular, Acts xv. 23—29, and it is not improbable that it was on the authority of the very passage under consideration the apostles drew the distinction, before mentioned, between Jewish and Gentile converts.

But while the Saviour thus recognized the authority of the Scribes and Pharisees as teachers of the law, (and as we may say, for a little space, prolonged their office, by his authority,) he cautioned the people and his disciples against the evil influence of their example—thus drawing a distinction between their personal and official character and relations. The Sadducees and the Herodians were worse—certainly not better—men than the Scribes and Pharisees, yet nothing is said of them in the ensuing discourse. The reason is, the latter were not looked upon by the people as teachers, or guides, or even as worthy of imitation in their conduct. The Scribes and Pharisees, on the other hand, rightfully occupied the seat of their great lawgiver, and the Lord himself had just given his own

sanction to their public official relations. This last consideration especially, rendered the caution of the utmost practical importance, lest the command he had given his disciples and the people should be perverted. Add to this the exterior conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees, as we may infer from this chapter, was beautiful, verses 27, 28, and imposing. Apparently they were men of prayer, verse 14—zealous in promoting religion, verse 15—punctilious in the performance of the smallest religious obligations, verse 23. They not only acknowledged but seemingly deplored the sins of former generations, verse 30, and were careful to do all they could to repair the dishonour and the wrongs which had been done to the holy men and prophets of former ages, verse 29. Had the Saviour therefore given this command without the caution, the spirit and intent of it might have been—probably would have been—misconceived, and the people and his disciples might have inferred his approbation of them as guides in morals and conduct, as well as of their authority as teachers. Accordingly, having given the command and the caution, he proceeds afterwards to lay bare their real character in the sight of God, in such a way as to prevent the possibility of misconceiving his meaning.

MATT. XXIII. 3, 4. “But do ye not after their works, for they say and do not. For [indeed] they bind heavy burdens and grievous [difficult] to be borne, and they lay them upon the shoulders of men, while they will not move them with one of their fingers”—[will not put forth the strength of a finger to move them.]

In these words our Lord alludes to their exposition of the precepts of Moses, as he does afterwards, in several instances, in his direct address to them, verses 16—18, from which we infer he did not intend to enjoin implicit obedience to all their behests, or to hold them up as infallible interpreters of the law they had been commissioned to explain. The charge brought against them in this verse is an excess of power—an unauthorized imposition, to which they did not give even the sanction of their own example. Had they done so, it would have been in the nature of self-imposed penances, and could not have authorized them to impose them on others. The law, our Lord had himself on various occasions explained in several important particulars. See Matt. v. vi. vii. xv. xix. xxii. 36—40; xxiii. 16—22. It cannot be supposed that he intended to sanction for any purpose, or to any extent, or for any time, the gross perversions of the law which these teachers habitually and systematically made, and for that reason, if indeed our Lord referred at all to the moral parts of the law, the direc-

tions given in the first clause of the third verse must be understood of the law *rightly* apprehended, and explained as he explained it. This limitation, however, would leave but little of their instructions for the people to observe and do, and hence we incline to the interpretation, that our Lord intended only the ritual or ceremonial parts of the law, the observance of which, by the Jewish nation, was to be permitted while the temple stood. In this sense, and to this extent, their commands might be observed without incurring taint from their false doctrines touching the weightier things of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. See verse 23.

MATT. XXIII. 5—7. "But all their works they do for to be seen of men. They make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi."

In these verses, our Lord describes the ruling passions of these teachers. They were ostentatious and vainglorious. They loved and sought for distinction in social intercourse, in their religious assemblies, and in other public places, and everywhere to be recognized by all in their official relations. Had this been the worst that could be said of them they were unfit to be spiritual shepherds; and none who heard these words could fail to perceive how unworthy the Saviour deemed them of the distinctions they coveted.

MATT. XXIII. 8. "But be not ye called Rabbi [my master]: for one is your Master, [the master of you all,] Christ."

It should be remembered that our Lord did not, during his personal ministry, publicly assume or take to himself the title of Christ. This is evident from the fact, that when arraigned before the High Priest, he was questioned under a solemn adjuration whether he was the Christ or not. Matt. xxvi. 63; Mark xiv. 61; Luke xxii. 67; see John x. 24. So far from assuming the title, he solemnly charged his disciples to tell no man that he was the Christ. Matt. xvi. 20; see notes on that verse and on Matt. xi. 3. Nor did he assume it on this occasion. But what he said amounted to the assertion that Moses, in whose seat the Scribes and Pharisees sat, was no longer their master, nor they his disciples. Consequently, a new order of things had commenced, under one greater than Moses, Acts iii. 22; Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19, whom they were bound to obey; and this, notwithstanding the permitted continuance of the Levitical ritual, and the qualified command he had just given them to obey, so long as Providence should permit, the precepts of those who sat in Moses' seat. The command he had given was indeed an assertion of authority which none but the Christ

could exercise. It was, in fact, an extension of the Levitical ritual; and of the authority of those to whom the administration of it had been committed. In this view the mere assumption of such authority, which none but the Christ could exercise, was virtually an assumption of the character of Christ. Still, our Lord employs the title without any direct or explicit application of it to himself, and it is evident that the chief priests and the rulers, who doubtless were informed of all that transpired on this occasion, did not regard it such an assumption of the office as would be a sufficient foundation for a public accusation. See Luke xxii. 67; Mark xiv. 61; Matt. xxvi. 63.

MATT. XXIII. 8—11. "And all ye are brethren. And call no man father, for one is your Father which is in heaven [ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, omnipresent]. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, Christ; and he that is greatest [literally, and the greatest of you] shall be your servant."

Our Lord had before declared this law of his kingdom in a private conversation with the twelve apostles. See Matt. xx. 24—27. Now he publicly declares it in the temple to the people and all his disciples. As a rule of conduct it was the reverse of their preconceived opinions of honour and greatness, as well as of the teachings and example of the Scribes and Pharisees. But the point most important to be noticed in this connection, is the bearing it has upon the undefined period of respite or grace which was still allotted to the nation. Although their temple and their ceremonial worship would be permitted for a time, and until God, in his providence, should otherwise direct, yet essentially a new order of things had come. The prophet whom Moses foretold had appeared, and him they were bound to obey. Acts iii. 22, 23; Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19. The authority of Moses, the great lawgiver, and of the laws he had given the nation, had expired by their own limitation. Whatever of force or effect their institutions and laws could have thereafter, could come only from a re-enactment, by Christ, under such modifications as he should impose.

In this consideration we perceive the ground of transition in our Lord's discourse. He had done with the priests and elders. He had put to silence the Herodians, Sadducees, Scribes, and Pharisees, and being now about to depart from the temple, which he had entered as his own house, he proclaims with authority, see Matt. vii. 29, to the crowd surrounding him and the whole company of his disciples, the great law by which thenceforth they were bound to live. "Be ye not called Rabbi, Leaders, Guides. Call no one on earth your father." Covet not—receive not vain distinctions from your fellows, nor comply with the exact-

tions of those who demand them. Ye are all brethren—equals before God. Sin has wrought the distinctions which hitherto men have established among themselves. Henceforth Christ is your only Monarch, and God the Father of all is your Father. In the kingdom of God the present order of things will be reversed. Your greatest honour and glory will be to serve each other.

When we consider the occasion upon which these precepts were given, and the tone of authority with which they were pronounced, we cannot doubt that the Saviour intended to abrogate all existing and hitherto allowed usages under the Levitical economy, inconsistent with the kingdom he came to establish. The social state which would be produced by universal and perfect obedience to these precepts, will, we doubt not, be realized when Israel shall be restored to their land and to the favour of God, and the new covenant written in their hearts, according to the prediction. Jer. xxxi. 31—34; Heb. viii. 8—11.

That they were not observed by the nation at that time, nor have been in any of the ages since, is not an objection to this view of the passage. Our Lord foresaw that until the Spirit should be poured from on high, his will would be disregarded, not only by avowed enemies, but by many who professed to be his disciples and followers. It was none the less proper, however, see Matt. v. 48, for him to proclaim the law of his kingdom, and to annex to it the sanction in the following verse:

MATT. XXIII. 12. "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

We do not regard these words as merely predictive, as we may in Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14, but as the expression of the Saviour's will or purpose. They are words of legislation, and strictly and properly a legislative sanction, in the technical sense. It has been observed that "human legislators have for the most part chosen to make the sanction of their laws rather *vindicatory* than *remuneratory*, or to consist rather in punishments than in actual particular rewards." This sanction comprises both these qualities. It is aimed directly at the root of the evil—a remarkable characteristic, which can seldom be attained in human legislation, owing to the imperfection of the executive or administrative power of the State. Observe, obedience to these precepts is the appointed way to secure the very end which the disobedience of them aims to attain. Self-exaltation is a breach of this fundamental law of the kingdom. Its appointed punishment is degradation, and abasement by the power of Christ the King. Self-humiliation is the indispensable

qualification for the service of Christ. It is a grace which God alone can give, and the greater the humiliation the greater the gift of grace, and the greater the qualification for exalted service. To the carnal mind, such a law is a paradox, being founded upon conditions repugnant to the innate principles of human nature as it now is, and therefore impossible to unrenewed men. Indeed, it is one of the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

It has been remarked that these precepts, abating the penal portion of the sanction, are substantially the same as our Lord gave to the twelve apostles on a former occasion. See Matt. xx. 25—27, and notes. It should now be added, that the sanction is to be accounted for by the difference of the application. It is, indeed, the *same* law of the *same* kingdom, but addressed to *different* orders or ranks, or conditions of the subjects of that kingdom. On the former occasion, our Lord addressed the apostles as the representatives of the whole body of the elect, whom he will receive to himself at his coming, and exalt to thrones, as kings and priests under him. Their sphere of service will be the world of glory, and their perfect obedience made sure by their union to him. No penal sanction, therefore, could be necessary, in respect to this body of the redeemed. But in the repetition of this law to the multitudes, and his other disciples, he had respect to men in the flesh, dwelling on the earth—to Israel as a nation whom he purposed yet to spare for a little space—to his Church on earth, consisting, as he foresaw it would consist, of a mixed multitude; the best portion of which, during this dispensation, would be imperfect. He had respect, also, as we suppose, to the millennial state of the world, when Israel will be restored as a people, and all of them made righteous, and the Gentiles converted to God. Thus applied, the sanctionary clause was appropriate. Indeed we may consider the enactment, in this application of it, as supplementary to the two great commandments of the law, which he had just before declared, in answer to the question of the lawyer. See Matt. xxii. 37, 40, and notes.

We may discern here another link in the chain of thought, which pervades the whole of this last public discourse of our Lord. In commenting upon his question to the Pharisees, concerning the Christ, Matt. xxii. 41—45, it was suggested that he claimed for himself the same love, honour, and obedience as are due to God the Father. In these verses he explicitly declares that while God the Father is Father of all, Christ, the Son of Man, is the Master or Monarch of all. See notes on Matt ix. 6, and xii. 8. He assumes authority over the laws and institutions established by the hand of Moses; and as the

only lawgiver and mediator between God and men, on the one hand continues by his own authority, for the time being, the ceremonial parts of their worship; and on the other, promulgates new precepts designed to effect an entire change of their exterior life, and bring it into conformity with the two great commandments of the law affecting their inner life. Taken together, they form the code of the laws of the kingdom of God, distinguished from all human codes alike by its brevity and perfectness. It is the outward realization of these laws, through the hearty and perfect obedience of all, which the Saviour taught us to pray for in the prayer he indited for the apostles—"Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"—and it is from their actual realization we can most easily form an idea of the social state of men on earth, when that kingdom shall be outwardly established under the reign of Christ, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

Christ a sign to the Jews.—The woe to the Scribes and Pharisees.—The Scribes and Pharisees.—The Apostrophe to Jerusalem.—Jerusalem and Judea to be desolated.—The Question of the Disciples about the Temple.—Their Question respecting his Coming.—The meaning of the End of the Age.—False Christs were to arise.—The Gospel to be preached to all.—Jerusalem's respite.—Jerusalem's desolation.—The Distress of the Nations.—The Advent of the Son of Man.—The Judgment of the Nations.—Christ's Kingdom.

**MATTHEW XXIII. 13—36.** Our Lord's purpose in this address to the Scribes and Pharisees, it is probable, was twofold: to warn the Scribes and Pharisees themselves of their perilous condition, and to portray in the hearing of the people, the true character of those whose authority, as the occupiers of the seat of Moses, he had just before recognized and prolonged. The latter, however, we may regard as the chief purpose; for he had already in a less public manner said to the Scribes and Pharisees nearly the same things. Luke xi. 37—54. On that occasion his language provoked a vehement attack upon him, which he did not see proper to prevent. But now he allowed no gain-saying. Matt. xxii. 46. He stood in his own temple. They were his last words of warning to them and to the people, and fell upon their minds with amazing power. We cannot err in believing that no words were ever uttered by man with so much majesty and awe-striking effect.

But why, it may be inquired, did our Lord recognize and prolong the authority of such teachers, for any purpose, even



for a moment? They were dissemblers, perverters rather than faithful expounders of the law, blind guides, filled with hypocrisy and iniquity, children of hell, verse 15, from which they could not escape but by miracles of grace, verse 33. This question touches a grave difficulty, the solution of which is to be sought for, as we conceive, in the mysteries of Providence, or more precisely, in the scheme of the Divine administration towards Israel as the elect people. Secularized and corrupt as the nation had become, and especially its rulers and teachers, it was God's purpose to make a still further trial of it under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. This our Lord obscurely intimated in his reply to the Pharisees and Sadducees, when they desired him to show them a sign from heaven. See notes on Matt. xii. 38, and xvi. 1—4. On another occasion he made the same intimation more publicly, as we learn from Luke xi. 29, 30, to which, as in some respects more explicit, we will turn. It may be paraphrased thus: "This is an evil generation"—a wicked race—"they seek a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it"—more than they already have in my miraculous works—"but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas" (after being preserved three days and three nights in the body of the fish, and his wonderful deliverance therefrom) "was a sign unto the Ninevites," during forty days, Jonah i. 17; iii. 4, "so shall the Son of Man" (after being preserved three days and three nights in the grave, and his wonderful deliverance therefrom) "be a sign," during forty years, unto this generation.\*

The personal history of Jonah considered as a type of our Lord's burial in the grave of Joseph, begins to be applicable at his resurrection. The deliverance of Jonah, which we doubt not was well known to the Ninevites, stamped his mission with Divine authority, and the deliverance of our Lord's body from the power of death and the grave, represented by the preservation of Jonah, was that further sign, which he foretold they should have. This sign or further proof, the apostles preached with great power, Acts i. 22; ii. 31; iv. 33; vii. 56, to that people during nearly forty years—God confirming their testimony by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the mighty works they performed. Thus considered, this was the greatest of the signs given to the nation. It was a permanent or continuing

\* The forty *days'* respite in the case of Nineveh, Jonah iii. 4, it is supposed, typically or mystically represented the *years* of respite which were to be allowed to Jerusalem after our Lord's resurrection, or perhaps we should say after the commencement of our Lord's public ministry; inasmuch as the forty days, in the case of Nineveh, commenced with the beginning of Jonah's preaching.

sign, during the remainder of their national existence, and in this respect differed from the miracles which our Lord had previously performed.

However this may be, the event shows that God intended to spare the nation, such as it was, and its teachers and rulers, depraved and wicked as they were, a little longer; peradventure they would yet repent, when they should have the further sign of the resurrection of Jesus proved to them by evidence which they could not doubt, and preached to them and confirmed by signs and wonders wrought by the apostles. It was in the execution of this purpose, as we suppose, our Lord recognized and prolonged the authority of the Scribes and Pharisees, not for any good thing he saw either in the nation or in its teachers or rulers. We add a few observations upon some of these verses.

MATT. XXIII. 13. "But woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

This was the characteristic sin of the Scribes and Pharisees. They lived in times the like of which had never been before. The kingdom of God had been brought nigh. Matt xi. 13. See notes, and Luke xvi. 16. Their privileges and responsibilities were greater than those of their predecessors. Matt. xiii. 17; Luke x. 24. It was for this reason, we suppose, our Lord began his enumeration of their enormous sins with this. Not content with resisting for themselves the most conclusive evidence of the Divine authority of John the Baptist's mission, and of his own, they were unceasingly malicious and perseveringly active in perverting it. They took away the key of (or rather say *to*) knowledge from the people, Luke xi. 52, thus closing or barring up the door, as far as it was in their power, to all who otherwise might have been inclined to enter the kingdom. See Matt. xi. 18, 19; xii. 24; Luke vii. 29, 30, 33, 34; also, John vii. 20; viii. 48, 49, 52; x. 20.

MATT. XXIII. 14. "But woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye [κατεσθίετε greedily eat up] devour widows' houses, and for [προφασει a show or pretext to cover up your real intent] a pretence [pray long,] make long prayer; therefore [δια τουτο on account of this pretext,] ye shall receive [more abundant, severer] greater [condemnation] damnation."

Avarice, which did not spare the poor and unprotected—merciless avarice, was another of their enormous sins. Practised, as it was by them, under pretence of religion, and covered up by hypocritical prayers, it may be regarded as a kind of form of that vice which was peculiar to their caste or class,

as spiritual guides. It was their character and office which gave them access to their victims. The apostle Paul warned Timothy, 1 Tim. vi. 5, against some in the church, even in his day, who regarded religion as a thing valuable only so far as it might be made subservient to lucre, see 2 Peter ii. 1, and the history of the Church, in all ages since, shows an uninterrupted succession of such teachers from the Scribes and Pharisees, whom the Lord thus severely condemned.

MATT. XXIII. 15—31. These verses cannot be made plainer by any comment.

They show how zealous these men were in propagating their (so called) religious scheme of doctrines, supported by the most absurd interpretations of the Scriptures, and how little influence their religious opinions had upon their moral and religious character. Punctilious as they were in the observation of small things, and imposing and beautiful as their exterior life appeared, they were, within, like sepulchres, full of rottenness and all uncleanness. Under pretext of being more holy than their fathers, and vainly disavowing their deeds, they were treading closely in their footsteps; and were at that moment meditating the commission of the most heaven-daring of the nation's crimes. Well knowing their character and their purposes, the Lord added:

MATT. XXIII. 32. "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." Fill ye up, then, to the full, the measure of the Divine forbearance towards your nation, which your fathers, in all their generations, have been filling.

This verse is to be regarded as permissive and predictive, not as an exhortation or command. As if the Saviour had said: "Seeing you are inflexibly bent upon putting me to death, and thus putting an end to your own existence as a nation, by the most atrocious of your sins, God will permit you to have your own way. But how, then, will it be possible for you to escape the severest punishment?"

The permission thus given to the Scribes and Pharisees, and through them to the nation itself, was indispensable to the accomplishment of their purpose of putting him to death. No one, not the whole nation, not Satan himself, nor all together, had power to take the life of the Lord against his will, or without his permission. John x. 18. The time, the place, and the occasion, concur to show that these words should be understood in this sense. They may remind us of the like permission soon afterwards given to Satan, as soon as he had taken corporal possession of Judas Iscariot. John. xiii. 27.

MATT. XXIII. 33. "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

The Saviour does not positively affirm that hell was their destination, and damnation their doom: for with God all things are possible; but, considered as a question, what other answer could they return to it? Yet, notwithstanding their extreme wickedness, they were to be spared, and borne with a little longer, and still further trial given them, as we have seen, in order that they might repent and believe, or display more fully their character, and the justice of God in their punishment. See Rom. ix. 17. The event of this further trial the Saviour foresaw and foretold, for the warning of such as would give heed to it.

MATT. XXIII. 34—36. "Wherefore, [referring to what he had said in verses 32, 33] behold, I send you [meaning, I will send you, after my resurrection] prophets, and wise men, and scribes, and some of them ye shall [will] kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye [ye will] scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily, I say unto you, All these things shall [will] come upon this generation."

These words, as already intimated, were a prediction of the issue of the trial of the nation, under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. As that dispensation was still future, the official titles or names afterwards given to those by whose agency it was carried on, would not have been understood, if the Saviour had employed them. Hence he adopted from the synagogue, those most analogous to the prospective institutions of the Gospel, as best adapted to convey his meaning; intending by "prophets, wise men, and scribes," the apóstles and other ministers of the word, whom he soon after sent forth to preach the gospel to the nation; who laboured in the midst of them, till Jerusalem was destroyed, and the people dispersed by the Romans. The cruel treatment which he foretold they would receive, he had before predicted in the parable of the marriage, Matt. xxii. 6; see xxiv. 9; John xv. 20; xvi. 2, and Paul refers to it as an historical fact in his first Epistle to the Thesalonians, ii. 14—17, written, it is supposed, about nineteen years after this time. And if minute accounts of the persecutions of Christians during this last period of the Jewish State had been transmitted to us, we doubt not they would most abundantly verify this prediction of the Saviour in all its particulars. See notes on Matt. xii. 43—45.

But what is especially noticeable in this last denúnciation is, that our Lord regards the Scribes and Pharisees both as indi-

viduals and as the representatives of the nation from its origin. Being the elect nation under the covenant, the people were dealt with as a corporate person, identically one and the same in all their generations. In this character and capacity, the privileges of the kingdom had been covenanted to the nation, and when forfeited, they were taken away from it as such. Upon the same principle, the guilt which former generations had incurred and accumulated was to be charged to the account of the last. The punishment which the Divine justice inflicted for the nation's sins thus considered, besides the national loss of the covenanted blessings, was the utter ruin of their commonwealth, and the subjection of the people to the power of the Gentiles: in other words, temporal judgments; which only, the nation *as such* could suffer. But these included particular inflictions upon the people individually, more or less intense respectively, according to their ill-desert. This no doubt was very various, yet in none so great, that the punishment due to it could not be averted by repentance towards God and faith in their rejected Messiah. Many of the priests, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, vi. 7, though they had been zealous and active enemies of Jesus, during his public ministry, afterwards became obedient to the faith; and the Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, though he took an active part in fulfilling the prophecy, Acts vii. 58; viii. 1; xxvi. 10, 11; 1 Tim. i. 15, 16, is another example of the Divine clemency. That there was among this corrupt people an election of grace is proved by many places, Rom. xi. 4, 5; Acts xxi. 20, and it was no doubt in part for the sake of gathering these that the days of vengeance were postponed. See 2 Pet. iii. 9. But to return to the principal point of this passage.

Our Lord charged the nation not only with the blood of their own prophets, but with the guilt of all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel. In what sense, it may be inquired, could the nation be charged with crimes which neither they nor their fathers, from the time they were chosen as the elect nation, had committed? Mr. Alford remarks, "that the murder of Abel was the first in the strife between unrighteousness and holiness; and as the Jews now represent the murderers of the first, they must bear the vengeance of the whole in God's day of wrath." Without controverting the views of learned men upon obscure questions, the writer may be allowed to suggest, that the ground or cause of the nation's guilt for crimes committed from the beginning of the world, is to be sought for, in their relation, as a people, to the scheme of redemption. In God's purpose, the day of final retribution for the sins of the world, for the removal of the curse and the restitution of all things, is inseparably connected

with the advent and kingdom of Christ; and the time had now come for the accomplishment of these events. Nothing was wanting on the part of God, and nothing was required of that generation, but the hearty reception of the Lord Jesus, as their Messiah, with the obedience of faith. By rejecting him, they postponed, so to speak, the execution of the Divine plan. In other words, instrumentally they prolonged the curse, and put off the day of God's righteous retribution of all the sins committed since the fall, and consequently were themselves responsible as a nation, for the guilt of sins which, but for them, would at that time have been avenged: for as a nation, they were a party to the covenant at Horeb, and as subjects of the law, which was declaratory of the conditions to be fulfilled by the people on their part, they were bound by its terms, and responsible for all the consequences of the breach thereof, one of which was, as we have seen, the postponement of the day of retribution. This reasoning is analogous to that employed in the notes on Matt. ii. 17, 18, and Jer. xxxi. 15, to which the reader is referred.

It cannot be necessary to add, that the actual issues or events of God's covenant with Israel were foreseen. Acts xv. 19. They were not only foreseen, but actually provided for in the scheme of redemption, which included all possible issues of each and every of its subordinate parts.

Having now done with the Scribes and Pharisees, our Lord closed his public ministry by an address to the nation. To enter at all into his conceptions the reader must consider with profound attention the time, the place, the occasion, the people addressed, their history, their relations to God by covenant, the consequences of their sinful rejection of the Lord Jesus to themselves as a nation and a race, and to the world. We call it an apostrophe, and such it is. But so vast are the thoughts it expresses, so deep the emotions which prompted them, so comprehensive the appeal, and in all these respects, so far above the conceptions of the actual audience, that we may with equal propriety regard it as a Divine soliloquy, or the Lord's declaration to himself of his own faithfulness to his covenant engagements, and of his reason for withdrawing the special care and providence he had hitherto extended to the nation. Let us attend to some of the particulars.

MATT. XXIII. 37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem."

Many great and glorious purposes are connected with Jerusalem. The Saviour himself called it the city of the great King, Matt. v. 35; see Ps. xlviii. 2. God himself had chosen it, 1 Kings xi. 13, and resolved to establish it, 1 Kings xv. 4, and will dwell in the midst of it, Zechariah viii. 3, and

make it a rejoicing, and a joy to the whole earth, Isaiah lxv. 18, 19. This purpose he will never abandon or change, Zechariah i. 17; ii. 12. That a city of such exalted privileges, and so glorious a destiny, should madly cast them all away, or even momentarily disregard them, was a matter of profound astonishment and grief. This is intimated by the repetition. It is more to our purpose, however, to observe, that under this name, the Saviour summons the whole nation, in all its generations, living and dead, before him, to hear these, his last words, as if he had said: "O my people, my people—my people by choice and covenant—how often would I have gathered you," &c.

MATT. XXIII. 37. "That killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee." See Isa. iv. 4; Luke xiii. 33, 34.

Plainly, our Lord refers, by these words, to former generations of the nation, and his dealings with them, from the beginning; not merely to events which had occurred during his advent and appearing in the flesh. We know not that any prophet had been killed during our Lord's personal ministry except John the Baptist, whom Herod killed. But what is especially noticeable is, that our Lord characterizes this highly favoured city only by its heaven-daring crimes. The prophets were God's ambassadors. But had they been only the ambassadors of an earthly king, they should have been received with honour, and their persons regarded as sacred.

An earthly king would have avenged, to the extent of his power, the dishonour done him by such flagrant wrongs done to his servants; but God had not only forborne to exterminate the nation, for repeated offences, but even preserved and protected it until at length he sent his Son, saying, according to the representation of the parable: "They will reverence my Son." Matt. xxi. 37, and notes. Thus our Lord enhances the effect of the appeal, by contrasting the goodness and forbearance of God with the ingratitude and crimes of the nation.

MATT. XXIII. 37. "How often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen [bird] gathereth her chickens [nestlings,] under her wings, and ye would not."

Our Lord spoke these words in the majesty of his pre-existent nature, 1 Cor. x. 9. They imply that he had ever been with the nation, and watchful over it, and ever ready to gather its scattered and oppressed children from under the power of their enemies, and foster and protect them with the most tender and affectionate care. See Ps. lxxxii. 13—16. How strangely these words must have sounded in the ears of the Scribes and Pharisees, who regarded him merely as a

mortal man, like themselves. See John viii. 58, 59, and 56, 57. In uttering them he had no special regard to his audience, but rather to his own greatness and glory, and the Divine scheme into which the election of Israel entered and formed an important part. The temporary failure, or perhaps we should say, the postponement, of the glorious consummation of this scheme, was not his fault, but theirs. They would not be gathered and blest by him. They had reached the outermost limits of the Divine forbearance, and would soon pass beyond them. With prophetic words, he therefore adds the sentence of the divine judgment for their national sins:

MATT. XXIII. 38. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

As if he had said: "Behold, the land which God covenanted to your fathers, to be your dwelling-place in all your generations, is abandoned of God. His special care and providence over it are withdrawn. It is left to yourselves to keep and protect as best you can. Soon it will be desolate."

The strength of the nation never consisted in its numbers. Moses taught the people, Deut. vii. 7, that the Lord did not choose them because they were more in number than any people; for they were the fewest of all people. Ps. cv. 12. Their strength and safety lay in the covenanted care and the special providence of God, as their whole history abundantly proves, Deut. iii. 22; xx. 4; xxxii. 30; Exod. xiv. 14; Lev. xxvi. 8; Josh. xxiii. 10; Ps. xxxv. 1; xlv. 4, 5, and that care and providence had been extended to them, during all their diversified fortunes, until this time. He was their King; and although in the days of Samuel they demanded another king to rule them, like all the nations, 1 Sam. viii. 5, 9, yet he continued his theocratical rule over them through the kings he gave them, and even covenanted with David that his own Anointed should descend from his loins. Acts ii. 30; Ps. cxxxii. 11. By the words we are now considering, the Theocracy was virtually, and even formally, withdrawn. The consequences of this change in their relations were foreshadowed by the word "desolate," but plainly declared, soon afterwards, to four of the disciples, in his prophetic discourse upon the Mount of Olives.

MATT. XXIII. 39. "For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth till ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

We regard this verse as a part of the apostrophe to the nation, as before explained, not as addressed especially to the auditory actually present in the temple. They import the excision of the nation from the high privileges of the covenant



they had forfeited; yet without extinguishing the hope of the inferior blessings of an earthly pre-eminence among the nations in the world to come under Messiah's reign. See notes on Matt. xxi. 43, 44. But to come to particulars.

Our Lord connects the desolation he had just before spoken of, with his withdrawal from the nation as their Messiah and covenanted King. They imply, that he will not appear to them again to be rejected; that is to say, his withdrawal from the nation, and the consequent desolation of their land, shall continue as long as their unbelief and disobedience. They imply also that when their unbelief and disobedience as a nation shall cease, and their hearts be prepared to receive him, then he will appear to them again; extend his care and protection to them, and repair their desolations. If we now turn to Acts xv. 16, we shall find, not the times and seasons, but the event upon which the return of the Divine favour is made to depend. It will be when the visitation of the Gentiles is over, and God has taken out of them a people for his name—in other words, it will be after the closing of the present dispensation of the Gospel among all nations. But then will that kingdom of priests, covenanted to Israel at Horeb, into which both Jews and Gentiles may now enter, be completely formed, and nothing will remain for Israel according to the flesh, but the glories of the earthly kingdom which their fathers coveted. We add, it is plain from other Scriptures, see Heb. ix. 28; Zech. xii., that the Lord will never again appear to any generation of the nation in the humble garb of human flesh, but only in his glory as the Son of Man for the judging and ruling of all the kindreds and nations of the earth. Matt. xxv. 31. Of this event, restored Israel may have a sign which will not be given to other nations. Matt. iv. 5, 6.

MATT. XXIV. 1. "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple [and Jesus, coming out of the temple, was going away from it,] and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple," [when his disciples came up to point out to him its structures and magnificence. Mark xiii. 1; Luke xxi. 5.]

The disciples were Galileans, and probably much less familiar with the temple than the inhabitants of Jerusalem. On this account, perhaps, they were more sensibly struck with its beauty and grandeur. Thinking that their Master would share in their admiration, they desired to detain him while they could survey it together. But whatever may have been the motives of the disciples, the fact shows how little they understood our Lord's nature. As in their previous intercourse with him, they seem to have regarded him on this occasion also, as

a man, like themselves, in all the essentials of his nature, not as one to whom all the glories of the universe were familiarly known. But the special design of this verse is, as we suppose, to introduce our Lord's reply.

MATT. XXIV. 2. "And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? [are ye looking at these things?] Verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."—"The days will come in which there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." Luke xxi. 6.

We are not informed that the Saviour halted, as the disciples evidently desired he should; but we may suppose at least that he momentarily turned, and extending his hands towards the temple, as if to demonstrate the meaning of his words, pronounced the startling prediction in the text. It was new to them; he had given no intimation of the kind before in public, or even in his private intercourse with them. Yet they believed it. Their confidence in him was implicit, as the next verse shows. But how, by what means, and when? They presumed not to ask him. The prediction, they well knew, would be regarded as criminal, not to say blasphemous, by their countrymen. Acts vi. 13, 14; Matt. xxvi. 61; xxvii. 40; Mark xiv. 58. If it were generally known, it would expose their Master to great personal danger. It was, therefore, a matter not to be much spoken of, even among themselves, and never except in the most confidential way. With such impressions, they pursued their accustomed way from the temple to the Mount of Olives, in silence, as the Evangelists allow us to suppose. But afterwards,

MATT. XXIV. 3. "As he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples [four of the disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew—Mark xiii. 3,] came unto him privately saying, Tell us [confidentially] when shall these things be? and what the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" [*αἰωνος.*]

The fact that only four of the disciples, so far as we know, ventured to broach the subject of this prediction to the Saviour, and then only in a private or confidential way, shows that for some reason, if not that before suggested, the disciples thought it improper to question him publicly about the prediction, or even before the whole company of the disciples. But waiving further observations on this point, we proceed to the particulars upon which these disciples desired information. To ascertain these, we must determine the sense in which they themselves understood, and put their questions; and it is important to do so. Our Lord knew their meaning, and it is reasonable to suppose, he responded to it, so far as the information called for

was proper to be given. If this assumption be allowed, the sense in which the questions were understood by the disciples may guide us to some extent in the interpretation of our Lord's answer; but not throughout; for nothing can be plainer than that the disciples entertained very imperfect views of the great events which they inquired about.

Most readers of the New Testament, and perhaps most commentators, take it for granted, that the disciples put these questions in the sense in which they are now generally understood; but this assumption requires investigation, as will appear, if we consider them separately.

The first question, "When shall these things be?" relates particularly, and we doubt not exclusively, to the destruction of the temple foretold, in general terms, in the preceding (2d) verse. If we turn to Luke xxi. 5, 7, we find no other antecedent to which "these things" can be referred. The stress of this question lies upon the *time*: "*When* shall the temple be destroyed—when shall it be so entirely demolished that not one stone of it shall be left upon another?" According to Mark and Luke, this was the only event upon which they asked for further information. "*When* shall these things be, and *what the sign when* these things shall come to pass—be fulfilled."

The second question relates to the Lord's appearing, and particularly to the sign of it: "What the sign (*της σησ παρουσιας*) of thy coming?" The disciples had been with him in the temple, Matt. xxiii. 1, and it is probable had left it with him. They had heard his parting words: "Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Ps. cxviii. 26. This declaration implied that his ministry at Jerusalem was ended, and that he was about to withdraw from the city, and remain absent from it, at least for a time, the length of which would depend upon the disposition of the people towards him. But it contained no intimation of the place he was about to retire to, nor of any sign or token of his return, after the people should be willing to receive him. On these points, or such as these, the disciples desired him to speak; but their own conceptions of them, we are justified by other passages in saying, were very imperfect. We must not suppose the disciples had in their mind the Lord's appearance from heaven in glory and power, or that they intended to inquire about such an appearance. They did not at that time even know whither he was going; but wherever it might be, it is probable they expected to accompany him, and remain with, and return with him. This is evident from John xiii. 36, 37; xiv. 5; xvi. 17, 18, 28, 29. They had no con-

ception or thought of his going out of the world, nor of the means by which his exit from the world would be accomplished. John xx. 9; Luke xviii. 34; xxiv. 21. We must therefore understand the word (*παρουσιας*) translated *coming*, in its primary signification, *of being present,\* in his proper person*, as in 2 Cor. vii. 6, 7, where Paul speaks of the coming (*παρουσια*) of Titus. See 1 Cor. xvi. 17; 2 Cor. x. 10; Philip. i. 26; ii. 12, where it is used as the contrasting word to *ἀπουσια*, being absent. His *being present again* after a period of absence implied his return from some place of which they were ignorant; and nothing more is involved in the question, or can be intended, when we consider how little the disciples at that time knew of the future. Nor did these disciples comprehend the answer of our Lord to their questions, at least in some of its most important particulars, until they received the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This will appear if we consider that Peter, who was one of them, two days afterwards did not know why he could not *then* follow his Master to the place whither he was going. John xiii. 36, 37; xiv. 5; xvi. 17, 18, 28, 29.

Their third question respected the ending (*του αἰώνου*) of the world. It is not improbable that many readers mistake the meaning of the disciples in this inquiry. It is reasonable to suppose, that with the rest of their countrymen, they believed that the Levitical economy which they then enjoyed, would terminate and merge in the kingdom of the Messiah; and as they fully believed that he was the Messiah, and had confessed him as such, Matt. xvi. 16, 17, they naturally connected his return and the establishment of his kingdom, not only with the ending of the (*αἰών*) economy under which they then lived, but with a new one, far more happy and glorious. Acts i. 6. We need not inquire what changes they supposed would be wrought in the transition. They had heard out of the law, that the Christ, when he should take possession of his throne and kingdom, would abide for ever, John xii. 34; that his kingdom was an everlasting kingdom, that shall not pass away or be destroyed; that it should be universal and exceedingly glorious.

\* The word *παρουσια* is several times used in the Epistles to signify our Lord's appearance from heaven; 1 Cor. xv. 23; 1 Thess. ii. 19; iii. 13; iv. 15; v. 23; 2 Thess. ii. 1, 8; James v. 7, 8; 2 Pet. i. 16; iii. 4; 1 John ii. 28, and when so used it is synonymous with *ἐπιφανεια* and *ἀποκαλυψις*, or nearly so, but this use of the word in all these places is founded upon that which our Lord makes of it in Matt. xxiv. 27, 37, 39, in his reply to these questions of the disciples, and is altogether different from that in which the disciples here use the word. It is noticeable that neither Mark nor Luke uses this word in recording our Lord's reply; nor do any of the Evangelists employ it in any connection, except Matthew, and he in this chapter only—verses 3, 27, 37, and 39.

Ps. lxxii. 8; Dan. vii. 14. So great a change necessarily involved the termination of the present (*αἰών*) order of things (*seculorum ordo*), and hence the disciples naturally connected the end of the world (*συντελεῖα του αἰωνος*) with the return of their Master to Jerusalem. It should be considered also, that the disciples had no conception of the events which were to occur between the destruction of the temple and the Lord's return, nor of the length of time between these events. Nor can we infer from anything our Lord had previously said, or from their knowledge of the Divine purposes, or their expectations, that they understood the purpose for which the temple would be destroyed—whether it would be in judgment for the sins of the nation, or to replace it by another, more magnificent or more suitable to the glory of the expected kingdom. They took it for granted, also, that the Levitical economy would continue until it should be superseded by Messiah's reign. This is evident from the form of their question, "What the *sign* of thy coming *and* of the end of the (*αἰών*) world." One and the same *sign*, they supposed, would serve for both these events. Had they understood the Divine purpose to open a dispensation of the Gospel to the Gentiles, of long continuance, between these events, it is natural to suppose they would have changed the order of their questions, and asked a sign for each event—"What will the sign of the consummation of this (*αἰών*) dispensation, and what the sign of thy coming to establish thy kingdom?"

The words *συντελεῖα του αἰωνος* should be rendered, the end or consummation of the age or dispensation, or the expiration of the age. There is no reason to suppose the disciples intended to inquire about the end of the world, in the common acceptation of the phrase, or the consummation of all earthly things. The great matter of interest to them was the establishment of their Master's kingdom. This they thought could not be expected till he should appear again at Jerusalem, and supersede the existing polity of the nation by establishing his own. Hence they connected these closely-related events in one question, under the preconceived opinion or expectation of their concurrent occurrence. The phrase *συντελεῖα του αἰωνος* occurs in the Gospels, only in Matt. xiii. 39, 40, 49; xxviii. 20; see Heb. ix. 26, where it denotes the consummation of the present order of things in the world. In the mind of the Saviour, that event was much more remote than the disciples conceived it to be; yet in all those places, the period denoted by the phrase reaches to and connects with the outward establishment of the Messiah's kingdom. The disciples, (not knowing of the destruction of their nation, the dispersion of their people, the

calling of the Elect Church out of the Gentiles, to be continued through many generations) thought the kingdom would be joined upon and immediately succeed the Levitical economy. Acts. i. 6. The Saviour knew the misconception, but left it for the Holy Spirit to correct; while he adapted his language to the course of events as he foresaw them.

It is important to apprehend correctly the sense or meaning of the disciples in the inquiries they propounded to the Saviour. In a general sense, they constitute the subject of his reply, but owing to the imperfection of their knowledge, and their ignorance and misconceptions of the Divine purposes, they are not to be regarded as arrangements adopted by our Lord in his prophetic reply, much less are we authorized to suppose that he limited his meaning to their conceptions of the events they inquired about.

MATT. XXIV. 4, 5. "And Jesus answered and said to them, Take heed that no one deceive you: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am [the] Christ, and shall deceive many."

This caution was suggested by the misapprehension of the disciples as to the *manner* of his return. They thought of his going away from Jerusalem as he had gone before, and of his returning, as he had returned before. See notes on verse 2. Under the influence of this error, supposing it to continue, they might be in danger of being led astray by false Christs, who would appear in that way. Hence he assures them in effect, that any one appearing in the manner in which they supposed he would appear, would be a deceiver, especially if he openly assumed the character and title of Christ. He, the true Messiah, would never again appear in this way. But he did not pause in his discourse to tell them how he should appear.

That was to be taught them by events, by the ministry of angels, Acts i. 10, 11; iii. 21, and by the teachings of the Holy Spirit. Why then, it may be inquired, did the Saviour give them this caution—"Take heed that no one deceive you." What he said on this occasion was not, as we suppose, especially designed for the four disciples, whom he thus addressed. It was for the public instruction of all that people, as well those who should not become his followers, as those who should. The misapprehension of the disciples *as to the manner* of Messiah's coming to establish his kingdom, was common to the nation at that time, and has been in all their generations since. This caution, therefore, though not necessary to guard the apostles against deceivers, (other and more effectual means having been appointed, in respect to them, for that purpose) was necessary for multitudes of that people, who were to be less favoured.

No unbelieving Jew expects that the Messiah will appear in the clouds of heaven. This is a doctrine of Christianity which the Jews reject. The caution, therefore, we regard as *a warning to Jews*, especially designed to guard them against deceivers, who were to arise from time to time during the whole of their future history, and through this common error of the nation, mislead all who denied or would not regard the Divine mission and authority of the Lord Jesus.

It is noticeable, too, that our Lord here expressly claims the name or title of Christ—"Many shall come in *my* name, saying, I am Christ"—thereby showing that the outward assumption of the title was another note or mark by which deceivers might be infallibly known. See notes on Matt xi. 3; xvi. 20. For the reader must remember, that hitherto he had not publicly assumed that character, John x. 24, and did not, until he was adjured by the High Priest to avow the character which he sustained. Matt. xxvi. 63; Mark xiv. 61; Luke xxii. 67, 68.

MATT. XXIV. 6. "And ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass; but [το τελος] the end is not yet."

The special design of the prophecy of the appearing of false Christs was, as we have just said, to enforce a caution of the utmost importance, on account of the prevailing misapprehension of the Jews relative to the manner in which the Messiah would come to establish his kingdom. As to his first coming, they were right in supposing that he would appear after the manner of men. Matt. ii. 5; John vii. 41, 27, 31; iv. 25. But having ignorantly rejected him as a false Christ, as a consequence of their error, they would be continually thereafter looking for another, who should come in the same way.

Now he adds: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars." But these would not be proximate signs of the *end* about which they inquired. We have here an example of the double sense, and are able to show, with some probability, the ground or reason of it. The disciples, as we have seen, thought that the end of the Levitical economy and of the existing physical order or condition of things in the world would concur in point of time, and that *both* would be followed *immediately* by Messiah's kingdom, which they conceived would be exceedingly glorious. The Saviour's conception was very different. He knew that a long interval was laid, in the Divine purpose between the ending of the Levitical economy and his second coming—in other words, that the end of the Levitical economy would not mark or concur in point of time with the end of the existing physical order of things in the world, see notes on Acts iii. 21, although the existing physical order of things

would be terminated by his coming in his kingdom. The different senses of the word (*τελος*) *end* therefore result from the different conceptions the disciples and the Saviour had of the things inquired about; and the language is adapted to both these senses. The wars and the rumours of wars which he foretold would not be a proximate sign of the end either of the Jewish polity, or of that period which, in the Divine purpose, had been appointed to precede the actual coming of Messiah's kingdom. Acts iii. 21.

A similar but more striking example of the double sense occurs in the 14th verse: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world (*οικουμενη*) for a witness unto all nations, and then shall (*το τέλος*) the end come." The universal promulgation of the Gospel for a witness, our Lord here declares, is the true sign of the end—that is, of the end in the sense in which the disciples put their question, and in the sense which, in the Saviour's mind, it really involved. The end of the Jewish state or polity, in fact, came when the Gospel had been preached throughout the (*οικουμενη*) inhabited portions of the earth, as it was at that time. See Luke ii. 1; iv. 5; xxi. 26; Acts xi. 28; xvii. 6, 31; xix. 27; xxiv. 5; Rom. x. 18; Heb. i. 6; ii. 5; Rev. iii. 10; xii. 9; xvi. 14; for the use of the word *οικουμενη*, see also Rom. i. 8. The answer, thus understood, fully met the question in the sense it was put by the disciples. They were, in fact, incapable at that time of understanding it in any other sense, owing to their ignorance of the Divine purposes in regard to the calling of the Gentiles. Acts x. 34, 35. Departing, however, from the destruction of the Jewish state as an epoch, and stretching through the then mysterious and undefined period of merey allotted to the Gentiles; the end of the present physical order of things and the epoch of Messiah's kingdom will come, when this Gospel shall have been preached, as it were, a second time, throughout a much more extended (*οικουμενη*) area than that *then* occupied by the nations. This sense is involved in the prophecy of the third mission of the servants in the parable of the marriage. Matt. xxiii. 9; see notes.

The words (*τελος*) *end*, and (*οικουμενη*) *world*, then both have, it is conceived, a double, that is, a limited and an enlarged sense, corresponding with the limited sense in which the question was put by the disciples, and the enlarged sense in which it was understood by the Saviour. According to the conception of the disciples, the answer of our Lord was fulfilled, as the event showed, in the brief space of forty years—or less. According to our Lord's conception of the question, as interpreted by the Divine purposes, his answer is yet in progress of



fulfilment. According to this view, in the mind of the Saviour, the passage of which this verse forms the conclusion, really extends from the time of the delivery of the prophecy to his second coming, while in the mind of the disciples it could reach only to the end of the Jewish polity, with which they generally connected the return of their Master: In other words, besides the plain, obvious meaning of the language, considered as responsive to the question of the disciples, in the sense in which they put it, there was a hidden meaning, founded upon the mysteries of the kingdom, see Matt. chap. xiii., which the Saviour left for the Holy Spirit to unfold to the apostles, in connection with the developments of his providence in a new dispensation.

We pause not to consider whether this observation is applicable to all the announcements of this passage. The question is difficult, and different views of it have been entertained by commentators, ancient and modern. See Grotius, Calovius, Jerome, Augustine, on verse 6. That they were all designed as notes of personal warning to the apostles and the Christians of their age, and were fulfilled in their experience, we do not doubt, nor should we, even if there were no historical record of the events; compare verse 9 with John xvi. 2; Matt. xxii. 6; 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. Beyond this, we perceive no sufficient data for any certain conclusions.

MATT. XXIV. 15. "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand.)"

If we understand the word "end," in the 6th and 14th verses, in the sense of the Saviour, this verse is a resuming, or going back from the yet future end of the present dispensation, to its beginning, or nearly. But if we understand it in the sense of the disciples, as denoting simply the end of the Jewish polity, this verse would be in regular prosecution of the prophetic narrative. Plainly, it is introductory of the events and consequences of the siege of Jerusalem. The language is figurative, and evidently addressed to the conceptions of Jewish readers. Luke, as his method is, expresses the same in plain language, chap. xxi. 20. We have had occasion repeatedly to employ the narrative of Luke as explanatory of Matthew, see Matt. xi. 12; xxvii. 54, and shall have occasion to do so again in one of the most obscure places in the prophecy we are considering. But in order to clearness, we must pause here to state some general views, and with them connect the particular observations we have to make.

The whole of this prophecy may be distributed into four distinct periods, which are consecutive, except so far as

the enlarged views of the Saviour imparted a mysterious, and thereby a two-fold meaning to his language, as before explained. These periods may be denoted: (1.) Jerusalem's respite. (2.) Jerusalem's desolation. (3.) The distress of the nations; and (4.) the advent of the Son of Man and the judgment of all nations. This distribution leaves out of view the parable of the ten virgins, the chronological order or sequence of which is not so distinctly marked as that of the other parts, and for that reason, it requires a separate consideration.

I. To the first of these periods we assign verses 4—14, inclusive, of this chapter, and the corresponding verses of the other Evangelists, Mark xiii. 5—13; and Luke xxi. 8—19. This period, as before observed, is the same as that denoted by the second mission of the servants in the parable of the marriage. Matt. xxii. 4—6.

The reader should reflect upon this coincidence. It is quite agreeable to our Lord's manner of teaching, Matt. xiii. 11; discriminating, as we have had frequent occasion to remark, between the careless and unfriendly multitudes and his disciples. It is also a beautiful example of the harmony which pervades his discourses upon this last great day of his public ministry.

There is a difference, also, between the Evangelists in this part, too important to be overlooked. Mark and Luke omit the observation of the Saviour which Matthew records in the 14th verse: "And this Gospel, &c., shall be preached in all the world (*οἰκουμένη*,) for a witness unto all nations, and then shall (*το τέλος*) the end come." In this expression, chiefly, as we have seen, lies the double sense, which the disciples at that time were incapable of apprehending. But observe: Mark and Luke record only one of the questions of the disciples; that, namely, respecting the destruction of the temple; and consistently, therefore, they record only so much of the Saviour's answer as had respect to that question. Indeed, if they had introduced into their narratives the matter of this 14th verse, it would have been due to accuracy, and even truth, to have introduced the other two questions of the disciples. The observation is important because it shows us why we are not to look for a double sense in this portion of Mark and Luke. It is delightful to notice these congruities. They are designed; and although not commonly pointed out, even by the learned, they are really a perfect moral demonstration of the inspiration of the Evangelists. No fabricator of false writings could make, or even imagine so nice an adjustment of parts. Nay, more—no writer, untaught by the Holy Spirit in the

mysteries of the kingdom, could even perceive the need of it in this instance.

II. Under the head of Jerusalem's desolation we include not only the actual destruction of the city by the Romans, but the continued desolation of the land, the captivity and dispersion of the people during the eighteen centuries which have followed. The period is undefined in prophecy, but Luke relatively marks it as co-extensive with the times of the Gentiles; perhaps he means the times of mercy appointed to the Gentiles, as well as the times of their power, chap. xxi. 24. To the epoch of the destruction of the city by the Romans, we assign verses 15—27 of this chapter; also Mark xiii. 14—23; and Luke xxi. 20, 21, 23, and the first clause of the 24th verse. To the ensuing ages of the desolation of the city and the land, and its subjection to Gentile power, and the condition of the people during the same period, we assign the 22d, and the last clause of the 24th verse of Luke xxi. Matthew xxiv. 28, appears to refer especially to the condition of the people during the same prolonged period. Mark passes, at verse 24, from the calamities immediately consequent upon the destruction of the city, to the third of the great periods before mentioned, without any notice of intervening events. Let us attend now to some of the particulars.

MATT. XXIV. 16—22. "Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath-day: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

These verses contain cautions and directions applicable, evidently, to the Jews of that age. Resistance would be hopeless: escape impossible, if these cautions and directions were disregarded; and destruction to those incapable of obeying them would be inevitable.

MATT. XXIV. 23—27. "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret chambers;

believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

The Saviour here returns to his prediction of the appearance of false Christs, as if to impress it the more deeply upon the minds of his followers. We do not suppose that this was intended especially for the four disciples who questioned him, or even for the apostles; for we know that all but one of them suffered death before the destruction of the city. Nor would they, as before observed, be in danger of being deceived by false Christs or false prophets, for they were soon afterwards taught, by the Holy Spirit, see Acts i. 9—11; iii. 21, that their Master would not appear again (*more humano*,) after the manner of men. To multitudes of the nation, however, to whom this Gospel would be known, and who, by the happening of the events the Saviour foretold, might be almost persuaded of his Divine mission, these were benign warnings, to which it is not improbable many gave heed.

MATT. XXIV. 26—27. "Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

We regard this 27th verse as a simile or comparison designed simply to show the difference between the manner of the appearance of the Son of Man, and of these false Christs. Our Lord does not affirm that he will, at the epoch of the destruction of Jerusalem, make his appearance, but that when he next appears, the manner of his appearance will be as different from that of these false Christs, as the appearance of the lightning's flash is from the natural approach of a human being. In other words: it will be as impossible to mistake his appearance for that of any other human being, as it will be to mistake a flash of lightning from one end of heaven to the other, for any other phenomenon of nature.

MATT. XXIV. 28. "For [and] wheresoever the carcass [ $\tau\omicron$   $\pi\tau\omega\mu\alpha$ ] is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

Under this expressive image ( $\tau\omicron$   $\pi\tau\omega\mu\alpha$ , the carcass,) our Lord represents the nation, during the whole period of the calamities which were to follow the destruction of their city and country. He employs it as a permanent symbol of the nation during the whole period of its subjection to Gentile power. The prophet Ezekiel, chap. xxxvii., represents the whole house of Israel under the imagery of dry bones. The symbol our Lord employs, while it expresses with equal emphasis the spiritual death of the nation, is designed principally to

represent its exposure to the power of their enemies. Thus considered it is full of meaning. The Elect nation, hitherto so highly favoured of God, is represented as a carcass cast out into the waste, without the common privilege of burial or any permanent resting-place—continually preyed upon, without being consumed, by ravenous birds. Consistently with this exposition, we understand the eagles to represent not the Roman power only, but all those Gentile powers which have since hitherto persecuted and oppressed this outcast nation.

This meaning of the symbol we derive from the Evangelist Luke xxi. 22. "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled," which we paraphrase thus: For this event (encompassing Jerusalem with armies) will mark the beginning of that lengthened period during which all the Divine judgments foretold by Moses and the prophets against this nation, shall be inflicted upon it, so that not one shall remain afterwards to be fulfilled. See Deut. xxviii. 15—68; Isa. liv. 8—10. There is nothing in Mark which can be deemed equivalent to either of these expressions in Matthew and Luke. Hence he passes immediately from the destruction of Jerusalem to the third of the great periods before mentioned—the distress of the nations. It is true that, with the light the other two Evangelists reflect on his narrative, we may discern an indistinct allusion in the 19th and 24th verses, to prolonged national calamities, and more intense, than any which had ever before been experienced. But this is not a sufficient ground for independent interpretation. Nor is there anything in Matthew equivalent to this plain declaration of Luke, except the verse under consideration.

That these expressions are equivalent, and that the language of Luke was employed with the design to explain the dark and awful saying of the Lord, and to show its application, we do not doubt. But to verify this opinion would require an examination of the things predicted by the prophets, and the histories of their fulfilment, in order to perceive the aptness and the force of the symbols here employed by the Saviour to represent them. This is a labour of time, which we must leave to the reader.

We add: this period, which, like the preceding, belongs to Jewish history, is still current. The end of it is among the unrevealed purposes of the Father. Acts i. 7. Relatively to the Church, that is, to the period appointed for the gathering of the Elect Church, (or that subrogated nation, of which our Lord spoke at the conclusion of the parable of the vineyard, see Matt. xxi. 43, and notes) we know, however, that it is the same, each being, in fact, the measure of the other. See Luke

xxi. 24. And it is with a view, as we conceive, to this coincidence, the Saviour introduces, in the sequel of this discourse, the parable of the ten virgins, Matt. xxv. 1—12, which relates especially to his advent as Messiah, to receive his elect people, and not to his advent as the Son of Man, for the judgment of all nations.

III. According to the distribution before indicated, the third period—or the period of distress of the nations—is yet future. Gentile power is still dominant in the earth. Ever since the fall of Jerusalem, the Romans, and the nations which have succeeded to their dominion, have preyed like vultures upon the carcass and scattered members of the Jewish Commonwealth—a fact, which of itself proves, that the predicted period of their distresses has not yet commenced. See Jer. xlvi. 28; xxv. 15—33. Distresses they have felt, inflicted by each other, yet always under the restraining hand of God, but none such as they have inflicted on the Jews. The symbols which the Saviour employs to denote the events of this period, in Matt. xxiv. 29; Mark xiii. 24, 25; Luke xxi. 25, 26—the verses which we assign to this period—betoken extraordinary Divine judgments; such as have never yet been seen or felt. See 2 Thess. i. 1—9; Mal. iv.; Isa. ii. 10—22; lxvi. 15, 16.

The futurity of this period may be inferred also from the language of the Evangelists. “Immediately after (*την θλιψιν των ημερων εκεινων*) the tribulation of those days,” &c., says Matthew; that is, immediately after the end of the period appointed for the tribulation of the Jews. The language of Mark, xiii. 24, is equivalent, because he says expressly, that it is *after* (*την θλιψιν εκεινην*) that tribulation which he had before described as coming upon the Jews. Luke is the most explicit. He shows that this tribulation (*θλιψις*) includes the whole (*οργη εν τω λαω τουτω*) of the wrath foretold against that people, which, as Mr. Alford remarks, “is yet being inflicted, and the treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles, is still going on.”

Besides these arguments, derived from the texts, there is another of great force, founded upon God’s method of dealing with Jews and Gentiles, which is distinctly noticed by St. Paul in Rom. xi. 30, 31, 33, and see verses 11 and 12, 19—22; i. 16. This method hitherto has been characterized by alternations of mercy and judgment; first to the Jew, and then to the Gentile. The period of Judah’s desolation is the appointed period of mercy to the Gentiles, and of the preaching of the Gospel to them for the gathering of an elect people into the place of Israel, under the covenant at Horeb. This period, which is now current, cannot therefore coincide to any extent

with the period of distress which the Saviour here foretells. The very purpose for which this period of mercy was appointed, evinces that it cannot take place until the Church shall have been fully gathered; consequently it must follow the excision and reprobation of the Gentiles—an act of judgment which shall sooner or later be performed—for the same reason that the Jews were cut off, namely, the abuse of the privileges bestowed upon them. But to proceed:

How long this period of the distress of the nations, when it shall have commenced, will continue, is a secret hidden in the Divine mind. That it will be brief compared with the period of Jerusalem's desolation, may perhaps be inferred from the magnitude and the glory of the purposes to be accomplished in the dispensation of the Gospel to the Gentiles. See Isaiah liii. 11: Rev. vii. 9. It may be, that during this period, Israel will be restored to the land of the covenant, in order to their being afterwards converted and constituted into a new and more glorious *earthly* theocracy than the former was; and if such be the Divine purpose, it would be analogical with the purpose to be accomplished during the period of Jerusalem's desolation, viz. the gathering of an elect nation out of the Gentiles, to be constituted into a *heavenly* theocracy, or a kingdom of kings and priests. But this is offered simply as a conjecture, the value of which depends upon the support it receives from the predictions of the ancient prophets. We confess to the belief, however, that some great purpose, besides merely that of inflicting judgments upon the nations, will be accomplished during this period; and also to our ignorance, what that purpose can be, unless that which we have suggested. See Dan. xii. 1 and 12.

IV. The next period is that of the visible advent of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven, Matt. xxiv. 30, 31; Mark xiii. 26, 27; Luke xxi. 27, with which we connect the judgment of the nations. Matt. xxv. 31—46. Not that we suppose the judgment of the nations described in the latter passage will immediately succeed upon the advent described in the former of these passages. On the contrary, there may be a very long interval between them, to be filled up with the greatest imaginable events. All the things predicted by the apostle John, from Rev. xix. 11, to the end of the twentieth chapter, even the judgment of all the dead may intervene. On this point we affirm nothing. But we may perhaps safely affirm that with the advent of the Son of Man in power and great glory, will commence a new era of the Divine administration over man and this earth, in which that great and glorious being will take an open and direct control over this part of his dominions.

These observations, though proper for explanation, are aside from our present purpose, which is to consider the structure of the Lord's discourse, and the logical connection of its parts, which we conceive to be in itself a matter of importance. We proceed therefore to say, that if this be the just connection of the discourse as recorded by Matthew, we may regard the passage from Matt. xxiv. 32 to xxv. 30, inclusive, as parenthetical, or we may consider Matt. xxv. 31—46, as a resuming of the prophetic discourse at xxiv. 31, which the Saviour suspended at that verse for the purpose of giving some private notes or tokens of warning, admonition, and exhortation, to his followers. It may be added that the passages in Mark xiii. 28—37, and Luke xxi. 28—36, are of this admonitory nature.

This period—that of the advent—we conceive, will be separated from the preceding by an interval of some extent. This opinion is founded upon the description our Lord himself gives of the world at the time of his coming, in verses 37, 39, and see Luke xvii. 26—30. Ignorant and regardless of the impending event, the masses of the nations will be in eager pursuit of all the delights of this life, as they were in the days of Noah; and Paul, writing by inspiration, 1 Thess. v. 2, 3, describes the day of the Lord's coming as a time of supposed peace and safety. Accordingly we understand the 29th and 30th verses of this chapter thus:

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days [that is, immediately after the termination of that period, during which the Jewish body politic, or state, is represented in the preceding verse as a dead carcass preyed upon by vultures,] the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken: and then [that is next in the order of these great steps in the march of Divine Providence towards the consummation] shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Mark xiii. 24; Luke xxi. 27.

We pause not to inquire what we are to understand by “the sign of the Son of Man, in heaven,”—an expression which both Mark and Luke omit. At most we can only conjecture; and it is sufficient for our present purpose to observe, that whatever that sign may be, it will not appear till after the distress of the nations, and the interval of fancied peace and safety is past; for it will be a sign of trouble, causing all the tribes of the earth to mourn.

This consideration suggests that this advent of the Son of Man, mentioned in Matt. xxv. 31, will be only for the



judgment of all the nations living on the earth at that time; not including the generations of the dead. For observe, it is in his Adamic character, or as the Son of Man, he sits upon his throne and exercises judgment. In the preceding notes the attention of the reader has been frequently called to the different relations our Lord sustains to Israel, to the Church, and to the world. See the notes on Matt. xii. 8, also see notes on Matt. viii. 23—27, 28—32; ix. 2; xiv. 17; xvi. 13, 14, 27; xviii. 22, 23; xxii. 41—45. As Messiah, he has a kingdom of kings and priests,—a multitude which no one can number, collected out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. Rev. vi. 4—9. These he will glorify and exalt to a partnership in his throne, Rev. iii. 21, and see notes on Matt. xxi. 43; xxii. 14. It is to that small portion of this immensely great and glorious body, who shall be living unglorified in the flesh at the end of this dispensation, that the parable of the ten virgins, Matt. xxv. 1—12, is designed to be applied. These were all given to him by covenant (*προ καταβολης κοσμου*, Eph. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 20; and see John xvii. 24) before the foundation of the world. In an especial sense they are his purchased possession. Eph. i. 14. They constitute an accession of accumulated glory to him, in compensation, so to speak, for the immense cost of the Divine achievement of redemption. Isa. liii. 11. Their inheritance is a co-heirship of all things with Christ. 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23; Rev. xxi. 7; Rom. viii. 17, 29, 30.

Different widely from these are those of the judged nations, whom, at the day of his coming, he shall set at his right hand. They are called to inherit a kingdom prepared for them in this world (*απο καταβολης κοσμου*) from (not before) the foundation thereof.\*

These considerations might be enforced by others derived from the expressed grounds of approval and reprobation. "I was an hungered and ye gave me meat," etc., verse 35, "I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat," etc., verse 42. It is a

\* The attention of the critical reader is called to the distinction between these two phrases, *απο καταβολης κοσμου*, found in Matt. xiii. 35; xxv. 34; Luke xi. 50; Heb. iv. 3; ix. 26; Rev. xiii. 8; xvii. 8, and *προ καταβολης κοσμου*, found in John xvii. 24; Eph. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 20. That they are not equivalent no scholar can doubt. That the latter expression is applied in these places only to the elect Church, or that kingdom of kings and priests, whom it is the purpose of God to substitute in the place of Israel, according to the flesh, under the covenant of Horeb, will be obvious to any one who reads these passages, while the former, in the place now under consideration, may be regarded as exegetical of Ps. cxv. 16 (latter clause) and of Dan. vii. 27. And the aptness of the expression consists in this: that the designed use of the world, even in the mind of the Creator, may be properly said to concur in point of time with its origin or foundation.

judgment founded simply on works of mercy; not on faith, and whatever else may be represented or intended by the *oil* in the virgins' lamps. Matt. xxv. 3, 4. But our object at present is not an exposition of the passage, but to indicate what appear to be sufficient reasons for the foregoing distribution of the discourse.

If it should be said that the reward conferred is eternal life, it would not follow from that, that those thus rewarded are aggregated to that elect body or kingdom of kings and priests before mentioned. The Lord can bestow the one without the other. See verses 14—23; Luke xix. 15—19. But we presume not to speculate on questions which belong only to the Divine disposal; feeling assured that the Judge of all the earth is not straitened either in his wisdom or power to accomplish whatever he has proposed or pleases. The exigencies of creation are infinitely more various and vast than any finite mind can conceive. Yet the wisdom and power of God provide perfectly for them all, and for each in its time.

V. The attention of the reader is now recalled to the questions of the disciples, Matt. xxiv. 3, "Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming," (της σης παρουσιας,) etc. They undoubtedly, *by intention*, referred to his coming or return to Jerusalem as *Messiah*. The only part of our Lord's discourse which is applicable to this question, considered *with that intent*, is the parable of the ten virgins and the advent of the bridegroom; but of this he gives no sign. The only note of the time is contained in the word (τοτε) *then*, Matt. xxv. 1—"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins," etc. This word may refer to the end of the period of Jerusalem's desolation. We may, perhaps, say with confidence, that it does refer to the time when the whole body of the elect Church given to Christ shall have been completed. See John xvii. 9; Luke xviii. 8. In giving the disciples this parable, our Lord, it is probable, tacitly alluded to the parable of the marriage, Matt. xxii. 1—8, which they had, not long before, heard him publicly deliver in the temple. As if he had said, *Now*, the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king, who invited many to the marriage festival of his son, and none of those invited were willing or worthy to come. But *then* it will be quite otherwise. For *then* the kingdom of heaven shall be like a bridegroom returning with his bride (see *Codex Bezae*,) when many will be willing, and more than are worthy, to come and enter in to the marriage.

As observed before, this parable, with the preceding context, (from Matt. xxiv. 32,) and the succeeding, (to xxv. 30, inclusive,) may be regarded as parenthetical, if considered relatively

to the *whole thread* of the discourse. But, however this may be, the whole of this passage refers to the Church, or to the company called and collected by the servants of the king, on their *third* mission, Matt. xxii. 9—14; see xxi. 43, and notes, and not to the masses of the nations. This parable and that which follows, xxv. 14—30, relate to our Lord in his Messianic character or relation, and to his kingdom as Messiah—not to his Adamic relations or his kingdom as the Son of Man. Compare the qualifications essential for admission into our Lord's kingdom as Messiah, with the grounds of his judgment of the nations of the earth as the Son of Man. In the former, each must wear the wedding garment, (xxiv. 11, 12,) each virgin must have oil in her lamp, (xxv. 3, 4,) each servant must have performed service in the faithful use of the talents committed to him, (xxv. 20—30.) In the latter case, however, the blessed of the Father are blessed, and inherit the kingdom *prepared for them*, on the ground of their works of mercy, (xxv. 34—40,) and the cursed are cursed, because they performed no such works, (xxv. 41—46.)

Let no one pervert this rule of judgment by applying it to the present dispensation or order of things. It belongs to a future one. The present dispensation has for its end the most glorious purposes. The highest privileges and the greatest responsibilities are cast upon all to whom the gospel is preached, see notes on Matt. xvii. 22, 23, and the rule of judgment is suited to this condition. The man *without* the wedding garment, Matt. xxii. 12, 13, and the merely *unprofitable* servant (xxv. 30) are cast into outer darkness, and the virgin without oil in her lamp will find no admission to the marriage. Matt. xxv. 10. See Gal. vi. 7.

VI. Another observation upon the whole prophecy is, that no chronological note, by which the times of any of the events discoursed upon by the Saviour can be determined, is given by him. None of the periods before mentioned, nor the intervals, if any, *between* them, are chronologically defined. Even the destruction of Jerusalem, the nearest of the events spoken of, was foretold by a providential event which did not occur within the life-time of three of the disciples the Saviour personally addressed. The same general remark is applicable to the second period, considered either as the period of the desolation of Jerusalem, or as that appointed for the calling and completing of that elect nation to be substituted in the place of Israel, Matt. xxi. 43, and notes, viz. the Church of Christ.

During this period the Jewish Commonwealth is represented as a carcass, a symbol which excludes the idea of a chronology. Luke, though he uses plain language, gives us no means of

ascertaining the number of the days of vengeance, or the continuance of the times of the Gentiles. But if we consider this period as that appointed for the formation of the Church, (notes on Matt. xxi. 43,) the continuance of it must be commensurate with that work, and the lapses of it are to be measured upon its progress—in other words, by the hidden operations of the Holy Spirit. From age to age the spiritual building has been advancing towards its completion, but who can estimate how much has been done, or how much remains to be done? The inquiry touches upon the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son—a mystery far beyond the ken of creatures. Isaiah liii. 11; John xvii. 2—9; Rev. vii. 9. If the reader will consider the greatness and glory of the purposes to be accomplished during this period, Eph. iii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 12; Eph. i. 21—23, he will not marvel at the length to which it has already run, nor will he confidently expect its speedy termination; yet in obedience to the Saviour's express command he will ever be watching for it. Matt. xxiv. 42; xxv. 13.

We leave it to the reader to pursue the investigation through the two remaining periods. He will find nothing which conflicts with the observation at the beginning of this paragraph. The prophecy corresponds in this respect with our Lord's express teachings, whenever he was inquired of concerning the times, Acts i. 7, and is in harmony with the ancient prophecies concerning the advent of Messiah.

VII. One observation more: The Revelation of St. John may be regarded as a symbolical explanation of this prophecy or of the principal parts of it. Certainly both stretch forward into the same distant futurity, and may reasonably be supposed to have at least some points of coincidence. We doubt not that light would be thrown upon each, by a comparison with the other. It is remarkable, though the writer does not remember to have seen it remarked by others, that the apostle records his visions under four symbolical captions or headings purporting to be the medium through which he received them. These may be designed to parcel or distribute the matters of the prophecy to distinct subjects, and also to denote lesser epochs, or different and perhaps successive stages in the progress of the Divine administration. Thus in Rev. iv. 1, John saw *a door opened* in heaven, and certain visions followed. In Rev. xi. 19, the scene is changed—*The temple of God is opened* in heaven. Afterwards, xv. 5, *The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony* in heaven *was opened*. And finally, xix. 11, he saw *heaven opened*. Do these divisions or partitions correspond to any extent with the four periods under which we have considered our Lord's prophecy? We do not affirm it—we only

suggest the question, but with great diffidence, to the consideration of the learned reader; and we do it because every coincidence between writings so important, and so difficult to be understood, is worthy of serious consideration. Light may break in from a quarter we do not anticipate.

From the foregoing analysis, it appears that the great subject of this wonderful prophecy is the way of Providence over *this world and the nations thereof*, from the rejection of the Lord Jesus by the Jewish nation, until the final settlement of all things earthly under his Headship as the *Son of Man*. See 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25; Heb. ii. 8. The fortunes of the Church are not distinctly or directly brought into view. For these we must turn to the Revelation of St. John, and other parts of the sacred volume. The admonitions and cautions of the Lord, and the similitudes in chapter xxv. are digressive from the main purpose; and designed as personal warnings to his followers; supplying rules and motives for each and all in every age, until he should come as the bridegroom to receive them. Of this event he gives them a sign—"the sign of the Son of Man in heaven"—which we suppose will precede his actual appearance.\* Having enforced his command and cautions by two impressive parables, he resumes the great line of vision, and pursues it to the end, when all rule, and all authority and power adverse to him shall have been subdued, and he alone be acknowledged and obeyed as the King of the kings and the Lord of the lords of the world.

That this judgment of the nations will not occur till after the millennium may be assumed, Rev. xx. 1—10, as the power of the devil, over the earth and the nations, will then have been finally and for ever destroyed. But, relatively to the time of judgment of the dead, Rev. xx. 11—15, which is represented as a distinct act of judgment, we have no data for any conclusion. Perhaps, however, we should not err in supposing that (*τα ἐθνη των σωζομενων*) the nations of saved men spoken of in Rev. xxi. 24, are the same as those which will be welcomed by the Son of Man into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Matt. xxv. 34.

\* The especial significancy of this expression is to be sought for, as we conjecture, in the parable of the ten virgins. It is the signal for the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." The reason for this conjecture, is that Mark and Luke omit it, as well as the parable.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE CRUCIFIXION.

First step in the proceedings against the Lord Jesus.—Jews' acknowledgment that they were a subject people.—Charges against Jesus.—Colloquy between Christ and Pilate.—Pilate's public acquittal of the Lord Jesus.—Pilate moved to dismiss the case to Herod.—Jesus' appearance before Herod.—Herod's questions.—Christ's silence.—Herod declines jurisdiction.—The fulfilment of the second Psalm.

JOHN XVIII. 29. "Pilate then went out unto them and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?"

This was the first step in the proceedings against the Lord Jesus before Pontius Pilate. The place was the *Prætorium*, or the place of Pilate's residence when at Jerusalem. Among the Romans, every magistrate who had a military command was invested with Prætorian power. (*Varro de Ling. Latina*, lib. 4; *Lamy, Harm.*) Such a magistrate was Pilate, and for that reason his place of residence was called *Prætorium*. This happened to be the magnificent palace formerly occupied by Herod. It had a vestibule or court, in which a body of troops was constantly stationed, as the body-guard of the governor. There was a colonnade extending from the palace to the public street. The common hall, spoken of in Matt. xxvii. 27, and Mark xv. 16, was the *Prætorium*, and the band of soldiers there mentioned was the whole or a part of the Prætorian Cohort, which accompanied Pilate to the province of Judea.

In front of this palace there was a pavement, probably somewhat elevated, called in the language of the country, *Gabbatha*. On this pavement, extending outwards a short distance from the *Prætorium* or palace, was erected a *rostrum* or bench, which was occupied by the governor when transacting business with the Jews, at least on some occasions. This judgment seat, it is supposed, had a covering above to protect the head, though it was open at the sides for the sake of the more convenient communication with those in attendance.\* To this place, the chief priests, the elders, the scribes, and the whole multitude conducted Jesus from their council, Luke xxiii. 1, and it was early on the morning of Friday when they reached it. John xviii. 28.

But early as it was, many things had already been done preparatory to the awful transaction which was then to be

\* For a pictorial representation of the *Prætorium* (Haus des Pilatus) and the *pavement* (Hochpflaster,) see "Das Biblische Jerusalem aus der Vogelshau, entworfen und gezeichnet von Adolph Eltzner, Leipzig, 1852."

commenced. If we turn to the thirteenth chapter of John we find the Saviour engaged in a most solemn and affecting interview with the twelve disciples. After washing their feet, and predicting again his betrayal by one of their number, he gave a sop to Judas, who thereupon, finally and for ever, separated himself from their company. The Evangelist is particular to note the time of his departure, as if to show how quickly the treacherous design was consummated by crucifixion. John xiii. 27. It was night when Judas went out. The devil having entered into the traitor, he proceeded forthwith to the chief priests, and having received from them a band of men and officers, John xviii. 2, went thence to the garden of Gethsemane. The Lord Jesus having surrendered himself to them, they took him first to Annas. John xviii. 13. It is supposed the apprehension took place about ten o'clock at night, according to our manner of reckoning. Annas sent him to the house of his son-in-law Caiaphas, the high priest. John xviii. 24. It is supposed this occurred about eleven o'clock at night. At this place he was detained until the Sanhedrim met, which was as soon as it was day-dawn—or about four o'clock in the morning. About five o'clock, while it was still early, they led him to Pilate.

While thus detained, he was twice condemned, once by the high priest soon after midnight, and again by the Sanhedrim, about four hours afterwards. This done, they proceeded thence soon afterwards to the Prætorium, or the Palace of Pilate, before mentioned, to obtain from him a confirmation of their unjust sentence. The unseasonable hour shows the urgency of the rulers, and their fear of a rescue by the people.

The priests, elders, scribes, and all the Jews stopped at the judgment seat, upon the pavement outside of the Prætorium, because by entering into the palace of the Roman governor they would contract ceremonial defilement, Numb. xix. 22; Acts x. 28, while the soldiers went forward with their prisoner into the hall of the palace itself, where Pilate was. Mark xv. 16. Pilate having been thus suddenly, and perhaps unexpectedly, broken in upon, probably before the usual hour to commence the transaction of business, and being informed that his judgment seat was thronged by a multitude, headed by the chief dignitaries of the nation; and learning from the soldiers, probably, that the person they had brought into the hall of the Prætorium was charged with some criminal offence, went out to inquire into the nature of it. This was Pilate's first step in the business.

The question of Pilate was a very proper one for a judge to put, when entering on a judicial investigation. It is evident,

however, from the course this proceeding took, that Pilate did not think it necessary to proceed with much formality. It seems that he did not even expect an accusation in writing. A verbal answer, specifying the offence, was all that he required. We have an example of a proceeding before another Roman governor, a few years later, in a different province, which we should consider not merely summary, but very irregular. Acts xviii. 12—17. At Rome, where the laws were enforced with a proper regard to the rights of citizens, proceedings were conducted with great formality. Any citizen had the right to bring an accusation against another; but to do this properly, and in due form, he must appear before the Prætor, and ask authority to accuse some person, whom he named, and at the same time, take an oath that he was not influenced by motives of calumny, but that he acted in good faith and for the public good. The Prætor drew up this declaration, which at first was made to him verbally, but afterwards in writing. This demand of the accuser was posted up in the Forum a certain number of days before he could proceed, in order to make known publicly the names both of the accuser and the accused, and to allow others to join in the accusation, or to dispute it. After that, the accuser appeared again before the Prætor, and, if it appeared proper, he was then allowed to denounce officially the name of the person, and the crime of which he accused him, stating with precision the circumstances of the case, which he subscribed. After some other formalities were gone through with, a day was fixed for the trial, when the accuser, the accused, and the judges were summoned by the herald of the Prætor, and the trial was commenced. *Brown's Antiq.*, 470, 471.

Such, briefly, was the care the Roman laws took of the liberties of their own citizens. How entirely were they disregarded in this province of the Roman Empire, when the Prince of Life was tumultuously arrested and dragged to the tribunal of Pilate! It was not the custom, however, of the Romans to treat the people they had conquered with the same consideration as their own citizens, either in respect to the forms of justice, or the punishment they inflicted. See Acts xxii. 25. Hence it was that Paul claimed the privilege of his Roman citizenship, when he was about to be scourged for no crime, in condescension to the malicious clamour of the Jews. Hence, too, he claimed his privilege of appeal to Cæsar, which belonged to him, not as a subject, but as a citizen of Rome. Acts xxv. 10. Yet Pilate's sense of justice, and of the duties of his office, prompted him to demand the particular accusation. The answer the Jews returned was a mere evasion. He wished



to know the particular crime. John xviii. 30. "They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him unto thee." This answer was probably delivered by the high priest, or by some high dignitary of the nation. It carries with it an air of offended pride, as if it were derogatory to answer such a question. "*If* he were not a malefactor, *we*, the high priests and elders of the nation, certainly should not have taken the trouble to appear before you, whatever others might have done. We have too high a sense of justice, and of what is due to ourselves and to others, to deliver an innocent man to you. It may be proper for you to put such a question to others, but not to us, who would not have approached your tribunal in person at any time in the case of an ordinary offender, and much less at so early an hour, or upon the near approach of a solemn festival."

Their answer was hardly respectful: for however superior to Pilate they may have been in true knowledge, he was their governor, and they were the subjects of those laws which they called upon him to administer. He had a right to the information which he required, and their answer implied a demand on their part, that he should blindly execute their wishes, without inquiry. But by their own laws no man could be rightfully condemned without a hearing and an inquiry into his conduct. John vii. 51. Yet they expected that Pilate would proceed contrary to this rule; for it does not appear that they informed him of their own midnight proceedings. Perhaps they were ashamed to do so; or, if not, they feared these proceedings would reveal their malice.

It is evident from the rejoinder of Pilate, that he considered their answer a disrespectful evasion of a proper question. It indicated also, very clearly, his purpose not to be put off in that way. From what we know of Pilate's character, it would not be too much to say, that his answer was a fling at the dignity assumed by the spokesman of the company, as if he had said, "Oh, well, if it be so, then you have no occasion for my judgment in the matter; you can take him away from my tribunal, John xviii. 31, and judge him according to your law. You have your own laws, your own tribunals, and your own judges; and as you appear to have made up your minds upon the guilt of this person, there is no doubt good reason, at least in your judgment, why you should proceed in that way; but without an accusation you must not expect me to act in the business."

The reply, whatever its import, drew from them a humiliating confession. As a nation they were proud of their privileges. The idea of bondage or subjection to a foreign power was gall-

ing. "We be Abraham's seed, and never were in bondage to any man." John viii. 33. But the resolution taken by Pilate on the one hand, and the enmity they cherished to the Lord Jesus on the other, forced from them, twice, during this proceeding, see John xviii. 31, and xix. 15, the acknowledgment that they were a subject people, and obliged to yield obedience to laws not their own. They said,

JOHN XVIII. 31. "It is not lawful for us to put any one to death."

Pilate knew that fact as well as they. He knew also, that except in cases of capital punishment, they had no occasion to consult him, or ask his authority for the execution of their own decrees, and the fact of their appearing before him with their prisoner, showed that it was a condemnation to death which they required. For this they were obliged to ask his consent.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, informs us, *Antiq.* book xx. chap. 6, that the Jews were deprived of the authority to decree the punishment of death about forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, that is, about the year A. D. 30. According to others, they were deprived of that power near the end of the reign of Augustus, which was about fifteen years earlier than the time fixed by Josephus. There was a providential design to be accomplished by this change in the Jewish state, as is evident by the remark of the Evangelist upon this response of the Jews. For he observes that through or by means of their subjection to the Romans, and this diminution of their power, (for such is the connection between the last clause of the 31st and the 32d verse,) it came to pass that,

JOHN XVIII. 32. "The saying of Jesus was fulfilled, signifying by what death he should die."

The saying to which the Evangelist especially refers, is recorded, Matt. xx. 19; see also Matt. xvi. 21; xvii. 22, 23; Mark viii. 31; ix. 31; x. 33, 34; Luke ix. 22—44; xviii. 31—34. Crucifixion was not a punishment appointed by the law of Moses, and there is no example of this punishment inflicted by the Jews upon those they condemned to death. Yet in the passage just cited from Matthew, the Lord foretold the whole course of the proceedings which would be had against him. "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death; and they shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify, and the third day he shall rise again."

The manner of his death, he foretold, would not be that which was appointed by the Jewish law—stoning—but by a Gentile punishment; and in accordance with this Divine pur-

pose, he foretold that he should be delivered to the Gentiles. In order to the fulfilment of this prophetic declaration, it was necessary that Pilate should take cognizance of the accusation, and should proceed to inflict a punishment appointed by the laws of Rome. But there was also a reason *for the prediction*, which should also be pointed out. Although crucifixion was a cruel and ignominious punishment, inflicted by the Carthaginians upon prisoners of war and their own citizens of the highest rank, but by the Romans only on slaves and such inferior persons as were guilty of atrocious crimes, yet it did not destroy the bodily organs, crush the flesh, or break the bones of the victim, as death by stoning did. It is true that in order to increase the suffering, or perhaps to hasten the death of the criminal, the executioners sometimes broke his legs, John xix. 32, but this was not necessarily a part of the punishment. Nor was it permitted in the case of the Saviour, John xix. 33; for he was the antitype of the paschal lamb, Exod. xii. 46; Numb. ix. 12; Ps. xxxiv. 20, and a bone of him could not be broken.

Whether this avowal or reply of the Jews was intended to change the purpose of Pilate we need not inquire. It was, indeed, a sufficient reason why they should bring their prisoner before him, but no reason why Pilate should disregard, not only the forms but the rules also of justice. The Jews, perceiving that Pilate continued firm, proceeded to make an accusation in the form required; but for this we must now turn to the Gospel by Luke xxiii. 2.

We have frequent occasions to observe how admirably the Evangelists supply the omissions of each other, and how necessary it is to take them altogether, in order to make out a full and connected narrative. Matthew and Mark give but brief notices of the proceedings before Pilate, and Matthew alone relates the message the wife of Pilate sent to him, while he sat on the judgment seat. Luke informs us of what took place before Herod, while John relates more minutely what passed, as we may say, privately, between our Lord and Pilate. We will take them altogether in the order of the occurrences, and thus endeavour to get a clear idea of the whole proceeding. We come now to the accusation made in compliance with Pilate's demand:

LUKE XXIII. 2. "We found this man [said they] perverting the nation—forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar—saying, That he himself is Christ—a king."

Here are three distinct charges:—"We found this man." It is not quite agreed what they meant by "found." They may have meant to be understood that they had caught or

arrested him in the act of sedition and opposition to the government. Or they may have used the word in a judicial sense, as when we say a jury has found a man guilty of an offence charged against him. But in either of these senses the accusation was wholly untrue. They arrested him by the aid of Judas, during the darkness of the night in the garden of Gethsemane, where he had retired to pray. Nor was the charge true in the other sense: because they had found or adjudged him guilty only of blasphemy, Matt. xxvi. 64—66, although what he had said was simply bearing witness to the truth, in reply to the solemn adjuration of the high priest. But leaving this matter for the present, let us attend now to the particulars of the accusation: and first, they charge him with perverting the nation.

Probably they intended by this that he disturbed the peace by attracting crowds, and inculcating dangerous or disloyal sentiments. It is most certainly true that he was followed by multitudes who were attracted by his wonderful wisdom and works. His miracles of healing were almost without number; a few of which only have been recorded. John xx. 30. On several occasions he fed thousands in desert places upon a few loaves and fishes, and this miracle convinced those who saw it of his divine mission. John vi. 14. His daily walk and life were truly described by Peter in his address to Cornelius, Acts x. 36—38: “He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, and preaching peace”—not discord or rebellion against the Roman government. Pilate must have known his course of life, and this accusation could not have had any influence upon him. It is also true that he denounced the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy, and declared to them plainly the consequences of their wicked conduct, and this it was that offended them. But it was not a matter of which the Roman governor could take cognizance.

Secondly: They charged him with opposing the Roman government, by forbidding the payment of tribute. Had he done so, he would have acted strictly in accordance with their own wishes. They were expecting a Messiah, by whom they believed the Roman empire would be overturned. If they had had the ability, they would have gladly shaken off the Roman power themselves at the very time they were making this accusation. But much as they hated the yoke of the Romans, they hated the Lord Jesus still more.

It is true also, that they had endeavoured to ensnare him into an answer which would have affected his influence with the people, or exposed him to this accusation. But he, perceiving their hypocrisy, exposed it, and left them to answer

their question themselves. It is worth while to dwell a moment on this incident, which is recorded in Matt. xxii. 16—22; Mark xii. 13—17; Luke xx. 19—25. The chief priests and scribes being provoked by his parable of the husbandman and his vineyard, Luke xx. 9—18; Matt. xxi. 33—46, resolved to entrap him by a question of politics, which addressed itself very forcibly to the popular mind, and perhaps caused the Roman government some trouble. They selected some artful person out of their own followers, to whom they joined Herodians, and sent them as spies. They were instructed to feign themselves to be just men, and by words of deference and flattery to entrap him into an imprudent expression of his opinion. The question turned upon the obligation of the people to pay tribute to the Romans, their conquerors. It was very artfully chosen. For either an affirmative or negative response would have answered their purpose. If he had replied simply, *Yes*, it would have affected his popularity with the people, and exposed him to prosecution under their own laws, or if not, enabled them, as in the case of Stephen, Acts vi. 13, to destroy him by a popular tumult. If, on the other hand, he replied simply, *No*, we can see by this very accusation the use they would have made of it. Our Lord really refused to meddle with it or answer it at all, it being a question of worldly politics with which it was not his purpose at that time to intermeddle. By making them produce one of the kind of coins they were required to pay as tribute, which was a token of their subject condition, he told them to render to the powers that be the things which they have the right to exact, and to God the duties they owed to him, and of this they were to judge for themselves. Yet this answer they perverted into the accusation before mentioned. If we turn to Rom. xiii. 1—8, we find a clear exposition of our Saviour's doctrine on this subject. Though he was and is the Ruler and Judge of all, yet he refused to decide a question of property between two brethren. "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Luke xii. 13, 14.

Let us now pass to the third head of accusation—"saying that he himself is Christ (that is) a king." This accusation is appended very artfully to the one just considered. They represent it as *the reason* why the people should not pay tribute to Cæsar; thereby insinuating that he and not Cæsar was entitled to demand tribute. As if they had said, "We found this man perverting the nation, and telling the people publicly that he was their Messiah or Christ, and therefore their rightful king, and that they ought to pay him tribute, not Cæsar."

This is what they intended Pilate should understand by the

accusation. In point of fact, however, he never had publicly given himself out as the Christ or Messiah, as we can easily prove from the Gospel histories. So far from the truth was this charge, that they knew not a witness by whom they could prove the fact; for Matthew informs us, xxvi. 59, 63, that although the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought false witnesses against him, and actually found many, yet they agreed not in their testimony. To end the matter, therefore, the high priest adjured him by the living God to declare whether he was the Christ. Had he publicly assumed this character, there could have been no difficulty in finding true witnesses of the fact. This proceeding of the high priest therefore shows that they had no ground whatever to make this accusation, except his own confession, drawn from him in a way he could not decline. The people, it appears, entertained various opinions concerning him. Matt. xvi. 14. Some thought he was Elias, some John the Baptist, some Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. Some surmised that he was the Christ, John vi. 14; vii. 41, and on one occasion they gathered around him in Solomon's Porch, and asked him to say plainly whether he was the Christ. John x. 24. On this occasion, as on others, he referred them to his works, John x. 25, as he did John the Baptist. Matt. xi. 5. He forbade his disciples to tell others that he was the Christ, Matt. xvi. 20; Mark viii. 30; Luke ix. 21; and not only this, he even exercised his Divine power over devils, who knew him by his power, to prevent them from declaring his character, Mark i. 34; Luke iv. 41; and the reason why he did so, was the Divine purpose to make the people judge of his character by their own Scriptures, John v. 39, and his wonderful works, by which their Scriptures were fulfilled. In private to his disciples, and those who sought him with a teachable spirit, he disclosed his true character—as to the woman of Samaria, John iv. 26; to Mary, John xi. 27; to the twelve apostles, Matt. xvi. 16, 17; John vi. 48. But none of these confessions were known to the rulers of the nation; and if they had been, they could form no just ground to accuse him of treason, or of setting himself up as a king. Indeed, when the people resolved to make him a king by force, he retired for a time out of their way to a place of solitude. John vi. 15. This examination proves that the accusation, in all its particulars, was a mere fabrication, got up for the purpose of meeting the unexpected demand of Pilate for a specific accusation. Pilate, having received the accusation, retired from the judgment seat on the pavement into the Prætorium, as if to examine the prisoner; but it is evident, from what followed, that the accusation, though made under extraordinary and imposing circumstances

by the chief dignitaries of the nation, really had no effect whatever upon his mind. The first two particulars of the accusation he did not even mention; and the last was treated of in a way to show that he considered it without foundation. But it will be instructive to enter into the particulars of the questions and answers which passed between them. Previously, however, let us endeavour to conceive rightly of the scene.

While Pilate was conferring with the chief priests and rulers around his judgment seat upon the pavement, the Lord Jesus remained in the custody of the soldiers within the palace, and probably bound. Matt. xxvii. 2. It is probable, also, that his person was concealed from the view of the multitude without, and beyond their hearing. As to the arrangements within the palace, it is impossible to say particularly what they were. Thus much, however, we know, that within the palace there was a court or hall—a spacious apartment where the soldiers who served as the governor's body-guard were ordinarily stationed. It contained also an apartment which might be properly called the judgment hall, as it was used for the hearing of causes. To this apartment, within the Prætorium, Pilate retired as before mentioned, and probably taking his seat, as is usual in such cases, called Jesus to him. John xviii. 33. Whether he was attended by any of the soldiers from the place where he was standing, we are not informed; perhaps not; for Pilate evidently did not consider him as an ordinary prisoner. However this may be, the Lord Jesus, in answer to the call, approached Pilate, and stood before him.

And now we will pause a moment to consider the character of these two persons, before we proceed to the colloquy which passed between them. Pilate was, without doubt, a man of considerable distinction and influence at Rome. Had he been an obscure or ignorant man, or of inferior rank or talents, we cannot account for his appointment to so important and difficult a province as Judea. His moral character was very bad. Philo the Jew (*De Legatione ad Caium*) describes him as a judge, who for money would render any judgment that should be desired of him. He says he committed murders and rapines; inflicted tortures on the innocent; put persons to death without even the forms of law. Josephus, the Jewish historian, (see *Antiq.*, book 18, chap. 4,) describes him as a proud, hasty man, violent in his temper, and of inflexible obstinacy, who troubled the repose of his province, and gave occasion to sedition and revolt. Besides, he was a heathen, and no doubt regarded the religion of the Jews as a strange superstition, not important to be known, except so far as it might be necessary to the administration of his government. Such in brief was the character of the judge.

He had not the slightest conception of the real character of his prisoner. Outwardly, the Lord Jesus appeared to him a mere man, of humble condition. Had he known what was veiled under that humble, human form, instead of sitting in judgment upon him, he would have fallen at his feet, and the work of redemption would never have been wrought through his means. 1 Cor. ii. 8. Yet taking him for what he appeared to be, Pilate was bound to observe the rules of justice, and resolutely to refuse to condemn the innocent.

But although Pilate was profoundly ignorant of the mystery of the Lord's person, we know that he was really Immanuel, Matt. i. 23, or God with men, manifest in human nature, 1 Tim. iii. 16. His body was assumed as a tabernacle or covering, in which the glories of the Divine nature were for a time hidden. John i. 14. The Scriptures describe him as the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person, Hebrews i. 3, the image of the invisible God—as before all things, as the creator, and upholder, and ruler of all things, Col. i. 15, 17, whose name is above every name, and entitled to the homage of every creature in the vast universe of God. Phil. ii. 9—11. He was the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Rev. i. 11; xxii. 13. From his creative power Pilate drew his being, and by his providential care he was sustained in being. The breath by which Pilate condemned him, he owed to the forbearance of the mysterious man who then stood before him. It is necessary to bear in mind the character of Pilate, in order to appreciate properly his proceedings in this business, and also the exalted nature of our Lord, in order to conceive properly of his answer to Pilate.

We now proceed with the narrative, John xviii. 33; Pilate having entered the judgment hall, and called Jesus to him, said: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" See Matt. xxvii. 11. Our Lord did not answer this question immediately, but interposed a question, and this he did to enable Pilate to set himself in the proper light; or, perhaps, we should say, to enable Pilate to assume the position which he really occupied. For observe, Pilate does not say that the Jews accused him of setting himself up as a king, which was the fact; but he puts the question as though it were prompted by his own mind. He was not the chief actor, although from his question, if we knew nothing more, we might infer that he intended to be. His sin was the less, because he performed only a secondary part, and would not have acted at all, had it not been for the importunity of the Jews. For some such reason as this, our Lord declined his question for a moment by asking him—



JOHN XVIII. 34. "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?"

The reply of Pilate to this question carries with it the air of impatience. It was probably uttered with some excitement. "Am I a Jew?" As if he had said, You know that I am not a Jew. You must also know that I take no interest or part whatever in the questions which divide this people. My birth, education, official employment, associations in life, all keep me aloof from your national disputes. You cannot but know, also, that I am perfectly indifferent and impartial upon all such questions. If you have been unjustly dealt with, I am not to be blamed for it, for I have not caused you to be arrested and bound, and brought before me. "But thine own nation, and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me." JOHN XVIII. 35. If any wrong has been done you, they are to be blamed for it.

The answer of Pilate, thus understood, defines his position, and thus accomplishes the supposed object of our Lord's inquiry. Pilate at the same time bears witness to the fulfilment of our Lord's prediction concerning the manner of his death, Matt. xx. 19, and also shows the inferiority of his guilt. JOHN XIX. 11. Observe, now, he does not go on to repeat his question, but puts a very different one. He does not say, "Tell me, therefore, art thou the king of the Jews?" but he inquires in general terms, "What hast thou done?" thus showing that he did not expect an answer to his first inquiry. Pilate, it is evident, was not deceived by this charge of treason. He was sufficiently acquainted with the long-cherished expectation of the Jews relative to their Messiah, to regard the question rather as one of religion than of politics. And, doubtless, he knew that Jesus was chiefly, if not exclusively, known and regarded by the people as a religious teacher. There can be no doubt he had heard of John the Baptist, and, like Herod, regarded the Lord Jesus as a man of like pretensions and character. However this may be, he regarded even this charge as utterly groundless, for he does not even persist in his first inquiry, and did not expect it would be answered.

It was not our Lord's purpose, however, to avoid the first inquiry. He therefore took no notice of the second, and replied not simply that he was a king, or that he had a kingdom, but with such a qualification as would prevent a mistake on the part of Pilate. We must not forget that he was dealing with Pilate as a mere man would with another. Had he simply said, "Thou sayest it, I am a king," he would have left Pilate at liberty to understand that word in its ordinary acceptation, that is, in the sense of an earthly ruler, such as Cæsar was.

Every such supposition or surmise, however, was excluded by the reply,

JOHN XVIII. 36. "My kingdom is not of this world."

It is very certain that Pilate had not the remotest conception of the nature, or glory, or extent of the kingdom our Lord claimed as his own, and we may add, that our limited faculties and contracted notions of the majesty and glory of Christ, prevent us from fathoming our Lord's meaning. In condescension, therefore, to the ignorance of Pilate, as well as our own, he added words that Pilate could understand, which by assuring him that his kingdom, though real, was not sustained by material force, as the kingdoms of the world are, gave him all the information he needed to decide upon the accusation he had just received.

JOHN XVIII. 36. "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But now my kingdom is not from hence."

It may be inferred, then, from the reply of Pilate to this avowal, that it took him somewhat by surprise. We observe that his question as to the kingship of Jesus had been dropped, and an inquiry concerning his actions in general had been substituted. With Pilate's consent, therefore, he might have left the first question unanswered. Pilate had dropped it, thinking it, no doubt, too futile to deserve notice. When, therefore, our Lord, by assuming that he had a kingdom, virtually admitted that he was a king, Pilate instantly drew the inference, "Thou art a king, then." For these words, we think, should be regarded rather as an inference than as a question requiring a further answer.

Some commentators perceive, as they suppose, an air of mockery in these words of Pilate; but the narrative is so brief it is impossible to determine with certainty what emotion was prevalent in the mind of Pilate. Perhaps he thought him a visionary person, whose pretensions and aspirations were greatly at variance with his outward condition. He might have queried mentally who those servants were who could fight for him; and what more than imaginary could that kingdom be, which did not belong to this world? If such were his reflections, he may have pronounced these words with an air of incredulity; at least, it is certain he did not regard his pretensions to royalty treasonable; for a few moments after he told his accusers that he found no fault in him. Pilate was evidently much impressed by our Lord's manner, and this prepared him for the deeper impression which was afterwards made upon him, when the Jews made the further accusation against him, that "he made himself the Son of God." JOHN XIX. 7. Waiving, however,

further inquiry at present upon this subject, let us pass on to our Lord's response,

JOHN XVIII. 37. "Thou sayest [the truth], I am a king."

We shall enter somewhat into the meaning of these words if we consider that our Lord, although he appeared to Pilate as a mere man, was in truth the Divine Word made flesh, John i. 14; the Creator of all things, John i. 3; the Divine Wisdom set up from everlasting, from the beginning, Prov. viii. 22—31; Immanuel, or God in human nature, Matt. i. 23; as come down from heaven and yet in heaven, John iii. 13; xvi. 28. He was in glory with the Father before the world was, John xvii. 5; but laid his glory aside to accomplish the redemption of men. Philip. ii. 6—11.

As the Creator of all things, the only revealer of the Divine attributes, he was officially, nay, essentially, the Ruler and Governor of all things; the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. In the true and proper sense he was the *only king*, inasmuch as he was the Creator of all kingdoms and all kings. His was the only kingdom—kingdom of the heavens—vast beyond our conception; a kingdom which from the beginning of creation has moved on with uninterrupted sway throughout myriads of worlds; many, and perhaps most, of which far exceed our own in magnitude, as well as in original glory. We have no reason to suppose that God has left his vast creation unpeopled with intelligent orders of beings, capable of giving glory to him. Nor have we reason to suppose that he has suffered sin extensively to enter into the worlds he has made, and mar his work. All this vast creation was under the headship of Jesus, acknowledging his sovereign rights as King and Creator (our world excepted) at the very moment he uttered these words to Pilate; and it was the purpose of his incarnation and of his being before Pilate at that time to restore this world to its proper place in this vast fabric. Eph. i. 10. Every paternity or race of beings throughout the universe, diversified though they may be, as the worlds are which they inhabit, are named from him, Eph. iii. 15, and he is the Lord and King over all.

In this sense we are to understand the words, "Thou sayest, I am a king." We now go back a little to consider those other words, "My kingdom is not of this world."

This world was not always as it now is, in a state of revolt, and groaning under the curse of God. Rom. viii. 22. It was not created to bring forth thorns and briers. The sin of man wrought a vast change in the condition and relations of this world to the rest of the universe. Gen. i. and iii. The kingdom which prevailed throughout the rest of God's creation was

withdrawn, but with the purpose to restore it by redemption, through the sufferings and death of its rightful King.

We are prepared now to enter somewhat into our Lord's meaning. It may be expressed thus: "Although my kingdom is from the beginning of the creation, and in its origin embraced all worlds, yet it does not now extend to this world, which is in revolt, and is labouring under the curse of God, and will labour, until it shall be redeemed in a way consistent with the Divine honour and justice. The kingdoms of this world will be permitted to exist yet a while, and to run their appointed course; and while they continue, my kingdom, which embraces all other worlds, will not embrace this. But when this world shall be redeemed and restored to its proper place in creation, then my kingdom will embrace this world also, for it shall then acknowledge me as its rightful king, and yield me a willing and perfect obedience."

JOHN XVIII. 36. "But *now* [that is, during this order of things] my kingdom is not from hence."

Some persons suppose that the Redeemer had respect chiefly to the *spiritual* nature of his kingdom, when he declared that it was not of this world, but we think that such an interpretation falls short of his meaning. His kingdom is indeed spiritual, and ever will be. It is not maintained by material force or carnal weapons, nor by the might or power of man. He said as much when he told Pilate that his servants would fight to prevent his being delivered to the Jews, if his kingdom were like the kingdoms of this world. Where his kingdom prevails, he has only willing subjects. His laws are written on their hearts, and it is their happiness and glory to yield him a perfect obedience. Not a discord exists throughout their countless hosts. We have a beautiful illustration in one respect of what the kingdom of Christ will be over redeemed men in Luke xxii. 24—30. Love to God, love to the Redeemer, love to their fellows—full, perfect, ever glowing, ever expanding, produced and maintained by the Holy Spirit, will be the great principle of all their actions. It is therefore truly a spiritual kingdom, though it will have respect to material objects. It is true also that Christians, really such, are influenced, though with many imperfections, in this life by the same great principle of love, produced and maintained by the Holy Ghost.

Such was his kingdom over all unfallen worlds at the time he uttered these words, although it extended to and embraced the material fabric of creation; and such will it be over this earth, when it shall be delivered from the curse, and garnished anew. To this period he alludes in his interpretation of the parable of the tares. "The field," he says, Matt. xiii. 38, "is

the world" (*ὁ χοσμος*;) the harvest is the end of the dispensation or age. "As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire," so shall it be in the end of this dispensation or age. "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. . . . Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

The apostle Peter teaches us that there shall be new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 2 Pet. iii. 13. He also foretells the end of the heavens and the earth which now are, that is, of this present world. They are reserved unto fire. 2 Pet. iii. 7. Our Lord himself, Matt. xix. 28, speaks of a second creation (*παλιγγενεσια*;) which can only mean those new heavens and new earth foretold by Isaiah, lxxv. 17, and Peter. It was to this future condition of our earth, in its regenerated state, our Lord specially referred when he said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world," tacitly alluding to the world to come, when all things will be made new. Rev. xxi. 5. Other places of Scripture might be cited to illustrate this view. Dan. vii. 13, 14, 27.

It is not an objection that Pilate did not so understand our Lord's answer. He was a heathen, and probably entirely unacquainted with the Jewish Scriptures; or, if not, regarded them with incredulity.

The only words which Pilate understood were those of the parenthetical clause. "If my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." The idea of a kingdom, vast as the universe, existing at that very time under the sway of the Lord Jesus, was altogether beyond the conception of Pilate. As little could he conceive of the Divine purpose in regard to this little speck of earth, isolated and shut off by its revolt from the rest of creation. Even we, who have the Bible, are slow to comprehend this great truth—the truth which comprehends within itself all other truths; for such our Lord regarded it, as is plain from the words which follow. John xviii. 37. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

The meaning is not that Christ was born to be a king, as some suppose. He was a king before he was born. He could not cease to be a king by his incarnation. He only laid aside the glory he had with the Father for a little while, that he might restore a revolted province and unite it again to the rest of his kingdom in such a manner as would maintain the honour of his law and the glory of his government.

The sense is, that he was born—that he became incarnate—

and had continued so long in the world (incarnate) that he might bear witness unto the truth, in which term he comprehends the great truths which encircle all the realities of the universe as God made it, and designs to maintain and preserve it under himself as the Head. This sentiment is elsewhere very plainly declared. Thus Paul teaches that all things consist and have their being in Christ, Col. i. 17; that he is the upholder and maintainer of all things, as Creator and King. Hence he is the Truth and the Life. John xiv. 6. His testimony to his own character and offices, therefore, was a testimony to that great truth upon which all truth depends. He was himself a manifestation of the Divine glory; and in his work of creation and providence he is the revealer of the Divine attributes. His work of redemption, including his incarnation and death, will for ever be a manifestation of the truth and reality of his relations to the universe, and of his supremacy over all created things, to the glory of God the Father. In the present condition of things in this world, the great truth of the universe is hidden in a mystery from men. We have not, in our present state, nor can we have, any adequate conception of the realities which are scattered around us in infinite profusion throughout the fields of space. At best the most enlightened Christian sees through a glass darkly or obscurely. Hereafter we shall all see clearly.

Bearing these thoughts in mind, we may more easily enter into the meaning of the next clause, John xviii. 37: "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." The sentiment is the same as that expressed in John viii. 47, "He that is of God heareth God's words." We need not restrict this declaration to an earthly application. It is true of all God's creatures in all worlds. Few of the children of men at that time heard his voice with obedient hearts, or even now hear it; while myriads of myriads of glorious and holy creatures in other parts of Christ's kingdom, ever have yielded a joyful obedience to his will; and so will it be on earth, when the kingdom of God shall come. For then, we are taught, the obedience of redeemed men shall be as perfect as the obedience of heaven. This is foretold by Isaiah, liv. 13, and by our Lord himself, John vi. 45.

Pilate's attention was momentarily arrested by this observation, although he was utterly incapable of entering into the comprehensive consideration of the truth intended. Some suppose that Pilate was sceptical enough to doubt whether there was any such thing as truth. If so, his question, "What is truth?" was prompted by incredulity. It is probable, however, his chief desire was to get on with the business in hand, and to

despatch the crowd which had gathered around his tribunal, as soon as possible. But however this may be, he was allowed to break off the colloquy without an answer. Indeed, judging from our Lord's conduct towards his disciples, we cannot suppose that he intended to enter into an explanation of his previous observation; because Pilate was incapable of forming any just conception of the hidden truth of which he spoke. Why should he, when he forbore to tell his disciples many things, because they could not bear or comprehend them? John xvi. 12. Evidently it was for the instruction of his Church, that he said these things to Pilate; because the business Pilate had in hand did not require any instruction in the nature of truth. Had it been our Lord's purpose to say more, he would have exercised his power over Pilate's mind, so as to detain him longer.

It is remarkable that these were the last words our Lord addressed to Pilate, except those which are recorded in John xix. 11. Although questioned, and mocked, and scourged repeatedly by Pilate and Herod, he answered nothing; thus fulfilling Isa. liii. 7: "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

We now resume, John xviii. 38: Pilate having said, "What is truth?"—for it can hardly be called a serious inquiry, as Pilate did not think it worth his while to stay for an answer—immediately proceeded again from his hall within the Prætorium, to the judgment seat on the pavement without, where the chief priests and the people still stood, Luke xxiii. 4, and declared to them publicly the result of his examination, in these words, Luke xxiii. 4; John xviii. 38: "I find no fault at all in this man."

One would suppose that this public acquittal should have ended the matter. We should think it very strange, and entirely inconsistent with regular proceedings, that accusers should be permitted to renew the charge after the acquittal of the accused. If such was the course of a criminal proceeding in the provinces of the Romans, we can only say that the formalities of their own laws, and the dignity, regularity, and justice of their ordinary judicial proceedings, were entirely disregarded by their provincial functionaries. They certainly were so in this case; for notwithstanding this acquittal by the governor, the chief priests and elders were allowed still to persist in accusing him, Mark xv. 3; Matt. xxvii. 12—14, of many things, but he answered nothing.

The narrative left the Lord Jesus bound, and standing in the

judgment hall, within the palace, while Pilate went out to the judgment seat on the pavement, to announce the conclusion to which he had come. It is probable, however, that the Lord Jesus was at the same time, or soon after, conducted from the palace to the same place, by one or more of the soldiers; for we are told that Pilate, upon hearing these new accusations, said to him, Matt. xxvii. 13: "Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? But he answered him never a word."

Such deportment, under the circumstances, seemed surprising to Pilate. He could not conceive that a man so fiercely accused by the chief men of his nation, could remain silent when called upon to speak. He supposed he would at least deny his guilt. Pilate, therefore, takes notice of this silence and renews the question.

MARK XV. 4. "Answerest thou nothing? Behold how many things they witness against thee." Still he answered nothing, so that Pilate marvelled greatly. Matt. xxvii. 14. His silence, however, had no softening effect upon the priests. It rather made them the more fierce. They reiterated one of the charges they had already made, but with the addition of other circumstances, saying, Luke xxiii. 5, "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place," that is, Jerusalem. Observe now that this accusation, to be of any moment, should mean nothing less than *seditions* conduct, by teaching dangerous and exciting doctrines extensively to the people. But this charge made no more impression on Pilate's mind than the former one. It does not appear that he even took it into consideration at all at that time, for the word *Galilee* immediately suggested to him an expedient by which he hoped to get rid of the whole matter. Galilee was not within the jurisdiction of Pilate, but of Herod; and he knew that Herod at that very time was in Jerusalem, having come to attend the feast of the Passover, as he supposed, but in truth having been brought there in the Providence of God to take part in the awful scenes which were then enacting. Acts iv. 25—29. The thought instantly occurred to Pilate to send Jesus and his accusers with the cause to Herod, under pretence that Herod was the proper functionary to decide the matter. He therefore promptly dismissed the whole party from his tribunal, and probably sent the Lord Jesus under custody to Herod, hoping, no doubt, that he should not be called on to act further.

It does not appear how long Pilate had been engaged in the business. The priests, we have seen, came to the Prætorium at an early hour, perhaps about five o'clock, or a little before



sunrise. It is probable that Pilate, after the cause was sent back to him by Herod, gave his final sentence as early as latest as nine o'clock, according to our mode of reckoning time. Consequently, to allow space for the transaction before Herod and the subsequent completion of the tragedy, we must suppose that Pilate sent the Lord Jesus to Herod as early as seven o'clock, and consequently it was still early when the Jews appeared before Herod. Yet we have not the means of computing the time precisely. What we do know is, that the crucifixion commenced at the third Jewish hour, Mark xv. 25, that is, about nine o'clock in the morning. This would correspond with the sixth Roman hour, which, according to the common understanding, extended to nine o'clock.

Before we proceed with the narrative, let us pause a moment on this conduct of Pilate. We have seen that he was astonished at the silence of the Lord Jesus, and endeavoured repeatedly to induce him to speak. What his motive was we can only conjecture. Perhaps, cruel and hard-hearted as he was, he felt some compassion for the man whom he knew to be innocent. But probably his chief motive was a selfish one. He wished Jesus to furnish him with the means of discharging him, so that he might refuse compliance with the demand of the Jews, without seeming to be favourable to Jesus. He saw plainly that the motive of the Lord's silence was not contempt for him, nor even contempt for his accusers. Contempt it could not be. That is a feeling which belongs to our corrupt nature, and it implies some proportion between the contemner and the contemned. The Divine nature of our Lord placed him at an infinite remove from those into whose hands he had surrendered himself. It was in compassion for sinners of mankind, that he had thus humbled himself, and in that compassion even Pilate and the chief priests shared. This is proved by his prayer on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The patience and the dignity of the Redeemer did not escape the notice of Pilate. Could he have read and understood the prophecy of Isaiah liii. 7, the impenetrable mystery would have been solved. He was the lamb of God brought to the sacrifice. He was no more under the influence of the passions of the human heart than that emblem of his person and work. Like his office as Redeemer, his demeanour on that occasion was a mystery concealed alike from men and devils. 1 Cor. ii. 7; Heb. ii. 14.

The conduct of Pilate in sending the cause to Herod deserves reprehension. There was no sincerity in the pretence he offered. His motive was to get rid of a responsibility properly devolved upon him, in a way that put in jeopardy the rights of

innocence. It was selfish prudence acting in opposition to the demands of justice. He ought to have discharged his own duty, and not to have cast it upon another. In the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, vii. 6, we find a maxim which it had been well for Pilate to have considered, before he accepted of the responsible office which he held: "Seek not to be a judge, being not able to take away iniquity, lest at any time thou fear the person of the mighty, and lay a stumbling-block in the way of thy uprightness." Pilate has had many followers in this part of his conduct in all ages. Men love authority, but fear the dangers it brings with it. Many, like Pilate, have recoiled from perpetrating acts of injustice, yet in a way to elude the demands of justice. Many have paid homage to conscience, but greater homage to man. Many have desired to appear wise, moderate, disinterested, and equitable, under pretence of not wishing to usurp functions or rights which belong to another, hoping thereby to conceal, under an honourable exterior, their weakness and cowardice. Such, beyond all reasonable question, were the real motives of this politic governor. His duty clearly was to have adhered to his own conclusions, and resolutely to have put an end to the cause, of which he had full and final jurisdiction. His fault in sending the Lord to Herod was soon after followed by others of a much graver character. We now proceed to the hall of Herod.

LUKE XXIII. 8. "And when Herod saw Jesus he was exceedingly glad; for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him, and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him."

The Herod here spoken of was Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great, by Cleopatra, his fifth wife. In order to distinguish between the different Herods mentioned in the New Testament, it is proper to give in this place a short account of them. Herod the Great, king of Judea, &c., mentioned in Matt. ii. 1, and Luke i. 5, was the son of Antipas, or Antipater, an Idumean, who was made Prefect of Judea and Syria by Julius Cæsar. Antipater died before the incarnation of our Lord. Herod the Great had four sons: Aristobulus, whom he put to death; Archelaus, mentioned in Matt. ii. 22; Philip, mentioned in Luke iii. 1; and Herod Antipas, who is spoken of in Matt. xiv. 3; Mark vi. 14; Luke iii. 1; ix. 17; xxiii. 11. Aristobulus left three children, viz. Herod, king of Chalcis; Herod Agrippa, the elder, mentioned in Acts xiii. 1; and Herodias, who married Herod Philip, Matt. xiv. 3, her uncle. Herod Agrippa, the elder, Acts xiii. 1, left three children: Berenice, mentioned in Acts xxv. 13; Agrippa, the younger, Acts xxv. 13; xxvi. 1—32; and Drusilla, mentioned in Acts

xxiv. 24. Herod Antipas is most frequently mentioned in the New Testament of all, and to him the Evangelist, in the verse just quoted, refers.

This was that Herod\* who put John the Baptist to death, in complaisance to Herodias, the daughter of Aristobulus, Matt. xiv. 3—12. He was the person to whom our Lord applied the epithet *fox*, Luke xiii. 31—33, in allusion to his crafty, insidious character. He was a deep dissembler, yet much more enlightened than Pilate in the religious faith of the Jews. He had often heard John the Baptist with pleasure, and was in many things influenced by him. Mark vi. 20. He feared John, and ordered his execution with reluctance. Yet he was a vain, unprincipled man, curious in his inquiries, fluctuating between religion and infidelity—a character not uncommon among princes, philosophers, and other persons whom the world accounts great. He had heard of the Lord Jesus, but had never seen him. He even surmised that he was no other than John the Baptist, risen from the dead, and accounted for his miraculous powers in that way. Luke ix. 7, 9; Mark vi. 14; Matt. xiv. 2. Herod was pleased to see the Lord Jesus, because his curiosity, and perhaps his fears, had been excited by the reports he had heard of his wonderful works, and the opportunity had at length occurred to remove the one, and gratify the other.

Had the Lord Jesus been actuated by considerations of human prudence, he would have embraced the opportunity thus afforded him of ingratiating himself with Herod. He was a Jewish prince, well instructed in the Jewish religion, who had enjoyed the benefit of John the Baptist's instructions, and might have been influenced by a miracle to interpose his

\* ANTIPAS OR ANTIPATER, an Idumean, made Prefect of Judea and Syria by Julius Cæsar.

Herod the Great, King of Judea, &c.			
Matt. ii. 1.		Luke i. 5.	
Aristobulus, put to death by his father.	Archelaus, Matt. ii. 22.	Philip, Luke iii. 1.	Herod Antipas, Matt. xiv. 3. Mark vi. 14. Luke iii. 1; ix. 17; xxiii. 11.
Herod, King of Chalcis.	Herod Agrippa, the elder, Acts xiii. 1.		Herodias, married to Herod Philip, Matt. xiv. 3.
Berenice, Acts xxv. 13.	Agrippa, the younger, Acts xxv. 13; xxvi. 1—32.	Drusilla, Acts. xxiv. 24.	

influence and authority for his protection. But it is very evident that Herod was utterly ignorant of the reasons for which miracles were appointed. Herod had listened to John as a preacher, whose office it was to preach the kingdom, and to baptize the nation, but not to perform miracles. John x. 41. With our Lord's personal ministry commenced the time of miracles, and they were wrought by him and his apostles, as proofs of the doctrine or fact which they preached. But at the time we speak of, the personal ministry of our Lord was ended. The Jewish nation had rejected him, and he was now about to offer his body as a sacrifice for sin. Even during his active ministry our Lord had performed miracles only as proofs of his doctrine, or to relieve the sufferings of those who approached him with faith. It was impossible, therefore, that after his public ministry was closed, and the purpose of miracles was accomplished, he should perform a work to gratify the curiosity of a wicked prince, who had put to death his forerunner.

The Evangelists do not inform us what questions Herod put to him, but Luke says,

LUKE XXIII. 9. "He questioned him *in many words.*"

It has already been mentioned, Matt. xiv. 1, 2, that when he first heard of the fame of Jesus, he said to his servants that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead; and he undertook to account in that way for our Lord's miraculous powers. This is an instance of the power of conscience. It proves that Herod had a knowledge of the doctrine of the resurrection, and believed it. If this impression still continued on his mind, it is not improbable that Herod directed some of his questions to that point, in order to know whether he was really John under another name. If Pilate sent the accusation of the Jews, that he claimed to be the Messiah, it is probable he questioned him upon that subject also. Perhaps, too, some of Herod's questions were suggested by the accusations of the chief priests and scribes; for the Evangelist informs us, that, Luke xxiii. 10, "The chief priests and the scribes stood and vehemently accused him."

By this we know that the priests and scribes went from Pilate's judgment seat on the pavement, to the lodgings of Herod. This shows how intent they were upon accomplishing their object. They were alarmed, perhaps, by the favourable judgment of Pilate. They feared, perhaps, that Herod, who had not thus far participated in their evil feelings, might be overcome, or be persuaded by the dignified bearing and persuasive words of Jesus, and confirm the favourable sentence of Pilate. They, therefore, renewed their efforts, and invented, perhaps, new accusations, although we are not told what accu-

sations they made before Herod, and urged them with greater vehemence, in order to persuade Herod to their side; or, perhaps, to intimidate him, if he were inclined to hesitate. But whatever were the motives of Herod, or the reasons of his joy at seeing Jesus, or the accusations or the motives of the priests and scribes, they were all disappointed by the unforeseen and unexpected demeanour of the Redeemer; for we read,

LUKE XXIII. 9. "He answered him nothing.

It is remarkable, that while the Lord answered questions before the Jewish council, and before Pilate, before Herod he was perfectly silent. The effect of his silence upon Herod was not the same as we have noticed in the case of Pilate. Indeed, if we compare the conduct of Pilate, as far as we have gone, with that of Herod, the advantage is in favour of the former. Pilate had not derided him, and he evidently wished to release him. But Herod and his minions indulged in unfeeling mockery, in spite of the calm and heavenly dignity of the Lord Jesus.

LUKE XXIII. 11. "He, with his men of war [that is, his military suite which attended him to Jerusalem], set him at naught, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe [probably of a purple colour, as a scoff at his kingly dignity], and sent him [back thus attired] to Pilate."

Why Herod sent him back, we are not informed. Some have surmised, that it was because he found on inquiry, that Jesus was not born within his province, but at Bethlehem, within the jurisdiction of Pilate. It is plain, however, that Herod, for some reason, declined to take jurisdiction of the cause; and although he cruelly derided him, yet he did not condemn him. Such conduct in a case of the humblest of Herod's subjects, was utterly unworthy of the dignity of the lowest magistrate, and much more so of a prince or governor. The conduct of Herod shows that he was devoid of compassion, as well as of the sentiments becoming his station. Herod, by clothing him in a scarlet robe, intended to intimate that his claims to royalty were vain and chimerical, and with the same motive Pilate may have composed the inscription he put over the cross. But both Herod and Pilate in this way rendered a public testimony to his true character, without intending to do so.

This union of these two men with the people whom they represented, is noticed in Acts iv. 25, 27, as a fulfilment of the second Psalm. "Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" . . . "For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel

determined before to be done." Their union in this work extinguished the enmity which had previously existed between them, for Luke adds, that "The same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together, for before they were at enmity." Luke xxiii. 12.

He does not tell us what was the cause of their enmity, but only the fact. It is true that Pilate had treated some Galileans who were subjects of Herod, with great barbarity, and this may have been the cause. Yet the cause, whatever it may have been, was considered of inferior moment to the compliment Pilate had paid to Herod, in transmitting Jesus to his jurisdiction, upon being informed that he was a Galilean.

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE CRUCIFIXION.

Pilate resumes the trial of the Lord Jesus.—His expedients to satisfy our Lord's accusers.—His solemn acquittal of Jesus.—The imprecation of the Jews.—Pilate's efforts to reconcile the demands of justice and his own conscience with his fears.—Second mockery of the royalty of Jesus.—The Jews endeavour to remove the scruples of Pilate by a new accusation.—Satan the chief actor in this great conflict.—Pilate given over to the invisible power of Satan.—Jews and Gentiles concur in the accomplishment of the mystery of redemption.—Judas's repentance not genuine.—An allegorical intimation of the future call of the Gentiles.—Jesus' warning to those who bewailed him.—National ruin of the Jews, and its continuance.

It was no doubt with regret that Pilate saw the soldiers return through the streets—at that time crowded with strangers who had come to attend the feast—with their prisoner to his bar. He had hoped to escape all further responsibility, but he found himself mistaken. It is probable the priests, and scribes, and the multitude, followed closely in the train. Seeing, therefore, no escape, Pilate resumes the trial; having first

LUKE XXIII. 13. "Called together the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people."

The embarrassment of Pilate arose from his indecision; and the unjustifiable expedient of sending Jesus to Herod as a prisoner. Herod returned him as such, in custody, to Pilate, and Pilate, therefore, could not avoid proceeding further. Had he declared plainly and firmly his sentence in the first instance, he would have freed himself from all further trouble. He ought not to have given the priests, and scribes, and people, the slightest encouragement to hope anything further or different from him, and adhered to his purpose with firmness.

Upon resuming the business, he said to the multitude gathered on the pavement, which no doubt was very large,

LUKE XXIII. 14, 15. "Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people, and behold, I have examined him before you, and have found no fault in this man touching those things whercof ye accuse him; no, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him, and nothing worthy of death is done unto him."

Observe, the only charge he specifies is that of perverting the people. He says nothing of treason, or forbidding to pay tribute to Cæsar. He again declares him innocent of the offences charged against him by the chief priests, scribes, and elders. He speaks of the examination as having been made in their presence, and he declares that his own judgment in the matter had been confirmed by Herod. Under these circumstances, what honest course was left Pilate but to discharge him immediately from custody, and allow him to resume his former course of life? We are astonished, therefore, at the obliquity of Pilate's moral sense, when he announces his purpose to chastise him first, and then release him.

LUKE XXIII. 16. "I will therefore chastise him and release him."

Pilate's motive for this act of injustice, was probably to propitiate the Jews, and allay the infuriated passions of the priests and rulers. Perhaps he had brought himself to believe that it was an act of lenity to inflict chastisement, if he might thereby save life.

But such a course was utterly unworthy of a man invested with judicial power, even without any other authority. But he was the governor. He had a military force at his command, sufficiently ample to protect himself, and enforce his decisions. He knew perfectly well that the charge of seditious conduct in Galilee was entirely groundless; for who could know better than Herod whether the charge was true? Had Herod thought the other charge of taking upon himself the title of king of the Jews worthy of consideration, who would have been more ready than he to punish the assumption? His father, Herod the Great, fearing lest his royal pretensions should be interfered with, some thirty years before, had ordered the massacre of the children of Bethlehem and its neighbourhood, on the report of the birth of the king of the Jews at that place. Matt. chap. ii. Yet Herod had ridiculed the idea, in a way that reflected strongly upon the high priests. The mockery of the accused was a mockery of them, the accusers. Pilate understood from what Herod did, Herod's opinion of what he, Pilate, ought to do.

Yet he proposes to punish a man because he is falsely accused, and to turn upon him the indignation which was due to his accusers. But the accusers were powerful, bold, implacable in their hatred, and capable of inspiring Pilate with fear. He knew they would not consent to an entire justification, but he thought this smaller injustice, as it seemed to him, would appease them. He feared to irritate the priests, and scribes, and rulers, by refusing everything, and hoped to make them relax, by ordering chastisement instead of death. But he was mistaken. This unjust condescension showed his weakness and his fears, of which the priests and scribes took advantage.

The bad example of Herod was probably injurious to Pilate. He understood from Herod's conduct that he regarded the Lord Jesus as a visionary king or a madman, and therefore not worthy of serious consideration. This led him, Pilate, to believe, perhaps, that it was a case in which he was not called upon to be absolutely and inflexibly just. Herod had been guilty of injustice in exposing an innocent person to derision, and Pilate thought, perhaps, that he might with as good reason commit an injustice of another kind.

MATT. XXVII. 15. "Now at that feast, the governor was wont to release unto the people,"

MARK XV. 6. "One prisoner, whomsoever they desired."

MATT. XXVII. 16. "And they had then a notable prisoner called Barabbas,"

MARK XV. 7, 8. "Which lay bound with them, that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection in the city, Luke xxiii. 19, and the multitude crying aloud, began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them."

The origin of this custom is uncertain. Probably it was very remote. Some suppose it was founded on the delivery of the people from Egyptian bondage. Others refer it to the deliverance from the exterminating angel on the night of the first pass-over. Others, still, suppose this custom was of Roman origin, and they refer to *Livy*, book v., c. 13, to prove that during the *Lectisternia* all prisoners in Rome were freed from their bonds. But this custom required the release of only *one* prisoner, and was probably of Jewish origin.

We observe that, according to Matthew, xxvii. 15, it was a favour shown to the people, not to the rulers. The people had the choice, and as Mark, xv. 6, says, they might choose whomsoever they desired. Hence, the priests and elders, knowing that the privilege of choice was not theirs, but that of the public generally, were obliged to use persuasion with the people



not to ask the release of Jesus. Matt. xxvii. 20. We may infer, however, that the custom had not the force of a law, because in this instance Pilate, as we shall soon see, restricted them to a choice between two persons, although we know that there were other persons in prison at that time. Therefore, after the Redeemer had been sent back to Pilate by Herod, and Pilate had called the chief priests, rulers, and people together, with allusion to this custom which they had mentioned, Pilate said:

JOHN XVIII. 39. "Ye have a custom that I should release one unto you at the passover; will ye therefore that I release unto you the king of the Jews?"

This question was prompted by Pilate's desire. According to Matt. xxvii. 17, he put the question in another form: "Whom will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" It is probable he put the question in both forms. But in neither form was it according to the custom as Mark stated it. Luke, xxiii. 17, informs us, that of necessity Pilate must release one person unto them at the feast, and we must either suppose that Pilate was disposed to disregard the law to some extent, or that the law was binding upon him only so far as to require the release of one person, without giving the people the absolute right to designate the person as Mark states it.

Let us go back now to the proposition of Pilate to inflict chastisement upon Jesus, and then to release him. Perhaps as some have supposed, Pilate intended this as a release according to the custom; but this opinion does not appear probable. Pilate was desirous to release the Lord upon any terms that would satisfy the accusers, and not jeopard his own popularity or safety. But whatever his intention was, they paid no regard to the proposition. For the next thing done by Pilate was to refer to this custom, which was another expedient to avoid condemning the Redeemer to death, as the priests and rulers demanded. Perhaps he thought this expedient even preferable to the one he first proposed, as it would relieve him from performing the unjust act of scourging an innocent person, and even from passing any judgment against him.

It is probable, too, that the motive of Pilate, in restricting the choice of the people to these two persons, was the belief that they could not hesitate between these two, to ask for the release of Jesus; for Barabbas appears to have been one of those atrocious criminals for whom the people have no sympathy. Pilate probably thought that if the people should be allowed to make choice generally of any prisoner whom they desired, their choice might fall on some other person. Cer-

tainly they could not choose Barabbas, the worst of men!! So thought Pilate, perhaps. But all these expedients failed. The chief priests and scribes were inexorable, and their influence with the people was sufficient to frustrate all his plans. They submitted to this restriction, imposed arbitrarily, perhaps, by Pilate, and demanded the release of Barabbas, although, perhaps, he was the last man they would have chosen, except Jesus.

Let us pause a moment upon this part of Pilate's conduct. In the first place, he knew that the motive of the chief priests was envy. Mark xv. 10. He knew it was our Lord's boldness in reproving hypocrisy and vice—his disinterestedness, his virtue, his reputation, and influence, that provoked them. Yet he was willing to abandon to the caprice of the people, a man whom he knew to be innocent. He made the people judges in his place, and gave them the right to declare which in their opinion was the most deserving of their commiseration. Again, his proposal was to render to the Lord Jesus, as a favour, that which was due to him as a matter of justice—that is, give him permission to live as one pardoned from crime. It was a great injustice to place on a level a man he had declared to be innocent, who he knew was persecuted by envy, with an atrocious criminal—a murderer; and by so doing, he prepared the people, as far as he could, to regard them both in the same rank. It was a manifest contradiction—in one breath to say, I find no fault in this man at all—and in the next, to say you have a custom that I should release one criminal unto you at this feast, will you that I release to you the king of the Jews? Why release him as a criminal, if he had committed no crime? Pilate at first, perhaps, hoped the people would accept him, without thus putting him in comparison with another, and hence, according to John, he proposed him at first alone, calling him the king of the Jews, not in mockery, nor in the way of derision, but with the design to excite in the people a sense of pity, or of respect, or of shame. For opprobrium would fall on the nation, if a person avowing himself to be their king, should suffer capital punishment for that cause. All these shifts were utterly unworthy of Pilate's official character. He knew that laws are designed to protect the weak against the strong, and to afford an asylum to virtue.

It was at this stage of the proceedings, while sitting on the judgment seat, that his wife sent to him, saying:

MATT. XXVII. 19. "Have nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream, because of him."

By this circumstance we know that the fame of our Lord had

reached the family of Pilate. How Pilate's wife was informed of the business he was engaged about, we do not know, but she must have obtained the information that morning; because the Lord had been arrested late in the evening before, and was brought to Pilate at an early hour, and probably before she arose from her bed. It is not probable she had seen her husband since the commencement of the business, or she would have personally told him her impressions and her fears. Evidently she was deeply impressed with the urgency of the case, or she would not have resolved upon a measure so unusual. Unless this disquietude of her mind had been deep, it is not probable that she would have had the courage to interfere in this public way.

Some ancient authors have ascribed her dream to Satanic influence. Other authors have ascribed it to a Divine influence—the design being, as they suppose, to cast an additional restraint upon Pilate, as well as to attest publicly in this way the sanctity of our Lord's character as a man. The fact, however we account for it, is very interesting. Upon these opposite suppositions, we may remark the latter is the most probable. It would be easy to prove that the mystery of our Lord's person was at that time hidden from Satan and evil spirits, although they felt his power in a manner they could not resist. We have no reason to think that Satan ventured to approach his person, or directly to molest him, from the time he departed from him after his temptation in the wilderness, Luke iv. 13, until he entered into Judas the evening of the betrayal. At that time Satan was formally absolved from the restraint our Lord had exercised over him, and speedily destroyed his own power by accomplishing the death of the Lord Jesus. Heb. ii. 14. Had Satan been aware of this consequence of the death he was intent upon accomplishing, we may be sure, on the ground of our Lord's reasoning in Matt. xii. 24—26, he would not have instigated Judas, the priests, the Jews, and Pilate, to pursue the work of his destruction, and we have also for this opinion the authority of the apostle Paul. 1 Cor. ii. 8. The fact is, our Lord's Divine nature was hidden from devils, as well as men, and with it the mystery of redemption through his death. His resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to glory and power, revealed this mystery to Satan, but not to the masses of mankind, who are still deceived and led captive by Satan at his will. Those only of mankind who are taught by the Spirit of God, really comprehend this mystery even now. But a time is coming when it will be openly revealed to all men, and shall be universally acknowledged by all in earth and all under the earth, as well as in heaven. Philip. ii. 9—11. Those who have

entertained the first of these opinions, suppose that Satan began to perceive the true character of the Lord and the consequences of his death, and therefore adopted this means to prevent it, as if he had repented or changed his purpose. But it is more reasonable to suppose that Satan, as well as Pilate and the Jews, regarded him merely as a man, or as a mere creature, not as Jehovah incarnate. As to the other supposition, we know that in ancient times God imparted knowledge by means of dreams—as the examples of Pharaoh, of Nebuchadnezzar, and of Joseph, the husband of Mary, attest.

Whether the dream of Pilate's wife was divinely inspired, we are not informed. If God did not produce it, he permitted it, and the Evangelist thought it worthy of being recorded. Some suppose that the whole scene through which Pilate had passed, appeared to her in a vision, and that thus she was apprized of the transaction in which her husband was engaged. In this way they account for the haste and urgency of the message.

It is certainly true, that God sometimes warns men who are bent on wicked courses, in an extraordinary way. Of this Balaam is an example, and it is not incredible that God should in this way convey an intimation of the guilt he was incurring to Pilate.

One thing is remarkable—that while every Jew, so far as we know, was either an enemy of the Lord, or silent, Pilate and his wife were the only persons who publicly proclaimed his innocence—a sign, if we may interpret it by the event, that the glory of the true religion was departing from Israel for a time to rest upon the Gentiles.

The interruption occasioned by this message to Pilate was brief, and we are not informed of its effect on his mind. The chief priests and elders employed themselves in the mean time in exciting the multitude to the course they desired.

MATT. XXVII. 20. “They persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus.”

Pilate was waiting for an answer to his proposition, when he was interrupted by the messenger of his wife. Priests, scribes, and rulers, a numerous body, took advantage of the interruption to influence the people. We must imagine a large concourse of people around the judgment seat of Pilate on the pavement. This concourse was much larger, probably, than could be expected in ordinary times. The occasion of the Passover had brought large numbers from all parts of the country, to participate in the rites of the festival. We may safely believe many of these strangers were present, having been attracted by the fame of the Lord Jesus, as well as by the prominence given to the matter by the chiefs of the nation. We should try to pic-

ture to ourselves the zeal, the activity, the earnestness, of these bitter persecutors of the Lord. They are many—they compose the highest and most respected classes. Their influence as religious teachers with the masses is immense. Instantly they scatter among the vast crowd, and, like leaven, pervade and affect the whole. The affair had reached its turning point. Should the people choose Jesus, their labour was lost. No artifice, no calumny, is left untried—not an instant is left unemployed—every word uttered in favour of the Lord Jesus is rebuked or treated with contempt or scorn—the irresolution, the indifference, the inconstancy, the ignorance of any, is turned to their own account.

This scene is a lesson for all ages. How little reliance can be put upon the people—how little upon the favour of a judge, unless followed by a clear, decisive, and resolute judgment, which shall command the silence, if not the respect, of crafty calumniators. This very withdrawal of Pilate's attention from the matter in hand by his wife's message, brief as it was, became the occasion of frustrating the object he had in view, through the malice, activity, and artifices of the priests, and scribes, and rulers. As soon as Pilate was ready to receive their answer, the multitude cried out all at once, saying,

LUKE XXIII. 18. "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas."

Pilate was taken in his own artifices. His unjust policy was turned against himself. His proposal in a manner bound him to abide by the choice of the people. But being still desirous to release Jesus,

LUKE XXIII. 20; MATT. XXVII. 21. "He spake to them again, and said, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?"

JOHN XVIII. 40. "Then cried they all again, not this man, but Barabbas."

It is not probable that Barabbas was present. It is evident from the form of this answer that Jesus was, and that he stood in their view. Not *this* man, pointing, as it were, to his person, and not calling him by name.

The choice, thus repeated, was conclusive. Barabbas, though a robber and a murderer, was to be set free, and allowed once more to enter on his course of violence and bloodshed.

Here let us pause a moment. The choice of Barabbas is the most striking instance of popular depravity on record. Had Barabbas been the only prisoner in all Judea, why should the people ask that he should escape the punishment he so fully deserved? He was a seditious person, a robber, a murderer. But when put in the alternative with one who was well

known throughout Judea, Galilee, and all Syria as a benefactor, intent on doing good, having, as all acknowledged, the most extraordinary powers ever possessed by any of the sons of men—who had wrought innumerable miracles of healing, whose wisdom, and virtue, and eloquence had elevated him far above all their teachers, their choice of Barabbas and rejection of Jesus excites our amazement.

Some have supposed that the *name* of this atrocious offender against the laws of God and of man was really *Jesus* Barabbas. It is a fact also that several ancient MSS., the Armenian translation, and a Syrian translation from the Armenian, write his name thus. See *Mill's New Test.*, *Knapp's New Test.*, *Griesbach's New Test.* The Greek father, Origen, in his exposition of the Gospel by Matthew, observes that several MSS. did not prefix *Jesus* to the name *Barabbas*; leaving us to infer that the greater number did. On this ground many read Matt. xxvii. 17 thus: "Whom will you that I release unto you, Jesus who is called Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"

It was very singular that two persons bearing the name of Jesus should have been thus contrasted. The word Barabbas, if it has any signification, means "Son of the Father," and Jesus, we know, signifies Saviour. Hence that which was essential in our Lord, was in name transferred, so to speak, to this murderer, as if our Lord had exchanged his name with him upon taking his place.

But if we leave the surface of this transaction, and consider the Divine purpose concealed, another vein of reflection is opened. There was a *needs-be* that Christ, the holy and the just one, should die, or the whole race of Adam would be condemned to a second death, without hope of redemption. There was a *needs-be* also that Barabbas, a notable sinner, chosen on this occasion as the fit representative of the guilty race of our first father Adam, should be released instead of Jesus, or we had been still captives under condemnation by the Divine justice.

What Pilate ignorantly did in pairing off the Holy One, the true and only begotten Son of the Father, against a robber and a murderer, intimates to us what passed in the secret councils of the Father, when our fallen race was set in comparison or contrast with his only begotten Son. John iii. 16.

What the Jewish people did, when they denied the Holy One and the Just, and required that he should be put to death, and that a murderer should be released to them in his stead, teaches us the greatness of God's mercy and love to our race, when he delivered his Son for us in our apostasy and crimes. See John iii. 16; Rom. viii. 32; v. 8; John xii. 27.

The Divine mercy of the Father chose us, deserving as we

were of his infinite displeasure, in preference to his own Son, in whom he was ever well pleased. He preferred that he should for a time lay aside his glory, become incarnate, and be despised and rejected, loaded with insults, and reproaches, and stripes, and expire on the cross, rather than consent to the punishment of mad, ungrateful, impenitent slaves of sin and Satan, who were eager to imbrue their hands in the blood of his incarnate Son. Equal also was the mercy of God the Son, who laid aside his glory, and became incarnate only that he might become a victim and a sacrifice for our sins—it being impossible that any other victim should stand for them. See Heb. x. 5; and 1 Pet. iii. 18.

If we regard only Pilate and the Jews in this matter, it was an awful crime to release Barabbas instead of Jesus; but if we look at it as the necessary means appointed by the Divine mercy for redeeming the world from the power of Satan, and the curse, we see in it the greatest exhibition possible of the holiness, justice, and mercy of the Divine government. Had God treated sinners of mankind according to their guilt and desert, and the innocent according to his innocence, all our sins had remained on our own heads, and would continue so to remain for ever. But the Holy One and the Just himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. By his stripes we are healed. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

It is said of Barabbas, that he was a notable offender and a prisoner. The substitution of our Lord for such a person, holds out a hope of pardon and release to all others, however aggravated their crimes; and in the same way, the apostle Paul reasons: "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." 1 Tim. i. 16.

Some have found in Barabbas a figure or a representative of Adam. Adam was guilty of rebellion, of robbing God of the only thing in the earth he had reserved as a sign of his sovereignty, and of destroying his own race; Barabbas was a prisoner for the like offences—insurrection or sedition, robbery and murder. On the other hand, the Lord Jesus, as the head of a new race to be brought into being through his death, is elsewhere, Rom. v. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 45, put in a parallel with the first Adam and his race. The latter cannot live and rise to a new life without the former, and the former cannot render life to the latter, but by consenting to die in his place. Relations like these, in fact, existed between Adam and Barabbas on the one hand, and the Lord Christ on the other. The Divine

mercy required the choice which was actually made. Men and devils, in their madness and ignorance, concurred in bringing it about; but the love, and wisdom, and mercy of God controlled both to the accomplishment of his own designs. Thus all things unite—the crime, the mystery—the reasons, the motives.

The choice of Barabbas by the people brought the question back to where it was before; but with an increase of difficulty to Pilate. It was now no longer possible for him to release Jesus under the custom; yet there he stood bound. Still wavering and reluctant, he hit upon a still more objectionable expedient, that of *consulting the people* as to what he should do with the prisoner.

MATT. XXVII. 22; MARK XV. 12. “He said unto them, What will ye then that I shall do with Jesus, which is called Christ—with him whom ye call king of the Jews—seeing ye have chosen Barabbas to be released unto you?”

It is remarkable that Pilate in no instance said of the Lord that he claimed or pretended to be a king, or that he affected to pass for the Messiah. He was very exact in his expressions, and Divine Providence so ordered it, that he should avoid all mistakes on this head. Yet, on the other hand, Pilate does really and seriously ascribe to the Lord these characters or qualities, in his intercourse with the priests and people, so that by the very course of the proceedings, and the form of his judgment, the Jews did demand the crucifixion of their King and Messiah. He gave him this title also in the epigraph or superscription of the cross, and refused to alter a word of it, though the chief priests besought him to do so. “Write not ‘the king of the Jews,’” but that he said, “I am king of the Jews.” The priests desired Pilate to write what was not true, and Pilate firmly refused to do so. Yet Pilate did ascribe to him his true character repeatedly, and in this character, the Jews invoked upon him a punishment unknown to their laws. Pilate all along appears to have understood that the royalty he claimed was connected with the religious expectations and hopes of the Jews, and therefore was not more obnoxious to punishment than were their own religious expectations and desires. But to resume. The people, thus appealed to, as if their wishes were to be consulted in a matter of official judgment—

MARK XV. 13; MATT. XXVII. 22; LUKE XXIII. 21. “Cried out again,” “and all say unto him, Crucify him, crucify him, let him be crucified.”

How strange, how unnatural, that they should desire the infliction of a barbarous punishment, unknown to their laws,



which could never have been practised among them, had they not been a subject people. Pilate must have been greatly surprised by these boisterous, unnatural cries of the people. But he had exposed himself to the embarrassment their demand caused him, by putting the question to them, and by coupling with him Barabbas, who had been really guilty of three crimes which the Romans punished by crucifixion, especially when the offender was not a Roman citizen. Thus the imprudence of Pilate, and the crime of the priests and the people, prepared the way to the mystery of the cross, which, up to this moment, was so concealed and, to all human appearances, so incredible; although the Lord himself had predicted it just before the close of his ministry in the most express terms, and had alluded to it, in a way which is now very intelligible to us, soon after the commencement of his public ministry: "He that taketh not up his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me," Matt. x. 38; "If any will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me," Matt. xvi. 24; "And whoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Luke xiv. 27; see also Matt. xxiii. 34. These expressions show that the manner of his death was ever present to his mind. Yet there was nothing of this kind predicted in the Scriptures, which shows in a more clear light that our Lord's prophecy was Divine. Before he left Galilee, he predicted his crucifixion in the plainest language, so that his disciples could no longer misapprehend his words, although they could not believe them. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and they shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify," &c. Matt. xx. 18, 19. No crime was punished by the law of Moses, as we have said, by crucifixion, and the observation of John upon these words of the Jews is important: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death, that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled signifying by what death he should die." John xviii. 31, 32. The Romans, without knowing the prophecies or the prediction of Jesus, had made the necessary preparation for the accomplishment of both. Pilate, still unwilling to yield to the popular cry, expostulated, though feebly, instead of resolving to act firmly, relying on his own judgment and authority, Luke xxiii. 22, and the third time asked, "Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him."

Had Pilate been merely a witness, it would have been sufficient to have given the testimony. But *he was a judge*, and his duty included much more.

He was fluctuating between crime and virtue, through the desire to conciliate the passions of wicked, envious men, with his duty. A man may expect to lose the aid of his conscience, when he so far forgets its obligations as to deliberate whether he will obey or disregard its dictates. His disquietude foretold plainly enough his fall. Even then he had made up his mind to do an act of gross injustice; for he adds,

LUKE XXIII. 22. "I will therefore chastise him and let him go."

What! chastise a man in whom he found no fault at all, as he had declared a short time before! True, he now modifies the expression by saying, "I have found *no cause of death* in him." Whether this change of expression was designed and significant or not, we do not know. Perhaps he aimed to save himself from the manifest contradiction of proposing to inflict even the smaller punishment on one so entirely innocent of all crime. But what we ought particularly to remark, is the imprudence of Pilate, in proposing to inflict the punishment of scourging, without knowing that the enemies of the Lord would be satisfied with it. Yet he binds himself to this extent, while he leaves them altogether free. He was weak and cowardly to punish at all; and having inflicted the punishment proposed, we should have no reason to suppose he would be firm enough to discharge him. He showed his fear by yielding at all. He ought to have known the workings of corrupt human nature too well, to suppose that the furious passions of the priests and rulers and the populace would stop precisely at the point he should fix. The scourging which usually preceded capital punishment among the Romans, was an incitement to the people to persist in their demand. Accordingly, we find that the announcement of this purpose exasperated the multitude yet more, and perceiving the power they had acquired over Pilate by their vociferous demands, they resolved to exercise it; for as Mark and Luke both inform us,

MARK XV. 14; LUKE XXIII. 23. "They then cried out the more exceedingly, and were instant with loud voices, requiring that he should be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed."

Had Pilate been a just and a holy man, God would not have allowed him to be brought into so perilous a condition, which is as much as to say that he would not have been allowed to become the Governor of Judæa at that time. It may be that much better men than Pilate coveted the office, which Tiberius Cæsar, the Roman Emperor, conferred upon him. If the affairs of government were managed then as they are now, we can hardly doubt that the office of Governor of Judea was

greatly coveted and sought after by many who looked upon Pilate's success with envy. Yet when we look upon these times in the light of the Scriptures, and of those Divine purposes which were then to be fulfilled, we can see mercy in the failure of Pilate's competitors, and judgment upon Pilate. There was a *needs-be* that Christ should suffer at that time, by wicked hands, and it was so ordered in the providence of God, that the voluntary wickedness of Pilate and of that generation of Jews should be the instrument.

MATT. XXVII. 24. "When Pilate saw that he could not prevail, but rather that a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it."

Pilate resorted to this ceremony, probably while sitting on the judgment seat on the pavement in the open air, and of course in the presence of an immense multitude of Jews from all parts of the country. It is computed, by some authors, that at the festival of the Passover, there were three millions of people in and near the city of Jerusalem. See *Vossius' Harmony*, and *Josephus*. The object of the ceremony thus publicly performed was to clear himself of the guilt of the unjust and cruel judgment he was about to render. That such a ceremony had long been in practice among the Jews is proved by Ps. xxvi. 6, where David says, "I will wash my hands in innocency." See also Deut. xxi. 6. We also use a similar expression, which we derive from the same source. The ceremony was perfectly natural. It was a symbolical action, which was well calculated, under the circumstances, to make a deep impression. Every bystander on that occasion, though they might not have heard the words of Pilate, perfectly comprehended the meaning of this action. It is said that such a custom prevailed among the Greeks and Romans also. It is founded upon the idea, that sin and guilt is a pollution, which needs to be removed by a washing. It is not important to inquire whether Pilate had in his mind the Jewish or Roman custom. But how strange that a judicial officer, and a governor attended by an armed force, should resort to such a means to be rid of the guilt of an official act which he was about to perform, as if such a ceremony could prevent a stain of the guilt of an unjust judgment. While it convicted Pilate himself of the most criminal inconsistency, it was a most remarkable testimony to our Lord's innocence. We read nothing like it in history. Pilate is not content to declare several times publicly, in spite of calumnious accusations persevered in before the people, that he found no fault in him. Nor is it enough in his judgment to say in figurative language, that

he washes his hands of the business—that he takes no part in the accusations made against the Lord Jesus, nor in his death. He determines to perform a public ceremony, while sitting on his tribunal, in the view of the immense multitude gathered before it, consisting no doubt, as we have intimated, in part of strangers, whom the feast had brought to Jerusalem, as an attestation which could not be obscured or perverted; and as a proof to all time of the injustice of the act he himself was about to perform. He therefore took water, and probably in the most solemn and impressive manner he was capable of, washed his hands before the multitude, saying audibly, “I am innocent of the blood of this *just* one: ye shall see,” for such is the exact meaning.

If we reflect upon this transaction, it will appear very extraordinary. Nothing short of the wisdom and power of God could thus connect with the death of the Lord Jesus so many justificatory circumstances, without making them avail to his deliverance—circumstances which proclaim in the most impressive form his more than human virtue, and yet without preventing the accomplishment of those prophecies, which foretold that he should be numbered with transgressors, and be treated as though he were one. The whole proceeding, taken together, was a most solemn acquittal of all crime, followed by a punishment which was inflicted only upon great malefactors.

MATT. XXVII. 25. “Then answered all the people and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.”

These words were uttered in answer to those of Pilate, in which he vainly attempted to cast on the people the responsibility of the unjust act he was about to perform. Pilate had intimated to them his belief, that they should some day suffer for their cruel and unjust conduct, and the meaning of their response may be thus expressed: “Your fear does not affect us; we have no fear that the blood of this man, whom you call just, will be demanded of us or our posterity. We willingly consent to bear all the vengeance which the Divine Justice shall see proper to inflict. We consent to be responsible for whatever injustice there may be, and to bear the punishment of it.” There was, however, a meaning in these words which the blinded multitude did not intend, and which, nevertheless, has been fulfilled in respect to many of that race, and will yet be fulfilled in respect to the entire nation. “The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. It speaketh better things than that of Abel,” Heb. xii. 24; and this imprecation, uttered in the spirit of hate, at that time, will hereafter be uttered in the spirit of mourning and bitterness, and be answered with the greatest of blessings. Zech xii. 10.

MARK XV. 15; LUKE XXIII. 24, 25. "And so Pilate having resolved to content the people, gave sentence that it should be as they required, and he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was east into prison, whom they had desired."

Thus ended all Pilate's efforts to reconcile the demands of justice and his own conscience with his fears. With washed hands and a polluted mouth, he sends Jesus to the cross, while pronouncing him innocent; because he had not the firmness to resist men whom he contemned in his heart, and on other occasions had treated with great indignity. See note, *Pict. Bib.*, Matt. xxvii. 2, p. 73; John xviii. 12, p. 237. Yet Pilate has not been without followers in this particular, many of whom do not deserve to be compared with him in courage or solicitude to save the innocent.

JOHN XIX. 1. "Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him."

John is the only Evangelist who states this fact in positive and direct terms; although Matthew and Mark do so incidentally. Matt. xxvii. 26; Mark xv. 15. Luke records merely the words of Pilate, "I will therefore chastise him and let him go," without saying that this declaration of Pilate was executed. Luke xxiii. 16. But John, who states the fact positively, enters into no detail; yet insinuates that it was extremely cruel, inasmuch as it was done with the hope of softening the hard hearts of the enemies of Jesus, and to influence them not to demand his death. The Romans scourged with rods, or with whips, or thongs, which were often armed with little bones or knots. The term used by Matthew and Mark to signify *scourge*, is derived from the Latin *flagellum*, from which we get the word *flagellation*. *Flagellum* is derived from *flagrum*, a whip, or from *flagro*, to burn, on account of the burning sensation it occasions.\* There can be no doubt, from the terms used by Matthew, Mark, and John, that it was very cruel, and a literal fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah, liii. 5, 10, and l. 5, 6: "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastise-

\* The Roman method of scourging differed from the Jewish in several respects. The Jewish was limited to forty stripes, from which it was the practice to deduct one, either from motives of humanity or through fear of mistake. Deut. xxv. 3; 2 Cor. xi. 24. The Romans varied in the number. The Jews scourged with *loro vitulino*, a leather thong simply, according to the Rabbins. The Romans used rods, whips, or thongs (*aculeatis flagellis*.) as stated above. They also bound the person doomed to be scourged, to a column, having first entirely denuded the body, *abducite hunc intro atque astringite ad columnam fortiter*. *Plaut. Bacch.* Act iv., Sc. vii., *Cicero Orat. pro Rabirio*. See *John Leusden's Philologus Hebræo mixtus*, Dissert. 49th, part 2d. Some authors have undertaken to say how many blows were inflicted by Pilate's command on our blessed Lord; but they can have no means of knowing anything about it. See *Vossius' Harmony*, lib. ii. cap. v. § 17.

ment of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. . . . Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him," &c. These expressions, which are not exaggerated, signify more than we can imagine.

Scourging with the Romans was sometimes used as a species of torture. It was resorted to sometimes in order to extort a confession, as we learn by Acts xxii. 24. In the Apocryphal book called the Wisdom of Solomon, chap. ii. 19, we have some evidence of the use of torture among the Jews for the same purpose. "Let us examine him with despitefulness and torture, that we may know his weakness and prove his patience. Let us condemn him with a shameful death; for by his own sayings he shall be respected."

There can be no reasonable doubt that the bodily sufferings of our Lord were inflicted through the instigation of Satan. From the ending of the temptation in the wilderness, before our Lord entered upon his public ministry, until the night in which he was betrayed, Satan was like that unclean spirit, dislodged from his house, mentioned in Matt. xii. 43; see verses 27 to 29 also. Without penetrating the mystery of our Lord's person, he felt his own power crippled even by the Lord's presence. He could not resist his word. Observe his language during the temptation: "If thou be the Son of God," (or a son of God.) Matt. iv. 3, 6; Luke iv. 3, 9. Had he really known the Lord Jesus to be Jehovah incarnate, his Creator and the Lord of heaven and earth, it is incredible that he even should have approached him in the way of temptation; and although he spoke to him, as it were, doubtingly, as though he might be the Son, or a son of God, we have no reason to suppose he understood "the Son of God" to be God himself in the person of the Son, the second person of the Trinity, but rather a mere man, whom God had wonderfully favoured. The mystery of the incarnation was hidden from him, as well as from all created beings. This mystery was not disclosed until the resurrection. Rom. i. 4. Being ignorant, therefore, of the Divine nature of the Lord, when he was liberated from the restraint thus laid upon him, he was active in the infliction of sufferings, having already found that temptations by way of allurements could not influence him. It is remarkable, that although Satan was free to compass the death of the Lord Jesus, yet there was still one restriction laid upon him. For after he had entered into Judas, the Lord said to him, "that thou doest, do quickly." This permission gave him no power to prolong the sufferings of the Lord; for there was a necessity that he should suffer at that particular time.

What an exhibition this transaction gives us of the love of

God, and of the Son, in thus submitting to be treated as a condemned and guilty slave! And what an idea it affords of the severity of the Divine justice! How can the impenitent sinner escape this justice, if he treads under foot the blood of Christ as a common thing! What a commentary also is it upon the words of Paul in Heb. xii. 6: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," none excepted, not even his only begotten; who, though without sin, was not without chastisement. Fear not then the rod, but fear lest you may not be reckoned a son. So thought the apostles; for when they were beaten by command of the Jewish council, they departed rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus.

MATT. XXVII. 27; MARK XV. 16. "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus and led him away into the common hall, called Prætorium, and they called together the whole band."

The place from which they led him was the judgment seat on the pavement, where he had stood bound, in the view of Pilate and the multitude, without saying one word. The Prætorium, you remember, was Pilate's residence, and near by. The common hall was within the Prætorium. Some suppose that this expression should be translated into the court of the Prætorium. The meaning is, the soldiers of the governor led Jesus from the place where he was standing, before the palace of the governor, into an inner court, and into the palace itself. It appears from these verses that only a part, probably a small part, of the soldiers were present on the pavement at this time. The whole band here spoken of was a Roman cohort, which contained several companies, each consisting of one hundred men. Cornelius, mentioned Acts x. 1, was a centurion, or captain of one hundred men, in a cohort called the Italian. Julius, mentioned Acts xxvii. 1, was a centurion, or captain of one hundred men, in another cohort, called the cohort of Augustus. The officer who commanded the whole cohort, was called a tribune. The number of men composing a cohort is not certain. In fact, it was not fixed, nor always the same. Lipsius says the number was about five hundred and twenty.

The whole band or cohort having been called together, the tribune, of course, was at their head. We are to understand then, that the things next mentioned by the Evangelists were done by the tribune and the cohort, and the place where they were gathered must have been of considerable size. We must not confound this cohort with another which was assigned to guard the temple. This cohort depended upon the priests and Levites, to whose immediate command it was subject, but, of course, under the control of the governor. It was to this

cohort Pilate referred, Matt. xxvii. 65, when he said to the priests, "Ye have a watch," that is, a military guard, as is clear by Matt. xxviii. 12. It was this cohort also, or a part of it, which attended Judas to the garden of Gethsemane, and who were struck to the ground by the word of Jesus. John xviii. 3—6. The centurion spoken of in Matt. xxvii. 54, probably belonged to the cohort which was attached to the palace of Pilate, for the defence of the city, and not to that which was assigned to the temple.

It is not certain that all the soldiers did within the court of the palace, was done by the express order of Pilate, or within his view. We cannot doubt, however, that he permitted it, with the design to avoid condemning the Lord to death. He thought, probably, that the severity of the scourging would move the people to pity, and that they might, of their own accord, exonerate him from proceeding further.

If we suppose that these cruelties were inflicted by the tribune and his soldiers, without the express command of Pilate, what a picture it gives us of their barbarity! They had not the motives of the priests to incite them—they felt no envy. Nothing short of the satanic love of inflicting pain and torture could have influenced them; and there can be no doubt that they were instigated to these excesses of cruelty by Satan. But what we are especially to notice is, that in this part of the transaction the Jews had no share. It was the crime of the Gentiles. Yet it was the mad fury of the Jews that led to these excesses; for Pilate, had he been left to himself, would have let him go. Acts iii. 13.

But observe, this was but a repetition, though with greater severity, of the indignities practised but a few hours before, in the High Priest's palace, by the cohort attached to the temple; for we are told (John xviii. 22) that one of the officers struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, for which act Jesus reproved him, and afterwards the men that held him (Luke xxii. 63) mocked him, and some (Mark xiv. 65) began to spit on him; that they spit in his face, and buffeted him (Matt. xxvi. 67,) and then blindfolded him, and struck him in the face (Luke xxii. 64,) and in derision said: "Prophesy unto us, thou Christ; who is he that smote thee?" Matt. xxvi. 68. And many other things they said blasphemously, Luke xxii. 65, and even the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands. Mark xiv. 65. If we attentively consider the narrative, we may find for these indignities practised by the soldiers attached to the temple, the servile disposition to curry favour with the priests, which cannot be supposed to have influenced the soldiers attached to the palace of Pilate. In fine, we shall search in vain for any



explanation of the scene in the court of the Prætorium, but the instigation of Satan. The inhumanity, the insolence, their insulting conduct against a man whom the governor had declared innocent, repeatedly, in the most solemn manner, were the promptings of Satan, and designed to extort from him some sign or mark, by which that foul spirit could know who he was. It was inexplicable to him, that he had so suddenly acquired the ascendancy, as he supposed, over that mysterious man, whose very word had hitherto deprived him of all his power. We will now proceed with the narrative.

The whole cohort having been assembled in the court, Matt. xxvii. 28; John xix. 2, "They stripped him, [of his clothing] and put on him a purple [or scarlet] robe or mantle."

The Evangelists use different words to express the colour of the robe; but there is no greater difference between them, than between the words *red* and *reddish*. Purple is the more sombre, and scarlet the more lively colour. Some suppose that what we call *crimson* is the same colour which is here called purple.

Here, for the second time, we see Jesus, the Lord of glory, dressed in purple by men who made a mockery of his royalty. Herod and the Romans unite in this mockery of the King of kings, whose royalty both Jews and Gentiles shall one day acknowledge. Philip. ii. 10.

We see here, that these brutal soldiers take from him, and put upon him what they please. They strip him of his clothing, to increase his suffering under their scourging. He endures all without uttering a word, as though he were insensible. Read Psalm civ. 2; Luke ix. 29; Matt. xvii. 2, in this connection.

MATT. XXVII. 29. "And when they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand, and they bowed the knee before him."

It did not satisfy the cruelty of the soldiers to make a crown of a single thorny branch, but they interwove several branches, arranging the points of the thorns, it is supposed, so as to press upon different parts of the head. Nor was it enough simply to place a crown of ignominy and pain on his head, so as to rest there; but, as we may infer from the inhumanity of the soldiers, who affected to join cruelty to derision and mockery, they forced it on his head, and then smote him on the head thus covered, as we shall soon learn, Matt. xxvii. 30, with the reed they had placed in his right hand as a sceptre.

We are reminded by this passage of the primeval curse. God said to Adam, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." Gen. iii. 17.

The thorn and thistle are the exterior emblems of the curse, and thus regarded, they cover, as with a veil, things much more terrible—all the consequences of the curse—sorrow, suffering, toil, death. Lamech, the father of Noah, seems thus to have understood it, as we may infer from Gen. v. 29. But Noah, though his name signifies rest or comfort, did not make the earth less fertile in thorns, nor relieve man of the labour necessary to remove them. In Christ alone will the curse be removed, and it pleased the Almighty, not only to bruise him, but to pierce him with this emblem of the curse, which made Grotius say, “The curse began in thorns, and ended in thorns, but with the lily in the midst of the thorns.” See *Grotius* on Matt. xxvii. 29.

When the soldiers crowned the Lord with thorns, they crowned him with the emblem or symbol of the curse, so that Christ, as the second Adam, bore the curse pronounced against the first Adam.

MARK XV. 19; MATT. XXVII. 29, 30; JOHN XIX. 3. “And they worshipped him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands, and they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.”

There never has been, and there never will be, another example of such indignities borne with such patience. But nothing less could expiate and remove the curse. The Lord of glory, by whose power and providence the universe is sustained, silently and meekly as a lamb, bore the mockery of the licentious soldiery, as the appointed means of redemption. For says the prophet Isaiah, liii. 3, 4, “He is despised and rejected of men—a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief—and we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem him stricken and smitten of God, and afflicted.” This transaction in the court of the palace of Pilate, and that which had occurred a few hours before in the palace of the high priest, were the fulfilment of Isa. l. 6: “I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting.”

JOHN XIX. 4. “Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth unto you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.”

The context shows that Pilate went out of the *Pætorium* to the judgment seat, a little in advance of Jesus, having given orders to the soldiers to follow him with their prisoner. As soon as he had uttered the words just quoted, the Lord Jesus came within view, and Pilate added, “Behold the man,” an

expression much of the same import as "here he comes," or "here he is." But why should Pilate bring him forth for the reason he gave? We suppose that, according to the usual course of proceeding in such cases, the soldiers took the condemned person from the court of the palace directly to the place of execution; but this course was departed from by Pilate for the reason he gave. We must bear it in mind, that Pilate had already given sentence that it should be as they required, Luke xxiii. 24; and the scourging, and other cruelties inflicted in the court, were preparatory to the execution. Yet Pilate, as if the matter were still depending, interrupts the execution, in the way mentioned in this verse, and the sense of his words to the people may be expressed thus: "Although I have given sentence that this man should be crucified, and the soldiers have, by scourging, begun the execution of that sentence, yet, instead of sending him to the place of crucifixion, I bring him forth again to you, that you may know that I am most firmly persuaded of his innocence." He hoped that the inhumanity of the soldiers would excite their compassion. Pilate, in fact, employed every means to save Jesus, except one, and that was firmness, founded upon the purpose to prefer justice to every other interest or motive, without which even firmness can effect but little.

JOHN XIX. 5. "Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe"—

And, as there is reason to believe, bearing in his hand the reed. The purple robe was put upon him to deride his royalty, and that he still wore. Why not, then, the reed, seeing that had been put into his hands for the same purpose?

JOHN XIX. 5. "And Pilate said to them, Behold the man!"

We may regard this act of Pilate as the presentation to the people of the true Messiah they had so long expected—the most august function possible for any man in any station to perform. Yet a Messiah already rejected by the people whom he came to bless and to save; and through their means crowned with a diadem of thorns, livid with bruises, bearing in his hand a feeble reed, and covered by a purple robe, yet more deeply coloured with his own blood.

JOHN XIX. 6. "When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify, crucify."

Observe here a peculiarity. Before the scourging, the priests and rulers were successful in inciting the people boisterously to demand the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, Luke xxiii. 21; Matt. xxvii. 20, 22; but on this occasion it was only the priests and their underlings who cried out. The priests knew the effect such a sight would be likely to produce upon the people, and

they cried out the instant Pilate presented Jesus to them in such a pitiable condition, and excited those in their service to do so, probably in order to prevent the people from a moment's reflection, and to extinguish by their cruel cries any rising emotion of pity.

JOHN XIX. 6. "Pilate then saith unto them, Take ye him and crucify him, for I find no fault in him."

We are not to understand these words as a permission seriously granted the Jews to inflict that punishment. It was rather a reproach of their mad obstinacy. As if he had said, "Crucify him yourselves, if you dare to do so, but do not expect me to be the minister of your passions. You persist in saying that he is a guilty man, but you do not prove it. I have examined him in private and in public, and I find him innocent. I have already done too much. I have condescended to the utmost limits possible, and I am resolved to go no further." But Pilate, if such was his meaning, did not know his own heart. His conscience had too often suffered violence to retain its authority. He should have listened to its first dictates, then it would have served him at the critical moment.

We observe here another reiteration of the innocence of the Lord Jesus by Pilate, and that, too, after he had delivered him to be crucified. The providence of God so appointed it, in order to remove every pretext to future calumnies. The cross of Christ must not be dishonoured, even in the view of men, with the least suspicion, much less with the stain of personal guilt; for then it could not have been regarded as a voluntary sacrifice for the sins of others. The Evangelists who record these facts, wrote while they were fresh in the public mind, and they attested the truth of their words with their lives. The malice of the Jews was unable to invent anything to the contrary, which bore even the slightest probability of truth.

JOHN XIX. 7. "The Jews answered him: *We* have a law, and by *our* law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

Perhaps this verse should be read with an emphasis on the pronouns *we* and *our*. As if they had said, "However innocent he may appear to you, when judged according to your law, you should remember that *we* also have a law, binding upon him and all Jews, which *we*, as Jews, chiefly regard in this business, and which you also would be justified in regarding, by which he ought to die, and therefore it can be no crime or fault in you to adjudge him to be guilty of death."

Thus considered, this answer is an argument designed to

remove the scruples of Pilate, inasmuch as they alleged the existence of a law which would justify the judgment they demanded. But if such was their design, the argument had not the effect they desired upon the mind of Pilate, but rather the contrary. This they did not foresee. Yet Pilate, being a heathen and unacquainted with their laws, could not judge of them for himself, and he could not allow it to influence his judgment without consenting to be the instrument of their passions. But what was this law to which they referred?

It is very certain they had no law which appointed crucifixion as the penalty or punishment of any crime, but this was the kind of punishment which they required. This they knew full well, and therefore they were guarded in their phraseology. For observe, they did not say, "by our law he ought to be crucified," but "he ought *to die*, because he made himself the Son of God."

It is not clear what idea the Jews intended to impress upon the mind of Pilate, by this accusation, but it is very certain, from the discourses of the Lord Jesus, enforced as they were by his miracles, that they understood him to claim Sonship in the proper sense, and equality with the Father. This is proved by John v. 18. "Therefore the Jews sought to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." In this particular, the Jews of that day judged much more accurately of our Lord's words than the Arians, Socinians, and Unitarians of later times. Let us, however, examine the grounds of this accusation. We can suppose but two. They must have believed or held either that there was no such being as the Son of God in that sense, or if they admitted such a distinction of persons in the Divine nature, they intended to assert that the Lord Jesus had usurped the character without proving his right to it.

With respect to the first of these suppositions, their own Scriptures were against them, although it is quite probable they did not understand them. Paul applies the words in the 7th verse of Psalm ii. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, Acts xiii. 33, and the same expression he uses in Heb. i. 6, as evidence of his pre-eminence over angels, and in the same connection he cites Psalm xlv. 6th and 7th verses. "Thy throne, O God is for ever and ever, the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre." Heb. i. 8. And, in Rom. i. 4, he speaks of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus as a declaration of his Sonship attested by Divine power. Our Lord also applies to himself, in an argument with the Pharisees, Psalm cx., proving

that the Christ is the Lord of David. They felt the force of the argument, and if unwilling to admit it, were unable to answer it. Besides, the prophet Isaiah ix. 6, applies to him, among other names, these: "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Modern Jews have endeavoured to evade this passage by a different translation—Wonderful, Counsellor of the Mighty God, of the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. But we may ask with Paul, Who hath been the Counsellor of the Mighty God, but the eternal Son of God? Rom. xi. 34. See Prov. viii. 22—30; xxx. 4.

These passages, and many others that may be cited, prove that the foundations of the doctrine of the Trinity were firmly laid in the Old Testament, although the Jews, even the most learned of them, may not have clearly understood them; for Paul says, Acts xiii. 27, they "knew not the voices of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath day." Yet their ignorance of their own Scriptures was no ground for denying the existence of such a being as the Son of God, nor did it dispense them from the obligation to receive him, and believe in him. Even the ministry of the Lord Jesus would have been without effect, had he not declared to them his true character, and their belief in him and reception of him as a *mere man*, would have been imperfect, and even vain. This accusation, then, was one which must of necessity fall upon the Messiah promised by God, because it was necessary that the Messiah should not only be the Son of God, but declare himself as such. Even Caiaphas and the council appeared to have believed this; as we may infer from his question, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Mark xiv. 61, for it was upon his answer to this question, claiming that character, that they condemned him. Mark xiv. 62, 64. Let us come now to the second supposition, viz. that he usurped this adorable character, or assumed it without proof.

We may admit that such a claim could never be established by mere assertion or argument, or by any merely human testimony or proof. Divine though he was, yet his Divinity was hidden under a merely human form, without any external evidences which human perception could reach. His wisdom and eloquence were wonderful, but these might have been imparted by Divine influence to one of merely human nature. Hence it was our Lord constantly appealed to his works. "Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth, but I receive not testimony from man. John v. 33. But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works that my Father hath given me to do—the same works that I do, bear

witness of me. John v. 36. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." John x. 37. See also John x. 24, 25. And after the close of his public ministry, he said: "If I had not done among them works which none other man did, they had not had sin." John xv. 24. These texts are sufficient on this point.

It was the low estimate entertained, even by the most learned among the Jews, at that time, which led them to expect that the Messiah would openly claim his office, without respect to miraculous proof, which caused our Lord to say to them, "I have come, *in my Father's name*, and ye receive me not: If another shall come, *in his own name*, him ye will receive." John v. 43. And for the same reason, he predicted that many would come after him, in *his name*, saying, I am Christ, and should deceive many. Matt. xxiv. 5. So that the outward assumption of the office was one of the marks of a false Messiah—whereas the works which he performed, having been prophesied of and ascribed to the Christ, were the only incontestable proof of the true Messiah. Let us consider now for a moment the works he performed: Were there ever greater works performed, or more in number, by any one in human form? He healed the sick, cleansed lepers, cast out devils, opened the eyes of the blind, raised the dead, gave hearing to the deaf, and perfect soundness to the lame, by his mere word and will; and all these things he did to prove that he was sent by the Father; that he was the Son of the ever-blessed God; that he was one with him, and that he performed the same works as the Father; that he was the resurrection and the life. He declared that he had done, or that he was about to do, them, in order to attest these important truths. We may say, if such proofs were insufficient, it is impossible, in the nature of things, that the fact of Divine sonship can be proved to men.

It is true that our Lord performed before his disciples some miracles which the public did not witness. He walked on the sea, he withered a fig-tree by his word, he exerted his power over the fish of the sea, causing one of them to bring tribute-money to the hook of Peter. He was transfigured before three of them, and called Moses and Elias into his presence. He might have performed all these miracles before the priests and rulers, had it been consistent with the Divine purpose to do so. He might have overawed and overpowered them by assuming his glory before them, and caused the people to tremble as they did when he appeared to them upon Mount Sinai. But such evidence would have left their hearts unchanged, and it was not the Divine purpose that he should throw off the covering of his humanity to prove to them his Deity.

We conclude, then, that this second supposition is entirely groundless, and therefore this new accusation was an evidence both of their ignorance and their wickedness. We will now proceed to the next verse.

JOHN XIX. 8. "When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid."

This new accusation struck Pilate with great force, and he was unable at the instant to discover whether it was a mere calumny or had some foundation in fact. He must have observed something very mysterious in the silence of the Lord Jesus—in his superhuman patience and mildness, in his tranquil dignity under the greatest outrages—and it was impossible for him not to reflect, "If a man, what a man!" His answers were equally incomprehensible. He must have remembered that he claimed to be a king, but of a kingdom different from the kingdoms of this earth. He recollected, also, what he said of the object of his birth and mission into this world. What could these words mean? Then, again, the distressing dream of his wife, and her urgent expostulation. Perhaps, also, he had previously heard of his preaching, his eminent virtue, his wonderful works. Such considerations would naturally bring him to a pause, and lead him seriously to inquire what this new character or office, which he was accused of usurping, could be, and what were the grounds of his claim to it. Such reflections, also, would naturally excite regret, if not fear, for what he had done, and fear to proceed further. They would increase his perplexities and his desire to meddle no further in a matter where there was perhaps something supernatural and Divine. Perhaps, also, they inspired the hope that he might find by the investigation a way of escape from the danger of condemning a man not merely just, but of Divine origin. But the place where he then stood was unsuitable for such an investigation and calm reflection. He therefore,

JOHN XIX. 9. "Went again into the judgment hall [or rather Prætorium], and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou?"

The design of this question, it is probable, was not to ascertain his birthplace or family, as such a question would be understood in the ordinary intercourse of men; but rather to draw from him what Pilate supposed to be his secret in regard to his supernatural origin, not known to the public. We must bear in mind that Pilate was a heathen, and that his religion taught him to believe in the existence of gods and goddesses, who had given birth to heroes, and although he may have regarded such beings as fabulous, as many enlightened Romans did, yet what he had heard of the works of Jesus may have inclined him to believe that such beings might exist. Or he



may have had more elevated thoughts of Jesus, who acknowledged but one God, and yet claimed to be the Son of God. But without attempting to penetrate the motive of his question, it was aptly put; for in order to know the true character of our Lord, it was necessary to know his origin. The Jews knew him not, because they stopped at that which they thought they knew. They believed that the Messiah was merely a son of David. They knew not that he was also the Lord of David. "We know this man whence he is, but when Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence he is." John vii. 27. There was more truth in this language than those who uttered it were aware of. Nazareth, and the human relations of our Lord, and his education in the house of Joseph, concealed his Divine origin. These were the veils which prevented them from knowing whence he was. But to the question of Pilate,

JOHN XIX. 9. "Jesus gave him no answer."

The silence of our Lord in these circumstances, when a word might have confirmed Pilate in the high idea he began to entertain, is more astonishing, when judged of by the rules of human prudence, than his silence under humiliation and sufferings. Pilate thought probably that he was doing honour to the Lord Jesus to propose a question to him, which implied a doubt whether he might not be of nobler birth than most other men. He thought probably that self-interest, or a desire to escape punishment would prompt an answer, which might lead not only to the discovery of his innocence, about which, however, Pilate did not doubt, but of his greatness—of his relations with some deity—of his motives in thus coming among men to mingle with them, and which had induced him to suffer so much without a murmur or a word—of his own power and resources, and of the chastisements which would befall those who should dare to condemn him to death. But more than this, Pilate thought that he had the right to question the Lord Jesus about everything that regarded his condition and person, and to have an answer. In this, we need not say, Pilate erred greatly. It is not to such as Pilate, but to the humble, that the Lord reveals himself. It is to faith, the first of his gifts, that he grants all others. Pilate could not comprehend this mystery.

JOHN XIX. 10. "Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me?"

These words discover clearly the secret disposition of Pilate, and confirm the suggestions already made. His words may be paraphrased thus: "Is it for my interest that I inquire whence you are? Is it my condition or yours that is now in question? Is it not an extraordinary precaution which I am now taking in your behalf, to find out, if I can, whether there is not some-

thing extraordinary in your origin? Plainly, it is your interest to give me the information I desire upon a matter so important to yourself. Your silence is out of place, and will make you responsible for any mistake I may fall into. My duty is done when I have endeavoured to inform myself, but I go even beyond that. On the other hand, you, by your silence, make my good intentions and my pains useless." With such reflections Pilate would naturally endeavour to justify himself in his own eyes, and condemn the silence of the Lord Jesus. But there is another view of the matter. Pilate did not need light, but courage. He had repeatedly declared the innocence of the Lord Jesus, and he needed no further proof. He had already succumbed to the enemies of the Lord, though he knew their malice and hatred. The marks of cruelty which the Lord bore upon his person, were the effects of Pilate's guilty complaisance to the priests and rulers. There is no reason to believe that Pilate would have been more just or more firm had the Lord Jesus told him who he was or whence he came. He had no means of rescue but the exertion of the Divine power concealed within him, but it was not the will of the Father that he should exert it; for "how then could the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" Matt. xxvi. 54.

If we consider the object of Pilate's inquiry we shall see many reasons why his question should not have been answered. Pilate was a Gentile and an idolater, ignorant of the Jewish Scriptures. It was impossible for him to form any proper conception of the nature and office of the Messiah. Had the Scriptures, which described his greatness and his humiliation, his deity and his humanity, been read to Pilate, they would have appeared to him nothing less than absolute contradictions. Besides, it did not belong to Pilate's office, as a civil magistrate, to decide upon such questions, and it certainly was not for him to prescribe to the Lord of heaven and earth the time and the manner in which he should declare himself. A moment's reflection might have convinced Pilate, that if Jesus were in truth the Son of God, as his question supposed he might be, it was not his office to inquire into the reasons why he had concealed his Divine nature from the apprehension of men. What Pilate added was more objectionable,

JOHN XIX. 10. "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee and have power to release thee?"

These are the words of an arbitrary and unjust man. He had the power to do wrong, but no right to do wrong. This language was designed to inspire fear, and thereby extort the

information he required. But it took from him all excuse. By his own confession, he had as much power to deliver Jesus from the cruel malice of the Jews as to condemn him. Yet he had condemned him, while declaring him innocent; and also subjected him to a cruel scourging. If he had the power to do justice, why did he knowingly do injustice, and instead of being the master and ruler of the Jews, become their slave or their tool? But it is much more easy to boast of one's power and authority than to exercise either properly. It is much easier to covet high places than to fulfil the duties of them. The pride of a man in power is enough to make him formidable to his fellows, but it requires great virtue, as well as intelligence, to use power only for good ends. It is true, Pilate was profoundly ignorant of the august being whom he thus addressed. He had no conception that he himself would one day stand before the judgment seat of that man whom he thus addressed. But if it had been the humblest of Pilate's subjects who then stood before him, his language was unjustifiable in every point of view. Is justice nothing—is probity nothing—duty nothing? Is God's providence nothing, and the judgments of men—are they not subject to revision? Can one man be the god of another? Is it chance that puts one man in the power of another? Is the mere caprice of the stronger the proper rule for the exercise of his power? If not, then Pilate committed the most grievous errors possible. His words evince pride, as well as contempt of innocence and virtue.

JOHN XIX. 11. "Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above."

It is remarkable that these are the first words our Lord uttered, so far as we know, after his former private interview with Pilate, within the Prætorium, when he avowed his kingly character, John xviii. 37; although, in the mean time, he had been sent to Herod, and sent back by him to Pilate—re-examined by Pilate, in the presence of the Jews, and scourged by the soldiers, in the court of his palace. During all these scenes, and under all these indignities, he opened not his mouth, thus fulfilling Isaiah liii. 7.

It is to be observed, also, that what he said on this occasion was not an answer to Pilate's question, "Whence art thou?" That question he had answered before, when he said he was a king. John xviii. 37. What he said on this occasion was intended to instruct Pilate upon the point of his own authority, and to inform him, as we shall see presently, of the relative guilt of those concerned in this transaction. But why should he speak upon this subject, while he remained silent upon all

others? We suppose the reason is, that Pilate's remark trenched upon the honour of the Divine government, inasmuch as he claimed a power independent of the providential government of God.

Pilate derived his power from Tiberius Cæsar. Tiberius had been chosen by Augustus Cæsar to succeed him in the imperial office. Augustus Cæsar overturned the government of his country, and by military force, had made himself the master of the Roman people. He also enlarged his dominions by conquest. Thus we trace the power and authority of Pilate back to a usurpation. How, then, could Pilate's power be said to have been given him from above, that is, from heaven?

The answer is, that it came to him in the order of God's providence, and so was a derived and dependent power, and not one originating in human force or will. In proof of this, we may refer to Rom. xiii. 1, 2, where Paul instructs us in the true nature and tenure of all human governments: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God—the powers that be are ordained (or ordered) of God. Whoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." When Paul wrote this precept, Nero, one of the most cruel and unjust of men, swayed the empire. It is evident, therefore, that the precept was intended for all rulers and all ages. True, God does not directly choose temporal princes as he chose David, but his providence regulates and controls the events by which their powers and authority are established.

Observe now, that in this qualified sense our Lord admits the power of Pilate even over himself *as a man*; inasmuch as his words imply that Pilate is established in lawful authority by God's providence, and that it was not the Divine purpose at that time to prevent any abuse of the power which had thus providentially been placed in Pilate's hands; but rather to permit an abuse of it, for the execution of the purpose of redemption. If such was our Lord's meaning, we have no reason to suppose that Pilate comprehended it, and we must therefore receive these words as an instruction for the Church in all ages. The remaining words of this verse, and the last which our Lord ever addressed to Pilate, are these:

JOHN XIX. 11. "Therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

These words are a deduction or conclusion from the previous proposition. The fact that Pilate's power was derived from above, (that is, as we have explained, it came to him in the way of God's providence,) was the reason why Pilate's sin was

less than the sin of him who brought the Lord to Pilate's bar. To unfold this reasoning, we must consider carefully both the premises and the conclusion. And first, as to Pilate's sin: This did not consist in the mere fact that he took cognizance of the accusation made against Jesus. It was his business—his official duty to do so, and power had been given him from above for that purpose. His sin consisted in the abuse or sinful exercise of his legitimate powers—in his cowardice, his unjust regard to infuriated men, in his vain expedients to get rid of his duties, in the cruelties he had perpetrated under pretext of clemency, in his unjust judgment, in opposition to the known and declared innocence of the Lord Jesus. We may trace all these sins to one source—the fear of man. Had Pilate's courage been equal to his judgment and conscience, he would have soon put an end to the proceeding, and dispersed the boisterous crowd, if necessary, by the military force at his command, or if that force was unequal to the emergency, he would rather have sacrificed his life than his conscience. But sins springing from fear are less heinous in the sight of God than those which flow from envy and hatred. It is plain that Pilate wished to deliver the Lord Jesus, and equally plain that the chief priests and rulers wished to destroy him. They were active in bringing the object of their hate to the bar of Pilate, and malicious, as well as active, in making false accusations. It was Pilate's duty to hear them, but not to yield when he discovered their malice and falsehood. They pursued their victim hotly and with the malice of murderers: Pilate, through weakness and fear, yielded to their importunity and threats. This is one view of the matter. There is, however, a point of difficulty not yet noticed. Are the priests chiefly intended by the expression, "He that delivered me to thee," &c. We observe the pronoun is in the singular number, as though some *one* person was intended. "Therefore *he* that delivered me," &c. Let us attend first to the historical facts. Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus to the band, the captain, and the officers of the Jews. John xviii. 1—3. They led him to Annas, verse 13; Annas sent him to Caiaphas, verse 24; Caiaphas examined him in the presence of the officers, verses 19—22. As soon as it was day, he was taken to the council, and the elders, chief priests, and rulers came together, Luke xxii. 66; and the whole multitude took him to Pilate. Luke xxiii. 1, 10, 13, 14; John xviii. 28. To whom, then, does the word *he* refer? Some commentators say that the singular *he* is put for the plural, and includes Judas, the high priest, and the whole Sanhedrim. Diodati says it refers to the chief priest and the Jews. Adam Clarke thinks Judas and the Jews are meant;

Henry says either the Jews or Caiaphas in particular was meant; Doddridge says the Jewish high priest and the council. No doubt all these were guilty actors, and even more guilty than Pilate, for the reasons suggested. But is it not as true of them as of Pilate, that they could have no power over the Lord at all, unless it had been given them or permitted to them in the course of God's providence? Our Lord's remark to Peter at the time of his arrest is pertinent in this place: \* "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" Matt. xxvi. 53. And this also: "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." John x. 17, 18. These passages prove that none of these enemies of our Lord had any power over him at all but such as he himself permitted them to exercise. Does not, then, the reason assigned for the difference between Pilate and these others fail, if the view taken be the correct one? Let us attempt another explanation.

Turn to Gen. iii. 15, the first prediction and promise to fallen man—a prediction which in fact preceded the utterance of the curse. "And the Lord God said to the serpent, Because thou hast done this . . . I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise (or rather, crush thee, as to) thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." But in the meantime Satan (who acted by the serpent) acquired a dominion in this world of such a nature, that he is called in Scripture the god of this world, *ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος*

\* Peter's denial of his Master, Matt. xxvi. 69—75; Mark xiv. 66—72; Luke xxii. 54—62; John xviii. 25—27, is an ever memorable example of his weakness; and forms a strange contrast with his rash assault upon an underling of the high priest shortly before. Our Lord's reproof of Peter on both these occasions is very remarkable. That *for his denial* is a touching example of his tenderness, Luke xxii. 61; John xxi. 17; while that for his assault contains a pointed allusion to his want of consideration. This disciple, with only two others, had been privileged to witness the scene of the Transfiguration, and the glorious apparition of Moses and Elias in answer to his prayer. Luke ix. 29—31. The remembrance of this scene should have stayed his rash hand. Yet he acted as if it were needful that he should rescue or avenge his Master. None could understand better than Peter the point and force of the reproof. "Thinkest thou," Peter, thou who wast privileged to witness my glory and power, when Moses and Elias appeared in answer to my prayer—"thinkest thou"—whatever others not thus privileged may think—"that I cannot now," as easily as I did then, "pray to my Father and he will immediately give me more than twelve legions of angels" for my rescue. "But how, then, shall the Scriptures concerning my decease (exodus) at Jerusalem, of which Moses and Elias spake, 'be fulfilled?'" &c. The emphatic *thou* conveys an allusion to the peculiar privilege of Peter; the emphatic *now* to the time of the transfiguration; and the whole expression to the inconsiderateness of this disciple.

τουτου, 2 Cor. iv. 4—the prince of the power of the air, Eph. ii. 2—the prince of this world, John xiv. 30; xvi. 11—the power of darkness. Luke xxii. 53. See also Acts xxvi. 18; 1 John iii. 8; Rev. xii. 7—10; xx. 3. The power or dominion of Satan thus acquired, is altogether different from the powers of human governments. These are changed and overturned in the order of Providence, but the power which Satan acquired at the fall of man could be broken, consistently with the Divine justice, only by the incarnation and atonement of the Son of God. Hence John says, 1 John iii. 8: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested [that is, in the flesh,] that he might destroy the works of the devil;” and Paul teaches, Heb. ii. 14, that the Son of God became a partaker of flesh and blood, that through (or by the means of his) death he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil, who acted by the serpent spoken of in Gen. iii. 15. See Rev. xx. 2. These considerations show that Satan gained a power which in some sense was independent, inasmuch as it could not be defeated or destroyed, consistently with the Divine wisdom and purposed mercy towards man, except by a sacrifice of infinite price.

The time had now come when this sacrifice was to be made. Let us suppose the curse upon the serpent, Gen. iii. 15, had a reference to Satan—its terms imply a contest, or an assault, by him upon the predicted Seed. He had no power to crush the head of the woman's seed, that is, perpetually to retain the dominion he had usurped by the fall of Adam, but he had the power, in the figurative language of the prediction, to assault and wound the heel of the Seed; although the act was full of peril to himself, for his head or dominion, while engaged in that act, would be crushed and for ever destroyed. Although this prediction thus referred to Satan, yet the mystery which it concealed was hidden from him, 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8, and when the time for its fulfilment came, the deceiver was caught in his own craftiness. Job v. 13; 1 Cor. iii. 19. It is evident, also, from the temptation, that Satan did not comprehend the mystery concealed in our Lord's person, Matt. iv. 3, 6; Luke iv. 3, 9; yet until our Lord's public ministry was actually ended, he felt and acknowledged his power, and afterwards until he was released from it by these mysterious words addressed to Judas, after he had actually entered into him, John xiii. 27: “That thou doest do quickly.”

Thus released from the power he had hitherto felt, he entered quickly upon his work. In the person of Judas, he went to the hall of Caiaphas, prompted the words of Judas, instigated the chief priests, the Pharisees, the officers, and the band of armed men; proceeded with them to the garden; guided their operations

there, and at the house of Annas, of Caiaphas, entered with them into their midnight counsel; prompted all the acts of spite, indignity, and outrage which occurred there, and at the palace of Pilate. He was the chief actor, while Judas, the chief priests, and the Jews, were his guilty instruments. All this is implied in the transaction which was then to be performed. His power was then to be crushed, but in the way of a seeming victory. If then the death of the Lord on the cross, by means of Judas, the Jews, and Pilate, was foretold by the words, Gen. iii. 15, "thou shalt bruise his heel," they imply at the least, that Satan should be the chief actor in that conflict; and the same thing we conceive is implied in the words addressed by our Lord to those who came to apprehend him, Luke xxii. 53, "This is your hour, and" (the hour of) "the power of darkness" is the hour of Satan's power. Our Lord, therefore, in the words under consideration, regards this power as single or *one*, which he personifies in Satan. As if he had said, "Thou, Pilate, couldest have no power over me at all, except it were given thee in the order of God's providence, for the purpose of civil government. It is no sin in you to exercise this power for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, nor even to take cognizance of all questions which are brought before you. But he that delivered me to thee does not act by a delegated power, and under God, but by a usurped power in opposition to God, which it is God's purpose to destroy in the only way possible, consistently with the honour of his government, and purposed mercy to sinners of mankind. Your sin, and even the sin of the chief priests and Pharisees, is pardonable, Luke xxiii. 34, through the blood which you are now about to shed. But the sin of the chief actor is unpardonable, 2 Pet. ii. 4; although he is as ignorant as you are of the mystery of redemption, and of the far-reaching consequences of his conduct in this matter."

We are justified, we submit, in taking this view of the passage. Our Lord did not, it is true, name Satan. It was not necessary to do so to Pilate. He was incapable of understanding more of his meaning than these words conveyed. But if we exclude the agency of Satan from this transaction, where, when, or how, we may ask, did the predicted conflict, Gen. iii. 15, take place? Let the reader pause to answer. Besides, the death of the Lord Jesus was accomplished at that time, and the power of death is expressly ascribed by Paul to Satan. Heb. ii. 14. Some have supposed, as Baxter, that ordinary sicknesses, as well as death, are inflicted by Satan, partly upon the ground of this passage; but we may, perhaps, give the apostle's words a more restricted meaning, by connecting with them an allusion



to Gen. iii. 15, and the method of atonement thereby appointed. For although the work of redemption was voluntarily assumed by the Son of God, Philip. ii. 7, yet having assumed it, there was a Divine necessity that he should submit himself to the power of Satan, for the undergoing of these sufferings and that death which were the appointed means of the redemption of the world, and the destruction of Satan's power over it.

This explanation of the passage may seem diffuse, but greater brevity would have left it obscure. Let us now proceed.

JOHN XIX. 12. "And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release Jesus."

We learn by these words the impression our Lord's answer made upon the mind of Pilate. Prisoner though he was, the Lord replied with the utmost tranquillity and mildness to the implied threat; yet he charged the guilty governor with sin, and in so doing, he acted really as his judge. Pilate's conscience felt the truth of the charge, and he sought, no doubt, anxiously to relieve himself, by releasing his prisoner. Our Lord's demeanour could not be otherwise than divinely impressive. It was impossible that Pilate should not perceive something mysterious and even supernatural in the patience and silence of the Lord Jesus—something beyond his power to comprehend, or even conjecture. It ought to have determined him unalterably to take no further step towards his condemnation.

Had Pilate acted with his usual resolution, there can be little doubt that he would have released the Lord, and taken his person under his protection. But he was a bad man, and, like Judas, was given over to the invisible power of Satan. He said the truth, when he affirmed he had power to release. He was under no irresistible constraint. He had a body of armed men at his command. The fortresses of the city and of all Judea were under his control. And it would have been easy for him to justify his act to the Roman Emperor, by a simple narration of the facts. Yet he allowed himself to be overcome by a threat from those whom, on other occasions, he had treated with contempt.

JOHN XIX. 12. "But the Jews cried out, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar."

The reader perceives here that the Jews abandoned their last accusation, and returned to the first, which Pilate had so often discarded, and even the Jews had abandoned. These inconsistencies prove their malice. But who would have thought a Roman governor needed the exhortations of Jewish priests to be faithful to the Emperor! Their zeal was certainly misplaced.

It was neither sincere nor pure. It is an example of religious bigotry, always malicious, invoking the aid of the secular power in furtherance of falsehood, when all other means failed. Besides, their charge was of a nature to fall directly upon the true Messiah, whoever he might be—even on the Messiah they expected. It was made also in opposition to the known fact, that the Lord Jesus expressly disclaimed interference with the temporal power, and had virtually enjoined on them the duty of paying tribute to Cæsar.

JOHN XIX. 13. “When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in the place that is called [in Greek] the *pavement*, but in the Hebrew *gabbatha*, and it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour, and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your king.”

It appears by the connection, that Pilate had left Jesus in the Prætorium at the close of the last private interview, and went out to the pavement to expostulate with the Jews upon their cruel and unjust demand. What Pilate said to them John does not record, but only the answer of the Jews to Pilate’s expostulation: “If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar’s friend,” &c. Upon hearing these words, Pilate retired into the Prætorium, where he had left the Lord, and brought him forth, and sat on his judgment seat. It is not improbable that the Lord stood near him, as conspicuously in view as Pilate. We have already remarked upon the august function Pilate performed, when he brought him forth from the court of his palace, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe; although Pilate was not on either occasion aware of the nature of the act he was performing. But hitherto this presentation of the Messiah to his people by Pilate, was in a manner indistinct. It was the purpose of Divine Providence that it should be now repeated as a distinct act, unconnected with anything else. This last scene in the transaction seems designed for that purpose. Pilate does not appear to have intended derision or mockery of the Jews on this occasion; but if such had been his motive, the act was providentially ordered for a very different end. Let us lay Pilate out of view, then, for a moment, and consider his act and his words, with the response of the Jews. Try to imagine this scene. There stood the true Messiah in full view of a vast multitude, gathered from all parts of the country, including their priests and their rulers. Pilate says in their hearing, suiting, perhaps, his action to his words, “Behold your king.” They instantly cry out with violence and passion, “Away with him, crucify him!” Thus, when formally presented, they again reject him, and demand his death. To

remove all ambiguity, Pilate was prompted to put to them this one question—"Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered in the name and on behalf of the nation, "We have no king but Cæsar." What Pilate said when he thus, for the last time, presented Jesus to them, was true. *He was their king.* In this act Pilate was the instrument of Divine Providence, and his words, heathen as he was, were dictated to him. Pilate spoke them not of himself. They were the words of God, as the words of Caiaphas were, when he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. John xi. 49—52. The rejection of him by the people and their rulers was formal and explicit. The place, the day, the hour, as well as the declaration of Pilate, and the answer of the Jews, rendered it the most solemn, most awful transaction this world has ever witnessed, except the scene of the cross which soon followed.

It would be difficult to determine the idea which Pilate had of Jesus, when he inquired, "Shall I crucify your king?" We have no reason to suppose he was instructed in the Jewish Scriptures, although there is reason to suppose he began to entertain a higher idea of the character of Jesus than ever before. But the answer of the chief priests, considered without reference to the thoughts of Pilate, was a plain rejection of the Messiah promised them in the Scriptures, and a formal, solemn renunciation of the national expectation and hope. "We have no king but Cæsar." They do not say to Pilate, "He is not our king whom you propose to us as such; he is an impostor—a deceiver. The Messiah and king whom we expect will bear a different character, and furnish us with other proofs of his title." On the contrary, they renounce all the promises made to Abraham and David; they cut themselves off from the house of David as effectually as the ten tribes did, when they said, "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the Son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel." 1 Kings xii. 16. Judging them by these words, they regarded as a vain thing the great and glorious hope of Israel, and renounced all that was essential in their religion, when they proclaimed that a foreign, heathen prince—an enemy of their religion, was their only king. They gave Pilate to understand that they neither desired nor hoped for any other. But was it in Cæsar, we may ask, they expected the fulfilment of those Divine promises made to David? "I will set up thy seed after thee. . . . I will establish his kingdom. . . . I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever." 2 Sam. vii. 12—16. "In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." Ps. lxxii. 7. Was it to Cæsar that God had promised with an oath, "The Lord hath sworn and will

not repent; thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec?" Ps. cx. 4. Was it of Cæsar that God by the mouth of David had said, "His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him. All nations shall call him blessed?" Ps. lxxii. 17. How, then, could they say, "We have no king"—we desire no king—we hope for no king "but Cæsar?"

God took the nation at their word, in answer to Pilate. He abandoned the nation to Cæsar, according to their choice. Never since have they had a king of the house of David, or of their nation. They have no priesthood, nor sacrifice, nor commonwealth, nor liberty. From that time to this, they have been subject to foreign powers, and the land of the Covenant has been trodden down by the Gentiles; thus fulfilling the words of their own prophet, Hosea iii. 4: "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." See Luke xxi. 24; Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.

These dreadful judgments and long-continued desolations they invoked upon themselves. Yet for all this, their rejected Messiah will yet have mercy upon them for their fathers' sake. Rom. xi. 28. For the same prophet adds, Hos. iii. 5: "Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." See Matt. xxiii. 39.

We may dwell here a moment on some of our Lord's allusions, during his public ministry, to this final and formal rejection of himself by the nation. "Oh that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes; for the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Luke xix. 41—44. See Matt. xxii. 7; xxi. 41—43; Luke xix. 14, 27.

These predictions of our Lord were executed by the Romans and that Cæsar, or that Gentile power, which they preferred to Jesus. They were oppressed by Caligula, the successor of Tiberius. Nero punished them for that revolt into which they had been goaded, by the entire desolation of Galilee. They suffered almost incredible evils in the siege of Jerusalem, which was taken the first year of Vespasian. One instance may be mentioned. A large number of Jews, oppressed by famine, and not being able to endure the tyranny of a party of their own people, endeavoured to escape from Jerusalem, and make

their way through the besieging army by artifice or by force. But they all fell into the hands of the Roman soldiers, who, after cruel flagellations and all sorts of tortures and indignities, crucified them upon the ramparts opposite to the wall. They crucified five hundred and even more daily, until there was no more space to plant crosses, and no more crosses upon which to hang victims. *Josephus*, lib. i. cap. 12. Thus God delivered this people into the hands of their enemies, who executed the Divine judgments, and from that time the Theocracy has altogether been withdrawn from Israel.

Our Lord foretold these dreadful judgments in the parable of the marriage, recorded in Matt. xxii. 7; and from that day to this, the Jews have been living witnesses of the Divine mission of the Lord Jesus.

JOHN XIX. 16. "Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified, and they took Jesus, and led him away;" or, as Luke expresses it, xxiii. 24, "he gave sentence that it should be as they required."

Thus ended the proceeding before Pilate, and thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah liii. 8: "He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he smitten;" or, as a learned Jewish translator renders the clause—"Through oppression and through judicial punishment, was he taken away; but his generation—who could tell?"

We are not to understand by these words that the Jews took our blessed Lord to Calvary, and with their own hands nailed him to the cross. The centurion and the soldiers executed the sentence of Pilate, as we learn from the succeeding narrative. Besides, we know from other sources, that among the Romans, soldiers took the lives of those whom the magistrates had condemned to death. Thus both Jews and Gentiles concurred in the accomplishment of the mystery of redemption. The Jews demanded the death of their King and Saviour at the tribunal of Pilate, and he gave sentence that it should be as they required. Gentiles then nailed him to the cross. Both were inexcusable while accomplishing that act, through which alone can either Jew or Gentile hope for salvation.

Pilate retained his office some two or three years after these events. According to *Josephus*, the Jewish historian, he was guilty of great oppression and of other misconduct, for which he was deposed from his office in the last year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, A.D. 36—7. *Eusebius* informs us that he was exiled to Vienna, a town in Gaul, situated on the Rhone. Herod Antipas suffered a similar end. According to *Josephus*, he was

banished to Lyons, which was a few miles north of Vienna. See *Josephus Antiq.*, xviii. 5; *Tacitus, Annals*, xv. 44.

MATT. XXVII. 3—5. "Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, (μεταμεληθεὶς) and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself."

This incident is brought in by some harmonists at this juncture of the proceeding, though it may be questioned whether we should not assign to it an earlier place. However that may be, it shows us that while Judas was touched with remorse, and would gladly have undone his deed, the priests and elders were inexorably resolved to accomplish their purpose. Deep must have been the anguish of the traitor to vent itself in such acts! Yet the Evangelist employs a word to denote it which does not allow us to suppose that his repentance was genuine. Some authors understand the word, (ἀπγγξαστο) translated "hanged himself," as signifying merely that "he was suffocated or strangled," and the learned Lightfoot takes it in that sense. He supposes that Satan, having taken corporeal possession of Judas, was permitted to destroy his life by a direct act of power in an extraordinary way, and that he did so at the moment of quitting possession of his person. Certain it is, there was something in the manner of his death so remarkable as to be generally spoken of as such by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Acts i. 18, 19, which serves to distinguish it from a common case of suicide. So Lightfoot argues, see his *Harmony*, and his *Works*, vol. ii. pp. 384 and 690.

MATT. XXVII. 6, 7. "And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for us to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in."

If Judas approached the priests during the proceeding before Pilate, it is not probable his interview with them was more than momentary. Nor is it probable they consulted together, as we are informed they did in these verses, before the awful tragedy was finished. Judas, finding they were remorseless, cast the money down in the temple as a detestable thing, and immediately departed. The resolution of the priests concerning this money shows the irregular workings of conscience in depraved men. The law they would not violate. Yet they would take the money, and even dispose of it. But because they had once paid it away to a traitor as the price of blood, it

could not be put back into the Corban, or sacred treasury, from whence, without scruple, they had taken it to buy that blood. See Deut. xxiii. 18. Still something should be done with it for a charitable end. They resolve, therefore, to buy the potter's field for the burial of strangers—probably Gentiles, though some suppose it was intended for the burial of persons who came to Jerusalem for religious purposes and died there. The potter's field is here spoken of as a place well known. The use which had been made of it would naturally give it notoriety with the people generally. Probably it had been exhausted of its clay, and abandoned as no longer of any value, otherwise it is not probable it could have been purchased for so small a price. Could they have looked only a few years into futurity, they would have seen how useless this provision would be, either for themselves or strangers.

MATT. XXVII. 8. "Wherefore that field was called [has been called] the field of blood until this day."

From Acts i. 19, we learn that the field was called in the dialect of Jerusalem *Acel-dama*, or *Hakal* (field,) *dama* (blood.) It was situated near the southern quarter of Mount Sion, according to Jerome, and was so called, not only because it was the price of blood, but was the place where Judas himself perished. See Acts i. 18, 19, and Lightfoot on that passage. It is remarkable that the name of the field should be changed for the reason here mentioned. It is not easy to bring the common people to change the name of a public and well known place. Why not call it still "The potter's field?" or if the name must be changed, why not denominate it from the new use to which it was to be put—"The field to bury strangers in," or, as we should say, "The strangers' burial-ground?" The change certainly could not have been made by the disciples of the Lord, nor was it made to honour him. According to Luke, Acts i. 19, the name served rather to perpetuate the crime of Judas, and according to Matthew, the crime of the priests also.

MATT. XXVII. 9, 10. "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."

The passage here cited is found in Zechariah xi. 13, and not in Jeremiah. Some have accounted for the discrepancy by saying that the later prophets were accustomed to repeat the predictions and the language of their predecessors. Compare Jer. xxxi. 29, 30, with Ezek. xviii. 2, 3, 4. Zechariah especially was accustomed to use the words of Jeremiah—so

much so, that the Jews had the saying, that the spirit of Jeremiah was in Zechariah. On this ground, some have supposed that the prophecy here quoted was first uttered by Jeremiah, and afterwards repeated by Zechariah. See *Grotius*. Others account for the discrepancy in this way: They say that the name of Jeremiah stood first in the book of the prophets, and that it was the intention of the Evangelist to quote from the volume under his name, not to cite the particular author of this prophecy. In the same manner it is supposed our Lord (Luke xxiv. 44) intended to include under the title of "the Psalms" the whole of the Jewish Hagiography, because the Psalms stood first in that division of the Jewish Scriptures. See Less. pp. 352, 353. This is Lightfoot's explanation (see his *Harmony*.) Passing this matter, which is of minor moment, as the authenticity and inspiration of the passage cannot reasonably be doubted, we add a word or two on the quotation itself.

If we turn to the prophet Zechariah, xi. 13, we find that God, under the parable, or rather in the character, of a shepherd, demands of the Jews his price or reward for the blessings he had conferred on them, in guiding and instructing them. They give him the niggardly sum of thirty pieces of silver—the price of a slave who had been pushed or gored by an ox. Exod. xxi. 32. Disdaining the gift, God commands the prophet to cast the money to the potter. The prophet obeyed by casting it into the temple for the potter. Thus, what was typically done by the prophet was actually carried out in the person of the Great Shepherd. 1 Pet. v. 4. The priests actually paid to Judas for the person of the Lord Jesus the thirty pieces of silver, which he brought back to them, and when they would not receive the pieces, he cast them down in the temple as the prophet did. These same pieces the priests paid away again to the potter for his field.

This passage, Matt. xxvii. 3—10, is evidently a digression from the general course of the narrative. If we read verses 1 and 2 in immediate connection with the 11th and the following verses, we perceive no break in the sense. By introducing this passage in the history of Judas at this place, the Evangelist gives us reason to suppose that it followed immediately upon our Lord's condemnation by the Sanhedrim, and before the proceeding before the Roman governor was commenced, and such we suppose the correct view, although Cradock, Newcome, and Dr. Robinson introduce it immediately after the condemnation of Jesus by Pilate. John xix. 16. We now return to the narrative.

JOHN XIX. 16. "And they took Jesus, and led him away."



The act of Pilate last mentioned, was the presentation of Jesus to the Jews as their king, and their rejection of him in that character. It took place, it will be remembered, at the judgment seat in front of the Prætorium. From that place they—the soldiers—led him away to the place of crucifixion.

MATT. XXVII. 31; MARK XV. 30. “And after they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.”

The mockery here spoken of was that barbarous sport which the soldiers made of the Lord of glory, delivered into their hands by Pilate to be put to death. At the conclusion of it they took off the royal robe, but not the crown of thorns, at least it is not said they did, and put upon him his own clothes. Thus we see the final scene of his suffering was delayed a little, in order to allow opportunity to heap on him new insults and indignities. Such conduct in the case of the vilest and most odious malefactor would not be tolerated among a people enlightened by the doctrine, and imbued, in ever so slight a degree, with the spirit of this Jesus who so meekly bore it.

It was the custom of the Jews to conduct outside of the camp or of the city those who were condemned to death, as we learn from Numb. xv. 35; 1 Kings xxi. 13. The Romans had the same custom, *Hirtius de Bello Africano*, *Seneca*, *Vegetius*, *Plautus*, *Mil. Glo.* act ii. sc. 4; *Sueton. in Claudio*, cap. xxi.; and it was observed in the case of the Saviour. But there was much more meaning in their leading the Saviour out of the city than a mere conformity to Roman or Jewish customs. Our Lord had predicted this in his prophetic allegory of the householder, Matt. xxi. 39; and the apostle Paul finds in it the fulfilment of the typical import of Levit. xiv. 11, 12; vi. 30; compared with xvi. 27. “For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest, are burned without the camp. Wherefore, Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” Heb. xiii. 11, 12.

The body of our Lord, considered as an offering for sin, therefore must needs be taken without the city, while his blood was offered, not within the temple by the Jewish high priest, but was presented by himself, the true High Priest, within the holy place of the upper sanctuary, having obtained thereby for his people eternal redemption. Heb. ix. 11, 12; x. 12.

JOHN XIX. 17. “And he, bearing his cross, went forth into a place called ‘The place of a skull,’ which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha.”

We are told that it was the usage of the Romans to compel those who were to be crucified to bear their own crosses. And

there are some evidences of such a usage. A heathen author says: "Qui in cruce figendus, prius ipsam portet," *Artemidorus*, l. 2, cap. 61, 'Ὀυεζροζρict.; and Plutarch says nearly the same thing: "Corpore quidem quisque maleficorum suam effert crucem." *Lib. de Tardâ Dei Vindictâ*. See *Vossius' Harmony*. There may be some reasonable doubt, however, whether this custom was universal. The Evangelists do not inform us that the two malefactors who were crucified with Jesus bore their crosses, and the Evangelist John, by noticing this fact, which the other Evangelists omit, seems to denote it as peculiar—and if peculiar, how significant! But whether so or not, the fact is recorded to show the sufferings with which it pleased the Father to afflict his beloved Son. And what a spectacle! The Son of God, in his human nature, bending under the weight of a cross!—a spectacle at which impiety scoffs, but in which faith perceives a great mystery. It reminds us of the offering of Isaac by Abraham at the command of God. Gen. xxii. 3—6, probably on the same place. The bearing of the cross may perhaps also have been intended as an act emblematical of the bearing of our sins. 1 Pet. ii. 24; Isa. liii. 6.

LUKE XXIII. 26; MARK XV. 21; MATT. XXVII. 32. "And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus; him they compelled to bear his cross: and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus."

This circumstance is not mentioned by John; and it may be observed that John's account does not contain a full representation of the crucifixion. Luke supplies several circumstances which add vividness to the dreadful scene, and Matthew records some which the other Evangelists do not mention. This we shall observe as we proceed. We have no reason to regard the act here mentioned as dictated by humanity, but rather by a desire to hasten the execution. Contrary to usage, they scarcely allowed time for him to be conducted to the place of execution; and seeing him bowed down with the weight of his burden, they violently constrained a poor African—a stranger whom they chanced to meet—to bear the cross. The sufferings which had been inflicted upon the human person of our Lord in the garden, in the palace of the high priest, and in the court of the Prætorium, had nearly exhausted his human frame, so that he could not advance with the speed which the maddened haste and hate of the high priests required. While, however, we attribute this weakness to natural causes, we must not forget that his word, at that very moment, could have prostrated them all at his feet, as it did a few hours before, in the

garden. But it was the Divine will that his human person should thus suffer, not only by stripes and bruises, but with a natural failure of its physical energies. Properly considered, it was one of the means which Divine wisdom appointed to conceal his Divinity within his humanity, not only from men, but from Satan, the chief adversary.

From the time of our Lord's baptism, Satan, we may safely believe, had been endeavouring to fathom his nature. He first put it to the trial of allurements. These having failed, he tried the course of torture and ignominy. The superhuman patience of the Lord must have increased his fears and his doubts; while the physical weakness of his body would naturally tend to allay, if not to remove his fears, as being inconsistent with the character of the Son of God, which he claimed.

It has been made a question, whether Simon was a Jew or a Gentile. Some of the early Christian writers maintain that he was a Gentile, and therein they find an allegorical intimation of the future call of the Gentiles. Judging by his name, however, we should incline to the belief that he was a Jew. His residence, also, it is probable, was at Jerusalem. It is not an objection that he was a Cyrenian by birth, inasmuch as we learn by Acts vi. 9, and ii. 10, that many Jews from the city or province of Cyrene resided at Jerusalem. Cyrene was the capital of Libya, or rather the Pentapolis. Besides, Josephus, *Jewish War*, book vii. chap. 38, informs us that many Jews lived in that country. However this may be, the honour thus put upon him, though no honour was designed, was not the result of chance. God so ordered it that this man should be the first associated with Christ in the actual bearing of the cross, and in sharing of the ignominy and shame of it. On the part of those who thus rudely forced him to this service, it can be regarded only as an outrage, such as might be expected from a lawless mob; but wherever the gospel has been preached, this service has been told for a memorial of him. Matt. xxvi. 13.

Some have conjectured that Simon was returning from a little farm, owned or occupied by him in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, when all at once he found himself in the midst of a great tumult, the cause of which was unknown to him, and that suddenly he was forced into a service proper only for condemned criminals. His sudden arrest would naturally excite alarm for his own safety. Some interpreters suppose that Simon alone bore the cross; but from the language of Luke, we may perhaps infer that he bore only a part of the weight, following after Jesus. See *Vossius' Harm.*, lib. 2, cap. vi., sec. 7. But what must have been the feelings of Simon after-

wards, when he knew the true character of the man whom he thus followed, and whose burden he thus shared! With what force, too, must these Divine words have struck his mind, when he remembered this event! "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Matt. xvi. 24. Grotius, a commentator not much inclined to mystical interpretations, finds in this event an intimation of the call of the Gentiles. For Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus, the former of which names is derived from the Greek language, and the latter from the Latin. The union of these Gentile names under that of their father, which is Hebrew, seemed, as Grotius thought, to intimate the union of Gentiles with Jews, under the banner of the cross of Christ. However this may be, these three persons were undoubtedly well known to the first readers of the Gospel of Mark.

LUKE XXIII. 27. "And there followed him a great company of people and women, which [*ai* women] also bewailed and lamented him."

This incident, and the reply of Jesus to these demonstrations of pity, are mentioned only by Luke, and they add a deep and melancholy interest to the scene. It is to be observed, also, that the words which follow are the first uttered by the Lord Jesus after those he addressed to Pilate. John xix. 11. For it is not probable he uttered any which one or another of the Evangelists has not recorded. But who composed this great company of people and of women? It is not probable that they were his disciples, though his person, his doctrines, and his wonderful works were probably known to them. Thus much we may infer from their sympathy, which must have been agreeable to the human soul of the Saviour, after the barbarous treatment he had received, and from his reply to them.

And here we have another example of the mutability of the popular mind. Whilst the Lord Jesus was in the hands of his accusers before Pilate, he appeared to the people worthy of their hatred and rejection. This feeling, perhaps, was produced by the influence and artifices of the priests. But when left to themselves, the people remembered his works of beneficence and their own acknowledgment of him a few days before as their Messiah and King; and they give testimony to his virtues by their grief. For observe, it was Jesus, not the malefactors, whom they lamented and bewailed; and we are, therefore, not to confound their sorrow with the sympathy which the common people often feel in the case of criminals whom they judge worthy of their fate.

LUKE XXIII. 28. "But Jesus, turning unto them, said,

Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

These words, and those he added, how pathetic! Yet they convey no comfort, but tend rather to inspire terror. And we observe, that although the whole company of people may have joined in sympathy, if not in the lamentation, yet the reply was addressed only to the women who bewailed him. What he said, however, was a warning to all, and designed to secure a blessing which would be permanent, through a sincere repentance and faith in his name. For, as members of the doomed nation, even they partook in its doom, if not of its guilt. It is probable—indeed there can be little doubt—that these women, and those who followed in their company, regarded him as innocent, but unfortunate and powerless—as one who had been effectually overcome by his enemies. Yet if such were their sentiments, our Lord's words were adapted, if not designed, to show that their pity was misplaced. For oppressed as he appeared to be, he was marching onward to his victory. His exodus from humiliation to glory was designed, yea appointed, to be from the very cross he then bore. Well might he say, then, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."

Let us try now to imagine the scene. Behold the Saviour, bending under the weight of his cross, and so overcome as to need assistance to bear it. Yet upon hearing this cry, without asking leave, he stops—he raises his voice, and by its mysterious power arrests the march of his executioners and the multitudes who were moving onward to the spectacle. He speaks with the same peaceful, tranquil dignity and power as ever before, even when in the temple. He turns their minds from what they then saw to the future, which they did not see, and, as on the day of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Luke xix. 41, so now again he forewarns them of the dreadful judgments which would soon overwhelm them.

LUKE XXIII. 29. "For behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck."

The history of the Jewish war by Josephus shows how this prophecy was fulfilled. The Romans invested Jerusalem at the time of the feast of the Passover, when innumerable multitudes, from all parts of the country, had crowded into that city to engage in its solemnities. These were caught as in a net, from which there was no escape. Famine ensued, and so severe was it, that mothers ate their own offspring. Murders, intestinal discords, the fury of a portion of their own countrymen, the hatred and cruelty of the Romans, filled the city with blood

and carnage. But this was not all. The axe was now laid at the root of the tree, and it was to be hewn down, as John the Baptist had predicted. The days of wrath—of the vengeance, predicted by the prophets, and also by our Lord, had commenced, in which all the evils and the curses foretold by Moses and the prophets were to come upon that people; in which they were to fall by the edge of the sword, and to be carried captive into all nations, and their land, the land of the covenant, was to be delivered over to the Gentiles, and held by them in subjection until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. Luke xxi. 24. It was to this national ruin, and the long train of woes which were to attend that race of men from generation to generation, even to the end of the times appointed for the continuance of Gentile power, that our Lord alluded. Dan. ii. 44; vii. 26, 27. The full import of his words, therefore, cannot be learned from Josephus, the historian of the Jewish war. We must follow that people in their dispersion, and read their history from that day to this, to ascertain their full import. Nay, more; we must look forward into the future, and learn what are the afflictions which yet await them, before we can exhaust the meaning of these words of the Saviour.

LUKE XXIII. 30. "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us."

The prophet Hosea employs similar language when predicting the fall of Samaria, the capital of the kingdom of Israel, Hosea x. 8, and the apostle John also, when describing the opening of the sixth seal. Rev. vi. 16, see also Isa. ii. 10—19. It is the language of extreme terror, of confusion—of despair. It is not improbable that Hosea and our Lord refer in part to the same events. The sin of the ten tribes consisted chiefly in renouncing the house of David, and consequently the Messiah, who was to descend from him, and in renouncing the temple at Jerusalem for gods of their own making. The sins of the Jews at this time were of the same nature. They renounced the true Messiah before Pilate for a Messiah of their own imagination—as different from the true Messiah as were the idols of Israel at Bethel and Dan from the God of Jacob, who was worshipped at Jerusalem. But when this same Messiah shall appear to them the second time, then indeed the scales shall fall from the eyes of some of them, who shall then believe; while the rest shall verify to the letter these prophecies of Hosea and John, as well as these words of the Lord Jesus. This will be at the conclusion of the days of the Divine vengeance for this sin of that people.

LUKE XXIII. 31. "For if these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

This is figurative language. By the *green* tree, our Lord undoubtedly refers to himself. By the *dry*, it is equally plain he referred to that doomed people. And the sense may be paraphrased thus: "If the green tree, the good olive tree, from which the unction of grace flows, is thus treated, what can be expected for the dry, fruitless, useless tree but burning? What hope can the heirs of the curse cherish, if the supremely blessed one, the source from which, and the channel through which, all blessings come, must be bowed down by a shameful cross in order to avert the wrath which they have deserved?" How vain, then, is the hope of escape from the deserved wrath of God, except in the way of his own appointment! It is only in that justice which exacted the humiliation, sufferings, and death of the Son of God, that we can learn the greatness of that mercy which pardons for the sake of Jesus Christ.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE CRUCIFIXION.

Fulfilment of Isaiah liii. 12.—Different statements of the Evangelists reconciled.—An additional proof of Christ's Divine mission.—Sins against the Son of Man, sin against the Holy Ghost.—The seamless coat.—Seeming discrepancy between Mark xv. 25 and John xix. 14 reconciled.—The malefactor's rebuke—his penitence, faith, and prayer—his testimony to the innocence of our Lord—his instruction in the mystery of redemption.—The consciousness of the soul in its state of separation from the body.—Existence of affection in the future state.—All things accomplished necessary for the perfecting of the new creation.—Public displays of the Divine power.—A new dispensation.—Risen saints.—Impressiveness of the last scene.—Providential arrangements for the accomplishment of Divine purposes.—Nicodemus's care of the body of our Lord.—Jewish mode of burial.—The evidence of our Lord's resurrection by Divine power placed beyond all doubt.

LUKE XXIII. 32. "And there were also two others—malefactors—led with him to be put to death."\*

In such company was our blessed Lord taken to the place of crucifixion; thus fulfilling Isa. liii. 12, "He was numbered with the transgressors." When we suffer unjustly for any cause, we naturally desire that we may not be confounded with

\* In the folio edition of the authorized translation, published in 1611, and in many later editions, this verse is printed, "And there were also two other malefactors led with him." &c. In some of the earlier English versions it is better rendered: "And there were two others, which were evil doers, led." &c. Both Tyndale and Crammer omit the word *other*. "And there were two evil doers led with him to be slain." The error of the authorized version is corrected in modern editions, as above. The Rhemish version is: "And there were led also other two, malefactors, with him to be executed." Wickliff renders thus: "Also other tweie wicked men weren led with hym to be slayn."

those who are really guilty of crimes. But in this life just discriminations are not always made. God in his providence often permits his true and faithful servants to be confounded, in the judgment of men, with those who are his enemies.

MATT. XXVII. 33. "And when they were come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,"—

The word *Golgotha* is transferred into our version from the Greek text. In the Hebrew it properly signifies the *head*. The same word occurs in Exod. xvi. 16, where it is translated *persons*; and in Numb. i. 2, where it is rendered by the word *names*. It occurs also in 2 Kings ix. 35, where it is translated *skull*; in the ancient Greek translation *κρανιον*, from which we get the word *cranium*, and in the Vulgate, or ancient Latin translation, *Calvarium*, from whence the supposed place of the crucifixion has been called Mount Calvary.

The common opinion of commentators is, that this place was so called from the fact that it was the appointed place for the execution of criminals. Grotius, however, found in Joshua v. 9, as he supposed, a prophetic allusion to this place, and the event which was now about to take place.

Some commentators adopting the opinion of Grotius, connect with it a tradition which prevailed extensively in the early Christian Church, that Adam, the father of our race, was buried there; and that God so ordered it, that the reproach of man, that is, his sin, should be expiated at the very place where the first sinner of mankind paid the penalty of his transgression. Following out the same idea, they even understand the words of the apostle Paul in Eph. v. 14, as if they were primarily addressed to Adam. It is unnecessary to say that we have no evidence whatever of the burial-place of Adam, and all such interpretations, without facts to support them, are at best nothing better than fanciful conjectures. Still we may, without rashness, so far adopt the idea of Grotius, that the reproach of man was at that time and place rolled away or removed; inasmuch as a way was at that time opened, in which God could be just, and yet justify those who believe in Jesus. See *Vossius' Harm.* lib. ii. cap. vi. § 16, for a full account of this tradition.

MATT. XXVII. 34. "They gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall, and when he had tasted thereof he would not drink."

If we turn to Mark xv. 23, we find a different statement, which has caused the commentators difficulty. Mark says: "And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh, but he received it not."

The whole difficulty disappears the moment we receive the



assertions of both Evangelists as true. We have observed repeatedly that each Evangelist omits something that another supplies. Accordingly we are to believe that *three* potions were offered our Lord, viz. two at the place called Golgotha, and the third, after he had been some time on the cross. That mentioned by Matthew was no doubt offered him in malice and derision. That mentioned by Mark had intoxicating qualities, and was commonly given on such occasions. We are here informed that he refused both. We should read in this connection the sixty-ninth Psalm, some portions of which can only apply to the Lord Jesus Christ, see verse 21. To this cruelty, it has been supposed by some, Moses alludes, Deut. xxxii. 32. A reason why the potion mentioned by Mark should be refused, is to be found in the priestly office or act our Lord was then performing. He was about to lay his body as a victim upon the altar, and to enter into the Holy of Holies, as our great High Priest, and the law commanded Aaron, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation," Levit. x. 8, 9.

LUKE XXIII. 33. "And when they were come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified him."

The word *Calvary* in this verse, and the word *skull* in Matt. xxvii. 33, are only different translations of the same word, so that we might read this verse thus: "And when they were come to the place which is called *skull*, there they crucified him." The same place, we have seen, was also called Golgotha. Whether this place was properly a mount may well be doubted. But without enlarging on this topic, we may dwell a moment upon the Divine simplicity of the Evangelists. They only say: "there they crucified him." They express no astonishment, or compassion, or feeling; they indulge in no reflection on the event; nothing declamatory, nothing homiletic. They do not describe the form of the cross—as some commentators essay to do—although several different forms were used; nor do they speak of the nails by which he was fastened, nor explain how it was done, or by whom. All they say is, "there they crucified him." It is only from the history of the resurrection that we learn that nails were driven through his hands and his feet. Who, without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, could thus briefly speak of the cruel death of a much loved friend! When the Evangelists wrote these brief narratives they had learned too much of the mystery of the cross, and the place it occupies in the Divine government, to enter into details concerning the manner or the means of the crucifixion. Were it possible for us to search the wide uni-

verse, and that too through all the ages of eternity, we may well believe it would not be possible to find another event so wonderful, so sublime, so far-reaching, so enduring in its consequences as that noted by these four words. The mysteries of all preceding ages terminated in this, and the mysteries of all future ages will be opened to the wondering universe by the progressive development of this one mystery of the cross of Christ. The simple fact speaks infinitely more than men or angels can ever unfold. Angels desire to look into the great fact, 1 Pet. i. 12, in the contemplation of which, matters of circumstance which might interest the curiosity of men, are entirely lost sight of, as things of no moment.

LUKE XXIII. 33. "There they crucified him and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left [John xix. 18,] and Jesus in the midst."

The suffering of our Saviour in such company would naturally incline the popular mind to believe that he also was a malefactor. But had they understood their own prophets, which were read in their hearing every Sabbath day, Acts xiii. 27, they would have perceived that such companionship in suffering, so far from casting a doubt upon his innocence, proved his Divine mission: for it was written of the Messiah whom they expected, according to their own prophets, Luke xxiv. 25—27, that thus should he suffer. For Mark adds, citing Isa. liii. 12:

MARK XV. 28. "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors"—that is, he was treated as though he were himself a transgressor. It is impossible to understand these words of Isaiah of any other than the Messiah. Before the coming of Christ, the Jews did apply this prophecy to the Messiah, and the Chaldee paraphrase, see *Walton's Polyglot*, expressly names him as the person intended. It is true, the author of that paraphrase takes the unwarrantable liberty of changing the predictions of ignominy and sufferings into victories and triumphs, answerable to the hopes of the nation, and worthy, as he supposes, of the dignity of Messiah. But the text of the prophet, which remains uncorrupted, is irreconcilable with the paraphrase, while the paraphrast admits that the Messiah is the person really intended by the prophet.

Had our Lord therefore suffered in company with *just* men, this prediction would not have been accomplished. In the strict sense, indeed, it was impossible that he should have been numbered in this world with any who were not transgressors; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Rom. iii. 23. But it is not in this sense the prophet is to be under-

stood. He means flagrant offenders against the laws of men, as well as the laws of God. There is also a further intimation, which must be noticed. It is probable the Jews expected that God would make some distinction between him and the notorious offenders with whom he was joined, if he were really the promised Messiah.

This will appear as we proceed. It is sufficient to say at present, that the absence of Divine interposition, to save him from the pains and death of the cross, completed the parallel intended by the prophet in these words: "He was numbered with the transgressors"—that is, until he had finished the work of redemption.

We observe, however, the words of the prophet are indefinite. He does not say with how many transgressors, nor define the place among them he should occupy. But the providence of God so arranged these particulars, as to give even to his sufferings and shame, the distinction and dignity which belonged to him as Messiah. His cross was converted into a tribunal or place of regal power, and planted between those of the two criminals, at his right and left, who represented the two great classes, into which he will, at the great day, divide all others, Matt. xxv. 33; and from this place of suffering he actually dispensed pardon to one of the malefactors, while he left the other to die in his crimes.

LUKE XXIII. 34. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

It is supposed by some, that our Lord, in these words, prayed only for the soldiers who were nailing him to the cross, and that the prayer was in fact uttered while they were performing that act. Others suppose our Lord intended to include all who were in any way instrumental in procuring his sufferings, and this appears to be the true sense of the petition. That the sins of the different actors were unequal, there can be no doubt. The Roman soldiers, it is probable, were much less enlightened than their governor, and he had much less knowledge of Divine things than the most unlettered Jew. Then again, among the Jews there were different degrees of knowledge. Still, none of them were aware of the sin they were committing; because they did not understand their own Scriptures, but to a large extent had lost their true meaning by false expositions. The apostle Peter alludes to their ignorance in extenuation of their guilt, Acts iii. 17, while he charges their act upon them as a crime, notwithstanding it was done by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Acts ii. 23. The apostle Paul also declares, 1 Cor. ii. 8, in the plainest terms, that none of the princes, or great ones, of this world knew the mystery of

the Lord's person, and this ignorance was necessary, in order to the fulfilment of the Divine purposes; for had they known really and truly that he was God, manifest in the flesh, the Lord of glory, they would not have crucified him. And upon this ground partly, we suppose, our Lord declared, that sins against the Son of Man, that is, all sins committed against his person, while he tabernacled in the flesh, were pardonable, while those committed against the Holy Ghost could not be pardoned. Mark iii. 28, 29, 30; Matt. xii. 31, 32; Luke xii. 10. Without entering into a full discussion of the reasons for this difference, it will be sufficient for the present to say, that it depended in part upon the difference between the nature and objects of the dispensation of our Lord's personal ministry, and the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. The Son of Man came to suffer, and to lay down his life as a ransom for many. The efficacy of his atonement extended even to the greatest of sins against his person; that, even, of taking the life, which he came to lay down. But the sin against the Holy Ghost has respect to a new dispensation, nor can it, as the sin against the Saviour's person, result in any such consequence. It issues in no shedding of blood, whereby to remove its guilt. On the contrary, such a sinner can only place before himself the fearful expectation of a coming judgment and fiery indignation which will destroy, not save him.

In this prayer, we have a means of judging of the greatness of the Saviour's mercy. Though the priests and rulers were actuated by hatred and envy, yet he imputes their crime rather to their ignorance than to these causes. His prayer is general, and for all without distinction. He pardons them, and asks pardon for them, at the very time they were adding derision and blasphemy to his sufferings. Had he not been truly the Son of God, and the disposer of his own gifts, justice would have regulated and given limits to his petitions. But as sovereign, he was free, and as the Son of God, he had the power over all that he asked of his Father; and from his cross he put up his unqualified petition: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

How forcibly does this example of the Lord Jesus impress the exhortations of Paul, in Rom. xii. 9—21.

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| JOHN XIX. 19.    | } | "And Pilate wrote a title," ( <i>probably at the time of his finally passing sentence.</i> ) |
| MARK XV. 26.     |   | "The superscription of his accusation,"  |
| MATT. XXVII. 37. |   | "And they set it up over his head," (on the cross, John xix. 19.)                            |
| LUKE XXIII. 38.  |   | "in letters of Greek and Latin and Hebrew.   |

JOHN XIX. 19. } "And the writing was,"  
 MATT. XXVII. 37. } "This is Jesus"  
 JOHN XIX. 19. } "Of Nazareth, the king of the Jews."

It was a custom of the Romans to denote either by a writing or by the voice of a herald or some minister of justice, the cause for which the condemned person suffered. When a writing was used, it was suspended from the instrument of his punishment, or from some other object near. A similar custom prevails, it is said, at present in Turkey. The Romans call it the *Titulus*, *Sueton. in Calig. cap. 32, in Domit. cap. 10.* John calls it by the same name, xix. 19; Luke, xxiii. 38, uses the word *Epigraph*. We find an example of this custom in the account we have received of the martyrdom of Polycarp, a disciple of the apostle John.

If we compare these epigraphs or superscriptions as they are given us by the four Evangelists, they all differ slightly. According to Matthew it was as follows: "This is Jesus, *the king of the Jews.*" According to Mark, it was simply, "The king of the Jews." According to Luke, "This is *the king of the Jews.*" Finally, John reads it, "Jesus of Nazareth, *the king of the Jews.*" This discrepancy has been urged as an objection against the inspiration of the Evangelists, but without any just ground. Observe, that according to all the Evangelists the superscription ended with the words, "The king of the Jews." Matthew prefixes to these words, "This is Jesus;" Luke the words, "This is," and John the words, "*Jesus of Nazareth.*" The variation does not at all affect the substance of the writing. But we may account for it in this way: Pilate wrote it in three different languages, and it is not improbable that he slightly varied it in each language. Let the objector prove that he did not. Thus in the Greek, he may have written, "This is the king of the Jews," while in Latin he may have inserted the name Jesus, "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews." Still differently he may have worded the inscription in Hebrew, "Jesus, the Nazarene (for that is the word actually used by John,) the king of the Jews." Indeed it is far more probable that such slight variations existed in the original compositions of Pilate, than that he (Pilate) should have translated the sentence first written, word by word, with exact literality into the other two languages. Assuming that such was the fact, each Evangelist gives the inscription in that one of the forms which he preferred, translating it, if he selected the Latin or the Hebrew, into the Greek language with substantial accuracy. Nor was it necessary that the Evangelists should preserve the several forms unmixed. They wrote in a language different from those in which two of the superscriptions were composed, and in so far as the

cause or accusation set forth in these various titles was concerned, they performed the office of translators, and as such, it was their object to give the sense rather than the form of the original words.

JOHN XIX. 20—22. “This title then read many of the Jews [for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh unto the city, and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin]. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate: Write not ‘The king of the Jews,’ but that he said, ‘I am the king of the Jews.’”

We learn from this passage what the chief priests considered the substance of the superscription in every one of the forms in which it was composed. It was the official title ascribed by Pilate to Jesus.

But why should Pilate write the superscription in three languages? The Jews would have preferred that none should be written rather than such a one as this, or if this must be adopted, they would have preferred it in the language least understood. No doubt Divine Providence designed this arrangement for the more extensive promulgation of the truth it contained. As to Pilate’s motive, we may reasonably conjecture that he caused it to be written in Latin because it was the language of the Roman empire, and most proper to be used in all official public acts. It was thought essential to the dignity of a Roman magistrate, in the times of the republic, to speak only in Latin on public occasions. *Val. Max.* book 2, chap. 2, § 2. Tiberius the emperor, was a great stickler for this point of Roman dignity. *Suet. in Tib.* chap. 71. The inscription was probably first written in Latin. A similar one was also written in Hebrew, probably because it was the language of the country, and in Greek probably because many Hellenist Jews, from different countries, were present at that feast, and understood no other language but the Greek, which indeed was then very common in Palestine.

The inscription was probably written in large letters, so that it was legible at a distance. It was put in a conspicuous place where all persons passing by could not fail to see it, and the only reason it announced for the mournful spectacle, was the fact that he was “the king of the Jews.” To the mind of a Jew at that time, this title was equivalent to Messiah or Christ; the great King promised by the prophets and expected by the nation from the time of Abraham. The Magi or wise men from the East, Herod, the chief priests, and the scribes, so understood this title. *Matt. ii.* 1—6.

By this superscription, therefore, Pilate virtually declared him to be the Messiah—as truly as the Evangelist Matthew did

when he described him as the Christ the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. Matt. i. 1. Thus understood, we can imagine how offensive this designation must have been to the priests who had so perseveringly demanded the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. It was the testimony of the judge and governor against them, as the murderers of their own Messiah; of that king who was the expectation and the glory of the nation. They felt the force of the epigraph, as their appeal to Pilate showed. Some persons perceive in it a sneer at the hope of the nation, and an insinuation that such would be the end of all who should assume that character in opposition to the Roman power; but we take a different view, as will be seen from the passage next noticed.

JOHN XIX. 22. "Pilate answered, What I have written I have written."

We learn from this passage that Pilate regarded the superscription as his own act, and whatever might have been his motive in preparing it, he declared by this title a momentous truth, as did Caiaphas when he prophesied the death of the Lord Jesus. John xi. 49—51. But let us pause a moment on this circumstance; had some passer-by merely remarked that the superscription was not correct, and that it ought to have been so written as to charge the sufferer with usurping the royal office—or had the chief priests done no more than complain of it among themselves, or before the people, there would have been some ground to suppose that Pilate had adopted this form of words inadvertently, and that he would have instantly ordered it to be altered, had his attention been called to it. The providence of God, however, took care to remove all grounds for such suppositions. The priests were made to feel the full force of the inscription, and to foresee the consequences to them and their nation of this acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus, by public authority, as the king of the Jews. They therefore assemble and proceed formally in a body to Pilate, from whom thus far, they had extorted everything they desired, and represent to him the error of the superscription, and how easy it was to make it exactly correct. Write not "The king," but write "*He said I am the king,*" &c. Such a change they would naturally say was necessary as well for his honour as their own, since a real legitimate title to royalty could not have made him a criminal, but only the usurpation of royalty. "Say not therefore that he is the king; but that he claimed to be the king of the Jews. You have as great an interest to make this change as we have."

Judging from the compliant disposition of Pilate thus far, we should not have anticipated inflexible firmness, in a matter seemingly so slight, so reasonable, and so well calculated to

cover up his own iniquity. What Pilate's motive was for peremptorily refusing to alter a letter of the superscription, it would be useless to inquire. It may have been his natural obstinacy, perverseness of temper, or he may have regarded the request of the priests an impertinent interference in his concerns, or he may have been unconscious of any motive. However this may be, we see clearly an overruling Providence, both in dictating the words of the title, and in preventing the slightest change of it. Pilate wrote this, not of himself, but being the governor of Judea, there was a necessity that by a public authentic act, he should announce to the world, from the cross itself, the true character of the Lord Jesus, and that character as the only cause for which he suffered. Had Pilate been a prophet of God, speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he could not have given a more fitting answer to this insidious request of the chief priests—"What I have written, I have written—" It was God's truth, and not to be changed.

JOHN XIX. 23. "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part—and also his coat."

By this passage we know the number of soldiers who participated in crucifying our Lord. It was the usage among the Romans, as has been observed already, that soldiers should execute sentences of death pronounced by civil magistrates. It was also their usage, as it is still in some countries, that the clothes of the criminal should belong to the executioners of the sentence. Humanity was not commonly the virtue of a Roman soldier. On the contrary, his ferocity, when but little excited, became worse than brutal. We may regard our Lord's human frame as a lamb among four wolves, who rudely stretch it on the cross, and, regardless of his patience and mildness, nail to it his outstretched limbs, and then hastily and roughly raise and plant it in the place prepared for it. This done, they take their seats near by, and unfeelingly divide his clothing among them.

But the scene suggests other reflections. Our blessed Lord, on one occasion, in allusion to his own poverty, said, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Matt. viii. 20. Here we behold him nailed to a hard cross—his head crowned with thorns—his clothing divided before his eyes by his executioners, and himself bearing the shame of nakedness. This also was predicted. Ps. xxii. 18. Yet this was he of whom it was written in another Psalm, civ. 2, "Who covereth himself with light as with a garment,"—and the earth with beauty and magnificence, exceeding the splendour of kings. Matt. vi. 28, 29. Well



might the apostle Paul magnify the grace manifested in this act of self-humiliation. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be made rich." He laid aside his robes of glory, and allowed himself to be deprived of the habiliments of his human person, that he might array his redeemed in fine linen, clean and white, Rev. xix. 8, and exalt them to a partnership with him in his throne. Rev. iii. 21.

JOHN XIX. 23, 24. "Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said, therefore, among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it whose it shall be."

LUKE XXIII. 34. "And they cast lots,"

JOHN XIX. 24. "That the Scripture might be fulfilled,"

MATT. XXVII. 35. "Which was spoken by the prophet."

JOHN XIX. 24. "Which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things, therefore, the soldiers did."

It is wonderful with what minuteness the sufferings of our Lord were foretold. We have noticed the custom which assigned the clothing of a person condemned to a capital punishment, as a perquisite to the executioners. The custom was observed in this instance, except in respect to one garment. That garment, according to the custom, would have been rent into four parts, and each of the soldiers would have had a part. The rending, however, would, as the soldiers thought, have spoiled it, and they chose to commit the disposal of it to the chance of the lot. The reason why this deviation from the custom was made is not foretold, Ps. xxii. 18, but simply the fact. The Evangelist informs us how the fulfilment was brought about. But observe with what coolness and indifference these soldiers discuss a matter concerning their interest. They talk upon it among themselves, while examining its texture, perhaps admiring its workmanship, regardless of the suffering of him to whom it belonged—and profoundly ignorant of the great mystery, in which they were acting so important a part.

Some commentators regard this garment as typical of the unity of the Church, and perhaps we should not err in so considering it. For the Church is indeed one; having one glorious Lord, one faith, one baptism, one hope, and it will ultimately appear as one great body showing forth the glory and the praises of its Head. But if we thus interpret, we must understand by the Church, not the visible body of professing Christians in this world of sin, but that perfected body which our blessed Lord will, at his coming, gather to himself, resembling, almost in

nothing, that mixed body which is aptly represented in the parable of the tares of the field. We need not say that this visible Church is rent with strifes and divisions, by those who have scarcely the form of godliness, or at least exhibit nothing of the power of godliness by holy living.

MATT. XXVII. 36. "And sitting down, they watched him there."

It was the usage of the Romans, and is still the usage of most nations, that ministers of justice should remain at the place of the execution of criminals, until the sentence is carried into complete effect.

In respect to the Saviour, who was treated as though he were such, it was necessary that there should be actual ocular witnesses of his death; because if that were not certain, his resurrection from the dead would have been an uncertain thing. Both Jews and Gentiles were present on this occasion. The Roman centurion, with his entire company, or at least a considerable detachment of it, was present also to restrain the priests and people from acts of violence, which in their nature would tend to accelerate the Saviour's death before the time he should declare all things finished, and voluntarily surrender his spirit into the hands of the Father.

MARK XV. 25. "And it was the third hour, and they crucified him."

The Jews, as well as the Romans, divided the natural day and night into four watches each. They also used the division of time into hours; but it is observable that no mention is made in the New Testament of the second, fourth, fifth, or eighth hour, and very rarely of any, but the hours at which their watches commenced, Matt. xx. 6, in which the other hours were included. The Romans commenced their computation of time by hours at midnight. Hence the sixth Roman hour corresponded to six o'clock in the morning, but as they reckoned by the watch hours, the sixth hour was deemed to continue till nine o'clock, A. M. The Jews, on the other hand, began their computation at six o'clock, A. M., and consequently the *third* hour spoken of in Mark xv. 25, commenced at nine o'clock, which, as just explained, was the expiration of the sixth, and the commencement of the ninth Roman hour. In this way we reconcile the seeming discrepancy between John xix. 14 and Mark xv. 25.

LUKE XXIII. 35. "And the people stood beholding: and the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others, let him save himself if he be the Christ, the chosen of God."

It is truly astonishing that the people could behold such a

spectacle without the most solemn and even painful emotions. Yet the bitter hatred of the rulers to Jesus, and their influence with the people, was so great, that neither seemed to take any notice of the malefactors. They showed no spite or hatred to them; they uttered no revilings against them, though justly condemned, but only against the Lord. They could not deny that he had exhibited superhuman powers. He had saved others by relieving them of incurable diseases—had raised several persons from the dead,—well known facts which ought to have convinced them of his Divine power and mission, and yet they make this the ground of taunt and reviling. “Let him save himself if he be the Christ, the chosen of God.” This shows how profoundly ignorant they were of the mystery of redemption. They demanded, as a proof of his Messiahship, the miraculous exertion of his power to deliver himself from their hands, not knowing that such a proof was inconsistent with the very object of his mission. Matt. xxvi. 53, 54; Luke xxiv. 26.

Besides, the very proof they demanded would not have been more conclusive than the raising of Lazarus from the dead. For the power to restore life to the dead cannot be less than Divine, and adequate to accomplish anything which its possessor might choose to do.

Observe, also, the rashness, not to say the impiety of such a demand. For if he was the Christ, the chosen of God, as their words implied he might be, it was impious for them to prescribe to him the proofs he should give of his character. Nay, more, the proofs of his Messiahship were divinely appointed, and sufficiently made known to them in their own Scriptures. It is evident, too, from this passage, that although their views of the character of the true Messiah fell far short of the reality, yet they regarded him as a great Being, and the special object of the Divine favour—as God’s elect or chosen one.

LUKE XXIII. 36, 37. “And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him and offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.”

It is supposed by some commentators that the vinegar had been brought to that place for the refreshment of the soldiers, who were appointed to watch the cross. The offer of some of it to the suffering Saviour, we are told, was made in mockery. They accompanied the act with words of derision. What idea these soldiers (if they were Romans or Gentiles) entertained of the king of the Jews, we have no means of knowing. What they said may be thus expressed, “If thou be the king of the Jews, so vaunted for mighty powers, now

is the time to exert them in saving thyself. It will soon be too late."

MATT. XXVII. 39—43; MARK XV. 29, 32. "And they that passed by reviled him, and railed on him, wagging their heads and saying, Ah! thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise the chief priests, mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said among themselves, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God. Let Christ the king of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe."

In Psalm xxi. 7, 8, we find several predictions which were fulfilled by this cruel conduct. The wagging of the head was a sign of contempt and derision, Job xvi. 4; Ps. cix. 25; Isa. xxxvii. 22. The stress of all these revilings was laid on our Lord's seeming inability to deliver himself from their hands, and the absence of any Divine interposition in his behalf. His claim to be the Son of God—of power to build the temple in three days, John ii. 19, 20, though they perverted his words, and entirely misunderstood their application, seemed to be confuted by his apparently helpless condition at that time. The proofs he had given in support of his claims all went for nothing. In bitter irony they call him "Christ the king of Israel," coupling with this title their demand for further evidence. "Let Christ the king of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." There he was, nailed by the hands and by the feet, and suspended between heaven and earth—a condition, as they thought, to which the Son of God, the king of Israel, the promised Messiah, could not be brought, and the proof they demanded was, that he should deliver himself from the spikes by which his flesh was pierced, and descend to the earth. This they seemed to regard as a fair challenge. Upon his doing these things (they said) they would believe. But that was not a kind of proof they had the right to demand; nor one which it was our Lord's purpose to give. Even if he had given it, though it might have convinced their minds, it would have left their hearts unchanged. What they needed was not evidence, but a new nature. We can easily conceive that had our Lord been transfigured before them on the cross, as he had been in the presence of Peter, James, and John, and if Moses and Elias had appeared to him in their glorious forms, the effect would have been overwhelming. These merciless revilers would have trembled at

the sight and become as dead men. Just such was the effect produced on the soldiers who watched the sepulchre on the morning of the resurrection, by the descent of the angel and his glorious appearance. But this produced no permanent influence on their minds, nor on the minds of the priests to whom the soldiers related the miracle. Though perfectly convinced of the fact of the resurrection, they bribed the soldiers to tell a lie, and the soldiers, instead of being convinced of the Divine nature of Christ, and the tremendous sin of falsehood in such a matter, took the money and did as they were taught by the priests. Yet in so doing they exposed themselves to the severest punishment. For information on this subject, see the *Digests of Justinian*, title *de re militari*, lib. 49, tit. 16. The resurrection was indeed a greater miracle than a descent from the cross would have been, which the chief priests and the scribes demanded, and yet that miracle, as we have just seen, had no effect to change their hearts.

But evidence of this kind would have been inconsistent with the Divine plan; and our Lord, during his public ministry, told them so: for when the Pharisees and Sadducees demanded a sign from heaven—that is, some higher display of power than any he had publicly exhibited—he told them plainly that no other kind of evidence than that which his daily works furnished would be given, except the evidence of his resurrection from the dead—for that was the meaning of his allusion to Jonas the prophet—that is to say: evidence which would not be given until the trial of the nation was over, and they had rejected him and put him to death, and had thus sealed their national doom and destruction.

We may add, that this same mysterious Being, who then hung before them, as they thought, helpless, and abandoned of God, had appeared to their fathers upon Mount Sinai, in fire, with thunders and lightnings, causing the mountain itself to quake. Exod. xix. 14—19; Heb. xii. 18—24. Yet this exhibition of the Divine majesty and power did not prevent them from falling into idolatry, even before they moved from the place where they beheld these wonders. Had our Lord performed every work which the Jews demanded publicly in the face of the nation; had he walked on the sea, or cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple unharmed, as Satan tempted him to do; had he summoned legions of angels to his presence, and caused them to appear rank over rank in their glorious forms, such exhibitions would, no doubt, have overpowered their minds, and might have compelled their obedience to him through their fears; but their reviling, envious, mur-

derous hearts would have remained unchanged. The work of redemption through sufferings and death, which our blessed Lord was now performing, was indispensable, according to the Divine plan, to purchase from the throne of God the office of the Holy Spirit, by whose agency alone can any of our fallen race be prepared for the kingdom of God.

LUKE XXIII. 39. } “And one of the malefactors, which  
 MARK XV. 32. } was crucified with him, cast the same in  
 MATT. XXVII. 44. } his teeth, and railed on him, saying, If  
 thou be the Christ, save thyself and us—and reviled him.”

John omits this circumstance altogether. Matthew says generally, “the thieves also that were crucified with him cast the same in his teeth,” and Mark also includes both, “And they that were crucified with him reviled him.” Only Luke records the fact with precision, which he does, as we suppose, chiefly with the view to introduce another deeply interesting incident which the other Evangelists also omit. There is really no discrepancy between the Evangelists. Each, it is apparent, omits something, which his purpose did not require him to record. John, we have seen, does not notice this circumstance at all. Matthew and Mark omit the reproof which one malefactor gave to the other; also his prayer to the Saviour, and the Saviour’s answer to him, which Luke records thus:

LUKE XXIII. 40, 41. “But the other answering rebuked him, saying: Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing [*ἀτοπον*] amiss.”

We are at liberty to suppose that even Luke (though more particular than the others upon this point) does not record all the words which passed between the three sufferers at this time. His chief purpose was to record for the instruction of the church, the repentance, faith, and prayer of one of the malefactors, which certainly did not occur without design.

It was a wonderful exhibition of the power and grace of Christ in his greatest humiliation. We have no reason to believe that this malefactor was a believer in Jesus before he was brought to the cross, but rather the contrary. Our Lord protected all his disciples from the perils by which they were surrounded, John xviii. 8, 9, while he was with them. Had this malefactor been a believer before, we may safely conclude that the Lord would have protected him, as he did his other disciples. Nor are we obliged to believe that his conversion took place while he was in prison, or while he was on the way to Calvary, or at the instant he was elevated on the cross. On the contrary, as Matthew and Mark inform us, though Luke

omits this circumstance, he joined, that is, at first, with the other malefactor in his revilings, but our gracious Lord, to magnify his grace, and to show his great power and authority as the judge of men, even on his cross, suddenly, by his divine energy, touched his heart and changed it—gave him true faith and a clear discernment of his own divine nature—stopped his revilings and put into his mouth words of reproof, confession, faith, love, confidence, hope, prayer. Why, we may ask, should not such an event occur at such a time and under such circumstances? And why should such an event occur but to show the power and grace of Christ? And why, if such were the divine purpose, should it not occur under circumstances which tend most to magnify these attributes of our blessed Lord? And how could this be more strikingly and impressively done than by thus changing words of reviling and taunt into words of repentance and faith and love?\*

This view of the passage proceeds upon the assumption that each Evangelist omits something which another supplies—an assumption which cannot be denied as to three of the Evangelists, and which we think, from the consideration mentioned, is true of Luke also.

Let us now consider for a moment the fact itself—the language of the penitent malefactor, and our Lord's gracious promise to him.

It is probable both the malefactors were Jews, and both condemned for a robbery which they had committed together. For they were cognizant of each other's crime. The word used by Matthew to denote it, is translated robber in John x. 1. Some suppose that the penitent malefactor had formerly been a disciple, but had forsaken the Lord, as we are told many did in John vi. 66. But of this there is no evidence. It is plain, from the language of the impenitent malefactor, that he had no faith in the power of Jesus to save either himself or them:—in other words, he did not believe that Jesus was the Christ. Yet he appears to have entertained the same opinion of the extraordinary powers of the true Christ, or the expected king of the Jews, as the deriding priests and rulers did, for he repeats

\* Chancellor D'Aguesseau (see his Works, vol. xii. p. 383) makes the following reflection upon the passage: "To convert a robber on the cross and promise him paradise, was something greater than to deliver himself from the Jews. To purify in a moment a man covered with crimes, is (*chef-d'œuvre*) the most excellent work of the Almighty power of God, and a complete proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ. This was the first decree which the Son of God pronounced from the tribunal of his cross. That wicked man asked only to be remembered, and Jesus Christ promised him a share in the heavenly happiness he himself was about to enjoy. What mercy! What munificence! A precious motive for the confidence we ought to have in this Divine Saviour!"

their words. It is evident also from the words of the other malefactor, that they both believed in one God. Notice his appeal, which is emphatic, "Dost *thou* not fear God?" as if he had said, "Art not thou afraid to join in the revilings of these wicked men—thou, who art justly hung up between heaven and earth for thy crimes?" The allusion perhaps is to the difference between his condition and that of the other revilers. This, if nothing else, should prevent him from following their bad example, "Let them revile if they will, while death seems far off, but not thou, who hast but a short time to live."

We should observe also the testimony this penitent malefactor bore to our Lord's innocence. "But this (person) hath done nothing amiss"—rather, *out of place*, which excludes the idea of every, even the least impropriety of conduct. Whether he knew the Lord Jesus before, we are not informed. Being a condemned criminal, he was probably confined in prison during the transaction before Pilate. Perhaps he had heard of his fame, his course of life. But this is not recorded. The true explanation appears to be, that having been taught by the Holy Spirit the mystery of our Lord's person, he was prompted to utter these words, as well as the prayer, by Divine influence. That he was a true believer, and taught of God, cannot be questioned. That his conversion took place suddenly, while on the cross, as has been suggested, after having joined in words of reproach, is also highly probable. His testimony, therefore, was that of a renewed man, who just before had been taught of God to regard the Lord Jesus, at whose side he hung, in his true character, and thus taught, he could no more revile him, or call him accursed, than any other man speaking by the Spirit of God; nor could he call him Lord, as he immediately afterwards did, but by the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. xii. 3.

Thus explained, the testimony of this man, considering the time, place, and circumstances under which it was given, is very striking. It comes in, by way of supplement to the testimony of Pilate, and seems providentially appointed as an attestation of another nature, namely, that of a renewed man speaking from the cross, under the influence of the Holy Spirit. In this respect, it is a testimony of a much higher order than that of Pilate.

LUKE XXIII. 42, 43. "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into [literally *in*] thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

This prayer or petition evinces extraordinary faith. It was offered to an apparently helpless and dying man, and that, too, in opposition to the jeers and scoffs of the priests, rulers, and



people. It evinces, also, a knowledge and belief in the future coming and kingdom of that very man whom he thus acknowledged as the Christ. He evidently did not expect that he would immediately appear in his kingdom. As for himself, he expected soon to die, but he believed in the power of Jesus to preserve his disembodied soul and spirit until he should come again. The severe sufferings of Jesus, and his apparent helplessness, were no stumbling-block to his faith, which was much more in accordance with the Scriptures than that of the learned Jews, who expected that the Messiah would establish his kingdom in power and glory at his first coming. No doubt he had heard the revilings of the priests and rulers, and the multitudes calling upon him to prove his Messiahship by a miraculous descent from the cross; but this malefactor knew that no such proof would be given. He knew that Jesus, as well as himself, would die upon the cross; but notwithstanding, he believed also that he would come again, and that, too, in the kingdom he claimed, and with a glory and power which would place his office and character beyond all denial or doubt. His language implies a belief in the doctrine of the resurrection, not only of Jesus, but of himself, which shows that he had been more fully instructed while hanging on his cross, in the mystery of redemption, than either Peter or John, John xx. 9, or the other disciples, Luke xxiv. 21, were at that time. Indeed, the more we consider this short petition, the more expansive and far-reaching its meaning appears. Evidently he regarded Jesus as an all-sufficient Saviour, though in the very jaws of death, and as having power to save and bless whom he chose. He regarded him also as a king, having a real kingdom; and although now about to die, yet to rise from the dead, and come again in his kingdom. He regarded even death as in the power of Jesus, and that though dying he would still live—that his death was but his way of departing from the earth for a time, and only preparatory to his return. Such thoughts and knowledge he could have derived only from the teachings of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord's answer to this petition, though brief and indirect, was full of consolation. But observe, our Lord does not answer him in the words of the petition, saying, "I will remember thee when I come in my kingdom," but he assures him of his present care and protection, "To-DAY shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Malefactor though he was, and justly suffering for his crimes, according to his own confession, yet the Saviour assures him that he—meaning his spiritual nature—should that very day pass with him into a state of happiness, there to remain until the wished-for time of his Lord's coming in his kingdom. We may infer from this

expression the consciousness of the soul in its state of separation from the body. It is in the soul, in fact, the personality of the individual essentially resides. "This day shalt *thou*"—not thy body, but thy soul, depart (from this world) with me into Paradise." There is an intimation, too, as it strikes us, that some further knowledge or assurance should be imparted to him after passing into that state. The soul of this believer, at its exit from the body, was made perfect in holiness. It passed with full consciousness into the glory of Paradise, with full confidence in the power, the goodness, and the faithfulness of his Saviour to grant him all he wished.

There has been much learned discussion upon the word "Paradise." From its use in other places of the New Testament, it obviously denotes a place of blessedness, Rev. ii. 7; 2 Cor. xii. 4, where the souls of believers look forward, with earnest expectation, to the coming and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the great, the blessed hope. Tit. ii. 13; Rev. vi. 9, 10. That it is a place for souls—and not for bodies—is evident from the fact that the body of this malefactor, as well as the Saviour's, remained during that day on earth. Perhaps, also, we may infer, from 2 Cor. xii. 4, and Rev. ii. 7, that to the same place believers may be gathered when raised and clothed upon with their spiritual bodies. These, however, are matters into which we should not too curiously inquire. The substance of the Saviour's gracious promise is easily understood. It contained, virtually, an assent to the petition of the penitent malefactor, and an assurance of happiness until his petition should be literally and punctually granted.

JOHN XIX. 25. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene."

By the next verse we learn that John also was standing by, for he always describes himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. But besides John and these four women, all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, as we learn from Luke xxiii. 49, stood afar off, beholding the things that were done.

As to these persons whose love overcame their fears, it is to be observed that Mary the wife of Cleophas, was the mother of James the Less and of Joses, Matt. xxvii. 56; Mark xv. 40; and in Matt. x. 3, this James is called the son of Alpheus. Hence we may infer that Cleophas and Alpheus were the same person. James the Less was so called to distinguish him from James the apostle. Mary Magdalene is mentioned in Matt. xxviii. 1. There is some difficulty in distinguishing between

the three Marys in some cases. Some suppose that Mary the sister of Lazarus formed one of this small group.

We may judge by this circumstance of the terror of the occasion, when so few of our Lord's disciples ventured to come near the cross; and how great was the affection of those who overcame it. Of the apostles, none but John stood by the cross—and of his numerous disciples and followers, only four feeble women, and one of these his mother. Joseph, the husband of Mary, was not there, and from this circumstance, as well as from the fact that our Lord commended his mother to the care of his beloved John, it is reasonably inferred that he was dead.

JOHN XIX. 26, 27. "When Jesus therefore saw his mother and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he said unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son. Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother; and from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

We are unable to enter into the sublimity of this scene. While, as our great High Priest, he was offering his body as a sacrifice on the cross, our Lord was not unmindful of the fleeting relations of this life, and amid his sufferings takes care to provide for the comfort of his mother, who now felt the sorrows predicted more than thirty years before by Simeon. Luke ii. 35. This act of the Saviour towards Mary, may be regarded as performed in the twofold character of her son and her Lord. In the latter character it was not necessary for him, in order to secure her comfort, thus to commend her to any human care. His will, unexpressed by words, might have accomplished all he designed. He was able to inspire by his own Spirit the consolation his words were intended to convey. But regarded in his human relations to her, our Lord exhibits in a very touching manner the natural affections of his human nature, and his language justifies the belief that such affections will exist in the future state. Our Lord here constitutes by the highest authority in the universe—by the authority of the God of Nature—the relationship of mother and son, between Mary and the beloved disciple. Can we suppose that his view was bounded by the short space of human life, which in her case was already much more than half spent? Can we believe that this transaction will ever be forgotten by either, or that the tie thus constituted will ever cease to be recognized? Our Lord's own human relations to her were about to be for ever changed. Hitherto, as a man, he had borne to her the affection and reverence of a son; henceforth he was to sustain to her the relation of ruler and Lord, and he substitutes a son to her in his place. It was one of the acts necessary to accomplish all the things which had been appointed for him to do, verse 28.

It strikes us as singular that John should almost always describe himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved; may not this designation have respect to this last act of the Saviour of putting John into his own place, so to speak, as a son? Certainly it was a striking token of affection, and a distinction conferred on no other of the disciples. It was owing to the grace of Christ, and not to any natural quality, that John on this occasion surpassed the other apostles in courage. He was too timid to enter the sepulchre alone, John xx. 5, yet it was necessary that he should be standing by the cross at that moment, in order that this new relation should be thus publicly constituted.

But is there not in this transaction a deeper meaning? Was not this thing done with a view to sunder, if we may so speak, his own human relations to her whom he had chosen to be the mother of his human nature? As if he had said, "Woman, henceforth behold thy son in him who stands at thy side. The work for which I came forth from the Father, and came into the world, and took from thee this body of flesh and blood, is now accomplished; I am now about to return to my Father and take again the glory I had with him before the world was. The reasons therefore for which I became thy son have ceased. Henceforth regard me not as such, but only as thy Lord. Yet will I not leave thee childless; behold thy son! He shall sustain and fulfil to thee all the duties of that relation. My power and my grace shall enable him to fulfil all those duties which, as thy Lord and the Lord of all, I can no longer fulfil in the subject character of thy son."

This act of the Saviour, according to this view of it, is not to be regarded as the expression of mere affection, but as an official act—a kind of correlate or counterpart to that act of sovereignty, by which Mary was at first chosen out of all the families of David, to sustain to him this most intimate of the human relations. Luke i. 28—31. As the one was a sovereign act of Divine power and grace by which he filiated to her the human person he intended to assume, so the other was an act of exfiliation, so to speak, or a sundering of that tie after the object of it was accomplished. At the same time, we may regard the substitution of John in his place in the character of a son, as prompted by that filial affection he had ever shown her, and as having respect chiefly to the wider, holier, and more enduring relations of the world of redemption under himself as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. See Matt. xii. 46—50. Thus interpreted, this transaction is irreconcilable with the worship which has since been rendered to Mary as the mother of God.

MARK XV. 33. } "And when the sixth hour was come  
 LUKE XXIII. 44: } there was a darkness over all the earth  
 until the ninth hour."  
 MATT. XXVII. 45. } "And the sun was darkened."

The hour here mentioned was the sixth Jewish hour, or 12 o'clock at noon, according to our mode of reckoning. The ninth Jewish hour would be three o'clock p. m. The darkness here mentioned could not have been occasioned by an eclipse of the sun, because that can happen only at the new moon. The feast of the Passover was always celebrated at the full moon. This reason is quite conclusive. But there is another: an eclipse of the sun can never continue longer than two hours, nor be total longer than seven minutes and fifty-eight seconds. Some authors suppose the darkness was local, not extending even over the whole land of Palestine, and that it was produced by natural causes. Darkness, it is said, often, if not always, precedes an earthquake. It did at Naples in the year 79, when Vesuvius became a volcano. See *Pliny's Letters*, 20, book vi. If we receive this explanation we may yet recognize a direct intervention of the Divine power in producing the earthquake and its attending phenomena at that time. We prefer, however, the more usual explanation, which regards the darkness as extending much beyond the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and as being itself the direct product of Divine power, see Acts xvi. 25, 26; and thus considered, the event would not be more a miracle, if it extended over the whole earth, than if we suppose it was confined to the land of Israel. As a miracle, it is to be classed with the quaking of the earth, the rending of the rocks, the opening of the graves, the rending of the veil of the temple. If we consider the sublimity of the time, and the stupendous mystery of the Son of God dying in a human body, the sympathy of physical nature with its own author would seem scarcely a miracle. Our Lord declared of himself that he was the light of the world, John viii. 12; xii. 46; and although the language is no doubt to be understood in a figurative or moral sense, yet it is true in the literal sense. For it was he who said, "Let there be light, and there was light." Of him it was also said, "He spake and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast." Ps. xxxiii. 9; civ. 2. The object of this miracle, as also of the others which followed, was to attest beyond a doubt the Divine mission of the Lord Jesus. During his public ministry he performed publicly all the works which it was predicted the Messiah should perform. The force of these the nation resisted. He was even required to perform works of a different kind. "Show us a sign from heaven." Matt. xvi. 1. "Let him save himself if he be the Christ"—"Let him now

come down from the cross and we will believe." But while he refused to comply with all such demands, at his departure, he gave them, as he assured them he would, other proofs or signs of his Messiahship; and now he was beginning to show them those other signs—signs from heaven, signs in the earth, signs in the temple, to be followed by the sign of his resurrection emblematically set forth in Jonah the prophet. These were miracles of power which should be considered together, because they all concur to one and the same end, viz., that of showing him to be the Son of God by demonstrations of power, Rom. i. 3, which were convincing even to heathens. Matt. xxvii. 54.

It is remarkable, that during this period of darkness our Lord hung in silence on the cross. Before it commenced he had performed the last office of affection to his mother. We may easily suppose, too, that the railings of the priests, elders, rulers, soldiers, and passers-by had ceased. Fear and amazement must have filled all minds. The busy preparations for the festival must have been suspended. Even the unfeeling soldiers who had parted his garments among them, must have been awed into solemnity and silence. If we may derive an inference from the word which the three Evangelists employ, the darkness was deep, like that of a night without stars. See Gen. i. 2, LXX. Luke says expressly the sun was darkened; and the same power which intercepted, restrained, or diverted its light, could intercept, restrain, or divert the light of the stars. This was the period probably of our Lord's greatest suffering; it was the closing scene.

Still it must be confessed we have no details of what occurred during this portentous period. The Evangelists give us merely the facts and their order. The period of darkness at length terminates—perhaps miraculously all at once. The light of day instantly takes the place of the darkness. The voice which is then first heard is the voice of Jesus, not feebly uttered, like that of a fainting, dying man, but with a strength which startles all the watchers of the cross, from far and near; for the Evangelists Matthew and Mark add:

MATT. XXVII. 45. } "And at the ninth hour [Matt.  
 MARK XV. 34, 35. } about the ninth hour, that is, after  
 the darkness ceased,] Jesus cried *with a loud voice*, saying, Eloi,  
 Eloi, lama sabacthani, which is, being interpreted, My God,  
 my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" See Ps. xxii. 1.\*

\* "The time has certainly been, when it was more difficult to understand and believe those passages of this Psalm (xxii.) which relate to the sufferings of Christ, than those which relate to the conversion of the nations, (verses 25—31;) and the fulfilment of the most difficult (incredible) should be a strong confirmation of our belief in the fulfilment of the rest. As certainly as the Son of

This is a new source of suffering. The desertion of his disciples, and the railing and mockery of the Jews, the agony of the cross drew from him not a groan, not a word. These he bore in silence. But now he is abandoned by the Father. The word "forsake" in this place is emphatical. It conveys the idea of a forsaking in the time of great distress or calamity. If we inquire why he should be thus forsaken, we can only answer that it was an indispensable part of the plan of redemption. The supposition cannot be admitted that any unnecessary suffering—that is, any suffering not absolutely indispensable to preserve the honour of God's law, was inflicted by the Father on his beloved Son. Yet this was the only suffering that drew from him a word. But how was it possible that the Father should withdraw from him? seeing our Lord himself had said, "I and my Father are one." It is vain for us to attempt to explain. The matter is too mysterious. It enters into the very nature of the Divine unity and personality. We can receive it only as a fact. But inasmuch as our Lord is called the second man—the second Adam, and was now repairing the ruin brought in by the first Adam, we may perhaps infer that the forsaking had respect in some way to his Adamic character, or the relation he was to sustain to the world of redemption.

MARK XV. 35. } "And some of them that stood by,  
 MATT. XXVII. 47. } when they heard it, said, Behold he  
 calleth Elias."

It is plain from this that the bystanders misunderstood his words. The expression, as given by Mark, is in the Syriac or Aramaic language, which was understood by the people of the country. How then could they misunderstand him? They were influenced, perhaps, by their fear, that after all, it was possible he might be the Christ, and if so, Elias might yet appear for his deliverance. Whether all the bystanders misunderstood his words, we are not informed. Some interpreters suppose this was an additional mockery, but there is nothing in the narrative to warrant such a conclusion. The fearful darkness which had just passed, and the powerful tones in which these words were uttered, would naturally not only repress all disposition to insult and mockery, but inspire fear.

JOHN XIX. 28. "After this, Jesus knowing that all things

God cried out upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and as certainly as the Roman soldiers parted his garments among them and cast lots for his vesture, so certainly will all the ends of the earth remember, and turn to Jehovah, and all the kindreds of the nations reverently worship in his presence. See Ps. lxxxii. 8; lxvi. 1—4; lxxvii. 1—6; xcvi. 7—13; xcvi. 1—9; lxxii. 17—20."—*Purves*.

were accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set near by a vessel full of vinegar."

Thirst was the natural effect of the protracted sufferings of crucifixion, but it was not with a view to have the pain of it allayed, that our Lord now spoke, for upon receiving the vinegar which was now offered him, he surrendered his Spirit. The inspired prophets were the first historians of his sufferings and death, and there was one other prophecy concerning him which must be fulfilled. It is contained in Ps. lxxix. 21. The vinegar was probably sour wine, which had been provided for the refreshment of the soldiers. According to the Harmony, this expression was uttered after the darkness was passed, though John mentions it next after the substitution of himself in the place of Jesus as the son of Mary. Nothing indeed had occurred during the interval but the miraculous darkness, and his exclamation in the words of Ps. xxii. 1. John, who omits these circumstances, nevertheless postpones the utterance of these last words to the conclusion of the crucifixion. This is evident by the connection.

MATT. XXVII. 48. } "And straightway one of them ran  
JOHN XIX. 29. } and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and put it to his mouth and gave him to drink."

The person who performed this office probably was some Jew, who took a deep interest in the scene. The soldiers, it appears, allowed him to saturate a sponge from their own vessel. The sponge was put upon a short reed or stick of hyssop, that being the most convenient way of conveying moisture to his mouth. While this was doing, others who stood by said:

MATT. XXVII. 49. "Let be. Let us see whether Elias will come and save him."

This surmise of these bystanders was suggested probably by the Saviour's exclamation and complaint, uttered at the close of the darkness, which was only a few moments before, and was misunderstood. The suggestion shows a persistence in the erroneous belief that Elias would yet appear for his deliverance, if he was really the Messiah of Israel.

JOHN XIX. 30. "When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, he said, 'It is finished.'"

His meaning was, the work he was to accomplish in his humiliation by suffering was finished. He had gained the victory over the powers of darkness. All things which had been written concerning him by the prophets and in the Psalms had been fulfilled. The time of his exodus from humiliation to glory had come. Luke ix. 31. All, in fact, had been done which was



necessary to repair the ruins of the fall. As if he had said, "It is finished. Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him." The residue was the assigned work of the Holy Spirit, and his work would follow as the reward of the work now finished. As by the sin of Adam all was lost, so by the work now finished, eternal deliverance from its effects was now made sure. Rom. v. 17; viii. 19, 22. These words of the Redeemer were prompted by the perfect apprehension of the sublime object of his incarnation. They involve a fulness of meaning, which eternity alone can unfold. Thus regarded, these words marked an event, equal in magnitude to the work of creation, inasmuch as all things were accomplished which were necessary for the perfecting of the new creation.

MATT. XXVII. 50. } "And when he had cried again with a  
LUKE XXIII. 46. } loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands  
JOHN XIX. 30. } [*παράθησομαι*] I commend my spirit, [or  
more exactly, into thy hands will I place my spirit as a deposit  
to be kept,] and having thus said, he bowed his head, and gave  
up the ghost," [or more literally, *yielded his spirit* (*ἀφίηκε το  
πνεῦμα*, *emisit spiritum*, Matt.,) *expired* (*ἐξέπνευσε*, *expiravit*,  
Luke, Mark,) *gave up the spirit* (*παρέδωκε το πνεῦμα*, *tradidit  
spiritum*, John.)\*]

Several things are worthy of notice in this place. He cried out with a loud voice, thus proving that he retained up to that moment, in full vigour, his vital powers as a man. In any other case, it would have been a sure ground for believing that the death of the sufferer could not immediately occur. When therefore the instant afterwards, or rather at the same instant, he gave up his spirit, he proved that he did not die as other men, by the necessity or weakness of nature, but voluntarily; thus proving his own declaration, "I have power to lay down my life; no one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." John x. 18. It was to prove this that the fact under consideration was recorded. Luke adds a circumstance confirmatory of this view. Matthew says merely that he cried with a loud voice, without recording the words he uttered. Luke gives us the very words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." We are not to consider this language in the nature of a prayer merely, but as designed chiefly to denote an act done. The

\* The word *παράθησομαι*, employed by Luke, is used in a law sense to signify the making of a deposit. Metaphorically it may be predicated of other things which one man may deposit in the hands of another. We may predicate it in the figurative sense of honour, life, soul, spirit. The word *ἀπὸθησκω* is commonly used in the New Testament to signify (*morior*) to die. Rev. xiv. 13; Heb. vii. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 22, 36; Rom. v. 7; John xii. 24; xi. 50, 51; Luke xx. 36; Matt. xxii. 24.

word commend does not so aptly express the true sense of the original, as *deposit*, *transfer*, or *put*. We suppose that by an act of power, exerted simultaneously with the utterance of these words, the Redeemer actually separated his spirit from his body and placed it as a deposit in his Father's keeping, while his body was deposited in the sepulchre. This act of power being accompanied by words uttered with a great voice, proved that the Redeemer was, if we may so speak, active in dying, and that his *passion*, properly speaking, consisted in those physical and mental sufferings which preceded the act of dissolution, which was not, strictly speaking, suffered, but rather *done* or *performed* by him *voluntarily*, and as truly voluntarily as the act of incarnation. This view is essential to the symmetry and perfection of our Lord's character as God-man, as well as of his priestly work.

Some commentators regard these words as intended to show our Lord's perfect consciousness of his Divine Sonship, notwithstanding his sufferings; and no doubt such was the fact. But it seems the chief intention of these words was to denote the voluntary separation of his spirit from his body, by his own inherent power, which was to be performed by him as God-man in executing the plan of redemption. In other words, as it was a voluntary act on his part to incarnate his Divine and spiritual nature in a human body; so it was also a voluntary act on his part to separate his spiritual nature from the material frame in which he had temporarily lodged it, and deposit it in the keeping of his Father, while his body, during the appointed time, rested in the sepulchre. See 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19.

We have now reached the end of the scene of the crucifixion. The event occurred at the ninth Jewish hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon—the time when the evening sacrifice was to be offered—the very time when the paschal lamb ought to have been slain. Up to this time our Lord retained his spirit, though it was in his power to have dismissed it the instant of the elevation of the cross. This retention of life was necessary that he might fulfil the type. The darkness, it is probable, had ceased only a few moments before. The return of light was necessary to exhibit clearly this last action of the Lord on the cross. If the darkness was such as we have supposed, or even considerable, as no doubt it was, it is not likely that the person who brought the vinegar could have performed that service with so much celerity. Besides, the return of light was necessary to exhibit those other miracles of power which occurred at the moment of the dissolution. It is evident from the succeeding narrative, that the centurion and others were eye-witnesses of some of the occurrences next related.

MATT. XXVII. 51—53. } “And behold the veil of the tem-  
 LUKE XXIII. 45. } ple was rent in twain in the midst  
 } from the top to the bottom.”

The temple consisted of three parts—1st, the court, vestibules or porches, where the people assembled; 2d, the holy place, where the priests made their offerings; and 3d, the holiest place of all—Sanctum Sanctorum. The veil here spoken of (*το καταπέτασμα*) was extended before the Holiest of All. It was made of thick rich tapestry, strongly wrought. 2 Chron. iii. 14. The Rabbins say it was four fingers thick. This may be an exaggeration. We do not know, but we have reason to believe that this veil was very thick and strong. There was another veil (*καλυμμα*) suspended before the holy place—Sanctum—from which the one we are speaking of must be distinguished. Comp. Exod. xxvi. 31 in the Hebrew with the LXX. See also Heb. ix. 3. At this very moment, it is highly probable the priests were in the holy place, preparing to light the lamps and to offer incense. What must have been their amazement at this sudden opening of the Holiest of All to their view! With what words did or could they announce the miracle to the people without! The event marked, though they did not know it, the end of the Levitical dispensation. Their own functions were now all ended. Christ, the true pass-over to whom the sacrifices pointed, was at that moment slain. The true High Priest had performed his sacrifice, and was about to enter into the upper sanctuary, of which the earthly temple was only a type. Still, if regarded simply as a fact, irrespective of its symbolical import, it was a most extraordinary miracle. The beam or fixture from which this thickly wrought veil was suspended, we are told was thirty feet above the floor, and consequently was far beyond the reach of any human hand. The rent was *from the top* (*ἀπο ἀνωθεν*) as Matthew and Mark take care expressly to say (*ἕως κατω*) downwards *to the bottom*, and as Luke says, through the midst. Such a miracle\* must have greatly alarmed the priests and rulers of the Jews. Its coincidence with the death of Jesus was a notable circumstance. They could not account for it by any natural cause. But besides this, there were public displays of the Divine power of a different nature, for “The earth did quake, and the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened, and

\* In this connection the reader may consult Josephus, *Jewish War*, book vi. chap. v. § 3, where that author relates, that during the siege of Jerusalem, the eastern gate of the inner court of the temple, which was of brass and very heavy, was seen to open of its own accord, by which “the men of learning understood that the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemy.” See the whole chapter.

many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the Holy City and appeared unto many."

The quaking of the earth and the rending of the rocks must have been perceived by the whole population. These following immediately after the obscuration of the sun, and the widespread darkness, were signs from heaven of the Messiahship of Jesus, certainly as great as those they had just before demanded. Nevertheless, they made no salutary impression on the nation. This will appear the more wonderful, if we consider the time when these signs and wonders in heaven and earth occurred. It was on the day of the preparation for the great Sabbath, on which all the people presented themselves in the temple according to the command in Exod. xxiii. 17. This Sabbath commenced at three o'clock in the afternoon, so that it was ushered in, so to speak, by darkness, and its opening hour was signalized by the quaking earth and bursting rocks. All their plans and preparations must have been deranged by these extraordinary events, forced upon the crowded population of the city.

Besides the rending of the rocks and the quaking of the earth, another supernatural event occurred—the opening of many graves or sepulchral monuments, and the resurrection of many bodies of the saints. Chrysostom, Cyril, and many of the early Christians suppose that at this time all the saints that had died before the Saviour, rose from the dead. Joseph Mede supposed that the number of these raised saints was not small. (Works, book III. chap. xii.) Others suppose that these raised persons were Christians, or professed disciples or followers of Jesus, who had not long been dead. But these are conjectures. As a fact we can easily receive it. Neither of the other Evangelists notice it at all, probably because they wrote later, and for the benefit of Gentile churches. Matthew, who wrote for the Jews, records merely the general fact, without entering into any particulars. He does not tell us where the graves were, whether near Jerusalem, or in other parts of Palestine, nor *how* many saints were raised, (see Dan. xii. 2,) nor in what age they died. Some suppose that they had not long been dead, because they would not have been recognized; but it is not said they were recognized, except as persons raised from the dead. We are, however, expressly told they appeared unto *many*, or more exactly, (*ἐνεφανίσθησαν*) *they were made manifestly known unto many* who probably were alive when this Evangelist wrote, and could be appealed to as witnesses. See 1 Cor. xv. 6.

Another question is suggested by the narrative: Did these

saints arise simultaneously with the rending of the veil and the death of the Lord Jesus, or not till after his resurrection? This raises a question upon the meaning of the original text. Some translate it thus: "And many bodies of the saints arose, and having come out of their graves, entered into the holy city after his resurrection, and appeared unto many." The objection to this interpretation is, that it seems to conflict with Col. i. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 20, in which Christ is represented as the first-fruits of them that slept. But to this it is answered that Paul's language in the places referred to has respect to the resurrection of the saints at the second coming of Christ. This seems to be the most natural interpretation of the Evangelist's words. The fact, however, is altogether mysterious, and the purpose of it is not explained. If we may indulge in a conjecture on this question, it was to show the power of Christ, even in the act of death. Thus regarded, it was an illustrious comment upon his words to Martha, John xi. 25, "I am the resurrection and the life," and a pledge of the power which he declared he would exercise over all his people at the last day. John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54.

It is proper to remark in this connection, that the resurrection of these saints coincided with the termination of the Levitical economy, and thus happened at the very time when all the saints of the Old Testament would have been raised from the dead, had the Jewish nation universally received the Lord Jesus as their Messiah, with the obedience of faith and the homage of their hearts. On this supposition, although there was a divine necessity that Christ should suffer, he would not have suffered by their hands, but rather, as we may conjecture, by the hands of the Gentiles, who providentially held and exercised the power of government, perhaps to meet this contingency in human regard, and then at his resurrection he would have established his kingdom in outward glory over his own people, as a people already prepared for his kingdom. But the Jewish nation shared deeply, yea, deepest, in the sin of crucifying the Lord of glory. They were therefore rejected, and the kingdom was, so to speak, postponed. A new dispensation was opened for the gathering of another elect people, into the place of those first chosen, according to the representation of the parable of the marriage. Matt. xxii. 1—10. Yet as a pledge of the faithfulness of God to the saints of the ancient covenant, and perhaps in fulfilment thereof, as well as to show the Divine power of Jesus, many—it may be a vast company—see Rev. xxii. 9; xix. 10—of the ancient saints were perfected by the resurrection of their bodies, at the very time when all would have enjoyed the same advancement in

glory, had the nation been faithful to the covenant. Exod. xix. 1—5; Heb. xi. 35, 40.

It is remarkable that the Evangelist gives no account of these saints, beyond the mere fact of their resurrection, their entrance into the holy city, and their appearance to many after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He is silent as to their local habitation in the mean time, and also as to the time and manner of their disappearance.\*

MARK XV. 39. } “And when the centurion which stood  
MATT. XXVII. 54. } over against him, and they that were  
LUKE XXIII. 47. } with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake and those things that were done, and that he so cried out and gave up the ghost, they feared greatly and glorified God, saying, ‘Certainly this was a righteous man—truly this was the Son of God.’ ”

Here we have the means of forming some idea of the impressiveness of this last scene, for which all minds had been prepared by the darkness and silence of the preceding three hours. The whole of what is here narrated probably occurred rapidly within the compass of a very short time. Let us attempt to group the occurrences. First, the darkness suddenly ceases and the sun appears. Immediately the Saviour breaks the stillness with the exclamation, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani!” A moment after he utters in a lower tone, “I thirst.” A watcher runs and quickly returns with a moistened sponge to relieve it. Having received it he pronounces, “It is finished,” and immediately bows his head and surrenders his spirit, but marks the act by words uttered with the full power of the human voice. Instantly the veil of the temple is parted—the earth quakes—the rocks are rent asunder—the graves open—dead bodies arise. All these things were not seen

\* Do we inquire whether these risen saints appeared in houses or elsewhere? Whether by day or by night? Whether their appearance was momentary or continued? Whether they conversed with those to whom they appeared? Whether they spoke of the realms of the dead, or the state of the soul after death, or of the entrance of Christ into these realms, or of his power? On these and all such topics the Evangelist is silent, and his silence is a strong internal proof of his inspiration. On precisely such themes an impostor would be most likely to enlarge. A question was raised and much discussed by the early commentators, whether these saints were raised to immortal life, or died again. (See Augustine Epist. 99, ad Evodium. Euthymius. Theophylact. Origen. Beda.) Eusebius (Hist. book iv. chap. 3), and Jerome, in his Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers, mention Quadratus, an early martyr, who declared that he had seen many persons who had been raised from the dead—*plurimos à se visos qui sub Domino variis in Judæa oppressi calamitatibus sanati fuerunt et quia mortuis resurrexerant*—but the writings of this martyr are lost; yet if we had them, it is not at all probable they would cast the least light on a subject which the inspired Evangelist has designedly left so much in obscurity.

indeed by the centurion and the watchers of the cross. What impressed them was *the manner* in which Jesus died, and the instantaneous occurrence of the earthquake. Though the centurion was a heathen, yet there was a meaning in these things which convinced him that Jesus was not only an innocent man, but a man greatly favoured of God. Some suppose the centurion was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, but this is not said of him in the Scriptures. The supposition is founded upon the words ascribed to him by Matthew. But it is to be remembered that Matthew wrote his gospel for Jews, and adopted their idiomatic forms of expression. Thus regarded, the words "Son of God," or "a son of God," merely denote a person who is an especial object of Divine favour. Luke, who wrote for the Gentile church, expresses the sentiment of the centurion in other though equivalent language: "Certainly this was a righteous man," or "Certainly this man was righteous." It is remarkable that all the recorded testimonies to our Lord's excellence of character on this eventful day, except that of the crucified malefactor and Judas his betrayer, were uttered by heathens. Pilate, the wife of Pilate, and the centurion, and those who were appointed to act with him, all pronounced him "righteous," while the priests and rulers still persisted, in spite of these wonderful things, that he was a deceiver. Yet, so impressive were these occurrences, that they deeply affected the minds of others; for Luke adds:

LUKE XXIII. 48. "And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things that were done, smote their breasts and returned."

The people spoken of in this verse were not his disciples or particular acquaintances; for these stood afar off, probably because they were afraid to go near; nor were they priests or rulers. These probably were dispersed by the lengthened darkness, and the business of preparation for the Sabbath, which was drawing near, called them away. The phraseology of the Evangelist conveys the idea that these persons had been attracted to the place by curiosity; but upon witnessing these prodigious displays of the Divine power which immediately followed the last loud exclamation of the Saviour, they smote their breasts with fear and amazement. Perhaps they had witnessed crucifixions before, as they were common under the Romans, yet never one like this. The spectacle was too mournful, too solemn, too awful for them to endure, and they turned away from it and departed to their homes.

Whether these persons had taken any part in the tumultuous proceedings before Pilate, we are not informed. If they had, a great change had come over them. The only remaining circum-

stance to be noticed relates to the acquaintance of Jesus, and the women that followed him from Galilee. Luke xxiii. 49; Mark xv. 40, 41; Matt. xxvii. 55, 56.

It is not easy to describe or even conceive the feelings of those attached friends. Their fear and, perhaps, the fact that many of them were Galileans, kept them at some distance from the cross, although within full view of it, while their love fixed them to the spot where they stood, though the sight was too dreadful to be endured by those who loved him less. It proves to us that love is a more powerful principle than fear or shame. It is to be observed also that the only persons named or described as forming a part of this group of the spectators were females. This testimony is most honourable to the female character; and although woman was first in the transgression, and is now, in her earthly relations, subject to the other sex, 1 Tim. ii. 11—13, yet (may we not reasonably infer?) such will not be her condition in the world of redemption.

JOHN XIX. 31—37. “The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it, bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.”

The *parasceve*, or preparation, was so called from the circumstance, that all things necessary for food were prepared at that time for the Sabbath, because it was not lawful to light a fire or to cook on the Sabbath day. The particular part of the day assigned for the preparation, some have supposed began at the ninth hour, and continued until sunset. The Sabbath that was approaching was a very solemn festival, as it occurred on the 15th of the month Nisan, and was the first day of the Passover festival. John xix. 31.

By the Jewish law, it was not lawful that the bodies of the crucified should remain suspended on the cross during the Sabbath, lest the land should be defiled. Deut. xxi. 22, 23. Josephus informs us, book iv. last chapter, in his history of the Jewish War, that the Jews of his time observed this law very strictly. It was the fear that this law might be violated through



their means, which induced them to go to Pilate, and desire him to hasten the death of the sufferers, by ordering the executioners to break their legs. This, no doubt, was their motive, not to add to their sufferings. We are told, that this was commonly done by striking the sufferer with an iron mallet just above the ankle. We may conjecture from the circumstances of the narrative, that this request was made shortly after the darkness was passed, and before it was generally known that the Lord Jesus was dead. It appears also, that until the sufferers were actually dead, their bodies could not be removed from the cross. But it was not the custom of the Romans to allow the bodies of crucified persons to be buried; yet this custom was departed from in Judea when a festival was near; for in such a case, the bodies of the deceased were delivered to their friends for burial.

It appears that Pilate granted this request; for soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other malefactor, and would have broken the legs of our Lord Jesus, had he been alive. Probably these were not the soldiers who were stationed at the cross, but others, Matt. xxvii. 54; Luke xxiii. 47, sent from the Prætorium expressly for the purpose. "Then came soldiers," &c. John xix. 32. Here we observe again an overruling Providence. It was not a feeling of awe, tenderness, or humanity, or a regard to decency, which restrained the hands of the soldiers; and had they, in passing from one cross to another, broken the legs of Jesus, they would have incurred no censure from Pilate. Nor does it appear that they were influenced by any such considerations; for one of them plunged his spear into his side, knowing at the same time that he was dead. No doubt he was influenced by a spirit of wantonness, or at least by thoughtlessness, for he was not directed to do so. Yet here, also, we see the hand of Divine Providence; for while it had been prophesied of him, that all his bones should be preserved from violence, Ps. xxxiv. 20, which was necessary to fulfil the typical relation between him, as the true passover, and the paschal lamb, Exod. xii. 46; Numb. ix. 12, it had also been prophesied of him by Zechariah, xii. 10, "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced;"—a prophecy which began to be fulfilled at that time, but will be more eminently fulfilled when God shall turn again to that people, and pour out his Spirit upon them.

But there was another reason for this act of the soldier. It was necessary that the death of Jesus should be established beyond the possibility of doubt. Hence this soldier was allowed to pierce him in a part where a wound is always mortal; so that if he had not been already quite dead, this

wound would have extinguished the last remains of life; and for this reason John has recorded the fact, perhaps with a view especially to refute some heretical opinions which had already arisen at the time he wrote.

We observe again how the act of one is ascribed to all. It was the hand of the Roman soldier that actually drove the spear into the Saviour's side, yet the whole people are said to have pierced him, Rev. i. 7; Zech. xii. 10, and thus Peter, speaking by inspiration, charges the whole upon them. "Him . . . ye have taken, and by the hands of lawless, ungodly men, have crucified and slain." Acts ii. 23. Pilate who condemned him, the soldiers who led him to Calvary and nailed him to the cross, and the Roman who wantonly pierced him after he was dead, are, in the Divine regard, mere instruments in the hands of the priests and rulers of Israel.

#### THE BURIAL OF JESUS.

JOHN XIX. 38. }  
 MARK XV. 42, 43. } "After this, when the evening was  
 MATT. XXVII. 57. } come, because it was the preparation,  
 LUKE XXIII. 51. } that is, the day before the Sabbath,  
 there came a rich man of Arimathea, a city of the Jews, named Joseph, an honourable counsellor, and he was a good man and a just, who also himself waited for the kingdom of God, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews—the same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;—This man went in boldly unto Pilate, and besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus."

A good character is given of this Joseph, mixed, however, as the best human characters are, with some infirmities. He was a rich man, of high rank, and probably a member of the Sanhedrim or great Jewish council, for it is said of him that he did not consent to their counsel and deed respecting the Lord Jesus. He had been, and was, in fact, a secret disciple of Jesus, and one of those who expected and earnestly hoped for the kingdom of God. But an emergency had now arisen, which overcame his fears both of the Jews and of Pilate. His master was now dead, and although he suffered as a malefactor, Joseph resolved to do honour to his remains. He therefore entered boldly into Pilate's presence (probably at the Prætorium) and asked from the governor the favour of removing the body of the Lord from the cross, contrary to the Roman custom, which did not permit, as a general thing, that the bodies of crucified persons should be buried, but required

that they should remain suspended until their flesh putrefied, or was devoured by ravenous birds or wild beasts.

Arimathea, it is supposed, was either the Rama mentioned in Matt. ii. 18, or more probably the city mentioned in 1 Sam. i. 1, in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim. It once belonged to the Samaritans, but was afterwards annexed to Judea, so that it was properly called a city of the Jews. 1 Maccab. xi. 28—34; Luke xxiii. 51.

MARK XV. 44, 45.	} “And Pilate marvelled if he were
MATT. XXVII. 58.	
JOHN XIX. 38.	

already dead, and calling to him the centurion, he asked him if he had been any while dead, and when he knew it of the centurion, Pilate gave him leave, and commanded the body to be delivered to Joseph.”

This request was probably made very soon after the Saviour expired, and Joseph, we may believe, being near the cross to witness the event, hastened to Pilate as soon as it occurred. His affection would prompt him to abridge, as much as possible, the ignominious exposure of his beloved Master. The Jews had requested of Pilate to order that the legs of all the sufferers should be broken while they supposed that all were alive, and Joseph, it is not improbable, made his request before the soldiers could have had time to execute the command of Pilate to hasten their death. For Pilate was evidently surprised by the request of Joseph. He could not believe that Jesus was so soon dead, nor did he believe it on Joseph's word. We are told that persons who were crucified in the full vigour of life and health, often hung suffering several days before they expired. Hence it seemed incredible to him that a man like our Lord, in the vigour of life, without blemish, Levit. xxi. 16—23, and in perfect soundness, who had endured scourging with such amazing fortitude, should have died so quickly, contrary to his observation and experience. Accordingly, he sent for the centurion who superintended the execution, and who probably remained at the place; for it was his duty to remain there until the death of the sufferers, and inquired of him whether the fact was so, before he assented to the request of Joseph. It is apparent from the language of Mark, that Pilate did not confine his inquiry to the fact whether he was dead or not. It seemed so extraordinary that he wished to know how long he had been dead—whether he had been dead any considerable time. It may be, also, that the earthquake had excited his fears still more than the saying of the Jews, as to his superhuman character; and he may have been desirous to know whether the death of Jesus happened at the same time with the earthquake. But these

are mere surmises, although there can be no doubt that Pilate must have been deeply impressed with the occurrences of that day.

Having ascertained the fact, Pilate freely granted the request, and gave direction to the centurion to remove the body and deliver it to Joseph. Mark's words (*ἔδωκεν τὸ σῶμα δωρεάν*) may be rendered, he made a present of the body to Joseph, alluding probably to the common practice of Roman governors, and, perhaps, to that of Pilate, on other occasions, of demanding money for the privilege of removing a dead body from the cross for burial. This is the more probable as Pilate condemned him so unwillingly and against his own judgment. It is not expressly said that the command to remove the body was given to the centurion, yet as Pilate had acted through him, and had just sent for him, it is not improbable that this direction also was given to him. Matt. xxvii. 58. Nor do the Evangelists inform us expressly who removed the body from the cross. Luke xxiii. 53, seems to ascribe the act to Joseph, though the centurion, acting by the command of Pilate, may have taken part in it. We have seen how deeply this officer was impressed by the scene of the crucifixion, and we can imagine that his feelings were such as to prevent all rudeness and violence in the performance of that duty. It was performed probably while the two malefactors were still living, and if so, in the presence at least of the centurion and soldiers.

Here we may observe again how Divine Providence accomplishes its plans. It had been prophesied of the Messiah, Isa. liii. 9, that he should be with the rich after his death, and Joseph of Arimathea was emboldened by God's Spirit, contrary to his former conduct, to appear before Pilate with his unusual request. It was necessary, too, that the dead body of the Lord should be cared for, so as to prevent further violence to the frame, and the centurion had been prepared, by the solemn scene he had witnessed, for that purpose.

MATT. XXVII. 59. } "And when Joseph had taken the  
JOHN XIX. 39, 40. } body, there came also Nicodemus, which  
at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of  
myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight."

It does not appear that there was or had been before this any concert between these two persons. Had there been, it is presumable that both would have gone to Pilate together and joined in the request. It appears too, that the body, after it had been taken from the cross, was delivered to Joseph, and not till then did Nicodemus appear. This man had early made the acquaintance of the Lord Jesus, even before he entered

upon his public ministry, John iii. 1, and was from the beginning deeply impressed with his miracles. He was a Pharisee and a ruler—or as our Lord addressed him, a master of Israel, John iii. 10; and, if we may judge from the quantity of the precious mixture he brought, was also rich. The aloes, we are told, was a production of India and Arabia, and its odour very pleasant. It was pulverized and mixed with the myrrh, which was a fluid. It had been prepared to anoint the body of the Lord, so as to repel the attacks of worms, and to preserve it against decomposition. Three or four pounds of the mixture would have sufficed for this purpose, but Nicodemus, in the fulness of his affection, had prepared about a hundred pounds' weight. It is evident these disciples did not know that their beloved Lord was so soon to rise from the dead. It was not till after the event they understood these words of the Psalmist, Ps. xvi. 10, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, (Sheol,) neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." Acts ii. 27.\* Yet was it a labour of love, which, like Mary's, John xii. 3—7, their Lord would not suffer to pass without its reward. Matt. x. 42.

JOHN XIX. 40. } "Then they took the body of Jesus,  
 MATT. XXVII. 59. } and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth  
 with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury."

This allusion of the Evangelist John to the Jewish manner of burial shows that he wrote this Gospel for the use of persons not acquainted with Jewish customs. But why, we may inquire, did not these rich men provide some more precious material than linen to wrap the body in; especially as Nicodemus had made so costly a provision of spices? We are told, and this is a sufficient answer to the question, that it was not lawful to use a more precious or costly material for the purpose of burial than linen. They might not use silk or gorgeous garments for the burial even of a prince.

As the Sabbath was near, it is supposed that this whole proceeding was conducted in haste, and that the body was removed to the sepulchre immediately after it was taken from the cross, and after that was wrapped in the linen with the spices. Luke informs us, xxiii. 55, 56, that the women who followed him from Galilee beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid, and after that they returned and prepared spices and ointments for the same purpose, intending to use them after the Sabbath was over. The Jewish method of burial was a kind of embalming,

\* The Hebrew word Sheol signifies *grave*. Gen. xlii. 38; 1 Kings ii. 6—9. The words *my soul* in the Hebrew idiom signify *me* or *my person*; so that the sense of the Psalmist is, "Thou wilt not abandon *me* to the grave," *i. e.* to the power of the grave, "that it may detain me as its own." See *Bythner's Lyra*.

and similar to the Egyptian method. The linen was made into strips, or bandages, then covered with myrrh and spices, and wound round the body after it had been washed. *Herodotus*, book ii.; *Tacitus Hist.* book v. chap. 5. After involving the whole body, without eviscerating it, in such bandages, it was the custom of the Jews to bind the head about with a napkin, as we learn from the account John gives of the resurrection of Lazarus. John xi. 44.

In this manner these two rich disciples performed this office of affection to the deceased body of their Master. The whole, it is probable, was completed before they departed from the sepulchre; but the pious women who remained only till they saw the body conveyed into the sepulchre, made preparation to perform the same office, not knowing what Joseph and Nicodemus did after they departed.

JOHN XIX. 41, 42. "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre, which he [Joseph—Matt. xxvii. 60] had hewn out of a rock, wherein was never a man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews' preparation day [Luke xxiii. 54,] for that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on, [John xix. 42,] for the sepulchre was nigh at hand."

The motive ascribed to these attached disciples for selecting this place of burial was its proximity to the place of crucifixion. The Sabbath, which would have been violated by the interment of a dead body, was so near, that no other place, perhaps, at that late hour, could have been provided. It seemed suitable, also, for the purpose. It was new, and had never been used as a place of interment. It belonged to Joseph, and he had the right to appropriate it to that use; and although designed probably for himself and his family, he could readily yield it up as a tribute of his affection. Observe, too, that it was a place of security; having been hewn from a rock, so that the body could not have been abstracted from its resting-place, except through the entrance or door. As no dead body had been deposited there before, there could be no ground to ascribe the resurrection to any other person; nor could the resurrection of the body of the Lord Jesus be ascribed to its contact with the bones of a prophet, of which the Old Testament furnishes an example, 2 Kings xiii. 21, in the case of Elisha. Thus while we may allow scope for the exercise of human motives, there was an overruling Providence in the selection of this place, in order to provide the strongest evidence possible of the fact of the resurrection of the identical body of the Lord Jesus. This will further appear by the precaution these disciples were influenced

to take to secure the entrance into the sepulchre, for after depositing the body they—

MATT. XXVII. 60. “Rolled a great stone against the door of the sepulchre, and then departed.”

But this was not sufficient to answer the Providential design; for a stone, that two men could roll to the door, two other men might remove from its place. We shall therefore see presently that the enemies of the Lord were moved to take the matter into their own hands, and not only to seal the stone, but station a military guard to prevent its removal.

MATT. XXVII. 61. } “And there was Mary Magdalene,  
 MARK XV. 47. } and the other Mary, [called by Mark,  
 LUKE XXIII. 55, 56. } Mary the mother of Joses,] sitting over  
 against the sepulchre, and beheld where he was laid. And the  
 women which came with him from Galilee, beheld the sepulchre  
 and how the body was laid; and they returned and prepared  
 spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day, according to  
 the commandment.”

There does not appear to have been any concert between these women and Joseph and Nicodemus. They, perhaps, were watching from a little distance, not venturing at first to come near. As Joseph and Nicodemus were secret disciples, it is quite possible the women had no acquaintance with them, and even did not know their purpose. It is not probable they remained as long as the two disciples. For those spoken of by Luke returned in time to prepare spices and ointments before sunset, when the Sabbath commenced, which perhaps they would not have done had they known of the large provision Nicodemus had made, and the use he had made of it. Neither did Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome know what Nicodemus had done; for they also bought sweet spices and came to the sepulchre after the Sabbath to anoint the body. Mark xvi. 1. Observe, too, how punctually these females observed the law of the Sabbath. Great as their affection was for Jesus, and Divine as they believed him to be, they did not feel themselves free to perform this act of affection as an act of necessity or mercy on the Sabbath. How painfully does the irreverence of many professed Christians contrast with the conduct of these Jewish disciples!

MATT. XXVII. 62—66. “Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so

the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as you can. So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.”\*

These circumstances are recorded only by Matthew. His phraseology to denote the time of the occurrence is peculiar. He does not say, *On the Sabbath*; although that was the day which followed the preparation. Various conjectures have been made to account for the periphrasis; the most probable of which is that the Evangelist chose to tax the chief priests and Pharisees obliquely or inferentially, rather than directly and bluntly, with a breach of the Sabbath, by the zeal they manifested in this matter. It is not probable that any considerable body of persons waited upon Pilate on the Sabbath. Perhaps their call was rather informal than official. Their motive may have been to induce Pilate to act in the matter rather than leave it to them, as they could not attend to it without violating their Sabbath, by setting a watch and making the sepulchre sure. However this may be, the fact shows a breach of their own law of the Sabbath, † which they would have censured in any other person. But their bitter enmity to the Lord Jesus, and their purpose to omit no means of extirpating his influence, made them disregard all other considerations—whether divine or human. If they expected, however, that Pilate would be condescending enough to relieve them of the care of securing the sepulchre, they were disappointed. His reply in effect was, “Why do you trouble me with this business? You have a military force at your command. Do it yourselves in your own

\* Μετα τρεις ἡμέρας is the same as ἐν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ or δια τριῶν ἡμερῶν. It means “within three days,” or “on the third day.” This sense the language yields, and the connection requires. Μετα is used in this sense in Biblical Greek, Deut. xxxi. 10. So likewise in classical Greek, μεθ’ ἡμερῶν (interdiu) in the day-time—μεθ’ ἡμερῶν ἑπτα, “within seven days.” In this sense the Jewish rulers understood the phrase, because they wished a watch placed *immediately*, and to be continued “ἕως τῆς τρίτης ἡμέρας,” until the third day. They did not understand the saying of Jesus to mean, that after *three full days* (that is, on the fourth day) he would rise, but that he would arise on the third day. The prediction, therefore, would be fulfilled if he rose at the first moment of the third day from his death.

† It should be observed, however, that the 66th verse may mean no more than that the priests and Pharisees *caused* these things to be done by others; not that they did them with their own hands. If so, then, according to the casuistry of the Rabbins, it was no breach of the Sabbath—for Moses forbade only *bodily* labour, such as gathering wood, lighting fires, &c. They might go, therefore, lawfully to Pilate and ask him to give them a watch, and to seal the sepulchre; and having received authority to do so, even cause these acts to be done on the Sabbath by others, without violating the fourth commandment as they explained it. Yet they did not so expound the law when our Lord cured the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda. John v. 11, 13, (see ix. 6, 7, 14, 16:) Luke vi. 7, 11.



way. As for any scruples of conscience upon the obligation of your Sabbath, you seem to have overcome them by calling on me for such a purpose. You can attend to this matter as consistently with your law as you can come to the Prætorium on your Sabbath to transact secular business with me." Perhaps Pilate remembered how, the day before, they had refused to come into the Prætorium lest they should be defiled.

It appears also by this passage, not only that our Lord had predicted his resurrection after three days, but that the priests were fully aware of the fact. Yet it appears by other places, that even his disciples did not really expect that he would rise from the dead, and were, in fact, as skeptical in this matter as the priests. Indeed, the preparation of the myrrh, aloes, spices, and ointments, of the linen, and the manner in which the body was wrapped up, all indicate the full persuasion of a long continuance in the grave. "They believed not," as Lightfoot remarks, "that he should die, till he was dead; nor believed that he should rise again, no, not when he was already arisen."

MATT. XXVII. 65. "So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch."

This precaution was of a nature not to be postponed, according to their view of the case. Of course, they did these things on their Sabbath, but whether after sunset on Friday, or on the morning of Saturday, according to our mode of reckoning, we are not expressly informed. The watch they set was taken from the soldiers attached to the temple who were subject to the orders of the priests. Some have supposed that the stone was sealed with Pilate's signet; but this is not recorded. Yet whether so or not, the end of Divine Providence was secured, by providing such means to secure the body of our blessed Lord within the sepulchre, as could not be eluded or overcome. Thus the evidence of his resurrection by Divine power was placed beyond all question or doubt, and an argument was put into the mouth of his followers which could not be gained or resisted.

It was probably the intention of the priests and rulers to remove the body from the sepulchre after three days, and publicly expose it to the gaze of the people, so that by the anticipated failure of this prediction, his credit with them would be destroyed. Undoubtedly, if the prediction had been falsified by the event, they would have done so. Their difficulty in that case would have been to prove the prediction, for he made it *plainly* to none but to his disciples in private, and only *obscurely* to others in public, to the people. Mark viii. 31; xiv. 58; Matt. xvi, 21; John ii. 19; Matt. xii. 40. How the priests came to understand his public allusions so well, we can only con-

jecture. Perhaps their intercourse with the traitor Judas was the source of their knowledge. However this may be, the result was, our Lord's body was kept safely in the sepulchre of Joseph under the threefold guard of *the stone, the seal, and the watch.*

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE RESURRECTION.

A harmony of the chapters to be considered.—The whole doctrine of the glorified Church inseparably connected with the doctrine of our Lord's resurrection.—The Marys at the sepulchre.—Intercourse between angels, the Saviour, and his disciples—Ministry of angels in the present dispensation.—Spiritual natures.—Mary's recognition of her Lord through his power over her mind and spirit.—Christ's prohibition of Mary's touch explained.—Jesus in his future interviews with his disciples no longer to be considered as an inhabitant of the earth.—Christ's risen body not confined to the earth during the forty days.—Inadequate conception of the attributes with which our Lord invested his risen human body.—The Sanhedrim convened.—Malicious ingenuity of its members.—The belief of the report of the theft of the body of Jesus confined to the Jews.—Pains taken by them to circulate and perpetuate it.

WE interrupt our Notes for the purpose of introducing a short harmony of the chapters upon which we are now to enter. There is considerable difficulty in determining with certainty the order in which the various events recorded occurred. The difficulty arises chiefly from the fact that each Evangelist omits to state the minor circumstances of the events which he narrates, and especially to record with particularity the times at which they occurred. It is not difficult, however, to show that the Evangelists do not contradict each other. Each account, we hold and firmly believe, is literally and exactly true, and all of them perfectly consistent with each other, as the following outline and notes, we trust, will show:

1. MATT. XXVIII. 1; MARK XVI. 1; LUKE XXIV. 1.—Soon after the end of the Sabbath, but the hour of the night precisely we cannot tell, the women whom the Evangelists mentioned in the preceding chapters, and some others with them, made themselves ready to go early in the morning to the sepulchre, taking with them the spices they had prepared to anoint the Lord's body. Whether they all intended to set forth from the same place, or from different places, and from what places, we are not informed. It is probable they went from different places, situated at unequal distances, and did not all set forth

at precisely the same moment of time, or go with exactly the same speed.

2. MATT. XXVIII. 2—4.—But before any of the women arrived at the sepulchre, and sometime before the dawn of the day, there was an earthquake. At or about the same time an angel descended, and rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and seated himself upon it. The watch were affrighted, and fled from the place, and the angel disappeared.

3. MATT. XXVIII. 1; MARK XVI. 1.—After this event, some of the women arrived. Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of James and Joses, certainly; and perhaps Salome also: but if the latter did not accompany the two Marys, she was not long behind them.

4. MATT. XXVIII. 1; MARK XVI. 2; JOHN XX. 1.—It was very early, yet dark, when they first came to the sepulchre. On their way they talked about the stone which they saw Joseph and Nicodemus place before the door of the sepulchre, and were troubled about it. But as they came up to the place, they discovered with astonishment that it had been already removed.

5. JOHN XX. 1, 2.—Mary Magdalen, seeing the sepulchre open, and the stone removed to a distance, concluded at once that the body of the Lord had been taken out of it, and carried away. Without stopping to investigate the fact, she immediately left her companions, and ran to tell Peter and John.

6. MARK XVI. 5.—Mary Magdalen having thus departed, the other Mary, with Salome (who either came with the two Marys, or arrived, it is probable, soon after) entered the sepulchre, and, while within it, saw an angel, who told them that the Lord had risen, and gave them a message to the disciples.

7. MATT. XXVIII. 8; MARK XVI. 8.—Affrighted at the sight of the angel, they quickly left the sepulchre and fled—not daring even to speak, so great was their fear.

8. LUKE XXIV. 2—9. Soon after, another and probably a larger company of women arrived at the sepulchre, not having met Mary the mother of James, and Salome, who but a short time before had fled from it. As they also found the stone rolled way, they entered. They saw that the body of Jesus was not there. Perhaps they noticed the linen clothes lying

and the napkin. But this is not said. Being perplexed, and unable to account for what they saw, two angels, in the form of men, appeared standing with them. The angels, or one of them, announced the fact of the Lord's resurrection, as the same or another angel had to the other company, but gave them no message. These women then left the sepulchre with the purpose to go to the apostles, and tell them what they had seen and heard.

9. JOHN XX. 3—10.—Soon after this John arrived, and then Peter; and soon after Peter, Mary Magdalen, who, some time before, had gone in search of them. John coming up first, stooped down and looked into the sepulchre; whence we conclude the morning had so far advanced that there was light enough to see clearly. While in this posture, perhaps, Peter came up; and without pausing long, if at all, he went in. John, emboldened by Peter's example, followed. They saw nothing but the linen clothes lying and the napkin. The body they found not. No angel appeared to them to explain the wonder. Having verified Mary's words, and seen what they could, they returned to their homes.

10. JOHN XX. 11—13.—But Mary Magdalen lingered still at the sepulchre, with no other object, as we can perceive, but to vent her sorrow. Whether Peter or John had told her what they had seen within the sepulchre, we are not informed; but whether or not, she stooped down, looked in, and saw two angels sitting, the one at the head, the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had lain. Immediately they, or one of them, addressed her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" This question she answered without fear, supposing, no doubt, that they were men.

11. MARK XVI. 9; JOHN XX. 14.—On perceiving these persons within the sepulchre, she naturally turned away from it, and, in doing so, perceived obliquely behind her another person, whom she took to be the gardener. It was, in fact, Jesus himself. This was the first appearance of the Lord after his resurrection to any of his disciples.

12. JOHN XX. 15—17.—Jesus put to her the same question the angels had, and also another. Her reply shows how entirely unconscious she was of his presence; but upon his pronouncing her name, instantly she recognized him. He gave her a message to his brethren, and disappeared.

13. JOHN XX. 18.—Mary having thus seen the Lord, hastened from the sepulchre, not sorrowful as before, but with intense joy, to tell the disciples what she had seen. Probably she ran to find Peter and John first, to correct the false impression she had given them, and which their own observation had confirmed. These apostles had not long before left the place, and perhaps had not yet reached their homes, when Mary departed the second time to find them. As she met others afterwards, she no doubt delivered to them the joyful message.

14. LUKE XXIV. 10.—In the mean time the second party of women, of whom Luke speaks, were on their way to find the apostles, and tell them what they had seen. But Mary had found Peter and John, and perhaps some other of the disciples or apostles, before they returned, and, as Luke himself intimates, had anticipated their information.

15. MATT. XXVIII. 8, 11.—Not long after this the first party of women, consisting of Mary the mother of James and Joses, Salome, and perhaps some others, returned and found the disciples. Their fear, it is probable, had kept them back, till Jesus met them and composed their minds.

16. LUKE XXIV. 11.—Notwithstanding these reiterated assurances of the women, the apostles were incredulous—in fact they regarded their reports as idle tales.

17. LUKE XXIV. 12—34.—But Peter, on hearing this second account of Mary Magdalen, arose hastily and ran the second time to the sepulchre, and stooping down saw the linen clothes lying by themselves, as he had seen them before, but did not enter the sepulchre again. Perhaps he hoped the Lord would appear to him, as he had to Mary. Some suppose that on this second visit, either at the sepulchre or on his way returning from it, the Lord did appear to Peter; but this particular is not recorded. All we know is, that at some time before evening, and long enough before, to make the fact known among the disciples, the Lord did actually appear to Peter, and on his assurance the other apostles appear to have believed the fact. 1 Cor. xv. 5.

18. MATT. XXVIII. 11, 15.—About the time the first party of women returned to the city and found the apostles, the watch who had been set to guard the sepulchre also came into the city and informed the chief priests of the wonderful things they had

witnessed, and how they were frightened from the place by the appearance of an angel.

19. LUKE XXIV. 13, 30, 31.—After the return of the second and larger party of women to the city—perhaps about mid-day or a little before, Cleopas, supposed to be the same as Alpheus, and another disciple, whose name we do not know, set out from Jerusalem to go to Emmaus, a village about seven and a half or eight miles north-west from Jerusalem. When they set forth these disciples had heard only the report of the second party of women (verse 22,) who spoke merely of having seen a vision of angels. While on their way to Emmaus, Jesus joined them in the guise of a traveller. They did not, like Mary Magdalen, at first recognize him; but at Emmaus, while reclining with them at meat, he made himself known and immediately disappeared. Allowing three hours for the walk to Emmaus, we may conjecture that this occurred between 3 o'clock and 4 o'clock, P. M., according to our mode of reckoning time. This was the Lord's fourth appearance on that day, if we assume that he had before this time appeared to Peter. See verse 34.

20. MARK XVI. 14; LUKE XXIV. 33; JOHN XX. 19.—Cleopas and his companion did not remain long at Emmaus, whatever their intention was before. Rising the same hour—that is with all convenient speed—they hastened back to the city, to tell their brethren of this wonderful interview. They found the apostles, or most of them, assembled, but in a state of excitement: for, before this, the apostles had heard of the Lord's appearance to Simon, and that was the topic which engrossed them, when Cleopas and his companion entered the room where they were assembled. According to John, the time of this meeting was evening, though still on the first day of the week. Mark represents the company as still reclining at table. Hence we infer that it was the time of their evening repast. As the sun set at that season near six o'clock, we may conjecture that Cleopas and his companion joined the company about that time, or a little after: for the company may have assembled some short time before Cleopas entered. It is probable Peter was not there, and quite certain that Thomas was not.

21. LUKE XXIV. 36.—While Cleopas and his companion were relating what they had seen and heard, Jesus himself appeared in the midst of them. The whole company were terrified and affrighted, supposing they saw a spirit. Cleopas and his companion, for aught that is said, shared in the fright and misap-

prehension. Yet, as the remark is general, perhaps it was intended to be applied only to those of the company who had not seen him before.

22. LUKE XXIV. 38—40; JOHN XX. 20.—Immediately the Lord allayed their fears. He knew their thoughts, and convinced them of the reality of his person and presence, by exhibiting his hands and feet to their sight and touch. Yet even after that exhibition and proof, they believed not for joy. The wonder was too great to be believed.

23. MARK XVI. 14; LUKE XXIV. 44—49.—Jesus, therefore, resorted to another proof. He called for meat. Accordingly one at the table handed him a piece of broiled fish, and (another, perhaps) a piece of honeycomb, which he took and ate before them. This proof, it appears, convinced them; for immediately Jesus began to instruct them, and open their minds for the apprehension of the truths he communicated. This was the fifth appearance of the Lord on that day; but before this time he had not appeared to the apostles collectively.

24. LUKE XXIV. 50, 51; JOHN XX. 21, 23.—How long this interview continued, we are not informed. If we may judge from the number and importance of the topics he touched upon, it was not very brief. It must have reminded them of their interview with him on the Thursday evening before. When his discourse was concluded, it appears they all left the apartment where they had assembled, and Jesus led them as far as Bethany, about fifteen furlongs, or nearly two miles from Jerusalem, and having blessed them, he was parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. This occurred in the night of the Lord's day, at what hour of night we know not. His last ascension, forty days afterwards, was from Mount Olivet, which was only five furlongs distant from Jerusalem, or one-third of the distance of Bethany. Acts i. 12; John xi. 18.

25. JOHN XX. 26, 29.—Eight days after, that is on the Sunday following, the disciples met again, and Thomas was with them. Jesus appeared to them again, much in the manner he had before. On this occasion he exhibited his hands and side to Thomas, which effectually removed his incredulity. The Evangelist records nothing more of this interview than what passed between the Lord Jesus and Thomas; nor does he inform us when, where, or how he disappeared.

26. MATT. XXVIII. 16.—The feast of the Passover by this

time having ended, and the women having conveyed to the disciples generally the message which the angels and Jesus also had sent to them, and the fact of his resurrection having been proved by the positive testimony of at least sixteen of their number who had seen him, the disciples generally, and several of the apostles returned to Galilee to await the fulfilment of his promise to appear to all of them there. Matt. xxviii. 16, 7; Mark xvi. 7.

27. JOHN XXI. 1.—Some of the apostles, however, lingered behind, among whom was Peter. At his suggestion, Thomas, Nathaniel, James, and John, and two other disciples went a fishing to the Sea of Tiberias. On this occasion Jesus appeared to them again. He spoke to them all, and conversed with Peter in the hearing of the others. This was his seventh appearance, but the fourth only of those which John particularly records. The time of it we have no means of determining.

28. MATT. XXVIII. 16.—His next appearance was the promised one in Galilee, upon a mountain, in the presence of the eleven apostles and of more than five hundred of his disciples. On this occasion also he instructed them in the nature and objects of their mission.

29. After this he appeared the ninth time, to James, as Paul informs us in 1 Cor. xv. 7, but the Evangelists do not mention this appearance.

30. The only other appearance which is particularly mentioned, was to the eleven apostles near Jerusalem, immediately before his visible ascension to heaven, from Mount Olivet. This occurred on the fortieth day after his resurrection. Acts i. 1—9.

Of these appearances Paul mentions five, in 1 Cor. xv. 5—7, *viz.* 1, that to Peter; 2, to the twelve; 3, to the five hundred; 4, to James; 5, to all the apostles. He omits the appearances—1, to Mary Magdalen; 2, to the women returning from the sepulchre; 3, to Cleopas and his companion; 4, to all the apostles, or at least to nine of them, on the evening of the day of his resurrection, when Thomas was absent; 5, to seven of the apostles at the sea of Tiberias. It is only by collating the Evangelists and the apostle Paul that we make out the number ten; yet some commentators have supposed that he appeared at many other times, of which we have no account. But the manner in which Paul alludes to the subject inclines us to doubt this opinion.



We now resume our annotations according to the order of the foregoing summary.

#### THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS.

We have seen that after Pilate had judicially ascertained, through the centurion, the death of Jesus, he freely granted his dead body to Joseph of Arimathea, and gave orders to deliver it to him. In all this Pilate acted *officially*, as the Governor and Chief Justiciary of Judea. The time at which Joseph made his request to Pilate, we have supposed, was soon after three o'clock in the afternoon of Friday. Matthew indeed says it was at evening (*ὄψιας δὲ γενομένης*—xxvii. 57;) but the Jews were accustomed to call the whole of the afternoon until sunset, (*ὄψια*) *evening*. As the Sabbath commenced at sunset, we infer that Joseph had received the body and deposited it in his own tomb before that time; for it was necessary, in order to fulfil our Lord's own words, Matt. xiii. 40, that his body should lie within the grave at least some portion of three days, according to the Jewish reckoning. Besides, the strictness and reverence with which the pious Jews observed the Sabbath, Luke xxiii. 56, justifies the inference that Joseph and Nicodemus completed their labour of love before the Sabbath began.

We have seen also how these pious disciples secured the body in its resting-place, and what measures the chief priests and Pharisees, with the approbation of Pilate, adopted on the next day to prevent the removal of the body covertly or by any fraudulent means. Thus secured, the body remained as it was laid, cold and motionless, during a part of Friday afternoon, the whole of Friday night, the whole of Saturday, or the Jewish Sabbath, and some part of Saturday night, with which the first day of the ensuing week began. At some time in the night, and as some suppose—though without the express warrant of the Scriptures—soon after midnight, the human soul of the Lord Jesus, in union with his Divine nature, returned from Paradise, entered the tomb, took possession of the body it had so lately left on the cross, reanimated it, and came forth. No human eye, as we suppose, witnessed this event. It was first announced some time, perhaps some hours, afterwards, by angels, whose words were verified at the moment by the opened and empty sepulchre. Before we proceed with the Evangelists, it may be useful to dwell a little on this wonderful event, which must be acknowledged by all Christians as absolutely fundamental. The apostle Paul makes the whole

truth of the gospel, and the very salvation of the elect, depend upon the truth and reality of the fact. He says: "If Christ be not risen, our preaching is (*κενον*) vain, and your faith is (*κενη*) vain." 1 Cor. xv. 14. Again: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is [not simply *κενη*, empty, but *ματαια*, foolish, as well as empty or groundless] vain. Ye are yet in your sins," verse 17. Nor is there any hope of the resurrection of others. For if Christ, the head, be not risen from the dead, how can believers in him, the members of his body, be raised from the dead? The dead in Christ are perished, verse 18, not merely fallen asleep, if Christ be not raised.

This doctrine, then, is equal in importance to any other in the Scriptures. It is, indeed, essentially connected with the doctrine of our Lord's Divine nature, and is, in fact, proved by it. For if we believe that the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, became incarnate in the person of the Lord Jesus, so that he was truly God and truly man in one person, nothing can be more reasonable than the doctrine of his resurrection. The greater wonder, by far, is that the Son of God should take upon himself the nature of man at all, and especially that he might die. See Acts ii. 24. It is only when we call in question, or lose sight of his Divine nature, as Socinians and Unitarians do, that the fact of his resurrection seems to require proof. To this consideration we add, that the doctrine is absolutely essential to the consistency and the truth of the other Scriptures. Our Lord himself declared that "As the Father hath life in himself, even so he hath given to the Son to have life in himself." John v. 26. He declared also that "he had power to lay down his life, and power to take it again." John x. 18. We have seen how he fulfilled one part of this declaration by delivering up his spirit at the appointed moment, and committing it as a trust into the hands of the Father. His spiritual nature went forth from his body, as we might go forth from a house or tent. The other part he fulfilled in the same way. As he was perfectly voluntary in becoming incarnate at first, so now, by an act of his own, he became incarnate the second time in the dead body he had shortly before left, as it lay embalmed in the sepulchre of Joseph, and quickened it into new and immortal life. By this act he constituted himself the second Adam, the head of the new creation, and especially of all his redeemed. Widely different were the objects, separately considered, of the first and second incarnations of the Son of God. His first incarnation was in order that he might offer the body he had assumed on the cross, that thereby he might put away sin, destroy the dominion of Satan, deliver the creature (that is, the world itself) from the bondage of corruption, re-

deem and glorify his elect Church, and through it make known in all worlds, and to all orders of creatures, the manifold wisdom of God. His second incarnation was the inauguration of his work of new creation. It was then that he cast off the image of sinful flesh, Rom. viii. 3, or rather (shall we say?) moulded that image into a new form, which, instead of being a copy from any other, is to be the pattern of the bodies of his elect, the Church of the first-born, his brethren. Rom. viii. 29.

This headship of Christ, as the second Adam, is the crowning blessing of God's covenant with David. Hence the apostle Paul, referring to 2 Sam. vii. 19, and 1 Chron. xvii. 17, calls him, by way of contrast to the head of our fallen race, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. 1 Cor. xv. 45.\*

In this connection it is proper to refer to Heb. x. 5, where the same apostle, quoting Ps. xl. 6, ascribes to the Saviour the words, "A body hast thou prepared me." These words, no doubt, had begun to be fulfilled when he was born into the world, and were fulfilling while he increased in stature from infancy to manhood. The use the apostle makes of them, shows that their primary reference is to the priestly office and sacrificial work of Christ. But may they not also refer to that adult frame, perfect without a blemish or the fracture of a bone, which, after having been suspended on the cross as a sacrifice, was laid, as we have seen, in the sepulchre? If we may so consider them, they will remind us of the body prepared for the first Adam, out of the dust of the earth, in its full and perfect measure and stature. We conceive of it as a most exquisite workmanship, but without intelligence or life, or more inherent power to move than the mould from which it had been made. Just so, lay the body of the second Adam in the tomb,

\* Dr. Kennicott renders 1 Chron. xvii. 17 thus: "And thou hast regarded me (David) according to the order of the Adam that is future, or the man that is from above," [for the word *המעתה* very remarkably signifies *hercafter* in respect of time, and *from above* in respect of place.] Hence St. Paul, combining both senses, says the second man is the Lord from heaven. 1 Cor. xv. 45. "Adam is the figure of him that was to come." (*του μελλοντος*—Rom. v. 14; rather say, of the coming one, *του ιρχμενου*, that is, the future Adam.)

Bishop Horsley renders the verse thus: "And thou hast regarded me (David) in the arrangement about the man that is to be from above," &c.—that is, in forming the scheme of incarnation, regard was had to the honour of David and his house, as a secondary object, by making it a part of the plan that Messiah should be born in his family. The sense of 2 Sam. vii. 19 is the same, though the phraseology differs somewhat. This remark of Bishop Horsley was intended to apply to the incarnation of Messiah in the womb of the virgin. The second incarnation, in the sepulchre of Joseph, had respect to much higher objects than the honour of David, if the observations before made upon John xix. 26, 27, are well founded. See vol. ix. 645, 646. The view here taken of the resurrection of the Lord, it is submitted, confirms the view taken of the passage in John xix. last cited.

perfectly formed and prepared, though by the process of natural growth, ready to be occupied by the spiritual and Divine nature of Jehovah Jesus. It was the same great Being who gave animation and life to both these bodies, but in different degrees and for vastly different ends. To the full-formed body of the first Adam the Lord Christ, as Creator, imparted the breath of life, and made him a living soul. Gen. ii. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 45. The other body he himself, as the creative, quickening spirit, entered and occupied, that through it and the Church, which is his mystical body, he might for ever make manifest to his intelligent creatures the Divine nature and glory.

But not to insist on these passages, which are adverted to in this place rather for the analogies they suggest than as the most obvious proofs of our proposition, it is sufficient to say, that the whole doctrine of the glorified Church is inseparably connected with our Lord's resurrection. See Col. iii. 3. Without it the gospel is an idle tale, and the preachers of it false witnesses before God.

The resurrection of Christ, which we proceed now to consider, is a question of fact, to be decided by testimony, and so the Scriptures represent it. Acts i. 22; ii. 32; iii. 15; iv. 33; v. 32; vii. 56; x. 41, 42; 1 Cor. xv. 15. Being the cornerstone of the Christian's hope it has been fiercely assailed. It is not our purpose to consider this testimony except so far as it falls in with the due exposition of the evangelic narrative to do so. Those who desire a full discussion of this whole subject may be referred to the elaborate discourse of Humphrey Ditton concerning the resurrection of Christ, or the less extensive, though learned and convincing work of Gilbert West, upon the same subject. We return now to the narrative:

MATT. XXVIII. 1. "In the end of the Sabbath\* as it began

\* Ὁψε δε σαββατων, after the Sabbath was ended, *peracto sabbato*. Figuratively the word signifies a week; because each week ended with the Sabbath. The Evangelists use different expressions to denote the time when the women first came to the sepulchre. Matthew says it was *τη ἐπιφωσκουση*, viz., *ἡμερα ορῶ*. These words may signify *in the morning twilight* or at the near approach of day, as appears by the use of the word by Luke xxiii. 54, where he applies it to the approach of the Sabbath, which began at sunset, and of course with the darkening rather than the lighting up of the sky. Mark denotes the time by the words *λιαν πρωι*, *very early*. Yet he adds the words *ἀναταλαντος του ἡλιου*, which create a difficulty. But the participle is in the first aorist, and may be translated *orituro sole*, see *Erasmus's Annotations*, or *cum sol oriri inciperet*, when the sun was beginning to rise; or at the first sign of the approach of the sun. Luke's expression is *ἑθρος βαθεις* (*subaudi εντος*.) The word *ἑθρος* denotes in pure Greek the whole of the morning twilight, from the first and faintest glimmering of it, until sunrise. Of course *ἑθρος βαθεις* signifies the early dawn in contradistinction to *ἑθρος ἑσχατος*. If we feel a difficulty in apprehending the precise meaning of this expression, it will be removed by an actual observation of the approach of the morning light upon a cloudless sky. At first a mere

to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalen and the other Mary to see the sepulchre."

The other Mary here spoken of was Mary the mother of James and Joses, who sat over against the sepulchre when Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus closed it with a great stone. Matt. xxvii. 56, 61; Mark xv. 47. John mentions only Mary Magdalen, but an expression occurs in her communication to Peter and John, from which we may infer that she went not alone. "They have taken away the Lord and (*οἶδαμεν*) *we know not* where they have laid him."\*

Mark seems to say that Salome also accompanied Mary Magdalen. Perhaps she did, although some commentators think otherwise.† The question is not important. There can be little

glimmering of grey light appears in the East. This the Greeks called *ἔσθρος*. Thucydides (3: 112, 4, 110) has *ἀμα ἔσθρος*, on the first dawn. This first feeble beginning of light gradually increases; the sky becomes brighter and brighter until it is changed into the redness of flame, and presently the sun itself appears, *ὁ ἥλιος ἀνατέλλει*. John denotes the time of Mary Magdalen's arrival by the words *σκοτίας ἐτι εἴσης*, while it was yet dark. He does not say *νυκτος ἐτι εἴσης*, while it was yet night. For the night was past and the first glimmering of light had appeared. This agrees with the more general expression of Luke *ἔσθρου βαθως*, and with Mark's *λεαν πρωι*, and Matthew's *τη ἐπιφωσκουση*, understood in the sense explained. Yet these expressions do not necessarily denote the same moment of time, or, indeed, any moment of time with exact precision; nor need we maintain that they do, in order to the consistency of the Evangelists. For proceeding, as the women probably did, from different parts of the city or its neighbourhood, and probably not setting out at exactly the same moment, they would naturally arrive at the sepulchre at different times: and although all were early, yet some would arrive earlier than others. If we suppose the Evangelists had in view different parties—and there was a considerable number of these women, Luke xxiii. 55; xxiv. 10,—it may serve to account for the diversities of expression. We add the remark of an ancient commentator upon the first part of this verse (*ἐπι δε σαββ. τη ἐπιφως*. compared with Mark xvi. 1, 2,) "Evangelistæ duo tempora insinuant; unum in quo Dominus surrexit quod est vespera sabbati; alterum in quo apparuit quod est mane prima sabbati."

\* The word *οἶδαμεν* must not be read as two words, *οἶδα, μεν*, *I know not*, but as one word, *we know not*. The particle *μεν* cannot easily stand in such a construction. Afterwards, when she was alone, at the sepulchre, she changes the expression from the plural to the singular number, see John xx. verse 13. As it was John's object in the first part of this chapter to relate only how he and Peter were first informed of the resurrection, and what they did and saw, he had no occasion to mention any of the females who visited the sepulchre, except Mary Magdalen.

† A learned German commentator suggests that the whole of the first verse of the xvi. chapter of Mark, excepting the words *και διαχρησμενου του σαββατου*, should be thrown into a parenthesis, and the 47th verse of the xv. chapter be read in connection with these words joined immediately to the 2d verse of the xvi. chapter. Thus: "And Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid; and after the Sabbath was past, and very early in the morning of the first day of the week they came unto the sepulchre (*For Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James and Salome had bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint him.*") This construction allows us to translate *ἤγερσαν* as a pluperfect, and thus harmonize Mark with Luke xxiii. 56. The authorized English version, though it renders *ἤγερ* as a pluperfect, yet

doubt, that if she did not actually go with them, she followed soon after, as she had joined them in buying and preparing sweet spices, that they might go together and anoint the body of their Lord.

MARK XVI. 3, 4. "And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was exceeding great."

These women, it appears, knew nothing of the military guard which had been set. They departed from the place before sunset on Friday, Luke xxiii. 56, and probably before Joseph and Nicodemus. Had they known of the guard also, they would have perhaps been deterred from making so early a visit to the sepulchre alone and unprotected. We observe that Matthew alone informs us how the guard was dispersed, and the stone removed. Mark, Luke, and John state only the fact that the stone was removed. The words of Matthew should be rendered thus:

MATT. XXVIII. 2. "But lo! there had been" (before these women came,) "a great earthquake: besides, an angel of the Lord, (*αγγελος*) having descended from heaven, and having come near, had rolled\* away the stone from the door and seated himself upon it."

At what hour precisely these events occurred we have no means of determining; we only know that they occurred after the Sabbath was ended and before these women arrived. The military guard only witnessed these demonstrations of the Divine power, but what appalled them was the appearance of the angel. The Evangelist adds, Matt. xxviii. 3, 4, "His countenance† was like lightning and his raiment white as snow, and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead."

We are not to suppose, as some have, that the Evangelist

represents the purchase as having been made after the Sabbath was ended. Thus rendered, Matthew and Mark agree in representing the two Marys as the first to visit the sepulchre in the morning. It is highly probable, however, as above suggested, that Salome, if not with them, was not far behind them.

\* The participles and verbs in this verse, except the last, are in the aorist tense, and may be rendered in the pluperfect, if the sense requires. The aorist, it is well known, is so called *quia non definit an imperfectum, perfectum vel plusquam perfectum denotetur*, Vossius Harm., lib. iii. cap. iii. § 7, Vigerus de idiot. Gr. L., and the marginal translation of the A. E. V. The word *ετι* in this verse, is adversative. *Ετι* often signifies *also, but, further, besides, propterea*—being used as a particle of transition merely.

† *ὡς* in this verse signifies the same as *μορφη* or *ειδος*. It means more than *προσωπον*, which denotes only the face or countenance. The Evangelist means to say, that the whole form of the angel at the time of his descent was dazzling like a flash of lightning, and his (*ενδυμας*) attire, or what seemed such, was as white as snow.

derived these particulars from the soldiers directly or mediately through the priests. The soldiers were too much overwhelmed with fear to observe accurately, or relate truthfully, more than their overpowering effect. The Evangelist wrote by inspiration; and God, who taught Moses the wonders of creation, revealed to Matthew whatever he thought it needful that the church should know. Yet we observe nothing here—and it is remarkable—that can minister to vain curiosity. Of the operations of the Divine energies within the sepulchre—the unrolling of the linen from the body; the orderly arrangement of it with the other clothing; the rising of the body from the place where it had been laid; the quickening it with the energies of immortal life; the manner in which it came forth, and the like actions—not a word is dropped, and to us they are as inscrutable as the energies which will hereafter gather and refashion the sleeping dust of the saints. Nor does the Evangelist inform us, even whether these demonstrations of power preceded, attended, or followed the coming forth of the body of the Lord Jesus. The angel who announced the fact of the resurrection to the women informed them of nothing more. This reserve is an unequivocal note of the inspiration of the record.

Most readers of the New Testament, it is probable, assume, but without reflection, that the descent of the angel, the rolling away of the stone, and the earthquake, were preparatory to the act of our Lord's resurrection, and that he did not actually come forth from the sepulchre until after the impediment of the stone had been removed. The assumption may be according to truth, although the Evangelist does not affirm it. He is silent on all these particulars. For aught that is written, the Lord may have arisen and come forth before the angel's descent, and such was the belief of some ancient commentators. See *Grotius* on Matt. xxviii. 2; *Vossius, Harmony*, lib. iii. cap. ii. § 5. Yet this opinion, also, is without express warrant. The opening of the sepulchre was necessary to expose it to the public view: it was a confirmatory proof of the angel's announcement of the resurrection; but that it was necessary to the exit of the Almighty occupant, is what we should not dare to affirm. It is vain to speculate how Omnipotence accomplishes its purposes. The descent of the angel and the earthquake proved to the watch, and through them to the priests and the nation, the presence of the power of God bringing to naught all their might and precaution. Let us not, however, understand the language of the Evangelist too literally. The apparel of the angel was, no doubt, visionary, and the rolling away of the stone not the work *literally* of his hand, but the

effect of the Divine power with which he was invested, to be exerted at his will; see Matt. xvii. 20; xxi. 21; Mark xi. 23; Luke xvii. 6, in accomplishment of the purpose for which he had been sent. How sublime; how awful the scene! The sudden lightning-like descent of the angel at a still hour of the night—the instantaneous opening of the sealed sepulchre—the removal of the huge stone (*μεγας σφοδρα*) as a pebble before him, and the sudden appearance of the majestic, glorious form of the angel (*επινω*) over it and apparently resting upon it, in a sitting posture. Such a scene was well suited to strike the keepers with dismay.

How long the angel retained his glorious form; or how long he remained in the posture which the Evangelist describes—whether until the keepers fled, or whether he disappeared to relieve them of their fears and allow them to recover their faculties and their strength, are topics on which we have no light. We only know that, when the women arrived, the terror of the scene had passed away.

This passage, Matt. xxviii. 2, 3, 4, is evidently parenthetical. Mark, we have seen, represents the women as anxious about the removal of the stone, but when they reached the place, behold, all was changed! No stone! no guard! no seal! Matthew alone explains how this change was produced. The women, as we learn from John, did not immediately enter the sepulchre, but seeing the stone removed, they took it as certain, without stopping to examine, that the sepulchre had been opened and the body removed from it by persons unknown. It is evident, also, that when the two Marys first arrived at the sepulchre, no angel or human person appeared to, or was seen by them. All was yet dark; they perceived nothing but the removed stone and open sepulchre. Leaving her companion, Mary Magdalen, whose temperament, like Peter's, was ardent and impulsive, John xx. 2, "runneth and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him."

Mary Magdalen having thus departed, the other Mary was left alone in the dark at the sepulchre, unless Salome was of their party, as no doubt she intended to be. But soon, it is probable, other females arrived, not all at one time perhaps, but in small parties and in succession. To the company thus formed the angel spoken of by Matthew appeared, but evidently in an altered form. According to Mark xvi. 5, the company entered the sepulchre before they saw the angel, and though Matthew does not expressly say so, the words which he ascribes



to the angel imply at least that he addressed them not from the stone, but from within the sepulchre.

MATT. XXVIII. 5, 6. "Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here—he is risen as he said. Come see the place where the Lord lay."

This speech of the angel is full of majesty. It rises at each pause, and at each upward step the wonder heightens. "Ye seek Jesus the crucified one. He is not here, He lives as he said. See, here the place where the Lord lay." The angel calls him **THE LORD**, the Lord of angels as of men, a sort of *κοινοῦντος* the angel uses: as if he had said, "Our common Lord." He assigns no cause of his resurrection but his word (*καθως ειπε*, sicut dixit) *as he said*. Could the angel have thus spoken had not Jesus been truly divine?

We observe that Matthew mentions only one angel, viz. that one who spoke the words we have just considered. He says nothing expressly about the position he occupied, or of his posture while speaking. But, as before observed, we infer from his language, that it was addressed to the women from within the sepulchre; nor does Matthew describe the angel's appearance. Mark represents him as a young man clothed in a long white garment, sitting on the right side. In these representations there is no contradiction, but only greater particularity in one than in the other. Neither Evangelist affirms that there were not other angels present: and why may we not believe that there were myriads of these holy beings gathered around that place, each ready to appear visibly and perform his assigned part? At the birth of Jesus, a solitary angel at first appeared in the fields of Bethlehem to announce the event to the shepherds; but suddenly there appeared with him a multitude of the heavenly host. Luke ii. 9—13. And why only one present now, and not a multitude? Can we conceive of an event which could more intensely engage angelic minds than this second incarnation\* of the Lord of glory? 1 Pet. i. 12; Job xxxviii. 7.

Some harmonists suppose that Mary and Salome entered the sepulchre before any of the other women arrived, and it may have been so; we have no express information on the question. But as they did not enter the sepulchre until there was light enough to see objects within it, at least dimly; they must have

\* In Rev. iii. 14, one of the titles the Lord assumes is, (*ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ*) "The beginning of the Creation of God." Does not his title have respect to the *new* creation spoken of in Rev. xxi. 5; and was not this taking to himself the second time the *human body* thus prepared and *glorifying* it, that "beginning of the New Creation," to which the title alludes? And may not Col. i. 15 and 18, also, refer to his glorified humanity? In his Divine nature he was without beginning.

lingered about the spot some little time before entering, although not the whole (*ὁρθρος*) period of the dawning. During this time, it is not improbable that some, though perhaps only a few, of these devoted friends of the Lord, joined them. Yet the company spoken of by Luke appears to have arrived some time after the first party left the sepulchre, although it could not have been very long. But not to dwell on conjectures, we pass on to the message with which the angel charged these women.

MATT. XXVIII. 7. "And going quickly, tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead."

Mark adds a particular which Matthew omits: "Go tell his disciples *and Peter*." We find no difficulty in understanding the reason of this special allusion. And how deeply must this message have affected Peter's heart! As an old writer says, it was a commission of comfort to all the disciples, for all had forsaken him and fled; but especially was it such to Peter, who had denied him with an oath. What follows in this verse was addressed by the angel to the women.\*

"Behold he goeth before (*ὅμας*) *you* (not *αὐτους*, *them*) into Galilee. There shall ye see (*ὄψεσθε*) him: Lo, I have told (*ὅμην*) you."

These allusions of the angel to the promises made by the Saviour in his private intercourse with his disciples, Matt. xxvi. 32; Mark xiv. 28, and to the peculiar sin of Peter, give us a glimpse of the intercourse between angels and the Saviour and his disciples. Though unseen by mortal eye, they were privileged to follow in his train, witness his trials and sufferings, hear his words, and study in him, as we may believe, the deep mysteries of God in the work of redemption. 1 Pet. i. 12; 1 Cor. iv. 9; Matt. iv. 11; xxvi. 53; Heb. i. 14.

MATT. xxviii. 8. "And going out quickly, [*ἐξέελθουσαι ταχῦ*, that is from the sepulchre in which they were,] they ran from the sepulchre with fear and great joy to bring the disciples word."†

Mark's language is more forcible than Matthew's. And going

\* Mark xvi. 7, as translated in the E. V., seems inconsistent with this explanation. But the punctuation of the original text is faulty. We should put a period after Peter, and make the rest of the verse a distinct sentence. "Go tell his disciples and Peter." What? That he is risen, that he is not here. In other words, "Go tell his disciples and Peter what I have just told you. The particle *ἔτι* like the Hebrew *אֲנִי* is asseverative, or pleonastic, as it often is, e.g. in John vii. 12. Why should the angel charge the women to tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus would go before them (*viz.* the women addressed *ὅμας*) into Galilee?

† To get this sense we put a comma after *ταχῦ*, and another after *ἰδραμον*, and strike out the comma after *μηλλης*.

out quickly, they fled from the sepulchre. For (*τρομος*) trembling and (*ἐκστασις*) amazement (*εἶχε*) had seized them; neither said they anything to any one, *i. e.* while they were fleeing from the sepulchre towards the place from which they had come, for they were afraid.

This picture is drawn from life. The narrative bears internal marks of its truthfulness. How natural is Matthew's expression!—"fear and great joy." How contrary was this news to their expectation! They had come to the sepulchre to see it, and to weep there. They had brought sweet spices to anoint his dead body. Could anything be more contrary to their expectation than what they saw and heard? The sepulchre open—an angel its only occupant—no dead body there—the linen clothes lying—the napkin in a place by itself—and the explicit announcement of the angel. A strong ray of hope suddenly falls on their hearts. And yet possibly the angelic form they seemed to see, and the words they seemed to hear, might be unreal, or in some way deceptive. Hence the mixture of emotions. Besides, the unwonted sight and voice of the angel would naturally excite the strong emotions Mark describes, and perhaps even restrain for a time the inclination, if not the power, to speak. Then again, their hasty exit from the sepulchre, their speed, and all of them under the influence of common emotions. Certainly unlearned, unpractised writers, such as Matthew and Mark were, could never have invented a tale so true to nature—so life-like. These women having thus fled, and the angel perhaps having disappeared, the sepulchre was again solitary. But soon, probably very soon, another party of women arrived, whose visit is described only by Luke. They were the Galilean women of whom he speaks in chap. xxiii. 55, 56. These by themselves were a large company, but their number was increased by others who joined them. Luke xxiv. 1—3. "These came at early dawn, bringing the spices they had prepared (before the Sabbath,) and found the stone\* rolled away from the sepulchre, and entering, they found not the body of the Lord Jesus."

Several circumstances prove conclusively that this was a different party from that mentioned by Matthew and Mark. To this party two angels appeared, whom Luke describes as men

\* *Τον λίθον, that stone, (ὄπισθικως,) viz.* that stone which Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had put there, and which the priests and Pharisees had caused to be sealed. Yet Luke had not mentioned anything about this stone before. He took it for granted, his reader would readily supply this and other circumstances which were generally known. None of the Evangelists wrote as philosophers or orators write, but as men without culture, content to employ the language of common life. Luke is not an exception to this remark.

in shining garments. They appeared in the posture of standing.\* The address of the angels was different, nor did they charge the women with any message to the disciples. The appearance of the angels, though it impressed the women with reverential fear, so that they inclined their faces toward the earth, yet had no overpowering effect. They are not represented as fleeing hastily from the sepulchre, or as speechless through fear. Two objections are sometimes made to this view.

1. It is said that Luke himself mentions (in verse 10) Mary Magdalen, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and (*αἱ λοιπαὶ*) the rest with them; and hence it is inferred these were the women intended in the first verse. But if such were his meaning, why did he not say, verse 10, It was Mary Magdalen, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the rest with them, who went (*ὁρθρου βαθεος*) very early to the sepulchre, bearing the spices they had prepared? And why did he say in the ninth verse, that these women, whose visit to the sepulchre he had described, told all these things to the eleven, and to the rest, and in the very next verse repeat that Mary Magdalen, and Joanna, and the other Mary told these things also to the apostles, if they were both but one and the same party? The repetition on this view would be quite useless.

What the Evangelist intends may be thus stated. In the 9th verse he says, these women from Galilee, of whom he had just spoken, returned from the sepulchre, and told the eleven what they had seen. But there were certain other females, namely, the Magdalen Mary, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the other women (*αἱ λοιπαὶ*) of their party, who had already been to the apostles before, and had told them these things. If this is not the true explanation, we can perceive no reason for repeating in the 10th verse what had already been stated in the 9th verse.

2. Another objection is, the phrase by which Luke denotes the time when these women arrived at the sepulchre, as being at the very earliest dawn—at the first twinkling of gray light, and of course while it was yet dark. In this assumption we apprehend lies a mistake, and the one which has created the greatest difficulty in harmonizing this part of the Evangelists. Luke uses, as we have seen, a word (*ὁρθρος*) which denotes the whole period of dawning from its earliest appearance till

\* Gilbert Wakefield says (*ἵεστησαν*) stood in this place means no more than (*ἵσαν*) were. The remark may be critically just, but we think the Evangelist means to express posture.

sunrise. To this he adds the qualifying word (*βαθύς*) deep; which, while it puts a negative upon the supposition that it was the appearance of the first and faintest ray of light, intimates that it was still early; when the dawn was somewhat, though not far advanced.\* Whatever difficulty there may be in admitting this sense of the expression, there is much more in harmonizing on this assumption the other particulars of the two narratives, and certainly it is more reasonable to allow some latitude to a general expression of time, such as Luke's is, than to add to or take from the material circumstances in the narrative of either of the Evangelists. Before we leave this passage, we should briefly notice the address of these angels.

LUKE XXIV. 5, 6, 7. "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

The force of the original is weakened in this translation. "Why seek ye the *living one*—the ever-living Jehovah Jesus—among dead mortals?" The expression reminds us of Rev. i. 17, 18: "I am the first and the last, the living one: I was dead, but behold I live for evermore." See John xiv. 6; v. 26. Here, as before, we observe the only proof the angels appeal to is his own word: "Recollect that while yet in Galilee he spake to you [of this very event], saying, It behooveth the Son of Man to be delivered," &c. How familiarly these holy beings refer to a special communication the Saviour, foreseeing this very visit to the sepulchre, had made to these devoted females, when perhaps none of his male disciples were present. They do not speak as though they were delivering a message with which they had been charged, but as of their own motion,

\* Ἄμα ἔρβρω may signify at the very first appearance of dawn. Περὶ ἔρβρον means about the dawn of day; it may be a little before or a little after the first appearance of light. Ὀρβρος βαθύς denotes a time when the dawning is still deep; that is, not far advanced, though not the very first appearance of light. As when we say *early spring*, we do not mean the very first moment of spring, but an early portion of that season; so by *early dawn* we do not mean the very first instant of the dawn, but the first part of that period. See a note of the Rev. S. T. Bloomfield on Thucyd., book III. § 112, where he endeavours to show that ἔρβρου βαθύς—ἄνα πρωί and σκοτίας ἐπι ὥσσης, all refer to the same time, which he expresses by the phrases "peep of day," "the gray dawn." He cites most, if not all the places from classic authors in which the expression occurs, and comes to his conclusion with some diffidence. Had he not supposed that the three Evangelists refer to the same party of women, his conclusion from his authorities would probably have been different. It is believed that the word βαθύς, in the comparative or superlative degree, does not occur in connection with ἔρβρος, and the reason is, that its use in the positive degree is to denote time by comparison.

reminding them only of what they already knew, and could not have forgotten, yet did not believe, as the spices they had prepared and brought with them proved. We may regard this address as a reproof of their unbelief, and its purport may be thus expressed: "You ought not to be surprised at any of these events which afflict you so much. While yet in Galilee, the Lord told you plainly what would befall him on this visit to Jerusalem. He told you very expressly, too, that on this very day he would rise from the dead. How faithless and slow of heart you are to believe his plainest words!"

We have no means of determining how long this company of women remained at the place. They appear to have entered the sepulchre immediately upon their arrival. If the dawn had then so far advanced that they could clearly distinguish the various objects about them, they must have seen what Peter and John saw a short time afterwards. On any supposition, they saw enough to perplex them greatly. At this juncture the angels appeared, and explained the cause of what they saw, but could not understand.

The first company of women departed quickly from the sepulchre, in great fear, by the express command of the angel. Matt. xxviii. 8; Mark xvi. 8. The second company were too much impressed by the unlooked-for appearance of the angels and their address to linger in their presence. There was probably a design in these arrangements, bringing first one company and then another, and quickly despatching them to make way for a third. Thus proofs were multiplied, and the news was quickly and widely spread. However this may be, when Peter and John arrived, which could not have been long afterwards, they saw no person near.

While these things were occurring, Mary Magdalen found Peter and John, and told them how she went to the sepulchre, and what were her fears: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." What she feared, she affirmed as a fact, but without evidence. It was her too hasty conclusion from her finding the sepulchre open. It is probable she stated both the fact of the open sepulchre and her conclusion from it.

JOHN XX. 3, 4. "Peter therefore ( $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\tau\eta\lambda\theta\epsilon\iota\nu$ ) went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre, and they ran both together; and that other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre."

The impression Mary's communication made on the minds of these disciples may be gathered from these verses. They regarded it as very extraordinary. It impressed them very deeply. Had she told them she found the sepulchre closed

with the stone, and surrounded with a military guard, it would have been just what they expected, and probably they would have remained unmoved where they were. But who could have removed the stone and conveyed away the body? To what place had it been taken? And what motive could any have for such a desecration, especially at that time? By what means, if any, could they recover the body, that they might bury it elsewhere, beyond the reach of malice? These, or such as these, were probably the questions which occupied their hearts and thoughts.

JOHN XX. 5. "And he, stooping down, saw the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in."

John was eager to see what could be seen, but his timidity of character prevented him from actually entering. How strange! This disciple, who feared not to stand at the foot of the cross during the fearful scene of the crucifixion, had not the courage to enter the sepulchre alone!

JOHN XX. 6, 7. "Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself."

We are struck with the particularity of the narrative, and its perfect consistency with the known characters of these apostles. Peter, upon reaching the sepulchre, did not pause an instant. He entered it to ascertain with certainty the minutest facts of the case. How consistent this with his ardent, decided character! John, emboldened by Peter's example,

JOHN XX. 8. "Then went in also, and he saw and believed"—

What? He saw what Peter had seen, *viz.* the condition of the sepulchre and of the linen clothes and napkin, and believed what Mary Magdalen had told him. To this interpretation it is objected that he might have believed thus much without entering the sepulchre. Hence it is inferred by some that he believed something more and greater. The particulars he records about the clothes and the napkin, and the manner in which they were laid, are mentioned as the ground of the conclusion he had formed, and which he expresses by the word (*ἐπίστευσεν*) *believed*—a word which is commonly used in a religious sense in this gospel, iii. 15; x. 26; xix. 35. There is force in these considerations. It is to be observed that John here speaks for himself only. He does not say anything about Peter's reasonings or conclusions, nor does he say that either communicated his reflections to the other; but he adds, that both he and Peter

JOHN XX. 9. "Until that time (*οὐδὲπω*) had not understood *οὐκ ἔγινωσκον*) the Scripture that he must rise from the dead."

His meaning, therefore, may be, that reasoning from these facts, and recalling our Lord's repeated declaration, that he should rise from the dead on the third day, light began to break upon his mind, and he soon came to the true conclusion, while Peter may have remained ignorant of the true solution until the Lord actually appeared to him. These disciples, being left to their own conjectures, may have reasoned differently. No interpreting angel appeared to them, and the thought of his resurrection might occur to one and not to the other as a possible solution of the strange occurrence. While they lingered about the solitary spot, Mary Magdalen returned, but whether any inquiries or communications passed between her and them we are not informed. Not a word is recorded as having been uttered by either Peter or John while they were there. All we know is, that having seen what they could,

JOHN XX. 10, 12. "They went away again to their respective homes, while Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down *and looked* into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain."

It was the strong affection and deep sorrow of Mary which detained her thus alone at the sepulchre. Yet she did not venture to enter it, as Peter and John had done. Perhaps she designed to do so,\* and would have done so, had she not when stooping down discovered the angels within, whom she took to be men.

Do we inquire whether these angels were in the sepulchre while Peter and John were there, unperceived? Or did they enter it after these disciples had departed, without being seen by Mary? Were they the same angels that had appeared before, or others? These questions we cannot answer; yet we may learn from the narrative, however explained, something of the extraordinary powers with which these holy beings are gifted, and how they can minister unseen to the heirs of salvation while yet on the earth.

We do not reflect as we ought what numbers of them may move daily in the paths of human activity, wholly unperceived by us, or, if perceived, regarded as these were by Mary. 1 Cor. iv. 9; Heb. xiii. 2; Luke xv. 10; Matt. xviii. 10; Rom. viii. 38;

\* The words *παρουσαν εις το μνηματιον* may signify, she stooped towards the sepulchre to enter into it. The words *and looked* in our translation, are not in the original.



1 Tim. v. 21. During the present dispensation, we are clearly taught, they fulfil a most important ministry, Heb. i. 14, which in the world to come will be supplied by the glorified saints, whose service may then be performed for the most part as unperceived as the ministry of the angels is now. Heb. ii. 5; Luke xx. 36; Rev. v. 10.

JOHN XX. 13. "They say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?"

Why should they ask such a question? Did they not know why she wept? Did they purpose to reply to her, but were prevented by the unexpected appearance of the Lord himself? Or were they conscious of his presence before? Or was their question designed merely to soften her surprise, or to invest the occurrence with the appearance of human life? Or do angels sympathize in the sorrows of God's people, and administer consolation by silent suggestion, and, when permitted, by audible speech?

JOHN XX. 13. "She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."\*

This answer shows how ignorant this devoted disciple was of her Lord's exalted character, and of the real object and end of his ministry. It shows us too, how completely his Divine nature was concealed in his human, or, perhaps we should say, how truly and perfectly he was a man. Mary thought of him only as a deceased human friend, whose lifeless, helpless corpse had been removed from its resting-place by rude hands—perhaps by his enemies. In the fulness of her heart she had come early to the sepulchre to embalm his beloved remains, and preserve them from early corruption. Her grief was that she was deprived of this mournful service. Had she thought of his resurrection to life, could she have wept? Could she have inquired about where his body was concealed? How improbable it is, then, that Mary, and all those who shared in her disappointment, Luke xxiv. 21, could have agreed together to circulate a report of his resurrection! Matt. xxvii. 64. We observe that Mary replies to the inquiry of the angels with composure; at least without fear of them. She supposed them, in fact, to be men, not reflecting that they could not have entered the sepulchre if they were such, without her knowledge.

But the women to whom the angels appeared before, were very differently impressed; they made no reply, but fled affrighted and speechless from the place. Matt. xxviii. 5, 8;

\* A writer remarks, "Perhaps she surmised that they had done the act, but did not like to tax them with it."

Mark xvi. 6—8. Why this difference? We suppose it was because the Lord designed to show himself to this disciple, and make her the first human witness of his resurrection. Another reason may be found, perhaps, in the typical office which Mary fulfilled at that time, which will be explained hereafter. For these purposes it was necessary that her mind should not be discomposed by fear, or by any such strong emotions as would disqualify her for tranquil and exact observation.

JOHN XX. 14. "And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus."

Naturally would Mary withdraw from the sepulchre on seeing two men within it. If her purpose was, when she stooped, to enter it, she would postpone it until the men, as she took them to be, had withdrawn. She turned, perhaps with the intention of retiring, till they should withdraw, to some place out of view. Some commentators understand the words (*ἐστραψεν εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω*) of the Evangelist as signifying that she left the sepulchre, and was on her way returning to the city. We see no occasion for this interpretation. The narrative, which is very circumstantial, seems rather to imply, that at the instant of rising from her stooping posture, and averting her face from the sepulchre, she saw the Lord standing near her, as it were, before the door of the sepulchre, within her reach, and in the view, perhaps, of the persons within the sepulchre.

JOHN XX. 15. "Jesus said unto her: Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?"

The first of these inquiries is the same as that just before made by the angels. Yet neither question was put for information, but rather as a proof to Mary of the reality of his bodily presence. It is not necessary to say that he needed not that she should tell him why she wept, or whom she sought. His voice, his appearance, and perhaps the place, suggested to her that he was the gardener, and she replied in continuation of her answer to the angels, which she took it for granted he had heard.

JOHN XX. 15. "If *thou* hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

"And if thou (art the person who) bore *him* (that is his dead body) hence," &c. This language is perfectly natural, and just such as would be suggested by the circumstances; and so was the grief which lavished itself on the inanimate remains of her departed friend. Yet these did not constitute the Lord's person. Luke xxiii. 43. But how remote from her mind—we repeat—was the thought of his resurrection from the dead! We cannot account for Mary's mistake, but by supposing that

our Lord's address to her—his appearance, voice, and manner, were perfectly in keeping with one who might be supposed to have the care of the garden, though it is not necessary to suppose that he bore about his person any badge or indication of that employment. The place where he appeared, and his familiar demeanour gave rise, perhaps, to the conjecture. Here we may remark, that a perfect power over the external form appears to be a distinguishing attribute of spiritual natures. We have seen examples of it in the angels who appeared on this eventful morning, and we now have another example of it in the person of Jesus.\*

JOHN XX. 16. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary: She turned herself and said unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master," [rather, "my master!"] "it is my master!"†

On seeing the angels within the sepulchre, Mary turned from it, and in so doing she perceived Jesus, obliquely—or as we may say—over her shoulder. In this half-averted posture he first addressed her and she replied. But upon hearing her name pronounced (*στροφεισα*) turning yet more, so as to survey his person, instantly she recognized him. How great was her surprise! One word was all that she said, or could say. Her highest hope and most intense desire, at that very moment, was to find the dead body of her friend. The bitterness of her grief she had just vented in his ear whom she sought for as dead. She had found him, not dead, as she hoped, but alive, which she had not thought of as possible.

Some commentators suppose that our Lord at first assumed the tones of a strange voice, but afterwards changed them to his own. We suppose that it was through his power over the mind and spirit of Mary that he made himself known to her. Her conviction of the reality of his presence and of the iden-

\* We have sometimes thought our Lord tacitly alluded to this power in his discourse on the Mount, Matt. vi. 25, 27; Luke xii. 22, 27, "Take no thought for your life," "nor yet for your body, for which of you (*μεριμναν*, though earnestly and anxiously desiring it,) can add one cubit to his stature;" as if he had said, Why bestow so much care and anxiety upon such frail and imperfect structures as your mortal bodies are, which are so little under the control of your spiritual and nobler natures? Seek rather an entrance into the kingdom of God, where you will be endowed with immortal and glorious bodies, which will be so perfectly subject to your spiritual natures that you will have power, simply by taking thought, to assume any form and stature, and appear and disappear in any part of the universe, as the service of God may require.

† רַבֵּן *Rabban Princeps* was the highest title of a Jewish teacher. Buxtorf (see the word in his *Lex. Talmud.* fol. col. 2176,) says: "Titulus summæ dignitatis circa tempora nati Christi, ortus in Hillelis filiis qui principatum gesserunt, in populo Israelis per ducentos circiter annos. Septem tantum hoc titulo appellati fuerunt qui præter doctrinam et prudentiam etiam fuerunt *רַבֵּי-אֵלִיָּהוּ* *principes* et hujus status respectu appellati fuerunt singuli *Rabban.*"

tity of his person appears to have been instantly full and perfect, just as it was eight days afterwards in the case of Thomas, verse 28. This power is an attribute with which he will endow the renewed nature of all his people when they shall be changed into his likeness.

Although Mary uttered only one word at this interview, yet it is supposed she approached him as if to touch his person, or that she fell at his feet, as if to embrace them, which gave occasion to the first part of our Lord's reply, "Touch me not." Why should he forbid her to touch him unless she were attempting to do so? We might admit the conjecture as plausible, or at least as harmless, were it not made the ground of interpreting the rest of the sentence. If the sense of the passage depended upon such an action of Mary, we cannot suppose it would have been passed over in silence. We prefer to consider the record, as designed to convey important instruction to the Church, 2 Tim. iii. 16, rather than to denote a fugitive circumstance personal to Mary and her fellow disciples.

JOHN XX. 17. "Jesus saith unto her (*μη μου άπτου*) touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my Father (*όπω γαρ άναβηθηκα προς τον πατερα μου.*)

Most commentators say this is a very dark and difficult passage, and some say it is the most difficult in the history of the resurrection; yet it would be impossible to find a passage more easy to be understood, if we take the words in their literal sense. It is only when we adopt the common prejudice of a single ascension at the end of forty days that we feel obliged to depart from the plain sense of the words, "Touch me not, because I have not yet ascended to my Father,"—implying, that if he had ascended, she might touch his person. The difficulty is to reconcile this sense with the fact that a short time afterwards he allowed the women whom he met returning from the sepulchre to the city, to hold him by the feet. Yet the common belief is, he had not ascended at that time, and did not ascend until he had given his disciples many infallible proofs of his resurrection, by means of the touch, as well as the senses of sight and hearing. Luke xxiv. 39; John xx. 25; Acts i. 3; x. 41.

This difficulty is generally got rid of, by rejecting the literal sense, and substituting another which the words do not naturally bear. Thus: Cling not to me: spend no more time with me in joyful gratulations: For I am not going to ascend immediately: *Non statim ascendo—adhuc versor in terris.* You will have many opportunities of seeing me again. Therefore, go now to my brethren without delay, and tell them (*άναβανω*)

that I *shall* ascend, depart (that is, after forty days) to my Father and your Father; to my God and your God.

This paraphrase converts the perfect and present tenses of *ἀναβαίνω* into the future, and assigns to (*ἀπτομαι*) the word *touch*, a sense which it does not elsewhere bear.\* It is remarkable how very generally the commentators agree in rejecting the literal sense. Yet we believe the literal sense, as expressed in the authorized English version, gives the true reason of the prohibition; "Because I have not yet ascended to my Father."

The high priest under the Levitical economy was a type of Christ. He only, of all the priests, went into the holiest place once a year, and then not without blood. Levit. xvi. 3; Exod. xxx. 10; Heb. ix. 7, 12. No person was permitted to be with him in the tabernacle of the congregation† on the great day of expiation. Preparatory to the solemnities of that day, the high priest was removed from his house and family during seven days, lest he should contract a defilement which would disqualify him for the solemn occasion. On the day of atonement, he purified himself with water, before he entered on his duties, Levit. xvi. 4; and one reason why no person was permitted to be with him in the tabernacle at that time was, it is probable, to prevent the possibility of ceremonial or actual pollution, by even the slightest touch of any of the people on whose behalf he was acting. See *Brown's Antiquities*, vol. i., 543.

Now the whole of this ceremonial was typical of the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus; and when he appeared to Mary, he was, so to speak, midway in the act of making that atonement which the Levitical ceremonial and the high priest prefigured. He, the priest and the victim, had been slain—his blood shed, but he had not yet entered the holy place, Heb. ix. 11, 12, that is, the Upper Sanctuary of which the earthly was a type—or, using his own words—he had not yet ascended to the Father, but at that very moment was on the point of doing so. No person, therefore, could intercept, or even touch his person at that time. Hence, as we suppose, the prohibition,

\* See Canne, Brown, Blaney, Scott, Townsend, Chandler, Clarke, Diodati, Jansenius, Bengel, Lamy, Chemnitz, Gottfried Less., Glassius, Vigerus Idiom. Gr. L. And, for the use of *ἀπτομαι* in the New Testament, see Matt. viii. 3, 15; ix. 20, 21, 29; xiv. 36; xvii. 7; xx. 34. Mark i. 41; iii. 10; v. 27, 28, 30, 31; vi. 56; vii. 33; viii. 22. Luke v. 13; vi. 19; vii. 14, 39; viii. 44, 45, 46, 47; xviii. 15; xxii. 51. Gottf. Less. cites Luke xviii. 15 and 1 John v. 18 to prove that *ἀπτομαι* may signify to embrace or take violent hold of. But such constructions are not only unnecessary in those places, but very harsh.

† Some have suggested the expression, "tent of meeting," that is between God and man, instead of Tabernacle of the Congregation. See Exod. xxix. 42, 43; xxv. 8; Rev. xxi. 3

“Touch me not.” The type must be fulfilled in all points, and in this as well as others.

But why, it may be inquired, did he thus show himself to Mary, and to her only? Why was not John or Peter or Mary his mother, favoured with this first view of his risen person? Or what necessity was there that he should appear to any of his disciples before his ascension? It is difficult, perhaps quite impossible, to answer such questions with confidence, except by saying, that such was his sovereign pleasure. Yet, if we may be allowed to conjecture, there was a typical necessity for the selection of some person, and a typical propriety or exigency was fulfilled by the selection of this female. Our Lord was manifested in the flesh, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 1 John iii. 8. This woman is spoken of in Luke viii. 2, as having been, in a peculiar manner, the victim of Satanic power, whom the Lord had not only delivered from a cruel bondage, but had made an eminent example of his grace. It is remarkable that the Evangelists, in speaking of her, always for some cause, distinguish her from the rest. Thus Luke, in the place just cited, viii. 2, mentions several females, but Mary Magdalen only by name. Matthew xxvii. 56, mentions many others, but Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, only by name. So Luke xxiv. 10—though he names two others, mentions Mary Magdalen first. No cause is assigned for the distinction, yet it is evident it was made and recognized during our Lord’s ministry, and with his approval. It is confirmatory of this view, that he should appear first of all to her upon the morning of his resurrection, although so many other females had been at the sepulchre: and the question to be resolved is, why was this last, this crowning distinction bestowed upon her?

She was a fit representative, as Barabbas was, of those whom the Lord came to redeem. But with this further distinction—Barabbas was the representative of those still in bondage to Satan; but Mary, of those delivered therefrom through the Divine power and grace of the Saviour. In other words: She was chosen to represent, as it were, at the altar of the great atonement, the true Israel, or the elect people of God; who, like her, will all be delivered from the bondage of Satan and transformed, while living in the flesh, into his friends and followers: although, like her, they will still be impure and their touch defiling, by reason of their sinful natures, until their bodies shall be transformed by his Almighty power into conformity with his likeness.

But why should he exhibit himself to such a representative,

before he entered the sanctuary above? This is another question equally difficult to resolve. Yet may we not suggest, that as the people of Israel during the Levitical economy and the tabernacle service, stood assembled without the outer tabernacle, and the high priest was not altogether hidden from their view, until he entered within (*καταπετασμα*) the inner veil; so Mary was brought to this place at the moment of the passing of our great High Priest within the veil, *i. e.* his ascension to the Father, that she might, in this respect also, fulfil the import of the typical tabernacle service.

Having thus exhibited himself to Mary Magdalen first of all, as Mark xvi. 9\* expressly informs us, he gave her a message to his brethren, quite different from that he soon afterwards gave the women returning from the sepulchre. Matt. xxviii. 10.

JOHN XX. 17. "Go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

To the company of women he said nothing of his ascension to the Father, but simply, "Go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, there shall they see me." If his ascension to the Father were to follow his appearance in Galilee, why send this message to them before going thither? Why send it at all? Why did he not communicate it to them in person? If he were not to ascend till after forty days, he would have frequent opportunities of communicating this fact to them. We submit to the judgment of the reader whether this message should not be explained by John xvi. 28; xiii. 31; xiv. 2, 3, 12; xvi. 5, 7, and similar passages. In his farewell discourse, he had assured them of his speedy departure from the world to the Father, and explained to them, as far as they were capable of understanding him, the great benefits which this event would bring them. He now sends them word by Mary, that he was on the point of executing that purpose. Hence, when they should afterwards see him in Galilee, or elsewhere, they were to regard him, not as an inhabitant of the earth, but as come again to them from the Father, and who would at length come to receive them to himself to abide for ever with him. John

\* "Ἐφάνη.—In the History of the Resurrection this word is erroneously translated 'appearance.' An expression which in the German leads to a gross and dangerous mistake, *viz.*, that Jesus never showed himself, but suddenly and with a rustling sound, such as superstition imagines a spectre to cause. This is by no means the meaning of the Evangelist; for the word *εφάνη* is also used of the presentation of one with whom we are intimate and in whose society we have long participated: *e. g.* Matt. vi. 5, 16, 18; also xiii. 26. Besides, we know from Acts i. 3, 4, that the friends of Jesus enjoyed as intimate communion with him after his resurrection as before his death."—*Less on the Resurrection.*

xiv. 2, 3; xvi. 16. In accordance with this idea, he spoke of himself in his first interview with the apostles the same evening, as being no longer with them in his earthly relations—as of one belonging to another world. Luke xxiv. 44. This gracious message, then, served to denote the moment at which his earthly ministry was completed, just as the rending of the veil denoted the end of the Levitical economy. Accordingly, we suppose that having given it, the Lord instantly disappeared from the view of Mary and appeared in the presence of the Father. The Evangelist does not expressly say so—nor was it necessary, if the design were such as we have supposed; because it might be left to be inferred by the reader.\*

JOHN XX. 18. “Mary Magdalen came [went] and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and he had spoken these things unto her.”

It does not appear that Mary met with any of her female companions after she left them early in the morning at the sepulchre to go in search of John and Peter. It is not probable she remained long at the sepulchre after the Lord disappeared from her view. Peter and John had left the place not long before, and perhaps were still on their way returning to their home. It would be natural to suppose that she hastened as she did before in search of them, to communicate the joyful news and correct the false impression she had made by her too hasty conjecture; which, nevertheless, had been confirmed by their own observations. Whether she overtook them, or where or to whom she first delivered the Saviour’s message, we are not informed. We have reason to suppose,

\* Chancellor D’Aguesseau, born at Limoges, France, Nov. 27th, 1668, one of the most illustrious men of the age in which he lived, makes the following reflections on this passage: “Un Dieu se faisant homme, a fait les hommes Dieux. Il s’est abaissé vers nous pour nous élever jusqu’à lui et établir par là—toute proportion gardée—une espèce d’égalité entre lui et nous. (See Notes on John xvii. 20—24, where this idea is developed.) C’est pour cela, que dans le même endroit il appelle les apôtres ses frères—*propter quam causam non confunditur eos fratres vocare* (Heb. ii. 11) dit St. Paul. Il accomplit ainsi et dès ce moment la prophétie de David. *Narrabo nomen tuum fratribus meis*. Y a-t-il rien de plus consolant pour les Chrétiens, que d’apprendre qu’ils ont un même Dieu et un même père que Jesus-Christ, et qu’ils sont ses frères: C’est un effet de la bonté extrême et toute divine du fils de Dieu d’appeler ainsi, dans l’état de sa puissance ceux même, qui l’avoient abandonné dans les jours de son humiliation et de ses souffrances. Les Divines Ecritures, retentissent par tout de cette vérité consolante. St. Paul nous fait souvenir dans toutes ses épîtres, non seulement que nous sommes les héritiers d’un Dieu vivant dans le ciel afin de mépriser les choses de la terre, mais encore, que nous sommes les co-héritiers d’un Dieu mort en croix afin de ne pas refuser de mourir avec lui sur la nôtre. *Ipsæ spiritus testimonium reddit spiritui nostro quod sumus filii Dei. Si autem filii et hæredes; hæredes quidem Dei, cohæredes autem Christi*. Quelle religion, quelle philosophie a jamais enseigné une doctrine, si sublime, si glorieuse, si précieuse pour l’homme?”



however that Cleopas and his companion had not heard it when they set out for Emmaus: for they spoke only of the appearance of the angels to the other women. Luke xxiv. 22, 23. Hence we infer that the Lord's appearance to Mary was not known to them, nor generally known so early as the appearance of the angels to the women of whom Luke speaks, although it might have been known to Peter and John even before they heard of the appearance of the angels. For the Evangelists abridge all these various communications into general expressions, without noticing the particulars. We are at liberty therefore to apply them as other circumstances require.

We cannot leave this passage without saying that notwithstanding the indefiniteness of this portion of John's Gospel in respect to some particulars, there is an air of truthfulness about it, that cannot escape the observation of any one accustomed to consider and weigh the probabilities of history. We *feel* that the narrative cannot be a fiction—it is so circumstantial, so natural, even life-like: so consistent in all its parts, so consonant with the characters of these three disciples, that we want no higher or clearer internal marks of truth. Read verses 3 and 4—6 and 8; how minute the particulars! Again: Read verses 5 and 6; how consistent with what we know of the characters of Peter and John! Now read verses 14 and 15; what more natural? The two apostles saw nothing either of the angels or of the Lord. This is confessed. The solitary witness of this wonder was a lone woman, whose excited feelings or heated imagination skeptics would say misled her. Yet they name her as the witness! Would a deceiver thus write? We think it quite impossible.

Mark, to whom we now turn, is a little more particular in some respects than John, although his account also is very general. He says:

MARK XVI. 10, 11. "She [Mary Magdalen] went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept, and they, when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, believed not."

If we turn to Luke xxiv. 10, we observe that he joins Mary Magdalen with Joanna and Mary the mother of James, and other women as the bearers of this news, without distinction of times or places. His object was, as has been observed, to say once for all, and in general terms, that the apostles received information of the occurrences at the sepulchre from the women. He does not therefore contradict John or Mark.\*

\* Some commentators suppose that Luke should be understood as saying, that Mary Magdalen and her company conveyed the information before the

It is not probable, Mark intends to include among the number of persons he refers to, the women who had been at the sepulchre and had seen the angels and heard from them of the Lord's resurrection. These would not be likely to discredit Mary's words: besides, the unmingled sorrow in which Mary found those of whom he speaks, shows that they had not yet received any intimation of the joyful event. It is probable, therefore, that Mark does not include Peter or John in the number. But if, as we have supposed probable, Mary hastened first after Peter and John and told them, and afterwards others, we see why John should not add as Mark does, "they believed not," because it is probable John did believe, or if not, that both he and Peter were prepared by what they had seen, to give credit to her words. Accordingly on hearing this second communication of Mary, as we suppose,

LUKE XXIV. 12. "Peter arose and ran" again "to the sepulchre, and stooping down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves," as he had seen them before, "and departed wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."

Some commentators suppose that Luke here refers to the visit which Peter made to the sepulchre in company with John. John xx. 3. Others maintain that Peter made two visits to the sepulchre that morning—the first in company with John, and the other alone. The question cannot be determined with certainty. We incline to the latter opinion.\*

On this assumption, we conclude that Luke refers to the visit of Peter, which was generally best known, and that John, writing at a later period, and intending to supplement Luke, relates an earlier visit, when he was Peter's companion. From what we know of Peter's character, there is nothing incredible in the supposition that Mary's account of the appearance of the Lord to her should determine him instantly to make a second visit. It was just like him to do so. We add; it is

other women; at least that some of them did so, to some of the apostles. Hence they translate the aorist ἐλάλουν, verse 10, as a pluperfect, and the whole verse somewhat in this way: "But there were others who had already told these things to the apostles, namely, Mary Magdalen, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women who were with them." That is to say, these women had conveyed the information they possessed to the apostles, or some of them, before those Galilean women, spoken of in the preceding context, returned from the sepulchre to the city. See notes on Matt. xxviii. 2.

\* Some regard this verse in Luke as an interpolation made from John's Gospel. They say it is not contained in some of the most authoritative MSS. The language is similar, and looks, it is said, as though it had been copied from John. But there is nothing incredible in the fact that similar words should be employed, even by different writers, to express the same ideas, nor in the supposition that Peter made two visits. Besides, no part of the commonly received text ought to be rejected, except upon the most convincing evidence of spuriousness.

not improbable that the Lord appeared to Peter on this second visit, either when he was alone at the sepulchre or on his return from it. When should we anticipate such a gracious manifestation to Peter alone, if not on such an occasion? Luke, it is true, does not mention the fact in connection with the visit of which he speaks.\* The interview was secret and mysterious, and the Holy Spirit has cast a veil over it. Only incidentally it is mentioned, as an isolated fact, by Luke and Paul. Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5.

The Lord having appeared to Mary Magdalen, appeared again soon after to Mary the mother of James and her companions, on their return to the city. It is probable both were proceeding to the city at the same time, though not in company; and, if we follow the order of Luke's narrative, both came to the apostles before Peter arose to make his second visit to the sepulchre. As some harmonists suppose, however, Mary Magdalen first came to the apostles, or some of them; then the Galilean women, of whom Luke speaks, arrived; and soon after them, Mary the mother of James and her party. We return now to

MATT. XXVIII. 9, 10. "And as they [that is, Mary the mother of James and her companions] went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them: Be not afraid. Go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee. There shall they see me."

According to Mark, the angel whom they had seen at the sepulchre bade them tell the same thing to the disciples, and particularly to Peter. Mark xvi. 7.

This especial reference to Peter, if the message were given to him at the time we have supposed, would naturally embolden as well as encourage him to seek an interview with the Lord, even before going to Galilee. But without dwelling on this point, which cannot be determined with certainty, we pass to notice how entirely the manner and address of the Saviour dispelled the fears of these women, and the full and confident belief they had of the reality of his person. How different were the emotions of the apostles, when, on the evening of

\* We notice a similar omission in Luke i. 20. He there tells us only that Zacharias was punished for his incredulity with *dumbness*. And yet it is plain from verse 62 that he was deprived of hearing also: a fact brought in incidentally, out of place, to complete the narrative. The English reader, however, should be informed that the word ( $\kappa\omega\phi\omicron\varsigma$ ) translated speechless in verse 22, properly signifies *deaf* as well as *dumb*; so that this supplementary fact is supplied earlier than would be supposed from our translation. This is an instance in which Luther and the translators of the authorized version have been unduly influenced by the Latin Vulgate, which renders  $\kappa\omega\phi\omicron\varsigma$  by *mutus*.

that day, shortly after the return of Cleopas and his companion from Emmaus, Jesus appeared in the midst of them. Luke xxiv. 36, 37, 41. We account for the difference by the manner in which he made his appearance. In the case of these women, he approached them as a stranger might do, who chanced to be walking the same way. By his salutation simply he makes himself perfectly known to them. They fall at his feet, worshipping, and embraced them, which he now permits. They feel no doubt of the reality and the identity of his person. He gives them no other proof, and disappears from their view, but how soon, or in what manner, as in the case of his appearance to Mary, we are not informed.

We have already remarked upon the difference between the messages he sent to his brethren by Mary Magdalen and by these women: the one related to his ascension to the Father, the other to his appearance in Galilee. Why did he not send the same message to his brethren by these women as he had by Mary Magdalen? The reason we suggest is, that he had in the meantime ascended to the Father, and fulfilled the typical import of the entering of the High Priest within the veil. See notes on John xx. 17.

It is commonly taken for granted that our Lord's first ascension into heaven was that particularly described in Acts i. 9, after having been seen by his disciples forty days. Yet on the evening of the day he arose he spoke of himself as no longer a proper inhabitant of the earth in his human person. Luke xxiv 44. Nor can it be denied that he appeared and disappeared, from time to time, under such circumstances as were wholly new and strange, and in no way agreeable to the state of his body and behaviour while he was truly and properly an inhabitant of the earth. Hence we may infer that he was during that period ordinarily an inhabitant of the heavenly world. Eph. iii. 20. During the ancient economy, though not then incarnate, he frequently appeared, as the Angel Jehovah, in a visible form, to patriarchs and other holy men; much in the same way he appeared during these forty days to his disciples. And why should his ascension be delayed for the purpose of exhibiting his risen body to his disciples? Acts x. 40, 41. Why could he not appear to them from heaven as he afterwards did to Paul? Is there any text which proves that his risen body was locally confined to the earth during all this time? The question can be resolved only by the testimony of the sacred writers.

We have already considered the reason why our Lord forbade Mary to touch his person. As it seems to us, the words of our Lord are not intelligible except upon the sup-

position that he then was about to ascend to the Father, which Paul explains, Heb. ix. 24, ascending into heaven itself. But whether this means that he ascended far above all heavens, Eph. iv. 10, or that he passed through all heavens, Heb. iv. 14, or that he ascended higher than the heavens, Heb. vii. 26, are questions into which we need not inquire. We know not where the place denoted by the Saviour's words may be, nor do we suppose that the proper interpretation of them depends upon any such considerations.

Yet it is probable that inadequate and even low conceptions of the Saviour's power, have had a determining influence upon commentators in interpreting these words. Insensibly we are influenced by the idea of difficulty and distance, as though it would require effort and time for the risen Saviour to ascend to and return from the Father. Such impressions are erroneous, and would not be entertained a moment if we could conceive adequately of the attributes with which our Lord invested his risen human body. We know that it is the most wonderful, the most perfect work of his almighty power and infinite skill—the tabernacle of his omnipotence. It is neither unreasonable nor unscriptural to believe that he who gave to the light its velocity, and to the lightning its power, would impart to his risen and regenerated human body, power transcending immeasurably all the powers of created natures, so as to make it the fit instrument of his infinite purposes. To him the universe, vast beyond our conceptions as it is, lies open to his view, and is accessible at his will. Its remotest extremes are to him like adjacent apartments in the Father's house. John xiv. 2; Heb. iii. 4; John xvi. 28; iii. 13; Prov. xxx. 4. Who that believes in the Divine nature of the Lord Jesus can doubt his power to appear at any moment in any part of the universe he governs? To ascend to the Father, to enter into the upper sanctuary, within the veil, into heaven itself, required of him, not effort, not time, but only the will to do it. To return from thence to the women, as they were going from the sepulchre to the city, was no more to him than to pass from the garden of Joseph to the place where he met them. We now proceed to another testimony, recorded only by Matthew; we mean the testimony of the watch, or military guard, to the high priests.

About the time the first party of women returned, or it may be, while they were on their way,

MATT. XXVIII. 11. "Some of the watch going into the city, showed to the high priests all things that were done."

How many persons composed the watch we are not informed, nor do we know how many of their number went to the high

priests. The Evangelist's words would be made good if only those of the watch went who were in command. They went only to the chief priests, Annas and Caiaphas, (probably to the palace,) and communicated to them the things which had occurred. At what time they went is not stated, but we may reasonably infer that it was after sunrise. Where the watch remained during the interval is an inquiry which we cannot resolve. These minute particulars are not important, and for that reason have not been recorded. Nor do we know the especial matter of their communication. While, on the one hand, the terrors of the scene had bereft them of the power of minute observation, they were by the same cause most thoroughly convinced of the presence of Divine power, and able to exculpate themselves from all blame. The emergency required prompt action. Accordingly,

MATT. XXVIII. 12—14. "They [viz. the high priests] assembled with the elders, and having consulted together, gave the soldiers large money."

The body which was thus convened, composed the Sanhedrim or Council of Seventy, established by Moses. The same body is referred to in Matt. xxvi. 5.\* It is not improbable the soldiers repeated before the assembled council the account they had given to the chief priests, and were then dismissed to allow an opportunity for private consultation. Obviously, the measure proposed, in order to be effectual, must have embraced all the soldiers employed on that duty; otherwise, no concert in their falsehood could have been expected, nor any sufficient inducement to suppress the truth. Yet the details of this proceeding are wholly omitted. We only know the result of their consultation and the measures they adopted.

MATT. XXVIII. 13. "Saying: Say ye his disciples came by night and stole him while we slept."

"Say ye"—to whom?—to Pilate the governor? The severity of the military discipline of the Romans renders the supposition exceedingly improbable. We can scarcely believe the soldiers would voluntarily say to their commander that they slept on their post and allowed the body to be stolen which they had been set to guard. Even if Pilate did not regard the service as an important one, he would, nevertheless, regard their neglect of it a serious breach of duty, severely punishable. The meaning of the priests, as we infer from the two verses following, was that the soldiers should give this out to the people—the

\* The word (*συναχθῆντες*) *assembled* may be construed in connection with the word (*τινῶν*) *some* of the watch. The original is somewhat indefinite, and indeed is not grammatically exact, yet such language as an uncultivated writer would very naturally employ.

Jewish public at Jerusalem. But how? By a direct and bold avowal of their own delinquency? Such an avowal, perhaps, would not have accomplished the object so certainly as an indirect method. We suppose they were rather to hint it from time to time as opportunity occurred, so as to give occasion of suspicion against themselves rather than to be open self-accusers. In this way a rumour among the people would be excited, which might come to the hearing of Pilate. The artfulness of the priests consisted, in the judgment of some commentators, not so much in the invention of the falsehood as in their contrivance for its diffusion; while others, not perceiving this, find nothing but a gross inconsistency in the report itself, which stamps it as a palpable falsehood. "Did the soldiers sleep? How then could they know the disciples stole the body? Did they see the disciples take it away? How then could they be asleep?"

Such an interpretation greatly underrates the malicious ingenuity of the members of the Sanhedrim; so much so, as to reflect upon the credibility of the Evangelist. We cannot easily believe, that these astute, crafty men, after having resolved to propagate a falsehood as the only means of extricating themselves from discredit with the people, would contrive one palpably contradictory in itself. Probably the priests and elders in secret council, resolved to fall back on the suggestion they made to Pilate, as the reason why he should order a guard to be stationed at the sepulchre, Matt. xxvii. 63, 64, and pretend that *what they feared had been realized*, notwithstanding the precaution Pilate had adopted. In this way they complimented their own sagacity, as well as maintained consistency. Not being there themselves, they could not be supposed to know of their own knowledge, whether it was through the wilful connivance or negligence of the guard that the mischief happened, but they insisted no doubt, that in one or the other way it must have happened; the latter supposition might be admitted as the most charitable. As for a dead man coming to life, and coming out of a sepulchre so securely closed—the idea is preposterous! This, or something of this tenor, the priests would very probably say. Then, to guard against any contradictory statement from the soldiers, they bribed them to let the affair take the course suggested, rather favouring it by innuendoes and a suppression of the truth. Thus arranged, the rulers on the one hand might say, "What we foresaw and forewarned the governor against, and earnestly besought him to prevent, notwithstanding all our pains, actually occurred. His disciples came by night and stole the body away: a thing which could not have happened if the guard had been faithful. How it

happened they best know. The most charitable supposition is, that they fell asleep, and the disciples, watching their opportunity, opened the sepulchre and purloined the body."

The soldiers played their part in the deception, as we may suppose, not by denying, but by ambiguous conduct, rather confirming the bold assertions of the priests and rulers. How easy, how natural was it for them to say, confidentially to some friend, that not supposing any person would dare to come to a place thus guarded at the dead hour of the night, and believing that the apprehension of any attempt to steal the body was quite preposterous, they were not so watchful as perhaps they ought to have been; and, in fact, that drowsiness might have overtaken them while each depended on the vigilance of the others, and while they were in that condition the disciples might have taken the body without their knowing it. An explanation of this sort, made in confidence, would almost certainly be repeated, with additions at each repetition, till it would pass from mouth to mouth among the common people as a positive fact. It requires but little observation of human nature, to perceive how an effect of this kind could be accomplished. The tendency of the popular mind to exaggerate and falsify even true accounts is proverbial. To this natural disposition or vice of the human heart the priests and rulers appealed, as we suppose, substantially, if not circumstantially, in the way suggested, in order to extricate themselves from the serious difficulty in which the truth would have involved them. The contrivance answered the purpose, for the time, of parrying the shock which the unvarnished truth would have made on the public. Yet, if we reflect but a little on the circumstances, the extreme improbability, if not impossibility of the report, will be apparent. How improbable it is that all the soldiers, were there only three of them, should have been asleep at the same time, and so profoundly that neither of them should have been awakened by the noise made by the rolling away of the large stone—the bringing forth of the body after liberating it from the bandages in which it was wrapped up! Again, only a few hours before, all the disciples had fled through fear, glad to escape with their lives. They convened secretly with closed doors, as companions in sorrow and misfortune, but so far as we know, for no other reason. They had given up all hope in Jesus as Messiah. They had even embalmed his body to preserve it a little while from corruption, and others, not knowing that it had been done, prepared spices, and came to the sepulchre to do it.

Again, if we contrast the conduct of the apostles and that of their rulers during the three days just closed, with their



conduct, respectively, on the day of Pentecost and the days following it, we shall find it quite impossible to give credit to such a report, even for a moment. For then these timid disciples came boldly before the people in the temple, at Jerusalem, and in the face of the rulers preached the resurrection of Jesus. They boldly charged them with the murder of Jesus, the Holy One, and the Just, and the Prince of life. No attempt was made by the priests and rulers to disprove their assertion. On the contrary, thousands of the common people, and a great many priests, fully believed the fact, and joined the apostles. To this proof we shall return hereafter.

MATT. XXVIII. 14. "And if this shall come to the governor's ears, [rather *before the governor,*] we will persuade him and secure you."

This promise was in addition to the gift of money. It proves that the soldiers were rather to conceal the matter from the governor than to declare it to him. There were chances that the governor would not hear it, for he commonly resided at Cæsarea Palestina; and if he should not hear it, they would be safe; but if the rumour should reach him, and he should take judicial notice of their delinquency, then they promise to persuade, or win him over to their side. What means they intended to employ they do not say. It is not to be supposed they would be so unwise as to tell the soldiers in plain terms that they would (*πειθειν\** ἀργυριω vel *χορημασι*) bribe him, which was no doubt their purpose. They knew the character of Pilate. He is represented by contemporary authors as most unjust, avaricious, and venal. He had committed innumerable robberies and other acts of flagrant injustice. With him, everything was accounted right which was profitable to his purse. Nothing could be easier than to persuade such a judge and secure the soldiers against his displeasure.

MATT. XXVIII. 15. "So they [the soldiers] took the money and did as they were taught; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."

This Evangelist wrote his Gospel, it is probable, about the year A. D. 41.

Until that time, the report was common among the unbelieving Jews of Palestine. He gives us no reason to suppose that Pilate, or the Romans, or any Gentile nation ever gave credit to it. On the contrary, if we may believe Justin Martyr, *Apol.* II., Tertullian, *Apol.* cap. v. 21, and *Eusebius*, lib. ii. cap. ii., Pilate wrote to Tiberius such an account of the life and

\* A euphemism to express a sinister purpose, or rather to cover it up.

miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ that he was willing to have the Senate decree Divine honours to him. Eusebius intimates that Pilate spoke of his resurrection and ascension. But the unbelieving Jews took great pains to spread and perpetuate this false report among their own people, as is proved by the writings of their Rabbins. The Evangelist does not inform us, in express terms, what account the assembled priests and elders agreed upon in their meeting, but only upon what they desired the soldiers to say. We have conjectured that they fell back upon the suspicion they expressed to Pilate, which they may have moulded into the story contained in a very blasphemous book called *Toledoth Jeschu*,\* the absurdity of which, as it seems to those who have the New Testament, appears from the fact that it ascribes the theft of the Lord's body to Judas Iscariot, who told it to one of their sages, and by that means they discovered the body, after it had been stolen, under the bed of a river or stream where it had been secreted.

But even this story tends to establish the truth of Matthew's narrative; for it admits the fact that the sepulchre, after having been thus secured, was found empty. Yet it was quite impossible for the friends of Jesus to purloin the body, for the reasons already suggested. How, then, can we account for the admitted fact except as the Evangelist does? And if he arose from the dead, what more probable than that the rulers—his enemies—to save their credit with the people, should invent such a fable? We now return to the other appearances of the Lord on this eventful day. Turning to Mark we find,

MARK XVI. 12, "that after" his appearance to Mary "he appeared in another form (*ἐν ἑτέρῳ μορφῇ*) unto two of them as they walked and went into the country."

This is a very brief and general account of an appearance which Luke records more at length, which we shall next notice. By *another form*, Mark means a form different from that in which he appeared to Mary, or in a form different from that he bore during his personal ministry. Mark leaves us to infer that these two recognized him, because, he says, they went and told it to the residue. But he does not tell us when or how, or what passed between them, nor to what place they were going. Some commentators suppose the change in his appearance arose from the change of his dress; that there was, in fact, no change in his person. Others inquire whether his dress was not visionary,

\* The principal part, if not the whole of this book, is transcribed into Eisenmenger's *Entdecktes Judenthum*, see vol. i. p. 189, and translated into German. It is also published in Wagenseil's *Tela Ignea Satanae*. It is said the Jews have the custom to read this book in their houses on Christmas eve, in order to dishonour Christ and teach their children to blaspheme.

and if not, how, when, or where he procured it; whether he created it, or received it from an angel; whether it was the dress he wore before he suffered? Such inquiries cannot be resolved by the text, nor would they shed light on the way of salvation if they could be. In connection with this text we now turn to

LUKE XXIV. 13. "And behold two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three-score furlongs."

Luke here supplies us with some particulars which Mark passed over. Cleopas, he says, was one of the two disciples, and the place in the country they were going to was Emmaus, a village about seven and a half or eight miles distant from Jerusalem, situated, as is supposed, at the north-west, say about three hours' walk from the city.

LUKE XXIV. 14, 16. "And they talked together of all these things which had happened, and it came to pass, while they communed and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near and went with them; but their eyes were holden that they should not know him."

This is the first appearance of the Lord mentioned by Luke, being the same as the second mentioned by Mark. It was probably the fourth. Cleopas, it is supposed, was otherwise called Alpheus. He was the husband of Mary, the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus, and the father of James the less, Matt. x. 3; Luke vi. 15; John xix. 25; and of Joseph or Joses. His wife, consequently, was that other Mary who accompanied Mary Magdalen early in the morning to the sepulchre. Matt. xxviii. 1; xxvii. 56, 61. We have seen that on her return from the sepulchre the Lord appeared to her and her companion, and permitted them to embrace his feet. It is probable, therefore, that Cleopas left Jerusalem for Emmaus before Mary his wife returned to the city from the sepulchre, or at least before he met with her. He shared deeply in the attachment which she bore to the Saviour. His countenance, verse 17, showed his sadness, and his conversation the burden of his heart, verse 14. Had he felt otherwise, it is not probable he would have been thus favoured.

The topics of their conversation, we may safely infer, were those enumerated in verses 19—24: Jesus of Nazareth, the greatest of the prophets; the sin and folly of the priests and rulers in procuring his crucifixion; their own disappointed hopes; the startling report of the women who were early at the sepulchre; the confirmation of it in part by some of their male companions. What themes!

While they were communing and reasoning, Jesus drew near,

in the guise of a stranger, and walked along with them. Mark, we have seen, intimates that his form was changed. Luke intimates that an effect was produced upon their vision. Both amount to the same thing, for both describe the cause from the effect, which might be produced by the Divine power in many ways, but in what way could not be known except by revelation, which in this matter appears to have been withheld, as not important or not proper to be known. But do we inquire why on this occasion, and to these disciples only, he exhibited himself in this manner, and why he designedly kept up their illusion until he disappeared from their view? Without attempting directly to answer these questions, let us advert to the effect accomplished by these means. If we read the whole passage, verses 15—32, we perceive that from the instant of his joining them, during the whole journey, until he disappeared from them, they were perfectly at ease with him as with an equal. Indeed, Cleopas at first seems to assume some superiority, or, at least, he seems to be conscious of having the advantage by his superior knowledge of current events. “Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and yet dost not know the things that have come to pass there in these days?” This remark implies a degree of surprise that any person should be so ignorant as to ask the question he was replying to, even if he were only a stranger in Jerusalem.

LUKE XXIV. 19. “And he said unto them, What things?”

Such a question following upon the remark of Cleopas would not only leave undisturbed his impression of his own superior information, but call forth a statement of the subjects upon which the Lord desired to instruct them. Approaching them, then, in this way, he invested the interview with the drapery of common life—kept their minds tranquil and open to the instruction he intended to impart. Continuing with them through the greater part of the way, as we may infer from verse 27 that he did, he gave them indubitable proofs of the reality of his human person, which were still further confirmed at the end of their journey by his partaking of food with them, and afterwards by his closing the interview with an act he had often performed in their presence, which instantly reminded them of his person. Was it possible for them, after such an interview, under such circumstances, so long continued and with such proofs as they must have had during this long walk of his human bodily presence, to doubt whether he was truly a man having flesh and bones, or a mere spirit? Their astonishment came after the designed impression had been made, and could not invalidate the previous conviction of the reality of his bodily presence. The effect of a sudden, unlooked-for, miracu-

lous appearance would have been very different, as we shall see hereafter.

LUKE XXIV. 19. "And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people."

Cleopas answered the first question, and perhaps this question also. The answer, however, is ascribed to both; but whichever of the two spoke, the record is historically exact.\*

LUKE XXIV. 20, 21. "And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel. And besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done."

Observe the mixture of feeling, perhaps we should say, the disturbed or unsettled judgment of these attached disciples. Evidently they did not know what to think about these unlooked-for events. While they held firmly to the belief that he was not only a true prophet, but the greatest of the prophets that had appeared, he was not in other respects what they took him to be. During his ministry they were confident he was the promised Messiah, whose mission and office would be the redemption of Israel. But in this they supposed they were mistaken; and this expectation, however cherished, was cut off, so they thought, by an ignominious death. These things seemed to prove, that although he was a true and a very great prophet, yet he was not the Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel. Consequently, the national hope was still longer to be deferred, and Israel must yet remain, how long they knew not, in bondage to their enemies. But this was not all:

LUKE XXIV. 22, 23. "Certain women also of our company made us astonished who were early † at the sepulchre. And

\* While they speak of the Lord Jesus with the greatest respect, it is remarkable that they do not give him the higher title which he claimed—Son of God. Perhaps they thought it not expedient to allude to such a subject in conversation with one whom they took to be a stranger; or perhaps their own views of his Divine nature were not, at that time, clearly defined. We observe also a common Hebrew circumlocution, to express the superlative degree: "A prophet mighty before God," means a *most mighty prophet, the greatest of the prophets*. See other examples in Gen. vi. 11; x. 9.

† Ὁρθρως or ἔρθρως, from ἔρθρος, see verse 1. Γνωσμεναι ἔρθρως is one of those beautiful classic expressions which we every now and then find in the New Testament in close connection with the peculiar idioms of Hellenistic Greek; as in this verse, where ἐπι with the accusative is used for προς, *propere*, near by; and in the next verse ἐπιτασιαν ἀγγελων ἐφοικεναι, which is a Hebrew pleonasm, see *Glassius*; and in general we may say of the Gospels and apostolical writings, that the nature of the subjects of which their authors treat, and the state of mind in which they write, often beget the most lofty conceptions, and rhetorical figures not unworthy of the most polished writers.

when they found not his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive."

We learn from verse 11 how the report affected them. It was too incredible to be seriously considered. So, at least, some of the apostles thought; yet not all of them.

LUKE XXIV. 24. "For certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said, but him they saw not."

That is, they found the stone rolled away—the sepulchre open—the body gone, but they saw nothing more. How could all these things be reconciled? How could he be the greatest of the prophets, and yet not the Messiah? How could he be the Messiah and yet be rejected by the chief priests and rulers, and even put to death with the consent, nay, upon the demand of his own people? John xii. 34. Impossible! And then again, how could he die and be laid in the sepulchre until the third day, and after that come to life again? And were that possible, how could it prove him to be the Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel? To these difficulties, especially the last, our Lord addressed himself.

Here we pause for the present; first suggesting to the reader, for his consideration, the question, "In what respects were the views of these devoted and faithful disciples of the office and work of Christ erroneous or defective?" That they were so in some respects is evident from the two following verses, but that their error consisted simply or chiefly in their expecting the restoration of Israel to the land of the covenant, and their deliverance from their bondage to the nations, as many commentators suppose, is by no means clear.



### CHAPTER XIII.

Walk to Emmaus.—Prophecies in the books of Moses concerning Christ.—Jewish custom.—Recognition of the disciples.—New views of the Prophetic Scriptures obtained by them.—The Lord's appearance to Peter.—Universality of the belief of the spirit world.—Christ with his disciples as he was with Abraham in the plain of Mamre.—The disciples advance in knowledge.—A new commission.—Inauguration of the new dispensation.—Powers and gifts conferred on the apostles and personal to them at the opening of the new dispensation, not transmitted to bishops, elders, &c. in later years.—The Ascension.—Offering of divine worship.

LUKE XXIV. 25, 26. "Then he said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." O ye unthinking, inconsiderate men! How slow ye are to comprehend the predictions of the prophets concerning the

promised Deliverer of Israel? "Ought not Christ to have suffered (*παθειν*) these things and to enter (*και εισελθειν*, to have entered) into his glory?"\* Was it not Divinely appointed, as an indispensable part of the plan of redemption, (even of that redemption of Israel in the flesh, to which you ignorantly limit your expectations and your hopes) that the Christ should suffer those very things, which cause your doubts and your sorrows, before he should enter into his glory, of which (glory) you have very low conceptions?

That these disciples, loving and faithful as they were, entertained very inadequate views of the dignity, office, and work of Christ, is conclusively proved by this reply. Yet the Lord had frequently warned them, not only in figurative, but in the plainest language, that his personal ministry would end in his rejection and death, and that his exaltation and glory with the Father would follow. See Matt. xvi. 21; xvii. 22; xx. 17—19; Mark viii. 31; ix. 31; x. 33; Luke ix. 22; xii. 50; xvii. 31—34; xxiv. 6, 7; Matt. xxvi. 31, 32; John xvii. 5. It is worth while to pause a little, and consider how they could thus err, and wherein their error lay. The subject is a large one. In this connection we can consider only the principal points, and those briefly.

(1.) According to the common apprehension of the Jews of our Lord's day, even of the most spiritually-minded and devout, the Messiah was to be regarded chiefly as the promised Deliverer of Israel from their bondage to the Gentiles. Luke i. 68—75. That there were predictions which justified the expectations of such a deliverance, cannot reasonably be doubted. 2 Sam. vii. 10—24; 1 Chron. xvii. 9—27; Isa. i. 26; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; xxxiii. 7—15, and 20—26; Lev. xxvi. 42; Ps. xviii. 3; cv. 8, 9; cvi. 44—48. The promises made to Abraham, literally understood, included the gift of the land of Canaan, in which they, a remnant of Israel, then dwelt, with which they connected their national redemption and glory. See Gen. xiii. 14—17; xv. 18—21; xvii. 5—8; xxvi. 2—4; xxviii. 10—15; xxii. 16—18. The Messiah was the promised Prince, through whom these expectations were to be realized. He was to be a descendant of David, and his right to the throne and the crown of David, they expected, would be devolved to him by descent from that monarch, according to the covenant God made with him. His dominion and rule, when once it should begin, they expected and believed would continue without interruption or change for ever. John xiii.

\* Both these verbs are aorist, and may with equal propriety be translated by the perfect infinitive.

34; Ps. lxxxix. 36, 37; cx. 4; Isa. ix. 7; Ezek. xxxvii. 25; Dan. ii. 44; vii. 14; Micah iv. 7. They believed, indeed, that Messiah's kingdom would be terrestrial, but in no sense limited in respect to the time of its duration. Undoubtedly they were right in their expectation of such a redemption, if the promises made to their fathers might be literally understood. That Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, so understood them, is plain from his allusion to the oath which God swore unto Abraham, Luke i. 73, 74, compare with Gen. xvii. 16, 17, "that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of *the hand of our enemies*, might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him *all the days of our life.*" See 2 Sam. vii. 10; 1 Chron. xvii. 9. We may add, that the language and conduct of our Lord himself, justified and confirmed this national hope. See Acts i. 6—9; Luke xix. 37—44; Mark xi. 9, 10; Matt. xxi. 40; ii. 2, 3; John i. 49, 50; Luke xxii. 29.

That there were diversities of expectations and hopes among the Jews in regard to the moral character of their nation in its restored state, we cannot reasonably doubt. The carnal and worldly, it is probable, entertained low views of the holiness and purity of the expected kingdom, while the devout, like Zacharias, connected with the national deliverance holiness and righteousness in a higher degree than the nation had ever exhibited. Luke i. 75; Isa. lx. 21.

(2.) Few, if any, of the pious, excepting those who were especially taught it by the Holy Spirit, had any conception of the means necessary to accomplish this redemption of Israel according to the flesh, from their temporary subjection to the Gentiles. Like Nicodemus, they thought that Messiah's kingdom would be effectually brought nigh to the nation, just so soon as he should appear. No other preparation of heart, they supposed, was necessary, than such as was attainable by means then within their reach. Here they erred: for inseparably connected with this *lower salvation or redemption*, was their deliverance from sin, Luke i. 77; John viii. 32—36, and their perfection in holiness *as a nation*, Isa. lx. 21; liv. 13; liii. 1; John vi. 45; Ps. xxxvii. 11, 22; Matt. v. 48, and these could not be attained consistently with the Divine plan except by the sufferings of Christ. To this defect in their faith, as we suppose, our Lord especially alluded in the words "ought not (the) Christ to have suffered?" &c.

(3.) Again; they had no conception of God's purpose to gather an elect people or church out of all nations, and to exalt it far above all terrestrial glory and bliss, by bringing it into intimate and everlasting union with himself, through Christ cru-



cified and glorified. This purpose, so far as we can discover, was first plainly disclosed in our Lord's intercession with the Father, which the Evangelist John has recorded, chap. xvii., for the instruction of the Church. Cleopas perhaps had not heard those wonderful words; but if he had, he did not comprehend them; for Paul speaks of this Divine purpose as *a mystery, hid in God* from the beginning of the world, *until it was revealed to the apostles* by his Spirit, Eph. iii. 1—11, which was not given until after the events we are now considering. This is an important consideration. It shows us how we may account for the defective views of the first followers of Christ, without ascribing to them carnal and mere worldly hopes. The building of such a church involved most unexpected events; such as the rejection of Israel according to the flesh for a season, Matt. xxi. 43, the opening of a dispensation of grace to all nations, which was to continue during an undefined period of time, until the number of the elect, as settled in the Divine purpose, should be fully accomplished. See notes on John xvii., and notes on Luke xviii. 7. They knew not these things, simply because the Spirit of God as yet had not taught them. Eph. iii. 5.

(4.) Moreover, these disciples did not understand God's purpose to redeem the earth itself from the curse and restore it to its lost place in his universal kingdom. See notes on Matt. iii. 2, and xix. 28.

They limited, in fact, Jehovah's promises of redemption to the earthly house and throne of David, and to the deliverance of Israel according to the flesh from Babylonian and Roman bondage, to which they were then subject. They hoped for pre-eminence among the nations of the earth in its present condition. Consequently the redemption of Israel from bondage to the Gentiles, and their restoration to the land God gave to Abraham, was a much more glorious event, according to the Divine purpose, than they conceived it to be; for it included the deliverance, not only of their own land, but of the whole earth from the bondage of the curse:—of their people from the bondage of sin, John viii. 36, and their pre-eminence in dignity, glory, and power, among holy and redeemed nations, in the world restored from the effects of the curse, and re-invested with the beauty and glory of Paradise. But the crowning glory of all these blessings is yet to be mentioned—we mean the restoration of the Theocracy—the reign of Jehovah Jesus over Israel restored and made perfectly holy, and over the whole earth, in peerless majesty. Cleopas and his companion had no such thoughts as these. They had fixed their hearts upon a national deliverance and terrestrial blessings, such as the world in its present condition may afford; in which they hoped

to share, in common with the pious and the good of their own people. They thought not of that Divine sonship and that better inheritance which Christ had purchased for them and for all his elect, John i. 12, comprising within itself eternal life and glory, enlargement from the clogs and restraints of their fleshly natures, together with exaltation far above all other creatures, in virtue of their union with him, their Redeemer. John xvii. To enlarge and correct their views on these and kindred topics, so far as they were capable of receiving the instruction, we may suppose was the chief object of our Lord's discourse with them, as they pursued their journey to Emmaus.

LUKE XXIV. 27. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself."

It is evident from this verse, that there are prophecies in the books of Moses concerning Christ, and such we reckon Gen. iii. 15; xxii. 1—9 and 18; xxvi. 4; xlix. 10, 11; Deut. xviii. 15; Numb. xxi. 9. Yet some commentators admit only one, Gen. xxii. 18, if we except the typical representations of the Levitical service. This opinion is quite erroneous. Heb. xi. 26; xii. 26; Acts. xxvi. 22; 1 Cor. x. 4. Whether these were all the places which our Lord explained we can only conjecture. Proceeding to the prophets we may imagine he cited and explained such as Ps. xvi. 8—10; xxii.; cxxxii. 11; Isa. vii. 14; Jer. xxiii. 5; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; Dan. ix. 24—26; Micah v. 2; Zech. vi. 12; Micah vii. 20.

It has been said, also, that the number of the prophecies which the Lord cited and explained on this occasion must have been small, because before the journey to Emmaus was ended he had very exactly gone through all of them. But we must not imagine that our Lord's method of unfolding the Scriptures was in any respect like that to which we are accustomed. Volumes, no doubt, might be written to unfold the meaning of the few we have cited, without perhaps making them any clearer either to the unlearned or the learned, while he who perfectly comprehended the whole of the Scriptures, and who spake as never man spake, could comprise the whole in a brief discourse. The voluminous and conflicting commentaries which we have upon even small portions of the Scriptures, are sad evidence of the ignorance of the learned, Job xxxviii. 2, as well as of the unlearned, for whom such labours are especially designed.

LUKE XXIV. 28, 29. "And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went, and he made as though he would have gone further, [that is, he seemed to them as if he intended or inclined to go further, as he would have done if they had not] constrained him, saying: Abide with us; for it is towards evening,

and the day is far spent. And he went in [as if he intended] to tarry with them."

It was a custom, we are told, among the Jews, not to enter the house of any one as a guest without being invited, and the Lord Jesus, by continuing his course onward as they were parting from him, until invited to stay with them, merely complied with that custom. Undoubtedly he would have parted from them and passed onward, had they not earnestly requested him to abide with them. This conduct of the Saviour, then, affords no colour of justification to falsehood, or dissimulation, or insincerity, though it does justify a compliance with the innocent usages of society.

It is more important to observe, however, how fully persuaded these disciples were, that he was *simply and merely a man like themselves*.

Their hearts were deeply affected by his conversation; they desired to enjoy more of it, and that was the motive of their urgency. Had they supposed him to be an angel or a spirit, or more or less than a man of like susceptibilities with themselves, would they have addressed him in such language?

LUKE XXIV. 30. "And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it [or gave thanks] and brake and gave to them."

We are not informed whether this action was performed at the beginning or at the end of the meal. But as it was one of the objects, perhaps the chief object of his intercourse at this time with these disciples, to give them convincing and indubitable evidence of his resurrection, it is probable that he had already partaken of food with them; for this was one of the proofs much insisted upon by the apostles. Acts x. 41; Luke xxiv. 41.\*

We are expressly informed, that he reclined with them at the table, as if to partake of food (*ἐν τῷ κατακλιθῆναι αὐτον*). But before he took the bread and broke it—an action proper to be performed only by the head or master of the family, or company, at the table—he must have risen, or at least changed his posture. We may imagine that, instantly on his arising, he assumed the tones of voice, and that inimitable manner of action in addressing the Father, with which they were familiar. He

\* Augustine says that the human body, in its resurrection state, would be imperfect if it could not partake of food; and that it would be imperfectly happy if it had need of food. *Epist.* 49, *Civit. Dei* xiii. 22. But the partaking of food is deemed conclusive evidence of life in the partaker, and hence our Lord ordered the parents of the child he restored to life to give her food.

puts the bread in their hands extended unconsciously, in their amazement, to receive it; and while they thus held it, untasted perhaps, he disappears. Most, if not all, of the ancient commentators, regard this blessing, or giving of thanks and breaking of bread, as the sacrament of the body of the Lord. We do not perceive any grounds for such an interpretation. No mention is made in this place of the cup. 1 Cor. xi. 25; Luke xxii. 19, 20. The action was designed rather as a means of recognition, and as a proof of the reality of his bodily presence, and the identity of his person.

LUKE XXIV. 31. "And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight."

So striking and peculiar to himself was his attitude, his voice, and expressions, that the truth flashed upon both their minds irresistibly, at the same instant, although they had thought of him, until that moment, only as absent and dead. They knew him. Their eyes were no longer *holden*, (*ἐκχόρευοντο*, verse 16,) but *opened* (*ἀνεγύθησαν*, verse 31.) At the same instant, he ceased to be seen of them (*ἀφ᾽ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο ἄπ' αὐτῶν*. See marginal translation.) How great their amazement! How unaccountable, that they did not know him before! Their hearts, however, were truer to his words, than their eyes were to his person!

LUKE XXIV. 32. "And they said one to the other, Did not our heart burn within us [was not our heart burning within us] while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" [while he was talking with us, and opening to us the Scriptures.]

The power and Divine unction of his words penetrated their souls. They were now prepared to believe the report of the women, which they had heard in Jerusalem, but heeded not. They had obtained new, though perhaps not very enlarged views of the prophetic Scriptures. Some things which before were dark, or shut up, were now clear, and shed a joyous light upon the occurrences which, just before, were sorrowful and perplexing. Above all, they had found him whom they had mourned as dead and gone. Their hearts turned to their companions in sorrow, and laying aside the purpose of their journey, whatever it may have been,

LUKE XXIV. 33. "They rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them"—who, though they had not seen Jesus, had heard of his resurrection, and were conversing among themselves. as Cleopas and his companion entered the room where they were assembled.

LUKE XXIV. 34. "Saying,\* The Lord is risen, indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

We infer from this passage, that the Lord appeared to Peter when he was alone, before he appeared to any other of his male disciples, but when or where, we are not expressly informed. See notes on Luke xxiv. 12. Perhaps it was with a view to such a favour, that a special message was sent to Peter by the angel, as Mark relates, xvi. 7. We may also infer from this verse, that this apostle was not present at that time, although he may have come in afterwards. That Thomas was not present, we learn from John xx. 24. Hence, we take the expression, "the eleven," as designed to designate the whole body of the apostles, as it was at that time—eleven being the number after the apostasy of Judas Iscariot. Acts i. 26; Mark xvi. 14; Matt. xxviii. 16. It is probable that nine, only, of the apostles were actually present at that time, though there were others, and perhaps some of the female disciples with them.

We observe in this expression (*ἰγγερόθη ὁ κυριος ὄντως*) an emphasis—an air of earnestness, which seems to say, that now indeed, they were really convinced. The report of the women they disregarded, verse 11, but Simon's account of the Lord's appearance to him convinced them. "Truly [*ὄντως*, in reality] the Lord is risen, and hath appeared," &c. But how can we reconcile this interpretation with Mark xvi. 13? We have taken it for granted, that the two disciples referred to in Mark xvi. 12, were Cleopas and his companion; and Mark says, verse 13, that when they went and told what they had seen and heard, to the residue, they were not believed. Yet, according to what Luke here says, the eleven had already been convinced by the appearance to Simon.

We suppose that Mark, in the 13th verse, does not refer to the eleven, but to others, to whom these disciples related the same things. Observe, Mark uses, verse 13, the expression (*τοὺς λοιποὺς*) the residue, to denote the persons who did not believe, while in the next verse he denotes the apostles by the words (*τοὺς ἑνδέκα*) "the eleven," as Luke does. Who those others were, and where Cleopas and his companion found them,

\* The word *saying* (*λεγοντας*) must be referred to (*τοὺς ἑνδέκα*, &c.) the eleven, and not to Cleopas and his companion. The true reading is, without doubt, *λεγοντας* and not *λεγοντες*. The connection requires it. For Simon was not one of the two who went to Emmaus, and if he were, Cleopas had also seen Jesus. Why should these two disciples say, if Simon was one of them, that the Lord had appeared to Simon without naming Cleopas, if they referred to the appearance to them on their way to Emmaus? The meaning is, that during the absence of these disciples it had become known at Jerusalem that the Lord had appeared to Simon; and this they were conversing about when Cleopas and his companion entered to tell them of yet another appearance.

we are not informed. Did they meet them on their return to the city from Emmaus, or in the city before they joined the eleven? Did they meet them on the same or on the succeeding day? These questions we cannot answer. Thus much, however, is evident: the 13th and 14th verses of Mark are not to be understood as referring to the same time or persons, and this is sufficient to remove the appearance of contradiction.

Still it is objected that Mark, in the 14th verse, represents the eleven as incredulous, notwithstanding what Luke affirms, of the effect of the testimony of Peter. This objection we shall notice hereafter.

Cleopas and his companion, finding the apostles engaged in animated joyful conversation about what Simon had seen and heard, which, probably, Simon himself had related to them, or to some one of their number, they interrupt the conversation, and go on to relate—

LUKE XXIV. 35. "What things" had happened to them while they were "in the way" going to Emmaus, "and how he was known of them in breaking of bread;" that is, during the meal or repast they took with him at that place.

An orderly narrative, as the original word ἐξηγγουοντο implies, of all that occurred from the time the Lord joined them on the way, until he disappeared, would probably have required a considerable time. The phraseology allows us to believe that their story was not interrupted till the substance of it was told. And with what intense interest must it have been listened to by the company! We can only judge of it by the hold which we know everything that concerned Jesus had upon their minds. The expression "in the breaking of bread" is idiomatic, and signifies, as before intimated, during the meal or repast. We do not understand it as intended to denote the particular act mentioned in verse 30, but in the general sense explained.

LUKE XXIV. 36, 37. "And as they thus spake," while they were yet speaking, "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they saw a spirit."

This effect of the sudden, and we may add, miraculous appearance of the Lord, is just that which might have been anticipated, notwithstanding they appear to have been convinced before of the fact of his resurrection. It furnishes a reason, as we suppose, for the different method the Lord observed in his approach to Mary Magdalen, and to Cleopas and his companion. It requires but little observation of human nature to know the extreme dread and terror all men instinctively feel when anything supernatural is supposed to occur. The real or supposed appearance of a departed spirit excites such a sensa-

tion of nearness to the unseen world, that the most resolute spirit quails and recoils at the sight. We regard such an event as a significant intimation of what exists behind the veil—an anticipation, so to speak, of a power yet to be universally felt, in the full development of good or evil.

It is pertinent to remark, also, how universally this belief of the spirit-world is spread among men. It is not peculiar to any nation, or age, or religion. The refined Athenians of antiquity and the Romans believed in a world of spirits. The uncivilized Hottentot and the savage Caribbean, of more modern times, have held the same belief. The ancient Jews, perhaps we should except the Sadducees, also believed in the reality of spirits. Philosophy has no arguments to refute the dogma, nor to secure mankind against fears from this source.\*

Revelation alone can furnish us with any solid knowledge on this subject. From this source we know that there are angels good and bad. We also know that they are under the control of a higher power, and can no more transcend the laws appointed to them, than we can the laws appointed to us. We know, also, that the souls of men exist after they have left their bodies in the places appointed to them, being conscious of their condition and their destiny, but without the Divine permission they have no more power to appear to, or hold converse with us, during their disembodied state, than we have to appear among them in our fleshly corporeal forms. But to return to the text.

LUKE XXIV. 38, 39, 40. "And he said unto them, why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts [questionings, doubts] arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have; and having said this, he showed them his hands and his feet."

Our Lord seems to admit that spirits may appear to men, (when permitted) but he says nothing expressly of the kind of spirits—whether human or angelic. His object did not require him to do so. He wished to remove their misapprehension in relation to himself and their fears, which he did by giving them a test by which they could surely know that he was not a disembodied spirit. He does not assert that a spirit may not

\* Calmet has written *Dissertations sur les Apparitions des Anges, &c.*, which have been translated into English, and published under the title of "The Phantom World; or, The History and Philosophy of Spirits, Apparitions," &c. The Rev. Henry Christmas characterizes it as "a vast repertory of legends, more or less probable, some of which have very little foundation, and some which Calmet himself would have done well to omit, though now, as a picture of the belief entertained in that day, they greatly add to the value of the book."

have a material body, but that a spirit hath not a body of flesh and bones, such as he had. 1 Cor. xv. 50, 44, 49; Heb. i. 14; ii. 14.

Undoubtedly our Lord's body, at that time, was composed of real human flesh and bones—the identical flesh and bones composing the body which suffered. To the eye of the disciples he appeared to be the same person as ever before. We infer this, because his object was to prove his corporeal identity. His body, therefore, must have been preserved in its natural state of flesh and bones, although in other respects it possessed properties no doubt that it did not before. For example, we may believe it was no longer passible, or capable of suffering pain, or of dying. It was also perfectly subject to his infinite spirit, he having been enlarged from the restraints to which before death he was subject. Luke xii. 50. It was capable of being transported at his will, without violence to its nature, from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth; although it was not yet glorified or transformed, through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, into that glorious nature in which he afterwards appeared to John and to Paul. Rev. i. 13—15; Acts xxii. 6; ix. 3, 4; see note on Matt. xxviii. 9, 10. Our Lord exhibited his hands and his feet to the disciples for the express purpose of proving, by the highest possible evidence the disciples could appreciate, that the body in which he then appeared before them was no phantom, but the very body of flesh and bones which had been rudely taken from them in the garden, and conducted to the palace of the high priest, and from thence to the hall of Pilate, and taken by the soldiers from thence to Calvary, and by them nailed to the cross. A spirit could not be felt if it could be seen, nor could it be seen to bear such marks as those he exhibited. Hence these proofs, added to the appearance of his whole person, his demeanour, his voice, his respiration, were full and perfect. They furnished his disciples with as convincing evidence of his corporeal and spiritual identity as they possibly could have of the presence and identity of each other.\*

\* Do we inquire whether the very wounds appeared as freshly made, or only the scars of them—the wounds themselves having been closed up and healed? The Evangelists do not explicitly resolve this question. We know, however, that such wounds could not have been healed in so short an interval—between Friday afternoon and Sunday evening—by a process of nature in any other person. The wound in his side was made after he had expired; and while the body remained lifeless in the sepulchre, the restorative powers of his human physical nature ceased. At his resurrection he could have restored his body to the state it was in before his crucifixion without leaving even a mark or scar. Yet why should we suppose he did this? The miracle would have weakened the evidence of the identity of his person. When they last saw that body, (on Friday afternoon) the flesh was cruelly lacerated.



LUKE XXIV. 41. "And while they yet believed not for joy and wonder, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?"

A moment before they were affrighted, but the brief address of the Saviour and the exhibition he made of his hands and his feet to their sight and touch dispelled their fears, and filled them with unexpected joy. How sudden the transition! They knew not what to think. They knew not whether they should believe or not. They stood between fear and hope. Their perplexity had passed into wonder. Was what they seemed to see and hear (for we do not read that any of them had ventured to touch his person, though invited to do so) possible? Could they believe their senses? Such a condition of the mind as we have described is neither impossible nor unnatural.\* Ps. cxxvi. 1.

To remove this new perplexity, the Saviour resorts to another proof. He called for food, that he might partake of it in their presence: "Have ye here any meat?" We may read these words, perhaps, without the question. Ye have here something to eat. It is supposed he found them reclining at the table at their evening meal, with their food before them.

LUKE XXIV. 42, 43. "And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb, and he took and did eat before them."

It is not necessary to add to the observations already made on verse 30. It is sufficient to say that this proof removed every doubt, and their minds had become so far tranquillized, that they could listen with composure to his instructions. Be-

rated. How could such wounds be healed so soon, except by a miracle, and what proof had they of such a miracle? And why should we suppose he miraculously healed those wounds? It was not necessary to the restoration of physical life. He, (the quickening Spirit) by mere occupation, could give and maintain its life, while allowing the wounds to remain just as they were when first inflicted. After his glorification we have no reason to suppose that either wounds or scars appeared upon his person. If we may adopt this suggestion, may we not suppose that the vision of the Lamb slain, Rev. v. 6, has respect to the appearance of Jesus in heaven before his glorification? See notes on John xx. 17. We add: If the existence of such wounds seemed inconsistent with physical life, and raised a doubt in the minds of the eleven, whether after all he was not a spirit or phantom; the calling for food, and partaking of it in their presence, and his breathing on them, were well calculated, if not designed, to dispel a doubt arising from such a consideration.

\* The Roman historian, Livy, in book 39, chap. 49, informs us that Philopæmen, the Achean general, after a battle, contrary to all expectation, remained alive. The enemy found him, and bore him off. He describes their feelings in these words, which are very apposite to our subject: "*Vix sibi met ipsi præ nec opinato gaudio credentes,*" "scarcely believing themselves on account of the unexpected joy."

fore proceeding further with this Evangelist, we must turn to the places in Mark and John which are supposed to refer to the same appearance of the Saviour.

MARK XVI. 14. "Afterwards he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."

This verse is commonly regarded as parallel with the passage in Luke which we have just considered, and so we have arranged it in the brief harmony prefixed to these chapters. Erasmus, however, in his Paraphrases, postpones this verse till near the time of our Lord's final visible ascension.\*

It is to be observed that Mark does not denote the time with any degree of definiteness. "Afterward (*ὀσπερον*) he appeared;" that is, after he appeared to the two disciples as they were going into the country, he appeared to the eleven as they sat at meat. Townsend supposes it was eight days afterwards; that is, on the Sunday following the Sunday on which he rose. The objection to considering it as referring to the appearance Luke speaks of, is that neither Luke nor John records anything as said by the Saviour, which can be considered *an upbraiding* of them for their unbelief and hardness of heart. On the contrary, his words were full of tenderness. His behaviour and discourse, as the author just mentioned remarks, were directed to the composing of their troubles and the satisfying of their doubts. Accordingly, he assigns the passage to a later period, when at least a whole week had been allowed the disciples to examine and compare the proofs of his resurrection, and to call to mind his own predictions and promises concerning it. Then, if no more was said by way of reproof than what he said to Thomas, it was a reprehension of the others, who were in the same state of mind, and sufficient to justify Mark's expression, "He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart," meaning to include therein other disciples besides the apostles. Unless we adopt this view, we must understand the expression of Mark, "upbraided them," (*ὠνειδισε*) as signifying nothing more than what Luke records of our Lord's language on the occasion of his first appearance to the eleven, or we must suppose that both Luke and John have omitted some expressions which would justify the expression of Mark. It is a question which cannot be determined with certainty, and it is

\* Postremo, jam abiturus in cœlum, apparuit undecim apostolis—nam Judas perierat—in convivio accumbentibus, quibus exprobravit incredulitatem et duritiam cordis, quod his qui vidissent ipsum, resurrexisse non credidissent. See *Erasmii Paraphrases*.

left to the reader to adopt such view as may seem to him the most reasonable.\*

We turn now to John xx. 19. There can be no doubt that the appearance recorded in this verse is the same as that described by Luke, though more briefly, and with some particulars which Luke omits.

JOHN XX. 19. "The same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."

John records four appearances of the Lord, after his resurrection: The first was in the morning to Mary Magdalen, when she was alone at the sepulchre; yet in the next chapter (verse 14) he speaks of the *fourth* appearance as the *third*. His appearance to Mary was, as has been suggested, for a special purpose. See notes on verse 17. His appearance to his *male* disciples was to qualify them to be witnesses to the world of his resurrection. Hence it was that while he *allowed* the women, at his second appearance, Matt. xxviii., to hold him by the feet, he did not *command* them to take hold of his person, nor give them those varied evidences of his corporeal presence, he gave his male disciples. Luke xxiv. 39; John xx. 20, 27; xxi. For some such reason, we suppose, John took no notice of our Lord's appearance to the other women, and omits in his numerical series the first appearance to Mary, and mentions as *first* in order, the Lord's appearance to his male disciples, recorded

\* We have seen that Erasmus postpones this verse till near the time of our Lord's visible ascension. Beza's remarks on this last chapter of Mark seem to imply, that the whole of it may be understood of events which occurred on the day of our Lord's resurrection without any violence to the language, although he does not make such an application of it. His words are: "Marcus hæc omnia in unum velut corpus conjungit. Deinde exponit quomodo eodem die fuerat duobus illis conspectus qui rus ibant. In postrema demum parte commemorat quomodo discipulis apparuit, incipiens a primâ illâ apparitione, quæ facta est eo ipso die quo resurrexit, quam aliæ postea multæ consecutæ sunt. Sed eas omnes rursus in unam velut historiam contrahit: ideoque, postremam hanc apparitionem vocat quæ ab ipso die resurrectionis ad ascensionem porrigitur, ut liquet ex versiculo 19. Eandem prorsus rationem sequitur Lucas postremo capite in quo, ita connectit primam illam apparitionem cum postremâ, ut nisi quis hoc quod dixi consideret, sit existimaturus, Dominum eo ipse die quo primum apparuit discipulis (id est quo resurrexerat) in cælum ascendisse, cum dies quadraginta intercesserint ut ipsemet refert." These remarks of Beza are more applicable to the last chapter of Mark than to the last chapter of Luke. The word "afterward," ὕστερον, in the 14th verse of Mark, makes a break in the narrative. We are not obliged to understand the appearance spoken of by Mark as having been made on the day on which the Lord arose. But we find no such break in Luke's narrative. The series of the occurrences which he records, down to the 51st verse inclusively, appear to be immediately consecutive, and compel us to believe that our Lord ascended into heaven on the evening of the day of his resurrection. See notes on John xx. 17.

in the verse we are now to consider. Comp. verses 19, 24, 26, and chap. xxi. 2, 14. It took place on the evening of the same day he appeared to Mary, being the first day of the week, and must have been the same appearance which Luke speaks of, unless we suppose he appeared twice to the apostles on the same evening, which would be inconsistent with the relation of Luke, xxiv. 36—49. John's account, in fact, is supplementary to Luke's, and for that reason is more brief. If we compare the two, we shall be prepared properly to appreciate the diversities almost everywhere discernible in the Gospels, in the narrations of the same events. They are not contradictions nor discrepancies, because it is not only possible, but easy to weave all the incidents into one consistent narrative, though it may not be possible always to determine with certainty the times or the order of the occurrences. In the passage under consideration, John informs us, that the disciples were assembled with closed doors, through fear of the Jews. The *motive* for shutting the doors suggests that they were also secured by bars, or bolts; indeed the word (*κεκλεισμένων*) translated *shut*, implies as much. See Matt. xxv. 10, 11, Gr. Such a precaution, if it did not effectually secure them from their enemies, would prevent a sudden intrusion into their company without notice. Hence the sudden appearance of the Lord Jesus in the midst of them would naturally cause the fright which Luke so vividly describes; and suggest to the imagination that the intruder was not a human being, but a spirit: for how could he enter, the doors being shut, if he were a corporeal being? Luke xxiv. 37. This imagination suggested, perhaps, the *mode* or form of proof which the Lord adopted—"See my hands, my feet; handle me, and satisfy yourselves that it is I myself, in my very body of flesh and bones." But Luke had not mentioned in his account of the crucifixion, the piercing of *his side*, and he says nothing of the exhibition of it on this occasion to the disciples. This omission John supplies, and from his account we infer that Jesus removed his dress to lay this wound bare to their view—an action which of itself would tend to dispel their unfounded apprehension. Luke records the words with which the Lord accompanied these various actions, and the mixed emotions of the disciples, fear, joy, wonder! John speaks only of the fact of his showing them his hands and his side, and of the joy into which the other emotions subsided. Luke records the heads of the discourse the Saviour held with his disciples, after their fears were allayed and their minds composed, verses 44—48, while John speaks only of the mission, on which he declared, at the conclusion of his discourse, he would send them, and the powers which should be imparted to them for that purpose, by

the Holy Spirit, verses 21—23. Luke also records the promise of the Holy Spirit, but does not mention the symbolical action of breathing on the apostles, in token of the Spirit's inspiration. John, it is well known, wrote last of the Evangelists. He supplies many important and interesting incidents which the other Evangelists omitted. We may regard him as having had that purpose especially in view, or we may regard him and the other Evangelists as intending to record a part only, John xx. 30; xxi. 25, of the memorable sayings and doing of the Lord Jesus, and of the events that befell him.\*

LUKE XXIV. 44. "And he said unto them: These are the words that I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me."

Observe the style of this address: The Lord speaks of himself as of one *who was no longer with them* as he had been before. Comp. Acts ix. 39. He was actually present with them in his body at that very time, or the exhibition of his hands and feet and side, and his breathing upon them and talking with them, was all an illusion. On no other condition could they handle him and feel his flesh and bones. Certainly he was locally, personally present with them in the very body which hung on the cross. In what sense, then, was he no longer with them? He had ascended to the Father. The earth was no longer the place of his domicile. His sacrificial work was done; his earthly ministry, as a man, was ended; and although incarnate and not yet glorified, he was with them, as he was with Abraham in the plain of Mamre, Gen. xviii. 1, or with Manoah. Judges xiii. He was come to them again from the Father, not to abide with them; not to continue with them in social intercourse in the flesh, but simply to qualify them to be eye-witnesses of his resurrection.†

\* Like Xenophon in his work upon Socrates, they record, says a learned writer, (*ἀπομνημονεύματα*) *Memorabilia*, without pretending to furnish their readers with an extended connected record of the whole of his life, or even of his public life. Hence Matthew and Mark confine themselves chiefly to what he did in Galilee. Of the rest they speak only summarily. Luke dwells chiefly upon the Lord's last journey to Jerusalem. See from the ninth chapter to the end of his Gospel. John gives more of his history in Judea than the other Evangelists. His Gospel is peculiarly rich in the private instructions which the Lord gave to his disciples and others who sought him with a friendly and teachable spirit. See chaps. iii., iv., xiii. to xvii. Neither of the Gospels, therefore, was intended as a biography or as a journal of his private and public life, but rather as *excerpts or miscellanies* selected from his life by each Evangelist independently of the others: the common design of all being to prove the Divine nature and mission of our blessed Lord, and the object of his incarnation and death, so that believing in him we may have life through his name. John xx. 31; Acts xiii. 38—41.

† According to Mill, some MSS. add to Acts x. 41, after the word *συντιμειν*

Observe also the matter of the address: "These are the words which I spake unto you." What words? Are they the words which follow to the end of the verse? viz. "that all things must be fulfilled," &c. This may be the sense. See Luke xviii. 31; Ps. xxii. 16. But the expression admits of another sense. "These are the *things* which I spoke of"—meaning *the wounds* in his hands and his feet, which perhaps he exhibited to them while pronouncing these words.\*

If we may understand the words in this sense, the Lord referred to his repeated predictions of his sufferings, which perplexed them so much, which they could not believe were even possible. These predictions he began to utter when Peter first declared, by Divine inspiration, the mystery of his person, which he repeated to them afterwards frequently in private.†

And now, when they saw them fulfilled, he says, "These are *the things* of which I spake," &c., when I said, "that all things written in the law," &c., concerning me must be fulfilled.

We observe again, that our Lord here recognizes and sanctions the three great divisions of the Jewish Scriptures, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms; and expressly asserts that he is the great subject of each of them. Indeed, if they relate to him at all, the other matters they contain must be of subordinate moment. It seems to us strange that this sense of the Scriptures, thus exhibited to them, should have escaped the observation of the whole nation, even of the devout. But it was not consistent with the Divine plan, that the nation should understand clearly before the event, the revelation of a rejected and suffering Messiah; for a clear disclosure of the event would have seemed inconsistent with the proclamation of the kingdom, and the freeness of the offer of its blessings. Luke xiii. 34; xix. 41, 42; Matt. xxiii. 37; xxi. 42, 43; iv. 17. Although these things were revealed, yet to the nation they were a profound mystery; and hence our Lord, in private, told his disciples of them beforehand, that when they should come to pass

the words *καὶ συνεισπραφημῶν*. Hence, it has been inferred, by some commentators, that our Lord, during the forty days following his resurrection, went about with his disciples in social daily intercourse, as he did during his public ministry. The expression in Luke xxiv. 44, *ἐστὶν ὧν συν ὑμῶν*, is quite sufficient to confute this idea, and justify the common reading.

\* The word *λογος* is often used in the New Testament in the sense of the Hebrew *דָּבָר* *dabar*, which signifies *casus*, *factum*, or *negotium*, as well as *sermo* or *verbum*, or in the sense of *πράγμα*, *ῥήμα*. See 1 Kings xv. 5, in Hebrew and Greek; Matt. v. 32. See *Vorstius de Hebraïsmis* N. T., cap. xiv.

† See Matt. xvi. 21; xvii. 22; xx. 18; Mark viii. 31; ix. 31; x. 33; Luke ix. 22; xviii. 31. Hardy's annotation is—"Hæc sunt verba, *vel res* quas nunc videtis impletas, nimirum passionem et resurrectionem; quod mihi prædicenti sæpe non credidistis aut quod prædictum non intellexistis, nunc reipsa experimini, et oculis vestris cernitis."

they might believe. John xiii. 19; xiv. 29; xvi. 4. Now they could no longer doubt. His pierced hands and feet and side thus exhibited to them, proved beyond cavil or doubt, the sense in which he had explained to them the Scriptures.

LUKE XXIV. 45. "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures."

That is to say, He opened their minds by this exhibition of his living person to them, with the wounds which had been inflicted upon it, for that was a practical or providential commentary on his previous declarations, which enabled them to comprehend his meaning, and the true meaning of the Scriptures he had so often cited to them, and applied to himself. This was an advance in knowledge; for when he last spoke to them of his approaching sufferings and death, which was only a few days before, Luke xviii. 31—34, "They understood none of the things that he said; his meaning was hidden from them, neither understood they the things that were spoken of."\* We are not to understand by this verse, that our Lord, at that time, imparted to them spiritual illumination. That was the appointed work of the Holy Spirit, John xvi. 13—15, and was reserved till the day of Pentecost. Acts iii.

LUKE XXIV. 46. "And he said unto them: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day."

We may regard this verse as exegetical or explanatory of what he had already said. "Thus as I have told you, it is written" in the Law, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning the Christ, "and thus," as you see in these (my) hands and in these (my) feet, Ps. xxii. 16, and in this (my) side, Zech. xii.; Rev. i. 7, "it was necessary that the Christ should suffer" death by crucifixion, as ye saw me crucified, "and rise from the dead," as ye see me now risen "on the third day," Jonah i. 17; Matt. xvi. 4; xii. 40, afterwards, as ye now see me stand before you. We do not suppose that the Lord entered into a formal orderly exposition of Moses and the prophets at this interview, as he had done shortly before with Cleopas and his companion while walking with them to Emmaus. Rather, as we infer from verse 35, these disciples had

\* John the Baptist appears to have understood the mystery of a suffering Messiah, John i. 29, and in this respect he was far in advance of the apostles, until they were inspired by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Yet, even John did not discern this mystery, we have reason to believe, before Jesus came to him for baptism. See a note on Matt. iii. 15. This was evidently the opinion of Clarius, who remarks on Matt. iii. 15: "Sunt qui credant eâ ipsâ horâ fuisse ei revelatum, etiam antequam signum sibi a Spiritu prædictum videret." In no other way can we explain Matt. iii. 14, consistently with John i. 31—33.

already (*ἐξήγγουστο*) rehearsed fully to the eleven the discourse the Lord had held with them before he entered the apartment. In this way he made them his spokesmen on these topics, and with this design, perhaps, delayed his appearance until they had finished the rehearsal. That done, he stood visibly before them, to verify the words they had heard from Cleopas, by the exhibition of his person—thus opening their minds, not only to perceive, but to receive the literal and true sense of the prophetic Scriptures which Cleopas and his companion had explained. What an impressive commentary! and how difficult it was to overcome the force of their preconceived opinions! Yet, the literal sense which lay on the surface, was hid from them, neither did they understand it or receive it, until they saw it fulfilled in his flesh. We add: there is nothing in the narrative of Luke inconsistent with the supposition that Jesus was invisibly present with them in his body while these disciples were relating their story. Is it not possible, that sincere and faithful men, now-a-days, like these disciples, are blinded to some of the plainest truths of the Scriptures, by traditional theology?

LUKE XXIV. 47. "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

This was a new topic, and the Divine purpose announced by these words, implied much more than the apostles were able, at that time, to comprehend. The sin of their nation, and their consequent fall, were about to introduce a new order of things. Rom. xi. 11, 12. The nation had lost its pre-eminence, and to a great extent its priority. Repentance and remission of sins were no longer to be preached to them exclusively, Acts xix. 4, as hitherto. Matt. x. 5, 6. Had the nation received their Messiah with the obedience of faith, he would have been eminently their Saviour. Ps. lxxxi. 13—16; Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 34; xix. 41, 42; Exod. xix. 5, 6. But that was impossible, considering the depravity of their nature, and they could not reject him and put him to death, and yet enjoy exclusively or pre-eminently the blessings of his kingdom. Hence all other nations were to be included in the new commission.

Yet the Jews are an example of what any other nation or race of men would have done in the same circumstances. Rom. iii. 9. Their fall proved—and it was designed to prove—the necessity of a dispensation of grace, and of a new agency, to prepare the world effectually for the coming of the kingdom of God, and its establishment in outward glory on the earth, for which we are taught to pray. Matt. vi. 10. Yet, for their sin,



the Divine judgments were to be sent upon them, their land was to be given up for a time to the Gentiles, their temple to be destroyed, their people to be dispersed, and all these things were to continue until the times before appointed for the continuance of Gentile power should elapse. Luke xxi. 24; Matt. xxi. 43.

These results were due to the folly and sin of the nation as such. Yet within the nation there was an election of grace, Rom. xi. 5; John i. 12, on whose account its times were to be prolonged for a little season. These things, however, the Lord did not attempt to explain, and we know from the inquiry they made of him, forty days afterwards, Acts i. 6, they did not understand him as alluding even remotely to the impending calamities, although to some of their number he had within a week foretold them in the plainest language. Mark xiv. 8; Luke xxi. 20—24; Matt. xxiv. 21. Nor did they seem to comprehend what he intended by the words we are now considering; because, a few years afterwards, a supernatural vision was necessary to make Peter comprehend God's purposes of mercy to the Gentiles. Acts x.

LUKE XXIV. 48. "And ye are witnesses of these things;" that is, of the Lord's sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection. He had given them every proof which it was possible for them to appreciate by their understanding or senses, in order that he might make them credible witnesses of the facts they were to attest in the fullest sense. And the great difficulty the apostles and most attached disciples of our Lord had in believing his resurrection from the dead, became, in the order of Divine Providence, the means of establishing more firmly the truth of this doctrine, the hearty belief of which, as the apostle Paul teaches, is indispensable to salvation. Rom. x. 9.

The resurrection of Christ was foretold, John xx. 9; ii. 19; 1 Cor. xv. 4; Matt. xvi. 4; Acts ii. 31; xiii. 33; yet not so clearly that the Divine wisdom saw proper to dispense with human testimony to the fact. Indeed, the resurrection of Christ is the great miracle of this dispensation, and considering the length of time the dispensation was to run, and the wide extent through which the fact was to be proclaimed, it is obvious it could not be established in any other way for all ages. Hence the apostles insist largely upon the *testimony* they allege in proof of the fact, 1 Cor. xv. 3—8, 15; Acts ii. 32; iv. 33, 21; x. 39, 41, 42, confirmed as it was by the miraculous gifts and powers conferred upon them, Acts ii. 3, 4, 33, and the miracles which they wrought, Acts iii. 16; iv. 10. It is to be observed also, that this office of bearing testimony to his resurrection is here conferred upon (the eleven) his male

disciples, as it was afterwards confined to them on the day of his final visible ascension into heaven, Acts i. 8, 22, to which official designation or appointment Peter refers in Acts x. 39. See John xv. 27, also. Hence, we learn that the ministry of the gospel of this dispensation of the Spirit is *chiefly a witnessing of the resurrection* of Jesus, without which all preaching is vain and our faith is vain. 1 Cor. xv. 15, 17; Acts iv. 33; Rom. x. 9; Acts v. 32; x. 39—42.

JOHN XX. 21. "Then said Jesus unto them again: Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."\*

We observe the same words nearly in our Lord's intercession, John xvii. 18, and as the eleven then present heard that intercession, only three days before, they would naturally notice the similarity. By comparing the mission he gave *them*, to the mission *he* had received and executed, he declared it to be heavenly and divine. As he was not of the world, so they were not of the world, John xvii. 16; and as he was sent into the world, so he sent them into the world, to preach repentance and the remission of sins in his name. They were qualified to do so as they had witnessed his sufferings and his death, and now had ocular proof of his resurrection.

JOHN XX. 22. "And when he had said this he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

His breathing on them was another proof of his corporeal presence, and of the restoration of the vital powers to his body. If the spear of the soldier had pierced the lung, its functions were restored, even if we suppose the external wound remained visible, and as freshly made. Some of the ancient commentators find in this action of breathing on them an allusion to Gen. ii. 7, where we are taught that in the creation of Adam God *breathed* into his face the breath of life, and he became a living soul:—so now the Lord Jesus, by breathing upon his apostles, gave them a divine and supernatural life. See *Augustine Tract* on John xxxii.†

Without dwelling on this conjecture, we may safely regard the action as symbolical, not as operative or efficacious. It sig-

\* In harmonizing and blending the record of John with that of Luke, it is impossible to decide with certainty the order in which the different matters recorded took place. Nor do we suppose the Evangelists themselves observed exactly the order of utterance or occurrence throughout. It seems to us that as soon as the Lord had recognized them as the witnesses of his resurrection, it was natural to advert to the mission in which they were to bear this testimony. Hence we have introduced this verse in this place.

† Augustine supposed also that the Saviour intended to signify by breathing on the disciples, that the Holy Spirit would proceed from him as the breath emitted proceeded from his body, so that the Holy Spirit which he gave proceeded from his Divine nature.

nified that they should as certainly receive the Holy Ghost as they received his breath—that He (the Spirit) would as certainly breathe into or inspire their souls with knowledge, power, and every needful gift, as he (the Saviour) then breathed upon their countenances or persons. This method of instruction, by actions addressing the eyes, as well as by words addressing the ears, was not unusual with our Lord, John xiii. 4, 5, 12, 15; ix. 6, 7; viii. 6, and was quite agreeable to the manners of the Jews, Jer. xxvii. 2; Isa. xx. 3; Matt. xxvii. 24, and of other ancient nations.

By the Holy Ghost we understand the third person of the Trinity, the Comforter promised by the Saviour to his disciples, John xv. 26; xvi. 7, who was given on the day of Pentecost next following, Acts ii. 2, 4, when Jesus was glorified. John vii. 39.

LUKE XXIV. 49. “And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye (*καθίστατε*) in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

This passage confirms the interpretation before given of John xx. 22. Evidently Luke refers to the same promise of the Holy Spirit, whom the Lord assured them he would send upon them, but not then. We know that the Spirit was given fifty days afterwards—at the Pentecost—though it is not probable the apostles knew beforehand what was the appointed time of this gift. They were kept in the posture of waiting, and not knowing, nor being capable of imagining how the fulfilment of this promise would affect them. Under their former mission, they exercised powers of the most extraordinary kind. Matt. x. 8. It is not probable that they were conscious of the manner in which they received those powers, and it is probable that after the trial of the nation was over, and at least as soon as our Lord's public ministry was closed, those miraculous powers were withdrawn. But now they were taught to expect a renewal of them in order to fit them for their new duties and the new field into which they were to be sent.

It was with reference to the bestowment of this new power from on high they were commanded to remain together at Jerusalem, in order that its effect might be witnessed by those who the Lord designed should be first influenced thereby. Jerusalem was the point of confluence of devout Jews of every nation, many of whom would be brought together by the approaching festival, and thus in the providence of God become witnesses of the first signal display of the Divine presence and power at the inauguration of the new dispensation. The command to *tarry in the city* until they should be endued with the promised power, required indeed that they

should not return to their homes in Galilee during this interval to abide there, but it did not prohibit their temporary absence;\* for we know that several did leave that city afterwards for a time. John xxi. 1. As the time, however, drew near, Acts i. 5, the command was renewed, Acts i. 4, *μη χωριζεσθαι*, in a form to induce greater strictness in observing it. They had this motive for strict obedience, that the promised power would be conferred at Jerusalem, and of course upon those only who should be there waiting for the fulfilment of the promise, in obedience to the Saviour's command.

But this injunction, however understood, must have struck the minds of the apostles with great force. Jerusalem was to them a place of danger. At that very moment it was given, they were secretly gathered together with closed doors for fear of the Jews. Yet the appearance of their Divine Master in the midst of them, and the demonstrations he gave them of his power and of his Divine nature, by his resurrection from the dead, would naturally dispel their fear of man, and incline them to rely confidently upon him for protection. At least, we may suppose that with the command which he now gave them, he imparted the grace and strength requisite to fulfil it.

JOHN XX. 23. "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

This declaration followed immediately our Lord's act of breathing on the apostles, which he explained as symbolical of the descent upon them of the Holy Ghost. This connection between the two gifts indicates that the extraordinary power conferred by these words could be exercised only by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost. There are many, however, who maintain that by these words the power of pardoning sin was imparted to the church and its ministers in all ages. But this is a great error. The Jews judged rightly that the power of pardoning sin belongs to God alone, Mark ii. 7; Matt. ix. 2, 3; and therefore the fact that Jesus exercised that power, attesting it by miracles, proved his Divine mission. The Divine power to heal incurable diseases attested his Divine authority to pardon sins, the cause "of death and all our woes." And now having just given the apostles a commission like his own, and having symbolically imparted to

\* Luke uses the word *ἐκβλητε* to denote Paul's residence at Corinth, Acts xviii. 11, which certainly does not imply that he confined himself continually within the very walls of the city. See Rom. xv. 19; xvi. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1; xi. 9, 10, which seem to prove that Paul visited the neighbourhood of Corinth. *Χωριζεσθαι*, on the other hand, does not denote a continued action; but simply the act of separating, departing, going away. Acts xviii. 1.

them the Holy Ghost as their infallible guide in the execution of that commission, he gives them also the power of pardoning sins, which he, as the Son of Man, had exercised on several occasions, and had power to exercise at all times in accordance with the Divine will.

Accordingly they exercised many powers and gifts which were not transmitted to the bishops, elders, pastors, and teachers of the church in later ages. 1 Cor. xii. 7—11. Witness the power exercised by Peter, in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v.; of Paul in the case of Elymas, Acts xiii. 5—12; and of the incestuous person mentioned in 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. Without the other extraordinary gifts, how is it possible that the power of forgiving sins should be exercised agreeably to the Divine will, and how, without the Divine approbation or sanction, could the power be exercised at all? "Who can remit sins but God alone?" The language is metaphorical and borrowed from the relation between a creditor and his debtor. Matt. vi. 12.

We need not, therefore, inquire more particularly into the power the Lord Jesus conferred upon his apostles by these words. It is enough to know that it was a power personal to them, Luke xxiv. 49, to be exercised by them at the opening of the new dispensation, and like other miraculous powers conferred on the apostles for the same purpose, not transmitted to later times.

LUKE XXIV. 50, 51. "And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them."

Up to this and the next following verse, we perceive no break whatever in the narrative, nor anything which indicates a change of place or of time. If we had only this Gospel, we could not avoid the conclusion that the preceding verses, from the 36th to the 49th, were an account of what transpired in the apartment in which Cleopas and his companion found the eleven, where Jesus also afterwards joined them. John does not tell us how the meeting broke up. xx. 24, 25. But Luke says, that after having finished his discourse with them, he led them out of the city as far as to Bethany. When they arrived at that place, "he lifted up his hands and blessed them, and it came to pass that while he was in the act of blessing them, he was parted (*διεστῆ*) from them, and was carried up into heaven."

Were we to read an account like this in a profane historian, such as Thucydides, Plutarch, or Livy, with the like circumstances, we should not hesitate to understand the author as intending to connect all the events narrated with the time and places specified. It is usual, however, with commentators to

dislocate these verses from the preceding context, and apply them to the ascension, which the same Evangelist records in Acts i. 9. There are several particulars, however, which tend strongly to show that the two places, Luke xxiv. 51, and Acts i. 9, relate to different ascensions.

(1.) The ascension which the Evangelist here describes took place at Bethany, which was at the foot of Mount Olivet on the east, fifteen furlongs, or nearly two miles, distant from Jerusalem. John xi. 18. The ascension which Luke describes in Acts i. 10, was from Mount Olivet, a Sabbath day's journey, only 2000 cubits, or just five furlongs from Jerusalem, according to Josephus.

(2.) If we compare the two accounts, and notice particularly the words spoken and the things done, and the circumstances under which they were done, it will seem very extraordinary that the *same* author should write *two* accounts of the *same* event so differently. In the gospel, it is said, Jesus led the apostles from Jerusalem to Bethany. In Acts i. 2, the author does not inform us from whence the Lord or the apostles came, nor whether they proceeded together from any place.

(3.) In the Gospel, Luke does not mention the inquiry of the apostles concerning the kingdom, nor our Lord's reply to it. Indeed, he records nothing as having been said by them on that occasion. They appear to have been merely listeners; and if we may judge from the state of mind they were in at that time, we should not expect their thoughts would turn to that subject. Nor does the Evangelist mention the cloud or the angels, or their address to the apostles; and yet he assures us, in the Acts, i. 2, that he brought his gospel down to the day in which the Lord (*ἀνεληφθη*) was taken up.

(4.) By the Gospel, it appears that the Lord lifted up his hands, and was in the act of blessing them, when he was separated from them, (*διεστῆ ἀπ' αὐτῶν*), see Luke xxiv. 51, a little distance, and then ascended into heaven; nor does he say that the apostles saw him as he ascended. In the Acts, where his final ascension is described, we are not informed that he pronounced his blessing upon them, but his last words were a repetition of the commission he had given them, John xx. 21, and thereupon he ascended visibly, while they gazed after him with astonishment, never having seen him depart from them in that way before. There are other differences in the two accounts, which we may hereafter notice.

(5.) Barnabas, the companion of Paul, whose character is described in Acts xiv. 4, 14; xi. 24, in his first epistle, which is undoubtedly genuine, has recorded in unequivocal language, his own belief upon this point, and without doubt the belief of

the churches in his day. In giving the reason why he and his fellow-Christians observed the eighth, (Ezek. xliii. 27, that is the first) day of the week, he says, "that Jesus rose from the dead on that day, and on the same day, after he had appeared to the disciples, he ascended into heaven."\*

His words are: "Therefore do we celebrate the eighth day with joy, because on that day Jesus both rose again from the dead, and having appeared, also ascended into heaven."

This is very remarkable testimony. Barnabas was a cotemporary with Luke, and both of them companions of Paul, and it is scarcely possible that either should be ignorant of the belief of the others upon this interesting question. This consideration is conclusive, if the genuineness of this epistle of Barnabas is well established.

(6.) Finally: the temple services appointed for this day confirm this conclusion. In 1 Cor. v. 7, the apostle Paul denominates "Christ our Passover, sacrificed for us," and in 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23, he denominates him the "first-fruits" and the first-fruits of them that slept. See Rom. xi. 16. In the former of these places, he has allusion to such passages as Exod. xii. 5, 46; Numb. ix. 12; Ps. xxxiv. 20; Isa. liii. 7. See John i. 29; Eph. v. 2; 1 Pet. i. 19; Rev. v. 6, 12. In the latter, he alludes to Lev. xxiii. 9—16, with which compare Lev. xxii. 19, 20. These types were closely connected in design or signification and fulfilment. On the evening preceding the Passover, it was the custom to go over the brook Kedron, and gather a sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest and bring it to the priest as a wave-offering to the Lord. This sheaf "was laid up before the Lord until the morrow after the Sabbath," when it was brought forth and waved by the priest. At, or near the time, and near the place, it is probable, where this sheaf was gathered, our Lord was apprehended. The sheaf was laid up, according to the ordinance, and kept until the Sabbath was past; and on

\* Δις και ἀρχομεν την ἡμέραν την ἕκτην εἰς την εὐφροσύνην ἐν ἣ καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνεστῆ ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ φανεράθεις ἀνέβη εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς. Upon this passage Menardus says:

"Hic videtur dicere Christum ascendisse in cœlum die Dominicâ, imo eodem die quo resurrexit, quod falsum est." And Hefele, in his edition of the Apostolic Fathers, notes on this passage: "Nonne Barnabas Dominum die Dominicâ ad cœlos ascendisse contendit?" Our Lord's final ascension, on the 40th day, occurred on the 5th day of the week (or Thursday) and of course the ascension which Barnabas refers to, was different in two respects:—it occurred on the 8th or 1st day of the week, and on the very day on which he arose from the dead. Menardus thinks, *quod falsum est*; he was mistaken in this; but it will be admitted, we presume, by all impartial persons, that Barnabas knew his own opinion, and also what was the common belief of the apostles and his fellow-Christians. The ancient Latin translation of this passage is: "Propter quod agimus diem octavum in lætationem, in quo et Jesus resurrexit a mortuis, et apparuit et ascendit in cœlos."

this day—the day of our Lord’s resurrection—it had been brought forth and waved by the priest as an offering of the first-fruits in the temple, before the Lord. This sheaf, as we suppose, was typical of the risen body of the Lord Jesus, and the waving it by the priest shadowed forth the presentation of the risen body of the Lord within the veil, in the upper sanctuary; by which he superseded and annulled the type which had been appointed to continue only until it should be thus fulfilled in his human person. If we reject this conclusion, we must allow a typical efficacy, or import, to the ceremonies and services performed in the temple on this day, among which was the sacrificing of a lamb, Lev. xxiii. 12, as well as the offering of the sheaf of the first-fruits, after the veil of the temple had been disparded, and the Levitical economy itself was done away.

LUKE XXIV. 51—53. “And it came to pass, that while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, and they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.”

And so it was that (ἐν τῷ εὐλογεῖν αὐτοῦ αὐτοὺς) while he was in the act of pronouncing his blessing upon them (διεστῆ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν), he withdrew a little space from them, see Luke xxiv. 51, and after that was borne upward to heaven: which sight, and the other things they had seen and heard during that evening, so deeply impressed and convinced them of his Divine nature, that before leaving the place where they then stood, (προσκυνήσαντες) they offered unto him Divine worship. Luke iv. 8; Acts xxiv. 11; Heb. i. 6. Thereupon they returned the same evening from Bethany to Jerusalem; and from that day onward they appeared publicly in the temple praising and blessing God.

Such appears to be the sense of these concluding verses. The Evangelist is careful to say that the disciples returned from Bethany to Jerusalem *with great joy*; as if to contrast the state of mind in which the Lord left them with the alarms, and sorrows, and fears, and doubts which had agitated and oppressed them during the day. How tranquilly and yet how confidently they afterwards spoke of the interview to Thomas! John xx. 25. They no longer sought concealment through fear—although they held their private assemblies, John xx. 26, perhaps in obedience to the Saviour’s express command. They may have even anticipated his appearance among them again, and with that hope may have frequently convened in private. Matt. xviii. 20. Perhaps the Evangelist had it also in view, to record the fulfilment of the Lord’s promise to the eleven when they were last assembled together. “Yet a little while,” said



he, "and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me, *because I go to the Father.*" John xvi. 16.

These words, in themselves very plain, were to them very obscure, verses 17, 18. This led him to explain his meaning. "Verily, verily I say unto you, ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow *shall be turned into joy,*" verse 20. And ye now therefore have (*shall have*—see *Mill*, New Test.) sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh (no man *shall take*, *Mill*, New Test.) from you. We have seen how sorrowful the disciples were at the death of the Lord. Mark xvi. 10; Luke xxiv. 17; John xx. 11. But now their sorrow, as he predicted, was turned into joy. The Saviour's promise to them was now fulfilled. The fearful peril, John xvi. 21, and trial were past. Yet, if we notice carefully the words of the Saviour, John xvi. 16, their sorrow was to continue during his absence from them, and *until his return from the Father.* For the reason of his return to them, was not that he was about to die; nor because his spirit was about to depart into the world of spirits, but because he was going to the Father—that is, was going to ascend *in his body*, to the Father: after which they should see him again. Thus understood, this passage confirms the interpretation before given of John xx. 17, and proves that our Lord, before he appeared to any of the disciples, except Mary Magdalen, had ascended to the Father. See notes on John xx. 17.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

Events that followed the Lord's resurrection.—Effect of the first interview of the Lord with the apostles after his resurrection.—Thomas's absence.—His incredulity.—His presence.—The Lord's condescension.—The consequences of Thomas's demand.—The seven disciples at the sea of Tiberias.—The Lord's appearance.—The special reason of this appearance.—The Lord addresses Simon Peter.—Mistake of the brethren.—The appearance in Galilee.—Scope of the apostolic commission.—Infant baptism.—Appearance to James.—A paraphrase.—Return from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem.—John's baptism.—Misperception of the apostles.—The Lord's ascension.—The apostles' employment until the Pentecost.—The day of Pentecost.

### EVENTS THAT FOLLOWED THE LORD'S RESURRECTION.

LUKE XXIV. 52. "And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

From this verse, we learn the effect of the first interview of the Lord with the apostles after his resurrection. It is just

what we should have anticipated; for he certainly was not straitened in means for convincing them. By one appearance, Mary Magdalen was convinced. John xx. 16. One appearance and his familiar salutation, convinced the women he met in the morning, on their return from the sepulchre, Matt. xxviii. 9; and one view, as we shall soon see, left not a doubt in the mind of Thomas, the most incredulous of all the apostles; and why should not one appearance and such proofs of the identity of his person convince the rest? John, in speaking of this interview, says expressly, "that they rejoiced when they saw him;" which implies, that the distressing fears and doubts, which Luke particularly mentions, were all removed. They were convinced also of his Divine nature; for they worshipped him. They worshipped him afterwards again when he appeared to them and other disciples in Galilee. Matt. xxviii. 17. It is an error therefore to suppose that the apostles first began to worship him after his last visible ascension from Mount Olivet, Acts i. 9—12; for this would imply, that until then, they doubted his Divine nature—a supposition which is disproved by the verse we are considering.

The place from whence they returned was Bethany, (verse 50;) and the time was the same evening, at the close of their worship, (*προσκυνησαντες αυτον υπεστρεψαν.*) Their joy was great—it was full. John xv. 11. It was the joy of triumph; their Lord and Master had conquered death. Fear was no longer possible. Accordingly the Evangelist adds in conclusion of his gospel;

LUKE XXIV. 53. "And were continually in the temple praising and blessing God."

He means that from the day of the Lord's resurrection forward, until they received the promise of the Father, (during which time they were commanded to remain at Jerusalem,) they openly frequented the temple and offered their praises and thanksgivings to God. A striking effect of the grace of Christ! They no longer closed the doors when they met, *for fear* of the Jews.\*

\* See note on John xx. 19. It is remarkable that when the disciples assembled on the eighth day after the Lord's resurrection, the apostles are not represented as having closed the doors of the house or apartment where they met, *for fear*, but rather, as we may suppose, *for privacy*. The reason why the Evangelist mentions that the doors were shut on this occasion, is to show the surprising manner of the Lord's appearance to Thomas. It was one of the things which convinced him; and it agreed perfectly with the manner of his appearance a week before, an account of which he had no doubt heard. Accordingly in describing the first appearance, the Evangelist tells us explicitly that the motive for shutting the doors was *fear of the Jews*, but in describing his second appearance he assigns no motive for the act, yet mentions the fact as in itself important for the reason already suggested.

Although they were known to be the disciples of Jesus, and were surrounded by his enemies, and theirs for his sake, they appeared without disguise, in that very place, where they could not fail to be seen and known.

Those who limit the application of this verse to the short interval between the Lord's visible ascension and the day of Pentecost, leave us to conjecture what were the emotions and employments of the apostles during the forty days following the resurrection. But no violence is done to the language by extending it, as we do, to the whole interval between the day of the Lord's resurrection and the Pentecost. On the contrary, it is the plain and obvious interpretation, and the only one which adequately represents the power of Christ over the minds and hearts of the apostles. See note on Luke xxiv. 49.

JOHN XX. 24. "But Thomas,\* one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came."

Consequently he was not one of those who accompanied the Lord to Bethany. He had not taken part in their worship, nor did he share in the joys of his fellow apostles. No cause is assigned for his absence. The fact only is stated. We may infer, perhaps, from what is said of him in John xi. 8—16, that he was a man of bold and resolute disposition, if not obstinate and self-willed. If he had heard the report of the Lord's resurrection, he treated it, no doubt, as the others did at first, as an idle tale, unworthy of his attention. Luke xxiv. 11. However this may be,

JOHN XX. 25. "The other disciples," or some of them, having casually found him, or sought him out perhaps, "said unto him, We have seen the Lord." It is probable much more was said than is here recorded. The words imply that the Lord's resurrection was spoken of. Judging from what we know of human nature we should not unreasonably suppose the wonderful facts recorded by Luke were circumstantially related to him—how and where they were assembled on the first day of the week—the hour when—the sudden entry of Cleopas and his companion—the story they told—the sudden and mysterious appearance of the Lord—the exhibition he made of the wounds in his hands, his feet, and his side—his partaking of food—their own emotions—the discourse he held with them, his leading them out of the city to Bethany, and the manner in which he left them. It is probable also they repeated the very words he used while exhibiting to them his wounds. "Handle me

\* Thomas is a Hebrew name which signifies the same as Didymus; a Greek word or name; so that Didymus is rather a translation of the proper name of this apostle than an addition to it. Both signify twin or twins.

and see"—satisfy yourselves by your sense of feeling, if you do not trust your other senses; a test which they would naturally decline, as well through awe, as because they were already fully convinced of the reality of his presence.\* It was to this test of the touch, Thomas in his reply plainly alludes.

JOHN XX. 25. "But he said unto them, except I [also] shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and even put my finger into the print of the nails and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe," or more exactly, "I will never believe."

In reading these words we should lay a strong emphasis on the pronoun I. Except *I* shall see, &c., *I* will never believe. The meaning may be paraphrased thus: "You were quite too easily convinced of a matter so extraordinary as that you speak of. To convince me, I must not only see for myself the print of the nails in his flesh, as you say you saw it; but I must feel it with my finger, which you did not venture to do. Nor would this be enough; I must lay my hand on his side, which you imagine you saw, having in it the very wound made by the soldier's spear. Had I been there, *I* certainly should not have declined any test possible for me to apply; less than this should not have convinced you."

We can hardly suppose that Thomas would have employed such peculiar terms to express his incredulity, or specified such extraordinary tests to insure his belief, unless the other disciples had related to him the particulars of their interview with the Lord, as we have supposed. Assuming that they did so, the reply of Thomas reflects upon them, on the one hand, as timid and credulous; and on the other, sets up by way of contrast, his own superior courage and discretion. Thus considered it is of a piece with what John says of him, xi. 8—16, when the Lord proposed to go into Judea, thereby exposing himself to the enmity of the Jews. All the other disciples, influenced by their affection, endeavoured to dissuade him. Thomas, for some reason, was of a different mind, which he expressed in terms which showed both his sense of the danger and disregard of it.

JOHN XX. 26. "And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *Then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you."

We are not to understand that this second appearance of the Lord to his male disciples, occurred eight days after Thomas

\* If we suppose they declined the test of touch, we may account for the additional proof the Lord gave them, of taking food from their hands, and eating it before them, Luke xxiv. 41—43, a test or proof approximating to that he had proposed, which otherwise would have been quite unnecessary.

had thus expressed his unbelief; but eight days inclusive, after his first appearance, mentioned in verse 19. Yet it may have been nearly as long, for aught that is said, after the interview of Thomas with his fellow disciples, just spoken of. On this occasion Thomas was present. Considering the fact that the Lord had already appeared at five different times to some of the disciples, and had promised to appear to all of them in Galilee, it is not improbable that those who had seen him indulged the hope, that he would often appear to them, if not whenever they met; and this hope or expectation being known to Thomas, may have had some influence on his mind. Indeed, if we reflect how blind the disciples were to the future, and how ignorant they were of the actual posture of their nation, and of the Divine judgments which were soon to come upon the people, it is not improbable they thought he intended before long, to establish his kingdom over them in outward glory; and consequently to return and permanently to remain with them. However this may be, we may at least believe that Thomas, although sceptical and without any such hopes, was not free from misgivings. Or if the evidence does not warrant so favourable a judgment, we can confidently affirm, that his Divine and compassionate Lord brought him, in spite of his gloomy and unreasonable disbelief, into the circle of his friends, that he might comply with his unreasonable exactions.

We remark again, that the doors of their apartment were shut and probably barred, as on the Sunday evening before. But it is not said that this was done through fear of the Jews. Comp. verses 19—26. Their fears, we have seen, were all dispelled. They appeared publicly in the temple, relying confidently upon the power and providence of the Saviour, by whose express command they made Jerusalem, for the time being, the place of their abode. On this occasion, the sudden and mysterious appearance of the Lord did not occasion any fear or surprise to those who had seen him before. If it did, the fact is not mentioned, nor is it probable. All but Thomas were fully convinced that he was indeed the same compassionate Friend and Master they had ever known him. It was the design of the Saviour, and if we may so say, his effort, at his first appearance to them, thoroughly to dispel their fears, and for this purpose he had led them forth from the city, as he had often done, to Bethany before he left them. His salutation, "Peace to you," uttered in his well-known voice, was sufficient to ward off fear and even surprise. Their presence and composure would naturally strengthen Thomas for the ordeal to which his incredulity had subjected him.

We may imagine that instantly the Saviour's eye rested upon

Thomas, and the eye of Thomas on him, and that alone was quite sufficient to carry conviction to his heart, before a word was spoken. But the address of the Saviour, and the repetition of his unseemly words, one by one, must have awakened emotions of shame and confusion as well as sorrow.

JOHN XX. 27, 28. "Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."

The repetition of the very words of Thomas, was an indubitable proof of the omniscience of Jesus, and consequently of his Divine nature. Hence the confession of Thomas. It was a similar display of this attribute which convinced Nathaniel of his exalted character even before the Lord entered publicly on his ministry. John i. 47—51.

Some commentators regard this expression of Thomas as a mere exclamation, indicating his astonishment and nothing more; while others, among whom is Beza, regard it as the most decisive proof of the Deity of Jesus. We suppose, that Thomas meant to recognize his Divine, as well as his human nature, by this twofold designation. Regarded as a mere exclamation, such as we sometimes hear in common life, it would not be easy to exculpate the apostle from profaneness; but as the confession of his faith, it was a religious act. And why may we not so regard it? Of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, he had now a full and perfect conviction, without making trial of any of the tests he had rashly demanded. This fact alone proved his Divine nature. Rom. i. 4. It explained what he meant when he said, "I and my Father are one." "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world. Again I leave the world and go to the Father." "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thyself, with the glory I had with thee before the world was." These sayings Thomas had heard, John xiv. 5, although he had not understood them. But the living person of Jesus, bearing in his flesh the very wounds of crucifixion, declared the sense, beyond a doubt, in which they were to be understood. Thomas did not need to be divinely inspired to appreciate the force of such a proof, any more than we do; and his expression, thus regarded, is an energetic, full, and appropriating confession of his heartfelt belief. This is proved by our Lord's reply to him.

JOHN XX. 29. "Jesus saith to him: Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

Surely, if this hitherto doubting or disbelieving disciple ex-

pressed nothing more than his surprise or amazement, the omniscient Saviour would not have accepted it as a confession of his belief.

It is remarkable, that the Evangelist records nothing more of this interview than the words quoted. He does not say how long it continued, nor how it was terminated, nor what passed between Thomas and his fellow disciples after the Lord left them. But if we may suppose that he appeared on this occasion solely for the conviction of Thomas, what an exhibition of grace to this doubting and perhaps wayward disciple! And what an impressive illustration of the character which the apostle Paul ascribes to him, Heb. iv. 15, encouraging the belief, that although he does not now visibly exhibit himself to his doubting disciples as he did then, yet he is not unmindful of their weaknesses and frailties, nor remiss in the use of the means best suited to remove them. We pass on to the concluding sentence, which may be more literally expressed thus: Blessed are those not seeing (*οἱ μὴ ἰδοντες*) yet believing (*καὶ πιστευσαντες*.)

These words prove that belief in the resurrection of Jesus is an essential article of the Christian faith. On this ground the apostle Paul says, without qualification or reserve, if Christ be not risen, our faith in him is vain, and the preaching of the gospel is bearing false witness. 1 Cor. xv. 14, 15. Up to this moment, Thomas did not believe the fact of the Lord's resurrection, and his unbelief involved, as a necessary consequence, that his Lord and Master was a deceiver. But Thomas was one of those whom he had chosen, and could not therefore be given over to perdition. John vi. 70; xvii. 12. Yet we infer from these words, that through his unbelief, he failed of a degree of blessedness which would otherwise have been within his reach.

It is more important, however, to notice the great principle which our Lord here declares, the principle which in fact distinguishes the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, from that of our Lord's personal ministry. The effect of ocular or sensible evidence had been tried upon the whole Jewish people, and had failed of its purpose. John xii. 37—40. God had, as it were, just concluded a great experiment upon a large nation, for the information of all creatures, one object of which was to prove, that it was not in the nature of evidence, however miraculous, though subjected to the senses of men, to beget faith in them. A new agency was necessary, by which this principle could be imparted to fallen man as God's gift, by means more in harmony with the general order of the Divine government and that economy or order of things which was about to ensue.

The fact of the resurrection was to be established at that time for all ages, until the end of the world and the second coming of the Lord, mainly through the very testimony which Thomas had rejected; and it was because Thomas himself was one of those, through whose testimony the world would be required to believe, that the Lord appeared to him especially to remove his doubts. Yet if it was right for Thomas to reject the testimony of his fellow-disciples, whom he knew to be as credible and trustworthy as himself, it would be right for others afterwards to reject his testimony as well as theirs to the same fact, without the other evidence which he demanded. Consequently, to perpetuate the knowledge of the fact of the Lord's resurrection, recourse must be had to a continued miraculous intervention, from age to age, upon the demand of each individual; in other words, the age of miracles could never cease, or rather miracles would cease to be miracles, by becoming the established order of things, and consequently lose their effect. Such a demand in reality denies to God the right to establish the order of things, in which we live, without relinquishing his authority to command our belief upon such evidence, as we receive and act upon as sufficient on all other subjects. Yet a dispensation of miraculous evidence, as has been remarked, had been tried upon a whole nation, without any saving effect. Judging from observation and experience, and from what we know of the human heart, we have no reason to believe, that if the miraculous powers exercised by the apostles under their first commission, had been continued in the Church until the present day, they would, without the agency of the Holy Spirit, have been attended with any better effect upon the Gentiles, than they had upon the Jews during the personal ministry of our Lord. Luke xvi. 31.

These considerations show the futility of the argument of infidels, "that an infallible revelation can come to man through the senses alone—that it cannot even be recorded without losing its infallibility, or be transmitted even from a single generation without becoming at once a fallible record, and therefore fallible evidence." We may concede the proposition, and inquire what does it prove? Does it prove that God should have established a perpetual dispensation of miraculous evidence addressed to the senses of men, in order to authenticate his words? He made sufficient trial of such evidence, without producing any reforming or saving influence upon those who enjoyed the advantages of it. Does it prove that historical or moral evidence, such as men act upon in matters of private or social interest, cannot be made effectual by the Holy Spirit to accomplish the Divine purposes, by working faith in men,



and thereby uniting them to Christ? This inquiry needs no answer. Even philosophy teaches us that there are other and surer means of attaining the truth than the bodily senses. All men habitually act in their most important concerns upon the testimony of others, and that, too, without any spiritual agency or Divine influence to enlighten or incline them. And such evidence would be sufficient in the concerns of religion also, if the hearts of men were willing to receive it. Hence the office of the Holy Spirit is not to magnify evidence, nor to incline men to believe, without reasonable and sufficient grounds of belief; but to prepare or incline their hearts to receive Divine truth upon such evidence as effectually convinces them in their worldly concerns. See Matt. xvi. 1—4.

But why, it may be inquired, is it more blessed to believe upon the testimony of others than upon the evidence of our senses? As a general proposition, having respect to all kinds of truth, it cannot be affirmed, nor is it what the Saviour intended; but restricted to the particular fact of our Lord's resurrection it is not difficult to show the reason: For a heartfelt belief of this fact, by those not having ocular evidence of it, is wrought by the Holy Spirit, John vi. 29, 44, 45, whose office it is to do much more than influence the understanding. Were his work to end there, no saving effect would be produced. The Holy Spirit gives permanency and strength to the faith which he originates, and makes it the means of renewing the whole man. Even the apostles, and those other disciples who had ocular and sensible evidence of the Lord's resurrection, had as great need of the Spirit's renewing energies as others, who believed on other grounds. Herein then consists chiefly the blessedness of all those who believe, in which Thomas no doubt also shared, but in a smaller measure, perhaps, on account of his unreasonable and sinful doubts. It is the Holy Spirit's work to make the truth efficacious, James i. 18; John xvi. 8, the beginning of which, Philip. i. 6; Rom. viii. 28—30; 2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 14, makes their salvation sure.

JOHN XXI. 1. "After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias, and on this wise showed he himself."

The manifestations before spoken of were made in Judea, and in or near Jerusalem. That of which the Evangelist now speaks, occurred in Galilee. The time of it is not stated, but we may infer that the feast of the Passover was ended, and that the disciples generally had left Judea for their homes in Galilee, where the Lord had promised to meet them. Matt. xxviii. 7, 10; xxvi. 32; Mark xiv. 28.

It would be fruitless to inquire why he appointed Galilee as the place of gathering for all his disciples. Perhaps he did it because most of his disciples were from that province. Acts ii. 7. It is not improbable that the apostles mentioned in this chapter had gone thither in obedience to this command, or were on their way from Jerusalem to the mountain Jesus had appointed. Matt. xxviii. 16. The manner of the Lord's appearance on this occasion, and the circumstances of it, are related with much particularity, for some reason not explained. It does not fall within the scope of these notes to enter minutely into the contents of the chapter, the style of which is very peculiar. We observe in general, that John, who was present and an eye-witness of what he relates, is the only Evangelist who mentions this appearance. Thomas, the doubting disciple, was one of the party. Nathaniel, it is probable, is the apostle elsewhere called Bartholomew. Peter and James the brother of John, and two other disciples, whose names are not mentioned, made up the party. Some of them—probably all of them—were fishermen by calling, and to supply their necessities (and perhaps those of other disciples, while waiting for their Lord's appearance) they resorted to their former avocation. They entered the little vessel at evening, as we infer from the narrative, verses 3 and 4. At day-dawn the Lord appeared to them, standing on the shore, but was not recognized at first by any of the party, either by the eye or the ear, owing to the dimness of the light, or the distance, which was not less than a hundred yards, or eighteen rods, even if he stood at the water's edge. His inquiry—Have ye any meat? was understood by them to refer to fish, as is plain from the sixth verse.\*

The haul they made at his bidding, being very extraordinary, if not miraculous, was the means of his recognition. Naturally would it remind them of a similar occurrence near the beginning of our Lord's ministry, which had greatly astonished them. Luke v. 4—11. John was the first to know him. He tells his thought to Peter, perhaps in the hearing of the others, but that is not said. Immediately they made for the land, but the ardour of Peter did not allow him to wait the slow progress of the boat. Girding himself hastily with his fisher's coat, † he plunged into the water and swam ashore, leaving his fellow-disciples to draw in the net.

\* Προσφαγην from προσφαγειν signifies whatever is eaten with bread, especially fish. The word ὄψαριον (or ὄψωνιον) in verse ninth is translated fish. The word ὄψων from ἔψω coquo signifies παν το πυρι κατασκευασμενον εις ἰσθδην. See Beza in loco.

† The word is ἐπεδυτις, which signifies commonly an overcoat (το ἱματιον ἑτανα. Suidas Lex. See 1 Sam. xviii. 4 in LXX.) Some suppose that it means shirt

We are not told whether Peter approached the Lord before the others landed; or if he did, what words, if any, passed between them. When all had come to the land, they saw a fire of coals and a fish laid thereon. At the command of Jesus other fish were brought, and their morning meal prepared, consisting of bread and fish. But whence the bread? Was it miraculously produced? Although it is not expressly affirmed, we regard the whole preparation of the repast as miraculous, and designed to remind them of their first call to discipleship, Luke v. 4—7, and thus to add a proof of another kind confirmatory of the proofs already given of the identity of his person.

Until this time not a word is spoken to him by any of the apostles, if we except their answer to his inquiry from the shore, before they knew him. The majesty of his person (Erasmus suggests) had taken from them their usual confidence. We prefer, however, another explanation. Evidently they regarded him as they would have regarded an angel come from the invisible world. He had spoken of himself as being no longer with them. Luke xxiv. 44. A feeling of awe pervaded their minds, rendering them incapable of familiar intercourse with him. Hence, as we suppose, the reason, in part, of the manner in which he approached Cleopas and his companion. Hence, too, the disciples are represented almost always as silent when conscious of his presence.

It is remarkable, that neither Matthew nor Mark records a word as having been addressed to him by any of the disciples after his resurrection. Nor does Luke, in his Gospel, with the exception of the words of Cleopas. Mary Magdalen could tranquilly address him, while she supposed him to be a gardener; but after she knew him she could only exclaim, "Rabboni." Besides what Mary said, the Evangelist John records only the confession of Thomas, and the answers of Peter to the thrice repeated question, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" and his inquiry concerning John, hereafter to be noticed.

At the meal thus miraculously prepared, not a word was spoken by any of the apostles, though they received the food from the Lord's hand, verse 13. "None of them," says John, "presumed so much as to inquire of him, who he was, for they knew him," and regarded him a visitor from the heavenly worlds.

in this place, because in the next verse it is said, Peter was naked, which is not a sufficient reason. In his eagerness to get to the shore Peter would naturally be content to put on his outer garment only, even if he were accustomed to wear others underneath it, and they were at hand.

As if he had said: If it be my pleasure to continue John in my service on earth until I come again in my kingdom, that concerns thee not. Let it be enough for thee to know thy duty and thy end.

This answer gave occasion to a false report among the brethren, which John thought it necessary to correct. The seven who heard the words of Jesus, repeated them perhaps incorrectly to others, who understood them as a positive affirmation that the beloved disciple should not die; thus bringing his end into marked contrast with the predicted end of Peter. It was a misrepresentation of the Saviour, and calculated to cast discredit on his prophetic character at the death of John. For this reason, John is careful to record the very words of Jesus, as the best means of correcting the error; and this was probably one of the reasons for adding the last sixteen verses to this chapter.

JOHN XXI. 23. "Then went this saying abroad among the brethren that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him [Peter] he [John] shall not die, but [he said simply] If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

Dr. Adam Clarke says, that for nearly eighteen centuries the greatest men in the world have been puzzled with this passage. We doubt whether the difficulty has been felt so long; and, indeed, that there is any difficulty in the passage itself, when considered in its proper connections.\*

Had these brethren thought that the coming of which the Lord spoke, was not to occur until after the lapse of many centuries, it is not to be supposed they could have put such an interpretation upon his words. But assuming, as the early Christians did, that his advent in his kingdom was near, and that it might be expected at latest, within a period not greatly exceeding an ordinary lifetime, they might easily convert the hypothetical expression, "If I will that he tarry till I come," into an affirmation of the purpose. Had they believed, as Dr. Whitby and other modern divines have taught the Church, that a thousand or two thousand or three thousand years, at least, must intervene between the Lord's ascension into heaven and his final coming, they would have found it difficult to reconcile the assurance of so long a life with the favour, in other respects, shown to the beloved disciple. To live so long in the body, under infirmities ever increasing with years, and

\* Erasmus found no difficulty in explaining the passage or accounting for the mistake of the brethren. He paraphrased it thus: *Ortus est igitur ex hujus occasione sermonis, inter discipulos rumor, quod discipulus ille, Jesu dilectus, non esset moriturus violenta morte, sed permansurus in vita, donec rediret Dominus, &c., quod omnes tum brevi futurum opinabantur, &c.*

to be absent all the while from the Lord, would not have been esteemed by them such a token of love as the gracious Saviour would show to this highly-favoured disciple.

We observe here the same reserve that characterized all our Lord's replies concerning the times and seasons. The supposition or hypothesis which he makes, that such *might be his will*, for aught that Peter could know, implied that his advent might occur within the lifetime of some of that generation. The idea thus hypothetically admitted is utterly irreconcilable with the view now generally entertained of a thousand years to precede the second coming of Christ.

MATT. XXVIII. 16. "[Then] the eleven went away into Galilee into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them."

The time of this gathering is not mentioned. We know not whether it occurred before or after the Lord appeared to the seven disciples at the sea of Tiberias. If we may assume that it was on this occasion the Lord appeared to more than five hundred brethren at once, we may infer perhaps from 1 Cor. xv. 5, 6, that it occurred not long after his first appearance to the twelve. Matthew, it is true, mentions in this verse only the eleven disciples, but from verses 7th and 10th of this chapter, we learn that all the brethren and disciples were commanded to assemble there for this meeting. See Matt. xxvi. 32.\*

Nor does the Evangelist inform us of the manner of his appearance, whether his approach was (*more humano*) natural or miraculous, nor does he intimate that the Lord exhibited at that time, as he had done on former occasions, any proofs of the identity of his person. But whether or not,

MATT. XXVIII. 17. "When they [that is the eleven apostles and the other disciples] saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted."

The apostles and some others of the disciples had, as we know, seen him before. They not only knew him, but were so perfectly convinced of his Divine nature, that they rendered him their religious homage and worship. But some of those present (*οἱ δε̅ subaudi τῶν παροντων*) doubted whether he was really Jesus. These, it is probable, were disciples to whom he had not appeared before; and this fact, that some of them doubted, justi-

\* Προεζω in this verse seems to be used in contrast with διασκορπισθησεται in the preceding verse; as if the Lord had said: "I the Shepherd am about to be smitten here in Jerusalem, and you the sheep in consequence of it will be scattered abroad. Yet the enemy will fail of his object: for I shall rise from the dead, and after I am risen, scattered though you be, I will lead you forth, I will conduct you into Galilee and there gather you again." The words of our translation, "I will go before you," in the sense of preceding in a journey, are quite inconsistent with the manner of our Lord's being after his resurrection.

fies the inference that there was nothing extraordinary in the manner of his approach or appearance.\*

MATT. XXVIII. 18. "And Jesus came and [προσελθων, approaching or drawing near] spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and earth."

We may imagine the scene. A large company of disciples assembled at or near a mountain, waiting for the appearance of Jesus. As soon as they saw him they prostrated themselves (προσεκυνησαν) before him—that being the manner in which adoration was commonly rendered in the East. After that he comes nearer and addresses them in the words quoted, which we may regard as responsive to their worship: as if he had said, "I accept your worship; it is rightly rendered to me: for all power in heaven and in earth is committed unto me." He then gave them his commission:

MATT. XXVIII. 19. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost:—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always unto the end of the world."

Neither Luke nor John mentions the commission. Mark does, but without note of the time when or of the place where it was given; he adds, however, particulars which Matthew omits. We assume that both Evangelists had in view one and the same transaction: for we cannot suppose the Lord formally and solemnly commissioned the apostles for the same object twice. We infer, also, that the commission was given in Galilee, on this occasion; for the Evangelist records nothing else as having been said at that time. How long it was before his final ascension from the Mount of Olives, we have no means of determining. It seems probable, however, from the passage under consideration, and the context, that the act was performed in the presence of many disciples, who had come

\* Some critics, among whom is Beza, suppose the true reading is *ὡς δὲ ἐδιστασαν* instead of *οἱ δὲ ἐδιστασαν*, which would make the passage signify *nor did they doubt*. The change proposed is merely from *υ* into *ι*, which in the uncial letters used in the ancient MSS. would be easily done by dropping the little hook at the top of the *Υ* (ΟΙ ΟΥ.) But the most ancient MSS. support the common reading, and the proposed change rests entirely upon conjecture. Nor is it at all necessary to the consistency of the Evangelists or the credibility of the accounts they have left. Why should it be thought incredible that some of the many disciples who met on that occasion, to whom he then appeared for the first time, 1 Cor. xv. 6, had their doubts, as all the apostles had, before they had other proofs of the reality of the Lord's resurrection, besides his mere appearance. Luke xxiv. 39—41; John xx. 20, 24, 25. But their doubts were all ultimately removed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the miraculous powers conferred on the apostles. Had it not been so, Paul would not have referred to them, 1 Cor. xv. 6, as living witnesses of the fact.

together at that place by the command of the Lord, to be witnesses as well of his resurrection, as of this act. But we learn from Luke xxiv. 49 and Acts i. 4, that they were not to enter upon their work until they should be endued with power by the Holy Spirit. According to Mark the commission was thus expressed:

MARK XVI. 15, 16. "And he said unto them: Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: He that believeth not shall be damned."\*

The difference between the commission thus worded, and its form as given by Matthew, is merely verbal. The effect of preaching would be to make disciples, (*μαθητευειν*) and these disciples they were commanded to baptize upon the profession of their belief. Acts viii. 37. The scope of the commission is otherwise expressed in Matt. xxiv. 14: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations." But observe, it was not promised, for their encouragement, that it should everywhere be received with the obedience of faith. The promise was, "he that believeth shall be saved;" and even this promise was not made to the preachers, but to their disciples.

The actual result of their labours, under this commission, was the organization, by means of instruction and baptism, of visible societies, within which, as within the ancient Jewish Church, the Holy Spirit for the most part performed and still performs his work—sealing it with Divine power and efficacy. Thus the true Church is formed, of which the Lord himself is the architect, Matt. xvi. 17, 18, against which the gates of death shall not prevail.†

\* The last eight verses of Mark's Gospel are remarkably compendious. The 12th verse, we have seen, relates to the day of the Lord's resurrection. It is impossible to fix the time of the 13th and 14th verses with precision. The four verses following, it has been suggested, apply to the gathering of the apostles and brethren in Galilee. The 19th verse relates to the Lord's final ascension, and corresponds with Acts i. 9. The last verse is a summary of the Acts of the Apostles.

According to this distribution, we paraphrase the 15th verse thus:

"And he said unto them, [afterwards, when he met the eleven in Galilee with five hundred other brethren, 1 Cor. xv. 6.] Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," &c.

† The Lord represents himself as the builder of his own Church. "I will build my Church." The rock or foundation upon which he declares he will build it is the work of the Holy Spirit, revealing to men the mystery of his person, as "Christ the Son of the living God." The words (*επι ταυτη τη πετρη*) "upon *this rock*," do not refer to Peter, nor yet simply to Christ himself, but to the work of the Holy Spirit, who taught Peter the mystery of the person of the Christ, as God and man. Against the Church which is thus being formed, the gates of hell, (*αιως*) that is, of *death*, shall not prevail. Although the members of it have been passing from age to age into the invisible world,

This view of the commission does not detract from the dignity and importance of the Christian ministry. It was appointed for the gathering of the materials out of which the Lord selects such as he pleases, to be builded into his spiritual house, and it is honour enough that it is divinely appointed for any purpose. To change the figure: The dignity and service to which he called the apostles was to be fishers of men, Luke v. 10; Mark i. 17; Matt. iv. 19; and the result of their labours he set forth in the parable of the net cast into the sea. Matt. xiii. 47—49. See 1 Cor. iii. 12—15.

It results also from what has been said, that baptism is not a saving ordinance, but a seal of discipleship. In Mark xvi. 16, it is connected with belief. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"—language which is applicable only to those capable of exercising belief in the gospel, and by some it is restricted to such. The language of Matt. xxviii. 19, however, is broad enough to include others. The infants of Israel, at the exodus from Egypt, were baptized in the sea and the cloud, as well as the adults, 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, and the baptism of John was appointed for all the people, Luke iii. 21; and the teaching and baptism the Lord appointed were for all nations, and for all of every nation capable of receiving them. This command, the apostles would naturally interpret by these national examples, and if there were a doubt on the question, the analogy of circumcision would be decisive. Col. ii. 11.

One use of the baptism of infants is to insure their discipleship—if they should live to majority—by uniting them to the visible Church, thus bringing them within the sphere of the ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit. If removed by death, before moral agency, with the seal of the covenant upon them, we doubt not that they are elect according to the foreknowledge of God; renewed by the Holy Spirit, aggregated to the Church of the first born, and will be raised in glory at the second coming of the Lord.\* If they are spared to the age of maturity,

(ἀδης) yet upon the completion of their body, the gates of death shall yield them up, and they shall appear in visible glory with Christ at their head. 1 John iii. 2. Excommunication may cut off such members from the visible Church, as it did many at the Reformation from Popery, but it cannot affect their relations to the invisible Church, nor to Christ their head.

\* Those who deny the premillennial advent of Christ and the first, or separate and earlier resurrection of the Elect Church, find it impossible to explain the use of infant baptism in the case of those who die in infancy before they are capable of moral action; without maintaining that all unbaptized infants dying before actual sin are not saved: For if all such, whether baptized or unbaptized, are raised at the same time to the same glory, what benefit does baptism confer? And what profit was circumcision to infants in Israel, dying in infancy with the seal of the covenant upon them, if the uncircumcised male infants dying in infancy, whether Jew or Gentile, are indiscriminately to be



their baptism; without faith, will be of no avail. "For he that believeth not," being capable of belief, "shall be damned." Mark xvi. 16.

MARK XVI. 17, 18. "And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Assuming, as we do, that these words were uttered on the occasion of our Lord's appearance in Galilee, when some of the disciples, who had not seen him before, doubted, they furnished a sure means of convincing them. These disciples could not doubt that they saw a person, or that they heard him speak, nor had they any doubt of what he said. They doubted whether he who appeared and spoke to them, was Jesus, who had been crucified. The conferring of such powers upon the apostles—especially the gift of new tongues on the day of Pentecost, was a sure proof not only of his resurrection from the dead, but of his Divine nature. A proof of this kind was quite agreeable to our Lord's method, John xiv. 29; xiii. 19; xvi. 4, and such we suppose was one reason of making this prediction or promise. The Acts of the apostles show how it was fulfilled, Acts xvi. 16—18; viii. 7; xix. 15; ii. 4; xxviii. 3; v. 15, 16; iii. 7; nor can we reasonably question its effect. The events of the day of Pentecost were marvellous without example, and proved beyond cavil the living energies of him who predicted them.

Besides removing the doubts of those disciples, the miraculous endowments here promised and soon afterwards conferred, were of the utmost importance, as we shall hereafter see, in laying the foundations of the Church. They aroused and fixed the attention of Jews and Gentiles. Acts ii. 7, 8; viii. 6, 13; xiv. 11; xiii. 12; xxviii. 3—6. They attested the veracity and authority of the apostles. As they were exercised in the name of Jesus, in proof of his resurrection and ascension, they challenged belief in those facts and obedience to his commands, and thus contributed to the rapid formation of the visible Church. Acts ii. 41; iv. 4, 32; vi. 5, 7. But it was not in their nature to do more. Nor was their long continuance necessary. For churches being thus formed, and being made depositaries of the truth, became witnessing communities capable of attracting the observation of Jews and Gentiles, and of

raised at the same time to the same degree of glory? And what can be the meaning of God's declaration to Abraham: "The uncircumcised man-child shall be cut off from his people: He hath broken my covenant?" It cannot mean he shall die an early natural death: for the case we are considering is that of a *circumcised* man-child dying in infancy.

preaching the gospel for a witness to the people among whom they were planted.

The next appearance of the Lord was to James, as we learn from 1 Cor. xv. 7: but of this we know nothing more than the fact. The time, the place, the circumstances, are nowhere recorded. The motive of it was probably personal to that apostle. The same may be said of the Lord's appearance to Peter; and for that reason nothing more than the fact in either case is noted. The only other appearance of which we have a particular account, is mentioned in Acts i. 4—9, to which we now proceed.

The appearances already spoken of, had fully convinced the apostles of the reality of the resurrection of their Lord and Master. The proofs they had of it were many and infallible. Acts i. 3. They were as fully qualified as men could be, to bear testimony to the fact; and this final appearance was not necessary, nor was the especial design of it, to confirm them in the belief of what they already infallibly knew. But it was necessary that they should be made eye-witnesses of the Lord's ascension. Hitherto his departure from them at the close of each interview, had been as mysterious as his approach. Luke xxiv. 31.\* But now the apostles were assembled to witness his ascension; a fact which they were also to preach and testify to as eye-witnesses. Acts ii. 33, 34. We may add, by these means they were also prepared to apprehend more vividly the fulfilment of the promise the Lord made them the night before he suffered: "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." John xvi. 7; xv. 26. They could not have understood at the time the manner in which this promise would be fulfilled. John xiii. 36; xiv. 5; xvi. 28. The event taught them that it was through his death, resurrection, and ascension—three mysterious steps, if we may so say—the first two of which had been fully proved to them, and they were now to be made eye-witnesses of the third, which they would naturally—we may say inevitably—connect with the visible descent of the Holy Spirit, whose mission depended on the ascension of the Lord Jesus to the Father.

For these reasons, in addition to those already given, we do not regard the account of the ascension, in Acts i. 4—9, as only a more particular statement or narrative of the ascension mentioned in Luke xxiv. 51, but as a distinct account of a dif-

\* What Luke says of the Lord's ascension at Bethany, Luke xxiv. 51, he wrote by inspiration. He does not mean to assert in that place, that the apostles at that time saw him carried up into heaven; for they did not see whither he departed, until he left them at his last appearance.

ferent ascension introductory to the relation he was about to make of the descent of the Holy Spirit in the next chapter, and intended especially to show the manner in which the Lord fulfilled the promises just mentioned. John xiii. 33; xiv. 2, 3; xv. 26; xvi. 7, 28. His visible ascension, and the visible descent of the Holy Spirit, were a demonstration to their senses of the truth and fulfilment of his words. They answered the questions and doubts of Peter, John xiii. 36: "Whither goest thou?" "Why cannot I follow thee now?" in a manner they could not fail to comprehend.\*

Thus much premised, we come to the passage, the scope and general meaning of which may be learned from the following paraphrase, Acts i. 1: In my first book, Theophilus, I have related [in part] what Jesus did and taught [during his personal ministry] among the Jews, Rom. xv. 8, bringing that history down, verse 2, to [the close of the] day, on which he [arose from the dead and] ascended [to the Father], having [first] given his commands, through the Holy Ghost, to [the apostles he had chosen] [to be his witnesses], verse 3. To whom he also † appeared again from heaven at several times after he suffered, during [the lengthened period of] forty days; exhibiting to them many indubitable proofs [that he was the same Jesus whom they had seen crucified]. At these appearances he spoke to them concerning the kingdom of God [which they were anxiously expecting and waiting for], verse 4. At length, after the apostles had returned from Galilee, whither they went with other disciples, by his express command to see him, Matt. xxviii. 10, 16—20; having assembled them together [upon Mount Olivet, for the last time], he strictly commanded them (*μη χωριζεσθαι*), not to leave Jerusalem again [even tem-

\* This view proceeds upon the assumption that each of the treatises of Luke is complete in itself—the former ending with the day of the Lord's resurrection—the latter commencing with the day of the Lord's visible ascension, which he introduced with a brief retrospect of the forty days comprised in twenty-five words.

† The force of the particle *καί* in the third verse is to intimate, that besides the appearance on the day of his resurrection, he *also* showed himself from time to time to the apostles during forty days afterwards, for their more complete and perfect assurance of the fact, and for other gracious purposes. Indeed the whole passage shows plainly enough, that the Saviour did not constantly dwell bodily on the earth during that period, concealing himself for the most part, as some have supposed, in unfrequented places, nor keep up his intercourse with them, as he did before, according to the supposition of others; but that at each time he appeared to them from heaven, as he afterwards did to Paul, under such circumstances, and with such demonstrations, as proved beyond a doubt the reality of his resurrection, although he had not as yet given them visible evidence of his ascension. What article of faith requires us to believe, that the Lord did not ascend to heaven on the day of his resurrection, nor until the fortieth day after? See the Apostles' Creed.

porarily for any purpose whatever], but to wait [constantly in that city] for the fulfilment of the promise of the Father [by the visible descent of the Holy Spirit upon them], which [said he] ye heard of me [both before I suffered, John xv. 7, and afterwards when I first appeared to you, Luke xxiv. 49].

[To which he added these words of explanation, in order to teach them something of its exalted and glorious nature,] verse 5: John baptized [all the people, Luke iv. 20] with water, [without imparting any transforming or saving effect upon them, as the event showed,] but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Matt. iii. 2.]

[This allusion to John the Baptist, whose name, baptism, and ministry were associated in their minds, inseparably with the expected kingdom, excited their curiosity. They surmised that as John's baptism had respect to the kingdom of Messiah, so the baptism of the Holy Ghost (which he gave them to understand was the meaning of the promise of the Father, to which he had just referred,) also had respect to the same kingdom, and the functions they were immediately, upon receiving this baptism of the Spirit, to exercise therein: and being fully convinced that he was truly the promised Messiah, and had the power to establish his kingdom over Israel whenever he pleased, they put to him [directly] this question, verse 6: Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel? [and is it to qualify us for the parts we are to perform therein, that we are to receive this new baptism?] To which question [without disclaiming the power the apostles ascribed to him, or the purpose at some time to restore the kingdom to Israel] he replied thus:

Verse 7.—It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father hath, [not committed to the Son to reveal, Mark xiii. 32,] but on the contrary, hath purposely put in his own power, (yet whatever may be the Divine purpose in respect to this event) verse 8, ye shall receive power—the Holy Ghost coming upon you, [whereby] ye shall be qualified to become witnesses unto me [not only] in Jerusalem and in all Judea, [the limits of your former commission, Matt. x. 5, 6, but in] Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth.\*

[Having thus answered their question by denying the

\* As if he had said: the Divine purpose in respect to the time for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel will not prevent the fulfilment of the Father's promise to you. However remote or near that event may be, you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, in order to qualify you for the actual mission and service in which you are to be employed, and that, too, not many days hence.

information they asked for, verse 7, and having also removed a doubt, verse 8, which might have arisen in their minds, if he had merely answered their question, he closed his earthly intercourse with them in the body, and, verse 10, while they beheld he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.]

[But as he had now appeared to them at several times and departed from them, without a promise at any time to appear to them again, except to the women on the morning of his resurrection, Matt. xxviii. 10; and inasmuch as this appearance was especially designed to make them witnesses of his ascension, lest they should indulge the hope that he would continue still to appear to them visibly as before, he commanded two angels to appear at their side, as he left them, and explain the meaning of what they saw, who addressed them thus:] verse 11, Ye men of Galilee, why are ye gazing upward to heaven? [The sight astonishes you. You do not understand it. We are sent to tell you why you were made to behold it. It is both a proof and an example of what you are slow to comprehend.] This same Jesus [whom that cloud has now concealed from your view, having made you witnesses of his death and resurrection, now makes you witnesses of his ascension bodily into heaven. Remember how he said unto you, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world. Again I leave the world and go to the Father." John xvi. 28. Since his resurrection hitherto, he has appeared to you and disappeared at unawares; you know not how. Think not that he will thus appear unto you visibly again. His next appearance will be at the times of the restitution of all things, at the end of this age, when he] will so come [from heaven] in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven, verse 12. Then they returned into Jerusalem from the Mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath-day's journey.\*]

\* The leading object of this paraphrase is to ascertain, as far as possible from the circumstances and associations of the moment, the current of thought in the mind of the writer as well as in the minds of the Saviour and the apostles, and in this way to account for the transitions which otherwise seem to be abrupt. Why, for example, should those who had come together (*οἱ μὲν συναβόντες* verse 6,) ask this question concerning the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, unless it was suggested by the mention of John the Baptist, the advent or kingdom-preacher? Why should the Lord, after he had fully answered their question, add, verse 8, what the question did not call for, (the addition being little more than a repetition of what he had already said in verse 4,) unless it was to assure them that the fulfilment of the Father's promise was not dependent upon the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, as they seemed to suppose? And what connection had the words of the angels with the sight they explained, or with the apostles' views or expectations, unless it be that suggested in the paraphrase? That there is a consecutive chain of meaning from verse 4 to verse 11, we cannot doubt. It may not be that suggested, but if not, will the reader endeavour to discover it?

To this paraphrase we now add a few observations on particular passages.

ACTS I. 3. "Speaking [of the] things concerning the kingdom of God."

What the Lord taught his apostles on this subject has not been recorded. It is plain, however, from the question they put to him, verse 6, that they did not understand him to say anything inconsistent with the prophecies respecting the kingdom promised to Israel, or its restoration at that time. The kingdom of God, of which he spoke, they understood to be the kingdom which John the Baptist preached, the coming of which he had represented by various parables, Matt. xiii., all of which implied some delay in its coming. See notes on Matt. iii. 2, p. 210. We may infer also from Acts x.; xv. 7—17, that the apostles did not learn from him at that time that the Gentiles would be sharers therein, Matt. xxii. 1—9, although he had already assured them that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations. Luke xxiv. 47. Even the inspiration of the Holy Spirit received on the day of Pentecost did not extend to this mystery, because a special command was necessary, Acts x. 19, 20, to determine Peter to go to Cornelius. Indeed the kingdom of God, to a great extent, is still a mystery, and will remain so, more or less, until it shall be revealed at the appearing of Jesus Christ. 1 Tim. iv. 1; 1 Cor. ii. 9; Rev. x. 7; 1 John iii. 2; Dan. vii. 13, 14.

ACTS I. 4. "And being assembled together with them," &c. Rather say, "and having convened them."

This meeting was brought about by a special act of the Saviour's providence, as were all the others;\* and this consideration, if well founded, enables us to decide in favour of the common reading. The sense of (*συναλιζόμενος*) "dwelling or lodging with them" is not agreeable to the fact, as we have seen, and the sense of "eating together with them" seems to imply that the apostles were not yet fully convinced of the reality of his resurrection: for it was only as a proof of that fact that the Lord partook of food in their presence at all. It is plain, however, that after his appearance to Thomas, John xx. 26, the apostles, without exception, were perfectly convinced of this truth. Besides, the sense we have suggested, is most agreeable to the Divine nature and dignity of the Saviour,

\* See note on Matt. xxviii. 16. Indeed it is remarkable, that from their first call to the apostleship, until his final departure from them, he exercised a special care and control over them. Luke xxii. 35; Matt. x. 9, 30, compared with John xvii. 12; xviii. 8, 9.

and for that reason most probably, if not certainly, the sense of the inspired writer.

ACTS I. 5. "For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Or thus: John baptized [all the people] with water, [to prepare them for the kingdom, the advent of which he preached,] but I will baptize you with the Holy Ghost. Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8.

It appears to be a part of the Divine plan to introduce every new dispensation with a preparatory baptism of those who were or are to enjoy it. The dispensation of law was preceded by baptism in the cloud and sea. 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. See 1 Peter iii. 20, 21; 2 Peter ii. 5; iii. 6, 7. That baptism continued, without any other baptism of the whole people, until John was sent to preach a new dispensation which implied his authority to baptize. John i. 25. Hence our Lord uses the words "baptism of John" in a sense which includes his function of teaching and preaching the kingdom. Matt. xxi. 25. It was this association of the rite with the preaching of the impending advent of Messiah, and of both with the person of John as the appointed preacher, taken in connection with the contrast the Lord stated between John as a baptizer with water, and himself as the baptizer with the Holy Ghost, that suggested to the apostles the inquiry in the next verse.

John's ministry preceded but a little, the appearance of Messiah. In fact, Jesus appeared and began to preach, as soon as John's public ministry was ended. Matt. iv. 12.

It was, therefore, very natural for the apostles, without setting down anything to the account of Jewish prejudices, to suppose that their ministry, aided by the promised power, would, like John's, be brief, and issue immediately in the outward establishment of the kingdom they so much desired. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit by degrees corrected and enlarged their views, Acts iii. 19—21; xv. 13—17, by unfolding to them, as occasion required, more and more of the Divine purposes. But with the amount of knowledge they then had, the inquiry sprung from the habitual association in their minds of baptism with the kingdom: from their hopes of its near approach, founded upon the preaching of John, and the promised aid of Divine power.\*

\* As John's baptism had respect to the kingdom he preached to the Jews, so the baptism the apostles were to administer has respect to the kingdom they were to preach to all nations. As the purpose of John's ministry and baptism terminated with the rejection and death of Christ—that is with the withdrawal of the kingdom from the Jews as a nation, Matt. xxi. 43—so the purpose of the ministry and baptism committed to the apostles and their successors will terminate with the resurrection of the elect Church and the second coming of Christ in that same kingdom which the Jews rejected. Both baptisms had

Verses 4, 5. These verses, it may be presumed, comprise all the Saviour intended to say in the first instance to the apostles on this occasion. All he said afterwards, verses 7 and 8, was drawn out by their question; and would not have been said, it may be presumed, if that question had not been put. Hence, it may be inferred that the object of gathering them at this time was not to give them further instructions, nor yet to confirm them in their belief of the fact of his resurrection, of which they were already fully convinced, but to make them witnesses of his final ascension. Verses 4 and 5, it will be observed, are but a repetition of what he had said before, John xx. 19—23; Luke xxiv. 49, except that he more strictly enjoined them not to leave Jerusalem, lest being absent at the moment of the bestowment of the promised gift, they should fail of the blessing. It is not improbable that for the same reason they abode from that time together, as we are told they did in verses 13 and 14.

ACTS I. 6. "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him," &c.

The connection of this verse with the preceding is obscured by the translation. The meaning is, that the persons who had thus been brought together, that is, the apostles and perhaps some other disciples, hearing this reference to John and his baptism, and the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, *therefore* asked him, &c. Who composed the company is not quite clear. They are not designated apostles. The angels called them "men of Galilee," verse 11, and it is apparent from the 12th and 13th verses, that the eleven apostles were of the number: but it is not improbable that other disciples were present, especially those pious women, see verse 14, who were last at the cross and first at the sepulchre, on the morning of the Lord's resurrection. And if it was a part of the apostles' office to bear witness to the Lord's ascension, it is probable, if not quite certain, that Joseph called Barsabas, and Matthias were of the number, verses 21—26. We perceive no reason why others,

respect to the coming of one and the same kingdom, and both to an *elect* people, but not the same people. The subjects of John's baptism were that generation of Jews to whom he was sent, but the subjects of Christian baptism are professed believers of all nations. The water which John applied was but an emblem of the Holy Spirit. The element was continued, but it is still only an emblem of that same Divine energy which the Lord, as the architect of his Church, Matt. xvi. 18, keeps in his own power. The apostles and the ministry which, instrumentally, they established, apply the element to multitudes, as John did, while the Lord baptizes (with the Holy Spirit) those only whom the Father has given him. John xvii. 2, 9, 12, 20. John's baptism, like that of Moses, was an ineffectual rite. The event proved it. Such, also, is the baptism committed to the apostles and the Church when unattended with the Holy Spirit's renewing power. Yet it is a divinely appointed ordinance of inestimable value.



as well as the apostles, should not be permitted to witness this wonderful event. The angels might especially address the apostles as they did, although others, Galilean men and women, were present.

ACTS I. 6. "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the *kingdom to Israel?*"

It is not probable that the apostles had an enlarged conception of the kingdom about which they inquired. See notes on Luke xxiv. 25, 26. Yet they were not mistaken in assuming that a kingdom had been promised to their people. Isa. i. 26; Zech. ix. 9; Micah iv.; Amos ix. 11; Hos. iii. 4, 5. The idea of theocracy was familiar to them, but it was a theocracy distinct from and paramount to the government of their kings and earthly rulers. The blending or consolidation of the theocracy with the earthly throne and kingdom of David, at the accession of Messiah, was a mystery they did not understand. This is indeed still the great undeveloped mystery of the kingdom. The astonishing events they had witnessed had fully convinced them of a part of this great mystery, the union, namely, of the Divine with the human nature, in the person of their Master; but this did not explain to them the profound and far-reaching mystery of the throne and the kingdom of David, nor had they any proper conception of the means by which, or of the dignity and glory to which, it was his purpose to exalt them. It is probable, therefore, that their conceptions of it were influenced by, if not formed upon the most prosperous period in their national history. But their misconception of it, whatever it may have been, and their low views, are to be ascribed to ignorance, not to national prejudice. The glories of the kingdom as well as the times of it, are still unrevealed secrets, deeply hidden in the mind of God, which his providence only will disclose. 1 Tim. vi. 14—18. See the *Jewish Chronicle* for April, 1849, vol. iii. pp. 289, 291.

ACTS I. 7. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in his own power."

This clause is better rendered without the article. The meaning is, It is not for you to know any of the times or seasons connected in the Divine mind with the purposes of redemption; for these the Father hath hidden under his Almighty power.

The restoration of the kingdom to Israel is one of those purposes. With it are connected others of inconceivable magnitude and glory—the completion of the elect church, or the church of the first born, the body of Christ—their resurrection to glory—the second coming of Christ—the destruction of the man of sin—the binding of Satan—the removal of the curse,

and the restitution of all things contained in God's covenant with Abraham.

Bengel, *in loco*, remarks, that the emphasis is on *you*, as if others might know what they might not.\*

This may be true in a qualified sense: for the Lord had already given them, and through them the church, providential signs of his coming, to be watched for. Luke xxi. 25—36; Mark xiii. 24—37; Matt. xxiv. 29—37. But this question was definite. It called for precise information: Lord, wilt thou, *at this time*," &c. It is worthy of remark, that our Lord always refused to answer such inquiries. See Matt. xxiv. 3, 42; xxv. 13; Mark xiii. 4. 32, 33; Luke xii. 36—46; xxi. 7, 34. It is plain from the Epistles, that the inspiration of the apostles afterwards, did not extend to this subject. 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Thess. ii. 3—8; 2 Pet. iii. 10; Rev. iii. 3; xvi. 15.

ACTS I. 9. "And . . . while they beheld he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight."

The sacred writer describes according to the appearance. The angels he calls men, because they appeared in the form of men; and that which concealed the ascending Saviour from view, he calls a cloud, for such it appeared to be. We should err, however, if we conceived of it as a natural cloud of vapour, through which the Lord passed. At his transfiguration a cloud appeared, out of which a heavenly voice issued. Luke ix. 34, 35; Mark ix. 7; Matt. xvii. 5; 2 Pet. i. 17. See also, Exod. xiv. 19; xvi. 10; xxiv. 15, 16; xxxiv. 5; xl. 38; 1 Kings viii. 10; Isa. iv. 5, which we are accustomed to regard as supernatural, and so we regard this. The ascension was an act of Divine power, and why may not all its attendant circumstances be ascribed to the same cause?

ACTS I. 12. "Then returned they [from the place where they witnessed the ascension] unto Jerusalem [namely] from the Mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath-day's journey."

Upon the hypothesis that our Lord first ascended to heaven on the fortieth day after his resurrection, it is difficult to reconcile this verse with Luke xxiv. 50, 51. See notes on those verses. Some have imagined there were two places called Bethany; but if this were so, some of the Evangelists unquestionably would have mentioned the fact. See Matt. xxi. 17; xxvi. 6; Mark xi. 1, 11, 12; xiv. 3; Luke xix. 29; xxiv. 50;

\* Non dicit non est vestrum sed non vestrum est . . . Non dicit non est juris et officii vestri querere, sed ait non vestrum est nosse. Revelatio œconomiz divinæ habet suos gradus.

John xi. 1; xii. 1. Reland rejects the supposition. All the itineraries, according to that author, show but one Bethany, and that at the foot of the Mount of Olives, on the east. Others suppose that tradition only fixes the summit of the Mount as the place of ascension; but such a tradition naturally, not to say inevitably, would arise from this verse, and should therefore be regarded as the early and contemporaneous exposition of the text, and for that reason more likely to be according to the truth than any different one which modern criticism can suggest.\* The difficulty disappears, if we admit several ascensions—a supposition quite consonant with the Divine power and majesty of the Saviour. See notes on John xx. 17. And why should the sacred writer mention Mount Olivet at all, and especially the distance of a particular summit or part of it from the city, if he had it in his mind to signify that they returned from Bethany? This would be to go out of his way in order to make a geographical note not called for by his subject; and at the same time, an omission of the chief thing he intended to say. The language he employed in his Gospel, xxiv. 50, 52, would have expressed his meaning clearly and fully. It is true, if they returned from Bethany by the nearest way, they returned along that part of the Mount which was opposite to the city, and when they reached the summit they were a Sabbath-day's journey from the city. But this he does not say. He says simply they returned from the Mount of Olives, without mention of any other place, and from the necessity of the case, we may say, they returned from the place of ascension. Hence the inference seems necessary, that the place from which he finally ascended was that part of the Mount of Olives which was a Sabbath-day's journey, about 2,000 cubits, or one thousand yards from the city. No doubt would have arisen on this question were it not for Luke xxiv. 50, 51, which applies, as we think it has been shown, to a different ascension. It may be added, that Zechariah, in prophesying of the Lord's return, Acts i. 11, designates the Mount of Olives as the place where his feet shall stand, xiv. 4, and Ezekiel, xi. 23, denotes that mountain as the place upon which the glory of the Lord rested.†

\* Bernard Lamy resolves the difficulty in this way, which he considers easy and satisfactory: "Non in ipsa Bethania sed in via, qua Dominus se recipere solebat in Bethaniam, ascendit in cælum; scilicet, eduxerat discipulos foras extra Hierosolyma, quasi more suo vellet ire in Bethaniam. In itinere autem antequam huc perveniret assumptus est." But the words of Luke, xxiv. 50, are: He led them out (ἐξ εἰς Βεθάνην) as far as to Bethany, which do not admit such an interpretation.

† Josephus mentions the Mount of Olives in *Antiquities*, books vii. 8; ix. 11; xx. 6; *Jewish War* vi. 3. It is referred to under different designations in

ACTS I. 13, 14. "And when they were come in"—after they had come into the city—"they went up into [the] upper room—where abode Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."

From the place of the ascension, these persons returned immediately to the upper apartment the apostles had, probably, previously occupied. The definiteness of the language justifies the supposition that some particular places were in the mind of the writer. Setting out from Mount Olivet, they returned, by a short walk, immediately to the city, and entering it, they proceeded together to the upper apartment, in the occupation and under the control of the apostles. Upon entering it, they engaged in prayer, and continued to do so daily, in expectation of the fulfilment of the Father's promise. Other disciples also took part in these daily exercises; among whom were certain women, of whom only one is mentioned by name—Mary the mother of Jesus, and his nearest kinsmen.

Nothing compels us to believe that all these disciples dwelt together under the same roof, but only the apostles, who were probably influenced to do so by the *supposed* connection between the Saviour's command to keep within the walls of the city, and his promise to baptize them with the Holy Spirit. Nor need we suppose they did not leave the apartment, or visit the temple daily: for this would contradict Luke xxiv. 52. The command was merely not to depart from *the city*, ἀπο Ἱεροσολυμῶν μὴ χωριζέσθαι. It was enough that they should be found together in one place, and so they were daily at the appointed hours for prayer. May we not believe that at such a meeting the Holy Spirit descended upon them? Acts ii. 1; see iv. 31. But to whom did they address their prayers? The events of which they had been eye-witnesses, left no doubt in their minds of the Divine nature of their Master. They knew him to be omniscient, as well as all-powerful, and to him they prayed. This is apparent from verse 24, which contains the only notice

1 Kings xi. 7; Mark xiii. 3. The Jews sometimes called it the Mount of Unc-tion, and they have a tradition that the Shekina, see Buxtorf's *Chald. Rabb.* and *Talmud. Lex.* ad voc., dwelt three years and a half on that mountain to see whether the people would return to God—calling out to them, "Return to me, my sons, and I will return to you"—but as they remained impenitent the Shekina returned to his own place. The mountain has three summits: the northern is the highest, and is distant two *stadia* or furlongs from that opposite to the city. The southern summit is called the Mount of Offence. The intermediate is that of the Ascension. See Reland's *Palestine*.

we have of the prayers they offered during this short interval. Their faith in this essential fact, then, *preceded* their inspiration by the Holy Spirit, and this removes one of the chief arguments of those who would fitter down the confession of Thomas into a mere exclamation. John xx. 28.

It is a notable circumstance that Mary the mother of our Lord is not mentioned in the New Testament, after this place, and that the other female disciples, whose names so frequently occur in the Gospels, are here alluded to only in general terms, and not afterwards—a confirmatory proof of what is sufficiently apparent from other places, 1 Tim. ii. 12; 1 Cor. xi., that the active public ministry of the gospel was not committed unto them. This may well be allowed, without detracting in the least from their importance and eminent usefulness in the Church.

We have now reviewed all the passages respecting our Lord's appearances to his apostles and disciples after his resurrection. To them these appearances established the fact, beyond the possibility of doubt, and thus qualified them to be witnesses of it to the world. But would the world receive the fact on their assurance, whatever proofs they might give of their sincerity? Would it be reasonable to expect it? More than this: would it be consistent with the equity of the Divine government to demand belief of facts so wonderful, upon mere human testimony? Even the Lord himself appealed to his works in confirmation of his words. John v. 36; x. 25; xv. 24. Admitting the sincerity of the apostles, they were ignorant and unlearned men, and it would be much safer to believe they were deceived, than to receive upon their assurance as true, events so incredible. So the world would reason. Add to this: the matters to which the apostles were to testify concerned the religious faith of the people, of which they were tenacious beyond example. How could they who had rejected and put to death the Master, notwithstanding his miracles, be expected to receive, with the obedience of faith, the unconfirmed testimony of his unlettered servants? His death was public, and extremely ignominious. None but his disciples ever saw him after his resurrection. The popular belief was, he had not risen at all. The rulers and priests asserted that his disciples had stolen and concealed his dead body, to give support to imposture. See notes on Matt. xxviii. 13. Under such circumstances, their verbal testimony would be regarded as the testimony of disappointed men, and unworthy of belief even by the vulgar. Why, it would be inquired, if he really rose from the dead, did he not publicly appear, as he did before, in the temple and before the assemblies of the people, that all might see him and judge for themselves

of the reality of the fact? These and such questions suggest, as we suppose, some of the reasons of the events of the day of Pentecost, and of the extraordinary powers which were then conferred upon the apostles. Formally stated: The leading design of the gifts of the Holy Spirit at that time bestowed upon the apostles, appears to have been, (1.) To establish and confirm the truth of their testimony, as witnesses of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. (2.) To prove to the apostles themselves, as well as to others, that the Spirit of Truth, John xvi. 13, the Comforter, xvi. 7, had really come, in fulfilment of the Saviour's promise, and dwelt in them and acted by them.

No doubt these gifts were subservient to other uses, some of which have been already briefly alluded to. See note on Mark xvi. 17, 18. They excited and fixed the attention of all of every rank, nation, and religion. They enabled the apostles to control and authoritatively to govern their numerous converts, and organize them into churches, and appoint over them rulers and teachers. They also attested the truth and authority of their writings. But these are topics which do not come within the scope of these notes. Incidentally some of them may be noticed. The first two, however, belong to the order of proofs under consideration, and in discussing them it will be necessary to examine with particular attention the miracles the apostles wrought, and the arguments they founded thereon to prove the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus, and consequently his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to heaven, and his future coming in his kingdom.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### CHRIST'S GLORIFICATION.

The Day of Pentecost.—Peter's discourse.—Peter's argument.—The miracles that were wrought.—The elect church.—The miracle of healing.—The times of refreshing.—The different dispensations.—The restitution of all things.

ACTS II.—The glorification of the crucified body of the Lord Jesus was an event fraught with the profoundest instruction to angels, as well as to men. Eph. i. 20, 21; iii. 10; Col. i. 18; Heb. i. 6; 1 Pet. i. 12. It was his installation at the right hand of power. Acts ii. 33. The sending down of the Holy Spirit was dependent on this event, John vii. 39, which, as we conceive, occurred simultaneously with his glorification. Then he was completely and for ever enlarged from the restraints he subjected himself to, by his incarnation, and then it was he

resumed the glory he had with the Father before the world was. Col. ii. 6—11; John xvii. 5; Heb. v. 5. His body was then baptized with the baptism he had desired, Luke xii. 49, 50, and the members of his mystical body on earth—adopting the inspired imagery of the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 15; Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 27; Eph. i. 22, 23; iv. 12, 13; Col. i. 24; John xvii. 21—23—at the same moment shared, though in much smaller measure, in the Divine unction. Ps. cxxxiii. 2.

It was to his glorification then, as we suppose, the Lord referred, by the words in Luke xii. 50. As this interpretation of the passage is at variance with the common application of it, the reader may desire to know the reasons on which it is founded. It is also important to explain them, in order to cast a clearer light upon what may be called the great epoch in the world of redemption. The words are, “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and (πως συνεχομαι) how am I straitened till it be (τελεσθη) accomplished.” It is commonly supposed that our Lord referred by this expression exclusively to his sufferings on the cross, and there can be no doubt that they were at that moment vividly presented to his mind. They lay in the appointed way to the enlargement he desired, consequent upon the exaltation of his human person to glory and power, and the resumption of the glory he had laid aside. The word (τελεσθη) translated “accomplished,” is of cognate origin with the word τελειωω which occurs several times in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and is commonly rendered “made perfect.” ii. 10; v. 9; vii. 19—28; ix. 9; x. 1, 14; xi. 40; xii. 23. This word (τελειωω,) when applied to the Lord Jesus uniformly denotes his exaltation to glory. See *Schleusner's Lex. Nov. Test.* ad voc. τελειωω, and Stuart on Heb. ii. 10, and the other places cited. So here\*: this word (τελεσθη) being joined with (βαπτισμα) baptism, also denotes the glorification of his human person. Until it, that is his glorification, should be accomplished he could not, consistently with the Divine purpose, put

\* The joining of a word of the same origin, and so similar in signification, see *Scapula* ad voc. τελος, with the word baptism (βαπτισμα) is in itself an argument of some weight. If we add, that in Hebrews ii. 10; v. 8, 9, the word (τελειωω) understood in the sense of glorification, is used in connection with the appointed means through which (διεπαλημυκτων) his state of glorification was attained, the argument is considerably enforced: and finally, if we duly consider that there was a logical necessity for the interchange of the verbs arising from the nature of the different subjects of which they are predicated, and also the evident parallelism which exists between this passage and those last cited from the Epistle to the Hebrews, we shall find sufficient reasons to admit the interpretation suggested. We may add that the baptism of the believer, by the Holy Spirit, is the beginning of a work or process which ends in his glorification, and in this sense his baptism is not accomplished (perfected) until his glorification. See Rom. viii. 29, 30.

forth his almighty energies. See Matt. xxvi. 53, 54; Deut. xviii. 18; John v. 19—30; viii. 28; ix. 4; xii. 49; xiv. 10. He could not send down the Holy Spirit he had promised. John vii. 39; xvi. 7. Till then, he would retain the form of a servant, Philip. ii. 7, and consequently be straitened or confined to such acts of power and grace as had been appointed to him to perform in that subject condition.\*

This interpretation discloses the latent thought which connects this verse, Luke xii. 50, with the preceding (49th) verse, and the three following: "I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I—(desire I more)—if it be already kindled?" The language is highly figurative. It expresses intense desire, and what so desirable to him in his human character, as his glorification? Heb. xii. 2. Under the emblem of fire he alluded to the descent of the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost, which was then first kindled, and from that day forward was sent broad-cast into the earth. The strife between the powers of the Saviour, which he then began to put forth through the Holy Spirit, and the powers of darkness, was then commenced. Acts ii. 13, which was to result in the separation of the children of the kingdom from fleshly alliances, Matt. x. 34—39; Luke xii. 51—53, and prepare them as an elect people to receive God's king of Zion at his second coming.†

\* The word (*συνεχμαί*) *straitened*, is very energetic. This we perceive when we reflect who spoke it. It signifies to be shut up or kept in constraint, as in a narrow passage—to be bound, held fast, shackled. See notes on Luke xxiv. 38—40. The LXX. employ it in some places, to translate *אָסַר* (*atsar*, see *Trommius*.) It is worthy of remark also, that the Jews apply the word (*אָסַרְתָּ*) *atsereh*, in the sense of restraining or shutting up, to the seven weeks between the Passover and the Pentecost; probably because the joy of the harvest was at that time restrained. See *Brown's Antiquities of the Jews*, vol. i. p. 480. Also Numb. xvi. 48; Job xxix. 9; 1 Chron. xxi. 22; Heb. text and *Gussetius Com. Ling. Heb.* and *Schindler Lex. Pentaglot.* ad voc. for the use of this word. It is not improbable our Lord had respect to this *customary* use of the word in the Jewish Calendar, and the enlargement he should receive at the close of it, by the baptism of his body by the Holy Spirit.

† It may be supposed that Matt. xx. 22, 23, and Mark x. 39, are inconsistent with this interpretation, but on the contrary, if rightly explained, they confirm it. In these verses, the idea of deep affliction is expressed by the words, "drink of my cup;" an expression which allows, if it does not require, us to understand the phrase, "be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized," of glorification. The sense, as we conceive, is expressed by the following paraphrase: "Ye shall indeed drink of my cup" of sorrows, Matt. xxvi. 39; "and be baptized with my baptism," by which at first your souls shall be renewed and sanctified, and your bodies shall ultimately be glorified, and made like my own glorious body. Philip. iii. 21; 1 John iii. 2; Rom. viii. 29. A glory and a blessedness so great should satisfy you. "But to sit on my right hand and my left," enjoying the first places in my king-



The common belief is that the Lord was glorified immediately on his ascension, and it is founded perhaps upon the supposed incongruity, or unfitness, of his appearing in heaven in his unglorified human form. Hence, perhaps, one reason for postponing his first ascension till the fortieth day after his resurrection. We have, however, endeavoured to show that the Lord ascended on the morning of his resurrection, and afterwards repeatedly during this period. See notes on John xx. 17; Luke xxiv. 50, 51; and Horsley, *Sermons on the Resurrection*. And why should it be thought incredible that the man Christ Jesus should thus appear in the presence of the Father, as the first Adam might have done, had he continued sinless? Can we be sure that there was no purpose in the plan of redemption which he was required to accomplish within the veil, that is, in the upper sanctuary, before his glorification? Why was not the Holy Spirit given immediately upon his last (visible) ascension? Was this gift bestowed in answer to his intercession after his ascension, first upon himself, as the head and first-born of the new creation, without measure—in all the fulness of the Divine power; and at the same time in such measure as needful upon his members? See Heb. vii. 25. We can neither affirm nor deny. These things are not revealed.\*

In the absence, then, of any more explicit declaration of Scripture, the foregoing observations render it at least probable that the glorification of the Lord Jesus was the great event of

dom, "is not mine to give except to those for whom it has been prepared of my Father."

The common interpretation of this passage makes the Saviour's answer tautological. For the idea of suffering is *twice* expressed, thereby divesting it of any promise of good whatever. The interpretation suggested finds in it an exceedingly great and glorious promise, in which *all* his faithful apostles had an equal share. Besides, neither James nor John suffered death by crucifixion. James was put to death by the sword. Acts xii. 2. John died, it is supposed, a natural death, at a very advanced age, after having suffered severe persecutions. We may regard these events as the fulfilment of the prediction that they should "drink of his cup." The Saviour certainly did not intend to say that they should suffer death on the cross. Again, how consistent the interpretation above suggested is with the gracious character of the Saviour. He assured those ignorant and ambitious, though loving and beloved disciples, of glory and happiness inconceivably great, which they should enjoy in common with their fellow-disciples, yet not the pre-eminence in his kingdom—the thing which they asked. See Matt. xviii. 2, 3; Luke xxii. 24—30; John xiii. 13—17. The next verse, Matt. xx. 24; Mark x. 41, shows how little the other ten entered into the spirit of the Lord's answer.

\* It is worthy of observation that our Lord was transfigured on the holy mount *while he was in the act of prayer*, Luke ix. 29; and in his final intercession he prayed to the Father for glorification. John xvii. 5. See Luke iii. 21. The glorification of his manhood, and of his elect people, constituting together one body, were alike the purchase of his death and intercession.

the day of Pentecost, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the apostles was an outward manifestation of greater things then done in heaven. By considering these events as simultaneous, we enter more fully into the doctrine of the *oneness* of Christ, (the head) with his members (his body) and are enabled to conceive more adequately of the manner and glory of its origin. These observations premised, we proceed to

ACTS II. 1. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

The feast of Pentecost (τῆς πεντηχοστής) occurred on the fiftieth day after the Passover. The Jews observed it in commemoration of the giving of the law, on the fiftieth day after the exodus of Israel from Egypt, when that people put themselves under the leadership of Moses, and the patriarchal economy, as to them, ceased. They call it also the feast of weeks, because it fell on the last day of the seventh week after the day of the Passover. They call it also the feast of first fruits, because on that day they offered to God the first fruits of the wheat harvest. As this feast was instituted immediately after the giving of the law, it has always been regarded as a public attestation of that great event. Exod. xxxiv. 22; Levit. xxiii. 15, 16. We observe, also, that as the patriarchal dispensation ceased fifty days before Israel came into new covenant relations with Jehovah at the foot of Mount Sinai, so the Levitical economy ceased fifty days before the economy of the Spirit was inaugurated. The meaning of these short pauses in the march of the Divine administrations, the Scriptures do not explain. We doubt not that both are typical in their nature, the former of the latter, and the latter of something yet future; although, by many interpreters, the latter is regarded merely as the period allotted for proving to the apostles and disciples the reality of the Lord's resurrection. Besides, this view of it does not extend to the whole of this period, but leaves a portion of it—the interval between the Lord's visible ascension and the day of Pentecost—unexplained.

How many of the disciples were gathered together, and at what place within the city, we are not informed. Beza inclines to follow the reading of two ancient MSS., which limits the number to the apostles, who alone, at the first outpouring, received the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, and to whom it had been especially promised. John xvi. 7—13. The place, it is probable, was (not the temple, else probably it would have been mentioned, but) some private dwelling, where they had been accustomed to assemble.

ACTS II. 2, 3, 4. "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house

where they were sitting: and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

This was the outward visible fulfilment of the Saviour's promise at the last interview with the Twelve before he suffered. See notes on Mark xvi. 17, 18. As before suggested, it was the effect of an act performed in the Upper Sanctuary, within the veil, far more glorious in heaven than on earth—a greater wonder to the heavenly hosts than to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. These demonstrations of the Divine power and presence could not fail to remove every doubt, if any remained, upon the minds of those disciples, who either received or witnessed the bestowment of this gift. They were designed, also, as a sign to others, and had the effect of arresting and fixing their attention, as we learn from the following verses. See 1 Cor. xiv. 22. The power to speak in other tongues, never learned or heard, suddenly imparted to illiterate men, was a great miracle, altogether new in its kind, and utterly inexplicable, except by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, verse 4.

Upon the apostles themselves, the first effect of the Spirit was no doubt regenerative. Luke xxii. 32; Matt. xviii. 3. Hitherto the Saviour had kept them by his special providence and care. John xvii. 12; xviii. 8, 9; Luke xxii. 35. Now he handed them over, so to speak, to the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, John xvi. 13, who commenced his work by renewing their souls, and transforming them into eminently holy, although not perfect men. He inspired them with new courage, enlightened their minds and enlarged their views, by removing the veil which hitherto had bounded their mental vision. A suffering Messiah was no longer a stumbling-block, but the only Messiah who could fulfil the predictions of the prophets. These effects we shall see exemplified as we proceed. But before we leave this passage, we should add that this first outpouring of the Holy Spirit was the fulfilment, in part, of the promise recorded in Mark xvi. 17, 18. If we compare this passage with John xiv. 16, and 1 Cor. xii. 4—11, we learn that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers would be made manifest in two ways, (1) by his converting power, and (2) by miraculous gifts, or powers; such as those of speaking new tongues, healing the sick, casting out demons, and other diversities of gifts, or of operations of the same gift. All these operations, the regenerative as much as the rest, are in truth equally miraculous, being the effect of Divine power exerted according to the Divine will, in a manner removed from human power and scrutiny. Yet, there is this difference between

them: in his converting power, the Holy Spirit was promised to abide in the Church *for ever*; that is, until the last born of God's elect shall be born again, and the Lord himself shall return to gather the whole body unto himself. But the outwardly manifested miraculous endowments of the Spirit were designed especially to qualify the apostles and their fellow-labourers for laying the foundations of the Church, and rapidly extending it throughout the world. These, as before remarked, see notes on Mark xvi. 17, 18, were not designed, as some have supposed, to be perpetual in the Church; and the withdrawal or cessation of those powers is not an evidence of the want of faith in those who are truly Christ's, but a part of the plan of the dispensation under which we live. See notes on John xx. 29.

The effect which the visible descent of the Spirit produced on the devout Jews at Jerusalem, is narrated in verses 7—12. The varieties of people, of their origin, and of the languages they spoke, give us a better idea of the confluence of strangers at that city, especially at the season of festivals, than we can obtain from any other passage. These persons, being Jews by descent or proselytes, but foreigners by birth, could appreciate the greatness of the sign, while others, probably natives of Judea, not understanding the languages spoken, regarded them as jargon, and the effect of drunkenness, verse 13.

ACTS II. 14—36. But Peter standing up with the eleven, repelled the calumny. He declared that this wonderful display was the outpouring of the Spirit predicted by the prophet Joel, chap. ii. 28—32, whom he quoted at length, and then proceeded to apply it as a proof of the Divine mission of Jesus of Nazareth, and of his resurrection from the dead, and, verse 33, exaltation to glory. He asserted that it was his act: "HE hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." In the course of his address he quotes Ps. xvi. 8, in proof of the resurrection of Christ, to which he adds the personal testimony of the apostles, who had received this wonderful gift of speaking foreign tongues. Such is the summary of the apostle's argument. We add a few observations upon some of the particulars.

(1.) He uses the event he was speaking of, as a proof of the resurrection. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses," verse 32, and he confirms the testimony by this obvious consideration; that the wonderful gift they had thus suddenly received, could be bestowed only by God, leaving it to be inferred by his hearers, that God would not bestow it to confirm their testimony if it were false. The argument is not only logical but conclusive. It is impossible that God should sanction or attest a falsehood by a miraculous display of his power, such as they witnessed. It will be instructive to notice

particularly the manner in which he confirms the personal testimony of the apostles by the Scriptures, verses 25—31. “For David speaking concerning him (Jesus of Nazareth) said, I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice and my tongue was glad. Moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope, because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell”—leave me in the grave (or *ἀδης*, the invisible world)—“neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life (John xiv. 6): thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.” This quotation from Ps. xvi. 8—11, the apostle avers was spoken of the resurrection of Christ—that he, viz. his human person, should not be left in (hades) the grave—that is, his *body* should not be left in the *grave*, nor his *soul* and spirit in the *world of spirits*—and that his body should not be permitted to see corruption. This sense, however, does not clearly appear from the passage itself, nor have we reason to suppose it was so understood by the learned of the nation. To deduce it from the passage, the apostle collates with it Ps. cxxxii. 11, and Ps. cx. 1, and proceeds to argue thus from the facts of the case. ‘David has long been dead and buried. His sepulchre remains among us until this day. His body has seen corruption. Therefore, although these words of David were apparently spoken of himself, that is not their meaning: for in that sense they are not true. Yet David was a prophet, and he spoke these words by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and we must therefore understand them as spoken of another.’

But of whom? To settle this question the apostle turns his hearers to Ps. cxxxii. 11, and then proceeds: David remembered God’s promise to him—confirmed by oath—“that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne.” This promise, then, was to be fulfilled in Christ; and, the Holy Ghost foreseeing that Christ would be rejected and put to death by his people, it included not merely the birth of Christ from one of David’s descent, but his resurrection from the dead. And to him these words do apply; for he was not left in the grave, nor did his body see corruption, but God raised him up from the dead on the third day after he had suffered by your hands, and we, his apostles, are eye-witnesses of that fact which we now declare to you. And not only hath God raised him from the dead, but he has exalted him according to another Psalm (cx. 1,) in which David says, “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool.” This Psalm also plainly is not applicable to David, Matt. xxii. 42—45: for David has not

ascended into heaven, but Jesus of Nazareth has ascended, of which also we were eye-witnesses; and having ascended he received of God the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, which he promised before his ascension to send upon us, which promise he has this day fulfilled, as you now see and hear, verse 36. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know for a certainty, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye lately rejected and crucified as a malefactor, both Lord and Christ.

The grounds of the argument then are these. The visible outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the miraculous powers he had conferred, were predicted by the prophet Joel, and they were a proof of the ascension of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had wickedly put to death. This prophet, therefore, had respect in this prophecy to the ascension of Christ. His ascension implied his resurrection from the dead, and this fact had been foretold by David; and these facts they, the apostles, who had received these wonderful powers, were eye-witnesses of: so that both these prophecies were confirmed—the first by what they saw and heard, and the second by the positive testimony of the apostles, whose testimony was also confirmed by the miraculous power of being able to speak *perfectly* many different languages they had never learned, as though they were their vernacular tongue. The greatness of this miracle will be best appreciated by those who have attempted to acquire the ability to speak a single foreign language with propriety and fluency—a task which is seldom accomplished after attaining the age of maturity, even by the most gifted.

The argument, as a whole, is perfectly conclusive; yet it must be confessed, that without the explanation of the apostles, and their testimony as witnesses to the facts he alleged, we should not be able to find in these passages a prediction of the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. The same may be said of Ps. ii. 7, cited by the apostle Paul for the same purpose, Acts xiii. 33; see Heb. i. 5: "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." And these, it may be presumed, are among the clearest prophecies relating to the subject. The obscurity was designed, lest too luminous a disclosure of the foreseen rejection of Christ by the nation, and of God's intended proceedings thereon, should interfere with the freedom of the Jews to receive their Messiah and enjoy the blessings of the kingdom he preached. Suppose for a moment that the rejection, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and the second coming of Christ, or either of them, had been clearly foretold in the Old Testament—the reader will perceive the influence it would have had on that people during our Lord's personal ministry. Had it been a part of the national faith, that, by the determinate

counsel and foreknowledge of God, they were to reject their Messiah, and wickedly put him to death, the people might have said, "It is in vain to preach the kingdom to us, or expect us to receive either the kingdom or the king." Or if not this, the unbelief of the nation would in some way have perverted the knowledge of these events into a stone of stumbling and an additional occasion of ruin. But the purpose of God required that the nation should be free in their action—free to receive, and free to reject: because they were to be held responsible for their conduct. This is a sufficient reason why the greatest of their national sins and the consequences of it should not be explicitly foretold.

Before we leave this passage we should remark the great change wrought in the mind of this apostle by the Holy Spirit. A large volume of Divine knowledge in the mystery of redemption had been, as it were in a moment, poured into his soul. He had become a new man in knowledge. To him it was another sensible fulfilment of his Saviour's promise. John xiv. 26; xvi. 13; see 1 John ii. 24—27. During the personal ministry of the Lord he was scandalized at the prediction of his approaching sufferings. Matt. xvi. 22. He could not imagine what the rising of the Son of Man from the dead could mean. Mark ix. 10. On the morning of the resurrection he understood not the Scripture that he must rise from the dead, as he now explained it; see notes on John xx. 9; nor had he any conception of the Lord's ascension. John xiii. 36. But now, these deep and far-reaching mysteries—obscurely taught in the Old Testament, as we have seen—were opened. He understood the Divine purposes that Christ must suffer, Acts ii. 23; Luke xxiv. 26; Acts xxvi. 23; and why it was impossible he should be holden of death. He understood the prophecies in a sense he never perceived before, and the purposes of the Lord's ascension, and the designed use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. So great a change, suddenly wrought in the mind of an unlearned and ignorant man, was a demonstrative proof of the presence of the Divine power, and of the truth of his testimony to the facts he preached. The character of this apostle as delineated in the Gospels, and in the first fifteen chapters of the Acts, presents in many respects very striking contrasts.

ACTS II. 37—42. The effect of this first sermon of the new dispensation is described in these verses. By some it is supposed that the honour conferred upon Peter by choosing him to preach it, and afterwards first to make known the gospel to Gentiles, Acts xv. 7, was the fulfilment of the Saviour's promise to give him the keys of the kingdom of the heavens.

Matt. xvi. 19. It is not improbable that this honour was included in that promise, but the full import of it, as those in Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30, we apprehend will not be exhausted until the kingdom of God shall come. Matt. vi. 10.

ACTS II. 43. "And great fear came upon every soul, and wonders and signs were done by the apostles."

The only miracles of the day of Pentecost, so far as we know, were the visible descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, and the discourses they held in new tongues; for we infer from verses 7—11, the other apostles, as well as Peter, proclaimed the wonderful works of God, although their discourses are not recorded. The reason may be that the matter of each was similar, while the language in which it was clothed was various. Peter, although he may have spoken in other tongues, pronounced this discourse in the vernacular of the country, as he addressed especially the men of Judea and dwellers of Jerusalem, verse 14. The wonders and signs spoken of in the verse we are now considering, were probably done by the apostles after the day of Pentecost, but how long after we have no means of determining. Nor are we informed what the miracles were, nor by which of the apostles they were performed. There can be no doubt, however, they were wrought in proof of the resurrection, Acts iv. 33, and ascension of the Lord Jesus. We have seen that such was the use the apostle Peter made of the visible descent of the Holy Spirit and the miraculous powers he imparted to the apostles. The great miracle of the present dispensation, or more accurately, of that brief interval between the Passover and the Pentecost, was the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus, and it was chiefly to establish and confirm the testimony of the apostles to these great facts, that miraculous powers were conferred upon them. To the same conclusion, the argument founded upon the miracle recorded in the next chapter is directed, Acts iii. 15, 16; iv. 10; but to this subject we shall return hereafter.

The effect of these wonders and signs upon the people at large, whatever they may have been, was impressive and conciliatory, while the chief priests and rulers regarded them with indignation, Acts v. 17, and as intended to bring upon them guilt in shedding the blood of Jesus. Acts v. 28. They seemed the revival of those wonderful powers which that crucified man had lately exercised in the face of the whole people. How futile the falsehood they invented and put off upon the people by the connivance of the guard they set at the sepulchre! See notes on Matt. xxviii. 11—15. The apostle does not even allude to it as worthy of notice. Thus, the elements of strife



and persecution were prepared, which very soon subjected the apostles to new trials.

ACTS II. 47. "And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."

The word (*ἐκκλησία*) *church* occurs in the Gospels only twice, and both times in a private conversation which our Lord held with his disciples near Cæsarea Philippi. Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 17. The word occurs many times in the Greek version of the LXX, see 1 Sam. xix. 20; Deut. xviii. 16; xxiii. 1, 2, 3—8; xxxi. 30; see *Trommii Concord.*, and usually signifies assembly or congregation. In the same general sense, it occurs in Acts xix. 39. Our Lord, however, adopted this word in a sense peculiar to his own purposes, in contradistinction to the popular sense and usage of the Jewish people. The Hebrew commonwealth itself was (an *ἐκκλησία*) a church in contradistinction to other nations. But it was an ecclesia or church which the Saviour foresaw would reject him, and which therefore he would reject for another to be formed out of it and all other nations, by the power of the Holy Spirit, which he was about to purchase by his death. Hence, in reading the passage in which the word first occurs, Matt. xvi. 18, we should place some emphasis on the pronoun *my*; as if he had said, "Though this people know me not (see verses 13, 14,) and therefore will reject me, yet by the teachings of the Holy Spirit, who has taught thee, Simon, the mystery of my person (verse 17,) I will build *my* church, (or I will build a church for myself in the place of this people,) and although I must be put to death, (John xii. 32,) and my people—members of my church—shall die; yet death shall not prevail against them. For I will rise from the dead, and I will raise up my elect also, and gather them to myself as soon as their number shall be completed." See notes on Matt. xvi. 18, and on Luke xviii. 7.

In this expression, then, the Lord referred to the *true* Church—that, *namely*, which is the product of his own Divine power, which he will gather out of all people of all ages, and as the master-builder erect and glorify.

The Church thus conceived of is destined to be the glory of the New Creation. Its members will constitute, as the Scriptures give us reason to believe, the most exalted rank of God's creatures. They will stand nearest to his throne; share in the glory of the Saviour himself; and be united together, and to him; and through him, to the Father, by bonds which can never exist between God and any other order of creatures. This is the Elect Church for which the Saviour interceded—"that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they may be one in us . . . I in them, and thou in me, that

they may be perfect in one." John xvii. 21, 23, and see note. The meaning of these words is incomprehensible: eternal ages only will fully unfold it. For this Church the Lord has gone to prepare a place. John xiv. 2.\* This Church he will receive to himself at his second coming. John xiv. 3; 1 Thess. iv. 14, 17. It is only for the completion of this Church, he delays his coming. See notes on Luke xviii. 7. Every member of it will then be gifted with a body of glory like his own. Philip. iii. 21; 1 John iii. 2; Rom. viii. 29, 30; 1 Cor. xv. 42, 44. It will be their happiness to be for ever with the Lord, wherever he may be, and to behold his glory. John xvii. 24. Every member of it will be angelic in his nature, Luke xx. 36, yet exalted above the angels, Heb. i. 4; Rom. viii. 29, being made co-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17, and sharers of his glory and his throne. John xvii. 22; Rev. iii. 21.

The inheritance of this Church is not the millennium, nor even the earth itself, but all things. 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23; Rom. viii. 38, 39. It is a low view of the subject which limits the presence and employments of this glorious body of redeemed ones to the earth.† They shall indeed reign on earth, Rev.

\* The Saviour does not say, "I go to prepare a mansion (*μονη*) for you," but a place (*τοπος*), intending, perhaps, to intimate thereby, that their mode of being and employments will be different from those orders of creatures which God has localized in worlds adapted to the particular constitution he has given them. "In my Father's house (*οικια*) dwelling-place (alluding to the omnipotence and omnipresence of God and the infinitude of his kingdom, see Heb. iii. 4; see *Camerarius* and *Theophylact in loco*) are many mansions, (*μοναι*, i. e. places prepared as residences or dwelling-places for various orders of intelligent creatures.) If it were not so, (if this were the only world God had made for creatures to dwell in,) I would have told you. I am now going away to prepare (*τοιμα*) a place for you;" a place for your concourse and departure in the service in which you will be employed, as well as of abiding. Such may be one of the reasons for changing the word *μονη* for *τοπος*.

† Many persons who concur in the belief that the second advent of the Lord will be pre-millennial, nevertheless entertain different expectations of the state of the world during the millennium. Hence the term millennialism has come to denote widely different and even discordant opinions. Some things touching the condition of the earth during the millennium are clear, while others are left in obscurity. For example, we are expressly taught that Satan will be bound and cast out of the earth. Rev. xx. 1—7. The earth will be delivered, in some large measure at least, from the bondage of the curse; for this deliverance is expressly connected by the apostle Paul with the manifestation of the sons of God, that is, with the resurrection and glorification of the Elect Church. Rom. viii. 19—23. Holiness will everywhere prevail. Mal. i. 11. Israel according to the flesh will be restored to the land of the covenant, and permanently established therein and made eminently a holy people. The theocracy will be re-established over them. The race of man will propagate itself as in preceding dispensations. Isa. lxxv. 17—25. But that we can adequately conceive of this new order of things, and their adaptation to each other, which God has established in some other world into which sin has not entered. It will be a new earth. 2 Pet. iii. 13. Whatever it may be, however,

v. 10; Matt. xix. 28; but they shall also reign with Christ for ever and ever, and wherever he reigns. 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. xxii. 5; xx. 4, 6. The vast realms of the Father's house—the universal creation—will be open to them, see notes on Matt. xxviii. 9, 10, and notes on John xx. 17; and it will be their happiness and their glory to serve him, wherever and in whatever he commands. Rev. vii. 15; xxii. 3.

In Matt. xviii. 17, however, our Lord evidently uses the word (ἐκκλησία) *church* to designate the *visible* Church on earth: for he there lays down a rule of discipline which is impracticable in any other sense. "Moreover, if thy brother trespass against thee," &c., &c., "*tell it to the Church*, and if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican—regard him as you do those persons, whether Jews or Gentiles, who have never professed faith in me, or united themselves to your community."

it is not the inheritance or the hope of the Elect Church. Their inheritance is much more exalted, and they will enter upon it at the coming of the Lord. This consideration invests the question of the premillennial advent with intense interest. It is the great *practical point* of the whole subject with which it is usually connected. Upon this question accordingly, the Scriptures are so clear, that they leave no reasonable ground for doubt or hesitation. They announce the coming of the Lord as an event *constantly* to be watched for, *at all times*; as the last article of the last chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith most explicitly declares. With this event, as has been already said, are connected the resurrection of the righteous dead, and their exaltation and glorification, together with the living elect. 1 Thess. iv. 14—17. Consequently it is the epoch around which the hopes and expectations of all the members of the mystical body of Christ gather. It will be the epoch of their complete and eternal *enlargement* from the bondage brought upon them by sin, and of their conformity to their glorious Head. If the souls of believers, during their separate state, are conscious, and capable of exercising their intellectual and moral faculties—a question upon which there is not the slightest ground for doubt, Philip. i. 21—24; 2 Cor. v. 8—it must be the great object of their expectation and desire. For what can they desire so much, as to be clothed upon with the bodies of glory promised them? However glorious and happy they are now, yet a greater glory and a greater capacity for happiness is in store for them. Why the possible *nearness* of the consummation of hopes so transcendently glorious, should be *repulsive* to any who really love the Saviour, and love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 8—or why any of the Lord's people *should feel relieved or comforted* by the assurance that their glorious Head will certainly delay his coming a thousand years, thereby postponing also the promised restitution of all things, Acts iii. 21, for Israel and the nations of the earth—are questions hard to explain. See Luke xxi. 28; John xiii. 37; 2 Cor. v. 4; Rev. xxii. 20; Matt. xxiv. 48. This hope takes nothing from the rest of the world. The millennium of blessedness still remains to men in the flesh. It will not increase the happiness of the future generations of men who shall enjoy that state, to know that the consummation of the happiness of the saints of former ages is still deferred. On the contrary, it will increase it to be assured that glorified beings in their nature, have been commissioned, in the place of angels, for active service among them. If the Scriptures were obscure or doubtful upon this question, one would suppose that every true believer would feel a strong bias to resolve them, if possible, in favour of the earlier consummation of his hopes.

Accordingly we find this word used in both senses in the Acts and Epistles of the apostles and the book of Revelation. In the first sense it is employed in Eph. i. 22; iii. 10; v. 25, 27, 28, 32; Col. i. 18, 24; Heb. xii. 23; see also 1 Pet. i. 1 and 2. In the latter or lower sense, in Acts v. 11; viii. 1; xi. 26; xiv. 23, 27; xv. 3, 22; xviii. 22; Rom. xvi. 5; 1 Cor. iv. 17; xiv. 4, 5, 23; xvi. 19; Philip. iii. 6; iv. 15; Col. iv. 15; 1 Tim. v. 16; Philem. 2; John iii. 6, 9, and other places. When used in the plural it is to be so understood; Acts ix. 31; xv. 41; xvi. 5; Rom. xvi. 4, 16; 1 Cor. vii. 17; xi. 16; xiv. 33, 34; xvi. 1, 19; 2 Cor. viii. 1, 19, 23, &c.

In this latter sense, the Church is a mixed body, whether we consider it as *one*, united under one visible head, as Romanists do, or as many bodies separately organized, and acknowledging no headship but Christ. In either form it is, like the ancient Hebrew Commonwealth, a people called out, and separated by ordinances and outward profession from the rest of the world, within which God has an election of grace. Rom. xi. 5, 7. To call out, collect, organize, govern, and teach these bodies is the appointed work of the Christian ministry, while the Lord himself carries on his own proper work of grace, for the most part, within their bounds. See notes on Mark xvi. 15, 16.

In the first sense the Church has not yet appeared. The lives of all its members are hid with Christ in God. The greater number of them have passed the gates of death, and have no longer a local habitation or name on the earth. The Head of this invisible body is himself invisible, and it is only when he shall appear, that they will appear with him. In the verse under consideration it is said, "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." These, no doubt, were true converts and members of the Church in both senses of the word. Their conversion was the Lord's own work. One observation more. In Matt. xvi. 18, our Lord usés the word *Church* prospectively, having respect to the then future work of the Holy Spirit.\* It is not at all probable that the apostles

\* The phrase *Επι ταυτη τη πετρα*, upon this rock, we repeat, does not refer immediately to what Peter had said, but to what the Lord had said in reply to Peter. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it,"—viz. the mystery of my person as God-man, the Christ—to thee, but my Father," &c. The truth which Peter had declared was beyond the reach of human sagacity to discover. He could not have learned it except by the teaching of the Spirit, and he was blessed, because he had thus been taught and distinguished above his fellow-disciples, in having been first taught it. Having pronounced this blessing upon Simon, and given him a new name, *Peter*; (taken from the Hebrew word, פֶּטֶר, see Hesychius and Alberti's *Glossaries ad voc.*, also Jerome on Hebrew names,) from that fact the Lord proceeded to make the general remark, "and upon this work of the Spirit, (in revealing to others, as he has now revealed to thee, the mystery of the Christ as God-man,) as

at that time comprehended his meaning. It was one of the things they were to be taught by the Paraclete—the Comforter. John xiv. 26; xvi. 13. With exact propriety, therefore, St. Luke avoids the use of this word to designate the body of believers, *until after the descent* of the Holy Spirit, although an uninspired writer, not perceiving this mystery, would have found an earlier occasion to use it. See Acts i. 15, 21.

ACTS III. In the first part of this chapter we have a particular account of a miracle of healing performed on a man above forty years old, iv. 22, who had been lame from his birth, iii. 2. It appears to have been performed without the exercise of faith on his part, or even any expectation or hope of the benefit he actually received, verses 3—5. The apostles Peter and John no doubt acted under the promptings of the Holy Spirit, with the design to attest their authority, and confirm their testimony as witnesses of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The place and the hour were fitly chosen for this purpose, as the event showed. The miracle suggests many interesting reflections, but as our object is chiefly to point out the use made of it, we pass immediately to the address of Peter.\*

*upon a rock*, (which can never be removed or shaken,) will I build my Church, against which no power—not death itself—shall ever prevail. This explanation is according to the truth: for no one not taught by the Holy Spirit ever really discerns (whatever he may think or profess) the mystery of Christ. Unitarianism is a religion of human reason—not of Divine teaching, or knowledge, or power.

\* The miracle was performed while Peter was (*ἰσχυρῶς*) in the act of raising the lame man from his seat, and it consisted in imparting strength to his feet and ankles, not the art of using it, verse 7. Hence we may account for the irregular effects or actions of the cripple described in the next (8th) verse, and for his holding on to both Peter and John as mentioned in the eleventh verse. Walking, and even standing in an erect posture, is an art acquired by much practice. Dr. Paley somewhere observes, that a child learning to walk is the greatest posture master in the world. A man who had never attempted to walk or stand erect, until he had acquired the ordinary strength of an adult, would get along very awkwardly, if at all. He would not know how to put forth his strength in a graduated measure, just sufficient to assume an erect position, and walk in an easy and, as we say, *natural* way. Thus considered, the description contains strong internal evidence of its truth. Notice the word *ἔξαλλομενος*, it means leaping or springing up. We should suppose a man in these circumstances would from want of practice exert his newly-received strength suddenly, and to its full extent. Again, he does not advance forward in a direct line, but (*περιπατῶν*) circuitously, and with a bounding motion (*ἀλλομενος*) as he went. He kept fast hold of Peter and John, to aid him in maintaining the posture of standing; at least he would need to do so if the miracle extended no further than to give him strength. We can easily believe that the cripple was very joyous, and thankful to God for the great blessing conferred on him, in restoring him to perfect soundness, verse 16, and very grateful to Peter and John, by whom he received it; and we concede that such emotions are naturally expressed by external actions, such as it is supposed are here described; yet, upon the supposition that the cripple had no such emotions, the manner of his rising, his incipient attempts to

ACTS III. 12. "And Peter seeing" how all the people ran together unto them, in the porch called Solomon's, greatly wondering, addressed them thus :

"Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this, and why look ye so earnestly (intently) on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?"

By this we learn that the miracle immediately attracted and fixed the attention of the people, (of whom there was a large concourse at that hour, verse I and iv. 4,) upon the apostles themselves, and prepared them to listen with respect to what the apostles should say. It was designed by the Holy Spirit that it should have this effect. It was one of the means HE employed to accomplish his own work. Hence Peter, speaking as the Spirit gave him utterance, disclaimed for himself and John the power or holiness by which this wonderful work was done, while the work itself was an incontestable proof of a present power and holiness some way connected with their persons, not unlike that which they had witnessed in the person of the Lord Jesus. It is worthy of remark that the apostle ascribes to *holiness*\* (or *εὐσεβεία*, piety) the power of accomplishing miraculous effects.

Holiness, or piety, is by God's appointment a power, or the medium for the transmission of Divine power, as faith is; imperfectly seen, it is true, in this life, owing to the imperfections of the most perfect Christian character. In the world to come, however, we have reason to believe its effects will be visible, decided, constant, unerring. Why should it be thought incredible that a perfectly holy being of any rank or order, whether man or angel, should be mightier in strength, or have more varied and wonderful powers than a sinful being of any rank or order, whether man or devil? See Luke x. 19; iv. 34, 35; Mark i. 24; Matt. xxi. 21, 22; Mark xi. 22, 23, 24.

Having disclaimed all personal efficiency in the work, the apostle proceeds immediately to point out the true source of the energy invisibly present, and in doing so, he charges them with the greatest of their sins.

ACTS III. 13. "The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob—the God of [all] our fathers, hath glorified his Son

walk, and his laying hold of the apostles for support—considered with regard to a man in those circumstances—are described with the truthfulness of nature. They could not have been otherwise, unless the miracle imparted with the strength to walk the art of using it. See Mark v. 43.

\* Instead of *εὐσεβεία* some MSS. have *ἐξουσία* or *εὐθυνα*, *potestate*, *robore*, *viribus*. See Mill. Proleg. 438, Beza in loco. But Beza preferred the common reading, as he found no other in any of the MSS. he possessed, and it gives an excellent sense, and in all probability is the true reading. See John iii. 2; ix. 31.

[servant] Jesus, whom ye delivered up; and ye denied [rejected] him in the presence of Pilate, even after he had resolved [decided] to let him go [release him]. And [in doing this] ye denied [rejected] the Holy and the Just One, and desired [preferred] a murderer [Barabbas] to be granted unto you [as a more gratifying favour]. But [Jesus] the Prince [the author] of life ye killed [hoping thus to destroy him; but in vain for]; God hath raised him up from [among] the dead, of which [fact] we are witnesses."

This language is very forcible; observe the varied designation of God: "The God of Abraham—the God of Isaac—the God of Jacob—the God of all our fathers"—the God of the temple, in which you now stand, as worshippers. Observe again, the titles he ascribes to Jesus of Nazareth, in whose name expressly, verse 6, the miracle was performed. Jesus—God's Son—the Holy One—the Just One—HIM he declares, God hath glorified. We do not understand this word (*ἐδόξασεν*) glorified in the lower sense of the honour reflected by the miracle performed in his name, but in the sense of the exaltation and glorification of his human person, Acts ii. 33, 36, for that was a point to be proved as well as his resurrection from the dead.

Next, the charge: It is direct and personal; for the apostle discriminates between the persons whom he addressed and their rulers, who were not then present; and as the very words of the apostle were prompted by the Holy Spirit, we safely conclude, the very persons who were at that moment gathered around the apostles, or at least many of them, were the same who had stood before Pilate and vociferously demanded the crucifixion of Jesus. See notes on Mark xv. 13; Matt. xxvii. 22; Luke xxiii. 21; Mark xv. 14; Luke xxiii. 23. The particulars of the charge justify this conclusion, "Whom YE delivered up and denied [or rejected in answer to the demand of Pilate when YE stood in his presence, and that too] after he had [not only declared his innocence, but had] resolved to let him go." To such, these words, how appalling!

The contrast which the apostle draws between their conduct and Pilate's, aggravates immensely their personal guilt; and their choice of a murderer, in the exercise of *their admitted privilege*, to have *any one* released whom *they chose*, shows that the guilt of the people was scarcely less than that of their rulers. See notes on Matt. xxvii. 15, 16; Mark xv. 6, 7, 8; John xviii. 39, 24; xix. 13, 14.

Having thus set before his audience their crime, he proceeds to declare the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, which he con-

firmed by the testimony of John as well as his own, and proceeds immediately to ascribe the miracle to the proper cause.

ACTS III. 16. "And his name [that is, HE, Jesus] through [by means of our] faith in his name hath made this man, whom ye see and know, [perfectly sound and] strong."

The cure could not be denied, iv. 14, nor the fact that it was performed in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, iii. 6. The apostles were known to have been his followers, iv. 13, and they professed to follow him still. It seemed a continuance of the miraculous powers which the Lord Jesus was known to have exercised. Such power proved their authority as servants of him whom they acknowledged, and the truth of their testimony to the facts they proclaimed. For this purpose chiefly, we suppose, the miracle was wrought.

The faith spoken of in this verse, as already intimated, was the faith of the apostles. There is nothing in the account of the miracle which leads us to believe the cripple was expecting to be healed. On the contrary, when, in obedience to the command of Peter, he gave heed to the apostles, he did it, expecting to receive such alms as they had not to bestow, verses 3—6; whether faith was imparted at the same time with the healing power, is a question upon which we have no light; but if so, it was not a *prerequisite* to the miracle.

Upon this subject it may be remarked that our Lord performed many miracles, as proofs of his Divine mission and authority upon persons incapable of exercising faith—such as children, demoniacs, and even the dead, as well as on others, who, though capable of faith, did not seek him in the exercise of it. John v. 7, 8; Matt. viii. 28, 32; Luke vii. 11—15. Peter and John, in this instance, followed his example. The chief design of the miracle was to prove the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and his exaltation to glory. It aroused the attention of his murderers to that fact, and was made by the Holy Spirit the means of convicting many of them.

But the Lord performed miracles by *his own* power, which it is unnecessary to add the apostles could not do, either before or after his resurrection. See Mark xvi. 17.\*

\* When persons sought the Lord during his personal ministry, or his apostles after his resurrection, for healing, faith in him was indispensable. In this there is no inconsistency. Considered as attestations of authority, or as proofs of facts, the object of miracles is quite distinct from the benefits bestowed by them. It was necessary that the evidence should be given to fix upon the people the responsibility of rejecting the facts proclaimed; and, like the common gifts of Providence, it was given especially by our Lord, in the greatest profusion, irrespectively of the faith of those who enjoyed the benefits of his miracles. But when persons sought him for the blessing, if sincere, they acknowledged the authority of him whom they approached, and could receive it only through their faith in him.



ACTS III. 17. "And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance ye did it, as also your rulers."

Observe the change in the apostle's address. He had just before charged them as *Israelites*—their national name—with the most heinous of their crimes. Now, he calls them *brethren*, and makes the only extenuation of their guilt which their case admitted. They did it *ignorantly*, yet in the indulgence of sinful passions, and against evidence which should have convinced them, see Acts ii. 23; 1 Cor. ii. 8; 1 Tim. i. 13; but in so doing, they had not frustrated—rather they had fulfilled—the foretold purposes of God. On this ground he proceeds to exhort them,

ACTS III. 19—21. "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, in order that your sins may be blotted out—that times of refreshing may come [ὅπως ἂν ἐλθῶσι καιροί, Luke ii. 35] from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send [καὶ ἀποστείλῃ] Jesus Christ [again] who before was preached [or rather *who before was ordained or appointed*, προεξηρισμένου, see Beza's *Commentary*] unto you, whom [nevertheless] the heavens must receive [detain or keep from you as a people] until the times of [appointed in the Divine counsels for] the restitution of all things," &c.

These verses are not accurately rendered in the common English version, as has been observed by many commentators, (see Lightfoot, Doddrige, Scott, Adam Clarke,\*) and conclusively shown by Dr. J. A. Alexander, in his learned commentary on the Acts. The translators probably were influenced by their doctrinal views concerning the destiny of Israel and the position they occupy in the scheme of the Divine government of the earth. That events of such vast magnitude and importance as the second personal coming of the Lord, and the restitution of all things, should be suspended, by Divine appointment, upon the repentance and conversion of Israel, is a proposition which many persons find it difficult to receive. In what is Israel better than any other people? Rom. iii. 29. Is not the middle wall of partition broken down? Eph. ii. 14. Are we not taught expressly that there is now no difference between the Jew and the Greek? Gal. iii. 28; Col. iii. 11. Such are the inquiries of many, to which, they suppose, no answer can be

\* Professor Scholefield, while he evidently prefers the authorized translation of ὅπως ἂν, admits that it is an unusual one. He suggests, that before it is discarded on that ground, the following examples, among others, should be well considered: Rom. xv. 24, ὡς ἐστίν; 1 Cor. xi. 34, ὡς ἂν; Philip. ii. 23, Josh. ii. 14, Sept., ὡς ἂν. He adds, that Tertullian translated the passage in question, "*Ut tempora vobis superveniant refrigerii.*"—*Hints for the Improvement of the Authorized Version.*

given, consistent with the exhortation of the apostle if it is thus understood.

But we observe that Peter connects the national conversion of Israel with the promised times of refreshing, and the restitution of all things, that is with a new dispensation—which at that time was distant, but not known to be so, even by the inspired apostles—*until which*, the wall of partition will be broken down, and no distinction will be made between Jew or Greek. Until this dispensation of the Gospel to the Gentiles, therefore, shall be closed, and the Lord shall return, Israel will not be restored to their peculiar privileges under the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. Acts xv. 14—16. So the apostle teaches.

Why then, it may be inquired again, should the apostle address them at *that* time by such motives, seeing the present dispensation had already commenced, and the times of their national restoration to the favour of God were postponed? To this inquiry it may be answered:

While God spared the nation and their temple (about thirty-seven years) they could be approached as a community or commonwealth, by the apostles, as they had been by John the Baptist and our Lord. It was for *this very purpose*, we suggest, their national existence was mercifully prolonged, peradventure they might still repent and believe in Jesus. It was a *peradventure*, however, only in human regard, though entirely consonant with the dealings of God with that people, as the ministry of John the Baptist and of the Lord himself conclusively proves. Acts xv. 18; John vi. 44, 45; xii. 37—41. If we adopt this suggestion, we may reasonably account for the form of this address of the apostle and the *national* considerations by which he urged their immediate and universal repentance. It supplies, also, a reason for the Saviour's command to the apostles to begin their preaching at Jerusalem, Luke xxiv. 47, in obedience to which command this discourse was delivered. Hence the delay to carry the gospel to the Gentiles, which is commonly supposed to have been about seven years. It is plain also from other places, Acts xiii. 46; Rom. i. 16; ii. 9, 10; Acts xi. 19, that while the temple stood, the Jews had not entirely lost their priority. During all this time, they were regarded and treated by the apostles, as the *children of the prophets and of the covenant*, iii. 25; and as such, *nationally* entitled to the blessings of it, *on the condition* of their national repentance and faith, notwithstanding their national sin of rejecting and crucifying the Lord Jesus. Consistently with this view the apostles themselves observed Levitical rites and permitted their Jewish converts to do so. Acts xxi. 20—25; xvi. 3; xx. 16.

These observances by the apostles are not to be regarded as

temporizing expedients resorted to by them to avoid the effect of inveterate Jewish prejudices, but practices *proper* to be allowed, while God permitted the nation to exist and the temple to stand. The kingdom of heaven, if we may so say, was still at hand in the same sense as when John the Baptist and our Lord so preached it. Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17. There was no impediment in the way of its immediate establishment in either case but the national unbelief and impenitence; and to remove these the Holy Spirit's influences had now been purchased by the Saviour's death, and were offered to them. Hence the *first* offer of the gospel was made to this people under the new dispensation.

We have no reason to believe God would have permitted the Romans to destroy the temple and scatter the people among all nations, had they, *one and all*, obeyed the exhortation of the apostle and received the Lord with the obedience of faith. But what form of worship he would have superinduced upon that of the temple, or established in its place in the event supposed, is to us a speculative inquiry. We may suppose, that it would have been the same as he will hereafter establish upon the restoration and national conversion of that people. Waiving, however, such inquiries, we pass on to remark:

The destruction of the temple and the dispersion of the people was a new epoch in their history. Many parts of their ritual thenceforth became impracticable. It was no longer possible for the preachers of the gospel to approach them as a nation. As such they *lost their priority* during their dispersion, see Rom. ii. 9; iii. 9, and as individuals no difference was made or could be made between them and the Gentiles, in the bestowment of church privileges. On this ground, we infer that special efforts for the conversion of the Jews, during their dispersion, though eminently proper, cannot now be enforced by the peculiar motives which the apostle here uses. Nor do we suppose the organization of them into separate churches, or the observance of Levitical rites by Jewish Christians, since that event, can be justified by the examples or precepts of the apostles during this period; their conduct, in this respect, being founded upon the Divine forbearance with the nation in allowing them a little further space for repentance, and the gracious purpose of the Saviour to give them still the first offer of the kingdom they had so lately rejected.

Thus interpreted, this exhortation of the apostle is in harmony with the doctrine concerning the church, as contained in the Epistles and other parts of the New Testament.

ACTS III. 21. "Whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things," &c.

The restitution of all things, of necessity includes the restitution of all things contained in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants—as well the things especially promised to the posterity of Jacob as those in which the Gentiles have a part. With this event the Saviour connects the future mission of Elias, Matt. xvii. 11; but his office and work, whatever they may be, like John the Baptist's, will be confined, as we suppose, to Israel, after they shall have been restored to their land. With this event, we have seen, are also connected the second coming of the Lord, the resurrection and the glorification of the Elect, and times of refreshing or relief from the effects of the curse. We dwell a little on this topic.

The various dispensations of God's government over the earth and man are among the grandest themes of the Bible. They are stages or parts of an infinite scheme which join on to others yet hidden deep in the Divine mind. Eph. ii. 7. They were all appointed and arranged by God the Son; they are upheld and unfolded by his power for the ever increasing display of the Divine attributes. Heb. i. 2, 3.

The first dispensation, of which we have only a brief notice, was characterized by the absence of all physical and moral evil, during which man had personal intercourse with his Maker. We may call this the dispensation of Paradise, or the dispensation of the kingdom of the heavens. Gen. i., ii.; Lam. iii. 38; Rom. viii. 20. How long it continued we do not know, but at the fall of man it was closed, and the kingdom of the heavens was withdrawn. Gen. iii. 17, 18. This kingdom was brought nigh again, when John the Baptist appeared, but not established, because rejected by the Jews to whom it was preached.

There is a remarkable expression of Moses, in Deut. xi. 21, which seems to allude to the physical change in the condition of the earth at that epoch. Gen. iii. 18, 19. The lawgiver exhorts the people to obedience by the motive, "that their days may be multiplied and the days of their children, in the land which the Lord sware unto their fathers to give them; *as the days of heaven* [literally of the heavens] *upon earth*;" as if he had said, days of blessedness and glory such as the world does not now enjoy—days of Paradise, such as the world enjoyed before the blessings of God's kingdom were withdrawn. The exhortation is not unlike that of Peter, in Acts iii. 19, for the days of the heavens, understood in the sense of the prophet, would be days of refreshing in the sense of the apostle. However this may be, at the fall of man a new dispensation came over the earth; God withdrew his kingdom and permitted

the powers of evil to prevail, yet set bounds to them as he did to the sea, which they should not pass. Gen. iii. 17, 18; John xiv. 30; xii. 31; xvi. 11; Eph. ii. 2; Col. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14. The earth was subjected to vanity and corruption. Rom. viii. 20. In the bold and figurative language of Paul, the creature, that is, the whole fabric of physical nature, and man also, was made to groan and travail in pain together, under the displeasure of the Creator. Rom. viii. 22. The change was vast beyond our conceptions. Whether it came over the world suddenly, as the blight and withering of the fig-tree the Lord cursed, Mark xi. 14, 20, 21; Matt. xxi. 19, 20, or gradually, as some have supposed, it would be fruitless to inquire. But, however wrought, it was quite a different order of things. We may call it the dispensation of the fall, or of the curse, or of the kingdom of the heavens withdrawn. Rom. v. 12. This dispensation still continues, yet not without the hope of restitution. Rom. viii. 20. For God has purposed to repair the mighty ruin—and ruin it is, though it seem fair and beautiful to man who knows nothing better—and restore the former state.

Our Lord, with allusion to his first work of creation, calls this his purposed work of restitution, *the regeneration*, *palin-genesia*, or second creation. Rev. xxi. 5. The apostle Paul refers to the same restitution in Eph. i. 10, by the words “dispensation of the fulness of times,” that is, the dispensation appointed to ensue upon the completion of the order of things now existing; as does the apostle Peter, in his second Epistle, chap. iii. 7, 13, and the passage under consideration. See Isa. lxxv. 17—25.

These are the great dispensations made known to us, of which most commentators have not taken sufficient notice. Those which they have chiefly enlarged upon, are really subdivisions of the dispensation introduced by the fall, and the coming in of the curse. But these are subordinate and remedial in their nature, and subservient in their design, to the coming of the kingdom of God on earth, the expulsion of sin, and the cause of every physical and moral evil. In their progress, they display to all creatures in all worlds the attributes and the glory of God, in a manner which otherwise, so far as we can know, would have been impossible, consistent with the Divine wisdom and goodness. The manifestation of the essential attributes of the Godhead thus made, considered relatively to the eternal well-being of the universe, is a good immeasurably surpassing the evils resulting from the temporary and com-

paratively brief disorder permitted in this world. But to resume:

The first of these subordinate dispensations is commonly called the Patriarchal. It began with the birth of the first man, and continued universal, until the whole race, excepting a few, was swept from the face of the earth. This period in the history of man is called by St. Peter "the world that then was," 2 Epist. iii. 6, intimating that it was essentially a different condition of things from that which now exists. The patriarchal economy was re-established with Noah; and with respect to the larger part of his descendants, has ever since remained unchanged. See Sir G. H. Rose's Essays—Article, China. Its results are visible in the abominations of idolatry. In respect to the posterity of Jacob, this economy ended at their exodus from Egypt, under the leadership of Moses, and the giving of the law at Mount Sinai fifty days afterwards. That people were then brought into new covenant relations with God, and thenceforward were regarded as a peculiar and elect people. Exod. xix. 5, 6; Numb. xxiii. 9. The economy thus established over this small portion of the human family terminated with the mysterious rending of the veil of the temple; to be succeeded by the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. This, like the patriarchal dispensation, is universal in its scope, but not so in its effects. The especial design of it is to gather an elect people out of all nations, Acts xv. 14, not the universal salvation of all men, in any age of it. Universal holiness belongs only to the times of the kingdom of God, Matt. vi. 10, when the tempter will be cast out, Rev. xx. 3, 10; John xii. 31, and all things restored. Then, as we have reason to believe, the Holy Spirit will act with powers unknown since the fall. As at the beginning, Gen. i. 2, his energies will be felt again by physical nature, and the sphere of his operations on the moral nature of man will be universal.

When we consider the vastness of this scheme of dispensations; (or even of the parts in which almost the whole history of man, and of God's dealings with him hitherto, are included,) and reflect that the whole rests and turns upon the God-man, Christ Jesus, Isa. ix. 6, we are apt to forget the humanity-side of his character. That a Being so great, so glorious, should become incarnate, in order to die in the nature assumed, is a mystery, the scope, design, and the effect of which the Spirit of God alone can comprehend. 1 Cor. ii. 8—11.

The particular place which we occupy in the scheme, is several times called in Scripture *the last days*, Heb. i. 2; 2 Tim. iii. 1; 2 Pet. iii. 3; James v. 3; see 1 Pet. i. 5, 20; Jude xviii., by which expression we understand the ulti-

mate subdivision or portion of the second of the great dispensations before mentioned—*viz.* the Dispensation of the Fall. We infer from it that no other economy will intervene before the restitution of all things spoken of in this verse.\*

The words, “restitution of all things,” it is unnecessary to observe, imply a former condition of things, which does not at present exist. See Matt. xii. 13, Gr., also Mark iii. 5. Taking the words in the largest sense, as we should, they carry us back to the perfect work of the Creator at the beginning, which he pronounced very good. Gen. i. 31. No condition inferior to this can properly be called a restitution, nor be well pleasing to God, all whose works and ways are perfect. The times of restitution, we have seen, depend on the personal coming of Christ, which under no preceding economy since the fall, has been precisely revealed. Gen. iii. 15; xlix. 10; Isa. vii. 14; Dan. ix. 24; Luke ii. 26; xxi. 25—28; Mark xiii. 32; 1 Thess. v. 2, 3. *Conditionally* they were connected with the first coming of Christ, Exod. xix. 5, 6; Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xix. 41—44, but as the Jews rejected him, the kingdom was taken from them, Matt. xxi. 43, and the restitution deferred, until another elect people should be formed and substituted in their place. 1 Pet. ii. 9. It is still deferred only because this elect body—the Church—is not yet completed. See notes on Luke xviii. 7.

Do we inquire in what the restitution will consist? or how far the things now seen will be altered? or according to what scheme or fashion (ὁ κόσμος) the world will be framed or formed? 1 Cor. vii. 31. We can form no adequate conception, either of the transformation itself, or of the power by which it will be wrought. We can only say, in the words of inspiration, the whole of this lower creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and made to share in some way in the glorious liberty of the children of God. Rom. viii. 21. Nor do we know whether the restitution will be accomplished all at once or progressively; although there is some ground to believe that the final dispensation will be divided into subordinate economies of increasing glory, as the dispensation of the fall has been. The apostle Paul intimates, Eph. ii. 7, that God has in store for his elect people (ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσι τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις) a series or ascending scale of economies or stages through which they shall advance from glory to glory. 2 Cor. iii. 18. The

\* In 2 Pet. iii., we find the expression ἐπ’ ἰσχυται των ἡμερων (των ἰσχυταιν) by which the apostle intends the *ending*, or the latter part, of the undefined period called “the last days.” His object is to direct the mind of his readers, not to the last days generally, but to the latter portion of the last days, and show a sign of the near approach of the new dispensation.

world itself may also in like manner have progress towards higher degrees of blessedness and glory.

It has been made a question whether the millennium will not be the initiatory economy of the restitution, to be followed by others of which we have not a distinct notice. Others positively maintain that the millennium will precede the coming of the Lord, and of course the restitution of all things. This opinion is irreconcilable with the doctrine of Scripture concerning the uncertainty or possible nearness of the coming of the Lord, so far as men can know or be assured, and should therefore be rejected as erroneous. If, however, we regard the millennium, according to the first opinion, as the introductory economy of the restitution of all things, the next two verses convey an intimation of great changes in the Divine government then to be established over Israel.

ACTS III. 22, 23. "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. And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." Deut. xvii. 15, 18, 19.

These words of Moses have respect chiefly to the coming of Christ at and for the restitution of all things. In a qualified sense, we may apply the 23d verse to the Jews, at the first coming of Christ, when in consequence of their sins they were destroyed *as a nation*, though still preserved as a race. Properly, however, they signify the excision of *individuals* from the nation, and not the destruction of the nation as such. But understood of the whole body as a nation hereafter to be restored to their land under the new dispensation, they import that Israel, at least, shall be all righteous, as Isaiah foretells, chaps. lx. 21; liv. 13. The rule of duty for them, will be perfect obedience *in all things*. Transgressors, should there be such, we are taught by these verses will be visited with immediate and condign punishment, each for himself. Matt. v. 48; Jer. xxxi. 29, 30; Isa. lxxv. 20. The word ( $\xi\zeta\omicron\lambda\omicron\theta\rho\epsilon\upsilon\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\omicron\alpha\iota$ ) translated *destroyed*, signifies much more, we apprehend, than excommunication from the Church. It means physical destruction or extermination, see *Vulgate*, *Erasmus*, *Montanus*, and such appears to be the sense of the passage the apostle quotes. Thus interpreted, the words declare a rule of government which has never yet been applied to that people. Nothing sinful will then be permitted to Israel on account of the hardness of their hearts. Matt. xix. 8. The words imply also the restoration of Theocracy in the perfect form of the kingdom come. Matt. vi. 10. Then their sins, should sinners



be found among them, Isa. lxx. 20, will be committed without temptation, Rev. xx. 2, 9, against light and knowledge, Jer. xxxi. 34; Heb. viii. 11, and in despite of the Holy Spirit's influences and the greatest earthly blessings. Luke xii. 48. The apostles, we are taught, will in some way have rule over them, yet, in what manner they will exercise their government, it is impossible, from the light we now have, to conjecture. But the language of the Saviour, Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30, does not compel us to believe that they will dwell on the earth, or at all times visibly appear among their tribes, or sit on thrones of earthly splendour. It must be confessed, however, that the whole subject of the coming dispensation lies beyond the sphere of our conceptions. So great, so universal will the change be, whenever and by whatever degrees introduced and perfected, that the former earth will not be remembered nor come into mind. Isa. lxx. 17. What is supernatural now may be natural then, and what is now natural, may then, should it occur, be miraculous. In other words, there is nothing in man or in nature as they now are, which can serve us as an adequate standard of conception. See notes on Matt. iii. 2; xix. 28; also, notes on John xviii. 36, for further remarks on the subject of the kingdom.

One observation more: We have seen that the fall of Israel retarded the times of the restitution. The falling away of the Church, 2 Thess. ii. 3, has also retarded them. The restitution still depends upon the repentance of Israel, but Israel is given over to blindness until the period allotted for the gathering of the elect Church shall have elapsed, Rom. xi. 25, and this event by the Divine purpose is made to depend upon the universal promulgation of the gospel among all nations. Matt. xxiv. 14. The times of restitution, therefore, humanly speaking, depend upon the full execution of the Saviour's last command. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15.

THE END.



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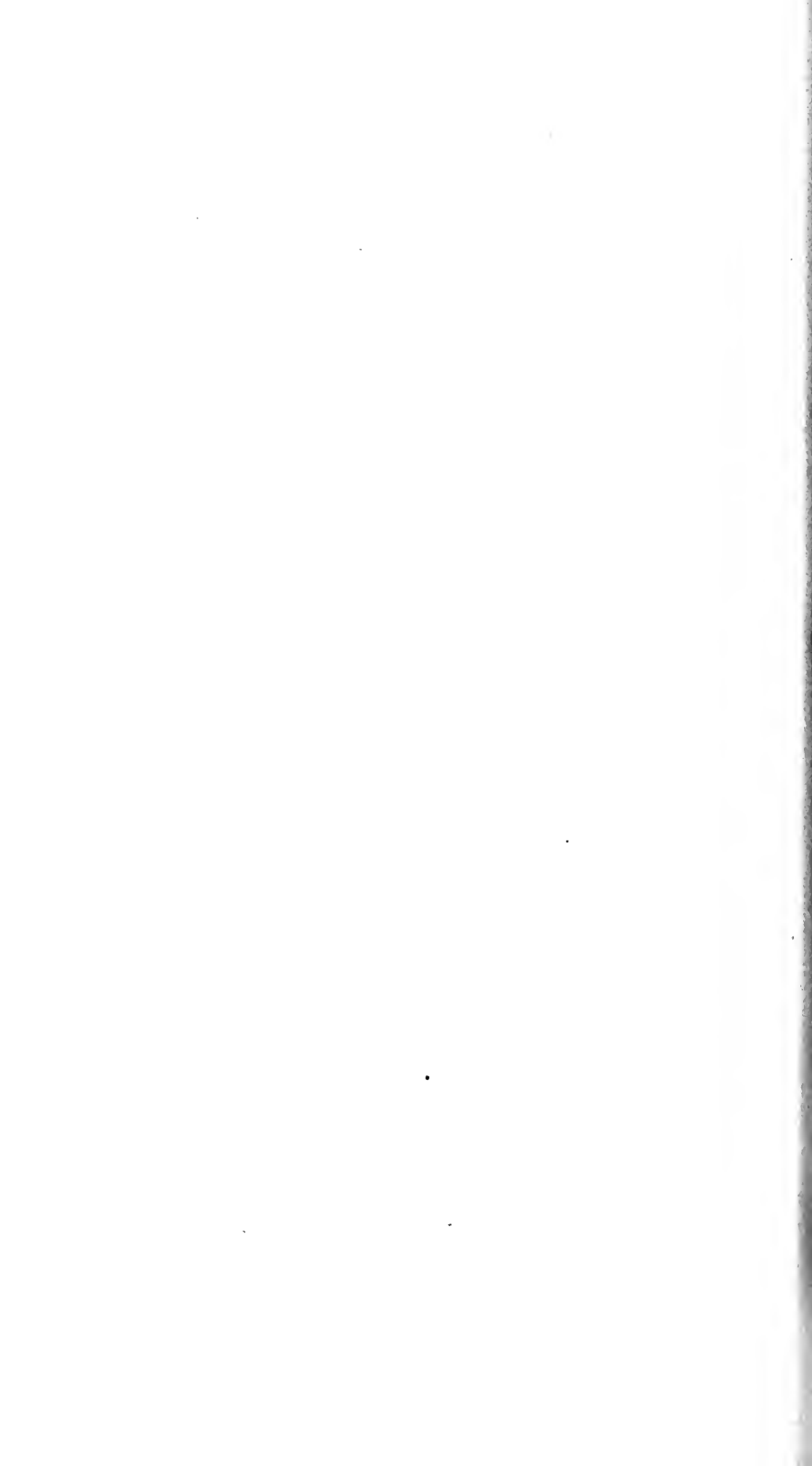
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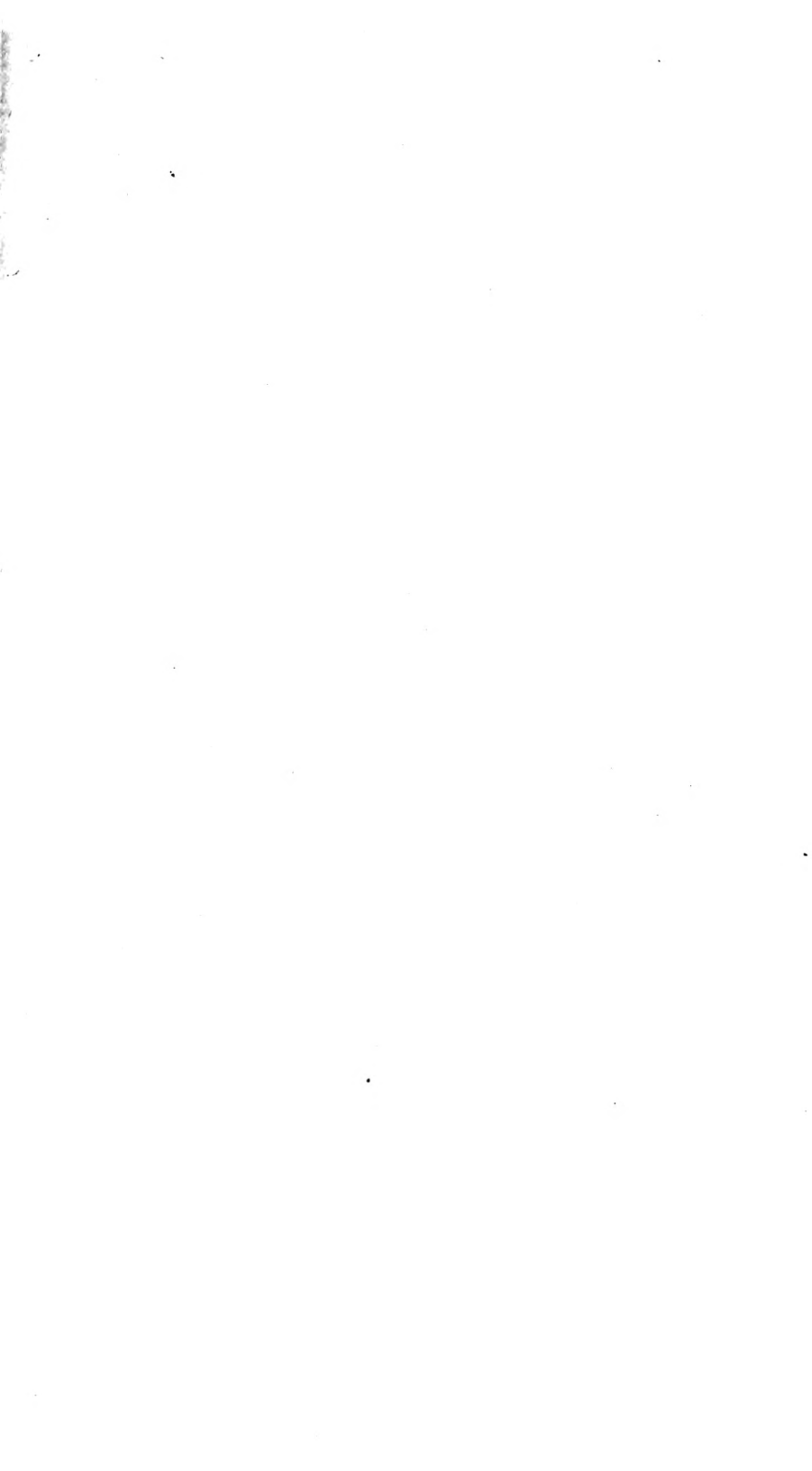
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